DRAMATICA
STUDIA UNIVERSITATIS BABEȘ-BOLYAI 2/2019

Copy-Past. Revaluating History, Memory and Archive in Cinema, Performing Arts and Visual Culture

STUDIA
UNIVERSITATIS BABEŞ-BOLYAI
DRAMATICA

2/2019
October

STUDIA UNIVERSITATIS BABEŞ-BOLYAI DRAMATICA

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Photo Cover by Mihai Pedestru

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YEAR **Volume 64 (LXIV) 2019**
MONTH **OCTOBER**
ISSUE **2**

PUBLISHED ONLINE: 2019-12-15
PUBLISHED PRINT: 2019-12-30
ISSUE DOI: 10.24193/subbdrama.2019.2

Thematic Issue

Copy-Past. Revaluating History, Memory and Archive in Cinema, Performing Arts and Visual Culture

Issue Editor: Miruna Runcan

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STUDIES AND ARTICLES

STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 2, 2019, p. 11 - 32
(Recommended Citation)
DOI:10.24193/subbdrama.2019.2.01

100 de ani (100 Years*) by I.L. Caragiale: Recycling the Image of the Nation*

ANCA HAȚIEGAN[1]

Abstract: On February 1, 1899, the National Theatre of Bucharest hosted the premiere of the play *100 de ani. Revistă istorică națională a secolului XIX, în 10 ilustrațiuni [100 Years. National Historical Revue of the 19th Century, in 10 Illustrations]*, arranged by I.L. Caragiale. Caragiale's controversial work is a montage of verses, prose and short plays written by several Romanian authors from the past (in other words, the play consists of old literary or dramatic works, appropriated, copied and pasted to fit into a new scenario). As a matter of fact, Caragiale wrote only the stage directions and a few lines and connecting scenes. But the overall, dramaturgical-directorial vision of the script belongs to him. Considering the way Caragiale treats the works of his literary colleagues in *100 Years*, one could say that, in this particular case, he does not behave as a writer, but as a true author-director (or "*auteur*"). The ten "illustrations" arranged by him consist of a series of more or less allegorical or symbolic representations of the century about to end, with its emblematic moments, culminating in an "apotheosis" celebrating King Carol I. In my paper, I will try to argue that Caragiale's "revue" is more than a minor piece of homage art: it is an exercise of historical re-evaluation underpinned by a philosophy of history. I will also analyse the way the author recycles the image of Romania, departing from the traditional theatrical (allegorical) representations of the nation.

Keywords: Caragiale, recycling, Romania, history, nation, allegory

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Paper translated from Romanian by Magda Iftene.

On February 1, 1899, the National Theatre of Bucharest hosted the premiere of the play *100 de ani. Revistă istorică națională a secolului XIX, în 10 ilustrațiuni [100 Years. National Historical Revue of the 19th Century, in 10 illustrations]*, arranged by I.L. Caragiale. The work had been made to order and it would reward the writer with a 1000 lei prize, granted by Petru Grădișteanu, then manager of the capital's National Theatre, but also the managing director of theatres. The revue poster promoted a "Great show. – *Tableau*x vivants, movement, dancing and singing. – Prose and verses of literature." [„Mare spectacol. – Tablouri vii, evoluțiuni, dansuri și cântece. – Proză și versuri din literatura diverselor epoce"]. It had a numerous cast, including some of the best actors of Romanian theatre, like Aristizza Romanescu, Constantin Nottara, Ion Brezeanu, Maria Ciucurescu, Iancu Petrescu, Nicolae Soreanu or Vasile Toneanu. The music aspect was the responsibility of Constantin Dimitrescu, who composed some of the songs played by the orchestra. The text of the "historical revue" was printed in the same year, in *Gazeta săteanului*[2].[3] Its author, Ion Luca Caragiale (1852-1912), was a great prose writer and playwright, one of the greatest classics of Romanian literature and viewed as a tutelary figure of Romanian theatre. When *100 Years…* premiered, he was already seen by some as one of the greatest playwrights alive, while also being envied and contested by others. However, the "historical revue" was generaly received with reserves (and ironies) from both sides. Nevertheless, it was a box-office hit and it achieved even greater succes, later that year, with the general public in Iasi, where it was staged at the initiative of actor Gheorghe Cârjă.

Caragiale's controversial work is a considerable montage of verses, parts of prose writing and play scenes selected from creations by Iancu Văcărescu, Ion Heliade Rădulescu, Costache Facca, Nicolae Bălcescu and

2. See *Gazeta săteanului*, XVI, no. 1, February 5, (1899): 22-32, and no. 2, February 20 (1899): 56-58.

3. The quotes in this paper are from: Ion Luca Caragiale, "100 de ani. Revistă istorică națională a secolului XIX, în 10 ilustrațiuni [100 Years. National Historical Revue of the XIX-th Century, in 10 illustrations]," in *Opere. Teatru. Scrieri despre teatru. Versuri . Vol. III [Works. Theatre. Writings on Theatre. Verses. Vol. III]*, ed. Stancu Ilin, Nicolae Bârna, and Constantin Hârlav, III (București: Editura Fundației Naționale pentru Știință și Artă, 2015), 673–716.

Alecu Russo, Vasile Alecsandri, Dimitrie Bolintineanu, Scipione I. Bădescu, as well as from the folk poetry selections by Alecsandri and G. Dem. Teodorescu. Văcărescu, Heliade Rădulescu and Costache Facca established themselves as writers in the first half of the 19th century. Bălcescu (known especially for his historical works), Russo, Alecsandri and Bolintineanu were part of the 1848 revolutionary generation. As for Scipione Bădescu, he was one of I.L. Caragiale's generation peers and member of the influential cultural association "Junimea" ["Youth"] led by the Romanian critic Titu Maiorescu, a group which, at some point in time, had also been attended by Caragiale. In other words, the play consists of old literary or dramatic works, appropriated, "copy-pasted" to fit into a new scenario. The "revue" also integrated the speech held by Prince Carol of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, the future King Carol I of Romania, in 1866, when he arrived in the country that he would lead until the beginning of the First World War, in 1914. Caragiale himself had written only the stage directions and several lines or connecting sequences. He, however, was the creator of the overall directing vision of the scenario, because, by the way in which he relates to the texts of his literary peers, Caragiale behaves, this time, not like a writer, but like a true auteur-director. The ten *tableau*x "arranged" by him include a series of "illustrations", more or less markedly allegorical or symbolic, of the 19th century that was ending, in the moments deemed emblematic for Romania's history; and culminating with the "apotheosis" that celebrates King Carol I. They depict history as if it were an evolving process of slow, but implacable progress, from the awakening from the "sleep of captivity" (*tableau* I) to the 1821 Revolution of Tudor Vladimirescu, against the Phanariote regime protected by the High Porte (*tableau* II), the appearance of education and of theatre in Romanian (*tableau*x III and IV), the failed Revolution of 1848 and the Romanian revolutionaries' forced exile, redeemed by the Union of the Principalities (Moldavia and Wallachia), which took place in 1859 (*tableau* V), the arrival of Prince Carol in the country, on 10 May 1866 (*tableau* VI), the Russian-Romanian-Turkish War of 1877-´78 (War of Independence), in which the Romanians fought together with the Russians, ending the Ottoman suzerainty (*tableau* VII), the proclamation of the Kingdom of Romania in 1881 (*tableau* VIII), the inauguration, in 1895, of the railway bridge of Cernavodă,

on the Danube (part of the largest complex of bridges in Europe at that time and the third longest in the world), an event representative of the country's technological progress and of its connection with the western civilisation (*tableau* IX), and, in the end, the aforementioned apotheosis.

Șerban Cioculescu, Caragiale's informed biographer and editor, was also very reserved in the introduction to volume VI of Caragiale's *Opere [Works]*, in 1939, with regard to *100 de ani...*: "We could say, in plain terms, that it is Caragiale's weakest creation, if it were not, in fact, a puzzle of parts that do not match."[4] In plain terms: Cioculescu is wrong. In reality, despite the puzzle-like/mosaic aspect, the work holds remarkable coherence. I will prove this by paying a closer look to the way in which the author creates the feminine allegorical characters who represent the nation and are present in the revue, as well as the manner in which he directs their appearance on the stage. Thus, în *tableau* I, open with a doina (a traditional Romanian song), in a wild landscape typical of the Romantic stage-setting, Moldavia and Wallachia are each chained to a rock, under a demon's spell ("the spirit of darkness"). "The women wear grey clothes and their national stoles; their respective flags and emblems laid at their feet. They are covered in black crape", the stage indications also show. They attempt several times, in vain, to stand up, while voicing their despair and hopes regarding the fate of the Romanian (the lines are from the poem *Ah! de-am putea!... [Ah! If we only could!...]* by Iancu Văcărescu). Three alphorn sounds precede the appearance on the "rock in the middle", "in white light", of a "bright angel" ("the Spirit of light"), which makes the demon "fold his wings terrified" and disappear in the ground. The angel recites Alecsandri's *Către români [To the Romanians]*, better known under its second title given by its creator, i.e. *Deșteptarea României [The Awakening of Romania]*. For the role of the Angel, Caragiale cast Aristizza Romanescu (1854-1918), the most appreciated Romanian actress at that time and Alecsandri's favourite actor. Obviously, this choice gave a special quality to the moment in the economy of the performance. (In her later memoirs, Aristizza would make a short note with regard to the

4. Șerban Cioculescu, "Introducere [Introduction]," in *I. L. Caragiale, Opere. Teatru. Vol. VI [I. L. Caragiale, Works. Theatre. Vol. VI]*, ed. Șerban Cioculescu (Bucharest: Fundația pentru Literatură și Artă, 1939), XXIX.

play: "*100 de ani*, some sort of compilation by Caragiale, which, at that time, disappointed many"[5].) At the end of the scene, Moldavia and Wallachia finally manage to stand up and free themselves. Starting from this first sequence, the critic Ștefan Cazimir identified, in the essay *I.L. Caragiale față cu Kitschul [I.L. Caragiale and the Kitsch]*, the manner in which the playwright had written *100 de ani*...: "by turning into a 'serious' text a parody published three years earlier!"[6]. (This was a gazette article, in which Caragiale announced the publication of Al. Macedonski's volume of poetry *Excelsior*, an excuse for the relentless ironist to criticise the pompous title and the highbrow author, while also ironizing the idea of human progress.[7]) In a backdrop populated by "alphorn sounds and riot thumps", the stage welcomes a young peasant woman ("brave Lelea"), who sings a song of rebellion against the Phanariote oppressors (the ruling elite of Greek origin, recruited from the Fenar quarter of Istanbul during the Ottoman suzerainty over the Romanian Principalities). She regrets that she does not have weapons and she promises that, however, she will fight bare handed. The peasant girl's verses are borrowed from the same Alecsandri's selection of *Folk Poetry*. Next, *tableau* II, the one with Tudor Vladimirescu's anti-Phanariote Revolution (or "riot"). Moldavia and Wallachia will appear two more times during the performance, but without lines. Thus, at the end of part two in *tableau* V, i.e. the part dedicated to the events of 1859, they recompose the group found in the upper part of "Union of the Principalities", a painting by Gheorghe M. Tattarescu (1820-1894) dating back to 1857 (made two years before the so-called "Small Union"). Tattarescu's painting – which bears an academic, neo-classic nature with influences from religious Renaissance painting – shows (in the lower part of the composition) two shepherds and their sheep. The older one, seen to the fore, seems to be sleeping and dreaming of two

5. Aristizza Romanescu, *30 de ani. Amintiri [30 Years. Memories]* (București: Editura Librăriei Socec & Co, 1904), 354.

6. Ștefan Cazimir, *I.L. Caragiale față cu Kitschul [I.L. Caragiale and the Kitsch]* (Bucharest: Editura Cartea Românească, 1988), 109.

7. See Ion Luca Caragiale, "Notițe literare [Primim la redacție…] [Literary Notes [We received at the editorial office…]]," in *Opere. Publicistică [Works. Journalism]*, ed. Ilin Stancu and Constantin Hârlav, II (București: Editura Fundației Naționale pentru Știință și Artă, 2011), 500–501.

women, Moldavia and Wallachia, who sit on a cloud and are shrouded in a flag marked with "UNION" and with the emblems of the countries (while emblems of the great friendly powers are standing guard around). An angel holds a crown above their heads. The women wear laurel wreaths and long, grey, belted clothes which resemble the world of Roman antiquity rather than the Romanian one. This was often reproached to the author (not only with regard to this painting) and this makes Caragiale's choice even more interesting and more significant, since he could have drawn his inspiration from two other paintings on the same topic, but much better localized, created in a Romantic manner, from the painters Theodor Amman (1831-1891) and Nicolae Grigorescu (1838-1907). In Caragiale's play, the two female character do not sit floating on a cloud, but they are placed on the "mound" in the middle of a village spreading on the "two banks of a brook" (*i.e.* the river Milcov that separates Moldavia from Wallachia). In the penultimate *tableau*, we will find them integrated in a scene that regroups the whole cast of the play. *Tableau* VI starts with the conversation of the folk in a village at the foot of the Carpathians. They discuss the arrival of Prince Carol in the country, from the Danube: "This was the fate of this imperial child; he was meant to follow the path and walk of the Danube. A streamlet starts quickly downward; then, gradually it crosses plain after plain; it grows forever; it becomes stronger; it breaks rocks; it opens in two a huge mountain chain and reaches, grand and undefeated, the Black Sea. This is the Danube's path and so will be his fate! Our special young man will grow step by step, patiently, will become stronger, he will break obstacles of circumstances and bad habits that are harder than rocks and, undefeated and grand, he will have to rule at the Black Sea", believes the village Chief. (The analogy is indicative of Caragiale's view regarding the organic development that should characterise the shaping of a man's personality and, at a wider scale, the evolution of society.) He – the village Chief - is also the one to repeat Carol's words at his arrival (otherwise, the dialogue is fully the creation of the playwright). Following the cheers for the young ruler, the stage is left empty and then, in the "strong moon light", the Romanian Sentry appears on the rampart and he recites the namesake poem by Alecsandri. At the end, the Sentry begins to patrol, saying: "The dawns will

be serene… the wind blows from the west!" – of course, an allusion to Carol's arrival. (This line and the others until the end of the *tableau* are all written by Caragiale.) And then:

> (*Ajungând în mijloc și uitându-se spre dreapta, [Sentinela] se oprește parcă ar vedea pe cineva că se apropie. – Orchestra în surdină. - România apare în dreapta și se oprește un moment gânditoare. Sentinela o vede; ia arma la mână și strigă puternic.)*
> Cine-i?
> ROMÂNIA (*pe gânduri, către sineși, fără a lua seama la sentinelă*)
> «Nihil sine Deo!»
> SENTINELA (*urmându-și jocul, mai puternic*)
> Cine-i?
> ROMÂNIA (*urmându-și jocul*)
> Inimile sus!
> Voi, copiii mei cu toții din hotare la hotare! (*face un pas*).
> SENTINELA (*culminându-și jocul*)
> Cine-i?
> ROMÂNIA (*ridicându-și fruntea*)
> Mama ta, voinice.
> SENTINELA
> Stăi... Lozinca!
> ROMÂNIA
> Neatârnare!
> (*Sentinela prezentă arma. România înaintează pe înălțime; apoi, ca inspirată.*)
> Dup-atâta chin, în fine soart-a vrut să fie dreaptă!
> De-astăzi m-a legat cu fiul unui neam împărătesc.
> Pentru numele lui mândru, pentru fruntea-i înțeleaptă,
> Trebui´altfel de coroană... Sentinelă, fii deșteaptă:
> Fapte mari se pregătesc...
> Sentinelă, fii cuminte!
> Sentinelă, nu uita!
> SENTINELA (*discret*)
> Neatârnare!
> ROMÂNIA (*tare*)
> Neatârnare!

SENTINELA (*cu avânt*)
Neatârnare!
ROMÂNIA
De-azi nainte,
Asta e lozinca ta!.

[(Reaching the middle and looking to the right, [the Sentry] stops as if he saw someone coming closer. – Soft music from the orchestra. - Romania appears to the right and, for a moment, she stops pensively. The Sentry sees her; he grabs his arm and shouts.)
Who's there?
ROMANIA (broodingly, to herself, without paying attention to)
«Nihil sine Deo!»
SENTRY (following his play, with more strength)
Who's there?
ROMANIA (following her play)
Be brave!
You, all of my children across the country! (she takes a step).
SENTRY (culminating his play)
Who's there?
ROMANIA (lifting her head)
Your mother, brave man.
SENTRY
Wait... The password!
ROMANIA
Independence!
(The Sentry presents his arm. Romania goes ahead; then, as if inspired.)
After the struggle, the fate finally wants to do right!
From now on it has tied me with the son of an imperial family.
His proud name, his wise forehead, for them,
A different crown is needed... Sentry, be smart:
Great deeds are on their way...
Sentry, be good!
Sentry, don't forget!
SENTRY (subtly)
Independence!
ROMANIA (loud)
Independence!

SENTRY (impetuously)
Independence!
ROMANIA
From now on,
This is your password!.]

The scene is interspersed with clear Shakespearean, Hamletian reminiscences (see the Danish prince's night walks on the rampart). In her first appearance on the stage, Romania astounds with her contemplative stance ("for a moment, she stops pensively", "broodingly, to herself, without paying attention to…"). The thing that haunts and puzzles her is the slogan of the house of Hohenzollern, *i.e.* of the family of the new ruler, "Nihil sine Deo" (which has remained the slogan of Romania's Royal House), which, in the end, is a high ethical principle. Will the country be able to answer to this moral command? Is she cut out for the "imperial" son, for his "stately" name? In other words, is she ready to enter the Western society (which also involves the espousing of the aforementioned ethics)? "A different crown is needed" for all these, says Romania "inspired"; in other words, a transfigured people is needed. Although focused on such dilemas, she continues to be confident ("Be brave!"; "After the struggle, the fate finally wants to do right!"; "Great deeds are on their way..."). The new password, "Independence!", also expresses the state of self-confidence and it foreshadows the *tableau* on the War of Independence. At the absolute premiere of the play, the character Romania was played by a very young and promising actress, who was at the beginning of her career, namely Eugenia Ciucurescu (1880-1942), sister of Maria Ciucurescu, one of Caragiale's favourite actresses, also in the cast. The next *tableau* (VII) reproduces a play in an act of the repertory generated by the War of Independence. This was "*La Turnu-Măgurele* – Scenă patriotică din vremea războiului de V. Alecsandri" ["*La Turnu-Măgurele* – patriotic scene from the war of independence by V. Alecsandri"], an idyll in which the action occurs in the back land; the play was put on stage, in 1877, for the support of wounded soldiers. The first part of the eighth *tableau* continues it, describing the victorious soldiers' return from war, while also discussing the women's involvement in the conflict, by invoking and celebrating the figure of the wife of Carol I, called by a soldier "the best mother" and

"mother of the wounded – our great captain's illustrious wife". And then he draws out Elizabeth's portrait, of which, he says, every soldier carries with him (together with the portrait of "our great captain"); the soldier shows it to the crowd from the village that welcomed the troops with water and wine. He then recites an ode to the Queen (signed by Scipione I. Bădescu). Bell tolls and band songs mark "the country's celebration", because "she took her crown from the mouth of a cannon" – as illustrated by another verse by Bădescu, delivered by an old man; this verse prepares the audience for the following scene. (It is not a figure of speech: the royal crown of Carol I was actually made from the steel of a canon captured by the Romanian soldiers from the Turks in the battle of Grivița, during the War of Independence, on 30 August 1877. The steel crown can now be seen at the National Museum of History, in Bucharest.)

In the second part of *tableau* VIII a second apparition occurs, even more surprising than the first one, of Romania:

> (S-a întunecat aproape de tot... Se aud lovituri de ciocane pe nicovală ca la o făurărie în plină activitate. – Muzica în surdină. Toată lumea ascultă. Apare sub lumină albă România înarmată. Toată lumea stă cuprinsă de emoție. România se apropie de stânca din mijloc. Scoate spada și cu mânerul bate rar de trei ori. – Stânca se deschide, se vede făurăria gnomilor, luminată roșu. Tunuri, arme, lanțuri rupte. Gnomii suflă în foale, alții taie dintr-un tun, alții lucrează la nicovală. – Gnomii primesc cu politețe pe musafira înarmată. Ea asistă mândră în picioare la activitatea faurilor. – Danț și evoluții de gnomi lucrând.)
>
> *["(It's almost dark... Hammers can be heard on anvils like in a forging shop during working hours. – Soft music. Everybody listens to it. Armed Romania appears under a white light. Everybody awaits, their hearts full. Romania nears the cliff in the middle. She draws her sword and, by using its grip, she knocks three times. – The rock opens up and you can see the dwarves' forging shop, in red light. Cannons, arms, broken chains. The dwarves blow the bellows, some other cut from a cannon and other work on the anvil. – The dwarves put on a courteous welcome for the armed guest. Proud, she stands and witnesses the activity conducted by the forgers. – Dance and movement of the dwarves working.)"]*

This is followed by an exchange between the dwarves (or the gnomes) and Romania, with regard to the steel crown that the former are building and which will be ready by the end of the tableau. In these scene, Caragiale's dramatized verses are again borrowed from Scipione Bădescu.

The woman's armed appearance, under a "white light", requires a retrospective look at the scenario, because it refers to two previous sequences, which – now an obvious aspect – had prefigured it by design (yet another proof that the parts of the puzzle "match" perfectly, contrary to what Cioculescu may think): it's the apparition of the Angel (also "in a white light"!) and the scene with the "brave Lelea", the warrior peasant who would urge people to revolt since the first *tableau.* We remember that she was chanting that she could only fight with her bare hands and teeth. Caragiale gave to the peasant woman the weapon that she needed and, thus, he civilised her…

The unusual backdrop against which "armed Romania" shows up is borrowed by the author from Nordic, Germanic mythology, i.e. from the space of origin of King Carol I. The feminine presence seems to be "contaminated" by the imaginary of this space, which, as known, is populated by warrior women ("the Valkyries"), although she is never unleashed like the first ones. Instead, Caragiale's "armed Romania" looks like "Germania" (the name is in Latin), the personification of the German nation (starting from around 1813, during the Napoleonic wars), portrayed as a young vigorous, dignified, serene women, carrying a sword and often a crown in her other hand (the crown of the Holy Roman Empire). The character's Hamletian stance in scene VI also is reminiscent of the Nordic area. At any rate, Caragiale's Romania is much closer to the feminine allegorical representations of the modern occidental nations (Germania, Britannia, Marianne, etc.) than the namesake characters of Romanian dramaturgy written before him, owed to his uncle, Costache Caragiali (1815-1877), and to Frédéric Damé (1849-1907), a French-born journalist and writer (translator, amateur historian, etc.), settled in Romania in 1872. Another dramatic text with Romania as a protagonist (*24 Ianuarie sau Unirea țărilor și a tuturor partitelor [24 January or the Union of the Countries and of All the Parties]*, from 1860), by the actor Mihail Pascaly, has been lost.

Thus, the first allegorical-dramatic representation of Romania, dating back to 1852, comes from actor and playwright Costache Caragiali. The character appears in a too little known *Prolog pentru inaugurarea noului teatru din București [Prologue for the Inauguration of the New Bucharest Theatre]*, written by Caragiali at

the inauguration of Teatrul cel Mare [The Grand Theatre] of the Wallachian capital (which will be later called the National Theatre). Unfortunately, it could not be put on stage, apparently because of its too markedly patriotic nature which did not sit well with the authorities of the age. Costache Caragiali's prologue remained in manuscript until after the author's death and was only published in 1881, in the *Familia* magazine[8]. Actually, Caragiali's allegory was not quite without precedent in the Romanian theatre: before him, the writer and cultural promoter Gheorghe Asachi (1788-1869) had turned Moldavia into a dramatic feminine character – "Zâna Moldovii [the Moldavian Fairy]" – , in a *Prolog [Prologue]*[9] made for the debut performance of the students at the Iasi Philharmonic-Dramatic Conservatory (the first school of theatre in Moldavia), which occurred on 23 February 1837, on the stage of Teatrul de Varietăți [Variety Theatre]. Asachi's prologue "dramatised", in fact, an even older representation painted according to his own sketches on the curtain used on 27 February 1816, during the show with *Mirtil și Hloe [Myrtil et Chloé]*, after Gessner and Florian, which went down in history as the first representation in Moldavia given by Romanians in their language. The aforementioned curtain, which was an imitation of a model he had brought from Rome, showed god Apollo extending his hand to Moldavia in an invitation to join him in the kingdom of the arts. Also, around 1850, the first iconographic representations of Romania appeared, from painters Constantin Daniel Rosenthal (1820-1851) and Gheorghe Tattarescu (already mentioned earlier), both of them participants, one directly, the other indirectly, to the Revolution of 1848. We are talking about the allegorical paintings "România rupându-şi cătuşele pe Câmpia Libertăţii" ["Romania Unshackled on the Field of Liberty"] (1848) and "România revoluţionară" ["Revolutionary Romania"] (1850), respectively "Renașterea României" ["The Rebirth of Romania"] (also known as

8. Costachi Caragiali, "Prolog pentru inaugurarea noului teatru din București [Prologue for the Inauguration of the New Bucharest Theatre]," *Familia* XVII, no. 14 (1881): 81–84.

9. See Gheorghe Asachi, Prolog rostit în Teatru Național din Iași la ocazia deschiderei și inaugurării sale în 23 Fevr. 1837, apud Theodor T. Burada, *Istoria teatrului în Moldova [History of Theatre in Moldavia]*, Institutul (Iași, 1915), 170–72; Gheorghe Asachi, "Prolog compus de A. G. Asaki, și rostit pe Teatrul Varietăților din Ieși în 23 februarie 1837. La acea întâi dramatică Reprezentație Moldovenească a Conservatorului Filarmonic," *Albina Românească (supliment)*, no. 18 (1834).

"Deșteptarea României" ["The Awakening of Romania"], 1850), painted by their authors abroad. (After the defeat of the Revolution in the Principalities, Rosenthal was in refuge in Paris, and, in the same period, Tattarescu was pursuing his studies in Rome.) "The Principalities' Union" by Tattarescu is, in fact, a replica of this much better-known earlier painting of his, "The Rebirth of Romania". Tattarescu would also paint Romania in 1866, in celebration of the abdication of Ruler-Cuza (Carol's predecessor).

The protagonists of Costache Caragiali's *Prologue…* are Apollo and the Muses (also present in Asachi's prologue), Saturn, God of Time, Romania and Fama (Pheme), Goddess of Rumors. The background characters include the spirits of "a number of dramatic authors of the classic school". The site of action is no longer the road to Mount Parnassus (like at Asachi), but Mount Parnassus itself: stepping on its peak, Caragiali's Romania will accomplish the journey started by the other, older writer's Moldavian Fairy… Apollo then encourages the Muses to share their gifts to the new proselyte, which they hurry to do, elatedly. In fact, in the guise of old Hellas, the Muses perform a rite with local origins, the whole scene being a reminder of the well-known motif of the Ursitoare (Fates) in the tales of the Romanians. Noteworthy, Romania, depicted as a young and beautiful woman, appears in front of Apollo dressed in "splendid national costume". Another occurrence of the character with Romania's name, prior to Caragiale's *100 Years…*, was in the dramatic poem (translated from French) *Visul Dochiei [Dochia's Dream]*[10] by Frédéric Damé, which premiered on the 8th[11] or 9th[12] of October, in the

10. Frédéric Damé, *Le rêve de Dochia. Poëme dramatique* (București: Szöllösy, Libr.-Edit. (Impr. de la Cour (Ouvriers Associés), F. Gobl), 1877). See also Frédéric Damé, Visul Dochiei. Poemă dramatică [Dochia's Dream. Dramatic Poem], translated in Romanian, in verses, by D. O. and T. S. [=Dem. C. Ollănescu and Th. Şerbănescu] (Bucharest: Tip. Românul Carol Göbl, 1879); and Frédéric Damé, "Visul Dochiei. Poemă dramatică" ["Dochia's Dream. Dramatic Poem"], translation by D. Ollănescu and T. Șerbănescu, in Familia, III, no. 10, February 28 (1879): 150-152; no. 11, March 15 (1879): 161-162; and no. 12, March 31 (1879): 183-184.

11. According to a note at the beginning of the 4th edition of the play. See Frédéric Damé, *Le rêve de Dochia. Poëme dramatique*, 4th edition, translated in verses by C. D. Ollănescu and Th. Şerbănescu (Bucharest: Stabilimentul Grafic I. V. Socec, 1894), 2.

12. According to theatre historian Ioan Massoff. Ioan Massoff, *Teatrul românesc. Privire istorică. Vol. III [Romanian Theatre. Historical Perspective. Vol. III]* (București: Editura pentru literatură, 1969), 29.

opening of the 1877-'78 season, during the Independence War. Dochia is a local mythological figure, linked with the Dacians, the ancestors of the Romanians, as well as with the moment when a significant part of the territories they occupied was conquered by the Romans, in the 2nd century AD. Literary critic Florin Faifer noted that "Damé's play has a blatant similarity, at times up to identification, with the lyrical poem *Dacia și România*[13] by Basiliu P. Rădulescu, which brings together the same allegorical embodiments and develops an almost identical argumentation"[14]. Despite the fact that they are mother and daughter, in the two texts, Dochia and Romania stand, in fact, metaphorically speaking, for the same character who has two faces – one turned toward the past, the other one toward the future. Romania tries to awake her mother from the slumber by which the latter seeks to ease her centuries-old pain; she tries to instil hope in the country's fate. In the end, she will manage to obtain from her the blessing for the soldiers who are getting ready to battle with the Turks. In Frédéric Damé's play, the two characters are also joined by other allegorical feminine characters who embody the Romanian historical provinces that had remained outside the borders of the United Principalities: Banat, Transylvania, Bukovina and Bessarabia. Each of them wears the traditional costume of the related region. From this point on, the Romantic vision of the nation (with its emphasis on local colour) became prevalent, as proved by the first Romanian postcards, from 1894, picturing none other than Caragiale's own wife as Romania, dressed like a peasant, in traditional clothes.

In I.L. Caragiale's "historical revue", unlike her predecessors, Romania looks foreign, remote. She lacks local colour. The traditional, rural apparel, where not abandoned entirely (the author does not give any indication on the character's clothes), is, at any rate, eclipsed by Romania's confrontational stance and the related features (the sword and the crown). The character's Hamletian position is even more foreign from the national specific traits. In 1910, two years before his demise, during a visit to the Romanian students of Budapest (and recorded, according to Șerban Cioculescu, in an issue of

13. See Basiliu P. Rădulescu, *Dacia şi România. Versuri [Dacia and Romania. Verses]* (București: Typ. Curții (Lucrători associați F. Göbl), 1877).

14. Florin Faifer, "Dramaturgia Independenței [Dramaturgy of Independence]," *Cronica* XII, no. 20 (1977): 4.

the Budapest newspaper *Lupta*, of 30 November - 13 December), Ion Luca Caragiale had apparently expressed openly his dislike of sentimental ruralist literature ("poporanism"), ending with the following advice for the young audience: "You know, from now on, you should stop writing about the long haired peasants who play the pipe. The train is the new pipe. You should turn the peasants into a European nation. Do not write about their dirty opanak. Clean it and wash the foot and give it something new to wear. That's it! Enough is enough! That's it! (…) we should be men of action…"[15]. Earlier, in 1899, Caragiale was doing just this thing in *100 de ani* – he was offering "new footwear" to Romania. In fact, the author was already flirting with the idea of emigrating toward the west, being increasingly more attracted – mentally – to "fresh" Europeanity. In the end, in 1905, he settled with his family in Berlin (in the motherland of King Carol I!), where he remained until the end of his life. Ion Vartic dedicated an exceptional chapter to this topic („Caragiale și complexul lui Fiesco" ["Caragiale and the Fiesco Complex"] in his book *Clanul Caragiale*[16].

Scene IX, the penultimate, the one with the inauguration of the railway bridge on the Danube (work by the engineer Anghel Saligny), brings on stage, "in the rhythm of a parade", all the characters of the "revue": "Romanian people", "all the historical and allegorical personalities of the revue, arranged by order of the scenes", it goes without saying that Moldavia, Wallachia and Romania are also included, followed – a very important aspect – by an "international audience wearing specific costumes and their national flags", "the Romanian general staff, soldiers of all arms and audience in festive apparel". This is a celebration of both the triumph of modern technology and the country's integration among the civilised populations, a celebration of the connections with the wider world, connections obtained under the rule of King Carol I. (So, we've been gently carried away from the fairytale-like world of the first scene of the play to the modern world of high-tech.)

15. Apud Șerban Cioculescu, *Viața lui I.L. Caragiale [The Life of I.L. Caragiale]*, III (București: Humanitas, 2012), 332.

16. Ion Vartic, *Clanul Caragiale [Caragiale Family Clan]* (Cluj-Napoca: Biblioteca Apostrof, 2002), 150–72.

In July 1898, less than one year before the premiere of the stage play *100 de ani...*, Caragiale had taken part in the banquet held for the inauguration of the Târgu-Neamț-Pașcani railway study; there, he toasted for the engineer Peretz and he stated: "the priest is always a sign for the beginning of a society, the soldier is the power sustaining that society, while the engineer is always a beginning of civilisation"[17].

In the last scene ("THE APOTHEOSIS"), which is a "*tableau vivant*", the armed Romania appears to the left of the royal throne, "standing", and "she adorns the throne with a laurel wreath". On one side and the other of the throne there are "a little hunter presenting arm" (a little soldier) and a "tiny fairy, on her knees, praying, her eyes looking in the sky", and:

> D-asupra tabloului întreg fâlfâie tricolorul și în nouri strălucește cu lumini deviza:
> NIHIL SINE DEO.
> Imnul regal cu cor, orchestră și fanfară.
> (Cortina încet)
>
> [*The flag flutters overhead and the slogan*
> NIHIL SINE DEO
> *lights up in the clouds.*
> *Royal hymn, with choir, orchestra and band.*
> (*the curtain gently*)]

With regard to this last scene (wherein, beyond the artificial costumes and stance, the characters resemble a patriarchal family), we may wonder whether Romania does not occupy a subservient position in relation to the "great captain", King Carol I, represented metonymically by the royal throne, around which the whole mise-en-scene is structured; or, on the contrary, Romania has the upper hand and it bestows power to the sovereign. I tend to favour the former possibility: the male royal figure seems to dominate the whole scene. Apart from the great invisible presence, Romania looks rather like a favourite daughter – the likes of Pallas Athena, the warrior daughter of Zeus, the governor of Greek deities, or of Wagner's Valkyrie,

17. Apud Virgator, "Inaugurarea studiului liniei ferate Tg. Neamț-Pașcani [The Inauguration of the Study of the Tg. Neamț-Pașcani Railway Line]," *Evenimentul* VI, no. 1584 (1898): 3.

favourite daughter of the great god Wotan. (In fact, Caragiale's "revue" seems to have borrowed something from the splendour of Wagner's mises en scene; we could ask ourselves whether the author, a great melomaniac and member of the "Society of Wagner's Friends", allowed some influence from the former; or perhaps he got his inspiration from the shows staged by his uncle Iorgu Caragiali, who "loved grand shows, with Bengal flames, explosions, apotheoses, allegorical scenes and stately and magnificent characters"[18].) The origin of such performances, of the virile, warrior, armed female characters is explained by the psychoanalyst-clinician Didier Dumas (disciple of Françoise Dolto) as follows: "Fathers are well aware that there is a Joan of Arc in every daughter and she is ready to raise armies to protect them; in our democratic views, Marianne is a 'republican Joan of Arc'. She is a typically male phantasm, the one of the 'warrior mother' who thinks about what the man should do, in his place"[19]. In Caragiales' scenario, the woman is strongly anchored in the sphere of the symbolic while the man possesses individuality. All the male characters with real models are identified by their own names (Tudor Vladimirescu, Gheorghe Lazăr, Alecsandri, Bălcescu, Carol I), while Elizabeth, wife of King Carol I, is never called by her name, she is only… the Queen – "Mother of the wounded", "jewel", "star", "angel" – competing with Romania for the title of allegory of the nation. She is materialised on the stage by the portrait shown to the crowd by the soldier, which means an image aimed directly at the senses, while King Carol is present as text – "Nihil sine Deo" – , aimed at reason, rather than as image (since the royal throne is empty, it suggests an absence).

There's a paradox here: although the woman is left without individuality, being projected in the abstract, she is also synthesized to the aspects that drive the organs of sensitive perception. These are the effects, the reminiscences of 18th century sensualist psychology, as noted by Joan Landes in her book

18. *Dicționarul Literaturii Române de La Origini Până La 1900 [The Dictionary of Romanian Literature from Its Origins to 1900]* (București: Editura Academiei RSR, 1979), 169.

19. Didier Dumas, *Sans père et sans parole: La place du père dans l'équilibre de l'enfant* (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 2009), 27. (In the original French: „Les pères savent bien que dans toute fille sommeille une Jeanne d´Arc prête à lever des armées pour les secourir et, dans nos ideaux démocratiques, Marianne est une «Jeanne d´Arc républiquaine». Elle représente un fantasme typiquement masculin, celui de la «mère guerrière» pensant, a sa place, ce que l´homme a à faire".)

Visualizing the Nation. Gender, Representation and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France[20]. According to the author, that was when the associations of the feminine with the senses and instinctual, sensory knowledge and of the masculine with the higher forms of cognition, with abstract, rational thinking were strengthened. From such a perspective, the images are closely linked with the feminine – the images are feminine (by extrapolation, the same may be stated about theatre). Later, Sigmund Freud would find that the transition from matriarchy to patriarchy was marked by the interdiction of illustrating God by images, which would mean the triumph of the spirit over the senses. This prohibition against making an image of God, claims Joan Landes, following on Jean-Joseph Goux (author of *Les Iconoclastes*, Paris, 1978) and on Maria Hélène Huet, should be linked with the taboo relating to the incest with the mother in Judaic tradition, because, as put by her:

> By carving images of Gods, one is making a material image of the mother and adoring the maternal figure through the senses. By tearing oneself away from the seduction of the senses and elevating one's thoughts towards an un-representable god, one turns away from desire for the mother, ascends to the sublime father and respects the law.[21]

In Caragiale's *100 de ani*, the soldier worships in the Queen's image this precise maternal figure (in his opinion, the portrait paints "the best mother"), while Carol I, the quasi-divine paternal figure, continues to be unrepresented. Instead, the King intercedes between the country and the "transcendent father", like the biblical Moses, and he decrees: "Nihil sine Deo". Of course, once the written law appears, no "illustration", no other "scene" may follow – the curtain falls. In this context, we may say that Caragiale's "armed Romania" enables the transition from the feminine images (Moldavia, Wallachia, the Angel, the brave Lelea, the Queen's portrait) to the masculine text: she "grows virile", she mans up, after she receives the law – "Nihil sine Deo" – (see the scene with the Sentry) and she assimilates it.

20. Joan B. Landes, *Visualizing the Nation. Gender, Representation and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France* (New York: Cornell University Press, n.d.), 33–34.

21. Marie-Hélène Huet, *Mourning Glory: The Will of the French Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1997), 46–47.

As noted by a number of commentators after the premiere, *100 de ani...* lacks any reference to the rule of Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1820-1873), the first ruler of the United Principalities (between 1859-1866) and the predecessor of Prince Carol I. This omission was severely criticized and, in general, it was assigned to Caragiale's intention to "butter up" the monarch. There can be many speculations with regard to this omission, but I cannot claim to know what Caragiale's intent was; however, I do not believe that the author's opportunism is a sufficient, strong enough explanation. That man was much shrewder and subtler than that. The king couldn't have been offended by the reminiscence of Cuza's personality. He had nothing to do with the February 1866 coup d'état; then, Alexandru Ioan Cuza had been removed by a coalition that included representatives of the main political parties. And, had he wanted to do so, Caragiale would have been able to evoke Cuza, without any demeaning aim at the personality of Cuza's successor. Writer and journalist Ion C. Bacalbașa, who had mentioned several times Caragiale's revue in the press of that time, added, to Cuza's absence, another criticism: the manner in which Caragiale had illustrated the "whole movement of 1848", choosing to limit it to the exile of Bălcescu and Alecsandri, "who, in the end, do not embody this movement"[22]. The same Bacalbașa pinned on Caragiale the fact that he "failed to do the work of an unbiased historian; instead, he focused on some feelings that cannot bring acclaim to a man who means something."

My guess is that the playwright did not even intend, for a single moment, to "do the work of an unbiased historian" in *100 de ani...*, but he used the occasion for the illustration and promotion of the organicist-evolutionist view on history, a view he shared with the members of the cultural and political association Junimea (which I've mentioned before). Or, according to this view, a society's development – toward a natural, organic, substantial structure – needs time: it does not occur on the spur of the moment, by great spasms, by sudden leaps, by revolutions (Caragiale loathed the revolutionaries of 1848 and they would often become the target of his wit!). Otherwise, the risk is the occurrence of the "forms without

22. Ion C. Bacalbașa, "Cronica teatrală. 100 de ani, revistă istorică a secolului, în 10 ilustrațiuni, de d. I.L. Carageale [Theatre Review. 100 Years, Historical Revue of the Century, in 10 Illustrations, by Mr. I.L. Carageale]," *Adevărul*, 1899.

content/forms without substance" – as labelled by Maiorescu, the leader of Junimea –; these forms devoid of substance meant ornamental institutions and hollow cultural products. Titu Maiorescu (1840-1917) developed his theory of "forms without substance" while influenced by "German and English organicism and historic evolutionism (Herder, Fr. K. von Savigny, H.Th. Buckle, etc.)"[23], as shown by Marta Petreu in *Filosofii paralele [Parallel Philosophies]*. In another book, called *Filosofia lui Caragiale [Caragiale's Philosophy]*, the same author dedicated a very substantial chapter to the writer's "socio-political philosophy"[24] and she analysed at length Maiorescu's influence on him in this sense, so I will not dwell on it here. Cuza's accession to the throne (he had been elected ruler, at the same time, by both Principalities, which thus became unified in 1859) was, largely, the outcome of the struggles applied by the generation of the 1848 revolutionaries. His radical policies had stemmed from their programme. In order to be able to apply them, in 1864, Cuza restricted the powers of the parties represented in the Assembly of Romania by a coup d'état. Especially toward the end of his rule, he acted like a despot (an enlightened one, however), by ignoring the parliamentary majority. He became rather unpopular and, in the end, he was forced to abdicate. Unlike him, Prince Carol was a more balanced reformer and a monarch who never exceeded his constitutional prerogatives. Furthermore, owing to his longevity, under his rule, Romania went through an unexpected age of stability. In retrospect, Cuza's rule (during which the foundations of the modern Romanian state were laid, in fact) must have resembled to Caragiale to a syncope in the organic evolution in which he had put his faith, when the demon of disavowal would not possess him. Because, there were times when, and we need to stress this, the writer would challenge the idea of progress (see the parody that, according to Ștefan Cazimir, was the basis of the revue *100 de ani...*,); in this sense, Caragiale was a true "anti-modern", as put by Antoine Compagnon. Perhaps the same conservative vision pushed him toward avoiding the focus on episodes like the Revolution of 1848 or the War of Independence, which are not depicted in the peak moments of the

23. Marta Petreu, *Filosofii Paralele [Parallel Philosophies]* (Iași: Polirom, 2013), 22; See Also Marta Petreu, Ioan Muntean, and Mircea Flonta, "Romania, Philosophy In," The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2004, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780415249126-N108-1.

24. Marta Petreu, *Filosofia lui Caragiale [The Philosophy of Caragiale]* (București: Editura Albatros, 2003), 131–69.

fight, but rather in the *post-factum* scenes, i.e. those that recall and reassess (grievingly or festively, as appropriate). If, from the movement of 1848, he selected solely the exile enforced upon some of the revolutionaries, this was probably owed also to the fact that the author had started to contemplate seriously on the problem of emigration, a thing that his contemporaries could not really know. So, it is my contention that Caragiale's "national historical revue" is more than a minor piece of homage art: it is an exercise of historical re-evaluation underpinned by a certain philosophy of history (which just happened to be indebted, indirectly, to the Romantic anti-Enlightenment historicist school of thought). But, in order to better understand it and assess its implications, one needs historical perspective, enabling a retrospective view on Caragiale's life and writings, as well as on - to a larger extent - his age.

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STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 2, 2019, p. 33 - 50
(Recommended Citation)
DOI:10.24193/subbdrama.2019.2.02

Critical Revaluation of French Operetta: La petite mariée *(1875)*

LARISSA DE OLIVEIRA NEVES[1]

Abstract: This paper aims to present part of an archive research that is being made in Brazil and France that has the purpose of understanding and analyzing the musical popular theater genre called operetta, in order to establish a critical revaluation of the genre. This genre was considered, by theater theoretical studies, during a long time, inferior when compared to dramas and comedies. However, nowadays exists a critical revision in Brazil that seeks to change that point of view. The historical research is a crucial part of this revaluation. For this paper, we place emphasis in the operetta *La petite mariée* (1875) ("The little married girl") written by Eugéne Leterrier and Albert Vanloo. The material collected about the French operetta demonstrates how complex and refined the production of these shows was. Besides reviews, we found drawings of the scenes, posters and the manuscript of the director's notebook. These materials are precious to the new critical appointments that this research aims to achieve, because they suggest that the quality of those pieces where as challenging as other better evaluated theater genres.

Key-words: operetta, critical revaluation, theater history, archive research.

The operetta and the critics

Operetta is a theater genre that was created in France, in the mid-19th century. Although it is reputed to the musician Hervé (1825 – 1892) the title of creator of the operetta, the genre became famous because of the skills of another composer, named Jacques Offenbach (1819 – 1880). There is not a consensus about which play can be classified as being the first real operetta,

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since the genre developed itself gradually between 1847, when Hervé put on stage the play in one act *Don Quichotte et Sancho Pança*, and 1864, when Offenbach made an incredible success with *La belle Hélène*, operetta in three acts. In almost fifteen years, the operettas passed from a simple show in one act, with two characters, to a great spectacle with innumerous characters, dancers, singers, and a big orchestra to play the music.

Even though its name resembles the Italian opera, the operetta is a very different kind of show. First, it is based in comedy grounds, satirical, ironical, critical comedy. Second, the music is exhilarating, played in a fast rhythm, so that the dancers can perform a vigorous dance, which includes putting the legs up in the *can can* style. And third, the shows alternate scenes that are sung with scenes that are spoken. The songs do not break with the continuity of the plot, in a Brechtian epic way, on the contrary, they serve the plot, they are part of it. The operettas are the ancestral of the modern musicals, but they carry an important difference from this genre also: the strong satirical and critical humor, especially in the second phase of the operettas, which went from 1864 to 1870.

We can say that the first phase was the process of formation of the genre, when, as the liberty in theaters grew in Napoleon the III's France, the spectacles became more and more complex and magnificent. The second phase was the reign of Offenbach, with his very profound critical plots. And the third phase started when Napoleon's government ended. After 1870, the operettas became less political and their themes began to refer more to the day to day life of the people. The most famous composer of this third phase was Charles Lecocq (1832 – 1918).

Despite its great popularity among all kind of people, or exactly because of that popularity, operettas were considered a minor genre, in the hierarchical critical organization of the time. The composers, Hervé and Offenbach, could not find space to present their music in the French national theaters, only in private ones. However, the importance of operettas should not be despised.

To understand the real importance of the genre, that was created in France but traveled towards a great number of countries, creating an impressive network[2], it is important to go after that past. The intention is to

2. Jean-Claude Yon, *Le théâtre français à l'étranger au XIXe siècle : Histoire d'une suprématie culturelle* (Paris: Nouveau Monde Editions, 2008).

posit a revaluation of the theater critical standards that prevailed in scholar's studies during so many decades, in order to understand the operetta without those prejudiced eyes that considered the shows mere entertainment without greater artistic or cultural importance.

To set an example for analysis it was selected the operetta *La petite mariée* (The little married girl) written by Eugène Leterrier (1843-1884) and Albert Vanloo (1846-1920), with music by Charles Lecocq (1832-19018). This play was presented for the first time in 1875, in Paris, with great success. It is an example of an operetta in its mature phase, when the genre had already more than ten years of success.

To understand how fast the operettas traveled around the world, it is enough to mention that *La petite mariée* opened December 21st in the Renaissance theater, in Paris, and in June 14, 1876, it was presented in Rio de Janeiro, in a French theater house called *Alcazar Lírico*. So in less than half a year the show had already crossed the ocean and was applauded by Brazilians in its original French version. Even more impressive is to remark that in August 19 of that same year of 1876 the Brazilian adaptation of the operetta, called *A casadinha de fresco* (The fresh little bride), written by the Brazilian playwright Arthur Azevedo (1855-1908) opened in the Phênix Theater in Rio de Janeiro. This theater was famous for presenting popular musical theater genres, having introduced the adaptations of French operettas in Brazilian soil.

Remarkable as it can be, this was not a novelty in the 19th century. Before *La petite mariée*, another two successful Lecocq's operettas had been recently presented in the *Alcazar Lírico* theater, and had been also adapted to Brazilian reality and presented in popular theater establishments of the city. *Alcazar Lírico* was a theater for the elite, since the plays were presented there in their original language. Jacques Offenbach's operettas were incredibly successful among Brazilian public, in French language, for a restrict public in the *Alcazar Lírico*, and for everyone in its Brazilian adaptations[3], that maintained the major characteristics of the plot, but changed much of the surroundings, transforming the French characters in

3. Orna Messer Levin, "Offenbach and the dispute for the Brazilian public (1840-1870)", in Márcia Abreu and Marisa Midori Deaecto (org), Transatlantic circulation of printed forms: connections (Campinas – SP: Unicamp/IEL/Setor de Publicações, 2014), 299 – 310. (Portuguese). Aléxia Ferreira, "Jacinto Heller: repertoire of a theatrical producer (1975-1885)", *Cadernos Letra e Ato* vol.06 (2016): 28-41. (Portuguese)

Brazilian folks. These adaptations were very popular; they were watched by all kinds of peoples, from the poorer, since the ticket of the cheaper seats had very accessible prices, to the richer ones, that bought the best places in the theater houses[4]. Even though Jacques Offenbach's operettas were the most presented ones, the operettas of other French musicians had also a great acceptance in Brazilian cities. Charles Lecocq was the second most famous one.

Hence, it is important to understand why those shows attracted so many people. It is beginning to be outdated the thought that they were not complex or literary interesting only because they were so popular. The research for documents about those plays shows not only that they had very well written plots, but that the intricacy of the history and the exuberance of the shows demonstrated the need for more studies about their composition, in order to evaluate their quality. In France exists a good number of researches about the history of the operetta and of their main musicians, such as Hervé, Offenbach and Lecocq. But there are not researches about their structure and their scene. It seems that the genre is valued because of the music, and the place that it had in the 19th century history, but not much as a theater genre that deserves to be analyzed in a more meaningfully way. There are not studies that lean over one specific play in order to understand it more profoundly, for example.

In this paper we aim to present some documents about *La petite mariée* that were found in archive and library research, in order to try to recover how the text was put to scene.

La petite mariée – discovering the past

In search for scene information about *La petite mariée*, a great number of documents were found in French libraries and archives. There are news reports and critics, images of the scene, an abstract of the plot accompanied by drawings, and a unique material: the notebook of the *Renaissance* theater director of scene, Raul Callais. With these kind of materials, it is possible to recover a little of how the show was structured.

4. Larissa de Oliveira Neves, "The comedies of Artur Azevedo: in search for history", (PhD diss., University of Campinas, 2006). (Portuguese).

First, it is impressive the virtuosity that the main actors should have in order to speak, sing and act in the three long acts of the operettas. In *La petite mariée*, one of the main characters, the *Podestad*, was played by an actor called Amedée Vauthier (1845 –19..). The magazine *La comedie* of April 1876 brought a feature about him in its first page. The article described M. Vauthier's abilities in scene:

> The audience, that only new Vauthier for his surprising skills and agility in the *Polichinelle's drunkness*, was surprised to recognize a real artist in a man he thought was a mere *clown* that doubled an acrobat. The audience loudly applauded the singer that was suddenly reveled and the *bravos* weren't enough. (…) Besides experience in acting, which Vauthier has better than anyone, it is important to emphasize without reservations his brilliance, his enthusiasm, his good mood and the pureness of his trill, which he throws sometimes like a real musician, in order to brighten up the melody.[5]

The commentary praises the actor because it is the first time he sings in an operetta, but, before this opening, he had had a great experience as comedy actor, whose histrionic abilities were known by the audience. The *pantomime* theater goes back to the *Commedia dell' Art* esthetics and the character of Polichinelle (Pulcinella) was one of the most important ones. These comedy scenes were based in the actor's histrionics, which is indicated by the quote: he had skills and agility recognized when he interpreted a drunken clown. This kind of experience, combined with a good singer's voice, would be perfect to represent a character in an operetta. The gender has a fast rhythm, the scenes change rapidly, alternating between the singed ones and the spoken ones. The description of M. Vauthier confirms that the art of acting in an operetta was not simple, or trivial. The artists should have great capacity to work with comic characters and swiftness to respond to the quick change of scenes.

It is possible to observe, also, in this quote, that the skills of an acrobat, in the pantomime, were not considered "real art" by the journalist. The journalist was surprised to observe that M. Vauthier was not "only" a comedy actor, but also a real singer, and, therefore, could be more highly considered. But operettas, in the hierarchical pattern followed by the critics

5. *La comédie*. Camée artistique: Vauthier. April 1st week, 1876.

of the 19th century, were also considered a minor genre. And one of the motives was paradoxically the skills to play comedy parts that actors should have in order to achieve the fast movements the genre demanded.

This was emphasized by the play's text. For example, in the first scene of *La petite mariée*, which happens in a hotel restaurant, we have:

> (*The travelers eat and drink in a hurry, seated in front of the tables. Beppo and Béatrix go from one costumer to another, serving them*)
>
> **Introduction**
> **Travelers Coeur**
> Let's eat fast,
> Let's drink fast,
> The car is leaving
> And tonight in a good place
> We will dine with pleasure
> **One traveler**
> Hey, hostess!
> **One traveler**
> Hey, host!
> Come fast!
> **Beppo**
> Don't worry,
> The break lasts one full hour.
> **Béatrix**
> They won't leave without you.
> **Beppo**, *to one traveler*.
> Empty this bottle.
> **Béatrix**, *to another traveler*
> Taste this *paté*.
> **Beppo**, *offering a glass of liqueur to an old man*
> This liqueur is old.
> **Beatrix**, *offering a ham to a wet nurse*
> It's good for your health
> **Coeur**
> Let's eat fast
> Let's drink fast, etc…
> *It can be heard the car's bell*
> **A traveler**
> A minute, silence!

I can hear the car's bell.
Everyone
Yes, it's the car's bell.
Let's go!
Let's go![6]

It can be noticed by this first scene how fast the movements must be. Beppo and Béatrix must run from one table to another, offering food and drink to the travelers. All of them sing. The scene is dynamic and cheerful. Therefore, the actors must have great skills for acting, singing, and moving naturally around the tables. Béatrix and Beppo must do all that, and still carry food and drink, pouring it while they sing, in the exact perfect timing, because the song must not stop. Hence, the acrobatic background of M. Vauthier was not a minor quality for his success in the operetta, even though considered by the critic as a less important ability.

Other critics of the opening also valued the good work of the main actors, and the well-orchestrated plot. It is interesting to remake, as in the quote above, that we may find the qualities of the operettas in the commentaries in a reverse direction. As in the case of the description of the actor M. Vauthier: his abilities as acrobat and as comedy actor are considered minor by the critic, but the commentary reveals that the actor had them. Therefore, as scholars looking back in the past, we can analyze that those skills were a great quality for the actor.

In the same way, other critics valued the plot of *La petite mariée*, which was vibrant and interesting for the audience. More than one remarked, however, that the writers, Leterrier and Valoo, repeated the same pattern of history traced in their previous operetta, which was called *Giroflé-Giroflá* and had been a great success in Paris and in Brussels two years before, in 1874:

> If the starting point is the same [of the two plays], the road is different for each one of these farces seasoned with a lot of salt. So what is the purpose of *La Petite Mariée* and of her former sister? It is to make, without any realism, direct and without prudery scenes and comic situations follow one after another, in order to make the audience laugh without rest and

6. Eugene Leterrier and Albert Valoo, *La petite marriée* (Paris: Trésse Editeur au Palais-Royal and Brandus et Cie Éditeurs de Musique, 1876), 1-2.

> to provide the composer good settings for his inspiration and experience. That program was sufficiently accomplished so that the authors of *La Petite Mariée* may hope for a great success.[7]

The critic seams to forget, or not to realize, without the time distance that we have now, that the operettas were indeed a genre built by patterns, and the fact that its aim was to make the audience laugh and listen to light music does not take away its qualities or its intricacy. The absence of "realism" is also a convention of the genre, which worked, since its creation, with the parody of myths and classical legends or characters. These patterns continued to be the mark of the genre in the late 19th century, with plots like *La Petite Mariée*'s tale, which is placed in Italy, in the 16th century. This kind of fantasy plot did not take the social criticism away from the comedy, because the references towards the contemporary society happened metaphorically. In *La Petite Mariée* there is a background critic against despotism and, nowadays, we can even find a critic about the place of submission of women in society.

The critic, who signs Bénèdict, continues:

> In judging the productions of light music, improvised, disordered, which we listen in theatres where the parody, more licentious than smart, is the rule, it is necessary to consider the needs, the eccentricities of the genre, and oneself needs to adapt, wanting it or not. The critic, full of scruple and wanting to see operetta with repugnance and with the tooth of Horace's rat's disdain, will be exposed to hear, in justice: "It is not for you that the table was prepared!" My opinion is that, in that case, if one is not going to eat, let the others do so. Thus, I will seat down and get – for good manners – a toothpick.[8]

In this ironic quote we can observe clearly how the operetta was seen in the more scholar groups of critics. However, even the journalists who had a certain "disdain" for the genre, used to enjoy them. This is a very difficult matter to verify from a 140 years distance. From the eyes of the 21th century, what we can understand from the documents of the scene and of the text, is that the operetta had a very well composed plot, vibrant, fast, with a lot of

7. Bénèdict. *Theatre de La Renaissance*. Paris: National Lybrary's Briefing, December 21, 1875.
8. Bénèdict. *Theatre de La Renaissance*. Paris: National Lybrary's Briefing, December 21, 1875.

turnarounds, and that would demand from the actors a great deal of training and talent. Consequently, the "repugnance" came from a scholar upbringing in which theatre genres that inspired sobriety and solemnity prevailed.

The director's notebook is a precious and rare document that helps to understand the complexity of operetta's scene organization. In the beginning of the description of each act is a sketch that outlines how the stage was organized. The first page informs about: "Furniture and accessories". After, the notebook lists all the scene objects that were used in the show. We can see how four tables (A, B, C, D) were disposed in scene. In the left margin is written the list of characters: the mains ones, and the secondary ones (the singers of the chorus).

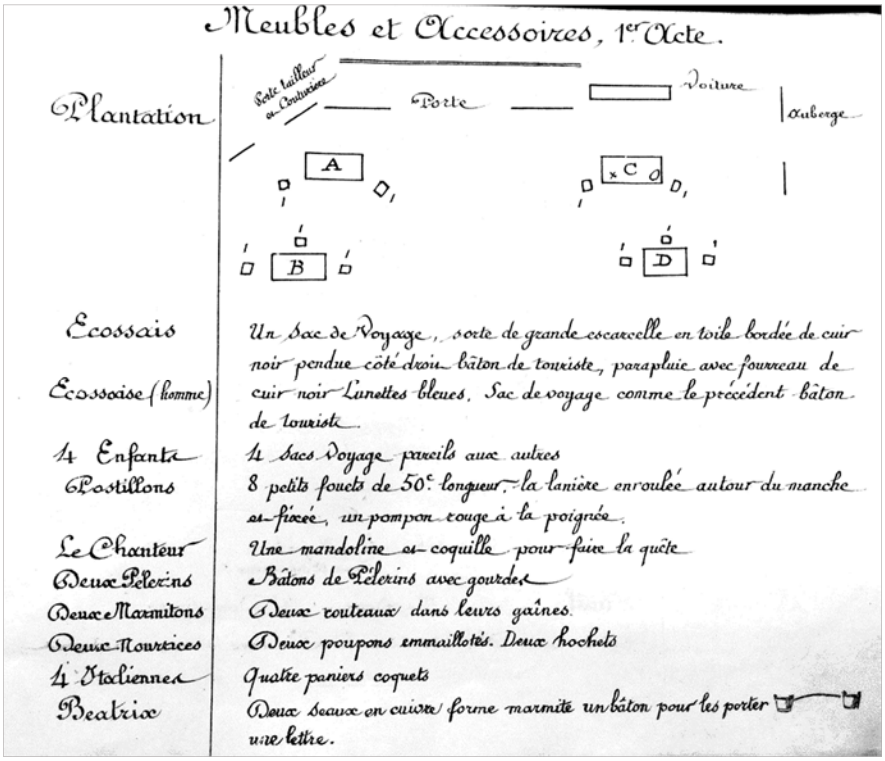

Fig. 1: *La petite mariée*: the director's notebook, page 3.[9]

9. Paul Callais, *La Petite Mariée: mise-en scène* (Paris: Brandus & Cie Editeurs, 1875) 3.

With the details of the scenery, objects and costume description presented in the notebook, the researcher can recover the image of the scene. In the right high corner is written: "Door of the tailor and the seamstress"; in the middle: "Door"; and in the left: "Car" and "Hostel". This indicates the passages around the dining room where the act places itself. After the sketch that indicates the position of the tables and the surroundings in the scenery there is the description of all the objects that the characters should use or carry. In the small column on the left is the list of characters: Scotsman and Scotswoman (that is a man), four children, coachmen, a singer, two pilgrims, two kitchen boys, two wet nurses, four Italians. The page ends with Béatrix, which is an important character in that act, since she is the hostess of the inn and takes part in the main plot. Besides each name is described some of their costume equipment. The Scotsman has a traveler's bag, the coachmen carry small whips, the kitchen boys hold knifes, etc. It is also impressive the number of actors, more than thirty, that will participate in the whole act, and whose description continues until the fifth page of the notebook.

From this information, we get to know that Béatrix enters the stage with two buckets over her shoulders connected by a stick. To describe it there is not only the text, but a small drawing in the inferior right corner of the page, as it can be seen in the copy above. Therefore, besides singing, walking fastly between the tables, serving the costumers, we now know that the actress should appear, at first, with two buckets hanging over her shoulder. The dexterity of the main actors, to accomplish a well played operetta, can be visualized by this details that both the description of the critics and the notebook provides.

This description of the stage continues for more four pages of the notebook, before the curtain is raised. After the detailed enumeration of all the scene objects, another sketch only of the scenery is provided, with the title of "Setting":

In this part, after the drawing copied above, there is a description to understand each letter code. The scenery includes: a curtain with the landscape of the Italian village (A), a realistic Henry the IV's coach (with description and a small drawing of it (C), trees, flowers, frames, Italian style construction, stairs, etc. Obviously, and as it is already known, one of the great operetta's audience attractive was the luxury of its settings. People wanted not only to follow an interesting and comical plot and to listen to joyful songs, but also

to be fascinated by the scenery and the costumes. To create, build and paint all those elements, specialized artists were contracted. In Brazil, the newspaper advertisements of the operettas would often highlight the scenographer's name.

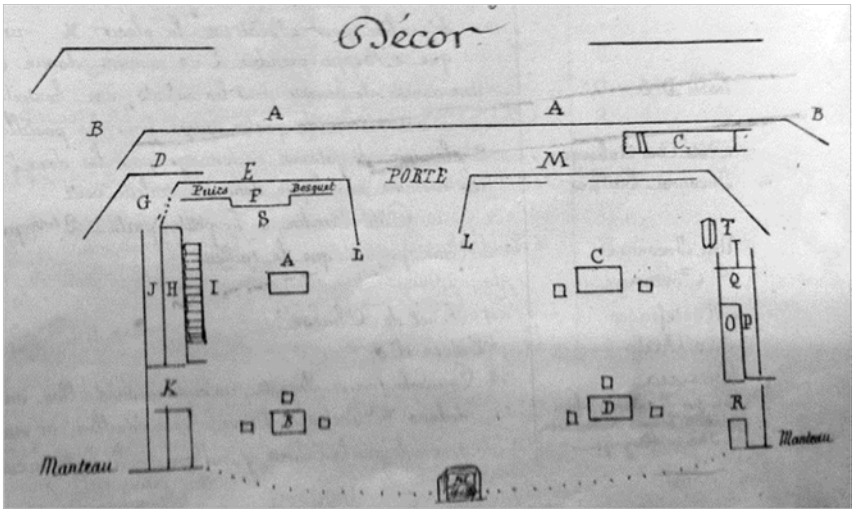

Fig. 2: *La petite mariée*: the director's notebook, page 5.[10]

After this detailed description of characters, costumes and scenery, begins the indications of scene movements. It is written "Curtains rise". And then the movement around each table in the restaurant is described, including the surrounding actors and the children. For example: "Table B: two travelers seated, the second is in higher position. A third uses a big coat. They eat and drink."

The scene of the travelers being served is then fully outlined in pages 8 to 11. Four pages describe only the first scene, which is very fast, but full of chorus songs, dances, movements. The travelers eat and drink, they here the bell, the coaches come inside to call everyone. Béatrix and Beppo run up and down "displeased that their clients are going to leave so soon". While everyone gets ready to continue their voyage, some characters change the scenery, taking to the backstage the tables and all the elements concerning

10. Paul Callais, *La Petite Mariée: mise-en scène* (Paris: Brandus & Cie Editeurs, 1875) 5.

the meal. It is a very vivid and active scene; everything must be very well orchestrated, so that the actors, which include children, perform, like in a harmonious dance, without bumping over each other.

When the stage is empty, the prologue is finished and the main plot begins. San Carlo enters the room. The director's notebook continues with the indication of the movements and actions that the actors should conduct in their scenes. In the left column, where was the list of characters in the initial pages, is now written references of the play's text or of the song that is singed in each part of the scene. For example, when San Carlo meets the Podestad, in the hostel, it is described: "As long there is still hope [the Podestad]" – Goes to the right. He turns his back to the audience. San Carlo enters very happily from the small door G./ "I am married" – He does not see the Podestad. He sees the Podestad. Both act surprised at the same time."[11]

The Podestad is the most powerful man in the village, which represents Bergamo. He is a kind of a coronel, and the mayor at the same time. San Carlos is his favorite subject, even though he cheated on the Podestad with his late wife. The Podestad is waiting for San Carlo to get married, occasion in which he will get his revenge by seducing San Carlo's bride. To avoid that, now that San Carlo is in love and to be married with Graziela, he wants to keep his wedding in secret. Hence, he claims to the Podestad that he is out of town because of an illness, but in fact he is getting married. The Podestad is worried about his favorite subordinate's health and goes after him. That is when they meet in the hostel.

This is the starting point of the plot. To mischief the Podestad and be happy with his wife, San Carlo will pass through a lot of complications, as well as the other characters, until the happy ending prevails. The detailed description of the scene pointed out in the notebook demonstrates that the group of actors must be very well rehearsed and attuned. The notebook has approximately 90 pages full of detailed instructions and sketches. Each movement is described following the complications of the playwriting, composed by scenes that go from solos to chorus of about thirty actors.

Around the main plot, small actions evolve to make the show vivid and fast, and all of them are traced out in the director's notebook. After the first scene, when the travelers wait for their coach to leave, a sequence of

11. Paul Callais, *La Petite Mariée: mise-en scène* (Paris: Brandus & Cie Editeurs, 1875) 20.

happenings makes the play extremely cheerful and, at the same time, complex. We have scenes of San Carlo and the couturiers hired to make the wedding attire; San Carlo and the owners of the inn, who suspect that the guests, because they keep so many secrets, are conspirators; San Carlo and his fiancée; both of them plus the father of the bride; an arguing discussion between the lovers, who end the engagement to subsequently make peace (a scene worthy of Molière). The tale is so complex that its abstract is hard to be fulfilled.

Despite the starting point being that simple, all the other happenings fill several pages with discussions, misunderstandings, hidings, escapes, etc. In a newspaper of the time was also published an illustrated abstract of the tale. This kind of publication would, at the same time, be a good advertisement for the show and help the audience understand the happenings from the beginning to the end. The feature presents two drawings for each act, with the description below it:

PREMIER ACTE (*Première Scène*). — San Carlo, jeune seigneur de la Cour de Bergame, fut surpris en conversation légère avec la Podestate.

Le mari répudia sa femme et pardonna à l'amant, lui disant que pour toute vengeance, il lui rendrait la pareille à l'occasion. San Carlo se promit bien de ne pas se marier, il avait compté sans les charmes irrésistibles de la charmante Graziella, fille du riche baron de Castel-Démoli, qu'il demandât en mariage. Que faire pour se cacher du Podestat? Il prétexte une maladie, s'éloigne de la Cour, et va se marier sans bruit dans un village aux environs, là, il attend ses témoins qui n'arrivent pas. Grande inquiétude et surtout grande colère de la part de Castel-Démoli; qui ne comprend rien à ce mariage sclegcieux. Enfin, arrive un jeune seigneur de passage en ce village qui rejoint en toute hâte sa femme Lucrécia. San Carlo le reconnaît, c'est son bon, son excellent ami Montefiasco. Il lui raconte son mariage secret et le retient comme témoin malgré lui. Enfin le mariage va avoir lieu. Le Podestat inquiet de la santé de San Carlo vient lui rendre visite juste au moment du mariage. Après la cérémonie il voit arriver la mariée avec son père et reconnaît en lui son vieux voisin le baron de Castel-Démoli. Il le félicite sur la beauté de sa fille, pour laquelle il s'éprend d'une belle passion, et va interroger la jeune fille sur sa toilette de mariée au moment où San Carlo, accompagné de son ami Montefiasco, voyant le danger qui le menace, le présente au Podestat comme le véritable mari. Montefiasco veut protester, le baron, ainsi que Graziella, mais San Carlo leur impose silence.

Fig. 3: Illustrated abstract of *La Petite Mariée*[12]

12. Léon Sault. *La petite mariée: analyse illustré*. In *La petite mariée collection.* Paris: National Lybrary, n.d.

This is the first of seven other drawings. We can see how the artist worked hard to reproduce in the drawing every detail of the garments, the costumes and the scenery, with all its laces, frills and, in the back, the building, the well and the mountains. The reader of the newspaper would not only understand better the tale, but probably want to see these ornaments for real, in the theater.

The text describes briefly all the main events of the first scene, which ends with the marriage of San Carlo and Graziela and the arrival of the Podestad. To trick him, San Carlo says that Graziela is newly wedded with Montefiasco, San Carlo's best man. But the Podestad is enchanted by Graziella nevertheless. He takes everyone to his palace, where he turns Graziela into his private book reader, in order to seduce her. This is only the main plot, very rapidly resumed. All the turnarounds of the scenes, listed above, turns the tale even more interesting and, despite simple, very demanding to the audience.

This intricacy, already very tricky as it is in the text, in stage gets even more complex, when all the turnarounds must be built concretely. We have a dialectical way of understanding the passage of this kind of text to the scene: first, it is not easy to maintain all the details clearly visible and hearable to the audience; on the other hand, the operettas literature is written directly aiming the materiality of the scene, regarding all the objects, the body and the voice of the actors.

The characters dialogue and sing, successively. Songs are part of the illusion of the tale as much as the spoken parts. These fast movements make the scene restless and difficult to pursue, if the audience is not attentive. It is even harder for the actors, to make the scenes understandable, to talk and sing, to dance, to run from one part to another of the stage, to enter and leave the stage in the perfect timing, in order to undertake all the changes that occur scene after scene. But if they accomplish that, the audience will be delighted with what it sees and hears, and swept away by the entertaining and critical tale.

The drawings of the scenes are a document that helps to validate the information found in the director's notebook and enables the researcher to imagine with more accuracy how the scene was organized. There were no other forms of getting a glance of the stage. Photos were rare and the ones that exist were taken in studios and not directly from the scene in progress. The researcher has few materials to try to recover the scene. The text of the play is an important base, since it brings all the happenings, characters, songs and

some description of the scene in the headings. In the special case of *La petite mariée*, the director's notebook details the scene, but, even with it, imagination is necessary to delineate what was in fact being showed on stage. The drawings give an additional hint, because we can see concretely what the text descriptions only indicate.

Besides the drawing with the abstract, published in the newspaper, there are some other sketches of the scene dated 1875. In the newspaper, the aim was to reproduce the plot, with some imagination of the scenery, even though the costumes are very alike the real ones. The drawings below have the objective of registering the theater scene, not the fiction, but the scenery and the actors.

Fig 4: Sketch of the first act of *La petite mariée*

As it is possible to see, the costumes search not only for being splendorous, but to bring some realism of the historical time and location of the plot, the Italian 16th century. The painting is similar in some points with the one copied above, published in the newspaper, but, in this one, the contour of the theater

scene is clearer. In this image it is possible to notice, also, the great number of actors in scene and opulence of the scenery, since in the other one the city outlined was more representative of the tale and not of the theater's stage. In the first act's drawing, we can see the frame of leaves, and the coach in the back, as well as the innumerous figures (the coach is mentioned in the director's notebook as well). Of course we can't be sure about what was really represented in scene and what was created by the drawer, but this kind of art was made more to register a scene, in a time where photography was almost unavailable, and to advertise the quality and the magnificence of the show, than to be an authorial painting. The images confirm the description of the notebook.

Other documents help us to assure this information. In the feature about M. Vauthier, commented above, there is a colored drawing of his character, the Podestad, that resembles both drawings above.

Fig. 5: M. Vauthier[13]

Fig. 6: Jeanne Granier in *La petite mariée*[14]

13. *La comédie*. Camée artistique: Vauthier. April 1st week, 1876.
14. https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53138688b.item

We found, also, drawing and photograph of the actress Jeanne Granier (1852-1919), that played the main role of Graziela. Granier was the favorite actress of the composer Charles Lecocq. He wrote the role especially for her. The beautiful dress is also alike the one that appears in the image of the second act's drawing.

In these two drawings the costumes can be better observed, with all its details: the sword, the hat, the frills of the wealthy man. The dress and the head ornament that Graziela wears in the second act.

As can be seen, ornaments, scenery and splendorous visual elements were part of the great operettas. The documents found in archives, about *La Petite Mariée*'s opening in 1875 are not much different from materials found about a lot of other French operettas of the time. These materials indicate peculiarities of each show, of course, such as the plot, the specially built scenery, the magnificent costumes and the reception of the public. The search for this past shows the dynamism of this genre, its complexity, the beauty it relies on. They assure several characteristics of the conventions of the genre that deny the common view that theater historiography established about it.

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STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 2, 2019, p. 51 - 79
(Recommended Citation)
DOI:10.24193/subbdrama.2019.2.03

Teatrul *Journal, between Norms and Emancipation. The Years of the "Thaw" and Those of the New "Freeze"*

MIRUNA RUNCAN[1]

Abstract: *Teatrul* Journal, dedicated to both professionals, and devoted spectators, appeared in 1956 following the so-called "thaw", which took place in the part of Europe controlled by the Soviet regime after Nikita Khrushchev's secret report at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. As we know, this "secret report" highlighted the horrors which took place during the decades dominated by Stalin, incriminated his "cult of personality", and promised a certain openness in the fields of science, culture and arts towards communicating with the West, as well as loosening the chains of censorship. This phenomenon was felt, in a more or less discrete way, at all levels of the Romanian society; and for the theatre domain, the sign of this change of politics was the launch of the *Teatrul* journal, under the patronage of the writer, playwright and aesthetician Camil Petrescu[2]. This paper (which is part of a wider research dedicated to theatre criticism discourses in the communist period) looks at the relation between party orders and the editorial policy taken on by or imposed on the journal from its birth (April 1956) to the new „freeze" wave (1958-1960).

Keywords: Theatre, Theatre criticism, Politics, History

1. *Faculty of Theatre and Film, Babes-Bolyai University Cluj. runcan.miruna@ubbcluj.ro.* Translated from Romanian by Camelia Oană.

2. Camil Petrescu (1894-1957) was a novelist, literary theory author and playwright. He was the Manager of the National Theatre of Bucharest between 1938-1939 and a member of Romanian Academy form 1947.

Keywords, editorials, and debates

In the first two years, the structure of *Teatrul* Journal was quite fix, testifying on a rather narrow and intra-professional photofit of the audience, despite the statements of intent within the first (unsigned) editorial, probably written by the critic Horia Deleanu, the first editor-in-chief. Consistent with the times, this editorial, modestly entitled "*Cuvânt de început*"[3] (Foreword) is scattered with praise for the party's care towards the artistic movement, with committing references[4] to tradition and to the recommendations of the report of the second congress of the Romanian Workers' Party, from which the author chooses a critical sentence about dramaturgy and its underdevelopment; this shows that, despite the apparent thaw, the priority of theatre and film play and scriptwriting, as established by Stalin at the beginning of the 30s, was still unquestionable. This is obvious in the insistence of both editorials, essays, and theatre reviews of the time to revive issues regarding drama, in a period fully dedicated to debates on theatre directing. Noticing - probably, with a programmatic end - that theatre criticism did not always consistently fulfil its objective "responsibly and based on solid theoretical training", the editorialist concludes firmly with a watchword containing the very commitment about the broad view that the journal should take on: "The problems around theatre do not concern a small, elitist group only, but the problems of all workers, of the people, of the state"[5].

In reality, the journal is mostly intended for people in the theatre field, whether artists, critics or cultural journalists: the levels of the new publishing construction were organized in the shape of a funnel, from the complex/s haping essay, whose role is to showcase (both ideologically, and artistically) the hegemonic direction, to the level dedicated to debates, then moving on

3. "Cuvânt de Început [Foreword]," *Teatrul*, no. 1 (1956): 3–5.

4. "The traditions in our theatre must first and foremost be understood and exploited. To this end, Teatrul takes on the task of regularly publishing memoirs, letters, archive documents, studies and historical articles, all of which are to modestly contribute to learning our theatre history, as well as to getting acquainted to and expanding universal theatre history, which was less accessible to the general public until now." "Cuvânt de Început [Foreword]," 4.

5. "Cuvânt de Început [Foreword]," 4.

to a rich space for reviews, which were much more comprehensively analytic and detailed than weekly cultural newspapers or magazines would have allowed. Lastly, the next level rather focused on short comments, acting as a kind of a theatre "press review", including quotes from other reviewers, usually organized as notice boards: "Dos and Don'ts". This same - somehow sprightly - level also included news from abroad, predictably dominated by socialist countries, or referring to communist-leaning Western authors/ artists (the first edition contained a translation of Jean Paul Sartre's opinions on French theatre, as taken from an interview after his visit to Moscow). Over the first years, an overwhelming majority of these news "from abroad" were summaries of articles, news pieces or interviews published in cultural magazines in "sister" (communist) countries.

The interesting thing is that, until towards the end of 1957, the editions of the monthly journal only rarely seem to be built around a dominant theme: also, one can find but rare keywords which are meant to direct, ideologically and/or aesthetically, a more or less substantial part of the criticism discourse. Certainly, in the first nine editions, we can trace the more complex essayistic reflections dedicated to the debate on directing (and implicitly on *re-theatricalization*), that *Contemporanul* Magazine - which I broadly described somewhere else - began in March[6]. It is just as interesting to see that in certain editions the editorial is, in fact, double or triple. For months, the editorial on the first pages, whether signed by Deleanu or not, was followed by substantial essays by Camil Petrescu, the official president of the editorial board, initiator and spiritual patron of the journal, as the representative of theatre art in the Academy of the Socialist Republic of Romania[7]. Here, sometimes in barely disguised irony, the Academy member resumes older ideas about the relation between text and performance, and of course, about directing[8] and its major importance, about theatre authenticity, etc. His essays are talkative-playful in

6. Miruna Runcan, *Teatralizarea și reteatralizarea în România. 1920-1960*, 2nd editio (București: Liternet Publishing House, 2013).

7. The spoken word of the time spread the (otherwise very plausible) legend that the writer was very irritated by the Party appointing some politruk as editor-in-chief to supervise him.

8. Camil Petrescu, "Despre unele probleme. Funcția primordială a regizorului în teatru (ca și în film)," *Teatrul*, no. 1 (1957): 7–11.

tone, but lack direct references to the points discussed in *Contemporanul* or even in the pages of the journal he patrons, giving the impression that the aesthetician-playwright followed the debate from the outside, from his own watchtower, and spoke so as to first and foremost highlight the fact that he was one of the few legitimate links between the past and the present (and thus, that young bellicose directors did not discover anything important). As a drop of timid rain announcing a virtual de-Stalinization, in the second essay, dedicated to theatre efficiency and artistry, the master did not shy away from mocking an anonymous Party activist, who also knew very well that "workers only want to see this in theatre" or that they "don't want that at all"![9]

Over all these years, the feeling that, despite all the clear signs of partial thaw, the young journal is hesitant regarding the relation with the political power is also strengthened by the presence - on rather normative positions - of other quills, of various ages, but assuming responsibility roles or fully affirming themselves as ideological activists working in a theatre and therefore keeping an eye on where it's going and making sure it doesn't derail. We thus find expository essays with an air of second-class editorials by Andrei Băleanu[10], Margareta Bărbuță, Simion Alterescu[11], Paul Georgescu[12], Horia Bratu[13], Eugen Luca[14], etc., while the proper editors and collaborators who are not registered with the party (I.D. Sîrbu[15], Șt. Aug. Doinaș[16], Mira Iosif, Valeria Ducea, Ecaterina Oproiu, etc.) are only allowed to write reviews, not

9. Camil Petrescu, "Despre unele probleme. Eficiență și măiestrie artistică," *Teatrul*, no. 2 (1956): 7.

10. Andrei Băleanu (n. 1931), theatre critic, party activist, chief of the cultural department of *Scânteia*, the Workers (then Communist) Party's organ, 1956-1969. He emigrated to Germany in 1985.

11. Simion Alterescu (1921-1995, Israel) theatre critic and historian, Worker's Party official, intendent of the Ministry of Arts (1957-1951), editor at *Contemporanul* magazine (1948-1952), professor at the Theatre Institute.

12. Paul Georgescu (1923-1989) literary critic and writer, in the 50s he was a prominent activist of the PMR Central Committee's Agitprop section.

13. Horia Bratu, theatre critic, party activist. In 1969 he left Romania for Israel.

14. Eugen Luca (1923-1997, Israel) theatre and literary critic, party activist

15. I. D. Sîrbu (1919-1989) novelist, playwright, theatre critic, journalist.

16. Șt. Aug. Doinaș (1922-2002) poet, literary and theatre critic. He was a member of Romanian Academy (1990-2002)

draw directions. I believe this strategic trajectory is symptomatic, as at a closer look, it puts Camil Petrescu in an ever odd-dramatic position in his last years of life: fully surrounded by bigger or smaller bosses who condescendingly allow him to have opinions, even vaguely acid.

For example, since the foreword of the first edition mentioned the criticism about the development of playwriting expressed during the second congress of the Romanian Workers' Party, Margareta Bărbuță[17] (who at the time worked for the Theatre Department within the Ministry of Arts) published an extensive and highly critical essay on this topic, tenderly entitled "Letter to a theatre manager". As an expert, i.e. as a censor who was also in charge of approving stageable plays and theatre repertoires, she tries to shake a certain self-sufficiency away from the system, marking in fact post-Stalinist orders to refresh playwrighting and set it free from silly patterns:

> We are still in the phase of promoting amateurish, green, often poor works, only played because they deal with current topics, not because they contain precious ideas, necessary to educate spectators. But you and I [*the generic manager*, n.n.] both know very well that spectators aren't touched or easily convinced by dummies blurting out watchwords, delivering moralizing decisions or behaving justly.[18]

Imperceptibly, the text of this mischievous article aimed at criticising poor and watchword-like playwriting turns into a real indictment of managers who merely reject poor plays, not working with their authors at all, or settle for waiting for good plays to fall into their hands from the sky. The text became a kind of official manifesto for "liquidating the passive

17. Margareta Bărbuță (1922-2009) Romanian theatre critic, in her youth she worked as a consultant at the Ministry of Culture. It's worth mentioning that, throughout her entire life, Margareta Bărbuță had a tireless career as literature and drama translator and theatre critic; after 1989, she became the secretary of the Romanian branch of the International Theatre Institute (ITI), hosted in a small room on the first floor of the UNITER (Romanian Association of Theatre Artists) villa. A rather honorific title, which nevertheless says a lot about the evolution of her relationship with the theatre world between the 50s and the events in December 1989.

18. Margareta Bărbuță, "Scrisoare către un director de teatru," *Teatrul*, no. 1 (1956): 58.

attitude" of institutions and literary managers, who were complacent in simply ticking off topics without any pressuring playwrights (in a friendly manner, inviting them to work alongside the artistic council, or going to factories and farms together with the theatre team): because some writers, to be honest, "have grown accustomed to the soft cushions of armchairs and the comfort of villas[19] in Sinaia"[20]. The revolutionary combative attitude of the text thus follows the same rhetoric as party meetings, which became current practice, clearly contravening the urge for artistic/aesthetic professionalization which it apparently intended[21].

As I mentioned on another occasion[22], in March 1957, the press introduces in the public discourse - most probably, as a reflex of party meetings taking place in the factories around the country - one of the few keywords of the soviet "thaw", i.e. combating *dogmatism*, which together with the "personality cult", will for a short while enter the active (partisan) vocabulary of the time. The so-called "thaw" within the USSR space, which surfaced both before, but especially after Nikita Khrushchev's "secret report" of 25 February 1956[23], corresponds to a new political stage, synonymous with

19. After being nationalized, the villas of the former aristocracy, surrounding the Royal Palace of Sinaia, transformed in 'creation houses' dedicated to writers, painters, musicians etc. authorized by the Party, who benefited of consistent residencies, entirely supported by the State.

20. Bărbuță, "Scrisoare către un director de teatru," 58.

21. It is worth mentioning that, at that time as well as later on, the position of the Theatre Department within the Ministry was a mere interface, separating the arts environment from the control deck, i.e. the Political Office of the Romanian Workers' Party, with its propagandistic department. One can therefore imagine that "dressing theatre managers down" directly reflected similar reproaches towards the Theatre Department itself and its clerks, who did not work attentively and closely enough with playwrights before giving them the right to stage certain rather inept, although "aligned" texts. This way of sending the aggressive-normative message top-down, through the Ministry's censor-clerks continued, with specific nuances, from decade to decade until 1989.

22. Miruna Runcan, "Arguments for a Historical Examination of the Discourse of Theatre and Film Criticism," *Studia UBB Dramatica* LXII, no. 2 (2017): 9–22, https://doi.org/10.24193/subbdrama.2017.2.01.

23. The report was so secret that, starting March, it had become a text which was to be processed during party and Komsomol meetings all around the great Soviet empire; it was also published in the United States in March. In the USSR, it wasn't officially published until 1989. In Romania, it also remained unpublished.

exposing Stalin's horrors, liberating hundreds of thousands of innocent people from camps, and a certain relaxation of relations with the outside, that is with Western countries and their culture[24]. Consequently, the same relaxation is felt in arts and education: the chains of ideological censorship were relatively loosened, the leaders of the central and local creation unions who were formerly favoured by Stalin were replaced by moderate people, especially renowned artists, the imperative of the "socialist realism" gradually becomes less important, while avant-garde tradition comes back, etc.

In the case of Romania, the "secret report" is engulfed by thick haze, but factories, schools, universities and collective households instantly incriminate, in endless meetings, the "personality cult". Institution titles including the name Stalin itself, as well as the names of "the living heroes of the working class", such as Gh. Gheorgiu Dej, Chivu Stoica, etc., and sometimes even those of the dead heroes, were changed (for instance, a cinema in Bucharest changed its name from I.C. Frimu, becoming *Lumina/The Light*). Quite quickly, even the great statues representing the "big boss" disappeared from Bucharest and the rest of the country. Cultural debates started becoming more consistent, though, to be fair, they did not touch politics or ideology. This wake even includes the debate on theatre directing and "re-theatricalization", at the same time as other less fruitful debates organized in cinema, in the Arts' and Composers' Unions, etc. The setting up of the *Teatrul* journal is also the result of the same process (at a fluctuating pace, regional cultural magazines and publishing houses will follow, as part of an undeclared decentralization programme; however, this was never a release from the lashing of central censorship).

On dogmatism, no proper incriminating debate arises regarding the negative influences of imposed ideology over the culture and arts field, much less about "socialist realism", although we may assume there were debates on dogmatism behind closed doors, in party meetings, at the worker's youth organisations or in political education and in creation unions, as well as in culture institutions or editorial boards. The effects of these probably formal - if not downright confusing - debates are almost invisible in the cultural media. Actually, during this time, the top level of leading institutions

24. William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (London: Free Press, 2004), 283.

experiences few changes, mostly at inferior levels, in an attempt to "rejuvenate" the apparatus[25] - the inquisitorial position of Leonte Răutu[26] and his close ideological circle remains unwavering. This is certainly explained by Gheorgiu-Dej's reluctance to the Soviet thaw and to Khrushchev himself. Firmly set on not giving up the least bit of the power he had earned and consolidated through a highly controlled apparatus, Dej only showed formal gestures of adaptation to the thaw, then using the Hungarian Revolution as a repression and a cleansing weapon against the last illegalists inside the country; and, in relation with the USSR, as a pressure/blackmail factor to obtain strategic advantages (the retreat of the soviet armies, the dismantling of SovRoms (Soviet-Romanian industrial corporations), relatively independent industrial development strategies policies compared to Comecon directives, etc.).

However, a shadow of the discussions on *dogmatism* emerged in the discourse of theatre criticism on the occasion of a polemics between theatre reviewers - very interestingly, the majority of those who took the floor were people from inside the apparatus, whether for a long time or rather recently, some of them writing constantly criticism, others more sporadically[27]. The concept of dogmatism was not defined, nor was its application in criticism discourses clarified, as the debate - including S. Damian, Vicu Mândra, B. Elvin, I.D. Sârbu, Horia Bratu, Radu Popescu, Eugen Luca and others - lamentably stranded on the sands of taste reasons about an author or another, a performance or another.

Nevertheless, 1956-1963 saw two recurrent topics, evidently following party guidelines, in culture magazines and most especially in the *Teatrul* journal: one related to the functions and the functioning of national theatres

25. Such as the critic Paul Cornea becoming the director of the Theatre Department within the Ministry of Culture, a position from which he discreetly observed and managed the revolt of young directors at the Theatre Professionals' Conference in December 1956.

26. Leonte Răutu (1910-1993) was one of the most powerful (and hated) figures in the propaganda sector of the Communist Party. He was the deputy chief of the Agitprop department of the Politburo (1945-1950) then its chief till 1965. Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, he was deputy prime minister supervising education (1969 to 1972) and, from 1974 to 1981, President of the Ștefan Gheorghiu Political Studies Academy.

27. For a short description of this discussion, see Runcan, "Arguments for a Historical Examination of the Discourse of Theatre and Film Criticism," 11–12.

(protracted by that related to the "profile" of theatres in general), and another (obsessive one) regarding playwriting. It is worth noting that, as we will see, despite the fact that the tone, the issues and the editorial policy changed every year according to political orders, these changes did not directly reflect the pressure coming from the Party. There is only one exception, in 1958, dedicated to "*revisionism*" - which we will tackle separately. Otherwise, the two recurrent themes seem to emerge and resume "naturally", from the editorial board's initiative. But, especially in the case of playwriting, their reconsidering is indissolubly related to the reports and analysis of the Theatre Professionals' (National) Conferences and, particularly, they are very well reflected by all cultural publications.

Probably born in the comet tail of the January 1957 Theatre Professionals' Conference - which actually concentrated the debate on "re-theatricalization" -, the February-March 1957 investigation into the National Theatre (especially that in Bucharest) is an indirect response to the accusations made by the young theatre director, on that occasion, against the repertoire and staff policy of the Bucharest National Theatre, the most prominent of the theatrical companies in the country. The respondents in the issues of March and April 1957 were not critics, but voices of important theatre artists, some of them true patriarchs: Ion Fințeșteanu[28] and Marietta Sadova[29], both professors at the Theatre Institute, the directors Victor Bumbești[30] and the younger Mihai Berechet [31]and lastly Ion Marin Sadoveanu[32], who had recently been appointed as the institution's director, after the removal of the cultural activist Vasile Moldovan. The artists involved did not defend, on the contrary, they accused the repertoire and artistic downfall (mainly at the level of team

28. Ion Fințeșteanu (1899–1984) was a theatre and film actor, professor at the Theatre Institute.
29. Marietta Sadova (1897-1981) was an actress and theatre director, professor at the Theatre Institute.
30. Victor Bumbești, theatre director at the National Theatre from Bucharest.
31. Mihai Berechet (1927-1991) Actor and theatre director at the National Theatre Bucharest.
32. Ion Marin Sadoveanu (1893-1964) was a novelist, playwright and famous theatre historian, professor at the theatre Conservatory (after 1948 Theatre Institute). From 1926 he was appointed inspector of the theatres, being subsequently promoted to inspector general and in 1933 director general of the theatres and operas till 1940. He was the general manager of the National Theatre of Bucharest (1956-1958)

heterogeneity), while also focusing on the difficulties resulting from the fact that, for almost a decade, the institution's building at Majestic/ Comedia was unsuitable: although modified and consolidated, it was still too small and completely unfit for big productions (Fințeșteanu ironically referred to the Studio hall built by Rebreanu at some point in the past as the venue between "vegetable stalls in the Amza Square")[33].

Perhaps this investigation would not have been worth mentioning here, as long as the journal's theatre critics or the critics-collaborators did not intervene, should its visible homogeneity not signal two issues that interfered with the editorial policy of *Teatrul* - and indirectly with the movement limits of the "opinion freedom" indicated by the party in this illusory moment of thaw. We are first and foremost referring to the "re-professionalization" movement which existed in almost all types of cultural and economic activities within the territory controlled by the Soviet Union, Romania included: in the sense that non-professional activists retreated towards the margins, giving an edge to specialists assimilated by the party or to declared "comrades". In the small debate mentioned here, this is the case with the critical coalition of artists, with the party's permission, against the former director-activist whose position had already been taken by a prestigious man of theatre - historian, writer, playwright - of the old generation, who already had the experience of managing the same institution in 1938-1940 (assisting Camil Petrescu). It is noteworthy that the artists' reactions were not the cause of Vasile Moldovan's dismissal, and their "courageous" and acid commentaries came after this.

On this transient terrain, important things were said, I believe, whether openly or covertly, for a nuanced overlook at the internal situation of the National Theatre, especially if one takes into consideration the combative attitude of the young generation of directors within the debate about directing, which had ended (just two editions before, an article by Sorana

33. The traditional building of the National was bombed in 1944 by the Germans and was demolished around 1951. The institution, who owned two halls, one on Victoria Boulevard, the other the Amzei Square, near a vegetable market, moved in the smaller building of former Comedia Theatre, one hundred meters down the boulevard.

Coroamă-Stanca[34] had been dedicated to the very "Functions of a National Theatre"). For example, Fintești, Sadova or Bumbești highlight that artists of the elite collective of the National Theatre either left for other theatres, some actors attracted by the opportunity of promotion, or were at some point flooded by actors from commercial theatre; even if some of the new comers were talented, they had a totally different stand on training, prestige, work style. Of course, there is a (rather muddy) hint about the 1948 integration of Sică Alexandrescu's[35] group - along with its leader[36] - of Comedia Theatre into the team of the National Theatre, when, after the National, Comedia Theatre filled the gap left behind by the bombed great hall. Moreover:

> ... the most serious thing is that Ion Șahighian - the only director who continued the tradition of the National Theatre and of our great director, Paul Gusty's school - was removed, in his years of maturity, from the collective alongside which he had grown and trained.[37]

And for this to be even clearer, it was Fintești who said the bizarrely iconoclastic sentence: "Our success in Paris should not get us heated to incandescence"[38], given that Sică's tour with *A Lost Letter* by I.L. Caragiale was treated with entire pages in the daily and cultural press, reports and interviews in the news and - the highest reward - the performance was filmed and scheduled for broadcasting in cinemas throughout the country. The fact that, in the National Theatre, a kind of a mute riot was stirring against Sică

34. Sorana Coroamă-Stanca (1921-2007) theatre and television director, playwright.

35. Sică Alexandrescu (1896-1973) theatre manager of multiple commercial companies between the two world wars, also theatre director. In the communist period he was theatre director at the National Theatre, and was awarded the titles of Emeritus Artist (1952) then People's Artist (1963).

36. On this topic, see Miruna Runcan, "The Coronation of the Accompanying Comrade. Sică Alexandrescu – A Case Study," *Studia UBB Dramatica* LXII, no. 2 (2017): 87–114.

37. Ion Fintești, "Deziderate," *Teatrul*, no. 2 (1957): 43–44. NOTE: Still, Ion Șahighian was then the manager and first-director of the Army Theatre (currently, Nottara Theatre), where he had gone together with his friend, actor George Vraca.

38. Fintești, "Deziderate."

Alexandrescu is also (politely) confirmed by Victor Bumbești[39], who praises the former theatre entrepreneur for the quality of his comedies, all the while scolding him (like certain other critics had done, but in a muffled manner) for the dramatic fiasco with *King Lear* (in fact, Sadova too refers to this failure covertly[40]).

The second reason why this first draft debate about the National Theatre is important from the viewpoint of the relations between political guidelines and critics' discourse is that the interventions - especially that of Finteștieanu and the more sensible one by young Mihai Berechet - introduce a broader theme, which will be resumed many times, and which, over the following decades, will also include theatre criticism, i.e. the topic of each theatre's *specific profile*, which should have first and foremost be reflected (the eternal goal) in their repertoires. Although, for the classic Finteștieanu the solution could only come top-down (through the providential person managing the theatre, i.e. I.M. Sadoveanu at the time), the issue of looking for and possibly finding a specific voice for the theatre companies remains not just open, but, as we will see, recurrent.

The freezing thaw - revisionism, partisanship, and other storms

As we know, in the case of Romania (but not only, things seem to have been similar in the USSR and other satellite countries too after the Hungarian Revolution), Khrushchev's thaw was pulsating, re-freezing every now and then because of the tribulations in the communist block's internal and/or external politics. In our particular case, the first signs of a storm after the short spring were felt as early as 1957 – when Ștefan Aug. Doinaș and I.D. Sîrbu, both editors at *Teatrul*, were arrested, the first in February, and the latter in September: their evidently unbalanced sentences (Doinaș one year, Sîrbu seven!) for "omission to denounce" the discussions in intellectual circles regarding the Hungarian Revolution; in 1958, Ioan Negoițescu, not an employee, but a mere collaborator of the same journal, was also arrested. But the actual guillotine in the field of theatre criticism only fell loudly in the spring of 1958.

39. Victor Bumbești, "Remedii," *Teatrul*, no. 2 (1957): 50.
40. Marietta Sadova, "În așteptare," *Teatrul*, no. 2 (1957): 48.

If in March and April the first articles in each edition were already normative-like, solemn interventions, like party meeting speeches, signed by the usual artists or critics within the party circle who normally made such statements (Costache Antoniu, Al. Pop-Marțian, Florin Tornea, Valentin Silvestu, Margareta Bărbuță, etc.), the issue of May 1958 abruptly opens with an unsigned editorial (for a while, these unsigned editorials had disappeared) entitled "Theatre and Partisanship"[41]. As in other communist countries, the ideological base marks a programmatic return to Leninism, after decades dominated by keywords from Stalin's speeches, but this does not stop the unknown author to pertinaciously evoke the unbreakable norm of socialist realism. Starting from another anonymous remark - i.e. the objective of theatre is "enjoyment" - made during the Theatre Professionals' Conference which took place the previous year, proletarian wrath unfurls:

"Because, as it was proposed (as a panacea in our theatre art), this enjoyment manifestly hidden and implied the invitation to get back to a so-called purity of the artistic act, to an artistic creation "freed" from who knows what oppression of realities, of life, of our political beliefs and orientations (all these apparently adjoining, foreign to beauty...) (...) That is why the theory of art-enjoyment quickly received a necessary, firm response. And the discussions of the conference went on, in the name of realist-socialist art, for its further development."[42]

The author combs through both theatre's placid repertoire policies, and the obsessive issue of the insufficient development of original playwriting, often accused of being superficial or ill-willed (we will come back to this later on), as well as the tendency to import somewhat fashionable Western texts (of course, not those of *theatre of the absurd*, incomprehensible and decadent, branded in a whip swish). All the issues highlighted in the text shall be extensively discussed by the journal's editors or collaborators throughout its pages and resumed in subsequent editions. The return to Leninist sources is sharply raised on almost half a page, declamatorily threading quotes from the works of the father of the Soviet Revolution.

41. *Teatrul* no.5, May 1958, p. 3-6. In Romanian, the term loosely translated from Russian is "*Partinitate*", an attitude manifestly reflecting the fidelity to the communist Party.
42. Idem p. 3.

Although "... we are not aware of anyone consciously, deliberately casting doubts or disobedient opinions in our country", the author harshly turns to the political experience from the "Short History of the Central Committee of the CPSU" (referring to Lenin's vituperate texts against the "renegade Kautsky"), extracting - probably from daily documents sent by Moscow to satellite countries - the new keyword of that stage: *revisionism*.

> Nevertheless, the wind against revisionism beats strongly in certain countries and circles from abroad. It's not a far-reaching wind. Discreetly and mischievously, it finds its way into pure consciousnesses, as its poisoned lash touches the very foundation of our art: the need to have the artistic work guided by the party and the realist-socialist method of artistic creation. (...) Once again, among us, there are no such voices of dangerous Marxism 'virtuosos'. Still, since revisionism even recrudesces in other places, since the fight against revisionism is as necessary as the fight against open class enemies, we must strengthen our belief that our art, as valuable and lasting as it is, owes everything it has to the party's guidance.[43]

In order for the return signal to the rhetoric before the "thaw" to be clear, the above editorial was followed by a substantial extract from the equivalent editorial of the Moscow soviet *Teatr* magazine no. 5, published a month before and signed by a certain M. Gus[44], who of course reiterated and commented, in a disciplined and enthusiastic manner, on a myriad of cited Leninist texts from the beginning of the 20th century. This was followed by an extensive review by Florin Tornea[45] of a performance produced by The Workers Theatre CFR Giulești, based on the debut text of the playwright Liviu Bratoloveanu, *Zile de februarie (February Days)* - a fresco-play dedicated to nothing other than the legendary 1933 railwaymen strike. The mere placement of this performance analysis right after the editorials, and not in the broad section traditionally dedicated to dramatic reviews, aims at positioning Bratoloveanu's play and the performance of the Giulești Theatre as a "partisan vision" model.

43. Idem p. 6.
44. M. Gus, "Arta și democrația," *Teatrul*, no. 5 (1958): 7–12.
45. Florin Tornea, "Valoarea umană și evocarea revoluționară," *Teatrul*, no. 5 (1958): 13–18.

Nevertheless, it is for the ideologue-critic, Eugen Luca[46] to exemplarily strike the new circumstance dramaturgy, which is intended as "aligned", but is simply cliché or, more subtly, intentionally harmful. Texts staged in various theatres in the previous season - completely buried nowadays, such as: *Microbii (The Germs)* by Dan Negreanu, *Secretul doctorului Bergman (Doctor Bergman's Secret)* by Frederic Vinea, *Flacără vie (The Open Light)* by Ștefan Tita and Liviu Floda, or *Visul nopților noastre* (*Our Nights' Dream*) by Ana and Eugen Naum - are quite rigorously demolished.

If in June only the editorial - again unsigned - is full of indications regarding "Playwrights and the New Communist", the July edition overall is a kind of a destructive mix of criticism and self-criticism. It opens with no less than three editorial texts dedicated to/resulting from the annual Theatre Professionals' Conference[47]. At the time, the director Mircea Avram was in charge of the Theatre Department of the Ministry. In the Conference report, on which the cited article is largely based, he ceremoniously speaks about the "danger of liberal attitudes, conciliatory towards bourgeois ideology and its agents within the field of arts", which signals that if revisionism didn't seem present in the Romanian artistic movement, new keywords were found to become targets in the game of intention processes – in this case, the barbarous *împăciuitorism* (*conciliatoriness* towards the former bourgeois classes).

At the beginning, we triumphantly find out that, for the first time in our history, the 1957-58 season opened, as ordered, in *all* theatres around the country with original Romanian plays. No less than 36 plays are thus counted, of which 17 absolute premiers! However, this blown-up figure is narrowly exceeded by the performances based on soviet texts, also a professional obligation of all theatre institutions, given the forty's anniversary of the October Revolution: 39 premiers "represented by 28 titles". Still, the praise only goes on for one page, while the rest of the material is dominated by condemnations.

A prominent place between reproaches, related to poor playwriting and the texts' lack of orientation, is taken up by what subsequently became

46. Eugen Luca, "Pretextul actualității," *Teatrul*, no. 5 (1958): 19–24.
47. "Consfătuirea oamenilor de teatru," *Teatrul*, no. 6 (1958): 3–12.

the "Ana Novac trial"[48] – unmasking the weaknesses and (at that time, insinuated only) the ideological toxicity of the play *Ce fel de om ești tu? (What Kind of a Person Are You?*), written by the young author whose début, with another play, had been very well received over the previous years. We will come back to this episode of professional execution, in its way typical of the communist re-freeze.

Still, in comrade Avram's article, the red flag about closing (once again) the windows facing Western Europe comes from his harsh criticism against the two theatres that dared to introduce Jean Anouilh's benign melodrama *Invitation to the Castle* "besides the plan" (i.e. eschewing censorship, an option no longer possible from then on).

> This ideologically wrong play, whose main aim is to present the 'humanism' of capitalism, promoting class reconciliation and trying to distract people from the true face of capitalism, was chosen by our main stage and by one of our best theatres to complete their repertoire.

For things to be even clearer, the Theatre Department director wrote a (preventive, we would say) charge-sheet against the more or less fashionable Western dramaturgy, which the Party believed to be harmful and unrepresentative of the social issues of the time, and which was programmatically shut off (for only two or three years, to be honest, as we will later see, when discussing the aesthetic resynchronisation processes).

48. Ana Novac (Zimra Harsányi), 1929-2010, wrote in Romanian and later French. Having survived Auschwitz, in the 50s, many writers and critics of the time regarded her as a fresh voice, based on her début with the play *Familia Kovacs (The Kovacs Family)*. Yet, the 1957 publication and staging of the play *Ce fel de om ești tu? (What Kind of Person are You?)* at the Municipal Theatre (nowadays, Bulandra), whose subject was the consciousness processes of an engineer regarding the abuses committed by some party-member plant colleagues, turned the writer into the perfect scapegoat in the re-freeze campaign triggered by Gheorghiu-Dej's regime following the Hungarian Revolution. The press condemned the play, and the writer was thrown out of the party and of the Writers' Union. (This is not the only case, as many Hungarian or Hungarian-Jews writers and journalists of the time, especially former Communist Party members from the underground period 1921-1944, were also depurated). In 1956, she emigrated to Hungary, then to West Berlin and from there she moved to France in 1968, where she published several novels, prose and memoirs collections).

> But plays foreign to our ideology, which stem from current dramaturgy in Capitalist countries, the morass of bourgeois ideology, have no place on our stages. Whether they approach the total decomposition - into hatred and disgust - of humans, or the desperate wait for a debatable solution, as it happens in Samuel Beckett's dramaturgy; or the sexual issue, elevated to a primordial philosophy, as in Tennessee Williams and other American playwrights' works, or about mystic solutions, as it happens in the case of Italian playwrights such as Diego Fabbri and others, or attempting to completely bypass any social issues (...), this playwriting spilling from country to country within the capitalist camp, losing its national traits, actually expresses the disorientation of a class of intellectuals who has lost its true purpose.[49]

In view of the fact that in Romania the *Glass Menagerie* only saw the limelight in 1960, at the Municipal (Bulandra) Theatre, and that nothing by (the now classic) Beckett, nor by (the nowadays almost forgotten) Catholic playwright and script writer Diego Fabbri was staged in our country until this conference, the above diatribe seems rather aimed at clipping the wings of potential theatre managers, literary secretaries and, most especially, directors who may have gotten an idea to ask for the plays of these - quasi unknown in the country - authors to be included in their repertoires, under the pretext of a possible connection between their repertoire offer and Western dramaturgy. Should we consider the frenzy of staging Tennessee Williams over the following decades and the great success of the films based on his plays which entered the Romanian market in subsequent years, the sad irony of the above-mentioned party directives now becomes evident (and the mere enumeration of the first two undesirable authors indirectly sounds like an invitation for curious theatre artists who had had enough propaganda to get to know them).

In reality, the fact that Beckett was mentioned next to Williams may have an immediate explanation: probably unsuspecting of the reasons behind the new interdictions which were to be stated during the conference, just one edition earlier, in June, the *Teatrul* journal had published a rather

49. Idem, p. 8.

extensive essay by the comparative literature professor Vera Călin, in which she discussed *Waiting for Godot* over several pages, timidly acknowledging that the "author is talented and the dialogue disturbing; we are still rational enough to observe the play's Kafka-, Camus-, and Sartre-like echoes."[50] However, using reviews of the time and negative quotes by Sean O' Casey, the emblematic Western communist playwright of the time, Vera Călin finds Beckett morbid and incomparable to a world undergoing a full socialist reconstruction process. The essay also briefly, but not without substance, analyses *Endgame*, but also *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* by Williams, as well as *Requiem for a Nun* by Albert Camus (the writer had recently won a Nobel Prize). Cautious, despite showing her knowledge of the field, as well as plenty analytical fineness, in the end, the author concludes:

> We are used to talking about such 'disintegrative' literary works as if they were decadent productions. Reading the above-mentioned dramas, we become terribly aware of the moribund character of this literature. (...) Their authors do not even try to promote the honour, the constructive and noble side of humans. Their funeral message doesn't quietly slip, but is ostentatiously proclaimed, as it represents the quintessence and extreme potentiation of the vision on life in a crepuscular world.[51]

It is not very clear to what extent Mircea Avram refered to Vera Călin's article when he chose to nominate Beckett and Williams to illustrate the Western dramas that Romanian theatre art should keep away from. Instead, the report openly accused *Teatrul* journal of "seriously lacking" the ideological guidance for theatre people, thus failing to fulfil its mission. The journal wouldn't have "taken a combative stance towards the unhealthy phenomena in our theatres" and, although harshly criticised in *Scânteia*, it didn't show any sign of reforming. Actually, starting with the following editions, the editorial box disappeared, and Horia Deleanu – party's cultural activist who, after only two years, was considered to be too assimilated into the conciliatory intellectualism of the theatre field - was removed as the chief editor of the monthly publication.

50. Vera Călin, "Anxietate și neant. Pe marginea unor piese ale Apusului," *Teatrul*, no. 6 (1958): 27.
51. Idem, p. 30.

As we witness, the terrorism of keywords - *revisionism*, *reconciliation*, *cosmopolitanism*, "*passive attitude*", *negativism*, and soon *practicality* (referring to an attitude focusing on professional arguments, which tend to elude/prevail compared to ideological commands), almost all of them taken/loaned from terms in the soviet vocabulary of the time - quickly took over speeches about theatre. All these terms and phrases functioned as bullets shot at the new forms of 'deviation' from party guidelines, incriminating both artists, and institutions, from theatres and their management, to theatre criticism itself, in this case, the country's only academic journal in the field. They were used in a disciplined manner (which is, after all, related to self-criticism) in many expository writings or (more rarely) dramatic reviews signed by critics themselves, whether employees or collaborators.

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Let's thus speak about some illustrating examples regarding the immediate consequences of party commandments' direction related to criticism practice. To this end, I have chosen two of the targets established in the 1958 spring and summer editorials, on which Mircea Avram's July report insists too: the partisanship of playwrights, i.e. the "Ana Novac case" and "decadent" Western dramaturgy.

The case of Ana Novac has vaguely been summarized in other cultural studies dedicated to the Gheorghiu-Dej regime[52]. The factual haze around it can be explained through the very military-style public speeches published in the media of the time, which is fairly odd considering that, in the myriad of memoirs published after 1990 (including the translation of her own memoirs from French), the precise explicative references are rather insufficiently detailed. It's clear though - from the viewpoint of the few authors mentioning the case, and from that of Ana Novac herself[53] - that in

52. Ana Selejan, *Literatura în totalitarism 1952-1953* (Sibiu: Thausib, 1995), 143; Cristian Vasile, *Viața intelectuală și artistică în primul deceniu al regimului Ceaușescu. 1965-1975* (București: Humanitas, 2015).

53. Ana Novac, *Frumoasele zile ale tinereții mele*, trans. Anca-Domnica Ilea (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 2014).

the winter of 1958, her play *Ce fel de om ești tu?* was almost randomly chosen as a scapegoat for implementing the new keywords in theatre: conciliatoriness, revisionism, and negativism.

Ana Novac, a Jew born in Dej, was deported to Auschwitz when she was 11 and miraculously survived, but like many others, lost her entire family. Until her emigration in 1965, she only wrote in Romanian: prose, essays, articles and two theatre plays, *Preludiul* and *Familia Kovacs*, appreciated by authorities and critics alike. The latter even won her the State Prize one year before the press campaign and her ideological execution. Her third play, *Ce fel de om ești tu?*, was included in the repertory of the Municipal Theatre's 57-58 season and was proudly announced by actress-manager Lucia Sturdza-Bulandra[54] in an article published in the Theatre journal in October[55]. It premièred on December 24th. In March, an unsigned finger-pointing article was published in *Scânteia* (the Party's daily journal), reproaching the bleak atmosphere of the play, its lack of ideologic orientation and its negativism. The article did not actually discuss the factual, circumstantial arguments of these accusations. Dutiful and obedient, Florin Tornea, the most aligned reviewer of the *Teatrul* journal, most certainly following an order, dedicated an article to this "case" in the April editorial, which focused on partisanship. It was not a review per se, but an ideological critique typical for that time, which did not convey any information about the play's action, place, narrative and characters. However, we do find out that:

54. Lucia Sturdza-Bulandra (1973-1961) famous theatre and film actress, born into the aristocratic old family Sturdza, who had a consistent education and had an academic degree in literature and philosophy. For choosing an artistic carrier, she was rejected by her family. She married Tony Bulandra, also a well-known actor and, in association with other important colleagues from their generation, they took over the independent Davilla Company in 1914, and transformed it in the most famous private theatre in Romania. Even if all the partners were related in and administration council, Lucia Sturdza-Bulandra was the real executive manager all along. From 1948 till her death she was the general manager of the Municipal Theatre Bucharest (named after her since then).

55. Lucia Sturdza-Bulandra, "Un bogat și valoros bilanț," *Teatrul*, no. 10 (1957): 17.

> On the one hand, Ana Novac leaves the impression that the world she captures is no longer divided into classes. That in this world, the class struggle - with all its complex aspects - has ended and, with it, the negative influence on mentality, psychology, and morality of the class enemy. (...) These features of disarmed, disabused and helpless psychologies specific for the small bourgeois spirit turn in their full frailty against socialism, against the working class and against the party. (...) taking your only hero, who understands the perspectives that the party calls and urges towards, to the abyss of losing these perspectives, to distrusting them, distrusting the party and the class he belongs to: could the play send a more perspectiveless message?[56]

As bizarre as it sounds, Florin Tornea is still lenient and indulgent to the author, adding in the next paragraph that he trusts her power to reform, probably not yet knowing the national dimension of the finger-pointing processes, all of which were justified through the keywords above. After Mircea Avram's July report presented at the Theatre Professionals' Conference, it is Margareta Bărbuță's turn to try to derail the reasons why the party believes that, in a record year from the point of view of performances based on current Romanian plays, playwrights wrote a lot of poor texts and that some topical plays were actually harmful. After incriminating recent plays which "seem" to highlight the bourgeois or landowner's drama, an entire paragraph is, to this end, dedicated to Ana Novac's play.

> For instance, one could not deny that Ana Novac's *Ce fel de om eşti tu?* is drawing a conflict. But the purposes of this conflict are totally wrong. The play unjustly and artificially sets the economic construction, the very base of the socialist construction, against individual interests elevated to foremost requirements. The author believes that their upholder, Toma, represents the frontrunner of the party; nevertheless, in his actions and ideas, the politically short-sighted character is not only far from having such a quality, but also refutes it. Instead, the very character promoting the interests of building socialism and putting the interests of the majority before the individual, i.e. Ianoş Madaraş, becomes the target of

56. Florin Tornea, "Responsabilitatea dramaturgului," *Teatrul*, no. 4 (1958): 6.

> confusing critique. The play thus turns the balance of power in our reality upside down, so that the unfolding of events sows mistrust in the possibility of meeting our objective, as well as confusion and scepticism, instead of contributing to the strengthening of new forces and to mobilizing masses to build socialism.[57]

As we can see, no summary of the play is provided this time either, but only an allegoric record of the plot and the names of two characters, with no indication whatsoever of their status, biography or nature. In 1957-1958, the journal doesn't bother to publish any review about the performance staged at the Municipal Theatre (which is drastically and evidently unfairly scolded for its repertory in another unsigned editorial in July, entitled "Ideological Orientation and Theatre Practice"; the aim is most probably to shake the armchair of the manager Luciei Sturdza-Bulandra, which nevertheless doesn't happen). In fact, Ana Novac went through an unmasking finger-pointing trial for negativism and conciliatoriness; it seems she refused to admit she was guilty and to engage in self-criticism, and as a result, she was excluded from the party and her State Prize was withdrawn - which evidently implies she lost her right to sign and publish anything else.

Her name is only mentioned in a subsequent issue of the journal within the context of a review by the bellicose young critic Mira Iosif, concerning a debate published in the *Tribuna* magazine of Cluj, dedicated to the problem of contemporary theatre: an inquiry to which established directors, actors and playwrights respond[58]. The journal gets a good whole-paragraph scolding for including the author's viewpoint in its investigation, as a response to the accusations from *Scânteia*, which incriminated the negativism and conciliatoriness in her play:

> It's very curious and incomprehensible that the intervention of Ana Novac found a place in the pages of *Tribuna* magazine. Criticised on countless occasions for the harmful and false perspective underlying

57. Margareta Bărbuță, "Spiritul de partid și eficiența mesajului," *Studia UBB Dramatica*, no. 7 (1958): 23.

58. Mira Iosif, "De ce dibuiri și echivocuri? Întrebări pe marginea unei anchete a revistei Tribuna," *Teatrul*, no. 8 (1958): 48–51.

> the play *Ce fel de om ești tu?* instead of explaining her mistakes by adopting a self-criticising stand, the author chooses to resist and oppose criticism. Trying to retaliate in a hidden polemic manner to the main critique against her in the *Scânteia* magazine, Ana Novac's reply is a new manifestation of her erroneous positions. By transposing the problems of creation into the field of "pure" passions, she openly promotes "the autonomy of art"; while the ostentatious statement that the connection between the artist and the present is to be done "by taking on all its limits, inconvenience and risks" is an insidious hint, remind the well-known theory about "the absolute freedom of creation" or about the "gratuitous game" of art.[59]

On this tone, the Ana Novac "case" is definitively closed, shutting the window, which was barely opened two years before, in the hope that creation would vaguely be liberated from the tight chains of absolute control over socialist realism. However, as we will see in the chapter dedicated to the evolution of discourses on theatre aesthetics, these *corsi e ricorsi* about what art is and about the limits of creativity will reach much further than this case - which still remains fully exemplifying.

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As far as the timid attempts to freshen the repertoire and the new party targets regarding decadent dramaturgy are concerned, things are very clear - at least for about a year and a half: the class enemy hides behind the smallest details, i.e. we are witnessing a heavy-handed re-stalinization throb. Sixty years later, some critical interventions on this topic either look very sad, or downright hilarious.

In the very issue of July, in which the report of chief Mircea Avram incriminated the staging of Jean Anouilh's *Invitation to the Castle* in two national theatres, as well as the theatre of the absurd - totally unknown in Romania, the journal's editors and collaborators very enthusiastically detailed these faults, as a hidden self-criticism. Trixy Staicu (a critic who,

59. Idem, p. 50.

over the following decades, reconverted to translating prose and plays, mainly from English) dedicated an entire essay to trends in French playwriting, combining both the former avant-garde represented by Jean Genet, and the philosophic absurd path, represented by Beckett, Ionesco, etc.

> ... we are dealing with texts (...) which aim at 'kicking' spectators (as foreseen by Ionesco) and getting them out of their normal balance. (...) By renouncing a few essential elements of current dramaturgy, the 'avant-garde' replaces them with an abstract, surreal type of writing. (...) In fact, Ionesco spells this out loud in *Victims of duty*: 'I dream of an irrational theatre', or more explicitly, a theatre in which the writer's oneiric vision fuses heteroclite elements through an unusual alchemy, with a view to suggesting what he calls 'the odd character of reality'.[60]

With the above-analysis (and many similar others) in mind, somewhere in the background, we notice the kind of rusty effort, resulting in cold perspiration, put up by these journalists (otherwise, some of the few people whose reading was up-to-date in a closed and well-controlled environment), who take on the task of stigmatizing certain playwrights - as dictated from higher forums - even if the just had revelations about some "unusual alchemy of heteroclite elements". Still, to remove any doubt, the author quickly reaches a definite conclusion, directly derived from Mircea Avram's report:

> We are simply talking about a new (and at the same time trite) literary diversionism, a kind of distorting literature, of prestidigitation (...) ... the much-trumpeted "avant-garde" literature, as it is called, is the literature of a dying class within a loose society. (...) It is understood that this literature cannot meet the requirements of anything making up the bulk of Romanian artistic creation.[61]

In the same July issue, Florin Tornea wrote a demolishing review of Anouilh's "*Invitation to the Castle*" (this storm in a teacup, actually), a real tour de force in an attempt to treat a banal, absolutely harmless text as

60. Trixy Staicu, "Paris 58 și cavalerii iraționalismului," *Teatrul*, no. 7 (1958): 58.
61. Idem, p. 61-62.

dangerous, because it wasn't properly oriented from a political point of view; in August, the conclusions of the Theatre Professionals' Conference were drawn in a self-critical, unsigned text, which even cited Ioan Masoff, the literary secretary of the Bucharest National Theatre, who engaged in self-criticism for recommending the play to be staged.

Nevertheless, in the same issue, Radu Lupan (anglicist, critic and essayist, publishing house manager and director of External Press division of the Ministru of Culture, well-known translator of works by G.B. Shaw, E. Hemingway, Durrenmatt, Dos Passos, Faulkner, Updike, Joyce, etc.) vigorously stepped into the incriminating campaign against Western playwriting with an essay entitled "The Mystical Solution to Western Drama".[62] Directly connected to the time's party rhetoric, which was programmed to invent dangers and enemies beyond the Iron Curtain, the essay focused on a sharply rising (imaginary) trend, i.e. the trend of encouraging the staging of "irrationalism, mystic or fideistic agnosticism", and clever formulas for the "opiate of the masses". Today, it seems truly funny how Radu Lupan mixed - clearly betting on the reader's ignorance - names of authors representing totally opposed cultures and ideologies, from openly leftist authors, such as Andre Breton or Graham Greene (whose works Radu Lupan was just translating or had already translated, such as "The Quiet American" was published exactly in 1958, and "Our Man in Havana" was printed in 1960 at the publishing house he was running) to Mircea Eliade (whose essay "*Mythes, Reves et Mysteres*" had just been published in 1957, with absolutely no connection to this discussion; thus, willingly or not, Lupan made an unsolicited confession about his dubious readings). Of course, his anti-mystic criticism would also target the catholic playwright Diego Fabri, who was mentioned in the Conference report, and whom nobody had heard and would not later hear about in Romania; and surely, the Nobel Prize winner Albert Camus, whose *Requiem for a Nun* was fully distorted so that it could fit into Procust's mystical bed. The time distance from the publication of the essay confers nearly grotesque meanings to this stunt, as both Graham Green's *Sanctuary*, and Camus' *Requiem* are actually dramatizations after

62. *Teatrul*, no. 8, 1958, p. 62-67.

William Faulkner's micro-novels, from which Lupan would translate the - critically acclaimed, of course - short story collection *The Bear* in 1964, and *Light in August* in1973.

A very similar lunge was done by Radu Lupan (who I only use here as a - not at all isolated - example of the successive twists and turns brought to the criticism diagnostic, depending on the topics induced/imposed by the party leaders) in an essay published in the September issue. This time[63], the target was strictly Eugen Ionesco, charged not only for his recent celebrity on the stages in France and abroad, but most especially for his pretentiousness of philosophically theorizing his position. This time too, the context introduction is a display of erudition, with ironical references to F. Alquié's *Philosophy of Surrealism* (1956) or to Gaëtan Picon's *History of literature* (1956) - thus showing that the top party members dealing with culture were allowed to read recent books, impossible to be found in libraries or bookshops. The essay is important not for - diagonally and accusingly - getting Romanian readers acquainted with some of Ionesco's plays (against the grain, it "summarizes" *The Bald Soprano, Victims of Duty, The Chairs, The New Tenant*), but mostly for the numerous citations from the recently published (in *La Nouvelle Revue Française*) essay "*Expérience du théâtre*" (February 1958).

> From Ionesco's perspective, all realist theatre is lapsed because of the 'ideology' it expresses; the only plays destined to last are those which are outside of time - of their time, of course. (...) But the playwright doesn't stop there. (...) He continues that 'exaggeration dislocates reality. Dislocation, disarticulation of language too'. This is how a reactionary ideological position - stemming from misunderstanding and negating the situation, from supporting the autonomy of consciousness (in this case, of 'imagination' and 'dreams') - can't help but introduce a profoundly disaggregated element. Renouncing 'ideology' (...), renouncing a work's sense aimed at expressing reality, a work of art's social and historical commitment, trying to get beyond reality, Ionesco can only reach the disintegration of artistic expression, which was what got him to writing anti-plays, anti-theatre.[64]

63. Radu Lupan, "Antiteatrul lui Eugen Ionesco," *Teatrul*, no. 9 (1958): 67–72.
64. Lupan, 68.

The entire essay is full of excerpts from Ionesco's article in NRF, and it is enough to remove the negative forms of verbs and the references to the mandatory ideology from Lupan's comments to obtain an - in fact - quite good and solid analysis welcoming a new Western author. Considering all this, I dare to imagine that the effect of this article was twofold: on the one hand, the text ticked his statutory obligation to demonize Ionesco, as ordered from above. Still, on the other hand, it worked as a teaser, an appetizer stirring the curiosity and the dreams of Romanian readers/theatre people; this can also explain the fervour with which the mature directors who emerged from the re-theatricalization would, only six or seven years later, start a real socialist race to stage Ionesco. In fact, I honestly believe that the author of inter-conflictual *NO* essays (1934) would have found this open-end argumentative centrifuge extremely funny:

> Thinking that the world of dreams is real, that human ideas, feelings, wishes - in general, the 'imaginary world' - only come from their conscience, investing them with absolute autonomy is being unable to understand reality. But, behind this inability of understanding reality lies the intention of deforming. Art based on such principles can only be a type of art doomed to disintegrate, decompose. And what other meaning can one find in renouncing 'the principle of character identity and unity' for a 'dynamic psychology', that is for the plot and character's oneiric lability? What does 'contradictory in non-contradictory' mean other than the disappearance of the borders between truth and absurd, logical and irrational? What else is the meaning of these obscure myths about the meaning of the human destiny in society, about the futility of social life, about human beings' impossibility to give sense to their existence?[65]

At this point, I take the liberty to promote the (working) assumption (though not as a joke) which we will try to discuss in further research: in the medium and long term, the effort to blow up recent Western aesthetic trends works against the propagandistic wishes/intentions of the leaders - whether they wanted to or not, some critics-activists who had responsibilities in cultural institutions, as much as they seemed to bring down doors, they actually opened windows. As political marketing experts say, "bad advertising is still advertising".

65. Lupan, 72.

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STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 2, 2019, p. 81 - 100
(Recommended Citation)
DOI:10.24193/subbdrama.2019.2.04

Filmic Revaluation of Political Rituals' Conflict: Hear My Cry *by Maciej Drygas*

SŁAWOMIR SIKORA[1]

Abstract: During an annual state propaganda event, the harvest festival, on the 8th September 1968 a man set himself on fire at the 10th-Anniversary Stadium in Warsaw. Ryszard Siwiec's self-immolation was a protest against the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact military troops (together with Polish troops). Although there were 100 000 people at the stadium, including the First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party as well as most notable party members, representatives from all regions of Poland and diplomatic corpuses, this fact has remained "unnoticed". The Radio Free Europe broadcasted information about it only a few months later.

In 1991 Maciej Drygas made Hear My Cry (Usłyszycie mój krzyk). This film creates/recreates social memory about Siwiec and his tragic death. Drygas used archival material, of which the most important scene is a 7-seconds film footage showing the very moment of Siwiec's self-immolation: a burning figure of a man on stadium tribunes. The Director used rhetorical devices (e.g. reframing, slow motion, a change of scale, repetition) that undone of official state ceremony (a bit like in a magic ritual), that has dominated the perception of people gathered on stadium's tribunes, and diminish its role and meaning. What was marginalized in 1968 and, in fact, unnoticed, becomes the main focus and a very special ritual; not without hesitance, I would say it becomes a performance (with reference to R. Schechner terms). I juxtapose it with a national drama Wesele (Wedding) by Stanisław Wyspiański (1901) and especially a filmic adaptation of it by Andrzej Wajda (1972).

The paper aims to discuss rhetorical devices used by Drygas in his documentary. It will also suggest that film can act as a ritual in itself and as a tool to recreate memory.

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Keywords: documentary film, film as ritual, memory, performance, political ritual, self-immolition, Ryszard Siwiec

"…success for political theatre also depends on converting the audience into the play itself."
David W. Apter

"That protest which ended so tragically was, to me, unsuccessful. It got lost amid those Polish folk dances."
A radio reporter, witness (from film's soundtrack)

"The past is a foreign country" – L. P. Hartley once noted in a sentence popularised by David Lowenthal in the title of his book about memory.[2] The film *Usłyszcie mój krzyk* (Hear My Cry, 1991), directed by Maciej Drygas, which I would like to discuss here, is an excellent example. It tells the story of an event that took place half a century ago and today appears to be incomprehensible. This is a description of a phenomenon of "refusing to acknowledge" an incident, which occurred in front of the eyes of almost 100 000 persons. Actually, the film deals with two events, albeit transpiring at one and the same time and, for all practical purposes, in a single place, but simultaneously remaining "non-transparent and incomprehensible" in relation to each other. A film is a specific medium of the memory[3] enabling the revalorisation of history. In his film Drygas juxtaposes those two events and attempts to re-evaluate them.

History

The event (events) described in the Drygas film took place on 8 September 1968 at the 10th-Anniversary Stadium (Polish: Stadion Dziesięciolecia) in Warsaw. The Stadium was packed with 100 000 spectators and was the site of

2. David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
3. David MacDougall, *Transcultural Cinema*, ed. L. Taylor (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), chap. XII.

one of the prime performances manifesting national unity: the so-called Harvest Festival (Polish: Dożynki), a state holiday during which highest state authorities headed by the First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party Władysław Gomułka, accepted the "homage" of the nation personified predominantly by representatives of the people (Polish peasants). The celebrations were elevated almost to the rank of a national holiday, and one of its prominent elements was the presentation of a loaf of bread to the Party First Secretary, the "host of the games", who subsequently, assisted by notables and representatives of the people, placed it on a specially decorated table (altar). A mythical image of the state conceived as a farmstead, with pride of place give to its husbandman (the First Secretary). An emblematic demonstration of national unity. In such rituals foremost rank was assigned to folksiness even if the subtext contained a worker-peasant alliance. It must be added that this folksiness was constructed by referring to native qualities, naturalness, and perpetuity.[4] Harvest wreaths from assorted regions of Poland were offered alongside other products of peasant toil. One of the foremost elements of the spectacle was the speech given by the Party First Secretary[5], while the entertainment was accompanied by, i.a. folk dances, an element of folksiness indispensable in socialist Poland. The account by a radio commentator outright included the remark that the people dance

4. The question of using "folksiness" is an extensive and multi-motif topic. The beginnings of ethnography were strongly linked with a quest for native qualities in the people: it is worth recalling that although this was an all-European trend certain Enlightenment-era ideas were connected with Romantic motifs, and in Poland were additionally overlapped by the search for securing our culture in native qualities and distinctness – after all, for over a hundred years Poland became a nation without a land (state), although some carried the motherland in their hearts. The ambiguity of this issue was brilliantly and symbolically depicted by, i.a. Wesele, a play by Stanisław Wyspiański (see: further part of this text) containing an important figure of memory, oblivion and fraternizing with the people (peasants) but also recollections of the latter's anti-gentry outbreaks. Cf. e.g. Ewa Klekot, "The Gentry Masters, Folklore and the People," in *Pany Chłopy Chłopy Pany (Masters Peasants Peasants Masters)*, ed. W. Szymański and M. Ujma (Nowy Sącz: Galeria Sztuki Współczesnej BWA Sokół, 2016). Naturally, references to the idea of folksiness and native qualities were made also by the authorities of the People's Republic of Poland.

5. In this respect listening to the "ode to folksiness", naturally including critical remarks by the "concerned" and "troubled" husbandman, delivered by Comrade Gomułka during the 1968 Harvest Festiwal, is highly instructive; see: http://www.polskieradio.pl/68/2461/Audio/332420,Centralne-Dozynki-wWarszawie (access: 18.03.2018).

even while working. Naturally, the scenario of those rituals was precisely defined, although each year certain modifications were introduced.

This was the day chosen by Ryszard Siwiec, an accountant from Przemyśl – but at the same time a philosopher, a book lover, a former Home Army soldier[6] and an ardent patriot – for his equally well-planned and conceived "performance", in which he wished to protest against the policy pursued by the state, the March events (the film mentions students of University of Warsaw being attacked by the militia[7]), and, in particular, the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact armies, including Polish forces, bringing "fraternal assistance" aimed at stifling the Prague Spring. It would seem that the time and place for such a protest were the best possible: a huge stadium filled with delegations from the whole of Poland, representatives of the state authorities, journalists, and the media (the Harvest Festival was transmitted live by Polish Radio). Nonetheless, Siwiec's tragic protest went unnoticed [8], and for years remained undisclosed and concealed behind a wall of silence. Only several months after the event did the French press

6. Conspiracy armed forces of the Polish Underground State active at the time of the Second World War. After the war members of the Home Army were persecuted by the new state authorities.

7. Essentially, the range of the "March events" was wider and did not come down only to student protests. One of the direct causes of the events in question were protests against banning the performance of the national drama *Dziady* (Forefather's' Eve) by Adam Mickiewicz, staged by Kazimierz Dejmek (Teatr Narodowy in Warsaw, 1967) and regarded by the then Polish authorities as directed against the Soviet Union. One of the consequences of those events was anti-Semitic propaganda unleashed by the authorities, which resulted in a large-scale forced emigration of Jewish citizens from Poland. An interesting view of this problem is to be found in the film by Maria Zmarz-Koczanowicz: *Zwyczajny marzec* (Ordinary March, 2008), in which a special commentator is Adam Michnik, at the time a student, participant, and victim of the events (Michnik was imprisoned), i.e. participant, witness, historian, and political commentator all in one.

8. Historian Jerzy Eisler (at the time a secondary school pupil) maintains that he came across – "it was said" – two versions of the event. One mentioned that Siwiec committed his act "in opposition to Gomułka". Filmed lecture: https://www.youtu be.com/watch?v=80lrELt PhhY&t=425 (access: 6.11.2017). Similarly, Krzysztof Kąkolewski recalled that he heard about the incident from his housekeeper, whose nephew worked in the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. K. Kąkolewski, *Pierwsze samospalenie*, "Kwartalnik Filmowy" 1993, no. 1. These were evident examples that the event was at least sporadically "talked about all over town".

publish pertinent information (upon the occasion of the self-immolation of Jan Palach in Prague), an example followed by Radio Free Europe.[9] For the wider public the incident came into being basically together with the screening of the film directed by Drygas.

Performance and ritual

I would like to treat both events as two performances. I use the word: "performance" in relation to the deed committed by Siwiec with a certain apprehension although the term appears to be justified. When it refers only to the act carried out by Siwiec I place it in inverted commas to mark certain distance to this term. Richard Schechner – one of the co-authors of performance studies[10] – maintains that every activity may become a performance, which denotes performing something according to a plan or a scenario.[11] At this stage I would like to refer to this wide definition. Without doubt, political events are considered precisely within the categories of a performance.[12]

9. Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, for years head of the Polish Service of Radio Free Europe, claimed that although information about the self-immolation was conveyed by some Party journalist almost immediately after the event, owing to the absence of any sort of confirmation it was considered false and not broadcast until March 1969 when Radio Free Europe editors received an anonymous letter describing in detail (and naming names) what had taken place at Stadion Dziesięciolecia. J. Nowak-Jeziorański, "Dlaczego Dramat Został Nie Zauważony?," *Kwartalnik Filmowy*, no. 1 (1993).

10. "Performance studies adherents explore a wide array of subjects and use many methodologies to deal with this contradictory and turbulent world. But unlike more traditional academic disciplines, performance studies is not organized into a unitary system. These days, many artists and intellectuals know that knowledge cannot be easily, if at all, reduced to a singular coherence. In fact, a hallmark of performance studies is the exposition of the tensions and contradictions driving today's world. No one in performance studies is able to profess the whole field." Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 4. Cf. primarily chapter I.

11. Ibid. "From the vantage of the kind of performance theory I am propounding, every action is a performance." (p. 38) "One of the meanings of 'to perform' is to get things done according to a particular plan or scenario." (p. 42).

12. Cf. e.g. Jeffrey C. Alexander and Jason L. Mast, *Social Performance: Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), or Vikki Bell, *Culture and Performance: The Challenge of Ethics, Politics and Feminist Theory* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2007).

While applying this abbreviated definition it could be said that both events were performances although incommensurate ones. The official Harvest Festival can be recognised as a structure, but then the act performed by Siwiec becomes an element of an anti-structure (with a reference to the terminology proposed by Victor Turner[13]). Participation both in the performance and in the ritual do not have to be connected with belief[14], as is stressed also by specialists. Pertti Alasuutari noted: "Cognitively – at least at some level of cognition – people know that rituals are invented traditions, whose contents can be developed and modified, and even that totally new rituals can be constructed. People do not even need to really believe in the values or ideologies that the rituals sanctify. Still, there is an air of solemnity around well-organized rituals, and that seriousness which creates the feeling of the ritual being a special occasion amongst the participants can best be achieved by making use of references to official authoritative ideologies or to sacred symbolism."[15] Schechner maintains a distance towards the division into religious and secular performances.[16] Upon numerous occasions attention was drawn to the political nature of rituals and their importance not only in authoritarian and totalitarian states, although in the latter they were significantly expanded. While writing that rituals (or social dramas) are a response to crisis situations in society Victor Turner distinguished their four phases: (1) breach, (2) crisis, (3) "redressive action", (4) "either of the reintegration of the disturbed social group, or of the social recognition and legitimation of irreparable schism between the contesting parties".[17] I believe that cyclically recurring state rituals – such as Dożynki – have a slightly simplified construction. They lack distinguished

13. Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969).

14. I write interchangeably about ritual and performance, at the same time recognising that "performance" is the more suitable and extensive term. This is also the path pursued by Turner. Jeffrey C. Alexander and Jason L. Mast noted: "When Turner turned explicitly to theorizing about highly differentiated societies, he moved from an analytical model based on ritual to one based on performance." J. C. Alexander, J. L. Mast, *Introduction: symbolic action in theory and practice: the cultural pragmatics of symbolic action*, in: J. C. Alexander, B. Giesen, J. L. Mast (ed.), *Social Performance*, p. 11.

15. Pertti Alasuutari, *Social Theory and Human Reality* (London: SAGE Publications, 2004), 98–99.

16. Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 53–56.

17. Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1986), 74–75.

phases, including that of "redress", and (re)integration is not so much restored as symbolically manifested. The very existence of the ritual is more of a confirmation of the "state of things", a guarantee of durability, and does not necessarily have to be associated with redress. Although perhaps this is not exactly what happens. In 1968 Władysław Gomułka (aka Comrade Wiesław) mentioned, e.g. certain shortcomings, which should be set right.[18] Important elements of the ritual in question include reminding about the necessity of waging a battle against the enemies of the system and indicating the progressing construction of "the new". It is form that is important. This was the purpose served by the ritualised speeches given by authoritarian and totalitarian leaders. The Harvest Festival perfectly continues this tradition in its capacity as a folk holiday (cyclical rebirth) and, simultaneously, a state festivity (a ritual confirmation of the state of things). At the time of the ritual it is simply impossible to stand to the side, and the absence of belief, or incomplete belief, is by no means an obstacle rendering active participation impossible. "Ritual is like a train: once you decide to get on board, it is very difficult to step off midway. Rituals make people – even untrained outsiders who decide to participate – act according to the script. (…) we just have to play by the rules imposed on us. That is how power works."[19]

The act performed by Siwiec can be by all means regarded as a ritual: a sacrificial ritual, a voluntary sacrifice made of one's life, whose purpose is to reform society and incline others to "come to their senses": "People, people! Come to your senses! Youths of the nation's future, it is not worth murdering, every twenty years, so that one '-ism' or another may dominate or not dominate the world. It is not worth murdering, so that this or that group of people takes complete power. (…) Hear my cry, the cry of a grey and common man, a son of the nation who loves his and everybody else's freedom more than anything, more than his own life. Come to your senses! It isn't too late!"[20]

18. Cf. a record of the speech by Gomułka: http://www.polskieradio.pl/68/2461/Audio/332420,Centralne-Dozynki-w Warszawie (access: 18.03.2018).

19. Alasuutari, *Social Theory and Human Reality*, 102–3.

20. From the message recorded by Ryszard Siwiec two days before the self-immolation (film soundtrack). I cite all quotes from the soundtrack without further references.

The performative film

It is worth noting that the Drygas film can be also described as a performance or a performative film; this holds true in particular for its second part, in which the director approached existing material in a highly creative manner and just as creatively combined archival material with obtained contemporary material. In this instance that, which is usually described as found footage possesses a literal meaning. Apart from film records of the Harvest Festival, the filmmaker, known for his enthusiasm for archive research, was able to discover a seven seconds long fragment of a film record of the self-immolation, and the way in which he proved capable of using it and including it into the film appears to be exceptionally interesting and inventive. But this will be discussed further on.

Bill Nichols regards the performative document to be one of the categories of the documentary film. The characteristic features of this genre include, i.a. suspending the traditional reference approach and abandoning interest exclusively in the "historical world". "This shift blurs yet more dramatically the already imperfect boundary between documentary and fiction. It also makes the viewer rather than the historical world a primary referent. (These films address us not with commands or imperatives necessarily, but with a sense of emphatic engagement that overshadows their reference to the historical world.) (…) The Referents R Us."[21] Nichols does not claim that the performative document excludes interest in the historical world. This type of document "embodies a paradox: it generates a distinct tension between performance and document, between the personal and the typical, the embodied and disembodied, between in short history and science."[22] It is the construction of the message that becomes supreme. Interpreted in a milder version this postulate says: it is worth drawing attention to the way of constructing the content and to think about the recipient – the film can be not solely a transmitter of information but also of, e.g. experience.

21. Bill Nichols, *Blurred Boundaries. Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Culture* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, Bloomington University Press, 1994), 94, 97.
22. Nichols, 97.

Some more history

The act carried out by Siwiec did not meet with understanding. By referring to the Actor-Network Theory launched by Bruno Latour[23] one could say that Siwiec did not manage to find allies who would first want to consciously and reflectively notice his act and then foster its dissemination and publicise its message. The reverse was true**.** The militia confiscated Siwiec's briefcase containing material explaining the motives of his act, intercepted a letter written to his wife, the heavily-burnt Siwiec was quickly taken to hospital where he soon died, and a rumour maintaining that "vodka set a man on fire" and that the victim was mentally unstable was spread. Stigmatisation was simultaneously an act of exclusion. Constructed alieness prevailed, but the majority of the contents, which Siwiec intended to communicate, proved to be "alien" to the public. It could appear that it was totally natural for the incident not to get to social awareness or to find itself within the domain of the "mass imagination" of the period. Information was not given by any media, including Radio Free Europe.[24]

An awareness blockade, however, is also not be underestimated and is mentioned by, i.a. a young woman, who witnessed the events. Although she knew the reasons for Siwiec's self-immolation since secret police agents examined his briefcase near the site where she found herself, the significance of the event transcended her *imaginarium*[25]: "The Siwiec incident was on a par with [a train] accident. It did not register in my mind. (…) Maybe because in our culture suicide is considered as something alien. I don't know. (…) I didn't know about exterminations, about Katyń[26], about what the system did

23. Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network- Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

24. Cf. note 3.

25. Here I refer loosely to the term used by Charles Taylor: "The social imaginary is not a set of ideas; rather, it is what enables, through making sense of, the practices of a society." Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 2.

26. In 1940 over 20 000 Polish citizens, including more than 10 000 Polish Army and police officers, whose considerable number had been arrested already during the Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939, were shot in Katyn upon the orders of the Soviet authorities (NKVD). This fact was carefully concealed by the authorities of socialist Poland, although it was also rather universally known.

to people. I found out about that later. (…) Perhaps one of the reasons why I thought his death was so futile, was that we subconsciously accepted the horrors of that system." It was not easy to get off this train (state ritual) – to evoke the metaphor conceived by Alasuutari – and to board a different train, to understand this different dramatic and authentic ritual.

The Drygas film

This situation is finally reversed by the Drygas film composed as if of two parts. While remaining within the range of the Latour theory it could be said that it was the film, which called those missing allies into being. The first part of the film is to a considerable extent linked with statements made by family members and close friends. Within this reconstruction there emerges a portrait of Siwiec, a man at times painfully righteous.

Drygas conducts as it were a two-track narration: the statements made by relatives and witnesses are intermingled with archival footage of the state holiday by recreating fragments of folk dances performed upon this occasion but also, e.g. with footage showing Władysław Gomułka making his way down a row of people and carrying a loaf of bread, which he then placed on a table – "altar" – embellished with wreaths. The parareligious sources of this state ritual are conspicuous.

In a similar fashion, albeit simultaneously totally differently, almost the entire second part of the film takes place at the stadium, the difference being two time levels. Now, Drygas allows direct witnesses of the incident to speak: a radio reporter, a filmmaker, a photographer, a fireman, a man (militiaman) who took part in an attempt at putting out the fire engulfing Siwiec, an elderly woman in charge of one of the groups of children dancing at the stadium, a medic, a nurse, and a young woman (Grażyna Niezgoda), who found herself at the stadium by chance but, it so happened, close to the event. Drygas filmed all those persons at the then still existing although already closed stadium. The fireman is in uniform, the doctor and nurse are wearing suitable white coats, the reporter holds a microphone, and the filmmaker – a camera... This interesting procedure "emblematises" the narratives and, at the same time, identifies the persons involved. It is also an illusion of returning to the past.

The split up stories told by the above-mentioned protagonists are rendered rhythmic and contextualised by shots of folk dances and fragments of the radio account, except that the context itself starts being de-contextualised. Those essential interferences in the documentary records start exactly in the second, "stadium" part of the film. Persons taking part in the ceremonial processions and dancing on grass are rendered hieratic (a vertical extension of the image with the help of a wide angle converter), the shots of the dances are now accompanied by changed music (*Partita III* by Paweł Szymański), in those further sequences the movements of the dancers are rendered slower, and finally the "camera"[27] shows a close-up of the almost still faces of several young female dancers as if tensely "waiting" – we see only micro-movements of the face and the head. Excellently chosen music creates meaning: the motionlessness of waiting. The delicate, single sounds of the harpsichord resemble breath-holding, which indicates *numinosum*.[28]

Digression

When some time ago I watched the Drygas film together with students I thought that it is connected with *Wesele* (The Wedding) by Stanisław Wyspiański (1901), and perhaps to an even greater degree with Andrzej Wajda's film *Wesele* (1972) regarded as masterly.[29] Wyspiański wrote *Wesele* at a time when Poland was as if an imaginary being, submerged in non-existence by the partitions, albeit carried in the heads and hearts of numerous Poles[30]. The titular event refers to the wedding of a poet (a representative of

27. When I use the words: "camera" and "frame" in quotes I refer to the operation of cropping the archival material (cropping the original frame) – we deal not with the actual motion of the camera but precisely with a special "focusing" of our perception in post-production.

28. I refer here to reflections by Rudolf Otto, who regarded the loftiest moment, closest to the sacrum, in The Mass in B minor by Johann Sebastian Bach to be that of the greatest cessation of sound. See Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy. An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational*, trans. J. W. Harvey (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), 72–73.

29. Wiesław Juszczak, "Splot Symboliczny ("Wesele" a Film Wajdy)," in *Fakty i Wyobraźnia* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1979).

30. Between 1795 and 1918 Poland vanished from the map of the world and its lands were divided by neighbouring powers: Russia, Austria and Prussia. Naturally, a significant number of Poles did not come to terms with this state of things.

the intelligentsia and the upper strata) and a local peasant girl, held in a village near Cracow. The drama takes place upon numerous levels, one of which (the realistic level) is connected with a boisterous wedding reception, vibrating, colourful and "powerful" (excellently staged in Wajda's film), with entwined important political and social dialogues between representatives of assorted social estates. Many resound with fragile rapport (merrymaking, fraternization) by no means devoid of multiple grievances between representatives of the peasantry and the gentry/intelligentsia. This joyful night (merrymaking) is, however, imbued also by elements of a forefathers' eve and the presence of characters from the netherworld/memories with a strong political and patriotic hue. It is they who predominantly introduce an atmosphere of yet another patriotic upsurge, which supposedly will free Poland. One of the scenes crowning the drama/Wajda's film is that of a straw-man dance performed by armed protagonists who freeze motionless by succumbing to lethargy and ultimately abandon their prepared weapons – all because a messenger had lost the golden horn that was to give a signal to embark upon a patriotic rising. The supra-estate and supra-division rapport does not take place. Poland sinks into lethargy.

The fact that the Wyspiański drama appears to be constantly topical in Poland, and even that its topicality grows once again, could be testified by the recent publication of *Wyspiański / Zbudź się, Polaku*[31]… (Wyspiański / Wake up, Pole…), a collection of interviews and essays. Naturally, this is not the sole example of the relevance of the Wyspiański drama…

Back to the film…

By means of his film Drygas tore the veil of silence and brings back events that took place on that day at the stadium and that, for all practical purposes, for the next 23 years vanished from social awareness. In doing so he extracted from social (and political) oblivion that, which must have been seen (and heard) but which did not reach the realm of the visible (and heard),

31. Piotr Augustyniak, ed., *Wyspiański / Zbudź Się, Polaku* (Gdańsk: Słowo/Obraz Terytoria, 2017).

i.e. the consciously noticed.[32] This is essentially an act of re-evaluation, a degradation of an official performance for the sake of ennobling the heroic act of an individual. That, which at the time was essential now becomes a background, while that, which was marginalised is now elevated. This is an act of revalorisation, which as such is a special rite of enhancement, a political act of "undoing oblivion", similarly as in magic or a ritual. "Performativity" – wrote Viki Bell – "is not an explanatory concept so much as itself part of an intervention, and, in this context, its promise is that in making such an intervention, it will bespeak possibilities without itself becoming a moralism; in other words, that it will imagine and articulate the possibility of things being 'otherwise' while not itself becoming so enamoured of power (even such a seemingly flaccid power as that of 'explanation') as to forget to question the terms and directions of its own interventions in the socio-political world. (…) The promise of performativity therefore must also be that those who utilize it reflect upon how their interventions themselves perform within a contemporary context of power relations. The political question does not come after the analytic therefore; they are entwined at the outset. Thus if the way in which one is invited or obliged to partake in the lines of power within which one emerges is always a political question, it is also necessary to consider the sense in which the attempt to comprehend the operations of power are themselves a 'cutting', an intervention that, like film editing, makes a story tell-able. This is not of course to say that this story is untrue. But it is to say that its own possibility and its framing need to be continually reconsidered."[33]

32. This is a rather controversial statement in the light of further parts of my text and of that, which had been partially shown in the discussed film. By introducing this opposition, I had in mind a differentiation proposed by, i.a. Judith Okely, who, by referring to Jacques Prévert, distinguished looking/regarder and seeing/voir. In the second case the comprehension element (I see) steps in to a greater degree (Judith Okely, "Visualism and Landscape: Looking and Seeing in Normandy," *Ethnos. Journal of Anthropology* 66, no. 1 (2001)). I do not consider this opposition to be strong: cf. Sławomir Sikora, "O Problematyczności Wizualności w Antropologii," in *Kultura Profesjonalna Etnologów w Polsce*, ed. M. Brocki, K. Górny, and W. Kuligowski (Wrocław: KEiAK, Uniwersytet Wrocławski, 2006), 184–85. One way or another, it is impossible to abstract from the political aura with which this "non-seeing" is connected.

33. Bell, *Culture and Performance: The Challenge of Ethics, Politics and Feminist Theory*, 5.

Quite possibly a considerable number of people present at the stadium – perhaps even a majority of those 100 000 gathered members of the public – must have seen the event taking place in the stand in the lower part of the sector near the tunnel-entry to the stadium.[34] An overwhelming majority were unable to hear the voice of Siwiec, who even though on fire still cried out what he was protesting against – the music completely drowned out his voice.[35] But had really none of those nearby heard nothing?

Although the declarations made (in the film) by witnesses do not create a single narrative line they do construe a new account of the event. It follows from their statements that they were all aware, although to various degrees, of what had happened. At times their voices resound with a considerable aloofness and reservations: "We'd been trained what to do and what not to do" (p. 52) notes a photographer speaking about his lack of "interest" in the event. This is a disguised indication of the oppressive nature of the system, admittance to functioning and living in a system of a decidedly determined and restricted freedom. The same holds true for the statement made by the radio reporter: "Later, after the broadcast, we wondered, why the man chose to burn himself during the dances and the show and not when Gomulka was there. If he'd done it during Gomulka's speech the commotion would have thrown him off balance, as it did us. (…) The speech would have been interrupted and the whole world would have heard about it." Slightly earlier the same witness said: "If the orchestra had immediately stopped playing, as reporters, we would have had to react and explain why the music had stopped. We would have had a point of reference and reported it. (…) We were dumbstruck. We wouldn't have been able to describe it. Sorry but would you be able to describe the death of a burning man." Both the rhetorical question capping the reporter's declaration and the rhetoric of the earlier sentences shift the responsibility of making a decision onto others.

34. My colleague, at the time a ten-year old girl, recalled that on that day she was at the stadium together with her grandfather. Today she finds it difficult to separate that, which she saw at the time from later knowledge, but she certainly took notice of the fact itself, the commotion that it produced, and remembers that her grandfather wanted at all costs to draw her attention away from the incident. On the other hand, the folk dances were extremely spectacular and colourful…

35. Part of the film made by the Security Service and disclosed already after the making of the Drygas film, shows the extinguishing of the fire as well as Siwiec, no longer on fire, who stands partly naked and for some time continues to shout.

And this already recalls the dialectics of power and powerlessness with which we deal in *Wesele*.

Apparently, the deed performed by Siwiec, envisaged as a conscious act and a communiqué, transgressed beyond the sphere of the imagined (at least in universal reception). And although a great number of people must have observed the event, it clearly had not been "noticed" and did not fit into their "imaginary" (here I once again refer to Charles Taylor).

Seven preserved seconds

The last more than ten minutes of the film – actually, almost one-third of its duration – are a true masterpiece. The director intertwined the brief statements made by assorted persons with fragments of a discovered seven seconds long sequence recreated in considerable slow motion and showing a man burning alive. Thanks to the reproduction of successive fragments of the original frame (as if "diachronic shots") Drygas extracted the extraordinary choreography of human movements, which enlarged, slowed down, and in a close-up often appear to be incomprehensible and disjointed, while the people captured in the "frame" seem to be "lost": gathered in a tightknit group they persistently watch something taking place next to them, a woman covers her mouth as though horrified, a man pats his hair as if in response to a uncomfortable situation, someone opens an umbrella, and another woman climbs onto a bench. Successive shots – other fragments of the same frame – show persons attempting to come closer to something: they run up and then retreat. All these movements produce the impression of being chaotic and uncoordinated, and assume a meaning only when we know what sort of event they respond to and what *all the people* are looking at. For a long time, the *punctum* remains outside the actual frame of the film.[36] The director stalls and, at the same time, deconstructs the sequences of the enacted tragedy.

36. In his fascinating book about photography Roland Barthes did not define punctum unambiguously. Punctum is a wound, a cut, a constant trauma, but also time stopped/arrested (in a photograph); according to Barthes the detail does not have to come down to a point (etymology) – it is a place that "hides", leads away, guides towards beyond the frame. It is in a sense a secret and strongly personified place that can pierce the viewer in the manner of an arrow. See Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. R. Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981). My use of the term probably transcends Barthes' comprehension.

Consecutive sequences thus show fragments of the dance performed on grass. Slow motion, fragmentation, and changed music (!) are the reasons why sometime the movements appear to be disjointed, as if the figures were seeking each other in the somnambular dance. The dancers on the grass perform incomprehensible movements, with their heads leaning backwards (and looking at the figure ablaze, invisible to us). Due to slow motion and sound de-contextualisation the dance assumes a hypnotic (im)potency and at certain moments becomes a truly straw-man dance, close to the one envisaged by Wyspiański and Wajda in *Wesele*. In this slow motion and certain awkwardness (the altered soundtrack) it becomes equivalent to the described "chaotic" behaviour of the public on the stand. Only in subsequent approaches to the discovered seven seconds long shot did Drygas slowly change the "frame" – it's an operation within the original frame – and as if in a vertical panorama he guides our gaze from the persons dancing on the grass once again to the stand – this time a man wearing a beret and standing in the midst of flames appears in its centre. A fireman and a militiaman attempt to put the fire down. The man burning alive waves his arms and continues to cry out – successive "shots" bring us closer to him. The appalled people who formed an empty circle around him must have heard what he tried to tell them. This had to be a terrifying and traumatic view: a man ablaze who cries not with pain but shouts his message addressed to the somnolent nation: "Hear my cry, the cry of a grey and common man, a son of the nation who loves his and everybody else's freedom more than anything, more than his own life. Come to your senses! It isn't too late!"[37]

Conclusion

Among assorted opinions and commentaries, one may come across also those claiming that suicide, death in flames, is foreign to (Catholic) Polish culture, as recalled by the earlier mentioned Grażyna Niezgoda. It is also indirectly remarked on by a medic in the hospital to which the burnt Siwiec was taken. The doctor describes how routine questions asked whenever a patient arrives at the hospital include those concerning the circumstances of

37. The preserved message to the nation, recorded two days before the self-immolation, is recreated in the film – one of witnesses (a fireman) declares that Siwiec cried out his slogans: "he was screaming 'Down with communism, down with Gomulka' and other things against the Soviets. It's difficult now to repeat exactly what he was saying."

the origin of the injuries: "When we found out why he'd torched himself people branded him a mad man and a psychopath. When one of my colleagues heard this he burst out that this was an example of how indoctrinated the Poles were. That when Buddhist monks burn themselves as a sign of protest, we see them as saints, but when someone burns himself here for political reasons he must be mad or a psychopathic." The reconstruction or perhaps rather the restoration of the meaning carried out in Drygas' film concerns also this problem. Twice the film cites the distinctive opinion of Rev. Professor Józef Tischner commenting on the significance of the deaths of Buddhist monks in an act of self-immolation but also speaking about conscience in a declaration already pertaining by all means to (Catholic) Polish culture: "Conscience is the ultimate judge of man's actions. And if I saw that his actions were dictated by the voice of his conscience, I would have to accept his choice." The film begins with scenes of documents carried out and set on fire by the militia, and ends with a real image of a man burning to death. The image of obliterating traces changes into the slow and laborious task of their reconstruction. In this manner, the film becomes an important medium for undoing social oblivion. Here, the statement made by Clifford Geertz: "In a ritual, the world as lived and the world as imagined, fused under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turn out to be the same world"[38] meets a declaration concerning the cinema, formulated by Gilles Deleuze, who recognised that in the cinema of our times description "was already reaching the indiscernibility of the real and the imaginary"[39]. It is probably possible to draw different conclusions from a confrontation of those opinions, including the one that the cinema/film can be the ritual of our times and thus can certainly serve the repetition and recreation of events, and possesses a power similar to the one granted to the traditional festivity. Leszek Kołakowski diagnosed this power as a paralysis of time (p. 33)[40]. In my opinion he

38. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 112.
39. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2. The Time-Image*, transl. by H. Tomlinson and R. Galeta, (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press), 1997, p. 131.
40. In an introduction to Treatise on the History of Religion Kołakowski –" formalising" the conception formulated by the Romanian historian of religion – recognised religion or rather its interpretation proposed by Eliade to be a paralysis of time. Leshek Kołakowski, "Słowo Wstępne – Mircea Eliade: Religia Jako Paraliż Czasu," in Mircea Eliade, *Traktat o Historii Religii* (Warshaw: Warshaw, Książka i Wiedza, 1966).

underestimated the restoring and refurbishing potency of the festivity, and perceived above all the power of "mechanical" repetition – a paralysis of time indeed, as in *Groundhog Day* directed by Harold Ramis (1993). At this stage I compared opinions expressed by Geertz and Deleuze also to accentuate the imagined, the element that is not merely imitative but also creative. To evoke the words of Victor Turner: "*poesis* rather than *mimesis*: making not faking"[41]. This new ritual – the film and the cinema – can undo history and sometimes makes it possible to see it anew, in a different and fuller light.

Post scriptum. Copy-past?

Almost fifty years later, on 19 October 2017, another person (Piotr Szczęsny) set himself on fire in the very centre of Warsaw, next to the Palace of Culture and Science, to protest against the policies of the ruling Law and Justice government. It follows clearly from the left-behind and distributed material – containing unambiguously critical references to the present government (the author formulated a catalogue of postulates and urged the Poles to "wake up") – that the deed was committed consciously. By calling himself a Grey and Common Man, Piotr Szczęsny evidently referred to Siwiec, and by carrying out the act close to the Palace of Culture and Science (a post-war "gift from the Soviet people" /1955/, in the past bearing the name of Joseph Stalin) he as if became part of a book by the prominent author Tadeusz Konwicki, who in 1979 (i.e. already prior to the "Solidarity epoch") wrote *Mała Apokalipsa* (A Minor Apocalypse, issued by an underground publishing house). In the book the Palace of Culture is called the Statue of Non-Liberty, and the leading protagonist roams the reality of the period while planning self-immolation... In an English-language article discussing and contextualising the event, Sławomir Sierakowski, one of the important Polish leftist publicists and a representative of the middle generation, recalls only Buddhist monks and Jan Palach[42]… "The Guardian" does the

41. Victor Turner, *No TitleFrom Ritual to Theatre. The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1982), 93.

42. Sławomir Sierakowski, "Mourning Poland's Anti-Populist Martyr," Project Syndicate, 2017, https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/poland-self-immolation-by-slawomir-sierakowski-2017-10.

same[43]. Siwiec's deed once again fell into oblivion… Does history really repeat itself?

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43. John Dyke, "In Poland Last Month, an Act of Self-Sacrifice on a Par with Jan Palach," The Guardian, 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/06/in-poland-last-month-an-act-of-self-sacrifice-on-a-par-with-jan-palach.

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STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 2, 2019, p. 101 - 118
(Recommended Citation)
DOI:10.24193/subbdrama.2019.2.05

Revisiting Great Soviet Symbols of World War II. The Young Guard Now and Then

OLGA GRĂDINARU[1]

Abstract: The anti-fascist organization The Young Guard (*Molodaya gvardia*) in a Ukrainian town is the main focus of the present analysis, offering a glimpse into the Soviet myth-making and hero-making cycle. The article unveils the ideological and cultural patterns during the Soviet period, with a focus on A. Fadeyev's novel and on the Soviet and post-Soviet film adaptations. The case of The Young Guard organization generated a frenzy of artistic representations throughout the Soviet Union, with various degrees of demystification during the post-Soviet period. The paper highlights the differences in describing and perceiving the heroic/heroicized death in various historical periods. Soviet propaganda traits and Socialist Realism patterns are revealed as part of the Soviet cult of World War II, as well as demystifying steps in approaching the myth of The Young Guard in post-Soviet filmic productions.

Keywords: The Young Guard, heroicized death, ideological fictionalization, demystification, cult of Great Patriotic War, Soviet material culture

Introductory Notes

The Soviet myth-making capacity needs no introduction. Homo Sovieticus was raised on the rich mythical soil of the Civil War cult replaced gradually by the Second World War cult.[2] We are to unveil the path of a symbol of the latter, called "Great Patriotic War" (*Velikaya Otechestvennaya Voyna*) in Soviet and

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post-Soviet period. This is the case of The Young Guard anti-fascist organization, revisited recently by two filmic representations. Our analysis takes into account the existing Soviet mythologized version of events - Alexander Fadeyev's novel and Sergey Gerasimov's film adaptation. The very fact that both these canonical heroicizing productions underwent censorship and editing is telling of the importance of the Soviet myth making process.

The historical events took place in Krasnodon, a town known for its coal mines in the Soviet Ukraine, in 1942, when a group of teenagers decided under dreadful circumstances of fascist occupation to fight back. The group grew bigger under the guidance of Ivan Turkenich (a former soldier of the Red Army who escaped Nazi imprisonment), Viktor Tretyakevich, and Oleg Koshevoy. What started as a chaotic childish game for some teenagers became a resistance force of up to one hundred members (mostly teenagers, aged 14-22). Among the activities of the resistance movement we mention: writing (then publishing) anti-fascist leaflets and real news from the front; constant diversions in occupants' attempts to restart industrial works, and hanging Soviet flags on important buildings of the town to commemorate the October Revolution. Whether or not ampler (and thus heroic) activities were initiated and completed by The Young Guard or they are only A. Fadeyev's fictional products in his novel is not clear. An armed riot was planned in order to restore the Soviet order in the town and to join forces with the nearby troops of the Red Army but the organization was uncovered.

The ambiguity and contradictions between the Soviet official version and recent information from archives presented in both Russian and Ukrainian documentaries may have one rather blunt explanation – that the Soviet version served the propaganda and myth-making machine. Once the film adaptation is released and the second version of Fadeyev's novel is published, they become the official canonical version of Krasnodon events. And this is eagerly pursued to the point that party members pressed the relatives from the small mining town of Krasnodon to support that particular version, imbued with Stalinist myths and motives.

Nevertheless, all sources agree that January 1943 is the period when the activity of The Young Guard stopped due to a wave of arrests. As a result, the official Soviet sources state that 71 Krasnodon prisoners were tortured and thrown alive into the pit of a coal mine on January 15, 16, 31, while others

were caught, tortured and shot in Rovenki, not far from Krasnodon on February 9. According to different sources, about eleven to sixteen members managed to escape. Krasnodon was liberated by the Red Army on February 14, and the bodies of the young fighters were retrieved from the pit and buried on the 1st of March 1943 in the central park of Krasnodon, where a temporary wooden obelisk was placed and then a monument. A museum dedicated to the memory of young guardians was opened in Moscow in 1958, and a memorial complex was built in Krasnodon in 1970, while the basement of the hospital where they were tortured was opened to the public as a museum.

To start with, Fadeyev's novel *The Young Guard* (1946) stirs a lot of public discussions on the accuracy of depicted events from Krasnodon area and on the issue history-fiction. Then harsh critical notes in November-December 1947 invoke the necessity of re-writing the book closer to reality, that is, in a dutiful and laudatory tone when depicting (or, it would be safe to say inventing) the importance of Bolshevik resistance movement in the region. It appears that the young guardians' activity was insufficiently watched, raised and surveyed by the older and wiser generation of the forefathers, previously involved in the Civil War and Russian Revolution.

As a result, Fadeyev adds ten chapters to depict the basic Stalinist motives of picking up the baton and the relationship between "fathers" and "sons"[3]. The author views the re-writing of the novel as a necessity, a great deed of civil responsibility and not as a coercive act (Blagoveschensky 1957). While the aspects of Soviet literary theory are not the concern of this paper, it is clear how the literary works were written – under the pressure of the censorship, under the strict magnifier of ideology. It would be therefore only just to consider the second edition of the novel (1951) an ideological fictionalization[4], a mythological historicization of real facts and events to serve better the needs and interests of the Soviet Homeland and Communist Party, the didactic purposes in raising exemplary submissive and self-denying citizens.

3. Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), 114–25, 226–33.

4. The context and genesis of the two versions of Fadeyev's novel, as well as the concept of ideological fictionalization are explained in Olga Grădinaru, *Războiul sovietic între idealizare și demitizare* (Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2018), 62–67.

A similar fate awaits Gerasimov's film adaptation[5] (1948) – the initial film (1947) is severely criticized by Stalin himself and undergoes serious transformation under Andrey Zhdanov's thoughtful supervision (on Stalin's active role as censor of Soviet cinema see Maryamov 1992). The film is edited again in 1964 as a result of meaningful historical changes (several stages of the Thaw[6] after Stalin's death), removing sequences that were part of Stalin's cult and correcting the name of the traitor[7].

The '60s and the famous trial against the traitors of The Young Guard is the basis for a documentary story – *Eto bylo v Krasnodone* (*This Happened in Krasnodon*, 1961) - signed by Kim Kostenko. The main merit of this documentary is pointing out that the first commissar of the underground organization was Viktor Tretyakevich and not Oleg Koshevoy (according to Fadeyev's fiction and assumed version in later films and documentaries).

The three Soviet documentaries about The Young Guard resistance are based on Fadeyev's already canonical version of events: *Pamiat* (*Memory*, 1970) and *Po sledam fil`ma Molodaya Gvardia* (*Following the Steps of the Film The Young Guard*, 1988) are reflections of the same official ideologically correct perspective. A series of short documentary biographies of members of the organization is entitled *Zhivite za nas* (*Live for Us*, 1970) – presentations of members through fragments of their diaries or school essays, productions of a didactic nature, meant to influence the younger generations and to raise them in the same patriotic spirit.

Among cultural and material consequences of the Soviet myth making phenomenon, there are over one hundred streets, villages, towns, parks, schools named after the organization and its members (Molodogvardeysk, Molodogvardeyskaya Street, Krasnodonskaya Street etc.). Various monuments were erected throughout the Soviet Union, among which the most prominent: *Klyatva* (*Oath*, 1954) in Krasnodon; the memorial complex *Slava* (*Glory*, 1982) in Rovenki, Lugansk; the alley of young guardians (1952) in Kharkov/Kharkhiv,

5. Script by Sergey Gerasimov, composer Dmitry Shostakovich.

6. Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, 210–33.

7. Fadeyev admitted that Evgeny Stakhovich was a fictional character, not a real member of The Young Guard; meanwhile the real name of the traitor became known – Genady Pocheptsov – after considering Viktor Tretyakevich the traitor.

and the memorial complex *Nepokorennye* (*Unconquered*, 1982) in Krasnodon. Moreover, Fadeyev's novel is the basis for many theatrical representations, as well as for Andrey Malyshko's Libretto (1947) and Yuliy Meytus' Opera (1947).

The Last Confession (4 episodes, 2006) and *The Young Guard* (12 episodes, 2015) are two Russian post-Soviet TV series, which are relevant examples for the necessity of re-writing the famous Soviet narratives about Krasnodon historical events during the fascist occupation in 1942-1943. Another post-Soviet approach of the thorny Soviet heritage is the Ukrainian animated feature film *Nashi* (*Ours*, 2012)[8], which may be considered a fine example of history reconstruction in search of relevance for nowadays young generations. The list of post-Soviet documentaries dedicated to this resistance movement is impressive: twelve documentaries on the heroic theme of the Soviet times in a relatively short period (only three Russian films and Ukrainian ones from the Lugansk/Luhansk region, the disputed territory in the hybrid ongoing Russo-Ukrainian conflict[9]).

Soviet Times: The Path from Popular Hero to National Symbol

In order to explain the nowadays interest and/or fascination of Russians with the young members of a resistance movement during World War II, we are to uncover the mechanisms that made them national heroes and symbols of patriotic duty and sacrifice. The Socialist Realism canon (1934) required the depiction of positive heroes and the merge of two opposite principles: the

8. The Ukrainian animated feature film is directed by A. Sych commemorates 70 years from the Krasnodon events and it is the work of "Fantazery" studio, within the State Academy of Art and Culture, Lugansk. The frame of the cartoon is a discussion between an old man and his grandson about war medals, heroism, and homeland, while the last sequence presents the two of them bringing carnations to the monument of the young guardians in Krasnodon. If the aim of *Ours* is an educational one as a continuation of the Soviet film-making tradition, then it may be considered successful due to its usage of nowadays adjusted language and avoidance of Soviet linguistic clichés and stereotypes.

9. See the analysis of post-Soviet documentaries in Olga Grădinaru, "The Discourse of Russo-Ukrainian Identity in the Luhansk/Lugansk Region," in *Ways of Being in Literary and Cultural Spaces*, ed. Leo Loveday and Emilia Parpală (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 66–79.

romantic and the realistic, or, as Katerina Clark puts it, combining verisimilitude and mythicization[10]. This resulted in a "modal schizophrenia" that reduced the novel to the dichotomy of depicting "what is" (realistic mode) and "what ought to be" (idealistic, utopian, mythic mode)[11]. The sudden leaps from realistic to mythic mode and the idealized tone are characteristics of Fadeyev's novel, especially the second edition, where entire chapters of elder generations involved in the resistance were added[12].

The creation of the New Man required a new type of literature, dedicated to the education of the masses, based on Lenin's vision regarding the close relationship between the party and literature[13]. In order to produce the new literary hero, the positive hero[14], examples are to be found among simple people of the newly established socialist state and embellished, idealized, mythologized and brought back to the people. The Soviet propaganda machine is prolific during the Second World War, using real-life heroes, writing articles, short stories and novels about them in order to raise the morale of those on the front and beyond.

Thus, the propagandistic cycle is complete: from heroes in the popular mentality to positive heroes in literature and back to people's conscience with the status of symbols, national heroes set as reachable examples. The mass-copying phenomenon has the task of creating a canonized symbol that is to be instilled in the social conscience[15]. This mechanism specific to Russian wars of the 20th century is a method of re-affirming the heroic examples in people's conscience, transforming real traumatic events into heroicized and idealized ones.

10. Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, 35.

11. Clark, 37.

12. One particular fragment must be mentioned – a lyrical-pathetic dialogue between two Bolshevik leaders just hours before their death penalty (buried alive near the town singing Internationale).

13. Anatoly Lunacharsky, *Stat`i o Literature* (Moskva: Goslitizdat, 1957), 76–90.

14. The positive hero is one of the mandatory traits of Socialist Realism, with its literary tradition going back to the middle of the 19th century, especially Nikolay Chernyshevsky's novel *What Is to Be Done?* (1863).

15. Elena Senyavskaya, *Psikhologija Voiny v XX Veke: Istoricheskij Opyt Rossii* (Moskva: Rosspen, 1999).

The propagandistic aim of literary works inspired by World War II events goes further than to educate submissive citizens through these transformed, mythologized heroes; the shaping of Soviet national unity and identity was at stake, where heroism and heroic deed play prominent roles (Grădinaru 2013:114-122). As for our specific case, Fadeyev's novel manages not only to build positive heroes as symbols of the Soviet era, but also to depict their death as a symbol – a trait that become part of what Katerina Clark called the "master plot" of the Socialist Realist novel[16]. A. Fadeyev's *Molodaya Gvardia* reiterates the defining features of the Soviet novel: the path of initiation from spontaneity (*stikhijnost`*) to consciousness (*soznatel`nost`*)[17]; the relationship "mentor-disciple" as variant of the relationship "father-son", and the social integration of the hero and his/hers collective identity.

Moreover, death under its various forms brings forth the issue of legitimization. By undergoing the initiation process, the hero dies as an individual and is reborn as a collective figure, as part of the newly found community. This "death-and-transfiguration" pattern may be seen in the way death of the Krasnodon people during the war triggered the beginning of the initiation process for most of the young guardians[18]. While most of them die after being brutally beaten and tortured, others survive and serve as living examples. The official funerals and the patriotic speeches at the grave of heroes are memorable scenes from the Soviet film adaptation of Fadeyev's novel. The gross plans of the survivors of The Young Guard organization, the party leader, the relatives, especially Oleg Koshevoy's mother are emotional filmic portraits with didactic role for imprinting the desirable patriotic citizen in the minds of the viewers.

The impact of Gerasimov's film in popular culture was huge, and the success was great partly due to the restrictions of film-making of those times and the fact that there were only five films released in 1948. The film *The Young Guard* perpetuates the same romantic-heroic narrative tone of the novel, with idealistic accents (the usage of light on the beaten up and tortured teenagers

16. Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritul*.
17. Clark, 15–24.
18. Olga Grădinaru, "Death Representation in the Soviet Novel of World War 2," *Journal of Romanian Literary Studies*, no. 4 (2014): 455–57.

is relevant, and the usage of some lyrical-heroic lines from the novel). It is known that the Stalinist cinematography played the role of an institution in producing history, creating the illusion of historical reflection and reflecting the specificity of the rhetoric of that era[19]. The Stalinist war films rebuilt historical events using historicization and museification of war experience, facilitating alienation toward past and traumas of memory[20]. The main task of the Soviet cinema was to create an alternative, mythologized reality and to educate in the spirit of socialism[21] so that it was rather a "factory of illusions" than a reflection of social-historical aspects[22]. Moreover, the Stalinist aesthetics aimed at overcoming the difference between art and life[23].

The great Stalinist myths and motives are present in the film as ideological testimonies: different variants of oaths by the graves of relatives and fellow citizens (as a reiteration of the revolutionary motif); the relationship mentor-disciple; the path from spontaneity and individualism to consciousness and collective effort (especially in the case of Sergey Tyulenin, as well as Oleg Koshevoy). The myth of the "great family" (*bol`shaya sem`ya*) is another relevant example, with its two variances: the "Great Family" as the unity of different peoples within the Soviet Union (and the organization is a great example at a small scale, including Russians, Ukrainians, Moldavians, and Armenians) and the "great family" - the collective as the new community of people with the same ideas, aims and ideals. The category of the traitor deserves a special place in Stalinist culture, as it is closely linked to concepts of "moral failure" and "political distrust"[24].

19. Evgeni Dobrenko, *Stalinist Cinema and the Production of History: Museum of the Revolution* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 4.
20. Dobrenko, 7–14.
21. Peter Kenez, *Cinema and Soviet Society: From the Revolution to the Death of Stalin* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2001), 223.
22. Anna Lawton, ed., *The Red Screen. Politics, Society, Art in Soviet Cinema* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 4.
23. Boris Groys, *Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond* (London, Brooklyn NY: Princeton University Press, 1992), 48–49.
24. David L Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values. The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity (1917-1941)* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 11.

Post-Soviet Films: Oscillation between Perpetuation and Demystification
Lyalin's Post-Ideological Fictionalization

The Russian TV series *The Last Confession*[25] (*Posledniaia ispoved`*, 2006), directed by Sergey Lyalin, seem to have the task of liberating the war events of Krasnodon from Fadeyev's canonical perspective or grand narrative of collective memory already instilled in the mind of readers and spectators. However, most of the motives and narrative elements, as well as dialogues are recognizable from the novel and the first film adaptation. The beginning of the film with wide views of the Ukrainian steppe with the idyllic and dramatic role and death of wounded Red Army soldiers and of a Soviet commander as the decisive factor for young men to fight back are similar elements.

We have to acknowledge though the fresh vision and the addition of a religious component[26] as a defining aspect of the Russian national identity under reconstruction. The fact that the young inhabitants of Krasnodon meet in the ruins of a church outside the town has a symbolical value, along with the soundtrack of old Orthodox songs. Moreover, the young anti-fascist fighters are welcomed, supported in their activity and conducted on their last road by an inhabitant of those church ruins - the tongue tied son of a deceased priest. These significant details are in line with the post-Soviet Russian national revival with its focus on Orthodoxism seen by N. Berdyaev as the basic component of the Russian Idea, the Russian national ideology.[27]

Among the plot elements, the scene of the arson of the German Labour Exchange lacks the dramatic touch of Gerasimov's film, but its planning by the young guardians is realistic. Moreover, there are no elder leaders, partisans to guide the teenagers, fact that seems impossible for German authorities in their constant search for Bolshevik underground leaders. The matter is discussed by German authorities: one of them prefers the presence of some elder guidance for teenagers and even new military troops than a spontaneous popular resistance.

Furthermore, the Soviet heroism is suggested by German authorities, along with some aspects of Russian and German mentality, which proves to

25. Script by Yury Avetikov and Evgeny Kotov; composer Vladimir Dashkevich. The film was shot in Russia, near Tula and in Ukraine, in a small mining town.

26. See the concept "religious turn" in recent Russian cinema in Berezhnaya 2013.

27. Nikolas Berdyaev, *The Russian Idea* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948).

be an ingenious directorial strategy. In fact, the entire film has only several references to heroism, escaping the trap of situating the discourse in a similar Soviet propagandistic language.

Lyalin's film does not dwell on the notable Stalinist motif of the traitor. The Young Guard's traitor's identity is not revealed, and the act of treason itself is a minor encounter with Gromov, former officer of the White Army, who gives Renatus (head of the German police) a list of young guardians from a teenager. Like in Gerasimov's film, *The Last Confession* has no scenes of torture of the young guardians, just metonymic images (gross-plan of the torture instruments and the disastrous effects on teenagers when sending them on their last journey to the mine pit).

Stalinist specific themes and motives are not present in this cinematographic depiction of The Young Guard activity: spontaneity is Tyulenin's trait throughout the entire film as much as consciousness is Koshevoy's. Besides, the myth of the Soviet unity of nations is not fructified. The tone of the TV series is realistic; there is no pompous funeral scene and no urge for an eternal remembrance. In this way, the core of Stalinist regime and culture – legitimization – is avoided. There is no emphasis on the symbolical value of death and no heroicizing and mythologizing agenda for the younger generation.

Despite some similarities, Gerasimov's and Lyalin's films bear a difference in tone: the theatrical and heroicized Soviet version of events versus the moderate post-Soviet demystified perspective, with mild idealizing accents. However, in the Soviet tradition of rewarding works of patriotic importance, *The Last Confession* is awarded the 1st place at the contest of televised films at the International Festival *Vernoe Serdtse* ("Loyal Heart") in Moscow, 2007 for the "Impressive representation of the military-patriotic subject".

Plyaskin's Demystifying Historicization

The recent TV series *The Young Guard*[28] (*Molodaya Gvardia*, 2015), directed by Leonid Plyaskin, may be regarded as a notable attempt in offering an alternative perspective on historical events of the Second World War. The

28. Script by Anna Suvorova; composer Maksim Koshevarov. The TV series was filmed in the village Krasnodonetskaya, Rostov region, not far from the area where the historical events happened.

director mentions that his film is neither Fadeyev's film adaptation nor Gerasimov's remake[29], while the script writer Anna Suvorova points out that the "*The Young Guard* is a modern perspective on the Krasnodon events during World War II"[30]. Moreover Plyaskin emphasizes "Fadeyev's politicized version of the events" and his directorial attempt to present "simple average students during the war"[31]. It is truly a new perspective on the old (manipulated and ideologically fictionalized) history. The beginning and the ending of the TV series contains some sequences from old documentaries and an extra-diegetic narrative voice stating several historical facts about the Krasnodon anti-fascist organization.

Firstly, there is a huge difference from the previous post-Soviet film on The Young Guard, not to mention Gerasimov's version and this refers to the historical accuracy. As a result, Oleg Koshevoy is almost a marginal member (who appears only in the 5th episode); Viktor Tretyakevich is the leader of the resistance, sharing his role later with the artists Lyuba Shevtsova and Ivan, with links to the Lugansk resistance. Moreover, the previously idyllic relationship between Elena Koshevaya and her son Oleg in the first films, following Fadeyev's fictional representation is presented in a twisted manner. Mainly, mother tries to protect her son from troubles and death until the end, being ready to lie and pay, while Oleg decides to do what is right for his conscience, dying with the others.

Secondly, the successful Soviet category of the traitor receives a different nuanced approach. The reason for Solikovsky (the main Cossack traitor from the town) entering the German police is revealed – the Reds killed his entire family. The motif of revenge is used for characters that were marginal characters in previous films, going beyond the classical Soviet description of the traitor as a liar, a criminal and an enemy of the state. Another traitor of the partisans is presented with his own emotional battles – torn between remorse and the

29. Susanna Alperina, "Pervyi Kanal Pokazhet Dolgozhdannyi Serial Molodaaya Gvardia [The First Channel Broadcasts the Long-Awaited TV Series The Young Guard]," Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 2015, https://rg.ru/2015/04/30/teleprogramma-site.html.

30. Alperina.

31. Aleksey Zotov, "Segondya Na Pervom Kanale Prem`iera – Mnogoseriinyi Fil`m Molodaya Gvardia" [Today on the First Channel the Premiere of the TV Series The Young Guard]," Первый канал, n.d., 2015, https://www.1tv.ru/news/2015-05-05/16674-segodnya_na_pervom_kanale_premiera_mnogoseriynyy_film_molodaya_gvardiya.

sense of duty for Fatherland, oscillating between covering the young men's activity and betraying them. The traitor of The Young Guard Genady Pocheptsov is corrupted by this treacherous elder miner and escapes the town with his family as a reward for his act. In this way, the Stalinist motif of mentor-disciple gains an ironic meaning – a traitor initiates a younger traitor on this path.

The sordid status of being undercover is yet again nuanced in the case of the artist Lyuba Shevtsova. It is only at the end that Lyuba's mother finds out the truth about her daughter's secret activities linked to her close ties with the German officers. Besides, the idealized image of the Soviet woman at war fiercely supported by Soviet censors[32] is compromised in this TV series – Lyuba is far from being an innocent modest Soviet girl, following strictly the Soviet moral code. Even if her behaviour is a cover, this shatters the deeply seated Soviet imagery in the minds of spectators.

When comparing the three actresses, one might highlight the fact that the first actress is a closer depiction to a Soviet teenager of the 1940s. While the actress from Lyalin's filmic version is frail, unconvincing and lacking the sparkling personality, Plyaskin's Lyuba is a modern version of what spectators call *damochka* (which in a loose translation would mean a young lady probably way too conscious of her charm and familiar with the men's world) and not a Soviet *artistka* (energetic yet pure). From this point of view, we might use Stephen M. Norris's concept of "packaging the past for the present"[33] and suggest that Plyaskin's version for the Krasnodon events is a case of "packaging the present for the past". Even though demystification of World War II heroicized reality is necessary, the process of post-Soviet revisionism has to be conducted carefully, conveying the atmosphere of the era.

32. See a similar reaction of censors even in the last Soviet decade to Svetlana Alexievich's de-heroicizing perspective on the Soviet woman in war: Svetlana Alexievich, *The Unwomanly Face of War* (London: Penguin Books, 2017). Other films that question the holy status of the Soviet woman during World War II are Gu-ga (1989) and Shtrafbat TV series (Penal Battalion, 2004).

33. Stephen M. Norris, "Packaging the Past: Cinema and Nationhood in the Putin Era," KinoKultura, 2008, http://www.kinokultura.com/2008/21-norris.shtml.

Thirdly, the "classic" Young Guard activities are depicted: writing and spreading the leaflets; placing the Soviet flags on buildings and even reading a statement on the local radio on the 7th of November; procrastinating the works on the mines and even killing the German engineer; attempting to free a local family of Jews from a camp; attack on the German warehouse with weapons; destroying the wheat prepared for the German army, and arson of the German Labor Exchange. The scenes of the arson and the concert organized by the members of resistance, as well as those presenting their arrest and Renatus-Tretyakevich relation are beautifully staged and montaged, ensuring great climaxes.

As for the atmosphere of those years, we might notice that the historical distance added some colourful exaggerations regarding the generous space of Krasnodon homes[34], the Western-like cabaret, as well as Lyuba's exotic stage costumes and truly elegant dresses, not to mention her master of German language (along with Oleg Koshevoy, his mother, Ivan Zemnukhov and others). This supposed knowledge of German is improbable, especially in a mining area where the population was half-literate, as some sequences of the series rightfully point out.

The presence of Stalinist motives is relevant in this last cinematographic approach not as an assumed ideological repertoire (as part of the post-Soviet cult of the Great Patriotic War), but as means of presenting the atmosphere of the Stalinist era: the graveside oaths (Tretyakevich's Jewish girlfriend shot by a German officer; boys witnessing the Jews' liquidation; hasty partisans' burial by young guardians), and the Great Family (the unity between the members regardless of their ethnicity).

Moreover, there is an ironic approach on the consecrated Stalinist myth of "father-son"/"mentor-disciple" relationship: there are no elders to teach and coordinate the younger generation how to fight; the only link with the exterior and higher authority is the usage of Morse code by the pianist. Besides, the bond between Oleg Koshevoy and the German engineer Hopf may be considered a subtle irony for the lack of real Bolshevik fathers in the

34. The same detail regarding the space characterizes the three film adaptations of M. Gorky's *Mother*, directed by V. Pudovkin (1926), M. Donskoy (1955) and G. Panfilov (1989).

life of Soviet children and teenagers – a void caused by the Civil War and Stalinist purges, especially in the Ukrainian space. Furthermore, when tortured, Sergey Tyulenin decides to confess the name of organization's true leader, naming Stalin, which is considered a great joke by Solikovsky the torturer.

The spirit of collectivity and the status of individual is another greatly explored motif in the film, when the two notions – collectivity and individual – are invoked in a dire situation: is it worth sacrificing innocent people to maintain the members' cover and life; is it worth to sacrifice a comrade for the sake of the entire team? The entire organization is almost split with contrasting opinions, but the rational order is installed by Lyuba and Ivan, casting doubt on Tretyakevich's authority and integrity.

The favorite Stalinist theme of initiation - the path from spontaneity to consciousness - is not represented in the film, although a hint of such a trajectory may be supported in Seryozha Tyulenin's case. However, unlike the Soviet path based on the patriotic duty, Tyulenin changes under the spell of Lyuba's charming presence, who is preoccupied with order and discipline. We must also admit that despite the fact that both Viktor Tretyakevich and Tolya Kovalyov are clear minds, they burst into spontaneous decisions and acts, which make them more credible heroes than the theatrical monuments from Gerasimov's film adaptation. Even Lyuba acts against any reasonable arguments and risks everything to save Viktor from death, guided by her feelings for him.

Patriotism is another aspect that is represented in Plyaskin's film in a balanced manner, even with de-heroicizing accents. The scene of the oath of core members of the organization is nothing but solemn and pompous: the entire scene takes place in a deserted cave, outside the town. The other scene of the oath, when more members join the organization, is more solemn, in the community home, swearing to die for the country if necessary and not to betray fellow comrades.

Another specific trait for both analysed post-Soviet TV series is the gradual amplification of filmic violence, an aspect that has been also highlighted by Peter Kenez in his study concerning the specific traits of films of the Second World War. The filmic violence becomes gradually amplified

toward the end of the war, when the Soviet victory is certain and death of heroes has a symbolic meaning for the viewers[35]. While Gerasimov's film adaptation eludes violence and is focused only on its effects (shredded clothes, wounds, bruises) and the most significant violent act is traitor's death penalty (represented by ellipsis), post-Soviet films have plenty violent brutal acts: shooting partisans, local people, beating up children and women with virtually no reason, throwing Jews into the mining pit in order to save bullets (and then chasing a pig in the yard with a gun), killing German officers as a retribution act, annihilating the German engineer and other German soldiers etc.

Naturalistic scenes of violence don't refer only to Germans; young guardians also resort to violence when necessary to protect themselves or only to avenge death of the loved ones. Besides, some German soldiers are killed by mistake, despite the initial plan. The purity of the Soviet heroic deed at war is questioned and de-heroicized, and the once clean martyrs are "tainted" with real love affairs with the enemy, with no such honourable propriety and more or less necessary murders. The temporal distance from the historical events influences not only the degree of represented violence, but also explores the moral and ethical nuances of deeds and choices at war.

Brief Conclusive Thoughts

The analysis is an attempt to unveil the complex Soviet myth-making process, focused on The Young Guard myth, part of the World War II cult. Once the cultural background set, we open a dialogue between the Soviet canonical versions represented by Fadeyev's novel, particularly the second edition, and Gerasimov's film, on one hand, and Lyalin's and Plyaskin's TV series, on the other. Their directorial perspectives are part of the post-Soviet revisionism, an attempt to deal with the thorny Soviet heritage.

35. Peter Kenez, *Cinema and Soviet Society 1917-1953* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 158–62.

If we take into account the three types of discourses in post-communist art – "off-modern", ironic and intermediate[36] – we may consider the post-Soviet films inspired by The Young Guard organization as ironic, taking into account the playful and conscious usage of Stalinist myths and motives. As we argue, the idealized Soviet heroism of The Young Guard organization underwent mutations when viewing the 2006 and 2015 films inspired by the same events. We support the idea of a gradual de-heroization and demystification process of what proved to be a Soviet carefully constructed heroic and propagandistic myth of The Young Guard. While Sergey Lyalin's TV series is a post-ideological fictionalization approach, trying to balance the canonical versions with a fresh and relevant directorial vision, Leonid Plyaskin's TV series offers a demystifying historicization. Although both directors use poetical license (real members of the organization are missing, new characters are introduced, events are altered), Plyaskin's perspective addresses rather the younger generation of viewers than the older ones used to Soviet heroicized version.

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STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 2, 2019, p. 119 - 128
(Recommended Citation)
DOI:10.24193/subbdrama.2019.2.06

Mnemonic Cartography of Violence

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Abstract: Important historical events such as revolutions sometimes lead to changes in the relationships that individuals have with places. The citadel of *Shahr-e No*, the largest brothel of Iran was burnt a little time after the end of the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Streets and buildings are one of the most stable social frameworks, they are the one that lasted through wars, riots, and revolutions. They play a key role in the process of recollecting memories. A social group can leave its print in a place, as a place can leave its print on a social group. In the case of the citadel, everything that constituted the memory of the place and of the life that people lived there disappeared. I have done a *forensic cartography* in order to bring back the memory of this erased place. Indeed, in the absence of oral as well as visual testimony about the citadel, I resorted to the object, that is the map. My practical work in connection with my research work is based on maps dating from before and after the destruction of the citadel and they report on the violence of the erasure of a public space and of its memory. I try to restore a critical relationship between memory, time, place, and political violence.

Keywords: map, memory, erasure, space, political violence, Shahr-e No

The citadel of Shahr-e No (which means the new city), the largest brothel of Iran, was set on fire shortly before the end of the Iranian Revolution, on the 29th of January 1979. The fire of the citadel was followed a few months later by its total destruction. Ten years later in the summer of 1988, this destruction continued when the Islamic Republic erased definitely Jamshid neighborhood where the citadel was situated. This article is about an artwork that I made, using to the map of Tehran through the last 200 years.

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1. Shahr-e No (new city)

The place where the citadel of Shahr-e No was built, was until the middle of the 1920s, in the south-west of Tehran, just outside the city limits. With the extension of the city during Rezà Shàh's reign (from 1925 to 1941) and the destruction of the city's gates, Jamshid area became a full neighborhood of Tehran. The regrouping of the prostitutes of Tehran in Shahr-e No begun at this time[2]. In 1955, in order to ensure the safety of the prostitutes, a wall was constructed all around Shahr-e No. The size of Shahr-e No was a hundred and thirty-five thousand square meters, which is roughly equivalent to the size of two football fields. The exact number of the persons who lived and worked there is unknown but in the middle of the 1960s the number of the women was estimated at a thousand and five hundred at least[3]. The citadel had a specific gate entrance for men and had a clinic, a police station and two theaters.

It is somehow possible to say that these women were deprived of their full citizenship because of the ghettoization of their workplace. Shahr-e No was a defenseless city whose inhabitants were called «the inhabitants of the neighborhood of sorrow». They were poor, even broke, and were often suffering from sexually transmitted diseases. Whether they were children, elderly people, or even polish immigrants from the second world war, they belonged to the most underprivileged social classes of the people. Because it was an enclosed territory, the citadel had several particular characteristics; for example, its architectural look, the particular language used by its residents, the way they celebrated the national days, etc., and furthermore the fact that they didn't use their real names. They formed a distinct social group, or we might say, a small society, a small marginal city inside the big city.

The inhabitants of the citadel have several times been subject to a political exploitation before and even after the Revolution and have been involved in several political events at the time of the Shah. The most important one among

2. Several sources refer to this date as the year of the regrouping of the prostitutes in Shahr-e No, However some other sources refer to an earlier date, around 1908-1909, during the reign of Mohammad Ali Shàh (Shàh of Iran from 8.1.1907 until 16.7.1909)

3. See Mahmoud Zand Moqadam, *Shahr-e No* (Stockholm: Bokarthus, 2013).

them was the coup[4] instigated by the US and the UK in 1953 against the Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq and against the nationalization movement of the oil industry in Iran.

It is difficult to know what happened to these women and men after the Revolution, but what is clear is that this place remained until the summer of 1979 and was then destroyed by bulldozers. As for Jamshid Neighborhood as a whole, it remained until the summer of 1988. During a police operation, a thousand people were arrested at night, the neighbourhood was completely razed by bulldozers and this is how several streets and avenues were wiped off the map of Tehran. Part of the land of Jamshid neighborhood, in particular the part where the citadel was, was given to Faràbi hospital and other parts were made into a nature reserve consisting of a large park (inaugurated in 1997) where no sign remained of the life that people had before in this place. Ràzi park, covering an area of 257 000 m² (two hundred and fifty-seven-thousand-meter square), had, among other things, a lake, a library, a craft market, two mosques, a football field, and other sports facilities.

Today, the only way to understand and learn more about the life in the citadel, (from which very few documents, images, and testimonies exist) is to refer to the few references found in the historical texts[5], the few novels[6], films[7], and photos[8] that survived the censorship of the Shah's regime and finally some archival materials. There was indeed a willingness of the previous regime to hide the social injustice and to show Iran as a modern country with a great history and an antique civilization and any image that could question this greatness was forbidden. Indeed, the monarchy's power had a complex relationship with this ghetto. On the one hand the State formally acknowledges

4. The Operation Ajax, known in Iran as the "Coup d'État of 28th Mordàd", was led by the United Kingdom and the United States against the Prime Minister of Iran and his policy of nationalization of the oil industry. The aim of this coup was to keep a large share of the gas sales rights. Every year, the anniversary of the 19th of August 1953 coup was celebrated in the citadel.
5. Hakim Elàhi and Ol-Allàh Hedàyat, *Bà Man Be Shahr-e No Biàyid [Come with Me to Shahr-e No]* (Tehran: Sherkat-e Sahàmi-e càp, 1946).
6. Zakarià Hàshemi, *Tuti [Parrot]* (Vienna: bongàh-e matbuàti-e hadaf, 1969).
7. Kàmràn Shirdel, *Qal'e [Women's Quarter]* (Iran: Ministry of Arts and Culture, 1966).
8. Such as the photo essays entitled "Prostitute" taken between 1975 and 1977 by Kaveh Golestan.

its existence, but on the other hand it didn't want it to be visible. This ambiguous relationship has continued in a different form, after the Revolution as a result of the religious restrictions imposed by the new Islamic regime against the prostitutes and its rhetoric of social justice. The Islamic Republic has always believed in the utopia of a Muslim nation, preserved from drugs, prostitution, and homosexuality, and the means it used for this purpose have always been eradication and confinement.

There seem to be no image of the arson of the citadel. There might be material traces of this event, but they could not, to this day, be found. The fire of the citadel has never been subject to a historical research, and according to my researches, there is no recorded testimony, either of the women and of the people who worked in the citadel, nor of the persons who set it on fire. Some photographers were there but they were prevented from taking pictures. This is why in this specific context; one can say that what we are talking about a missing picture. The awareness of a missing image such as the one of the fires of the citadel, encourages artists to initiate a process of reflection, inquiry, and analysis. This absence definitely had an effect on my artwork.

2. Space as the social framework of memory

When we walk in a city, and we go to the place of an event which we read about, or we face a building or a street that we saw in a film, a painting, a photo, or a novel, all the things we've learned re-emerge in our memory. Beyond the knowledge that we've acquired about the buildings, the neighborhoods, and the avenues of this city, these places, due to their architectural features, reveal a little bit of their history. Therefore, one may say there is a memory within and a memory through these social spaces. Space is a social framework of memory, it is a mean that allows us to organize, to fix, to lock, and to find memories. Maurice Halbwachs[9] regarded streets and buildings as the most stable social formations as they survive through wars, riots, and revolutions. Yet, these events sometimes lead to changes in the relationships between the society and the places, of which meaning is likely to change during and after the major sociopolitical events. The traces that these events leave in the different

9. Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945) French philosopher and sociologist. He died in Buchenwald concentration camp.

sites constitute the visual elements of the complex relationship that sometimes exists between the official history and the inhabitant's memory.

Social events leave their mark on places. Social groups can also leave their marks on places and vice versa. As Halbwachs writes: "place and group have each received the imprint of the other"[10]. He continues by saying "The group not only transforms the space into which it has been inserted, but also yields and adapts to its physical surroundings"[11]. The place is the home of the collective memory, or in other words, the group's memory. Halbwachs highlights the relationship that the group and the collective practices have with the place. He considers that "every collective memory unfolds within a spatial framework"[12]. There are several spacial frameworks and a multiplicity of space representations in each city, because each group cuts up space in its own way, Halbwachs says "there are as many ways of representing space as there are groups"[13]. Therefore, one can distinguish different spaces into one city.

The determination of social frameworks in a city allows us to comprehend the groups that live or lived there, thanks to the marks they left in the space. Those are sometimes very visible and can take very various forms, depending on the neighborhood and the streets. In the case of the citadel and Jamshid neighborhood as a whole, everything has totally disappeared, it means everything that represented the memory of this place and the life that people led. The destruction of the citadel meant the disappearance of the collective memory of this group. Their collective memory no longer exists because their group has disappeared and this memory now belongs to History.

Shahr-e No was not the symbol of the monarchy as the I.R.I pretended. It was in reality, the symbol of the discriminations existing within the Shah's political regime. The freedom won during the revolution paved the way for the fire of Shahr-e No by the muslim revolutionaries (and not to all the revolutionaries), those who from that time had already plans to build a new Islamic state. This arson of the citadel that is the most extreme form of the destruction of a group and its place didn't constitute a revolutionary violence

10. Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. JR. Ditter and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 130.
11. Halbwachs, 130.
12. Halbwachs, 139.
13. Halbwachs, 156.

that targeted the State power (the divine violence as Benjamin defined it[14]), it was more exactly a lawmaking violence. The erasure and the total destruction of Jamshid neighborhood in 1988 demonstrated a political willingness which goal was to control the urban space and the social life. The destruction of this neighborhood must be considered as the manifestation of a continuous domination and should not be understood as part of a simple urban planning policy.

The use of violence during the destruction of Jamshid neighborhood was a strategy to control the urban landscape of Tehran and the memory of its past. It was part of a homogenization policy of the city. This place has been the place of the State's political violence. It was an erasure by an authoritarian power of the memory of a social space and everything that was associated with it. The Islamic Republic attempted to reshape the memory of Tehran and to manipulate the memory of its inhabitants with a willingness to rewrite the history of the city. The citadel was a neighborhood that had elements of the life from before, that the new regime had to erase, as it was doing everything it could to get rid of the reminders of the past.

3. A forensic mapping

In the case of Jamshid neighborhood that was wiped of the map and within which the citadel was, the inhabitants were scattered in different places, were forgotten, and the atmosphere of the place completely changed. In the absence of direct testimonies of former residents and given the impossibility of saving their traces, I resorted in my artistic project to an object, that is the map.

I put together a series of maps of Tehran on which I revealed the episodes of violence which marks were erased from the urban landscape. Thus, in my work, it is the map itself that represents the trace. Indeed, the map is a recording system of the trace that is outside the memory of the social group and outside written history. Its structure allows to retrace something that cannot, in the case that I'm studying, be found otherwise. Indeed, given the lack of image, the absence of witness and the few archival materials, I started my work with the things I could access.

14. See Walter Benjamin, *Critique de La Violence et Autres Essais*, trans. Nicole Casanova (Paris: Payot & Rivages, 2012).

What I actually did is something I call (forensic) mapping. My work is based on the maps, before and after the destruction of the citadel. When they are put together, these maps create a form of continuity and relation that allows to see the trace. My work was inspired by the *forensic architects,* brought together by Eyal Weizman, an Israeli architect, within the *Forensic Architecture* agency. As Weizman says, its task is to : "study the forms of destruction and, rather than viewing them as an illustration of the atrocities committed, considering them as epistemological resources"[15]. In the concept of forensic architecture, the pictures of a place, taken before and after a conflict, are from an architectural point of view, considered as analysis tools of violent acts. As Weizman said, there is, in this type of work, a switch from the testimony to the object. He recalls that the 20th century, which was "the era of the testimony" has little by little given rise to a "legal culture focused on the object". That culture led us to what he calls "the era of the object". For him, the object can facilitate the testimonies, especially those from people who went through traumatic experiences that affect their stories[16].

The Forensic architecture is a new discipline that is based on the evidential value of architecture. Architecture can be a way of seeing, a point of view on images and it allows to confirm things that used to be denied. Forensic architecture enters into the very reserved domain of the forensic expertise to make it a political tool for citizens. It is an archaeology of image, images of violent acts of the past or captured by citizens in real time, at the very moment when violence occurs. These images are put in relation with texts, testimonies, and other kind of proofs of a particular type like for example the visible marks on the soil of the desert or the analysis of the waves motion. The forensic architects search and collect evidence, then they make them public. They make three-dimensional objects, maps, images, etc. Forensic architecture suggests new readings of pictures in a time of the « image complex » (in reference to the thousand pictures in the social networks), analyses them, links them with each other, and put them back into space and time. They extend the realm of the image and of its very definition. In the investigations conducted by this agency, the State is most often the criminal,

15. Eyval Weizman, "L'archéologie Des Pixels," in *Le BAL. Que Peut Une Image*, ed. Dork Zabunyan (Paris: Centre National des Arts Plastiques, 2014), 160.
16. Weizman, 162.

and in fact the citizens are the ones who reverse things. The official forensic practices are the police practices of a State in order to govern and monitor its citizens and have always created counter practices. Weizman writes:

> Forensic, as the rhetorical "art of the forum" refers to the mobilization of aesthetic practices to make them investigation tools able to reverse the forensic look, no longer from the State towards the citizen but from the citizen towards the State.[17]

The use of this technique in my work is for me a way to question and challenge the spatial and memorial representations by the political authority. My cartography is called "the book of the erasure of the citadel". For an artist who works on the issue of memory and its preservation, the book is the preferred medium. Lack is the starting point of this book which content can evolve according to political developments and to the possible historical discoveries. It is indeed an open project, which means that the possible developments on the ground can have an impact on the map and be included, gradually, in this book.

I found maps, recent or on the contrary very old, in different books and archives dating from the middle of the 19th century, when Shahr-e No didn't exist yet. I did an archaeological work through the maps in order to show the traces of this erased place. The reading of these maps, when crossed with texts, allows to understand how this place changed, from the time it appeared and expanded, until it disappeared.

Weizman turns to *forensic* practice in order to get a proof, and I use this practice to find the trace. The 1980s maps of Tehran, where I found this trace, are so eloquent that one can say they "talk", so to speak, about the erasure. Shahr-e No appears on the 1981 map of Tehran while in reality it had already disappeared at that time. On the map of 1984 an empty rectangle can be seen in place of the citadel. From that year and until 1988, in place of the rectangle, "park under construction" is written. In 1988, the year of the construction of Jamshid neighborhood, the word "DESTROYED" was written on the whole Jamshid neighborhood and Kàj park took the place of Shahr-e No. From 1988, and until 1997 (year of inauguration of Ràzi Park) these writings were

17. Eyval Weizman, "Note Sur Les Pratiques Forensiques," in *Images à Charge, La Construction de La Preuve Par l'image*, ed. Diane Duffour (Paris: LE BAL & Éditions Xavier Barral, 2015).

replaced with the following information: "park under construction". While all the streets of this area have disappeared, there is only one very small trace left of the two main avenues of the citadel and only one of them, of which a small, 80 meters long, section remained, kept its name; Abdolmahmud.

Figure 1. Excerpt from a 1980s map of Tehran

The lack of images, as I mentioned before, is somehow part of the history of the citadel. This deficiency says much more about the citadel than any other thing and even more about the relation that the city of Tehran and the successive governments had with this marginal space and its inhabitants. The missing image of the citadel tells us things about Tehran's history and about the memory of this city. The recognition of this deficit that affects me explains, in the absence of witness and documents, the feeling of having only a very limited knowledge of this place. This feeling can lead the artist to adopt a new form of practice because the missing image, as such, cannot be recreated nor even replaced. The feeling of lack creates a void that should lead to a work of critical imagination. It is the role of the artist to try to imagine different ways to show the lack, with the making of an original mechanism, as I have tried to do: the creation of a cartography in the form of a book, with texts. This work of critical imagination with and from the map can draw awareness to the issue of lack and trace.

Figure 2. "Le livre de l'effacement de la citadelle", the author's project.

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STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 2, 2019, p. 129 - 144
(Recommended Citation)
DOI:10.24193/subbdrama.2019.2.07

Traces of Old Visual Patterns in the Romanian Modern Painting

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Abstract: The contribution intents to stretch out the way certain visual sequences of old Romanian or Byzantine art are brought back to life in the Romanian modern age. Some study cases reveal specific ways of using and understanding the cultural tradition. In the first two decades of the 20th century the artistic research regarding the past is connected to the concept of national identity. One of the pioneers in this field was the theorist artist Apcar Baltazar, well-known for his attempts to construct a "national style" on the basis of Romanian folk elements and the post-Byzantine style. His viewpoint on a modern national style established upon past decorative patterns, indebted to Symbolism and the international style Art Nouveau, represents a start in developing spiritualized forms inspired from archaic arts. The discourse on history, in the manner of eclectic quotations from the painting of Baltazar, was exceeded by history itself. The First World War changed life and art, increasing the dramatism of image, the harsh simplicity of line, the flattening of color present in the entire production of the generation of artists grouped in 1920 around the association *Arta Română* (Romanian Art). Artists like Tonitza, Dimitrescu, Sion, Șirato reinterpreted and adapted the aesthetics of Romanian old mural painting and rustic elements to the modern artistic language. The Byzantine tradition, a long-lasting paradigm (in the situation in which artists accepted

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commands of the Christian Orthodox Church as a way of living), was lightly assimilated by strong personalities, but tangible in the propaganda discourse of the Neo-Orthodox movement.

Keywords: Art Nouveau; tradition; Romanian modernism; Apcar Baltazar; post-Byzantine style; portrait and still life in interwar painting.

In the second half of the 19th century, intellectuals and artists in Romania put into debate new concepts of art, and topics related generally to the cultural heritage, folk art, national art's character.

At the General Exhibition held in Bucharest in 1906, Romania was celebrating a triple anniversary: 25 years since the foundation of Romanian Kingdom, 40 years of Carol I´s reign, but also 18 centuries since the Roman Empire´s conquered the ancient territory of Dacia. The Exhibition was a tribune for the affirmation of the national identity by bringing altogether the past and the present, the historical Romania and the modern Romania, but its real purpose was to prefigure the aim of the future nation: the united Romania[3].

Within the impressive display that followed the pattern of European universal exhibitions, they developed a range of architectural forms originated in the polemical discourse on the specific features of national art. The garnishment of various buildings elevated with that occasion combined a rich variety of historically derived elements of Romanian old architecture. At the same time, the general display included full scale copies of some monuments with historical resonance: so-called The Silver Knife Church / *Cuţitul de Argint*[4], the church of Hurezi Monastery in Vâlcea, and the fortified house of Greceanu family in Vâlcea.

3. Carmen Popescu, *Le Style National Roumain. Construire une nation à travers l'architecture 1881-1945* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes / Simetria, 2004), 133–53.

4. A cover after the Moldavian Church St. Nicholas in Jassy, restorated by the French architect A.E. Lecomte de Nouÿ; The Silver Knife Church was constructed by the architects Nicolae Ghika-Budeşti and Gerorge Sterian between 1906-1910, and decorated with frescoes by the painter Costin Petrescu.

Figure 1. The National Exhibition 1906, The Silver Knife Church, postcard.

The architecture and the decorative arts made steps forward than other branches of art in reconsidering the role of the past. In the last decade of the 19th century the architect Ion Mincu (1852-1912) had already introduced elements of Romanian traditional and religious architecture, especially suggestions from Brancovan monuments in some of his projects: Lahovary residence (1886), Școala Centrală de Fete (1890), Bufetul de la Șosea (1892), Nicolae Petrașcu residence (1900), etc.[5]

5. What distinguished Ion Mincu from other pioneers of the national style which followed eclectic and historicist principles was his manner of questioning the tradition and to create bridges between the national heritage and the present demandings of the architecture. See Popescu, *Le Style National Roumain. Construire une nation à travers l'architecture 1881-1945*, 62.

Today's debate around the ethnical stream, that marked the architecture and decoration at the cusp of 19th century, are rather nostalgic and admirative, meanwhile for the contemporaries the subject used to be controversial. How could a work of art (whether building or a painting) encompass an ethnical meaning? What makes it recognizable as Romanian among similar products? Which are the visual sources to follow: the old religious monuments or elements taken over from the peasant's art and industry? How could the architects and artists create new art objects and buildings having a national character? This corpus of questions that have made the artists in Spain, Hungary, Finland, Russia etc., equally intrigued Romanian historians and artists. In the interwar period, in the context of modernist movements of the 1920s, it still remains one of the most ardent subjects.

Even prior to the year 1906, the scientific research of national patrimony had become a major objective, although the logistics, as well the financial support, were limited. The study of old monuments and restoration of a few ones, the inventory of ethnographical and archaeological materials were direct consequences of the importance given to the cultural past. The foundation of the *Commission of Monuments* (1892) and of the *Museum of Ethnography, National Art, Decorative and Industrial Art* established in 1906, were the leading institutions for the research of national patrimony.

The romantic revivals and the historicist taste in Europe at the end of the 19th century nourished the Romanian modern art. Besides, the artistic past was seen as indispensable source in re-shaping the Romanian art.

Apcar Baltazar (1880-1909), a passionate researcher and an inspired art critic, joined the small team of historians, archaeologists and architects of the *Commission of Monuments* where he had to investigate the iconographic display of mural painting in monuments belonging to the age of Constantin Brâncoveanu, time considered a climax for Romanian pre-modern civilization.

Figure 2. Apcar Baltazar, *Selfportrait.*

In his studies[6], Baltazar presented, at some didactical level, each section of decoration, and analyzed its formal sources with arguments reflecting the familiarity with the specific terminology and the biography of the subject. In this investigation, the artistic skills played a fundamental part: the copies Baltazar made after several iconographic sequences of the original helped him to understand better the character of the image and prepared the ground for some of his own compositions.

Close to the moment when the Austrian painter Gustav Klimt revisited the byzantine themes being inspired by the Venetian mosaics, Baltazar meditated on the post-byzantine paintings seen at Hurezi, Filipeștii de Pădure or in other similar monuments. At the same time, he paid attention to the various forms of peasant art and industry. Some compositions alluded to mural paintings of 17th century, but others are dominated by the synthetic forms and fluid lines of Art Nouveau.

6. Apcar Baltazar, *Convorbiri artistice [Artistic Conversations]* (București: Editura Meridiane, 1974).

Baltazar was an unconventional artistic character, opened to innovation and experiments, qualities in frequent opposition with the conventional principles he acquired during his studies at the School of Fine Arts in Bucharest, where he studied between 1896-1902, with the academic painter G. D. Mirea[7]. This split between education and individual artistic profile can be observed throughout his creation.

At the end of his short life (dead at the age of 29), Baltazar left behind many works, sketches, decorated pottery and projects that compound a fragmented and, in a certain measure, a confusing assemble, corresponding with the uncertain metamorphosis of art around 1900 in Romania, as well as all over the Europe[8]. The stylistic diversity of his work demonstrates the fail in finding a solution for his major project: the creation of a "national style" in arts, having as starting point traditional forms. Baltazar's ideas, expressed in a range of articles published in magazines as *Viața Românească, Voința Națională* or *Convorbiri literare*, were decisive in redefining the concept of *ornament* and in reconsidering the importance of decorative arts with reference to other domains considered "majors". He was concerned mostly on motifs that could be applied in the arts of the present, being one of the first critics of Romanian art who conveyed an original vision of the artistic phenomenon regarded in its historical evolution[9].

7. Vasile Florea, *Apcar Baltazar* (București: Editura Arc 2000, 2015), 121. The Decorative Art Department at the School of Fine Arts was created in 1906 by the architect George Sterian, the first professor of this section; Baltazar participated at the contest for the new speciality in 1908, along with Constantin Artachino and Costin Petrescu, the last one winning the cathedra, see the article "Concursurile pentru școlile de arte-frumoase," *Arta Română*, no. 7–8 (1908): 128–29.

8. Theodor Enescu, "Luchian și primele manifestări de artă independentă în România. Eseu asupra gustului artistic la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea," *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei*, no. 3–4 (1956): 185–208.

9. See also Irina Cărărbaș, "The Shadow of the Object. Modernity and Decoration in Romanian Art," in *(Dis) Continuities, Fragments of Romanian Modernity in the First Half of the 20 Th Century*, ed. Carmen Popescu, Irina Cărăbaș, and Ruxandra Demetrescu (Bucharest: Editura Simetria, 2010), 101–41.

Figure 3. Apcar Baltazar, Project for the poster for the Exhibition of the Agrarian Society, 1906.

In the Romanian artistic milieu, the byzantine revival and its practice of symbolic and literary quotations, was mirroring the confluence between historicism and Art Nouveau, direction which reached its highs at the beginning of the 20th century and goes off with the outbreak of the First World War.

Although many painters affiliated to groups as *Tinerimea Artistică/ Artistic Youth*, among them Kimon Loghi, Ipolit Strâmbu, Nicolae Vermont, shared secessionist conceptions and independent behaviors, they also continue to produce works of academic, impersonal character. This feature of vague frontiers, common to European change in taste, dominated the artistic life and art until the WW I.

Baltazar's contemporaries Ștefan Popescu and Nicolae Tonitza were also interested in theories regarding decorative arts, in their attempt to infuse vitality in all fields of art.

Ștefan Popescu (1872-1948) was admired by Apcar Baltazar for his various activity as a landscape painter, engraver, graphic designer who made sketches after religious or rustic architecture, projects of mural painting and furniture, some of them reminiscent of Ruskin's gothic details, most of them unfortunately lost today. Popescu emphasized the conception on decoration as an intellectual, selective approach, opposed to naturalistic imitation. He considered that the mural painting was able to give more substance to art and to improve its status in the society. The artist, considered by Tzigara-Samurcaș "an enthusiastic researcher and a connoisseur of the local art", believed that the mural painting is capable to give art a superior meaning and a status in the society, and emphasized the conception of decoration as ideas art, opposed to naturalistic imitation[10].

Figure 4. Apcar Baltazar, *Project for a decorated pottery*.

10. Ioana Vlasiu, "Réflexions sur les arts décoratifs et la décoration en Roumanie au début du XX siècle," *Studii și Cercetări de Istoria Artei* XLIV (2007): 49–54.

The painter Nicolae Tonitza (1886-1940), also gifted with various skills from religious frescos to satirical illustration in newspapers, strongly reacted against the mimetic and idyllic style, largely cultivated in the field of mural painting, starting with the middle of 19th century. At the beginning of his career, Tonitza was involved in the re-painting some old monuments before The Great War (in 1904 the church of Grozești, Bacău, in 1911 the church of Poeni, Vaslui, 1912, Scorțeni, Bacău, 1914, Netezești, Ilfov)[11], activity unfortunately less studied by art historians. Tonitza – labelled by his circle of artists-friends as "The Byzantinist" of the group - wrote articles that put into question various sides of the concept of "national style". Some of his theoretical conclusions derived from the artistic practice. As a mural painter, Tonitza imposed to himself to avoid that he used to consider to be the "trivial mixture between Byzantine and Renaissance features"[12].

Figure 5. Cecilia Cuțescu-Storck, *Contemplative portraits, mural painting*.

11. Doina Păuleanu, *Grupul celor patru* (București: Editura Monitorul Oficial, 2012), 55; see also Barbu Brezianu, *Tonitza* (București: Institutul de Istoria Artei, Ed. Academei Române, 1967).
12. Păuleanu, *Grupul celor patru*.

This apparently irreducible discrepancy between the traditions of Western Renaissance and Eastern Orthodoxy was cleared up within the return to the classicism in the 20s avant-garde, embraced by Romanian artists bias their connections and affinities with French artists.

After the Great War, the painting, reflecting more or less the realities, transformed the modes of expression introducing formal simplification, color desaturation and discontinuity, reiterating expressionist and cubist traits. This turn to a sober experience of view reclaimed a redefinition of the image that rejected the naiveté of impression, or the peculiarity of the expression by revisiting the works of the three giant figures from the end of the 19th century: Cézanne, Gauguin and Van Gogh. The triad provides a major lesson toward purification and spiritualizing of the form and expression in interwar painting. The shift of paradigm inspired the artists to find ideas and solutions outside or inside, not to *copy* or the to work in the manner of, *à la manière de*, but with the reference to its means and contents. Another model artist in interwar period was the symbolist painter Puvis de Chavannes. His work marked the artistic conscience of Romanian modern painters as Theodor Pallady, Sabin Popp, Ion Theodorescu-Sion or Camil Ressu, inspiring them in the sense of austerity and refinement derived from aesthetics of mural painting. Baltazar appreciated the French painter for "the nobless of his feeling and his originality, considered today by the cultivated class as one of the greatest painters"[13].

A personality as Apcar Baltazar still needs to be analyzed in correlating his creation with early works of big artists from his generation. Although unfinished, his creation is plenty of potential research material, as well as his activity as an art critic and historian which had a great impact on Romanian artistic life.

One of the first female Romanian artists who was contributing at the shaping of the national Romanian style, a pioneer of the decorative art cathedra at the Fine Art School in Bucharest[14], and multi-skilled artist, Cecilia Cutzesco-Storck (1879-1969) wrote in 1910:

13. Apud Florea, *Apcar Baltazar*, 120.

14. At the decorative arts department, organized by George Sterian in 1906, was created in 1916 a special class for women artists under the title "Principles of decorative art" ruled by professor Ceclia Cutzesco-Storck until 1941, see Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, Irina Cărăbaș, and Ada Hajdu, "Istoric Unarte / A Historical Overview," in *Universitatea Națională de Arte București/ The National University of Arts in Bucharest* (București: Editura UNArte, 2014), 9–101.

> Modern artists in Paris are tired of technical art super productions – real acrobatics in painting – tired by the imposing subjects or parade painting, and officially, they are wishing a more simplicity and construction, and they are fulfilled with sincere enthusiasm for pristine epochs and their archaic works. They founded there an increased purity and force of expression.[15]

This flash back was driven by the excitement of primitivism, which was at that time a very generous but massive confuse concept.

In 1906, at the Romanian Athenée Hall in Bucharest, Cecilia Cuțescu-Storck opened her first exhibition where she presented a large range of subjects, from genre portraits to landscapes, works painted in Romania or abroad. In a small fragment in her book of memories[16] she described the itineraries she followed in the years after her studies at Munich: Forges-les-Eaux and Trouville in Normandy, Ploumanac´h in Bretagne, Choisy-le-Roy near Paris, then Le Havre, Amsterdam and in the country: Rătești, Berca, Joseni, Plopeasa. In just several years, the style she acquired in Munich's art school was abandoned in favour of a decorative synthetism descending from Paul Gauguin's Tahitian painting. This stylistic model is obvious in the cycle of pastels Salomé (1910-1916), a substantial subject in fin-de siècle art and literature, in works as *The Rainmakers* (*Paparudele*), *Whisper* (*În șoaptă*) (1911-1916), *Dynamic* (1911-1916), *Static* (1911-1916), *The Joy of life* (*Bucuria vieții* triptic, 1921). The *Salomé* cycle avoids the dancing girl *clichée* and limits the story to two tragic moments, both in reference to the episode of repentance: a general lament breathing, in a certain degree, a theatrical dimension generated by readings as Wilde's homonym play or the poem of Adrian Maniu; the other one, the episode of the kiss, was alluding to the largely-known motif in Wilde's play, *Je baise ta bouche Iokanaan, je baise ta bouche.* Despite of these references these works reevaluate the possibilities of iconic representation and reconsider the Christian background of the story as well.

15. Cecilia Cuțescu-Storck, "Răspuns La Unele Puncte Din Critica D-Lui Tzigara," *Viața Socială*, no. 4 (1910), apud Amelia Pavel, *Idei estetice în Europa și arta românească la răscruce de veac* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1972), 69.
16. Cecilia Cuțescu-Storck, *Fresca unei vieți* (București: Ed. Bucovina, I. E. Torouțiu, 1944).

In search of purity and spiritualized form, an artist like Olga Greceanu (1890-1978), also preoccupied with the study of the national past, reached to a neo-byzantinism which in the 30's was assimilated with the rhetoric propaganda instrument shaped during the King Carol II reign. The mural painting was a lifetime passion for Olga Greceanu. Frescoes decorating buildings in Bucharest and Măldărești breathe the spirit of time in their taste for history, heroic and monumental vision. In these works, she develops a hybrid, paradoxical style that combines pregnant volumetry of cubist origins with elements decanted from Byzantine tradition. Speaking about the specificity of the Romanian art[17], Olga Greceanu claimed that the representations in the Romanian tradition are abstract, and she believed that the artist founded in figures and objects the genuine geometric archetype. It was her path to follow for her, her compositions, religious or not, being indebted to the spiritualized forms of the old art. A similar attempt to conciliate (apparently) incompatible manners of representation could be observed in Nadia Grossman-Bulighin's painting whose pictorial vision was ironically described as "academic cubism". In works as *Decorative composition with four women* (c. 1920-1925, Stamps and Drawings Cabinet, The National Art Museum of Romania, Bucharest) Olga Greceanu replaced the formal accent with a synthetism recalling certain compositions of Cecilia Cuțescu-Storck realized between 1910-1916.

Descendant from an old family of Polish nobles, a painter, writer, religious muralist with studies of art at Liège and Paris, founder of the first Association of Women Painters and Sculptors in Romania (1914), Olga Greceanu was overlooked and mystified under the communist domination from 1948 further on, recently rediscovered[18].

17. Olga Greceanu, *Specificul național în pictură* (București: Tiparul Cartea Românească, 1939).
18. Adina Nanu, "Pictura monumentală realizată de Olga Greceanu," *Revista Monumentelor Istorice* LXIV, no. 1–2 (1995); Adina Nanu and Ștefania Iancu-Ciovârnache, *Olga Greceanu* (București: Ed. Centrul de Cultură Palatele Brâncovenești, Mogoșoaia, 2004).

Figure 6. Olga Greceanu, *Salomée*, oil on cardboard, 1927.

Nowadays the interest for the interwar painting animates largely the Romanian public, mainly from nationalistic and religious viewpoints. The study of the beginning of the organized artistic education in the field of decorative art was came in the forefront for the art historians in the last ten years, while modern religious mural painting remains an unexplored field of research. The relationship between art the tradition had a fluctuant evolution. Frequently quoted in the painting of 1920s, the interest in it slowed down in the 1940s when the coryphées of national style Francisc Șirato și Ion Theodorescu-Sion, changed their discourse.

The style of Francisc Șirato (1872-1953) in the 1920s paid tribute to modernist movements as the post-impressionism (Cézanne), constructivism and cubism. Works as *The carpet seller /Negustorul de scoarțe* known also as *Vânzătorul de covoare* (c. 1917-1923), *The Return from market /Întoarcere de la târg* (1923) put in evidence artist´s interest in monumental forms. His creations of that period reacted to the impressionist sediments in the Romanian art.

Considered by the Romanian historiography as a doctrinary work, *The Meeting* was symptomatic for Șirato's interests at that time. In the 1930s he turned his back to geometrized forms and abandoned himself to a pictorial hedonism.[19]

The painting of Ion Theodorescu-Sion (1882-1939) express his exuberant, versatile character. In the first decade of the 20th century he experienced the energy of expressionism (see *Nevermore* and *Lux in tenebris lucet*), but some landscapes and allegorical compositions reveals, besides a great talent, his extraordinary adaptability in terms of technique. A decorative project for National Theatre's curtain whose subject based on Victor Eftimiu's play, *Înșir-te mărgărite*, Theodorescu-Sion augmented even more the area of his explorations, with suggestions extracted from byzantine mosaics and Art Nouveau compositional strategies.

In the 1920s, under the influence of the New Classicism, he focused on subjects taken from Romanian peasant's daily life. Likewise, Francisc Șirato, Theodorescu-Sion became a reference point for the national style concept.

Sabin Popp (1896-1928) had the revelation of the importance of old religious art in a particular context: Maruca Cantacuzino ordered him to paint some copies after the frescoes in Băleni and Sinaia, monuments built by her ancestors. These copies were destined to decorate the walls of his manor in Posada along with a large tapestry by Nora Steriadi.

Sabin Popp continued his investigation travelling across the country at Neamț, Horaița, Bistrița, likewise his coleagues Apcar Baltazar, Ștefan Popescu, Constantin Artachino, Ipolit Strâmbulescu. From these old frescoes Popp take over that hieratic pose with symbolic valence. A previous experience in Italy prepared him for this research. In Rome in 1919-1920, Sabin Popp took the contact not only with the Italian art from the museums but also with the Italian avant-garde whose artists expressed their ideas and visions in the pages of the magazine *Valori plastici*. The leading figures Giorgio de Chirico and Carlo Carrà, advocated the reconsideration of their tradition.

In Sabin Popp's painting the portrait and the self-portrait was studied keeping in mind the models seen inside the old monuments. Ștefan Nenițescu admired his works exhibited at the *Autumn Salon*, in 1922, describing them as a mixture between Tuscan and byzantine style[20].

19. See Ioana Valsiu, *Anii 20, Tradiția și pictura românească* (București: Editura Meridiane, 2000).
20. Adina Nanu, *Sabin Popp* (București: Editura Meridiane, 1968).

For Theodor Pallady (1871-1956) the Byzantine art is not a visual pattern but a significant subject of meditation that would led him toward a formal synthesis: "To uncover the object from all its temporality - said the artist - to go beyond the object... that has to be only a starting point to express our subjectivity". The art critic Aurel Broșteanu discussed the bi-dimensional character of Pallady's art in this period in terms of an increasing spiritualization:

> The presence of Byzance was felt in the bold outline, that bordered the form in mosaics and frescoes while the surface is the ideal place for its making. Minimalized, the form reflects the formal principle behind it. The stylistic construction by simplifying the form started under western influences reach, by severe aesthetic constrains of Byzantine art, the highest form of ascetism. Hence, the emaciated appearance of the human figure in line with the ataraxy of psychic stance.[21]

Pallady's thematic repertory reflects his secluded life. His still lifes and nudes in interior, even more than his landscapes, mirrors his own poetical vision, indebted to literary symbolism.

As in the cases of Apcar Balthazar, Olga Greceanu or Costin Petrescu, many interwar artists devoted to decorative arts, deriving their aesthetics from old visual patterns of the Romanian mural painting or book illustrations, close tight to religious, traditionalist or royalist subject matters, where underestimate or forbidden by the critics starting from late '50, artists which constitutes a large chapter in the history of Romanian art to be written from now on.

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21. Aurel Broșteanu, *Acest altceva... pictura* (București: Editura Meridiane, 1974), 57.

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STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 2, 2019, p. 145 - 152
(Recommended Citation)
DOI:10.24193/subbdrama.2019.2.08

Recreating Realities in Horror Films: the Found Footage Effect

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Abstract: Regardless of the circumstances in which they are used, found footage insertions aim to establish for any kind of cinematographic production certain veracity and credibility in regard to the proposed themes and subjects. Given the authenticity of their aesthetics, these insertions seem to present reality as it is, leaving in most cases the feeling that there is no room for artistic interpretation. This paper aims to analyze and debate the usage of found footage in fiction film. Having its roots in pseudo-documentaries, the technique is widely known for its exploitation in horror film as it became an extremely convenient low-budget strategy to build up suspense and create the captivating universes imposed by the horror genre. Analyzing films that set the stage for the subgenre such as *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980) or more accessible productions like *Blair Witch Project* (1999) and *Paranormal Activity* (2007), the paper presents the techniques in which found footage manipulates audiences through certain aesthetic and narrative structures. Studying the means of production and effects on audiences, the analysis intends not only to debate the psychological impact of found footage images, but also to theorize the origin of this subgenre by approaching it from a wider perspective. Recalling David Bordwell's observations on found footage horror films in his article, *Return to Paranormalcy*, it is important to insist on the niche that the subgenre unavoidably approaches through its techniques and selection of subjects. Therefore, the paper also aims to integrate the found footage film in a larger context by analyzing the character-spectator dynamic.

Keywords: found footage, horror films, audiences, authenticity, aesthetics, subgenre, social media

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Between Experiment and a New Cinematic Language

The term *found footage* places the audience in a very distinct area of filmmaking, mainly associated to documentaries or, at least, to a documentary-like aesthetic. However, this paper aims to identify the cinematographic circumstances in which found footage images are meant to create certain expectations for the viewer by establishing a very specific set of `manipulative` techniques. By approaching the horror genre, the goal would be to analyze the depths of the psychological implications that are determined by the found-footage subgenre and also to investigate to what extent does this aesthetic manage to `recreate realities`.

The history of the found footage subgenre begins in the early 1980s with the notable *Cannibal Holocaust* by Ruggero Deodato, a controversial representation of cannibal tribes through the so-called realistic point of view of a film crew whose intention of making a documentary ends in disaster. Nonetheless, the roots of this subgenre are recognizable in pseudo-documentaries (films that don't portray real events but take the form of a documentary). Cannibal Holocaust establishes a set of `ground rules`, mostly determined by technique and visual impact and less focused on the narrative or on the ideological level that such a film could aim to open to debate. Basically, these are: the use of unprofessional actors, hand-held cameras, a `sloppy` type of editing and no after effects or any other kind of alteration of the raw material. Therefore, by researching throughout the last almost forty years of such horror films, the experimental and in-need-of-innovation purpose of the filmmakers can intuitively be recognized as perhaps the only and most important aspect of this subgenre. As it doesn't have much to offer from an aesthetic point of view (these films are basically shot with shaky, hand-held cameras, having a poor quality image), the found footage subgenre's goal is to make use of these low budget, seemingly unprofessional editing and filming in order to access a different level of fear in the spectator's psyche.

After Cannibal Holocaust, filmmakers who managed to put this subgenre `on the map` approached more relatable themes and subjects in order to create the desired suspense. Two of the films that made the difference in this area, The Blair Witch Project (1999) by Daniel Myrick and Paranormal Activity (2007) by Oren Peli both investigate means of building up suspense

and horror by using simple, clear and, in one way or another, predictable scenarios. Although both movies use mainly the same unprofessional types of filmmaking, a certain difference of aesthetic is to be recognized as the result of the character's motivation to film the events. As David Bordwell explicitly mentions in his article *Return to Paranormalcy:*

> The problem of the pseudo-documentary is to motivate the fact that someone is filming these dramas. Various solutions have been worked out. You might make the protagonist a filmmaker exploring a subject or creating a diary. Or you can pretend that the people being filmed are celebrities (as in *Spinal Tap*). Or make the act of filming an effort to document dramatic occurrences. Filmmakers face a second problem as well: motivating how the film has been made public. You can, for instance, present it as a TV or theatrical documentary, as *Spinal Tap* purports to be. More recently another solution has been found. You can suggest that this film has been discovered after the events were over.[2]

Figure 1. *Blair Witch Project, 1999*

2. David Bordwell, "Return to Paranormalcy," David Bordwell's website on cinema, 2012, http://www.davidbordwell.net/blog/2012/11/13/return-to-paranormalcy/.

In these two particular cases, the characters have one strong common motivation (that is, perhaps, even more important than the outcome of the plot), and that is to identify a number of supernatural phenomena, to understand them or at least to be able to document them. The potential paradox of this procedure stands in the mechanism which they choose to use: cheap equipment used in a sloppy manner with the one and only goal - to be able to capture something impossible to understand or perceive with rational, analytical thinking. By identifying this aspect, the discussion can only lead to one basic question that is related to how exactly the induction of fear, anxiety and suspense work for this genre's audience. In his study on the uncanny, psychiatrist Ernst Jentsch analyses the origins of the word explaining at the same time that a definition for it would be rather unnecessary, considering the fact that it can mean different things for each individual.

> With the word *unheimlich* the German language seems to have produced a rather fortunate formation. Without a doubt, this word appears to express that someone to whom something 'uncanny' happens is not quite 'at home' or 'at ease' in the situation concerned, that the thing is or at least seems to be foreign to him. In brief, the word suggests that a lack of orientation is bound up with the impression of the uncanniness of a thing or incident.[3]

Without wishing to insist on terminology, the purpose would be rather to focus on how exactly the aesthetics approached by the found footage subgenre effect the audience by accessing that particular feeling defined by Jentsch. 'Movies get personal: this is YouTube and iMovie, ostensibly announcing the century of the amateur. Found footage movies constitute an entire narrative style of mediating amateurs, of subjective, first-impression cinema, and almost always with "realism" as the goal.'[4] In almost every way possible, the found footage horror film managed to innovate, surprisingly by letting go of

3. Ernst Jentsch, "Zur Psychologie Des Unheimlichen," *Psychiatrisch-Neurologische Wochenschrift* 8, no. 22 (1906).

4. Jordan Lavander-Smith, *The New Reflexivity: Puzzle Films, Found Footage, and Cinematic Narration in the Digital Age* (New York: City University of New York, 2016), 18.

everything that means technological innovation, by going back to the roots of the discovery of filmmaking – at least from an aesthetic point of view - in order to recreate a feeling of raw authenticity that was slowly being diminished by the special effects revolution. The goal to create such a realistic universe has probably to deal with a particular kind of crisis in the horror movie industry. By the late 1990s filmmakers worldwide have `juggled` with an extremely wide variety of ways to access all layers of fear. From supernatural themes like *The Exorcist*, 1973, to revitalization of the slasher subgenre like *Scream*, 1996, horror filmmakers have been using not only basic repulsive, grotesque or shocking images in order to induce fear, but also complex narratives, approaching psychological levels of anxiety (like *Rosemary's Baby*, 1968). Therefore, the use of a subjective, `realistic` point of view manages to place audiences in a somewhat fragile position towards the plot and characters. Suddenly, empathizing with the character that is filming the story becomes almost an obligation or even more, an implied commitment.

As Bordwell specifically mentions in his article, *Return to Paranormalcy* "filmmaking becomes a kind of game like performance that coaxes us to ask: How will they deal the cards this time?"[5] Expectations and suspense are obviously built in a very different manner. Although the basic narrative structures are respected, found footage horror films create yet another paradox in what expectations and fear are concerned. The term found footage itself implies the fact that the spectators will watch an ensemble of images and/or videos that have been found and not obtained in any other way. "Found" means that they have been eventually, at some point, lost or that the people filming the material have not been physically capable of delivering it. However, although spectators are fully aware of the outcome (that is the fact that probably every main character who is filming/being filmed in the movie will eventually die or go missing), they still need to find out how it all happened.

5. Bordwell, "Return to Paranormalcy."

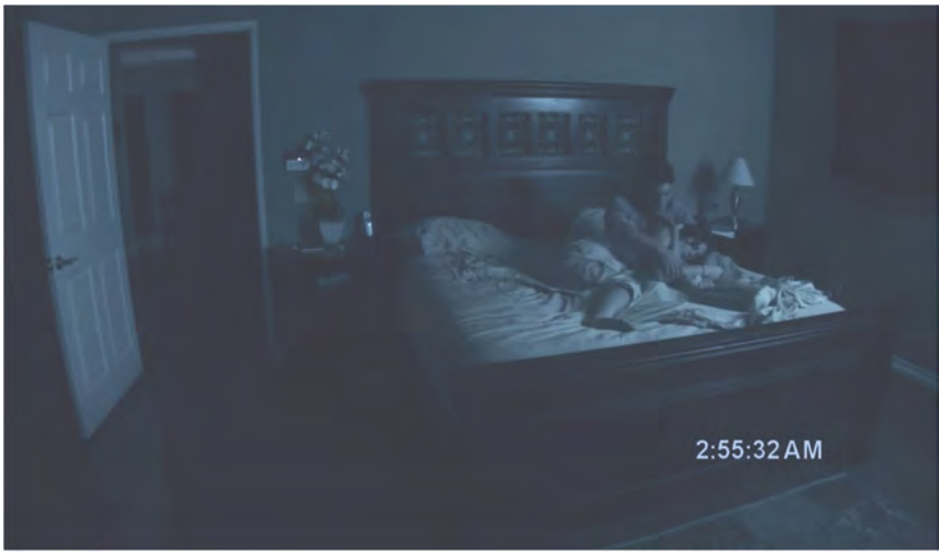

Figure 2. *Paranormal Activity*, 2007

Towards new perspectives on fear: voyeurism and social media

In some perspectives, the curiosity in these cases is even more pronounced: the pressure of finding out what the final act preserves is eliminated in the first seconds of the movie. Thus, the only mystery that's left stands in the `journey`. The mechanisms used by the characters in order to capture whatever it is they're trying to document (whether it's related to legends about witchcraft or paranormal activities that take place in a domestic environment), vary from one situation to another. In movies like *Cannibal Holocaust, The Blair Witch Project* or *Rec* by Jaume Balagueró and Paco Plaza, 2007 the characters find the motivation to make documentaries about subjects that clearly impose the possibility of danger, fatal repercussions and immediate negative effects on their lives. The importance of their motivation is, evidently, insignificant in comparison to their ways of handling the subjects in extreme situations. The unprofessional style of filming is meant to create an aesthetic and psychological approach between spectator and characters/ storyline, mainly because the elements of fear seem unanticipated.

After the first *Paranormal Activity*, a film that mainly uses a surveillance-camera type of filming, the found footage subgenre needed new approaches in

order to keep the audience on the edge of their seats. The downside of such an innovative and original aesthetic is that it can quickly lose its element of surprise – a rather vital one when it comes to the horror genre. As much as the idea of ghosts, zombies and witches can still frighten audiences on some level, these classical elements of a horror film rarely manage to obtain the same effects as they did fifty years ago. Therefore, when it comes to found footage horror films, the idea of perpetuating the same mechanisms that have shocked audiences worldwide would be rather counterproductive. Researching new methods of creating discomfort, anxiety and fear, one can only come to the conclusion that the technological evolution and digitalization of almost all aspects of everyday life might offer a reliable source of inspiration in what horror stories are concerned – the *Black Mirror* series (2011 – present) indicates through a uncomfortable yet authentic approach the anguish that technological progress would be able to generate in a society. For that reason, found footage horror films could begin to explore the universe of social networks, virtual interactions and `feed` on the anxieties, horrors and dread that result from the infinity of possibilities that lay behind a telephone or computer screen.

Documentaries like *Catfish,* Henry Joost, Ariel Schulman (2010) or films like *Ingrid goes West*, Matt Spicer (2017) and the short movie *Noah*, Walter Woodman, Patrick Cederberg (2013) show different perspectives on how social media can manipulate interactions and basic human perception on relationships. These productions aim to present extreme situations that can occur when using too much social media. Characters easily fall into the trap of miscommunication or end up in desperate need of social validation. While these conclusions seem rather unfortunate, there is also a strong level of authenticity from a cinematographic point of view: the fact that the spectator is given the impression that he assists in `real time` to an online conversation creates a similar perception to the one generated by found footage films. *Unfriended*, a 2014 revenge horror movie even manages to approach a disturbing issue: a girl who is presumed dead starts chatting and threatening her old high school colleagues on Skype. Like in *Noah,* spectators participate to an online massacre, all the threats, injuries and deaths being filmed by the character's laptop webcams.

The last decade doesn't necessarily represent a decline in found footage film production. There are still a few notable films like *Grave Encounters* by the Vicious Brothers, 2011, *The Visit*, M. Night Shyamalan, 2015 or the *Paranormal Activity* sequels (2010-2011). However, they rarely manage to receive mixed to positive reviews or to have box office success. The subgenre, clearly addressed to a niche audience, needs innovation either on a narrative level or from an aesthetic point of view. Therefore, exploring the social media universe (a very present level of human interaction and even existence, at some point) might be the way of obtaining the desired effect.

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STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 2, 2019, p. 153 - 166
(Recommended Citation)
DOI:10.24193/subbdrama.2019.2.09

The Vision of the American History in Paul Thomas Anderson's Filmography

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Abstract: This paper presents the reinterpretation of the history of the 20th century United States as shown in the chosen films by Paul Thomas Anderson [*There Will Be Blood* (2007); *The Master* (2012), *Inherent Vice* (2014)]. His filmography is presented as a valid historical narrative, which encompasses the American 20th century in its entirety. The notion of historical narrative is presented with reference to the writings of Hayden White. The modern American society is characterized by its atomization and impossibility of forming interpersonal relationships. Anderson's historical movies are treated as an attempt of finding the rationale for these societal conditions. The analysis refers to the traditionally American values of individualism and Emersonian self-reliance. Anderson's films show the modern reinterpretation of these values which degenerated into egoistic self-centeredness. This process is seen in the emergence of the hardline capitalism (*There Will Be Blood*) and is strengthened by the post-war shattering of human relations (*The Master*). This deterioration of values cannot be stopped, what is shown through the failed hippie revolution (*Inherent Vice*). Throughout the analysis the films are constantly contrasted with the narrative of Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*. This work is chosen as a point of reference because it was a significant reinterpretation of dominant historical narrative in itself, while still remaining scientific in its nature. The aim of this paper is to further the interdisciplinary research by showing that both historical and artistic narratives reinterpret the American history and have their tangent points.

Keywords: Paul Thomas Anderson, Howard Zinn, USA, 20th century

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyze the filmography of the American director Paul Thomas Anderson. Soon after his debut in the 90s he gained international recognition thanks to his original and unique style based, among other things, on his predilection for long takes and unconventional usage of music. At this point Anderson has helmed eight features. This paper will focus on three of them: *There Will Be Blood* (2007), *The Master* (2011), and *Inherent Vice* (2014), which will be treated as a singular and coherent historical narrative. *Phantom Thread* (2017) is disregarded altogether due to its British context and the first four films of Anderson (*Hard Eight* (1996), *Boogie Nights* (1997), *Magnolia* (1999) and *Punch-Drunk Love* (2003)) are treated primarily as a depiction of a more or less modern America. Thus, the conducted analysis can be treated as somewhat genealogical - its main goal is to reconstruct the roots of the contemporary society's flaws as perceived by Paul Thomas Anderson.

For the sake of this argument history will be treated as a primarily narrational form of writing. Being conscious of the obvious differences between the academic inquiry and the artistic creation, I intend to purposefully blur the aforementioned distinction. According to the assumed understanding of history, this branch of knowledge will be understood in a postmodern manner. This kind of approach can be reconstructed for instance with reference to Hayden White, who pointed out the similarities between writing history and writing narratives and defined a historical narrative as "a mixture of adequately and inadequately explained events, a congeries of established and inferred facts, at once a representation that is an interpretation and an interpretation that passes for an explanation of the whole process mirrored in the narrative"[2]

Having established this kind of view of history, one can easily compare historical writings with Anderson's films. The main context used consistently throughout this paper is Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*. This choice is made due to the fact that, on the one hand, this book exerted a significant influence among historians and is one of the crucial historical

2. Hayden White, "Interpretation in History," *New Literary History* 4, no. 2 (1973): 281.

handbooks in the United States. On the other hand, it is known for being vastly different from the traditional, conservative approaches to history - Zinn shifts the weight of his narrative from the great figures of history to the eponymous people, who can be associated with the ordinary men and women, oftentimes stemming from the working class.

What is more, Zinn himself admits the subjective character of his work, when he writes that "a historian (or a journalist, or anyone telling a story) was forced to choose, out of an infinite number of facts, what to present, what to omit. And that decision inevitably would reflect, whether consciously or not, the interests of the historian"[3]. Subjectivity stems not only from the choice of facts, but also from their interpretations, because "there is no such thing as a pure fact, innocent of interpretation"[4]. Zinn defines his approach to history as an attempt "to awaken a greater consciousness of class conflict, racial injustice, sexual inequality, and national arrogance"[5] - he tries to give voice to those who was excluded from the historical narratives.

Anderson's filmography cannot be interpreted as a political project aimed at giving voice to the excluded masses. Nevertheless, common ground between the narratives of Zinn and Anderson may be found in their insistence on describing history with relation to the ordinary people. The discussed movies are consciously avoiding references to the actual historical figures. The director focuses on his characters and the history of the United States is always perceived from their unique points of view. Having established the possibility of this comparison, it should be stated that it will not be proportional. Anderson's movies will be treated as the main focus of this paper and the usage of Zinn will be treated as a context-giving instrument which sheds light on the analyzed plots and characters.

There Will Be Blood

The first movie of Paul Thomas Anderson which will be discussed is *There Will Be Blood*. It is a movie which instantaneously gained international

3. Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, 3rd editio (London and New York: Longman, 2003), 683.
4. Zinn, 684.
5. Zinn, 686.

recognition and is treated as Anderson's *opus magnum*. When it comes to its critical reception, one can refer for example to one very telling commentary of Scott Foundas, who claims that "Paul Thomas Anderson has taken a stab at making The Great American Movie — and I daresay he's made one of them"[6]. The words of the critic signify that the discussed film is American through and through and as such can be treated as a valid point of entrance when it comes to analyzing the American history of the 20th century.

The movie presents the story of Daniel Plainview (Daniel Day-Lewis) who gradually accumulates wealth thanks to oil drills. The plot presents few decades - from 1898 to 1927 - during which the main character becomes the oil tycoon. The plot of the movie focuses primarily on Daniel's stay at Little Boston, which becomes the main scene for the events. Among the crucial plotlines one should mention Daniel's conflict with Eli Sunday (Paul Dano), the self-proclaimed priest of the local church. This conflict indicates the tension between secular and religious powers. The character of Plainview can be defined in terms of his greed, which seems to be one of his constitutive characteristics. Daniel's need for money turns into obsession and is the only goal of his life. In consequence his greed leads to his eventual demise: he rejects his adopted son after the boy loses his hearing and becomes a murderer - first when he kills an impostor who claims to be his long-lost brother and later on, in the last scene of the movie, when he kills Eli. The figure of Daniel Plainview can be treated as a metonymic representation of the rampant capitalism which organized the oil business - and the entire country - in the early 20th century. The main character of the movie cannot be treated as a singular character, because he is a representative of his kind. The film might present a history of just one man, but the meaning of this one story can be treated as commentary on the entire American epoch.

It is worth mentioning that *There Will Be Blood* is inspired by Upton Sinclair's *Oil!* The book and the movie differ vastly, and the discussed film cannot be treated as an adaptation, but the choice of this particular source is quite telling. Anderson refers to Sinclair who was a politically engaged

6. Scott. Foundas, "There Will Be Blood Is Anderson's Citizen Kane," *LA Weekly*, 2007, https://www.laweekly.com/there-will-be-blood-is-andersons-citizen-kane/.

figure and belonged to the group of muckrakers, who unmasked the wrongdoings of the American industries and cared for the wellbeing of the American workers. Using Sinclair, the ardent socialist, as a source material means that the left-wing perspective is assumed. This kind of approach is in alliance with Zinn's view as well.

The film begins with a long sequence in which Daniel discovers a silver ore. Throughout the entire sequence there is no dialogue. This voiceless approach may be seen as a distant echo of the silent cinema (with Chaplin's *Gold Rush* being an obvious association), which would be a valid historical context. This subtle meta-commentary can be understood as comparison between oil and movies. Filmmaking should be treated as an artistic endeavor, but it was demoted to the level of industry; it is done in accordance with the perspective of films being financially beneficial. This kind of connection shows that greed, which can be easily observed in oil industry, permeates the American culture in its entirety.

The opening scene is crucial from a different standpoint as well. In this sequence Daniel Plainview breaks his leg and for the rest of the movie he limps. This kind of disability is traditionally connected with the devil[7]. Thus Plainview - and all the values and norms he represents - may be seen as truly infernal. After all his defining characteristic of greed is one of the seven deadly sins. The Biblical context can be developed in the context of the title. The phrase "there will be blood" echoes one of the scourges, which was announced by a similar phrase "there shall be blood"[8]. And blood indeed appears - the titular prophecy is fulfilled in the last scene, when Daniel kills Eli and "fulfils in an extreme fashion the prophetic imperative of the film's title"[9]. One may treat blood as visually analogical to oil as well.

However, it seems that the vision of capitalism in *There Will Be Blood* is more nuanced. It is a potentially perilous force, but it is not evil in the infernal sense. The context of the devil should be understood rather in light of the Mephistophelian claim - the devil of capitalism is "the part of that

7. Maximilian Rudwin, *Diabeł w legendzie i literaturze* (Kraków: Znak, 1999), 60.
8. Exod. 7:19 ESV.
9. George Toles, *Paul Thomas Anderson* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016), 83–84.

power which would / Do evil constantly and constantly does good"[10]. It can be said that the rampant capitalism is based on greed and is potentially destructive, but these motivations are not bound to be reproduced in their effects. In spite of its dubious moral foundations, economic development significantly benefitted the everyday comfort of society. Zinn admits that "there was some truth to the standard picture of the twenties as a time of prosperity"[11]. This, however, doesn't change the fact that "prosperity was concentrated at the top"[12]. What is more, it can be claimed that this kind of structure prohibits any possibility of change, because "there were enough well-off people to push the others into the back-ground. And with the rich controlling the means of dispensing information, who would tell?"[13]

In the final scene of the movie, after killing Eli, Daniel Plainview utters the phrase "I'm finished". On the literal level it merely announces the end of the violent argument with Eli. It can be treated as a meta-commentary as well - murder completes the plot and is synonymous with the end of the movie. Daniel is left in a position of the utmost demise, which gives no chance for retribution. All possibilities of starting anew are nihilated by the overbearing end titles. This phrase may be seen as a sign of Daniel's self-proclaimed end or - referring to the discourse of economy - his moral bankruptcy. His story is finished, and he has no future. He gained opulent riches, but at the same time lost his humanity.

The very scene of the murder is filmed in a way which alludes to Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). When Daniel hits Eli with a bowling pin, he looks just like Kubrick's monkey, which kills his enemy. This visual quote - in the context of one of the most famous movie cuts in a following scene, when a bone changes into a spaceship - presents Daniel's story as yet another fragment in the perpetual cycle of history-governing violence. In the moment of murder Daniel represents the innate violence connected to humanity's development. In this scene he represents the American economic development at its fullest.

10. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust, Part One*, trans. David Luke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).
11. Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, 382.
12. Zinn, 382.
13. Zinn, 383.

If Plainview shall be treated as a metonymic representation of the entire mode of culture, then his fall must be treated as relating to the entire society. This fall may be seen as a degeneration of one of the crucial American notion - that of Emersonian self-reliance[14]. The conviction according to which each person is capable of shaping their own fate got distorted. Once it was understood in terms of an introspective insight leading to subjectification, and now it is equal to egoistical pragmaticism. Individualism got replaced by a purely economic greed. One "relies" on himself only to attain riches - this kind of approach cannot be treated as a noble method of living. Living life in accordance to business-like model leaves no free space for those things which escape the discourse of economy such as interpersonal relationships. Plainview objectifies every single person he meets and uses them in accordance to financial opportunities.

Capitalism may be seen as one of the crucial elements of the notion of America. Zinn explains this notion with reference to Du Bois, who "saw the ingenuity of capitalism in uniting exploiter and exploited-creating a safety valve for explosive class conflict"[15]. The historian describes how the exploiting and the exploited are united by nationality. Economic benefit of the country is treated as an ideological method of creating a community. Capitalism is a crucial condition for shaping the national identity. However, this kind of community is very feeble. Using extreme forms of individualism as a template for the citizens is beneficial for the ruling class, because it distorts class distinctions and prohibits the lower classes from assessing their social position. In the discourse of individualism everyone thinks of himself as a (potential) millionaire. This uncertain perspective is tempting enough for the citizens to refrain from creating a real community.

The Master

The process of destruction will be finalized with the World War, which will destroy the order of the world. Post-war America, which is still impacted by the extreme capitalism, will soon be forced to redefine itself. This process

14. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self-Reliance* (White Plains, N.Y.: Peter Pauper Press, 1967).
15. Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, 363.

is presented by Anderson in the next movie which will be discussed - *The Master*. It can be seen as continuation in two senses - it follows *There Will Be Blood* chronologically both in terms of plot and in terms of Anderson's filmography. The movie depicts the story of Freddie Quell (Joaquin Phoenix), who cannot find himself in the American society after returning from the war. He falls victim to the manipulative Lancaster Dodd (Philip Seymour Hoffman), the leader of a sect. The relationship between these two characters it the main pivot of the film. Freddie treats the sect as a surrogate family, which fulfils his communal needs. This form of community is bound to fail and Freddie eventually escapes this toxic relationship.

When it comes to the historical context the main events of history are omitted. One can observe the influence of the World War, but actual combat is never shown, because the film begins with the end of war. Freddie is depicted as a fully uniformed soldier, but this scene is just a glimpse and is used in order to signal Freddie's dependency on the army. It seems that Anderson does not care for the event itself. He seems to be preoccupied with its impact on the people.

Freddie can be described as traumatized and broken due to his experience of war. His state manifests itself in few ways. First of all, he has problem with proper relationships with women. In one of the first scenes he copulates with a sand figure - this shows his inability of forming a relationship with an actual woman. In this kind of relationship, a woman is reduced to the lifeless figure deprived of her subjectivity. In the end of the movie Freddie seems to partially work through his problem - he has an actual intercourse. Anderson, however, decided to return to the image of a sand woman in the next scene - creating a full-fledged relationship remains impossible for Freddie.

Freddie's brokenness is expressed through his drug addiction as well. Throughout the movie he prepares certain mixtures. His addiction stems from his military past - it is shown in an obvious way, when he prepares his drink on the basis of antifreeze stolen from the army. His addiction can be interpreted as a form of escapism. Drugs not only allow him to escape, but they also give him a false sense of control. In one of his hallucinations he imagines all of the women in the room as naked - this gives him a sense of dominance.

The situation of Freddie is manifested by his inability to control violence as well. This is seen at best during the arrest scene. When both Freddie and Dodd are arrested, Anderson positions them in two cells next to each other. Dodd is presented as calm and stone-like figure, whereas Freddie seems to be unable to control himself and destroys the cell entirely. This dichotomy presents Freddie as inferior and subjected to emotions, while the eponymous master occupies the position of dominance.

Inner disturbance of the protagonist leads to his alienation, which seems to define the entire post-war period. Anderson himself defines the typical psychological state of these times as "confused, and heartbroken, and soul bent"[16]. This alienation is so painful that one is willing even to connect themselves with a sect in order to alleviate it. On the surface the movement of the master seems to be inclusive - it provides a sense of belonging and offers a group identity.

The post-war society is shattered, and this lack of singularity is seen in the structure of the movie. While the pre-war period could have been presented through one larger-than-life persona, in the case of the years after the war it is no longer possible. Anderson uses two contrasted characters in order to present the dynamics of interpersonal relationships after the Second World War. Neither Freddie nor Lancaster can function without each other - the former desperately needs a surrogate father figure and the latter needs someone to manipulate. This relation is not based on a sincere bond. The church of Lancaster Dodd remains rooted in the capitalist ideology. The master plays the role of a religious leader, because it is beneficial financially. He treats his believers as a commodity. Anderson no longer criticizes capitalism in itself, but presents how detrimental it was when it comes to interpersonal relationships. Every human can be reduced to the role of commodity.

In his analysis George Toles refers to Kenneth Gross' reinterpretation of Simmel's notion of a dyad. This concept treats the relation of two partners as a basic foundation of society. Gross observes that "the relation indeed enhances rather than blocks the individuation of its members", because it

16. "Director Paul Thomas Anderson on This Fall's Most Buzzed-about Film, 'The Master,'" Cigarettes and Red Vines, 2012, http://cigsandredvines.blogspot.com/2012/10/interview-cbc.html.

"creates peculiar conditions of mutual exposure, since it represents a relation in which one member cannot hide from the other" and cannot "pass responsibility (…) onto a larger group or impersonal ideal"[17]. Freddie's relationship with Dodd eventually forces himself to consider his own subjectivity as independent. He must deal with his psyche and cease to mask it by means of escaping into the group identity.

Zinn observes that the war was a stimulus which initiated the rebuilding of capitalism after the Great Depression. The historian writes that "the unemployment, the economic distress, and the consequent turmoil that had marked the thirties, only partly relieved by New Deal measures, had been pacified, overcome by the greater turmoil of the war"[18]. Zinn refers to Wittner, who claims that "the war rejuvenated American capitalism"[19]. According to Kolko "the American economic war aim was to save capitalism at home and abroad"[20]. The American goal seems to be fulfilled. Some benefits were shared by the workers and therefore the system was not only defended, but also acknowledged by the overwhelming majority. This common acceptance of capitalism leads to its absence in the historical narrative of Anderson - the economic effects of individualism are substituted with its influence on interpersonal relations.

The detrimental effects of the American form of individualism are observed not only from Zinn's left-wing perspective, but also from more conservative standpoints. Bellah underlines the importance of language, when he writes that the individualistic language, which can be understood as a primary discourse of the American self-knowing, limits the ways of thinking[21]. In this case there is no contradiction between the authors - they might be focused on different things, but they agree that social separation of individuals may be connected with culturally and linguistically transmitted values.

17. Toles, *Paul Thomas Anderson*, 126.
18. Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, 425.
19. Zinn, 425.
20. Zinn, 413.
21. Robert Neelly Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, ed. Robert Neelly Bellah (New York: HarperCollins, 1986), 290.

Post-war America presented in *The Master* looks like an environment alienating the members of the society. Traditional individualism still shapes the minds and renders the creation of positive community impossible. What is more, it is no longer embraced by everybody. There are people who are desperate for contact with others, but their attempts are bound to fail. These needs are catered for by the pathological communities, which exploit the shattered post-war generation of young people and require full and unconditional submission. In post-war America there is a society, but there is no community. People who were scarred by the war cannot find help in interpersonal relationships.

Inherent Vice

The last movie discussed is *Inherent Vice* based on the novel by Thomas Pynchon. It depicts the story of Larry "Doc" Sportello (Joaquin Phoenix), a private detective and a hippie, who uncovers the dark side of Los Angeles in 1970s. Anderson again decides to omit the historical context of the Vietnam war. The government is presented as potentially perilous - this depiction may be connected with the mindset of the times, because - as pointed out by Zinn - "in the early seventies, the system seemed out of control - it could not hold the loyalty of the public"[22]. The plot of the film is very dense and oftentimes hard to grasp. The main plotline can be described as a detective story about a real estate tycoon named Mickey Wolfman (Eric Roberts), who is kidnapped. However, the plot is constructed in a specific manner, which translates Pynchon's writing on screen - the number of characters and subplots seems to grow exponentially, and it seems that the kidnapping is a part of an omnipresent conspiracy, which controls the entirety of the American life. The sense of confusion is created consciously - the viewers are lost in the plot just like the main character.

Even when Doc finally finds Mickey Wolfman, the intrigue is not resolved. The enormous scale of conspiracy is never revealed. The system seems to control everything and everyone. Wolfman is yet another example of a capitalist, who seems to represent the notion of being American. He has

22. Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, 541.

no independent position - capitalism morphed into an impersonal system of financial connections. The capitalist mindset is so common that a man who wants to share his wealth with the poor is treated as insane. Mickey is put into asylum and is forced to "wake from his bad hippie dream". The figure of Mickey shows American reaction to the hippie movement - in the long run it was disregarded as a temporary lack of reason. Individualistic ideology was so strong, that the attempted revolt was instantaneously prohibited.

America cannot be reformed, and the only positive perspective can be found in an escape. Sortilège (Joanna Newsom), the narrator of the movie, refers to a ship, which suddenly disappeared: "May we trust this blessed ship was bound for some better shore (…) - risen and redeemed. Where the American fate mercifully failed to transpire". The United States are bound to be restricted by their foundational values. There is a deep need for re-signifying it and creating a new American worldview. History shows that this kind of notional revolution was not possible, and the hippie culture was assimilated by capitalism. Zinn observes that "never in American history had more movements for change been concentrated in so short a span of years. But the system in the course of two centuries had learned a good deal about the control of people. In the mid-seventies, it went to work"[23]. The societal change introduced in the late sixties was never completed, because the movement was overwhelmed with the government's power and the conservative backlash.

The world depicted by Anderson is governed by the gigantic network of interconnections, which construct a view of life which could be labeled as an embodiment of conspiracy theories. This non-understandable structure represents the complicated and omnipresent order created by the state. The authority of the ruling class is so impenetrable, that there is no possibility of starting a revolutionary movement. The movie ends with a scene of Doc and Shasta driving away. They don't have any destination, but it is not important. What is crucial is from where they drive - it is an act of escape from the American society. This postulated escape is possible only on a small scale, there is no potential for a large movement. The final escape seems to

23. Zinn, 539.

be judged positively by the director. Doc's face is illuminated by an unexpected ray of light, which falls on his face. Given the spatial order of the scene, the light must be located in front of the car. Thus, it can be stated that they are driving at good direction. The sanctity of light forms a jarring contrast with the infernal character of Daniel Plainview in *There Will Be Blood*. The potential for a small-scale revolt seems to be crucial, especially given the fact that - for the time being - *Inherent Vice* completes Anderson's depictions of America. The affirmation of escapism is a gloomy diagnosis, but still it provides us with some sense of hope.

Summary

America in the 20th century may be defined by the lack of interpersonal relationships. O'Brian writes that "The America where we live (…) is a country of deep loneliness - that same loneliness that permeates all of Anderson's films. (…) All his films … have found their way to the heart of a peculiarly American disconnectedness"[24]. Anderson seems to be not so negative and gives some of his characters hope - in spite of this lack of connection, a positive perspective can be found in interpersonal, oftentimes romantic, bonds.

Anderson's world seems to stem naturally from the ideological foundations of this country. From the very beginning it was built on the basis of strong faith in the individual. The history of the 20th century shows the gradual degradation of the ideas which were once praiseworthy. The culturally conveyed remnants of distorted self-reliance are connected to the capitalist system and in consequence are detrimental for the members of the society, who are unable to form bonds with each other. The historical process results in modernity of disconnectedness: in which "millions of people have been looking desperately for solutions to their sense of impotency, their loneliness, their frustration, their estrangement from other people, from the world, from their work, from themselves".[25]

24. Toles, *Paul Thomas Anderson*, 2.
25. Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, 636.

The vision of the 20th century America presented by Paul Thomas Anderson is coherent and convincing. The director is consistent in focusing on the interpersonal relationships and how they are hindered by the American axiology. His filmography can be treated as a valid and interesting historical narrative, which – even if subjective – sheds new light on the historical facts which are shown from a new angle.

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STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 2, 2019, p. 167 - 179
(Recommended Citation)
DOI:10.24193/subbdrama.2019.2.10

Cognitive Schemata and Meaningful Strategies in Adapting Ian McEwan's Novel, Atonement

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Abstract: Adapting literary works for cinematography has not been of much interest until two-three decades ago, mainly because of numerous aporias and biases having to face across time. This paper is considering looking into this subject through the dynamics of the workflow of creation and receiving the product deriving from it with whatever mental activity it involves in order to be meaningful. "Atonement" based on Ian McEwan's novel and directed by Joe Wright, offers a good example concerning the filmmaker's double orientation in the process of artistic production: on the one hand, towards the literary text, attempting to respond to the indications offered by it, on the other hand focused on the audience, attempting to create a similar impact, to guide his way of perceiving the story, to anticipate the viewer's emotions and the cognitive ways through which he could access a meaning. Throughout its entire unfolding, the film is playing with the spectator, activating a series of cognitive schemata which will subsequently be subject to correction, guiding the activity of imagination in a manner that is analogous with the one operated by the strategies of the literary text.

Keywords: adaptation, cinema, cognitive schemata, reception, copy, interpretation, fidelity

In spite of the widespread practice and interest that it spurred among the filmmakers and the public, until towards the end of the last century, the cinematographic adaptation of the literary works had been the most marginal

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area of cinema studies. The few theoretical researches that up until the last two-three decades took an interest in adaptation are marked by two common denominators: the fidelity of the adaptation and the specificity of the two media. The first transformed adaptation into a simple copying of its source of inspiration and the second sustained the impossibility to separate the form from the content, therefore the illegitimacy of an aesthetic transfer from book to film. Overcoming the theoretical impasse in which adaptation found itself happens during the '80s, under the influence of the poststructuralist theories, which provide a series of concepts, such as "intertextuality", "dialogism", "hypertext". The new paradigm puts forward the horizontal relations against the vertical ones, which implied authority. There is more and more talk about adaptation as intertextual practice, as "a creative act of closeness/salvation"[2] or even "palimpsest", a term taken over by Linda Hutcheon from Gérard Genette's theoretical arsenal. These theories, being launched not more than 20-30 years' prior, have the merit of having led to the transgression of moralism and elitism, in the terms of which adaptation was regarded, and to understanding its nodal role in a web of relations. What can be reproached to them, however, is the continuous repetition of certain concepts, without seeking to explain the ontological dimension of the derived oeuvre and the strategies by which it opens up to the public, always keeping the memory of its source of inspiration.

This presentation proposes a new outlook upon adaptation, through the lens of the theory of reception and effect, of cognitive and constructivist psychology, in view of surprising the dynamics of the derived oeuvre's process of production and reception. By its quality of secondary oeuvre, the adaptation is a form of the literary text's interpretation. It expresses confidence in the communicability of the artistic creation, in the possibility of the "occurrence" of sense and it taking form into another work that does not deny, but, on the contrary, it affirms the previous one in a new form. For this reason, we will direct our attention to the manner in which the potential for sense of the literary oeuvre is harnessed in adaptation and, especially, to the manner in which the film anticipates the reactions, the emotions of the spectator,

2. Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 8.

the cognitive approach of semantic processing. We are interested in the effect of the literary text over the filmmaker, but also in the effect of the secondary oeuvre on the spectator. Our conviction is that, in view of meeting the requirement of fidelity, understood not as a simple transfer, but as respect owed to the previous creation, the second effect should be similar to the first.

The adaptation of Ian McEwan's novel *Atonement* by the director, Joe Wright offers a good example concerning the filmmaker's double orientation in the process of artistic production: on the one hand, towards the literary text, attempting to respond to the indications offered by it; on the other hand, towards the spectator, seeking to produce on him/her an effect similar to the one produced by the literary work, guiding the reception activity, anticipating the emotional reactions of the public and the cognitive modalities by which it might access a sense. Throughout its entire unfolding, the film is playing with the spectator, creating expectations only to contradict them later on, suggesting interpretations which prove to be non-compliant with the "reality", activating a series of cognitive schemata which will subsequently be subject to correction, guiding the activity of imagination in a manner that is analogous with the one operated by the strategies of the literary text.

In an interview with the journalist Rob Carnevale, the director Joe Wright said:

> I think the book is very visual so therefore I tried to make an almost literal adaptation of the book. […] With a lot of adapted novels, the catchphrase they all have is kind of, «at some point you need to throw the book away». I always used to nod my head and pretend to understand what they meant. But I think you only throw the book away if it's rubbish, so we never did that. We kept the book by our side throughout the whole process. Obviously, you have to cherry pick a bit. I also think a lot of literary people presume that literature and the written word has a monopoly over internal truth and I personally, as a dyslexic, don't agree with that. I think, to me, the films of Fellini or Bergman or the great classical masters of the medium spoke just as much truth as Tolstoy or Dickens. It's just another medium, so anyone who thought that the book was un-adaptable was probably underestimating the power of film.[3]

3. Rob Carnevale, "Atonement - Joe Wright Interview," Indie London, 2007, www.indielondon.co.uk/Film-Review/atonement-joe-wright-interview.

Ian McEwan's novel is a novel about love, about war, but it is especially a self-reflexive novel, one that shows in what way imagination manages to "parasite" reality. For the screenwriter Cristopher Hampton, writing the adapted screenplay was a complex and a rather difficult process, due to the fact that he had to operate various revisions. Initially, the producer Robert Fox had handed over the project to Richard Eyre, however, the delay of the beginning of production, due to other projects in which the director was involved, determines Fox to replace Eyre with the younger Joe Wright, known until that time especially for the 2005 adaptation of the *Pride and Prejudice* novel by Jane Austen. The three or four screenplay versions written by Cristopher Hampton for Richard Eyre will be followed by three different ones, realized upon Joe Wright's request. The last version combines the classical logic of the narrative evolution with the fragmentary character, the discontinuity and the self-reflexivity of the postmodern discourse.

In Richard Eyre's vision, the film would have begun with the return of the writer Briony Tallis to the mansion where she had spent her childhood in order to celebrate her 77th birthday, an occasion for reflection and refreshing the memories of the moments that had profoundly marked her existence and the one of her loved ones. In this version, the entire narration of the film was thought about retrospectively. According to Cristopher Hampton's confession, Joe Wright did not like this idea, his main concern being that of eliminating the filmic "crutches": *the voice over* with an explanatory role, the narrative linearity and the frame. He showed interest in the mainly visual representation of the story and by the possibility of the ability to read the thoughts and the emotions of the characters on the face of the actors instead of exposing them by a voice from the background. The advantage of this new perspective consisted in, according to Hampton's opinion, the fact that „the viewer of the film, no longer alerted by premonitory hints, can suffer the same dislocating shocks at the end as the reader of the novel"[4]. In other words, the fidelity invoked by Hampton, but also by Wright, meant attention granted not only to the scrupulous illustration of the course of events and the details of

4. Cristopher Hampton, "Introduction," in *Atonement. The Shooting Script* (New York: Newmarket Press, 2008), vi–vii.

the diegetic world, but also to the production of the same effect on the spectator as the one produced by the book, the filmic strategies being thought out in correlation with the literary ones, in order to pursue a similar movement towards the occurrence of meaning.

Any creative act is realized by successive readjustments of the schemata offered by tradition, by the deviation from what is already made trivial by usage. Referring to the manner in which the screenplay was initially structured, Joe Wright explains:

> There was a script that Christopher Hampton had written with the previous director, Richard Eyre, and I read that script and didn't feel that it was in line with the film. I wanted to make, and felt like I needed to get some ownership of the material, in a way, creatively.[5]

According to Hampton's confession, both Eyre and Wright had in sight the principle of fidelity towards the book. However, the screenplays requested by them differ significantly, because they update the novel's potential for meaning in a different manner. For Joe Wright the correction of the initial schemata, of the other director's perspective is vital, since such an act offers him the chance to express himself creatively, to give up the convention of the retrospective telling and to seek cinematic equivalences for the strategies of the literary narration. In an interview with Edward Douglas, talking about the manner in which certain mental images are clarified within the director's mind over the course of the project, through the corrections and completions of the schemata, Wright said: „It's a funny thing when you're designing a film. You have certain images in place and then it starts to, almost like painting, you're balancing the composition if you like.[6]

In a similar manner, MacEwan explains the process of the literary creation:

5. Edward Douglas, "Joe Wright on Directing Atonement," *Coming Soon*, 2007, http://www.comingsoon.net/movies/features/39526-joe-wright-on-directing-atonement.
6. Douglas.

> To some extent writing a novel has to be a journey without maps. A later draft allows one to smooth the edges and make that tension operate so that it looks as if everything was intended, but in the actual process I feel like I'm only partially in control of the material.[7]

The manner in which the initial schemata may sometimes suffer, in the process of creation, radical transformations can be understood from the writer's declarations referring to the *Atonement* novel, into the writing of which he had plunged with the image of a girl looking for a vase to arrange a few field flowers. The action should have unfolded in a future in which a privileged elite turns its back to the technological civilization to live at the countryside, in the spirit of Jane Austen's books. Together with the development of the second chapter, which subsequently became the novel's first chapter and with the appearance of Cecilia's younger sister, McEwan confesses that the creative direction had changed.[8]

Instead of the credit titles, the film opens with the sound of the typewriter, a sound which is, at first, non-diegetic, sustaining the paratextual elements. On the dark background, the letters of the title appear one by one: *Atonement.* The first frame sets the time and the space of the action: England 1935. In the foreground appears the mansion of the Tallis family. However, immediately the camera realizes a *travelling* motion from left to right and the viewer realizes that he/she was subject to an optical illusion: it was not the mansion, but a miniature of it, a doll house exposed in Briony's room (Saoirse Ronan.). Sitting at the table, she drafts at the typewriter the ending of her first play: *The Trials of Arabela.*

Both visual clues, as well as the sonorous ones converge towards the idea of the mise-en-abîme of the cinematographic discourse. The viewer is alerted right from the beginning that what he/she sees is not entirely credible, that the matters are not what they appear to be. At the end, it is confirmed that the entire filmic narration constitutes the product of the main character's imagination, of the little girl that we can see in the first

7. Jon Cook, Sebastian Groes, and Victor Sage, "Journeys without Maps: An Interview with Ian McEwan," in *Ian McEwan*, ed. Sebastian Groes (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 146.
8. Cook, Groes, and Sage, 146.

sequence marching on the corridors with the manuscript in her hand, in a dazzling rhythm imprinted by Dario Marinelli's music. The camera follows her through successive approaches and distances, loses her from the frame and finds her again, in a tension potentiated by the original soundtrack, which valorizes magisterially the sound of the typewriter for *beat* and *tempo*. Resuming the same *staccato* suggests Briony's capacity as an author, in the second part of the film, when, being a nurse, she drafts the first version of the love story between her sister, Cecilia (Keira Knightly) and Robbie (James McAvoy).

Another element of metadiscourse is constituted by the image of the mansion, of the real ne this time, depicted by a "frozen" frame, followed by the camera's panoramic motion, just to set, in the end, on the image of Cecilia and her sister, lying on the lawn of the imposing edifice built in a Victorian style. Seen from above, the two girls seem they themselves dolls in the play of fiction, some simple toys, just like the ones in Briony's room, aligned in front of the miniature mansion.

The action is set in the year 1935. An unconfessed love smolders between Cecilia Tallis and Robbie Turner, the son of a servant, yet raised and educated along with the children of the Tallis family. The completion of the studies and the maturity that both reached brings a sort of uneasiness characteristic to the first thrills of love. Moreover, the distance interposed between them is emphasized by Cecilia's frustration, who sees in Robbie's decision of pursuing a second university to become a doctor an obstacle in the path of a potential relationship. The accumulated tensions burst in the artesian fountain scene, surprised randomly from the window of her room by Briony, Cecilia's younger sister, who, through the lens of her own fantasy, gives it a wrong interpretation. To this, it is added the letter with erotic connotations addressed by Robbie to Cecilia, opened by Briony, but also the library scene, where the little girl surprises the two lovers in an engagement full of passion, understood by her as a "wrestle". All these cumulated elements determine Briony to believe that Robbie is a maniac, reason for which when cousin Lola is raped, no one knows by who (without knowing the author of this act), Briony will make a false statement against Robbie, a mistake that she would regret for the rest of her life and which will only find atonement in the fictional novel written by her.

Based on the constructivist theories of perception and cognition, David Bordwell supports the idea according to which the activity of the film reception is circumscribed by the existence of certain schemata, generated as a result of previous narrative experiences, be they cinematographic or of a different nature. In his opinion, the spectator realizes inferences, emits hypotheses, then he checks them, and when they are not confirmed, he rejects them, generating new ones.[9] Let's see how these schemata work in the scene (sequence) from the artesian fountain.

Both in the book, as well as in the film, this scene is resumed from different perspectives, each of which sheds a new light upon the facts. In McEwan's text, it is first told by an omniscient narrator, who reveals Cecilia's thoughts while heading towards the fountain, then it is resumed from Briony's perspective, so that the third time, the literary text returns to this moment through an analepsis, which depicts the details of Cecilia's body, as they had been ingrained in Robbie's enamored memory.

The first description of events is presented as follows:

> She hadn't changed, but there was no question that he had. He was putting distance between himself and the family that had been completely open to him and given him everything. For this reason alone—expectation of his refusal, and her own displeasure in advance—she had not invited him to dinner that night. If he wanted distance, then let him have it. […] Her idea was to lean over the parapet and hold the flowers in the vase while she lowered it on its side into the water, but it was at this point that Robbie, wanting to make amends, tried to be helpful. «Let me take that» he said, stretching out a hand. «I'll fill it for you, and you take the flowers.» «I can manage, thanks.» She was already holding the vase over the basin.
> But he said, «Look, I've got it.» And he had, tightly between forefinger and thumb. «Your cigarette will get wet. Take the flowers.» This was a command on which he tried to confer urgent masculine authority. The effect on Cecilia was to cause her to tighten her grip. She had no time, and certainly no inclination, to explain that plunging vase and flowers

9. David Bordwell, *Narration in the fiction film*, Madison, University Of Viscon Press, 1985.

> into the water would help with the natural look she wanted in the arrangement. She tightened her hold and twisted her body away from him. He was not so easily shaken off. With a sound like a dry twig snapping, a section of the lip of the vase came away in his hand, and split into two triangular pieces which dropped into the water and tumbled to the bottom in a synchronous, seesawing motion, and lay there, several inches apart, writhing in the broken light. Cecilia and Robbie froze in the attitude of their struggle. Their eyes met, and what she saw in the bilious mélange of green and orange was not shock, or guilt, but a form of challenge, or even triumph.
> «You idiot! Look what you've done.»
> He looked into the water, then he looked at back at her, and simply shook his head as he raised a hand to cover his mouth. By this gesture he assumed full responsibility, but at that moment, she hated him for the inadequacy of the response. He glanced toward the basin and sighed. For a moment he thought she was about to step backward onto the vase, and he raised his hand and pointed, though he said nothing. Instead he began to unbutton his shirt. Immediately she knew what he was about. Intolerable. He had come to the house and removed his shoes and socks—well, she would show him then. She kicked off her sandals, unbuttoned her blouse and removed it, unfastened her skirt and stepped out of it and went to the basin wall. He stood with hands on his hips and stared as she climbed into the water in her underwear. Denying his help, any possibility of making amends, was his punishment. The unexpectedly freezing water that caused her to gasp was his punishment. She held her breath, and sank, leaving her hair fanned out across the surface. Drowning herself would be his punishment. When she emerged a few seconds later with a piece of pottery in each hand, he knew better than to offer to help her out of the water. The frail white nymph, from whom water cascaded far more successfully than it did from the beefy Triton, carefully placed the pieces by the vase.[10]

Drawn into the traps of her own bookish fantasies, Briony plans on transforming this scene, which she notices randomly from the window, into the subject of her writings:

10. Ian McEwan, *Atonement* (New York: Nan A. Talese (Random House Inc.), 2002), 27–29.

> Closer, within the boundaries of the balustrade, were the rose gardens and, nearer still, the Triton fountain, and standing by the basin's retaining wall was her sister, and right before her was Robbie Turner. There was something rather formal about the way he stood, feet apart, head held back. A proposal of marriage. Briony would not have been surprised. She herself had written a tale in which a humble woodcutter saved a princess from drowning and ended by marrying her. What was presented here fitted well. Robbie Turner, only son of a humble cleaning lady and of no known father, Robbie who had been subsidized by Briony's father through school and university, had wanted to be a landscape gardener, and now wanted to take up medicine, had the boldness of ambition to ask for Cecilia'shand. It made perfect sense. Such leaps across boundaries were the stuff of daily romance. What was less comprehensible, however, was how Robbie imperiously raised his hand now, as though issuing a command which Cecilia dared not disobey. It was extraordinary that she was unable to resist him. At his insistence she was removing her clothes, and at such speed. She was out of her blouse, now she had let her skirt drop to the ground and was stepping out of it, while he looked on impatiently, hands on hips. What strange power did he have over her? Blackmail? Threats? Briony raised two hands to her face and stepped back a little way from the window.[11]

If Ian McEwan's narrative endeavor starts from an objective perspective over the facts, in order to illustrate later on, the manner in which these are decanted within the conscience of the characters, Joe Wright is aware that in order to obtain the same effect on the spectator, the narrative decoupage (montage) will have to bear within the film a rearrangement. Following this principle, the adaptation presents this scene only twice, first, as it is seen from the window by Briony, being in the position of the *voyeur*, and only afterwards completed by dialogue. The decision is justified by the specificity of the cinematographic medium in relation to the literary one. If the novel is capable to express the thoughts and states of consciousness assertively, the film can only suggest them through images. The director chooses to first present

11. McEwan, 36.

the perspective of the little girl in a subjective montage, alternating the frames which are close-ups of her surprised guise, with the ones illustrating the confrontation between Robbie and Cecilia, precisely to guide the spectator to identification, to the overlap of his/her perspective over that of the viewer character. In this manner, even if the spectator does not know the entire interpretative process that is borne in little girl's mind, he/she realizes that he/she is the indirect witness of a happening whose impulse eludes her.

If the film had revealed right from the start the dialogue between Robbie and Cecilia, as the book did, the spectator's view would not have been an innocent one. The schemata that he/she would have constructed in his/her mind would have comprised a series of information, impossible to ignore. Already holding the key to the event, he/she would not have understood Briony's astonishment just as well. Instead, by guiding the interpretative process to the direction of creating first a general schemata, with numerous "spaces of indetermination" and only then completing this by resuming the sequence, the director creates on the one hand suspense, and on the other, he offers the spectator the chance to discriminate Briony's false interpretation from the reality of the facts. Joe Wrights follows the same principle in the case of the library scene, which is presented both in the book and in the film fragmentarily, at first, from Briony's perspective (who sees Robbie and Cecilia in penumbra, between the bookshelves, in a struggle full of passion, understood by her as "fighting, a hand to hand combat", and only afterwards in a complete image.

The two scenes (the one from the fountain and the one from the library), together with the sensual letter addressed to Cecilia by Robbie and fallen into Briony's hands, create in the child the conviction that her sister is the target of a „maniac". The precipitation of the events through the rape of her cousin Lola determines her to make a false statement against Robbie, a mistake she shall regret her entire life and which shall find atonement only in fiction. Falling prey to her spirit of order, Briony herself had created a schemata for herself, a mental pattern meant to facilitate her „initiation into the secrets of the adult world", to offer her precise answers to the questions eating away at her, to set the phenomenal reality into the bed of the predictable. She had knowingly eluded a series of evident details (Paul

Marshall's scratches, Lola's uncertainty in establishing the aggressor), processing the information selectively, emitting erroneous hypotheses and suppositions in order to justify her fears.

Right from the beginning, Joe Wright's intention was to make as explicit as possible, both for the spectators, as well as for the actors involved, Briony's fragmentary and distorted view of the facts. Due to this reason, even during the production process only the scenes showing the girl at age 13 (interpreted by Saoirse Roman) were shown to the actresses who would embody her at 18 (Ramona Garai) and at 77 (Vanessa Redgrave). This endeavor was meant to enable the actresses to understand the child's point of view better, and then to build their roles based on this identification.

Throughout the entire cinematographic account, the director pays close attention to the spectator's mechanisms of identification, because the emotion invested, the ability to make inferences, of tying the "signs" one to another and to untie them when the subsequent development of the plot requires it, to create, in the end, that web of well-articulated significances depends on them.

At the end, the film presents Briony, at 77, not in the ambience of a family reunion, as it happens in the novel, but in a TV studio where, being now a famous writer, she gives an interview. This apparent departure of the film from the text is compensated by creating the same effect of surprise on the spectator which the novel creates when the readers realize that nothing they have read up until that moment complies with the reality of the facts, but that it is, in part, a work of fiction created by the writer Briony Tallis. In addition, the convention of the interview enables a credible confession of the "author", referring to the entire artistic endeavor that has been presented to us until that moment. The talent with which the filmmaker manages to create an original, autonomous film at the same time, true to the spirit of Ian McEwan's book, the delicacy with which he approximates its significations and intentions, the good knowledge of the spectator's psychology, of the cognitive processes involved in the production of meaning, make Joe Wright one of the masters of cinematographic adaptations.

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STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 2, 2019, p. 181 - 190
(Recommended Citation)
DOI:10.24193/subbdrama.2019.2.11

For a Revaluation of Genre Theory in Contemporary Drama

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Abstract: Despite their singularities and divergences, the major dramatic theories of the twentieth century keep the classical tripartition of genres untouched. Our recent research on rhapsodic criticism has evidenced the increasingly appropriation by playwrights of elements traditionally reserved for a fourth genre, as important as epic, lyric and dramatic genres, but left aside by critical reflection because of its traditional association with "non-artistic" practices: the essayistic genre. A new theory of genres that incorporates this fourth genre into the classical triad may not only illuminate some of the main features of modern and contemporary drama, but it also allows a more accurate understanding of some of the fundamental works of Western drama.

Keywords: essay; contemporary drama; discursive genres; rhapsodic criticism.

Despite their singularities and divergences, the major dramatic theories of the twentieth century keep the classical tripartition of genres between the dramatic, epic and lyric modes untouched. Peter Szondi formulates his *Theory of Modern Drama* from the observation of how "pure drama" is fractured since the end of the nineteenth century by the increasing presence of epic elements. Although he criticizes the "supra-historical" conception of genres, Szondi does not question what he regards as "the three fundamental categories of poetics."[2]

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2. Peter Szondi, *Teoria do drama moderno (1880-1950) [Theory of modern drama]*, trans. Luiz Sérgio Repa (São Paulo: Cosac & Naify, 2001), 24.

If in fact "the evolution of modern drama departs from drama itself,"[3] this occurs not only through the insertion of epic elements, but also through what Jean-Pierre Sarrazac called the *rhapsodiation* of the dramatic form: from the second half of the nineteenth century on, the drama does not only become more epic, but also more lyrical. In many works (such as the plays of Ibsen and Chekhov), the intersubjective dimension gives way to the intersubjective dimension,[4] and external conflicts give way to the intimate drama of the characters (which does not exclude their historical dimension).

However, the simple shift from drama to epic and lyric genres is not enough to elucidate the major transformations of dramatic form over the last hundred and fifty years. Our recent research on rhapsodic criticism[5] has evidenced the increasingly appropriation by playwrights and directors of elements traditionally reserved for a fourth genre, as important as epic, lyric and dramatic genres, but left aside by critical reflection because of its traditional association with "non-artistic" practices: the essayistic genre. A new theory of genres that incorporates this fourth genre into the classical triad may not only illuminate some of the main features of modern and contemporary drama, but it also allows a more accurate understanding of some of the fundamental works of Western drama.

If, in the formulation that consolidates from Romanticism, the epic genre differs from the dramatic genre by the presence of an external narrator to the facts, and the lyrical genre is characterized by the manifestation "of an emotion or a feeling"[6], it remains unclear in which of these three genres we could insert the logical arguments, the abstract discussions and the speculative digressions formulated in the plays of Chekhov, Pirandello, Brecht, Koltès and many other modern and contemporary playwrights. On the one hand, we could consider these examples as subjective manifestations of the characters (which would insert them in the lyric genre); on the other,

3. Szondi, 27.

4. Jean-Pierre Sarrazac, *Poétique Du Drame Moderne* (Paris: Seuil, 2012), 120.

5. See Marco Catalão, "Crítica e ficção na análise do teatro contemporâneo [Criticism and fiction in the analyses of contemporary drama]," *Sala Preta, Revista de Artes Cênicas* 14, no. 2 (2014): 143–52.

6. Gérard Genette, *The Architext: An Introduction*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

as interruptions of dramatic action that would point to the presence of an extradiegetic narrator (and therefore, to the epic genre). However, none of these alternatives would contemplate the specificity of argumentative enunciation, which is presumed to be a general rather than a subjective statement (which removes it from the lyrical genre) and a non-narrative instance (which refutes its classification as an epic trait).

The formulation of a new theory of genres makes it possible not only to suppress this theoretical gap (by adding a fourth genre to the traditional triad) but also to clarify one of the most striking features of contemporary drama: the artistic exploration of the essayistic genre in its various forms (such as the dramatic appropriation of philosophical and scientific texts, the blurring of boundaries between works and discourses about them, the exploration of the scenic potential of scientific conference). Our goal is not to propose a normalization from pure and immutable categories: as Compagnon notes, mixing, inter-artistic dialogue and hybridization are essential characteristics of contemporary creation[7]. We therefore think of the four genres not as definite groups of fixed works, but as transversal categories, modes of enunciation that cross all subgenres and all forms of discourse, artistic or not, to a greater or lesser extent. Turning our attention to the form and proportion in which generic modes combine, can reveal important characteristics not only of each individual work, but it can also elucidate certain recurring tendencies in contemporary artistic creation.

There are two basic types of enunciation: either we enunciate events and interactions that develop in a temporal dimension or we enunciate propositions relatively unrelated to the passage of time. In the first case, events can be narrated by a voice that necessarily places itself at some distance from events (this distance can differ to varying degrees between the omniscient third-person narration and the almost simultaneous narrative of a character who suffers almost immediate effects of narrated events) or can be presented without mediation by the voices of the figures or characters involved in the actions. As it is known, Aristotle based his theorizing on the *Poetics* in these two genres characterized by the mimesis of action, the epic and the dramatic genres.

7. See Antoine Compagnon, "Théorie de la littérature : la notion de genre. Cours de licence, Université de Paris IV-Sorbonne," Fabula, 2001, https://www.fabula.org/compagnon/genre.php.

There is, however, an immense variety of statements which do not present themselves as imitations or inventions of temporal events nor as circumstantial interactions, but as descriptions, speculations and statements about feelings, ideas and reasons in which the temporal logic typical of epic and drama gives way to other kinds of relationship. Also in this case, the elements can be described from a private perspective (intimate or collective, but always with a concrete and specific reach) or can be exposed as arguments, demonstrations, theories or claims about characteristics that are posited as valid in a more general and abstract form. The first type of enunciation belongs to the lyrical genre; the second, to what we call the essayistic genre.

In the lyric mode, we enact the description of an internal object (a feeling, a fantasy, a fear, etc.) or an external one (a landscape, a concrete object, a scene). The description postulates itself as a relatively fixed crystallization, with some temporal stability.[8] As the descriptions are altered by the passage of time, we left the lyrical mode and enter the epic mode.

In the epic mode, we stage a situation in which someone narrates an event. Even if the narrator is involved in the facts, the narration is made at a minimum distance that allows him to stand out from the narrative matter. When the distance between the narrator and the facts falls apart, we left the epic mode and enter the dramatic mode.

In the dramatic mode, we stage one or more discourses directed specifically at a person or a limited group of people with the intention of producing some effect on this interlocutor. The statements are circumscribed to a specific situation and have a definite purpose: to move, to exhort, to convince, to inquire, to apologize, to thank, and so on. As statements become more general and extrapolate the specific circumstances of interlocution, we left the dramatic mode and enter the essayistic mode.

In the essayistic mode, we enact an exempt exposition or the objective search for some universally valid truth. Definitions, comments, and arguments are addressed to a generic interlocutor, and assertions are posited as truths independent of circumstances. If we begin to use appealing elements having

8. I owe this characterization of lyric mode as a description to Seymour Chatman, *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

the intention of touching the interlocutor, we enter the dramatic mode; if a description or narrative is used to illustrate the argument or make it less arid, the essayistic mode gives way to the lyric and the epic modes.

From those observations, we note that the acts of narration and of describing establish by themselves a distinction between the enunciating voice and the world narrated or described. In the dramatic and the essayistic mode this does not occur: in the first case, because the enunciating voice is within the referred world; in the second, because the voice pretends to be incorporeal and impartial. In the essayistic mode, it only matters what is exposed (the ideas, the arguments, the conclusions); the enunciator is postulated as irrelevant. In the lyric mode, on the contrary, although there is a separation between who describes and what is described, this separation is fluid and precarious: those who describe also say something about themselves. The description, by its metonymic character, ends up "contaminating" the subject who describes. Thus, the essayistic (as the dramatic) world posits itself as immediate; on the other hand, the lyrical world (as the epic) is always mediated by an external voice.

Thus, in the epic and lyric modes, there are two distinct discursive levels ("two worlds", as Karol Berger calls them[9]): that of what is narrated or described, and that of the voice that, to narrate or describe, must necessarily put itself at a distance from what it refers to (even when it describes an intimate feeling or tells a personal adventure). This separation is set aside in the dramatic mode, in which the voices are in the same plane of the facts, and in the essayistic mode, in which the voice proposes itself as incorporeal, disinterested, alien to the ideas and propositions that it exposes.

The distinction between the four genres becomes clearer in this table:

LYRIC	2 discursive levels	timeless statement
EPIC	2 discursive levels	temporal statement
DRAMATIC	1 discursive level	temporal statement
ESSAYISTIC	1 discursive level	timeless statement

9. See Karol Berger, *A Theory of Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 166 et passim.

It should be noted that, unlike the traditional triadic division, which mixes formal and thematic elements, the classification we propose is structured in strict formal terms.

It is important to emphasize, however, that the generic classification that we propose does not appear as a rigid division between irreconcilable elements, but on the contrary, as general tendencies that rarely crystallize in pure forms: it is difficult to find a narrative exempt from dialogues, a lyrical poem without reflective instances, a drama without lyrical moments or an essay without narrative passages. We are not as interested in fixed and abstract genres as in the concrete use of each generic mode in artistic works, which freely alternate between dramatic, epic, lyric and essayistic instances. Discrimination of the specific role of each instance allows us to observe more clearly certain tendencies of contemporary artistic creation and to perceive nuances that the traditional triadic division tends to obscure.

The fact that the fourth genre has been excluded from practically all the systematizations undertaken by theater and literature theorists over the last few centuries should not be surprising to us, since we traditionally associate the argumentation, exhibition and demonstration of ideas and concepts to non-artistic (predominantly scientific and philosophical) practices. However, as we have shown in part of our research, one of the most important features of twentieth-century art is the creative appropriation of the essayistic genre[10]. Playwrights such as Bertolt Brecht and Luigi Pirandello, narrators such as Jorge Luis Borges and Roberto Bolaño, visual artists such as Michel Duchamp and Michael Asher, choreographers such as Jérôme Bel and Xavier Le Roy explored the essayistic genre not as an extra artistic element but as a fertile space for invention.

It is not a question of simply establishing a new generic classification that will leave the artistic works and experiences more or less untouched, but rather of proposing a new way of observing aspects of individual works and characteristics of great groups that we would hardly perceive from the traditional perspective. From this new perspective, we understand in

10. Marco Catalão, "Virtual Theater: Theory and Practice," *Art Research Journal* 3, no. 11 (2016): 92–106.

another way what Sarrazac calls the "philosophical tendency"[11] of an author like Luigi Pirandello. The character who "explains his role" (a recurring feature in Pirandello's work) is an important element in the erosion of canonical drama through the insertion of essayistic elements.

The move of Pirandello, who three years after the first performance of *Six Characters in Search of an Author* publishes a preface in which he comments on his own work, illustrates the extent to which drama in the twentieth century *overflows* (the term used by Sarrazac) towards the essayistic mode. The objection that the preface "is not part" of the play is not convincing: from the moment it is published, it is definitively incorporated into the work, participating ineluctably in its scenic and interpretative becoming. A preface is not "just a preface": consider, for example, the *Preface to Cromwell*, which over the years has become more relevant than Victor Hugo's own drama. Symptomatically, Sarrazac takes as its starting point from his analysis of the "poetics of modern drama" the preface, not Pirandello's theatrical play.

The displacement of action to commentary can be observed in many other authors besides Pirandello: in Brecht, of course, but also in Beckett and in a playwright like Edward Bond, who states that "the author must provide a meaning to history, what he dramatizes is not so much history itself as the interpretation or analysis that it must arouse."[12] This "second degree" drama demands a form more porous to speculation, digressions, and commentary that slows down and truncates action and dialogue. In this respect, Chekhov is one of the forerunners in the presentation of characters who do not only lyrically *expose* their yearnings and fears but who also speak and *lecture* on social, philosophical, and scientific issues.

From the reflection on the essayistic genre, we find that what Sarrazac calls the "novelization of drama" (its use of devices and compositional processes typical of the novel) indicates not only the recurrent presence of epic, but also essayistic elements. If, in Bernard Marie Koltès's play *In the Solitude of Coton Fields*, "each character presents himself as a thinker, a 'philosopher' who defends 'or attacks' a position",[13] the monologues can not

11. Sarrazac, *Poétique Du Drame Moderne*, 25.
12. Apud Sarrazac, 30.
13. See Sarrazac, 265.

simply be lyrical, and necessarily move to the essayistic mode, as Koltès himself clearly asserts: "For me, a true dialogue is always an argument, as the philosophers understood it, but deviant."[14]

The insertion of the essayistic mode in the genre theory allows us to reevaluate also the innovations of Brecht, whose devices have as main function to emphasize the reflective and critical aspect of his works. Since the characteristic elements of Brecht's "epic theater" are narration and commentary, it may be more appropriate to rename it as an epic-essayistic theater. In this sense, Galileo's choice as a protagonist seems to us emblematic: handled "not ... as a hero, but as an intellectual subject to contradictions",[15] his figure serves perfectly the purpose of a theater in which dramatic action gives way to hypotheses, discussions, and conflicting comments about human actions. The transformation of the modern character into a person who "interrogates indefinitely about himself, his aims, his motives and his identity"[16] leads the dramatic form to the essayistic mode, substituting intersubjective action for comment, reflection, abstract discussion, self-analysis. The "theater of a scientific epoch"[17] resorts more consistently to the discursive mode typical of scientific communications (the essay) than to the epic mode traditionally associated with fiction.

With his constant activity of writing notes and theoretical additions to his plays, Brecht definitively consolidates the figure of the "playwright-essayist", already outlined in Lessing and Diderot, which extends to the present moment in names like Michel Vinaver, Heiner Müller, Romeo Castellucci, and Jean-Pierre Sarrazac himself, whose theoretical reflection on theater is as influential as his artistic production (which, on the other hand, is no longer apprehended independently but rather in correlation with his essayistic counterpart).

14. Sarrazac, 265.
15. Sarrazac, 152.
16. Sarrazac, 217.
17. Bertolt Brecht, *Estudos sobre teatro*, trans. Fiama Pais Brandão (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1978), 99.

Since, as Karol Berger[18] points out, the tendency toward abstraction is what defines modern art, in the theater this characteristic is manifested not only by the refusal of the subordination of the scene to the fable or the text, as observed by Hans-Thies Lehmann, but also by the growing prestige of the essayistic genre as the enunciative mode privileged by contemporary artists. If, in fact, in the stage experiences that approach what the German author called "post-dramatic theater" actors cannot be considered "as agents of a discourse of a director who remains external to them,"[19] it is not satisfactory to observe them only from their "own bodily logic;" what happens in most of these cases is a displacement of the discursive elements of the stage to its surroundings.

The fact quoted by Lehmann,[20] that "with notable frequency, important theatrical artists of the present day have previous experience in the visual arts", has as consequence not only the insertion of self-referential, non-figurative, abstract and random practices in contemporary theater, but also an inflation of the discursive and essayistic aspect, omnipresent in the field of contemporary visual arts. Thus, as in much of the reception of contemporary art, we are faced with works that are postulated as anti-discursive, but which only circulate and reach the public through an intense discursive production (journalistic and academic articles, interviews, catalogs and artist's books, more or less explicit statements that can no longer be seen as para-artistic elements, but rather as fundamental performative instances for the construction of the senses of the works). It is symptomatic, in this sense, that, when analyzing Tadeusz Kantor's work as one of the emblematic figures of post-dramatic theater, Lehman does not only refer to his concrete works, but also to the discourses that the artist composes with the intention of substantiating and justifying his artistic practices.

Finally, it should be pointed out that a work such as *Post-Dramatic Theater*, which at first would only be a critical exposition of certain procedures common to a set of stage experiences of a certain period, becomes an important reference for directors and playwrights, who take Lehmann's essay as a stimulus for his own artistic creations. Similarly, theoretical texts by Deleuze, Agamben, and Foucault become recurrent references to contemporary drama - perhaps more recurrent than any canonical dramatic work.

18. Berger, *A Theory of Art*, 153.
19. Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Teatro pós-dramático [Postdramatic theatre]*, trans. Pedro Süssekind (São Paulo: Cosac & Naify, 2007), 49.
20. Lehmann, 155.

Thus, contemporary theater is no longer conceived as *the* theater, but as a permanent state of self-criticism and self-reflection, manifested through the refusal of the centrality of the text, but also through decentered texts. From this perspective, the essayistic genre offers itself as an alternative not only to drama but also to epic and lyric discourses, moving the scenic experience in directions that go beyond the limits imposed by the critical tradition.

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MISCELLANEA

STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 2, 2019, p. 193 - 210
(Recommended Citation)
DOI:10.24193/subbdrama.2019.2.12

Journey and Immersion. About a Poetics of Sensory in Contemporary Theatre

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Abstract: In the contemporary theatrical practice we find very frequently different formulas where the role of the audience is explored and its relation with the performer is renegotiated. This paper investigates some of the practices that aim to abolish the traditional boundary between the stage and the audience, counting on its affective participation, on the interaction with the performer or the acting space. In many situations the productions are labeled as immersive, although the term remains ambiguous and generic, the diversity of the spectacular formulas not allowing the establishment of a consensus. Such productions seek a higher degree of the participation of the audience, so that it becomes an active part of the performance, more than a spectator, having the freedom to move in space, to explore freely or guided, to make choices, even to influence in a certain degree the course of the story. The inner world of the characters materializes rather in corporeal expressiveness, in objects, scenographic or sound elements, so that the textual poetry, with its content of meanings and verbal images, is transposed into a sensorial poetics, being favored the gestural, vocal, kinesthetic dimensions. Often the dramatic construction is episodic, fragmented and generates networks of meanings, which are detached from the narrative and the logic of the original textual support, in order to be later individually assembled by each participant.

Keywords: contemporary theatre, immersive theatre, spectator, space, Punchdrunk, mask.

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Traditionally, theatre is considered a place of immersion due to its ability to create a detailed and convincing representation of a fictional reality, which causes a "suspension" of the audience's doubt, so that spectators "forget" about the immediate physical location and enter into another through an active imaginary process. The spectator is emotionally driven into the represented drama and immersion manifests as a cognitive experience, or as Packer and Jordan say "the audience loses itself in the veracity of the drama, creating an immersive experience"[2]. According to the two authors, immersion involves a process of depersonification, through which the audience projects itself in an alternative world, but this approach tends to be limiting, especially in contemporary theatre, which has increasingly turned to a sensory, physical experimentation. Different formulas, often circumscribed to notions as postdramatic theatre or multimedia performance, reject the portrayal of a fictional universe and create physical environments that have the ability to engage the participant both cognitively and viscerally, through an experience that combines information with materiality, image and sound, creating new models of reception, personification and contemplation. There is no longer built an imaginary world where spectators can project themselves, but an approach that focuses on their immediate reality and their physical presence in space. In the theatre based on representation, the audience is often separated, "left outside" of the fictional world of the action, which is framed by the stage and away from the viewer, while the postdramatic theatre and performance place the audience inside, "here and now", stimulating the entire sensory system. Theatre is a "hypermedium", one that can be ideal when, as George Landow and Paul Delaney say, "engaging all five senses"[3]. In postdramatic theatre, which does not offer an alternative reality clearly bounded, there is potential for the audience to experience a high degree of immersion in relation to the space and surrounding stimuli.

2. Randall Packer and Ken Jordan, eds., *Multimedia: From Wagner to Virtual Reality* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002), xxxi.

3. George Landow and Paul Delaney, "Hypertext, Hypermedia and Literary Studies: The State of the Art," in *Multimedia: From Wagner to Virtual Reality*, ed. Randall Packer and Ken Jordan (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002), 212.

The term ”immersion” was first used in computer games and in multimedia art, and it has recently entered the theatre vocabulary, gaining popularity in the mid-2000s. In the field of video games, it refers to the capacity of a computer system to generate three-dimensional images that absorb the user, and also, the experience that comes and coexists in this alternative environment. The user is caught in this world of the game through an avatar, which allows him to go beyond the standard of involvment offered by literature, cinema or other kinds of media. While identifying with a character in a book or movie does not change the course of events, in the virtual world this changes some parameters, sometimes in relation to the other players. The word has been borrowed in the performative arts to characterize a level of involvement and experience at a comparable intensity.

Also, the term has begun to be used in multimedia installations, for those works that aim to capture the visitor in a sensory universe. *CAVE*, a direct reference to Platon's cave, made in 1991 by media artist Daniel Sandin, projects a virtual setting on the walls, the floor and the ceiling of a room. The space is simultaneously real and virtual and ”the CAVE immersant does not experience dislocation and disembodiment, but rather is viscerally aware of his or her physical presence «on stage» amid the animated imagery and orchestrated sound.”[4] Another example is *Five Angels for the Millennium* (2001), made by Bill Viola, who uses the sound and the image to explore topics as birth, death, memory and subconscious. Five ethereal bodies are projected on the black surface of the space in a permanent slow-motion, allusion to the purification process associated with the immersion in water. An ambiental music accompanies this dynamic, and suddenly one of the bodies get out of the water, leaving behind a trail of bubbles that marks the end of a cycle. The images, the lack of gravity of the figures, the textures and the colours of the water, the sound and the rhythm drive the viewer to another time frame and invites him to undergo, in his turn, a kind of transformation.

Particularly, one of these installations has had considerable influence among theatre practitioners. It is *H.G.*, a labyrinthine scenography in fusion with sound and light, realized in 1995 by Robert Wilson and Hans Peter

4. Landow and Delaney, 287.

Kuhn in a network of underground spaces in London. Many scenes (a Victorian dinner wherefrom the guests have gone, a hospital room, luxuriant gardens, ruins), make a fascinating and strange world, that the viewer can complete with his own characters and stories.

Immersion is a subjective experience which can be measured only by the participant according to the degree to which it reflects the intensity of his cognitive, emotional and sensory connection, by reference to the content and the form of a work of art. The spectator of the immersive theatre is often invited to get involved with his own body, senses and imagination in the artistic act, to analyze his presence and his participation, that is what Adam Alston calls "narcissistic participation"[5]. This asks from the audience not only reception, but also a direct role, sometimes decisive in the artistic work. When the spectator has the possibility to be involved more than commonly - he observes, feels, thinks - the experience generated by the possibility tends to be followed by a self-absorption. The narcissistic spectator focuses his attention on his own role, psychically and physically, in the space of the immersive event, which may involve relationships with other actors and/or objects. He may influence this space to a greater or lesser extent, he may alter it or he may improve it. Alston also sees this involvement from the perspective of bio-politics, as a negotiation of power relationship, of the link between the dominant and the subordinate, especially when participation is based on a model to which the public is invited to conform to.[6] In immersive theatre, there are often specific rules - following a route, wearing a mask, wearing video glasses or other electronic devices - but first of all it involves a tacit "contract", a mutual trust between the spectator and the performer.

There are many, extremely diverse productions that are labeled as immersive, often just because they take place outside traditional spaces and/or include interaction with the audience. A definition that includes fixed and determined codes is difficult to be found and may be incomplete or rigid. However, we will say, that immersive theatre designates those productions that involve commitment and intense, visceral experience of the audience, although

5. Adam Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre: Aesthetics, Politics and Productive Participation* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 34.
6. Alston, 36.

the statement remains a relative one. There are specific elements, common to several productions, that can characterize this phenomenon as a whole. First of all, whether it is about large-scale shows or the most intimate ones, they all put the spectator in the centre. He is given the opportunity to interact with the performer or to the space, to directly influence and to create a theatrical experience that will be unique and personalized. The show awakens his spirit of adventure, stimulates his imagination, curiosity and responsibility, it allows him to discover and study highly detailed theatrical images, objects or secret rooms. He becomes an active element in which the observer and the protagonist merge. Immersive theatre "rejects the passive obedience usually expected of audiences."[7]

In productions that intend the immersion of the audience, the connections with the actuality, with the social or other issues remain usually subliminal, the individual experience being in the centre. Most of the time, it is tried to distance the self from the outside world and explicit reformulations or polemics about it are not usually sought in this regard. This refusal of engaging in social becomes the most important argument for some commentators when they consider that immersive theatre is more entertainment than art. However, we mention the show *Container* (2007), an examination of human traffic made by the company Nimble Fish, which places spectators in a limiting space and involves them on a journey with five clandestine migrants.

The fact that immersive theatre offers individual experiences largely explains the success it has, managing to attract other audiences besides those who attend traditional productions. Adam Alston suggest that these shows fulfill "hedonistic and narcissistic desire: hedonistic because the experiences are often pleasurable, with pleasure often sought as an end in itself, as a site of self-indulgence or even eroticism; narcissistic, because the experience is all about you, the participant."[8] This happens much more in those productions where a performer acts for or together with a single spectator/participant (*one-to-one performance* or *one-on-one performance*).

7. Felix Barrett apud Stephen Purcell, *Shakespeare and Audience in Practice* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 134.
8. Adam Alston apud George Rodosthenous, ed., *Theatre as Voyeurism: The Pleasures of Watching* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 66.

The Moonslave, one of the first productions of Punchdrunk, aims to create such an experience, where the participant is simultaneously voyeur and protagonist. Blurring the boundaries between the real and the imaginary, the space and the journey included in the story, sequential structure made of scenes with strong visual impact, the sound and the light design , define this immersive world designed complex and rigorously, which is reconstructed by one of the participants as follows:

> It began pretending to be a conventional performance. Alone, you enter a village hall with a classic proscenium-arch stage, programmes on every seat, an old telephone on a rickety table centre stage. Phone rings, no one answers; it must be for you. The caller instructs you to go outside and get in the car. The masked and gloved chauffeur, head to toe in white, provides an alarm that you can hit if you want the performance to stop. He places you on the back seat, and silently drives you into the countryside. A sound-score begins via the car stereo system; Igor Stravinsky's Firebird Suite overlaid with narration telling of a castle and a princess who was forbidden to dance. During this prologue the car turns onto a dirt track and pulls up at a ruined mansion, one lit window at the very top. Your chauffeur disembarks, opens the door, puts the headset on you, gets back in the car and speeds off. You are alone. The soundtrack continues; one night, Viola breaks free from the palace, follows the path into the forest. There is a burning torch lighting your path; all you can do is follow this, like a moth drawn to the flame. As Viola, in the story, reaches a gate, so do you, and gradually you realize you are becoming the protagonist. The next full moon, Viola returns, missing her engagement party; as you turn a corner, suddenly you see a banqueting table laid out for 20 people, coffee still steaming, cigarettes still smouldering. On you go, through one environmental installation after another, evocations of the narrative. The night before her wedding, dusk falls and Viola bursts out of the palace, in her haste forgetting her shoes, cutting her feet as she runs to the clearing. She calls to the moon and her music plays more powerfully than ever before. But it is the night of the lunar eclipse. As she dances the eclipse occurs and '*suddenly she was no longer dancing alone*'. You have been alone for 30 minutes, firelight ensuring you cannot see beyond your immediate vicinity; 'at the point of that italicised sentence the music swells', a marine flare shoots into the sky

> turning everything for 15 miles bright red and revealing 200 scarecrows, to suggest those that have danced with the devil before. A second flare, you are blinded by floodlights from 50 metres away which reveal a figure moving towards you, through the scarecrows: your chauffeur. He takes you by the hand, leads you through the scarecrows, removes your headset and returns you to the car. Here the epilogue plays; her fiancé finds the blood trail from her feet leading to the clearing, her footprints in the sand alongside another set of footprints, these with a cloven hoof.[9]

Also, there are productions for only one participant, that involve more performers, as those made by the company Il Pixel Rosso. The participant wears video glasses, in which a 3D film is shown, in the mean time the performers around him complete this virtual reality so that all the senses are involved. Another example may be the show made in 2004 by Kate Bond and Morgan Lloyd, *You Me Bum Bum Train*, where a single participant is involved for almost an hour in an adventure in which he has the main role, passing through several episodic scenes, in different situations and spaces, together with more than two hundred volunteer actors.

An immersive experience designed for a single participant which does not involve performers is *Cold Storage* (2011), made by Ray Lee, artist known mainly for kinetic sound installations that react to the movements of the audience. "A calm, white clothed technician assists as you climb into the cryogenic tank. The lid is closed on you. Inside it is cold, noticeably cold, freezing. Your hands and face feel the cold. There is not much room inside. You are lying down on your back. The casket is lit from the inside and you see your reflected image on a mirror above you. You cannot see outside the tank. It is a bit like being in a coffin, or in a medical procedure, or… There is an uncomfortable sense of nothing happening except that you are beginning to feel the cold penetrate the outer layers of clothing that you wear. You wonder how long this will go on or if you will get too cold for comfort. Wearing headphones you listen to a calm, authoritative voice explaining what will happen to you. You will be deep frozen and put to sleep for a thousand years. The voice continues to gently talk to you and you are invited

9. Liz Tomlin, ed., *British Theatre Companies 1995-2014* (London: Methuen, 2015), 270–71.

to consider the finite nature of our life span and as you do so the light dims inside the tank until you become aware that you can see through the glass window above you. As you see through the glass and your mirror image fades you can see that above you are an endless sea of stars. You are now in complete darkness, in the cold of the cryogenic tank, looking out into space, as if set adrift, lost in an ocean of nothingness."[10]

In *Cold Storage* the participant is the performer as well, and also his own spectator; he is the one who through the body and mind triggers the experience and he is also the one who observes it, voluntarily accepting imprisonment in a restrictive space. It is an experience both cognitive and sensory, in which the participant looks at himself and inside himself, he is "the centre of his own singular journey"[11].

An essential element of the immersive performance is the space, and the relationship with it is built in numerous hybrid formulas, some of them being often surprising. In contrast to traditional productions, the immersive theatre focuses on the journey, on the movement in space as a form of active involvement, based on the model of the museum and the visitor. In some productions, the immersion of an existing space is emphasized by the incorporation of scenographic elements, objects, complex sound and light design, so that inside it, the own world of the show is built, a world that is distinct from the one of the building, or of the place where it is placed. In some cases, the accent is on the potential of the natural landscape or on the architecture, the dimensions and the design of the construction. This personal world is also generated when the space where the action takes place cannot be differentiated from the space of daily life, being a condition for the viewer to "disconnect" from the surrounding reality. It may include an emphasis on geographic location, community, culture and local history. According to Fiona Wilkie, the relationship between the show and the space includes three typologies, although the distinction is not always easy to make: site-specific, when the production is specifically generated from/for one selected site; site-

10. "Cold Storage [2011]," *Invisible Forces*, 2011, https://www.invisible-forces.com/projects/cold_storage/.

11. Keren Zaiontz, "Narcissistic Spectatorship in Immersive and One-on-One Performance," *Theatre Journal* 66, no. 3 (2014): 405–25.

generic, if the production is generated for a series of like sites; site-sympathetic, when a performance-text is physicalized in a selected site which defines, influences and shapes the work that is produced[12].

The company dreamthinkspeak, managed by the director Tristan Sharps, exploits architectural details, acoustics, the mystery and the history of some spaces, in combination with text, sound and film, to create meditative essays about absence, loneliness or missing worlds. The productions are usually based on classic texts transposed into mainly visual scenarios, static images or images animated by actors, which the spectator discovers by following more or less predetermined routes. *Don't Look Back* (2003) is an exploration of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, *Underground (2005)* was a piece inspired by Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and takes place in an abandoned slaughter house, while *One Step Forward, One Step Back* (2008) leads the audience through the hidden rooms of a gothic cathedral, having as a guide fragments and images provided by *The Divine Comedy*. Being inspired by *The Cherry Orchard*, the show *Before I Sleep* (2010) proposes a journey through the labyrinthine interiors of a former shop, where the spectator meets Chekhov's world recomposed by several recurring characters and themes. Firs, Lyubov Andreievna and Gayev are beings incarnated by actors or objects, small-scale figures, abandoned in different situations: on a field covered with snow, in a children's room, in a partially melted candle forest, submerged in an aquarium, in a toy carousel or on a small piece of land surrounded by water. The appearances of the old servant and his attempts to serve the former masters with tea, while they are dancing or they are deepened in reveries, become the leit-motif of the show. At the end of this journey, the audience enter the "reality" of an ultramodern shop, recreated in detail and populated by employees who speak different languages, where fragments from the world of the orchard (objects, costumes, furniture) are exposed for sale. Firs, a ghostly appearance, seems once again lost between the past and the present; in search of a refuge he sits on a bed, but the sellers force him to leave. When exiting this space, the spectators cross a huge warehouse and find the orchard in the form of trunks of cut trees.

12. Fiona Wilkie, "Mapping the Terrain: A Survey of Site-Specific Performance in Britain," *New Theatre Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (2002): 150.

When the nature itself is the venue for the event, geographical data and atmospheric phenomena will be key elements that stimulate the audience, as it is the case of some productions made by Louise Ann Wilson. *Fissure* (2011) is an itinerant show that lasts for three days, where Christian and Greek myths, poetry, music and choreography, in resonance with rocks, caverns and underground rivers, speak about the degradation and erosion produced by time and disease, about life and death as part of natural cycles.

Immersive theatre is always an interdisciplinary one, incorporating very varied elements from other fields: architecture, video art, installation, film, dance, animation, circus, video games. The sound – musical compositions, sound effects, recorded voices or ambiental product - is a vital component in many cases, having the role of an interface, of intermediation between the real and the fictional universe. *The Borough* (2013), a project of the company Punchdrunk, is a sound escape where a single participant travels on a certain route in a small town by the North Sea, listening in the headphones the music of Benjamin Britten, poetry, sound effects and the shocking history of that small community.

The spoken text loses its importance, may even be missing or may appear as audio recordings, on video screens or integrated into the scenography of the show (in *Sleep no More*, by Punchdrunk, fragments from *Macbeth* appear on the walls of the rooms, at a typewriter or in various documents abandoned in space).

The members of Shunt Collective have gained notoriety through the collage formula practiced, but especially through the nonconformist, even anarchic, spirit of the productions in which they are involved. Many diverse ways of expression are used, including cabaret, circus, dance, masks, video art, installation art, live music, alongside fragmented scenarios, parody, absurd, cliché images taken from urban culture. Every project means "the invitation to an audience can be part of the work, part of the dramaturgy, part of the scenography"[13], but unlike companies that encourage free and often

13. Mischa Twitchin, "On the History of Shunt and Their New Show Money," Andrew Eglinton. Writing about contemporary theatre and performance in Japan and beyond., n.d.; quoted in Dan Rebellato, ed., *Modern British Playwriting: 2000 – 2009. Voices. Documents. New Interpretations* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 55.

individual exploration, Shunt practices a guided group movement: "It's not an individual journey, they might have an individual perspective and of course they will necessarily have an individual interpretation, but all of the audience are on the same journey". If there is too much freedom, says David Rosenberg, one of the founders,

> an audience can choose not to encounter some of the difficulties of that performance; an audience can choose not to see the thing that is going to upset them or confuse them, or surprise them, or revolt them. It's a very difficult balance because also you don't want the audience to feel manipulated. You don't want to pretend to give them a choice and then actually there isn't one or we're forcing them to feel complicit, we're forcing them to make decisions that they wouldn't necessarily make.[14]

The productions made by Shunt challenge the spectator, demands his attention and senses through *coups de théâtre*, long moments of darkness, noise, sudden changes of register, rhythm or place of the action. In *Money*, the audience is placed in a closed space where the ceiling and the floor are transparent, and the action takes place both indoors and above or below. In *Dance Bear Dance*, a show about global conspiracies, spectators, along with actors, are involved in an international pseudo-conference and participate in making of a terrorist attack against an unspecified enemy. In the end, this "terrifying, hallucinatory experience"[15] comes to its climax, when a gigantic metal door opens, revealing a room where another group performs identical actions.

Punchdrunk's productions are first of all about journey, discovery and interaction, because the audience have the freedom to explore, to build their own show, having "a visceral experience for both the mind and the body."[16] Thus, the audience are placed in another relation with the performer and the space, spectators become an active factor, removed from the apathy and

14. David Rosenberg apud Josephine Machon, *(Syn)Aesthetics: Redefining Visceral Performance* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 106.

15. Rebellato, *Modern British Playwriting: 2000 – 2009. Voices. Documents. New Interpretations*, 55.

16. Felix Barrett apud Mark Fortier, *Theory/Theatre: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 124.

inertia that are usually present in the theatre. "The physical freedom to explore the sensory and imaginative world of a Punchdrunk show without compulsion or explicit direction sets it apart from the standard practice of viewing theatre in unconventional locations."[17] For Felix Barrett, the founder of the company, immersive theatre "it's the empowerment of the audience in the sense that they're put at the centre of the action; they're the pivot from which everything else spins. It's the creation of parallel theatrical universes within which audiences forget that they're an audience."[18]

One of the first performances made by Barrett, *Woyzeck* by Georg Büchner, already outlines its own aesthetics that will remain a constant basis in later developments. Inspired by the fragmentary structure of the text, Barrett deconstructed the original, compressing it into a montage of scenes, each about twenty minutes, played at the same time and "in the loop" for three hours. He placed Woyzeck's world in an old military base, he added small scenographic details to the space (including taxidermy, smells, real human hair) and invited spectators to wear a mask to get in touch with what it was "as much art gallery inspired by the text as it was theatre show"[19]. The mask, in particular, was an important revelation for Barrett, a solution through which the spectators could be integrated into the theatrical space. The mask that the audience wear has an essential role, it changes their statute and the relationship with the show or the performer, but it is also a tool for negotiating a certain game of distances. The mask makes the spectator anonymous, hides his facial expression and his response to the show, eliminates inhibitions, stimulates active participation, although there is also the risk that he will remain a silent witness in the shade. "The impact of the mask differs for each audience member – for some, wearing the mask gives them a sense of character, enabling them to come out of their shell and adapt their behaviour accordingly. This is empowering because it means they have the freedom to act differently from who they are in day-to-day life."[20] Christine

17. Apud Tomlin, *British Theatre Companies 1995-2014*, 262.
18. Josephine Machon, *Immersive Theatres. Intimacy and Immediacy in Contemporary Performance* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 159.
19. Apud Tomlin, *British Theatre Companies 1995-2014*, 259.
20. Machon, *Immersive Theatres. Intimacy and Immediacy in Contemporary Performance*, 160.

White has analyzed shows where version of the involvement of the audience appear and considers that when there is no mask "the experience seems to have been less immersive and more self-conscious"[21]. Although the performer and the spectator often occupy the same physical and fictional space, the intimacy and interaction are achieved in a controlled way. The spectator remains "invisible" most of the time, being treated as if he is part of the scenography, and the interactions, whether planned or not, are always initiated by the performer. There may be dancing moments or "one to one" monologues, when the performer "unmasks" and invites a spectator into an intimate room. White has found out that the spectator often refuses to put off the mask, and when this happens, he produces "the strongest reactions [...] tears, confessions, and sometimes anger."[22] When using the mask, she says, Punchdrunk "produce disjuncture between the individual spectator and the crowd-like audience, and do so quite deliberately [...] They produce experiences in which we appear to forget ourselves as social subjects."[23]

In large scale shows, as *Sleep No More* or *Faust*, each element that contributes to their realization is equally important and the multitude of creative voices in the company can be found in the final result. The process is extremely complex and laborious, participatory, everybody is involved in creation, production, technical and administrative tasks. It is based primarily on the cohesion of the creators, because "it's like designing and directing a 200 scene play"[24]. Despite being in a full digital age, Punchdrunk shows distinguish themselves by appealing to tools that are largely from the traditional theatre: scenography, sound and light, corporality, physical interaction.

The classical text provides the characters, actions, secondary themes and details, even minor ones, which lead to contiguous developments of the main narrative, respectively to a non-linear, kaleidoscopic scenario, constructed in the form of a narrative loop, with the role of coagulant element for the story of each character, from which the spectator will build his own story. The sequential structure contrasted to the long speeches, allows a fluidity of

21. Alison Oddey and Christine White, *Modes of Spectating* (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2009), 225.
22. Oddey and White, 228.
23. Oddey and White, 228.
24. Apud Tomlin, *British Theatre Companies 1995-2014*, 268.

expression during the performance and encourages the individual journey because sometimes it is not necessary for a scene to be fully followed to reach its essence. The sound makes the atmosphere in each room, and also for the whole performance, defining the world and the mood of the show. The sound mediates the connection between scenes, brings weirdness and contrast, sometimes it is barely noticeable or reverberates from other areas, guiding the spectator, stimulating his imagination and curiosity.

The most intense phase involves improvisations in the chosen location, first without audience, then with its participation. ”The audience involvement produces a whole new layer of improvisation”[25], time intervals change, there may occur interactions, responses and unpredictable dynamics, and performers must develop the ability to respond instinctively to these presences, ”becoming really skilled in changing the movement language in response to other bodies and other bodies in space”[26]. Subsequently, the entire "material" is edited, from the detail to the ensemble, each scene is customized and the performers' routes are fixed.

The venues where the big projects take place are generally former administrative or industrial buildings, without personality, neutral, but which allow the creation of labyrinthine universes, composed of a network of corridors that interconnect many rooms. Each room is designed separately and they impress by plasticity, sometimes by the abundance of details, sometimes by cold and strange minimalism, they are hyper-realistic or abstract, suggest that they are inhabited or, on the contrary, seem abandoned long time ago. The space tells stories and offers emotional possibilities to the audience and the performer, triggers new ideas and solutions on the theme, narrative and form, facilitates clarification of the whole concept. ”With each project we go into, I know how much of a player the building is; it becomes a battle to try and match it. That’s what marks Punchdrunk out among other companies that do site work; so often the site or building dominates and the show doesn’t do anything in it.”[27]

25. Apud Tomlin, 265.
26. Apud Tomlin, 265.
27. Apud Tomlin, 262.

Faust (2006) is placed in a huge warehouse, with five floors and more than forty rooms, inspired by the aesthetics of Edward Hopper's paintings. The fusion of space, scenic movement and sound have transformed the classic myth into an epic, multi-faceted and multi-sensory journey. The spectator can join Faust, from the library on the last floor, with huge shelves full of old books, to the underground cell, cold and wet, where he finds his end, passing through cramped motel rooms, vast fields of corn and pine forests, he can enter the small chapel where Gretchen's child lies in the coffin or stop at the bar where Mephisto gives him the magic potion. *The Masque of Red Death* (2007) offers hallucinatory journeys, too, a gothic nightmare inspired by Edgar Allan Poe's short stories, played in the space of a former archive, *Tunnel 228 (2009),* an experiment of visual theatre in the catacombs under the Waterloo Station, where the atmosphere from *Metropolis*, the film by Fritz Lang, connects with an art gallery with surrealist objects and a dark vision of the future, *The Drowned Man: A Hollywood Fable* (2013), which transforms a former post office building into a 1960s film studio, and the Woyzeck's story becomes a pretext for two "mirror" narratives. In *...And darkness descended* (2011) elements related to the form and aesthetics of computer games are incorporated, the virtual environment being transferred to a concrete one, using the vast network of underground galleries in London. Here is recreated a post-apocalyptic universe with industrial spaces, scientific laboratories, abandoned hospitals, where the spectator participates in the double quality of player and character.

The longest running show, *Sleep No More,* is an free adaptation of *Macbeth,* initially performed in London in 2003, than in Boston (2009) and New York (2011), the last one in a six floor and about one hundred rooms building. The show transposes Macbeth's tragedy in the 1940s, using the aesthetics of the film *noir* and more or less explicit references to Alfred Hitchcock's work (particularly *Rebecca* and *Vertigo*), both visually and through the sound universe. Apparently, the spectator enters the atmosphere of a an old hotel, with reception, dance halls, restaurants, offices and rooms, all meticulously reproduced through furniture, decorations and lots of objects, but soon he discovers that behind the doors are hidden disturbing worlds that invites exploration or contemplation. In this enormous space, partly museum, partly haunted by specters, performers and spectators alike, the experience is inevitably fragmentary, difficult to be percieved as a whole. You can follow the main characters, attend the reception

offered in Duncan's honour, see the arrival of the witches, the murder scene, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth trying to wash the spots of blood, or watch the whole show as an installation that can be visited on any route. For those who are not familiar with the narrative of the play, the non-linear scenario is undoubtedly difficult to follow, even confusing, but the lack of lines favors the focus on movement and scenographic detail, on the interaction with "site-sympathetic"[28], as Barrett calls it. The rooms best translate the atmosphere of Shakespeare's play; the supernatural, the mystery and the marks of violent crimes are impregnated everywhere: the Duncan's bedroom, the room of Macduff's children that is full of toys, the infirmary, the upholstered cells, the laundry and the numerous baths, the cemetery, the taxidermy workshop, the abandoned cinema where the same scenes run continuously. The show always offers something new to explore, because from one representation to another the composition and the number of these spaces change.

Covered by mask, the spectator is almost forced to step out of passivity, he has to make choices and to set his own route. This intention becomes explicit in *Faust* and *Sleep No More*, where the audience are transported literally and figuratively in the world of the show, by an elevator that randomly drops them to one of the floors. Moreover, the groups are usually separated by successive stops at different floors, thus suggesting that the solitary adventure would be the premise of a much more intense experience. Spaces urge to sensory interaction through all five senses: entering Faust's laboratory, the spectator can observe the equations written on the walls, he can touch the experiments, he can have a look in the drawers, he can read documents; like a detective he can invade the characters' private space, he can get close to Lady Macbeth as she reads letters, or he can study the magic substances, plants, and books used by witches; in *The Masque of Red Death* he has access to the world behind the show, and can even enter the actors' cabins.

There is a permanent discussion on Punchdrunk's shows and, of course, many critical opinions. It is argued that the sequential structure, developed in several spaces and scenes, comes at the expense of drama, character and dramatic cohesion or that the use of the mask blocks the total participation in the event. On the contrary, Deborah Prudhon says that

28. Machon, *Immersive Theatres. Intimacy and Immediacy in Contemporary Performance*, 288.

> In a Punchdrunk show, the narrative grows organically, taking the shape of an arborescence. The different storylines – one for each character – follow their own directions, overlapping from time to time. The plot thus unfolds both horizontally – the characters' pathways – and vertically – the superimposition and crossing of all these journeys.[29]

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29. Deborah Prudhon, "Punchdrunk's Immersive Theatre: From the End to the Edge," *Sillages Critiques*, no. 24 (2018): para. 10.

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PERFORMANCE AND BOOK REVIEWS

STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 2, 2019, p. 213 - 216
(Recommended Citation)

Theater Criticism in Search of Lost Identity. Stories of Professionalization

Book review: Miruna Runcan, *Teatrul în diorame. Discursul criticii teatrale în comunism. Fluctuantul dezgheț 1956-1964* [*Theater in dioramas. The discourse of theater criticism in the communist era. The fluctuant thaw 1956-1964*] (București: Tracus Arte, 2019)

Miruna Runcan's book, *Teatrul în diorame. Discursul criticii teatrale în comunism*, subtitled *Fluctuantul dezgheț 1956-1964*, joins the recent attempts to explore, from a rhetorical and ideological perspective, the discourses of

Romanian criticism that coagulated during the communist decades. What distinguishes this volume, however, from similar endeavors, most focused on literary criticism, is precisely its focus on theatrical criticism, in the wake of an older preoccupation of the author both with regard to the particularities of the critical phenomenon in the performing arts in our country (materialized in the volume *Critica de teatru: încotro?*), as well as facing the evolution of the theater during the communist period (see *Teatralizare și reteatralizare în România*).

The present work thus benefits from a double perspective - historical and analytical -, managing to engage the reader by being both instructive and exciting. Thus, any factual accounts are mirrored by accounts of the backstage maneuvers, as the text analysis itself goes hand in hand with broad contextualizing paragraphs. *Teatrul în diorame* has the seductive quality of not abandoning its readers in the mire of chronological events, also avoiding the barren landscape of de-historicized text analysis. Throughout its more than 300 pages, it guides them through a continuous motion between concrete and abstract, particular and general. For example, in the case study centered on Liviu Ciulei's show, "As you like it", and on the controversy that the production generated in the era, the people involved are not portrayed strictly through their stated positions, but benefit from ample side-notes, of both a speculative and biographical nature, in the penumbra of their professional and ideological motivations (be these implicit or explicit).

The period chosen by the author, between 1956 and 1964, is marked by a relative thaw (whose buds an be traced from the beginning), followed by a short, but brutal refreezing (in 1958) and a new relative reopening in the end. This temporal cut-off allows a thorough investigation of the forms in which the critical discourses were incarnated at the end of the Stalinist period, the whole approach being based on the dichotomous relationship between normative and (the dominant) aesthetic criticism.

In this context, the *Teatrul* magazine is the main documentary source of the research, largely due to the fact that its establishment, at the beginning of the period treated by Miruna Runcan, marks the beginning of the (re) professionalization of theater critics. Thus, as the author has well intuited, the aforementioned publication is perhaps the most generous

source of scientific material for tracking the changes that led to the partial break with purely ideological criticism and for uncovering the "double discourse" - a phenomenon also largely discussed in this volume. However, the book maintains a skeptical, or rather lucid, tone in relation to the motives of the protagonists of the thaw, consistently followed in tandem with the metamorphoses of Romanian politics - in turn treated contextually.

From a structural perspective, *Teatrul în diorame* reunites seven main sections/chapters and an Addenda - meant to present the researched era in its specific color and to reveal, through a case-study, the almost engineered way in which celebrity and influence were constructed during the first communist decades.

The first chapter includes both the argument for including the critical discourse in the studies of the history of the theater - in subtext a slightly exasperated plea, addressed to the researchers, to (no longer) ignore the intimate connection between the theatrical work and the specialized literature that it generates - and an introduction to the antonymic relationship (although the two positions are not, in fact, always mutually exclusive) between normativity and aesthetic autonomy.

The second chapter marks the beginning of a taxonomic effort of the author, applied to the *Teatrul* magazine, which delimits the strictly dogmatic reviews from those written mainly from an aesthetic standpoint, following them in their historical evolution. Next, Miruna Runcan paints the picture of the brief and brutal refreezing of 1958; the reader is provided here with a list of keywords that have marked the dogmatic imaginary of the period, with examples of how those obsessions, with all their intrinsic and profoundly traumatic absurdity, were applied. Thus, the case of the playwright Ana Novac's fall into disgrace is followed closely, due to it being an example for the way the system manufactured its scapegoats.

The so-called interlude about the show "As you like it" constitutes the third section of the book; applied and punctual, the author looks at the ways in which the struggle for retheatricalization reaches a positive denouement, encouraged by a more permissive political context.

The fourth section deals with the expansion of theatrical criticism in areas more and more guarded from the interference of official ideologies and how it manages to assume an ideologically uncontaminated (or less

contaminated) axiology, gradually separating from socialist realism. The relaxation of Romanian politics is thus reflected by an opening towards other cultural and geographic spaces, which generate a series of subgenres, classified and widely characterized by the author.

The fifth chapter looks at the evolution of the socio-professional status of the theater critic in communism, in terms of its relation to the profession, the artists, and the authorities.

The sixth section is perhaps the densest from an analytical perspective. At this point, the specificity of discourses about theater is revealed through rhetorical analysis. Again, it follows the way in which theater criticism turns against dogmatic textocentrism, rediscovering its hermeneutic vocation. Moreover, the author unmasks, relevantly, the semantic tension between the "dramatic review" and the "theatrical" one, also noting the stylistic conventionalism of most texts on theater. However, the most captivating pages (perhaps even in the entire volume) remain those dedicated to the great exceptions, to the reviewers devoted to the theatricality of the theater, portrayed in passages imbued with both nostalgia and admiration.

The concluding chapter reiterates the importance of researching the archives for understanding the history of performing arts in all its complexity. The author poses a series of questions regarding the status of the theater critic from both the past and the present. The section also foreshadows an expansion of the research into the rest of the communist timeframe.

Miruna Runcan's approach has two important merits: one, she prospects a virgin territory with a contagious investigative enthusiasm, which could inspire the potential specialized readers. Then, she completes the picture of the retheatricalization of Romanian theater, once again demonstrating the documentary potential of theatrical criticism.

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STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 2, 2019, p. 217 - 219
(Recommended Citation)

Morning of the Actresses

Book Review: Anca Hațiegan, *Dimineața Actrițelor* [*Morning of the Actresses*] (Iași: Polirom, 2019)

Romanian theatre history is short however the studies, books and research - we mean those worthy to consider - are rare. This is why a book like Anca Hațiegan's *Morning of the actresses* is more than welcome among theatre specialists. But the great contribution comes only now: it is a book about the very beginning of female acting in Romania written in a style full

of warm and humor, so that it can be read by anyone, using a language adapted to the story extraction era to facilitate reading. What the book does is to return the respect for the women at the beginning of the century, that fought to have the recognition of their presence on stage and to give them the recognition that they deserve. Divided into seven chapters the book is trying - successfully I may add - to recompose an era when the calling of being an actress is an obloquy. The picture is a complex one because we have a chapter about the first female critic or a chapter about the female students of the first drama schools from Romania. The big plus of the research is that it's not only a series of portraits, as expected, but it creates and anecdotal atmosphere, full of conspiracy and obstacles put in the way of these women. It follows the destinies of the first females who risked their reputations to play on stage, from time to time in intimate details, that are selected by the author with the purpose of explaining the circumstances - sociological, political, family, perceptions - in which the professional actress appears in Romania and the circumstances that lead to the disappearance of some of them: Romanian women agreed with this hypostasis of "mothers of the nation and family" because it facilitated their penetration into the public sphere.[1]

Set in the first part of the XIX century, in a time when exposing yourself publicly could attract public outrage, the research that Anca Hațiegan offers is readable more as novel than a history book, due to the relationship that the author creates between the written plays - elaborated specially containing female roles - and the desire to act and to impose acting as a respectable job not only for men in conjunction with the way these parts are played on stage. The research is a huge one because of the few existing sources, but mainly a thorough one, identifying names on posters and linking them to women of the era, analyzing memoirs or other theatre histories. The book contains also a series of images, from the reproduction of a poster from 1818 announcing a bilingual performance to the reproduction of a stage design draw for the first performance in Romanian language in the east part of the country and images of the first actresses the book refers to, or important men that shaped the destinies of these women. By the way, the author constantly links the

[1] Anca Hațiegan, *Dimineața Actrițelor [Morning of the Actresses]* (Iași: Polirom, 2019), 53.

first actress with their husbands, brothers, fathers, mainly because they facilitated, or they opposed to the idea of their wives and daughters on the public stages. Anca Hațiegan gives an attentive eye to the economic and social details of the first actresses existence, to their expenses with the costumes and makeups, highlighting the death in poverty of most of them.

First and foremost, the book reestablishes the recognition that these women should have had, in a passionate lecture, a little hampered by the analyses of the plays written for them, otherwise necessary for the common reader. By recreating the atmosphere of the time, with gossips, spicy details, but also relevant information, Anca Hațiegan illuminates all interested in the becoming of the Romanian professional actress, on the development of Romanian plays and performances of the time. As the author states, the appearance of (...) the first professional actresses appeared to me as a phenomenon whose implications far exceed the area of interest of the history of the theater and which should concern a much wider audience: historians , researchers of the condition of women in Romanian society, historians of Romanian mentalities[2]. At the end the filling that remains is that there is still more to come on the subject.

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[2] Hațiegan, 13.

STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 2, 2019, p. 221 - 223
(Recommended Citation)

A Field Defining Study

Book Review: Cătălina Gheorghiu Iliescu, *Un model polisistemic de analiză comparativă a textului dramatic din perspectiva traductologiei descriptive (A Polysistemic Model of Comparative Analysis of the Dramatic Text from the Perspective of Descriptive Translation Studies)* (București: Editura Universității din București, 2018)

Cătălina Iliescu Gheorghiu's recent book *Un Model Polisistemic de analiza comparativa a textului dramatic din perspectiva traductologiei descriptive (A Polysistemic Model of Comparative Analysis of the Dramatic Text from the Perspective of Descriptive*

Translation Studies) is a meticulously crafted and unprecedented comparative study of two translations of the play *The Third Stake* by the celebrated Romanian writer Marin Sorescu within the theoretical frame of the model for descriptive and functional translation studies created by Jose Lambert and Hendrik Van-Gorp.

The crucial goal of the comparative analysis between the two existing translations by Andreea Gheorghitoiu and respectively, Dennis Deletant is to demonstrate how the translators' choices vary in terms of the levels of theatricality and cultural adaptability in the target language, although admittedly, they are both focused, by different degrees, on the literary value of the text and only secondarily on its dramatic or performative elements. Iliescu Gheorghiu bases her analysis on abundant materials and documentation both in the source and target language from the various versions of the play's manuscripts, to its several "official versions," to recordings of actual performances both in Romania and the United Kingdom, to interviews with directors, actors and spectators thus establishing a solid meta-textual corpus of information that informs her equally punctilious comparative analysis of the two translations. Equally important Iliescu Gheorghiu's comparative study of two English texts, one by a Romanian native speaker who did not collaborate with the author in the process of translation, and the other a native speaker of English who collaborated very closely with the author, is the analysis of the cultural, political, in a word contextual details embedded in each translation, and the degrees by which the texts lean either more towards a method of acceptability (i.e. with more attention to the target language and culture) or adequacy (i.e. leaning more towards the source culture and language).

In preparation of the detailed comparative analysis of the two translations, Iliescu Gheorghiu does an excellent job exploring in some depth the codified meanings, tropes and artistic strategies used by Sorescu in the creation of his play as an ingenious system of subversion and denunciation of the political situation of the time, namely the dictatorship of Nicolae Ceausescu that would escape the notorious and draconian censorship at work in all the areas of public expression, the arts above all. This exploration serves as a necessary and productive background of the translations themselves particularly as

analyzed through the model Lambert Van-Gorp which places particular importance on the socio-political contexts of the source or target languages/ cultures that are at play. Against this background she proceeds to analyze and compare in dizzying depth and minutia, the two translations against the original and against one another in a multilayered fashion, considering everything from cultural contexts, syntax, lexical choices, even diacritics, levels of colloquialism, of literarity and most importantly, levels of performativity and orality. Although as she affirms several times in her study, both translators seem principally concerned with the literary values of the text than with its dramatic or theatrical aspects, it is the translation of the English native speaker that displays heightened degrees of theatricality. Dennis Deletant does this, according to Iliescu Gheorghiu by taking into consideration the communicative values of various enunciation and their projected effect in a context of British culture and audiences composed of native English speakers. The extensive Appendices at the end of the study offer an impressive body of examples through which Iliescu Gheorghiu groups lines from the original text together with their equivalents in both translations thus offering abundant proof for the entirety of the comparison and equally for the usefulness and viability of the model Lambert Van-Gorp in both analyzing translations and in the actual process of translation of dramatic texts.

Cătălina Iliescu Gheorghiu's book promises to be a field defining study in the areas of translation and performance studies combined that could be of great value not only to translators in general, to translation scholars, but in particular to translators of dramatic texts, to directors and actors alike whenever working with foreign texts. For as she so eloquently demonstrates, when it comes to the translation of dramatic texts, it is the accumulated details of communicative intensity, orality, performative potential and cultural discernment in the target language that make for a most valuable work of transposition of the respective work of art from one linguistic universe into another.

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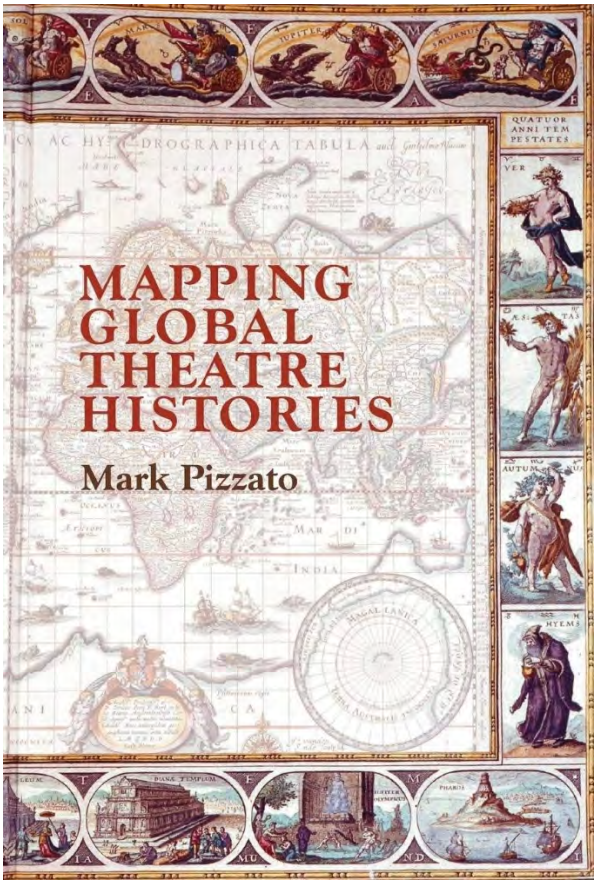
STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 2, 2019, p. 225 - 228
(Recommended Citation)

Mapping Inner and Outer Theater Histories

Book review: Mark Pizzato, *Mapping Global Theatre Histories* (London:Palgrave Macmillan, 2019)



When I was in school the translation of Vitto Pandolfi's 1964 *Storia universale del teatro drammatico* was compulsory reading material. The bibliography of theatre history is quite abundant by now, with books such as

History of the Theatre by Oscar Brockett and Franklin Hildy, republished from the original 1968, to now at its ninth edition, or the beautifull and very expensive, six volume *A Cultural History of Theatre* by Christopher Balme and Tracy Davis published in 2017.

Mapping Global Theatre Histories by Mark Pizzato is an online and offline text book providing historical and genuinely global knowledge, mapping significant areas of world theatre. The timeline covered stretches form prehistory, explained also through the evolution of the brain, all the way up to postmodern performative events of the early 2000's, such as domestic anti-governmental terrorism, or Stan Lai's eight hour long *A Dream Like a Dream*.

What is the general need of a theatre history book today when information, accurate or not, is a quick, online search away? As the author explains, knowing and to reframing the past, for its usages in the present and the future, would allow us better chances of not repeating the proverbial past mistakes: "Thus, global theatre history acts as an uncanny mirror, revealing our repressive blind spots and stereotypical projections in wider arenas of theatricality today."

The book is arranged to be an ideal resource for performance and theatre studies teaching-learning. First of all, paragraphs in the books are numbered, and with keeping to around one type of information per paragraph, this makes it easy to reference in school group work. Secondly all of the fourteen chapters have a three-tier system structure: a timeline of the period and region under discussion, highlighting important developments of that period, allow for historical contextualization of the information to follow in the chapter. Secondly the chapters have questions allowing for individual reflection and making the information relevant for students. Thirdly each chapter concludes with very a subchapter of good references for the period under discussion.

As a reader you cannot get lost, swamped under loads and layers of text. Everything is clearly mapped and you can easily navigate, around time and the globe. The mapping vocation of the book delivers also small maps set within the larger maps, in the form of comparative tables. This is the case of anti-realist styles and movements, spanning from the 1890s through to the 1930s, or the one elaborating the types of African theatre and their characteristics.

What makes from Pizzato's historic perspective an innovative one in the field of theatre history, and what is a deal-make for this book, is actually the first chapter: *Theatricality in Deep History and the Human Brain*. By now most theatre history have very similar first chapters, with theatrical manifestations linked to religious rituals and loosing themselves in the "fog of times". Pizzato, as the author of *Ghosts of Theatre and Cinema in the Brain* (2006) and *Inner Theatres of Good and Evil* (2011), brings in a transdisciplinary perspective looking at the evolution of the brain to map out the possible shapes of theatre evolution in the past, and thus connecting what material history cannot account for. The animal–human evolution of our brain's "inner theatre" sets the stage for the understanding of historical developments and present practices, through involving: contagious emotions, mimetic desires and rivalries, mirroring neurons and primal drives, all the way to "enfacement" and "body-swapping experiments".

The neurological perspective is employed not only to account for historical perspective but also to possible expand the field of theatre history, from the out world to the inner world because: "Technologies of inner/outer theatricality have multiplied from deep history to today: in person, onscreen, and online.". The book brings into discussion not just the historical dimension of time, where we occupy the well-known time-space of a glimpse, but also the personal historic timeline, which is the longest timespan one individual has actually been involved in history. The reflective exercises proposed throughout the book guide the personal time to the thinking of the larger historic time line. These exercises, formed as bold questions, suggest how one might reflect and make present parallels leading to the construction of personalized global theatre histories, that explain and include also one's inner theatre. Prehistoric theatre understood as deep historic theatre makes for an engaging vision of theatre, even when information is missing.

As constant discoveries and historical reconnections can reorganize and give new meaning to past events, making written historical accounts sometimes incomplete, slightly incorrect or even obsolete. Clearly some history books "age" better than others. Mark Pizatto's e-book, which is also the version consulted in the case of the current review, has a built-in failsafe mechanism in the form of a link button at the beginning of each chapter, called "check for updates". Since the past is never truly past this history of the theatre

is open to some present influences. It would seem that from its publication a few months ago there have been no updates, and that the "document is current", on the chapter on "Medieval Europe and Premodern Africa, Australia, and the Americas", for instance. This is not to be understood that the e-book has a built-in automatic update function. Rather, the reader is redirected to "crossref" webpage, an online service that provides addendum services on updating, correcting or retracting e-published content. While doing this the reader does not lose control over the information, and the history cannot be reworked at any point, but the book can reflect the historical accuracy of its time.

The same way the first chapter sets the scene and brands this volume as a remarkable one, so does the last chapter, or the lack there of. The book is proposing as a closing chapter a chapter on "Global, Postcolonial Theatre". First of all the concept of postcolonialism could be problematic in itself, depending on who puts the "post" in postcolonial, but also it is too much aligning to the version of linear temporalities of theatre histories that we are already used to and that the books sets out to delineate itself in the beginning. And especially "today" when we are seeing an increase in digital and immersive experiences the understandings of neurology and inner theatre can illuminate directions of future development, instead of leaving us with the "fog of the future". Also, a bit leaving to desire are some sub-chapters, such as the third subchapter of "Modern Realism and Anti-Realisms". This is a two paragraphs long subchapter, with one paragraph on social realism, and one in Nazi propaganda, hence titled "Social-realism and Propaganda". Also, the one paragraph Dada subchapter acts more as an aide-memoire. We will continue to try and access the "check for updates" button.

All things considered, *Mapping Global Theatre Histories* is a good theatre history text book, judging by structure and content, with the great innovation of this volume evolving around neurology and inner theatre as ways of understanding and constructing theatre historicity, and thus making scholars think twice about theatre history, as well as "their theatre history".

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STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 2, 2019, p. 229 - 233
(Recommended Citation)

Unwritten Truths

Performance review: *Surpriza vieții* [*The Surprises of Life*], presented within the 1st edition of the "Ziua Grănicerului" [The Border Guard's Day] event, 11.09.2019, Năsăud, Romania.

Cast: Sofia Ceciuleac, Dorel Timiș, Andrei Carafa, Macedon Marte, Ionela Timiș, Ancuța Filipoi

At the beginning of September 2019, the Border Guard Museum from the town of Năsăud (a former, up until 1918, border town of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, home of the 10th Border Regiment), in association with the City Hall and Bistrița County Council, hosted the first edition of "The Border Guard's Day" event, presented by Andrei Duban and Iulia Dragu, an occasion to celebrate the town's rich cultural and military heritage. Throughout the day, audiences were rewarded with a military parade (including students in historical costumes and military uniforms, alongside the march of the 81st Mechanized Brigade), an exhibition dedicated to the history of Năsăud's border guards, medieval and folk dance ("Dancing Wings" and "Colibița" Ensemble), music (Dan Pantiș – folk, as well as Vali Boghean Band), a folk art fair and, last but by no means least, a brief theatre performance entitled *The Surprises of Life*, presented by the renowned "Constantin Iugan" Unwritten Theatre Company® from the parish of Șanț, Bistrița-Năsăud County, Romania.

When I say "renowned", I am by no means exaggerating. Re-established as a community theatre company in 1935 (its existence attested as of 1912) by none other than the famous sociologist and ethnologist Dimitrie Gusti, who understood the value and extraordinary potential of this unique folk theatre form, the group manages to this day to thrivingly continue a more than one hundred years old theatrical tradition from their village: a theatre of situations with improvised, not written, dialogue. In this respect, it bears some resemblance to Commedia Dell'Arte.

Fig. 1: "Constantin Iugan" Unwritten Theatre Company®, Șanț, Romania
© Emilian Puițău

Currently, the company led by Sofia Ceciuleac, a folk theatre performer with 30 years of experience in the group, comprises six members, three women (Sofia Ceciuleac, Ionela Timiș, Ancuța Filipoi) and three men (Dorel Timiș, Macedon Marte, Andrei Carafa), but the structure has varied over the years, so much so that the shifting nature of its organization could easily be considered an integral part of the Unwritten Theatre's identity, alongside the predominance of "plays" dealing with the life of the community – such titles as *Bătrânul/Bătrâna îşi împarte averea* [*The Old Man/Woman Dividing His/Her Wealth*]; *Măritatul fără voie* [*Unwilling Marriage*]; *Fermierii* [*The Farmers*] date back to Constanin Iugan himself – , the reliance on the local dialect for authenticity and, to a considerable extent, for comic effect and, most importantly, the fundamental role of improvisation.

Fig. 2: The Wife and the Gossipy Women in *The Surprises of Life*
© Emilian Puițău

With just a general idea of a plot line and a set of pre-established, often stereotypical, characters (The Old Man; The Old Woman; The Cheating Spouse; The Lover etc.), no Unwritten Theatre performance is like the other, varying, not unlike a happening, in accordance with the intrinsically changing nature of the surrounding environment. According to Sofia Ceciuleac, the company's coordinator, at present "the members have written sixteen plays dealing with contemporary issues, events from the day-to-day life of the community". And they seem to be doing it with great success, winning several accolades at various artistic events over the years, most recently in 2019, at the "Oltenii și restul lumii" Humoristic Festival in Slatina, Romania, were they won first prize.

The performance presented in September in Năsăud, entitled *Surpriza vieții* [*The Surprises of Life*], brings forth a comic perspective on immigration and how it affects, or rather how it becomes a part of the community. The story is filtered through the eyes of the ever-present on stage, gossipy Women (Ionela Timiș, Ancuța Filipoi), two know-it-alls sitting on a village bench, spinning and humorously scrutinizing every movement on the street. The Wife (beautifully performed by Sofia Ceciuleac) enjoys a love affair with her Lover (Macedon Marte), confident that her Husband (Dorel Timiș) is working abroad, like so many husbands, is constantly sending money home for her and their child and is not smart enough to suspect that she might be having another love interest. His sudden return home to find the two lovers together represents a shock and, apparantely, he suffers a heart attack, to the satisfaction of the Wife who begins to empty his pockets before reluctantly calling for the Doctor (Andrei Carafa). The husband recovers and, having heard his wife's true opinion of him, scolds her dearly. The group succesfully managed to shed light on an issue affecting the lives of so many communities. Divided families all over the country, though not as disfunctional as the one portrayed in rough overtones by *The Surprises of Life*, will resonate to such problems as immigration, alienation, financial distress and life as part of a community.

Fig. 3: The Wife and The Husband in *The Surprises of Life*
© Emilian Puițău

The commitment and sustained artistic efforts of the Unwriteen Theatre Company from Șanț should only be applauded and encouraged. They successfully carry on a century old community theatre tradition, a unique phenomenon in the Romanian cultural landscape.

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STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 2, 2019, p. 235 - 239
(Recommended Citation)

Du théâtre en(tre) exil et questionnements

Performance Review: *Per Gynt from Kosovo*, de Jeton Nezirai, mise en scène Agon Myftari and *Chronique d'une ville qu'on croit connaître* de Wael Kadour, mise en scène Mohamed Al Rashi et Wael Kadour, Syria, Festival Sens Interdits, Lyon, 2019

Quel est le rôle du théâtre? Est-il politique, aussi ? Est-ce qu'il peut changer quelque chose au niveau de la société ou est-ce qu'il opère exclusivement au niveau de l'individu? Si le théâtre est politique, est-ce qu'on peut encore le considérer une forme d'art ? *L'échange culturel*. Qu'est-ce qui nous rend ensemble et qu'est-ce qui nous sépare ? Où trouve-t-on l'essence ? *Est-ce que je pourrais vivre dans un certain pays ?*

Ces sont quelques-unes des questions que je me suis posées au cours de la sixième édition du festival de théâtre *Sens interdits*, qui a eu lieu à Lyon, entre 16-27 octobre 2019 sur le thème du Théâtre de l'urgence. Les problèmes de l'injustice sociale, de l'exil, du travail dur, de la prostitution, de la violation de loi – font tous partie de la réalité quotidienne de plus en plus difficile à accepter, mais aussi impossible à ignorer dans certaines régions du monde. Le théâtre documentaire, en générale sans grandes ambitions esthétiques, nous donne la restitution la plus objective possible de la réalité sociale et politique d'un espace – ça peut nous toucher, nous révolter, nous mettre en colère, nous aider mieux expliquer des phénomènes qu'on observe dans nos propres vies etc.

Débat sur le Théâtre de l'urgence, Festival Sens Interdits, Lyon, 2019

Dans l'atmosphère ouverte et conviviale de ce festival, on a discuté de choses graves qui influencent et affectent le monde contemporain. Dans ce qui suit, je concentrerai mon attention sur deux spectacles qui mettent en lumière le sujet de l'exil et les conflits qui en résultent.

Je vais au théâtre. Je vais voir un spectacle dans la langue de mon père. Donc, naturellement, ça m'intéresse un peu plus que les autres. *Per Gynt from Kosovo* de Jeton Nezirai, mise en scène d'Agon Myftari. Un kosovar part à l'étranger pour mener une vie meilleure. Pour gagner de l'argent. Pour ne pas devoir vivre dans un monde de plus en plus violent et instable. L'Europe est un rêve brillant qui, petit à petit, se révèle être une illusion, un espace hostile, inamicale et froid, où les gens ne savent rien de son pays et, de plus, ils s'en fichent. Le spectacle est construit en utilisant des clichés, des stéréotypes et des typologies bien reconnaissables. Il a de l'humour et de l'auto-ironie – pour que ça ne devienne pas déprimant, je crois. La réalité à la fois presque infernale que les personnages vivent est placée dans un décor vivant, bien coloré, naïf, qui veut peut-être nous transmettre que *ce n'est pas si grave*. C'est un contraste. Tout ça fait le public rire, parfois un peu plus fort que nécessaire.

Moi, je connais cette réalité qu'on voit sur la scène – donc, je trouve quelques parties un peu exagérées. Je me demande si les autres sentent la même chose. Le lendemain, pendant l'école du regard dirigée par Olivier Neveux au Théâtre Kantor de l'ENS Lyon, on discute *Per Gynt from Kosovo*. J'apprends que, jouant ce spectacle en Allemagne, personne du public n'a ri ; au contraire, quelques-uns sont sortis de la salle en ayant des larmes aux yeux. A ce moment-là, je me suis demandé : est-ce qu'on peut expliquer cette grande différence de réaction par un autre stéréotype et dire que les français ont plus d'humour que les allemands ou que les allemands préfèrent de se concentrer sur la dimension grave de l'histoire, tandis que les français sont un peu plus détendus? Je ne le sais pas./ Peut-être. Mais je trouve que le rire est un terrain glissant, car, sous sa protection, on ne sait pas ce qui vraiment pris au sérieux.

Photo Credits Jetmir Idrizi

Le spectacle syrien *Chronique d'une ville qu'on croit connaître* de Wael Kadour, mise en scène de Mohamed Al Rashi et Wael Kadour nous raconte l'histoire et la fin tragique d'un couple lesbien au début de la révolution de 2011. Joué dans un décor créatif et pratique (des blocs de ciment différemment mis en place pour représenter plusieurs espaces tels que la ville, une chambre, le bureau de l'interrogatoire etc.), le spectacle a des coupes presque cinématographiques qui le rendent très facile à suivre. Même si je pense que rien de spécial ne se passe devant moi, je regarde le spectacle pour découvrir la réalité d'un pays que je ne connais pas, qui a une mentalité bien différente de mon pays (ou de *mes pays*) et qui intervient et restreint brutalement la liberté privée des citoyens. Grâce à la représentation théâtrale, tout devient plus accessible, plus facile à comprendre et je commence à penser à la liberté, à ses limites et aux réactions étranges qu'elle produit souvent. Dans une société qui n'accepte pas la diversité des orientations sexuelles, mais qui manifeste une curiosité exagérée et une fascination évidente envers elle, je crois si il s'agit plutôt de ce qu'on pourrait appeler un « exil dans son propre pays ».

Photo Credits Nabil Boutros

J'observe que tous mes pensées habituelles en anglais sont maintenant traduites en français. Échange culturel, globalisation ? Je pense à tout ça dans l'avion ; après 7 jours à Lyon, je reviens chez moi. En Roumanie. Je peux parler dans ma langue maternelle (même si j'écris cet article en français). Je n'ai pas d'accent, je ne dois pas penser à la précision grammaticale avant chaque phrase que je prononce. Cette expérience m'a enrichi et l'une des raisons est qu'elle m'a donné envie de me poser encore plus de questions – même si les réponses ne viennent pas tout de suite.

Pourquoi est-ce qu'il y a des langes étrangères si notre essence est, au moins théoriquement, la même ? Comment on peut définir *l'étranger* ? Quelle est la langue du théâtre ? *Quel est le rôle du théâtre ?* Des questions qui attendent toujours leurs réponses.

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STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 2, 2019, p. 241 - 243
(Recommended Citation)

Notre Petite Antarctique

Performance Review*: Ma petite antarctique*, création documentaire et mise en scène, Tatiana Frolova, Téâtre KnAm, Russia, Festival Sens Interdits, Lyon, 2019

Lyon. 20 Octobre 2019. Au Théâtre des Célestins les gens attendent quelque chose. Tout le monde attend en gardant le silence. On lit la brochure du spectacle et l'histoire de Tatiana Frolova, une metteuse en scène russe qui en 1985 a décidé de créer KnAM théâtre, un espace indépendant qui se trouve en Komsomolsk-on-Amur dans la région Khabarovsk. Au début, cet espace accueillait seulement 27 personnes, on peut dire qu'il était presque un théâtre d'appartement, un théâtre pauvre ou l'histoire se mêle avec la fiction et donne comme résultat « une petite Antarctique ». Notre petite Antarctique où le sentiment d'une permanent hiver prédomine plus que jamais, où l'on parle encore d'un sujet fortement aimé par l'Occident – le communisme et ses traces.

Photo Credits Theatre KnAM

Cette histoire, construite sur le canevas du conte de la Reine des neiges qui a touché le cœur d'un jeune garçon et lui a fait oublier ses sentiments, nous parle des évènements passés et du quotidien d'une Russie qu'on croit connaître, une pays qui n'a pas encore guéri, où le président déclare avec fierté que 2019 est « l'Année du théâtre », même si les autorités ont manifesté leur oppression envers le milieu théâtral, en emprisonnant Kiril Serebrenikov et en donnant une loi qui empêche le théâtre d'utiliser des mots qu'on considère obscènes. Le spectacle commence avec la vidéo ou Vladimir Putin manifeste son orgueil et ses désirs pour un pays bien éduqué et où il crie « Vive le théâtre, vive la culture, vive l'identité nationale ! ». Les vidéos sont le tissu du spectacle – on voit des témoignages de personnes âgées mais aussi une vidéo avec un jeune bloggeur russe qui glorifie l'idéologie de Lenin, vu comme un vrai héros national, un exemple de pouvoir et de conduite. Voilà comment on se souvient, en tant que Roumains, de notre « bien aimé » Ceausescu et de tous ceux qu'on a utilisé pour justifier notre non-action en tant que peuple impuissant et apeuré. La réalité du documentaire est adoucie par ce conte un peu naïf dont le spectateur a besoin pour continuer à avoir confiance dans un avenir moins nuageux.

Le décor du spectacle n'a rien d'extraordinaire: les acteurs utilisent des escaliers blancs, ils descendent et remontent en reproduisant ainsi les rapports de pouvoir entre parents et enfants ou enfants et grands-parents. Tatiana Frolova apparaît aussi en tant qu'actrice, en soutenant une position précise, impitoyable qui se tourne vers la table où à l'aide de la vidéo et d'extraits documentaire on raconte les histoires des locaux russes. On parle d'une situation où on ne peut pas oublier que la fiction est seulement métaphorique – cette reine des neiges est en réalité un régime totalitaire qui ne laisse au peuple aucune possibilité d'exprimer son choix. Les acteurs connaissent leur situation politique, leur jeu est bien articulé, sans exagérations, ils ont des moments où ils discutent avec un détachement brechtien leur situation. Parmi les personnages qu'on voit sur scène, Guerman (« guerre man ») est la figure la plus emblématique – il représente l'image parfaite du jeune torturé par sa grand-mère autoritaire, un soutien du régime communiste. Ainsi, l'enjeu du spectacle n'est pas seulement de

réveiller la conscience des gens face au sujet du communisme mais de démarrer un débat fort, lever des questions graves et douloureuses, plus que nécessaires.

Je me demande si les personnes qui ne sont pas nées dans un pays ex-communiste réalisent que la fascination exercée par ce régime est seulement un sujet de discussion dont ils n'ont pas vraiment la légitimité de parler sans prendre en considération le danger de se tromper. Il est toujours difficile de porter la parole de quelqu'un qu'on ne connait pas, de faire des suppositions sans pouvoir vraiment comprendre tout le contexte d'une nation.

Même si le sentiment dominant du spectacle est la peur, il nous reste encore de l'espoir. Peut-être Tatiana Frolova n'est pas un grand nom dans le théâtre Européen (elle est très connue en France surtout où elle a eu beaucoup des collaborations), mais sa création nous montre qu'on peut encore créer des spectacles de valeur qui touchent tout en affectant la mémoire collective, spectacle qu'on peut voir sur scène et dire « le théâtre engagé politiquement est l'art de reprendre la parole d'un pays, de sanctionner le système et le gouvernement sans blesser l'art et sa cohérence''. Bref, « Ma petite antarctique » reste une poésie documentaire vivante ou les réalités recrées ne peuvent guérir les blessures, mais luttent contre les maux enracinés dans nos gènes.

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UBB CLUJ-Napoca

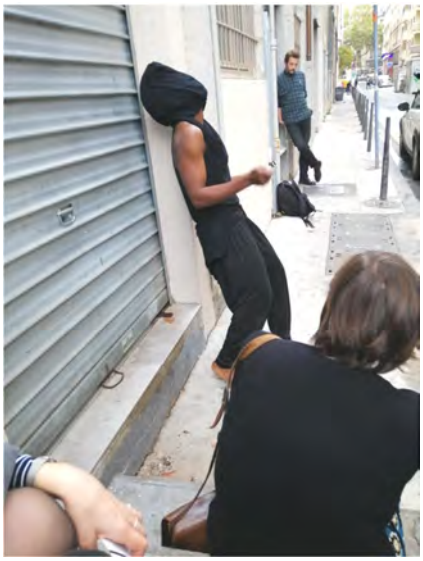
STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 2, 2019, p. 245 - 249
(Recommended Citation)

A qui le tour *or How to Mourn with Your Body* and Henrietta Lacks – *A Theatrical Take on Practical Ethics*

Performance Review: Agathe Djokan Tamo's Solo, "A qui le tour", Cameroun, Festival Sens Interdits, Lyon, 2019 ; and "Henrietta Lacks", Nowy Teatr and Copernicus Science Center, after a text by Anna Smolar, Marta Malikowska and Maciej Pesta, directed by Adnna Smolar

Agathe Djokan Tamo's solo, "A qui le tour", was not only an encounter with a different theatrical culture, the one from Cameroun, but also a chance for the *Sens Interdits Festival* audience to rediscover the strength of a bodily performance. Using dance, movement, music and silence, a voice over, and a few other elements, the artist takes us on her journey of mourning and loss. From the street to the theatre hall, we watch unrevalling in front of us the most intimate experiences of the human soul.

Shock, denial, depression, helplessness, anger, peace and rebirth, all these can be read in Agathe Djokan Tamo's expressive performance. By joining together repetitive, powerful movements, she manages to engage the audience in her tragedy, while inviting the spectators to explore theirs. At a first glance, Tamo's dance is, to say the least, odd and uncomfortable. We don't really know what is happening and all these repetitive choreographic fragments seem monotonous and a bit annoying. She's dressed in black, and a black piece of material is covering her entire head and face. What a sinister appearance! All these elements are meant to push us out of our confort zone and into a place of curiosity and openness, while giving us time to process the significance of every step.



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At the end of the show, one of my friends said: "it was excruciating to watch so much stifled pain! It's like she tried to scream throughout the entire performance and never managed to." In my opinion, that's exactly what the artist was aiming to transmit. The force and the tension in her movements, the fact that the music was absent until the stage of rebirth, the use of the street, a familiar conventional space, for the beginning of a deeply personal tragedy, all these elements vexed us and engaged us. And to make everything even more intimate, at the end of the show, right after the performer completed the stage of relief, she walked through the audience, sharing something from a bowl and calling the names of the deceased: she gave us peanuts as a symbol for the ashes. I doubt anyone managed to eat those peanuts!

We cannot end this analysis without answering a burning question: why might one wish to participate in such an uncomfortable theatrical experience? To this question, I found two reasons: 1. It beautifully displays the expressiveness of the human body, while reminding us that movement is our universal mother tongue; and 2. It can function as a therapeutic experience by inviting us to self-reflection and by embodying the abstract flux of emotions most of us experienced at least once in our lives. What's for sure, however, is that "A qui le tour" is not everyone's cup of tea. And it doesn't have to be.

One of the most memorable performances of the lyonese theater festival Sens Interdits was "Henrietta Lacks", a polish coproduction from Nowy Teatr and Copernicus Science Center, after a text by Anna Smolar, Marta Malikowska and Maciej Pesta, directed by Anna Smolar. The show tackles the topic of medical ethics and discrimination, while telling the story of Henrietta Lacks, a young african-american woman whose cancer tisuue has been removed during treatment and used for scientific experiments without her knowledge.

One of the most fascinating elements in Henrietta Lacks is the refreshing contrast between a topic rather hard to swallow and its entertaining, light-hearted on stage representation. While raising the question of whether it's fare to use human tissue for scientific purpose without the owner's approval, the director Anna Smolar makes sure the structure of the performance is built with mathematical precision in a way that keeps the audience alert. Whether we talk about the step dance, the video-projections or having actors play the Cancer or the Clonned Sheep, the performance is full of attractive and justified solutions that make it memorable. Another aspect that contributed to the overall success of the show was the clean, well-polished acting.

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The members of the cast were visibly tuned in with each other and managed to engage the audience with the socio-psychological subtleties of the play. The performance as a whole was a great example of practical ethics, successfully launching pointing out the multiple perspectives of the situation. On the one hand, we have the lack of consent from the patient. In addition to this, the use of that tissue lead to scientific and financial achievements that were not even partially enjoyed by Henrietta Lacks. Moreover, her name was completely forgotten. Is it due to the fact that she was a woman of color? On the other hand, we have the perspective of the doctor: firstly, he was the one who performed both the surgery and the medical experiments, hence the results are due to his own intellectual capacity, and secondly, as he states brutally, "if the patient wanted to have rights over the cancer cells, why didn't she keep it?".

I believe one of the greatest achievements of the polish performance is the fact that it raises awareness about a controversial issue while creating a context for meaningful conversations between the spectators. Regardless of the different ways people related to theatre throughout history, there is one function of this art that will never fade: its role in the socialization of communities. And Henrietta Lacks undeniably managed to fulfill this request.

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