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ЗА ТЕОРИЯ, ИСТОРИЯ И КРИТИКА НА ИЗКУСТВОТО

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# SUMMARIES

## TRADITION AND CHANGE DURING THE 60-es

Vassil Stefanov

The dividing line between the 50-es and the 60-es of the XX century for Bulgarian theatre was not a formal one standing between two decades, but a period when important changes started. These changes went on in two mutually linked directions. In the second half of the 50-es, when young directors – graduated from the Higher Theatre Institute established earlier – started to enter the theatre system, the recognition of the so called 'director's theatre' started. The director having passed through specific professional training became entitled to be the author of the theatrical performance. At first this created some tension in the relations between actors and directors; but just at the borderline between the two decades these relations were considerably harmonized and became the prerequisite for the appearance of performances, which were distinguished for their original director's conception and high mastery of actors' interpretations.

The new, more active and wider creative function of directing stimulated artistic quests. In the changed atmosphere a natural resistance arose against the dogmatic interpretation of realism (including social realism). Elements of convention increasingly penetrated the stage practice, young directors decisively gave up the aesthetic of photographic credibility. In the 60-es the process of reappraisal of the views of realism, dominating in the previous decade, gave rich crop in the work of a dozen young directors, who used convention as the main weapon for reviving Bulgarian theatrical art in this period.

## SOMETHING MORE ABOUT THE TERM POLITICAL THEATRE

Violeta Decheva

The article is part of a larger study carried out within the framework of RSS – CEU, Grand Holder No.509/1999, devoted to the causes predicting the death of the political theatre. The research massif on the concept "political theatre" is analyzed from the point of view of: 1) historiographic tradition and 2) theory of theatrical art. According to the tradition of historiographic literature the term of "political theatre" is defined by means of description and analysis of the works and activities of figures, considered to be "authors" of political theatre. The analysis ends with the conclusion that in this tradition the term functions as a "dictionary" or different "dictionaries",

which haven't been updated since the 70-es. In the theoretical studies of "political theatre" the "disagreements" are more than the agreements upon its definition. Irrespective of the methodological differences in most studies the term remains within quite blurred limits – in the semiotic paradigm it is not used at all, but the analyses from the point of view of the "theme" and "material" quite relativize it. Therefore, further in the article the term of "political theatre" is not defined within the framework of 'a priori' contemplated "ars poetica" of the theatre, but from the point of view of the necessity for "political theatre" in the context of its appearance during the 20-es and 30-es. Its appearance is studied 1). as part of the "restricted dictionary" of the avant-garde and 2). as a necessity for defining the changing interrelations between the "field" of theatrical art and the remaining "fields", building up the common social environment (Bourdieu). Its "authors" and "ideologists" are Erwin Piscator, Bertolt Brecht and the authors of the Russian theatre avant-garde. The analysis ends with the conclusion that the concept "political theatre" appears as a result of: 1). the intention to influence through the theatre (the art) the typical social and political practice, offering an aesthetic project for political and social change and 2). as a result of an ideologically motivated reduction in the laws, operating in the field of art (the theatre) and in the "fields" of economy and sociology as far as the laws regulating the political field.

## BULGARIAN COMEDY IN THE BALKAN CONTACT ZONE OF THE COMICAL

Romeo Popiliev

Some basic texts of Bulgarian comedy-graphy such as "Civilization misunderstood" by D. Voinikov, "Mother-in-law" by A. Strashimirov and "Office-Seekers" by I. Vazov are compared by looking for the similarities and differences between them and the comedies of St. L. Kostov – in the principles of the comical, in its continuity and divergence, in the attitude towards the foreign and the national (the native), in accommodating oneself to the authorities, etc. The interrelations and influences as well as the development of the above attitudes and themes in the comedies of Stefan L. Kostov, Branislav Nukič, Yon Karadjale and some other Balkan authors from the period between the two world wars are examined afterward. The eternal theme of Bai Ganyo in its Balkan context is treated as well (e.g. "Bai Ganyo" and "A Trip round the World" by Branislav Nukič). Obviously the Balkans – as a contact zone of various cultural mentalities – favours

the presence of all kinds of contrasts, surprises, a variety of travesties and, of course, continuous laughter.

## THE THEATRE ICONOGRAPHY AND THE ACTOR'S IMAGE

Joanna Spassova-Dikova

The text aims at establishing the scientific consistency of the iconographic approach in the field of theatre history and particularly in acting. Basic tasks are to define the very concept of "theatre iconography" and to trace briefly the historic development of this relatively new subject. The main thesis is that the theatre-iconographical approach is quite adequate for studying the actor's art as far as there is a great relevance between the approach and the object of studying. In the light of the communication theories the theatrical process, its recording and studying are presented as a whole intermedial chain in which is accomplished the transcodification of two basic structure forming features of the actor's image – iconographicity and theatricality. The object of studying are two specific cases of theatricality of the iconographic images in the actors' caricatures by Alexander Bozhinov, painted in the first half of the XX century and the iconographicity of the actors' images in the totalitarian stage iconographies of the party leader, presented in performances of the National Theatre during the first two decades after the Second World War. The choice of these examples is not accidental. In the first case the immanent theatricality of the caricature as a pictorial genre and iconographic evidence is sought. In the second example the possibility for extreme iconographicity of the actor's image on the stage is analyzed, thus attempting to prove that the theatre iconography can be not only a collection of visual documents or a scientific approach, but a specific method of creating the stage image.

## BULGARIAN NATIONAL REVIVAL DRAMA – READING WITH A VIEW TO ITS PARATEXTUAL ELEMENTS

Nikolai Yordanov

The article is an attempt to find out the typological characteristics of the Bulgarian National Revival theatre texts by analyzing their paratextual elements: prefaces, titles, dedications, definitions of type/genre, lists of characters, names of composition units, epilogues, footnotes and other accompanying minitexts of the author. The theoretical view on which the study is based is that in the drama there are two discursive principles of construction – dialogue and stage directions, but around them there is a marginal zone, where the accompanying elements are arranged – paratexts, which in a specific and indirect way promote the building up of the fictional world. The surface discursive structure automatically records the norms and clichés – the paratexts are analyzed as "unconscious memory" for the theatrical code of the Revival epoch.

The paratextual cover of the revival plays clearly shows the priority of Literature over Stage. The Revival drama concentrates the

signs of identification and legitimization around the publication of the book. We can claim that the name of the author from the Bulgarian National Revival period, similarly to the prefaces and dedications, becomes "alienated" from the text system, referring to the act of its publication rather than to the act of its writing. The authors seem to desire to "write" their names into an imaginary encyclopedia of literature. Writing one's name into the encyclopedia of literature is identified with writing this name into the history of the nation.

The hypothesis for a stage realization remains as a wish in some of the dedications, but is not incrustated otherwise in the text. There are no notes (instructions) for the actors, there is not the least attempt to give characteristics, directed at the stage interpretation of their roles. The authors write their plays as literary texts – between the writing of the dramatic text and its stage realization there is still a cultural vacuum.

By analyzing the names in the lists of characters and the composition units the Revival theatrical notion can crystallize: the drama is considered a spectacle, in which the characters perform certain acts; it bursts forth during their appearance on the stage – this notion will dominate Bulgarian drama until the end of the XIX century.

The paratexts in the Bulgarian Revival plays show an enlightening and classicist model of dramatic writing, upon which sentimental and romantic influences overlap – an imaginary palimpsest, which has mixed the historical layers of various dramatic practices through the transformations of the Balkan cultures. The awareness of creating national literature, however, disciplines the differences and imposes individuality. This process determines to a considerable extent the character of what we call "Bulgarian dramaturgy". The later attempts to get out of it by manifesting "modernity" weakens it, but they cannot revoke it completely as basic arrangements and notions.

#### WHERE DOES THE HORIZON POINT TO?

Elena Vladova

The very creation of modern puppet theatre contains the gesture of modernity. The theatre is "forced out of" its ritual commitment and primitive entertaining aim and is placed within the limits of art as a way of self-expression.

Bulgarian modern puppet theatre /1924/ started developing almost simultaneously with the quests of Bauhaus /1919-1933/. The modern puppet theatre in Bulgaria

arises through the little cultural explosion of the show "We are called to life" /1924/, which clears out space for its more untraditional existence. In its later life the modern puppet theatre in this country (as well as in Europe) collects parts of the world puppet tradition combining them in a new way in order to build up the personality "again" and "now". The chain of tradition is broken off by cultural explosions to be joined again, to be interrupted, again broken off and revived.

#### EURIPIDES AS A SCENOGRAPHER

Vassil Rokomanov

Euripides introduced into "Medea" Deus ex machina as a winged dragon's chariot. The God is identified as the Son of the Great Goddess Mother of the Thracian-Pelasgian antiquity, the mysteries of Samothrace and Eleusis and their appearance in the Balkan folklore. A vase painting of the Eleusinian mysteries closely presents the described chariot; Dionysos entered Athens for hierogamia with basilina on a bed-ship-cart (the first tragedies were performed upon carts); the Mummer without mask conveys the King on a cart, sharpens his phallus on a wheel, plays hierogamia with Grandmother on a wheel carrier, etc. So is portrayed the image of god-king-demiurge in techné, legitimizing itself ritually through a machine – an idea confirmed by Aristotle in his view of God as an eternal static force.

The machine for stage flight is called geranos, which means crane (bird) and crane (machine). The cranes were offered as a sacrifice on Samothrace and were sacred for Demeter; they were present in the plot of geranomachia – a fight between pygmies and cranes, connected with earlier technological cultures; they were birds of Apollo and Hermes; they brought the cuneiform writing with their flocks, which relates them to the Moiras. The crane has common constructive principles with the scales – a metaphor of justice – Moira.

"Medea" is analyzed as a sacred drama – mystery. The heroine is an embodiment of Dionysos pathos (passions), but is not a perfect tragic character in the sense of the polis ideal; she is indicated to be Alien. The very event Deus ex machina is mystical: infantside is interpreted as sacrifice from a vase painting on an Apulean vase, in which a snake-legged god on a chariot is giving a torch to the sacrificed boy and is holding another torch for Medea. Fire is life and/or the way to another life. The event replaces the conflict from the myth in order to achieve a catharsis, coded ambiguously; Medea

reaches it as mystical entousiasmos – concealed in time, place and action. The Moira falls upon Jason, who is on his own. If the chariot takes MEDEA TO Dionysos Junior, it means hierogamia for her, in which she will be queen and wife to the god and king of the theatre; the climax of Dionysos' wedding to the polis is agon of dramas. The fact that in the text she calls the god "father of my father" confirms that hierogamia is meant.

The final event is a dance for an actor and machine-scenography. The dance is unity itself – the action and the material image of Deus ex machina are coded and understood in Muse unity. The chariot has come with a "biography" from mythic and ritual codes, having ritual-mythological and poetical i.e. agonal influence simultaneously – place, time and action are thought of in images, many of which are machines. The profane and sacred dimensions of time, place and action up to art are studied through them.

The event Deus ex machina transforms the stage time, place and action into functioning not according to the myth, socium, space and rituality and as soon as they cross each other in the poetics of a performance, in which the myth is the plot and the action is not a ritual. This is the key to a possible imaginary travel in theatrical time, place and action as far as catharsis. The winged dragon's chariot caused non-profane happening – agonal unity "organic convention".

From the profane existence and the ritual-mythological place-time-action of the Son, the synthesis place-time-action arose, in which a mortal stage heroine speaks from mechane on behalf of the god who possessed her. The ritual condition that the victim should come alone, and the theatre should present the suffering, passion-pathos of Dionysos in order to elevate and purify the polis is observed. That is a unity of time, place and material structures of the action – performance – theatrical interpretation of Euripides of the myth "Medea" as theatre, not ritual. The chariot is an independent hero-character both in the text and the performance. The change involves scenography as art.