A Theatre for Postmodernity in Western European Theatrescapes[1]

Henning Fülle

Manfred Brauneck's depiction of (West) European theatre topographies, or theatrescapes, since the Second World War in the fifth volume of his opus *Die Welt als Bühne*[2] recurrently references the emergence of free, independent theatre groups during the 1960s and 70s. Here mention is made mostly of 'free groups' and 'free theatre'[3].

A new Theatre Arising from the Crisis of Modernity?

Although most of the youth and student revolts associated with the 'magical' year 1968 do manifest in specific national societies, their attendant processes nevertheless occur in similar patterns, more or less in correspondence to one

1 | Rather than being a product of the Balzan Research Project, this essay was commissioned for this anthology as a supplementary perspective and was able to be developed, starting in June 2015, only after completion of the dissertation manuscript (see fn. 5); for this reason, my remarks in the following must remain structurally somewhat akin to a thesis.

2 | [The world as stage], Manfred Brauneck, *Die Welt als Bühne: Geschichte des europäischen Theaters*, Vols. I–VI, Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler Verlag, 1993–2007; Vol. 5, *2. Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart and Weimar: Publisher, 2007, (further citations: Brauneck, WaB/V.)

3 | In the context of his research, the author asks that the German term for the new 'Freies Theater' (and the associated terms 'Freie Gruppen' and 'Freie Szene') be left untranslated in the English text. The self-identification of 'Freies' [free] theatre refers in Germany specifically to theatrical activity that takes place outside the system of state-funded city and regional theatres. This distinction is not necessarily applicable outside Germany, so the literal translation of 'free' or 'libre' holds little meaning. The key feature of this theatrical activity is its independence, therefore 'independent theatre' is the closest translation.

another, and more or less tempestuously and militantly in almost all societies of 'Western'[4] industrial civilization.

Even without recourse to scholarly investigation into the relevant contexts, we can, in the broadest sense, understand the formation of 'free' theatre in West-European societies, or in other words, the formation of production modes, dramaturgies and aesthetic forms of new theatre since the sixties and seventies, as resonant with the moment of these processes of youth revolt.

As regards terminology, however, one must make the point in advance that any talk of 'free theatre' (and its derivatives: the free scene, free groups and so on) comes as a derivative of the German theatrescapes's specificities[5]; it describes the unique circumstance wherein forms and structures of contemporary theatre production in (West) Germany arose only late and in clear contradistinction to the traditional structures of the 'German system'. The term 'free' signifies this dissociation from the structures of state and municipal theatre and is often enough not (correctly) understood in foreign theatrescapes where these structures do not exist, at least not in this all-pervasive monopolistic capacity. Neither The Living Theatre, nor Peter Brook, Ariane Mnouchkine or Georges Tabori (for example) – and to a certain extent also Christoph Marthaler – defined or understood themselves as 'free' theatre, even though their work constitutes central references for what we in Germany have become accustomed to designating as such.

For the emergence of these new forms – of production modes, dramaturgies and aesthetics – one can distinguish two impulse-fields that lend them their character:

- on the one hand, the dynamics of international artistic developments since the Second World War, which have encountered different conditions of realisation in different national cultures and in the corresponding topography of their theatrescapes.
- the second impulse-field consists in – reformist and/or conservative – endeavours on the part of cultural and social politics that, for one, react or are responsive to artistic developments or else make efforts – harnessing, traditionally, the political momentum of the state or emanating from the public hand – to realise certain goals towards development or change by means of classical forms of political and/or administrative (legislative or executive) intervention.

4 | Here 'Western' means modern, capitalistically and parliamentary-democratically organized industrial societies – in this sense, also Japan.

5 | Cf., Henning Fülle, *Freie Gruppen, Freie Szene, Freies Theater und die Modernisierung der deutschen Theaterlandschaft (1960–2010)*, dissertation, University of Hildesheim; Hildesheim, Germany, 2015. And Henning Fülle, *Freies Theater. Die Modernisierung der deutschen Theaterlandschaft (1960-2010),* Berlin 2016 forthcoming.

Figure 1: 'Zelt Schanzenpark', Jango Edwards, Kampnagel, Hamburg, 2001. Photograph: Friedemann Simon

In that regard, it makes little sense, in the international context, – which will also be shown by this essay – to employ the catch-all term 'free theatre' when discussing these forms. This would constitute an illegitimate projection of German circumstances onto other contexts and would furthermore lead to equivocal perspectives and evaluations. 'Independent' is the much more appropriate term for such production modes and products that have produced a new, different theatre – mostly developed by young and new ensembles that frequently understand themselves as 'collectives' – for other audiences, mostly since the end of WW II in the 'Western hemisphere' (which includes, in keeping with the cultural-historical circumstances, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the rest of 'Middle Europe').

The term 'free theatre', on the other hand, designates a German phenomenon, whose definition via the term 'free' only becomes systematically and historically coherent against the backdrop of the meaning and constitution of the 'German system', made up of publicly financed state and municipal theatres, and its link

to the youth and student revolts of 1967/68. These specificities also explain the continually encountered difficulties in communication between German theatre makers and those from other countries in Western Europe. At issue in the following are almost exclusively the latter – as far as German developments are concerned, reference is to be made to my forthcoming study[6].

As concerns the impact had by the two aforementioned impulse-fields on the formation of developments in diverse theatrescapes, we will adhere to the following guiding hypothesis: the artistic impulses aiming for changes in traditional forms of dramatic text-based theatre are themselves part of the international development of a new phase or era in the evolution of civilisation and culture, an era whose description via the term 'postmodern' has gained broad acceptance.

Postmodernity's backdrop is provided by twentieth-century catastrophes of civilization, by the global mass-medialisation of conditions of communication and by the expiry of the dominance of industrial conditions of production[7], beginning in the regions of capitalistically organised industrial civilisation; in the course of which the teleologico-utopian promise of progress and happiness guaranteed by bourgeois societies since the Enlightenment becomes increasingly obsolete.

When focussing on theatrical-artistic developments since the sixties, one recurrently comes across discussion of Peter Brook, whose work is appreciated as artistic inspiration throughout Western Europe and whose specifics concerning production conditions are regarded as a characteristic impulse for contemporary artistic developments.

In point of fact, Brook's works seem to be of no small importance to the emergence of new, postmodern forms of theatricality precisely because they do not spring from classical theatre discourse.

And yet the detonation of the canonic dramatic theatre of 'Aristotelian'[8] provenance begins much earlier, even in its Enlightenment varieties. I offer the evidence in the following sections while simultaneously taking into account that these developments cannot – even *almost* completely – be accounted for here.

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6 | Cf. footnote 5.

7 | Just as these regions of the world saw the supersession of dominating agricultural and craftsmanship-realted production conditions by industrial conditions since the second half of the eighteenth century.

8 | Lehmann has aptly shown that the 'Aristotelian' tragedy is an ensemble of rules and forms, a construct that has been embedded, as an adaptation undergoing transformation to this day, in cultural-historical developments in Europe since the Renaissance. Cf. Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Tragödie und dramatisches Theater*, Berlin: Alexander, 2013, pp. 15–32. English translation: *Tragedy and Dramatic Theatre*, London: Routledge, forthcoming (March 30, 2016).

Figure 2: 'Hotel Pro Forma', Kirsten Dehlholm, Kampnagel, Hamburg, 2000. Photograph: Friedemann Simon

Some Historical Background: Theatre as Art

The concepts proper to the fin de siècle 'Theaterreform' (the reformation of the 'German system'), which are linked to the names Craig, Appia, Dalcroze, Moholy-Nagy, Schwitters and others, correspond to those processes of the development of art's self-referentiality, of the shaping of analytical and methodological perspectives like Impressionism, that were triggered both by advances made in the scientific penetration of matter and the world, and by self-reflections on the part of the classical optical and acoustic arts, themselves inspired by the inventions of photography, telegraphy, telephony and phonography.

Ever since the 'Meiningers', continuing through (for instance) Max Reinhardt, Stanislavski, Brecht and Piscator, theatre in Middle Europe develops, starting at the nineteenth century's close, as an increasingly autonomous 'director's art' that stands at least next to embodiment of the drama as core of the staged material; Piscator experiments with the theatre as multimedial political message-spectacle, Brecht with the didactic play as theatrical research process that takes place primarily among the actors and is witnessed and fathomed by the audience – and whichever of the two may be reckoned as the inventor of 'epic' non-Aristotelian theatre will remain undecided here.

If an analytical, self-referential gaze that in a certain sense follows the analytical perspectives of the natural sciences – relativity, quantum physics, psychoanalysis – ensues in the wake of these developments in artistic innovation and

reformist concepts until well into the thirties, then already with Dada and the Surrealists themes related to the abdication of sense and enlightenment as the telos of art itself become – as a result of the great catastrophe of civilisation known as World War I – the subject matter as well as the purpose of artistic praxis.

As regards the theatre, in the thirties Antonin Artaud, more than anyone else, comes to mark the watershed in this development: his (admittedly somewhat terminologically diffuse) turn towards a tendentially introspective research-theatre – that also demands of the play the *partager*, the 'sharing' of the experience and witnessing of the interior worlds underneath the varnish of positivist moral philosophies – is, at least theoretically, a central point of departure for the theatre of postmodernity.

Postmodernity in this sense means the rejection of that systematic promise of future, salvation and happiness proper to the self-understanding of bourgeois society, that abdication which emancipated itself from the preestablished divine world orders of any provenance whatsoever and required the system and the teleology in order to counteract the mightiness of theological concepts by means of something approximately equal or similar.

These systems – whether stemming from Lessing, Kant, Fichte, Hegel or Marx – are based, with all the pathos of reason and science in their ultimate justifications, on a principle of belief; but to be precise, it is not the 'acid bath of contingency' so readily quoted by Stegemann, but rather above all the reason-driven reflection itself which – with the Frankfurter School's 'dialectics of enlightenment' being its most elaborated and presumably most bitter modality – notifies us that the abdication of this system is no longer – hardly any longer – negotiable.

The extent to and modality in which artistic and philosophical processes are hence interrelated remains a topic of philological and discourse-hermeneutical research, but this must be set aside at present; yet the writings of Albert Camus and Jean Paul Sartre, John Osborne, Tennessee Williams, Samuel Beckett... can in any event be read for the theatre as reflexes of the increasing rejection of hopes and promises of reason; of the catastrophes of civilisation and the global medialisation of the conditions of communication. After two world wars, the industrial-genocidal efforts to eradicate Europe's Jews, after the appearance of the scientifically elaborated potential for the obliteration of the planet at its inhabitants' own hands, after transportation technologies that were designed to conquer gravitation, it would seem that the heavens are empty and the human being is genuinely free. And yet freedom is no longer a promise; it surfaces instead as a calamity, one spelled out by Sartre and Camus.

As concerns theatre after WW II, in Germany after a brief phase, attempts at new beginnings immediately following war's end in the Bundesrepublik mark the establishment of a tendency towards the restoration of theatre art as vision of the 'conditio humana'. And while the assertion of a theatre of 'Socialist Realism' (and consequently a theatre for the 'scientific age' that

carries the 'changeability of the world' in its head) is developed beyond the 'Iron Curtain' in the Soviet Occupied Zone/German Democratic Republic, in Western industrial civilizations the forerunners of artistic engagement with postmodern civilisation begin to show themselves.

The fact that the characteristic influences which are exerted on these forerunners' engagement are emitted by the pioneering development of an autonomous theatre art of modernity practised by protagonists forced into emigration – such as Brecht and Piscator – can only be mentioned here: at any rate, Julian Beck and Judith Malina went through Piscator's Dramatic Workshop in New York before they founded The Living Theatre in 1947. This group's work, which is shown all over Europe during the fifties and sixties, issued some of the most crucial impulses for processes of the contemporary renewal of theatre with respect to production modes, dramaturgy and aesthetics. Much the same can be said for the Bread & Puppet Theatre and the LaMama Group, who mould unique forms of theatre praxis on a foundation of contemporary sociopolitical awareness.

Alongside new forms of production praxis and dramaturgy, a number of authors also embark on new directions in theatre text beyond the drama: with Samuel Beckett as practitioner of the highest degree of radicality, but also with Eugène Ionesco and the French 'absurdists', Jean Genet and the British authors Harold Pinter, Edward Bond and Arnold Wesker; while in Eastern Europe, alongside Socialist Realism, above all in Poland, Jerzy Grotowski and Tadeusz Kantór develop forms of theatre work inspired by Artaud.

Subsequently, in the sixties and seventies this milieu sees the emergence of Peter Brook, Eugenio Barba, Robert Wilson, Ariane Mnouchkine, Luca Ronconi and others who begin afresh to experiment and reflect on theatre for their contemporaries. They found (or take over) research and production institutions in Vienna (Prato (Dramatic Centre)), Paris (C.I.R.T., Bouffes du Nord, Cartoucherie), Holstebro and Opole/Wroclav, where they labour concurrently towards their visions of theatre and towards the continual education and formation of young people.

Their characteristic trademarks: exploratory theatre art for an audience of contemporaries that refers to their time and the Zeitgeist while tackling the demand to treat present-day perception and enable and mediate experiences for their audience. The same way pop culture and pop art devotes itself to the empirical worlds and perceptive modes of the 'masses' – beginning to speak their language and dispensing with pedagogic gestures of improvement and cultivation in the sense of 'higher values' –, each artist of postmodernity assumes the tasks of ushering the traditions of stagecraft into each respective Now, processing stories of political and societal reality and developing the art of perception as a central technique for the evolution of civilisations, and as a vital coping mechanism for postindustrial cultures.

Figure 3: 'Accions', La Fura dels Baus, Kampnagel, Hamburg, 1986. Photograph: Friedemann Simon

Theaterschrift[9] — Reflection and Impulses for a Theatre of Postmodernity

The quadrilingual – English, French, German and Dutch – periodical *Theaterschrift*, which appeared with a total of thirteen issues from 1992 to 1998, conveys a one-of-a-kind, concentrated overview of the dimensions of postmodern theatre art.[10] It was edited and published by the European production and coproduction network that formed during the late eighties around Hebbel Theater in Berlin, the (new) Theater am Turm in Frankfurt am Main, the Kaai-

9 | Many thanks to Thomas Tylla of the Hebbel Theater Berlin for unbureaucratically borrowing the author a set of the complete edition. Even though in the second issue (October 1992) the chief editor Marianne Van Kerkhoven treats postmodernity as an epoch that is over – 'In the recent period – which is usually labelled "postmodern"' – for the investigations of "new" theatre compiled in *Theaterschrift*, we will adhere to the term "postmodern" – for the mere reason that the history of culture has to this day foreseen no newer epochal designation. [trans. from the German by W.W.]

10 | An overview of the focuses and authors of all thirteen issues can be found at http://www.archiv.hebbel-am-ufer.de/archiv_hebbel_theater/seiten/archiv/theaterschrift/haupt.html (14.07.2015).

theater in Brussels, Felix Meritis in Amsterdam and the Wiener Festwochen in Vienna.[11]

Already years before the appearance of Hans-Thies Lehmann's opus magnum *Postdramatic Theatre*[12], which gathers these international artistic developments under the same term, here texts and conversations with agents themselves negotiate and refine the dimensions of new contemporary theatre art. The journal is a transcript, as it were, of the search for the formal determinations of these new theatre forms – wherein its special merit and its significance as a source lie. In original essays, interviews and conversations, an indeed rather precise spectrum of artists, theatre intendants, dramaturges and theorists get a chance to speak. These agents' observation and analysis also constitute an informational stock for Lehmann's work.[13] What is more, the greater part of categories into which Lehmann divides postdramatic theatre are treated in this journal series as thematic foci.

The self-determined goal, as described by Marianne Van Kerkhoven, of *Theaterschrift* is 'the study in-depth of dramaturgical work, which accompanies creative work... to place the work of artists in and around the various theatres associated in this project, in a context and in a time'.[14] A 'common basic choice' for all artists who are heard or talked about in these pages is their desire for 'their artistic freedom to be as big as possible and that they reject recuperation through the "system"'[15] Even still, 'not wishing to be locked up in institutes implies that other means have to be sought in order to achieve a consolidation which the work of these artists requires, to which it is entitled.'[16]

Be that as it may, the jumping-off point for *Theaterschrift*'s editorial collective lies in 'institutes' – but ones which 'all stand, to a greater or lesser extent, on the fringes of the theatrical landscape as it appears in their respective countries; so for them *Theaterschrift* is also a way of arriving at a "self-definition"'.[17] The task

11 | Later editorial appearances are made by the ATEM-Atelier Théâtre et Musique, Nanterre, das Bayerische Staatsschauspiel with Marstall (starting with issue 7/1994), Kampnagel Hamburg (starting with issue 8/1994) and das ICA – Institute for Contemporary Art, London (issue 10/1995). The editorial location of the 'new edition', with a new size and new graphic layout (issues 11–13, 1997–98), moved to Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin, with an editorial team consisting of Felix Meritis, Kaaitheater, Hebbel Theater, the Festival Theaterformen, the EXPO 2000, Wiener Festwochen and Künstlerhaus Bethanien.

12 | Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, London: Routledge, 2006.

13 | Cf. the section titled 'Names' in Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatisches Theater*, London: Routledge, 2006, p. 23.

14 | Marianne Van Kerkhoven, 'Beyond Indifference', in *ThS* 1 (1992), p. 8.

15 | Ibid., p. 10.

16 | Ibid.

17 | Marianne Van Kerkhoven, 'On Dramaturgy', in *ThS* 5–6 (1994), p.16

at hand for the journal amounts, therefore, to a reflective accompaniment of the artistic working practices employed by both theatre artists and theatre houses.

Figure 4: 'Woyzeck', Pip Simmons, Theater der Welt, Hamburg, 1979. Photograph: Friedemann Simon

These artists' basic initial situation as regards dramaturgy and aesthetics consists in the fact that 'at present, at the close of the 20th century, the theatrical basic code, that is to say, the essential dialectics between fiction and reality – appears to be interpreted in a fundamentally different way than at the start of this century.[18] [...] The relationship between 'real' and 'unreal' in the world becomes one of their important points of attention.'[19]; the 'story of the world can only be told by breaks and jumps', whereas 'one can still feel a desire for a unity'[20]. The 'power of dreaming seems to be the only power which modern art has at its disposal', whereas 'the powerlessness of theatre is almost indiscriminately admitted. [...] the artist does not see him/herself (anymore) as a world reformer'.[21]

18 | Van Kerkhoven, 'Beyond Indifference', p. 14.

19 | Ibid., p. 26.

20 | Ibid., p. 28.

21 | Ibid.

As further 'leitmotives'[22] of these new forms of theatre, Van Kerkhoven broaches their a priori European – hence not primarily nationalistic[23] – dimension, the constant togetherness of artistic praxis and theoretical reflection that is consequently 'theory of practice'[24], as well as the goal to convey experiences by means of art:

'[Experience] is considered the (only) way to obtain knowledge about reality. Experience means: "living through something", it means "being touched". [...] Observation is the essential vehicle for this experience and these artists seem to be actually aware of the fact that nowadays this observation is influenced or even manipulated [...]; moreover, they try to use this vehicle in their work'.[25]

What is at stake is hence an approach towards new determinants acting upon the relation between theatre (or theatre art) and the world, and upon the circumstances and phenomena of those theatres and those worlds. To this end, highly diverse suggestions are made throughout *Theaterschrift*:

'The question emerges whether modern theatre, in a context of far-reaching mediatisation, derealisation and fictionalisation of reality (cf. the role of the media during the Gulf War), can still be approached as a "purely fictional" medium. For some time already avant-garde artists within the theatre have felt the need to bring "more reality", "more materiality" on stage. Does this mean that the old paradigm of theatre – to "pretend" within a certain time and space – and the acceptance of this paradigm by an audience is unsettled?'

asks Marianne Van Kerkhoven, in all likelihood rhetorically.[26]

Anatolij Vassiliev makes a statement in near contradistinction:

'During the past few years the process is such that I stopped examining life outside the theatre. I have been concentrating on studying only life in the theatre, life in the art world. [...] Not life itself but the state of the ideas in this life [were of interest to me]. [...]

22 | Translator's note: English versions exist for all the texts from the journal *Theaterschrift*, a quadrilingual journal (as mentioned by the author). The author's citations are hence drawn here from these English originals, which in some cases contain linguistic idiosyncrasies. In all quotations from *Theaterschrift* (exception: see fn. 7), the preexisting English versions have been used.

23 | Van Kerkhoven, 'Beyond Indifference', pp. 18/20.

24 | Ibid., p. 18.

25 | Ibid., p. 26.

26 | Ibid., p. 16.

As a consequence, I locked the doors of my theatre. And the more you close the theatre doors, the more it reminds you of a monastery.'

– in any other situation, one would be shut out from the examination of ideas pertaining to society.[27]

In terms of the concept of experience as the centre of theatre's perceptual and effectual potential, Ritsaert ten Cate asserts that 'to my surprise the changes in the world around us have not had such a great effect on my life and work until now.'[28] Your 'experience may be something similar as with the development of CNN: the physical feeling that world news is coming closer, although very superficially.'[29]

Discussing the central point of departure for her work, Laurie Anderson too instances the form of current-events television unfolding in near real time, something relatively new at that point, in its provision of the entire world as live event. Anderson nevertheless accounts for the edited nature of its content and thereby for its fundamental manipulation: 'The whole world is filtered for us by CNN.' Anderson's goal is 'to *look* at things well, not to change them. That's not my job.'[30] And the Performer Tom Janssen formulates the topic thus: 'Television has changed our way of life permanently, as photography did as well.'[31]

The open form of honing observations of and on new forms of theatre art as well as garnering hypotheses on ways of working through conversations with artists, and condensing or expanding on preliminary perceptions or theoretical conceptions, characterises the editorial work of *Theaterschrift*, a work which is also by and large consistently maintained throughout the course of its production; and it is perhaps no accident that the last issue of *Theaterschrift*[32] was published in September 1998, shortly before the 1999 appearance of Lehmann's, in a manner of speaking, canonical concept of 'postdramatic theatre', in comparison to which the 'internal discussion' seems very nearly obsolete.

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27 | Analolij Vassiliev, interviewed by Michael Haerdter, 'Theater as monastic community', in *ThS* 1 (1992), pp. 46–78, here p. 64

28 | Jan Ritsema, interviewed by Marianne Van Kerkhoven, 'So that it remains flexible in itself', in *ThS* 1 (1992), pp. 88–112, here p. 88.

29 | Ibid., p. 90

30 | Laurie Anderson, interviewed by Tom Stromberg, 'The speed of change', in *ThS* 1 (1992), pp. 118–132, here p. 120, 124.

31 | Tom Janssen, interviewed by Elske van de Holst and Marianne Van Kerkhoven, 'We watch with dry eyes and we prepare our soup', in *ThS* 1 (1992), pp. 136–156, here p. 142.

32 | This issue was published under the theme 'Spirituality: a Utopia?'.

Scenography — 'The Written Space'

In this open form, thirteen issues handle thirteen discrete aesthetic and dramaturgical thematic clusters on new, postmodern European theatre.

Issue two, titled 'The Written Space', discusses new determinants affecting the relation between theatre art and space, and does so in regard to both the location of work and performance, and the 'stage' in a stricter sense as each work's 'location of occurrence'. Here too it can be viewed as remarkable that Achim Freyer's[33], Robert Wilson's[34] und BAK-Truppen's[35] radical questionings of the central-perspectival Renaissance stage[36] are flanked by a 'Plea for the Italian Stage' by Urs Troller[37].

Troller's plea, however, is anything but conservative orthodox loyalty (or even reactionary, if seen from the perspective of the postmodern artist): 'I think that the question of what theatre can still offer in the context or in the ensemble of all the other media – where is [the thing that] makes it unique among other fields of expression? – can be investigated today at the Italian stage: the box is antinaturalistic and antirealistic.'[38] Even if 'the famous saying of Artaud, that theatre is something quite different from speech which has been written down, and which is then simply supposed to be transposed on stage' were accurate, 'the ritual space that Artaud dreamed of can no longer be restored'; and 'that's not due to our form of theatre, but to the changed – and fundamentally changed – social conditions under which we have to make theatre'[39], formulates Troller against the postmodern efforts to overcome a 'hierarchization of means' in the theatre and supplant language as the 'top of this pyramid'.[40]

Yet all in all, and for the most part, the texts in this issue point towards the development of 'scenography' as opposed to stage design:

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33 | Achim Freyer, interviewed by Bettina Masuch, 'Looking Behind the Mirror of Appearances', in *ThS* 2 (1992), pp. 114–130.

34 | Robert Wilson, interviewed by Bettina Masuch and Tom Stromberg, 'The Architecture of Theatrical Space', in *ThS* 2 (1992), pp. 102–106.

35 | BAK-TRUPPEN, in *ThS* 2 (1992), pp. 108–112.

36 | 'Our traditional theatres are the heirs of the Renaissance theatre, a space in which all the lines of perspective converged on that one central filled point, the place from which the prince watched the proceedings. Now there is no-one sitting there anymore. "The core of the world is empty." (Italo Calvino).'
Marianne Van Kerkhoven, 'The Written Space', in *ThS* 2 (1992), pp. 6–36, here p. 26.

37 | Urs Troller, interviewed by Gerhard Ahrens, 'Plea for the Italian Stage', in *ThS* 2 (1992), pp. 88–100.

38 | Ibid., p. 92.

39 | Ibid., p. 96.

40 | Ibid.

'When the spatial image in the theatre no longer has to serve to give the audience a faithful and recognisable copy of reality, it can fill itself with inner meanings, external references and abstract connotations. The concern that art should evoke an 'illusion of reality' is completely foreign to the artists present over here. The space which is written or described in this way can be 'read', not as a reference to the world but as an autonomous entity.'[41]

Worldliness and Aesthetic Exploration

Both of the first two issues of *Theaterschrift* distinctly show that two currents can be documented as concerns artistic impulses towards the contemporary renewal of the theatre: on the one hand, approaches with which artists react to social, political or cultural developments and proceed to engage with these – the production of 'worldly theatre' –; and on the other, approaches shaped by an aesthetic research that is, so to speak, 'immanent in art'.

The texts in the third issue, under the heading 'Border Violations', circulate within the interface between both tendencies; the task at stake is to identify the momentum that drives these artistic developments: 'How do you describe that inner necessity that takes you to the point of creation? What drives you to go and stand on a stage? So doing, what risks (artistic and otherwise) do you take? To what extent do you have to treat yourself and your audience with 'violence'?[42] – all these questions are posed 'at the core of the interviews/texts/statements' either by or about the work of Peter Greenaway, Reza Abdoh, René Pollesch, Romeo Castellucci, Hans-Thies Lehmann, Jan Fabre, Marina Abramovic, Truus Bronkhorst, Lloyd Newson, Josse de Pauw, Tom Jansen, Einar Schleef and Ivan Stanev.

These pages include reactions by artists to border transgressions in, for instance, pop culture, where sensational films like *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* or *The Terminator* violate existing taboos against representations of violence. On this subject, Peter Greenaway says 'that all satisfactory works of art necessarily do have built into them areas of sensitivity and taboo which push the boundaries of human experience to the edges'.[43]

41 | Van Kerkhoven, 'The Written Space', p. 16.

42 | Marianne Van Kerkhoven, 'Close to a secret', in *ThS* 3 (1993), pp. 6–20, here p. 8.

43 | Peter Greenaway, interviewed by Brigitte Fürle, 'The exposing of human beings', in *ThS* 3 (1993), pp. 24–42, here p. 26.

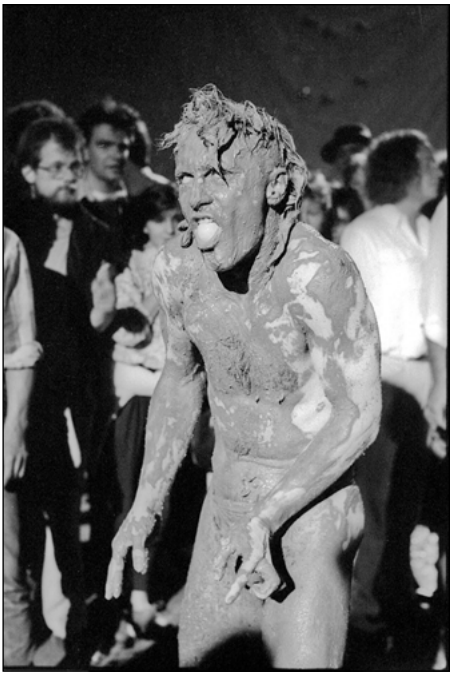

Figure 5: 'M7 Catalonia', Els Joglars, Kampnagel, Hamburg, 1979. Photograph: Friedemann Simon

However, Greenaway and the other authors in 'Border Violations' also insist that the breach of boundary and taboo in their work is not a matter of provocation of the audience and its limits of taste (or its voyeurism), but rather of uncompromisingly radical views into the depths of relations of body-politics. Greenaway refers both to cases of alleged or real child abuse and to the advertising campaign of the garment company Benetton depicting 'this naked second-old child, which caused such a furore in England that all the posters had to be taken down'.[44]

Reza Abdoh also makes reference in his work to the then-current events of the first Gulf War and to CNN's coverage thereof as well as to the murders committed by the sex killer Jeffrey Dahmers in the USA[45], and when asked, he confirms that his choice of references to phenomena of social violence is made in pursuit of a concept of catharsis: it's not that he believes so much in catharsis as 'the power of staged atrocity'; he understands it more 'as a celebration of

44 | Ibid., p. 38.

45 | Reza Abdoh, interviewed by Hortensia Völckers and Martin Bergelt, 'Violence – Death – Theatre', in *ThS* 3 (1993), p. 48–64.

[emotion]. I don't want to send the audience through purgatory but to create a solemn atmosphere of emotion'.[46]

In the nineties, war, violence, sexuality and pornography are topical public issues to which artists respond; they are also instances of the 'conditio humana' to which the praxis of artistic research turns, especially in the case of Jan Fabre and Marina Abramovic[47], who in their work show real injury and pain in their own bodies as well as the bodies of performers on stage as artistic actions, thereby directing attention towards the unreality of images and enactments of the human being (in the performing arts) which comply with conventions of taste and taboo. Hans-Thies Lehmann explains and defends this artistic praxis in his discussion of Jan Fabre's work:

'Pain, violence, death, and the resultant feelings of fear and compassion, have since antiquity been at the centre of *pleasure in tragic themes*. Nowadays we tend to translate 'eleos' and 'phobos' more as 'misery' and 'horror'. According to Aristotle these were used to evoke 'catharsis' in the audience of an Attic tragedy, designed to purify them of that very state of misery and horror. Whether you understand the latter as release from such feelings, as their mitigation, as their refinement, or as abreaction, the process in any case implies the purification of a form of psycho-physical attack on the audience. The realm of appearance is not cut off from the living world, it is a part of it.'[48]

In such modalities, risky border experiences and the deployment of one's own person into artistic praxis reflect both the radicality of artistic research interests and the situation in which violence and terrorism creep closer as social experiences after the post-1989 years, when a longer period of relative peace prevailing in Western Europe during the Cold War ended.

The pronouncements of these artists reveal two things here: for one, they provide insight into the ideas, thoughts and reflections which initiate and accompany their artistic work and through which they actualise processes of (re)examination; content-wise, they articulate a special quality belonging to these artistic works: they concern themselves with topics and phenomena of the immediate cultural, political or social present – not to mention the present of the audience. 'Tua res agitur' – yours are the subjects of these proceedings – could be the motto which heads these works. The ceaseless flow of real-time news; the breach of taboos against the showing, even exhibiting of violence, death, sexuality; the return of war to Europe; the treatment of diversion and

46 | Ibid., p. 56.

47 | Marina Abramovic, interviewed by Ilse Kujkens, 'Catching the moment', in *ThS* 3 (1993), pp. 104–120.

48 | Hans-Thies Lehmann, 'When rage coagulates into form … On Jan Fabre's "aesthetics of poison"', in *ThS* 3 (1993), pp. 90–102, here p. 92.

entertainment – beyond the embodiment of drama and consequently dramatic literature, these theatre makers take their works directly into conflict with political, social, cultural and communicational relations and conditions, the experience of which they share with their audience. Analysis and orientation within these circumstances are therefore pertinent to their work: perceptual art, experiential art, orientative art.

This holds especially true for issues 4/1993, titled 'The Inner Side of Silence', and 9/1995 on 'Theatre and Music', where the latter in a certain sense reciprocally ponders the ubiquity of noise and music and technologies of sound generation and transmission while also detailing artistic treatments thereof:

'But what really is the purpose of theatre (or dance)? Perhaps to place us in society (in politics) with the aid of work at the fringes of society, by rejecting the terms of the challenge which mass communication imposes (on us), and by looking, instead, for the seeds of a new contract (between the cultural act and society).'[49]

'But also, Sarajevo' – in other words, after the recent Balkan wars is one point of deliberation for a treatment of silence:

'Naturally, there's silence and there's silence. The complicitous silence of politicians. The shameful silence of intellectuals. The resigned silence of public opinion. The media casually mention Sarajevo, only to tell us of our so-called powerlessness, and, in parallel, to inoculate us, perversely, with a feeling of guilt because, in point of fact, we do nothing. Sarajevo is besieged, as we are besieged by sounds, by information which we oppose only with feeble passivity.'[50]

Dramaturgy of the New Theatre

A central locus of interaction for efforts at more precisely apprehending and delineating new forms of theatre art could be found at the symposium *Context 01: Active Pooling, the New Theatre's Word Perfect*, organised by the venue Felix Meritis in Amsterdam, which took place 25–29 August 1993. A series of texts in the *Theaterschrift* double issue 5–6 are extracted from this context.[51]

49 | Jean Marc Adolphe, 'Fragments drawn from silence so as not to shut up completely', in *ThS* 4 (1993), pp. 184–202, here p. 194.

50 | Ibid., p. 194/196.

51 | Cf. Marianne Van Kerkhoven, 'On Dramaturgy', in *ThS* 5-6 (1994), pp. 8–34, here p. 14

In her introduction, Marianne Van Kerkhoven summarises the essential facets and tendencies of this dramaturgy for the 'new theatre':

- a 'process-oriented method of working; the meaning, the intentions, the form and the substance of a play arise during the working process, so that the actors often also make a great contribution by means of the material they supply during the rehearsals'.[52]
- 'dramaturgy is no longer a means of bringing out the structure of the meaning of the world in a play, but (a quest for) a provisional or possible arrangement which the artist imposes on those elements he gathers from a reality that appears to him chaotic. In this kind of world picture, causality and linearity lose their value, storyline and psychologically explicable characters are put at risk, there is no longer a hierarchy amongst the artistic building blocks used...'[53]
- 'The "single" individual no longer has the structural means available to master reality's complexity.'[54] This leads to attempts at simultaneity of actions, to circular narrative structure, to the multiple perspectives and also to the next point:
- the need for 'another organisational structure for the performance of repertory theatre with the "leaderless" group De Vere: not the view of one single director or dramaturge of the classical theatre heritage, but a multitude of views, a repertoire in which each actor makes a contribution...'[55]
- 'In this sort of operation production's primary "building blocks" are the participants themselves, and their experience: in this new dramaturgy each actor's personal history gains considerably in importance.'[56]
- 'The individual "writer" of a play is tending to disappear; he is replaced by a collective; but on the other hand this collective has a nature different from the one we remember from the seventies: at that time the groups all tended to rally themselves behind one single (political) conviction; these days the collectives [...] are, rather, made up of the sum of the individuals, expected to provide "many voices".'[57]
- 'The "new dramaturgy" is also looking for a new relationship with its audience: this theatre wants its audience to share in the multiple points of view, or at least alienate from its "normal" way of viewing. [...] In this way the dramaturgy of space and its division also inevitably becomes a drama-

52 | Ibid., p. 18
53 | Ibid., p. 18 seq.
54 | Ibid., p. 20.
55 | Ibid., p. 22.
56 | Ibid., p. 20.
57 | Ibid., p. 22.

> turgy of the audience and of context in which a performance unfolds. If reality has become an inextricable tangle or a tower of Babel in which all languages are spoken at the same time, then an overview and a spot from which the spectator can obtain this overview are no longer to be achieved.'[58]

This substrate of 'new theatre' dramaturgy – for the description of which Hans-Thies Lehmann proposed (at the aforementioned conference in Amsterdam) the compilation of a thesaurus of sorts, an encyclopaedic 'lexicon' composed of 'terms, notions and components'[59] – is developed in this issue of *Theaterschrift* through texts by Erwin Jans, Josette Féral, Jan Kott, Eda Cufer und Emil Hvratin, Mira Rafalowicz, Marianne Van Kerhoven, Norman Frisch, Elisabeth LeCompte, Robert Lepage, den BAK-Truppen, David Mayaan, Jan Joris Lamers and Alexander Kluge.

Acting – Performance

Now that the building blocks 'stage' (space) and 'sound' (noise, music) as well as the 'dramaturgy' of the 'new theatre' have been examined, it would indeed seem to suggest itself that we turn our attention to the traditional centre of performance – to 'playing' – which is the object of investigation in the seventh issue of *Theaterschrift*[60] under the title 'The Actor'.

Here reference is made to traditions of the conception of acting:

'When we published the very first, exclusively Dutch-language, Theaterschrift 'On Acting' in 1991, we tried to define the new variation of acting that had been developing in Flanders and the Netherlands since the early eighties. In fact we described this form of acting at the time as a Sort of 'third' variation: in contrast to 'the Stanislavski actor' whose work is based on immersion in the character and 'the Brecht actor', who displays his character to the audience, 'the third variation actor' primarily wants to show himself to the audience, whether or not by means of a character.'[61]

58 | Ibid., p. 22.

59 | Cf. ibid., p. 14.

60 | June 1994. The issue is dedicated to the performer Ron Vawter of the New Yorker company Wooster Group, who died on 16 April 1994 'high in the air, during his flight from Europe to America'. This new syndrome, which was defined in 1981 as a full-fledged infectious illness, is also a pivotal sociocultural point of reference for the artists of the 'new theatre', not least for Reza Abdoh and his troupe dar a luz. Abdoh died on 12 May 1995 in New York due to AIDS related complications. Cf. Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reza_Abdoh (14.07.2015).

61 | Marianne Van Kerkhoven, 'The Actor', in *ThS* 7 (1994), pp. 8–30, here p. 10.

This 'third variant', which was first developed mainly with Flemish-Dutch and American exemplars[62] – above all in the work of the Wooster Group – is delved into further in this issue through conversations with a variety of actors, four American, four German, three Flemish, one Dutch, one English and one French[63]. With fodder for reflection provided by Hans-Thies Lehmann and the directors Christoph Marthaler, Jan Lauwers and Gerardjan Rijnders, the image of an actor 'very probably influenced by performance art, among other things',[64] one who 'no longer steps into the character's shoes', who 'allows this imaginary figure to live within' in order that 'the character almost "disappears". "Really existing on a stage" means first of all being oneself, which means that the personality of the actor is more important than his technical capacities: it is not rare for "amateurs" with an interesting stage presence to be integrated into the working process.'[65]

This – and herein lies another perspective on the transformed production modes of the 'new theatre' –

'naturally changes the relationship between the actors and the director. On the one hand, the actor is the "most important material" on the basis of which the director tells his story, and on the other the actor acquires a greater independence as a determining element in the play: he is no longer an interpreter but a co-creator of the piece. This also has its repercussions on the way in which groups of actors come together, or do not, on the way in which actors treat each other on stage and on the way the audience sees this sort of acting.'[66]

And almost secondarily, mention is made of the fact that 'Ron Vawter developed his roles in the plays of Elisabeth LeCompte, which are planned to the last detail. Ron Vawter was pleased to have reached the final version of Frank Dell's *"The Temptation of St Anthony"* after 9 years, while his more traditionally thinking colleague Ulrich Wildgruber feels frustrated and played out when he has to tour the same play for more than three years'.[67]

62 | Cf. ibid., p. 14.

63 | Ibid., p. 26; the actors are Ulrich Wildgruber, Hermann Beyer, Margarita Broich, Martin Wuttke, Ron Vawter, Frank Vercruissen, Juliana Francis, Tom Fitzpatrick, Tom Pearl, André Wilms, Viviane de Muynck, Frieda Pittors as well as the dancer and choreographer Wendy Houstoun and the musician Paul Koek.

64 | Ibid., p. 10/12.

65 | Ibid., p. 12.

66 | Ibid.

67 | Ibid., p. 26.

Issue nine from July 1995 on the topic 'Theatre and Music' constitutes de facto the completion of the series of 'workbooks' that explore forms of the 'new theatre'. With little focus on 'theatre music', however, it deals primarily with newer interpretations of the genre 'music theatre' and its relation to opera and opera's tradition.[68] Classical dramaturgical themes for theatre as well as theatre artists are tabled in issues eight, 'Memory'[69], and ten, 'City / Art / Cultural Identity'[70].

And starting with issue eleven, which appears in 1997, not only does the format and the outer appearance of the journal change. The editorial office too shifts from Brussels to Berlin (into Künstlerhaus Bethanien, which itself also joins the circle of co-editors), and Sabine Pochhammer assumes the role of chief editor, replacing Marianne Van Kerkhoven.

Even though its exceptional multilingualism is maintained, even though Hugo de Greef, director of the Kaaitheater, and Tom Stromberg, who meanwhile had moved into the position of director at the cultural programme at *EXPO 2000* Hannover, assert its continuity and 'guarantee' its 'quality'[71] as compared to the earlier issues, the 'new edition'[72] demonstrates an unmistakable change of course: the gesture of self-exploration and discussion of the 'new theatre' wanes in favour of a scientific and feuilletonistic treatment of dramturgical themes: 'The Return of the Classics?' (with emphasis on Shakespeare), issue 11/1997; 'Time', issue 12/1997 and 'Spirituality: a Utopia?', issue 13/1998, which does not appear until September of that year.

I will engage in no speculation about the end of the journal – whereas a reconstruction of internal discussions occurring at the time would surely be of interest. Suffice it to say that the following is clear: the new artforms' phase of 'self-invention', at least with regard to their 'implementation' and institutional stabilisation in Europe, is to a great extent a settled matter – and to accompany that, the publishing of the canonical work: Hans-Thies Lehmann's *Postdramatic Theatre* is right around the corner.

68 | Cf. the essay by Matthias Rebstock in this collection of essays.

69 | December 1994.

70 | December 1995.

71 | Hugo de Greef and Tom Stromberg, Editorial, in *ThS* 11 (1997), p. 8.

72 | As it is called starting with issue 12 (1997).

Theaterscapes and New Theatre in Europe – Cultural-Political Situations and Impulses

A glimpse back on the synopsis of European postmodern theatre's theoretical self-invention reveals its origins in processes of dismantling and reassembling the traditional forms of dramatic-literary theatre as well as the aspiration to go beyond it and utilise the theatre as a medium for artistic engagement with the social and cultural developments of the time: seeking societal, political and cultural relevance, being on eye level with the audience and working towards the formation of medial communication are the most important perspectives proper to the developments that are advanced by artists.

By the middle of the nineties, these new theatre forms – whose designation as 'postdramatic theatre' establishes itself (even before the appearance of Lehmann's work) quite rapidly – are largely consolidated.

At annual international festivals for emerging artists, such as Junge Hunde at Kampnagel in Hamburg (1993–2001), reich und berühmt at Podewil in Berlin (1996–2001) and Hope and Glory at Theaterhaus Gessnerallee in Zurich (1997–2004), one can already discern the next generation of postmodern theatre artists. At the Belgian Kunstenfestivaldesarts, at the Dutch Holland-Festival, the 'Fringe' Festival in Edinburgh, the Zurich Theaterspektakel, but also at the Wiener Festwochen, the Parisian Festival d'Automne and in the programmes of pertinent festivals and production houses from Bergen, Norway, to Zagreb and Polverigi, newer theatre forms are regularly shown and arise within the framework of more or less stable national and international cooperations and coproductions. The Informal European Theatre Meeting (IETM), established in 1981, has since 1989 enjoyed the status of an international nonprofit organisation that represents the interests of supporters of the 'new theatre' in the realm of cultural politics and elsewhere.[73]

Yet the development of these forms, which springs mainly from artistic impulses, is met throughout European theatrescapes with highly varying conditions influencing their creation in varying ways. One must note here that the heretofore illustrated developments in no way comprehensively delineate the field of *new* forms in these theatrescapes. The artists studied in *Theaterschrift* and consulted by Hans-Thies Lehmann are somewhat of an 'avant-garde': leading figures in new production modalities, dramaturgies and aesthetics for a theatre that above all pursues aspirations for the contemporary, for relevance, for authenticity and for a closeness to the audience, thereby distinguishing itself from elite cultural institutions and their productions that representatively display the classic canon of drama. However, apart from the

73 | Cf. IETM, https://www.ietm.org/sites/default/files/ietmbrochure_pages.pdf (14.07.2015).

artists and troupes who find their forum in *Theaterschrift*, during the sixties and seventies stages and theatrescapes across Europe are entered by a wide array of young agents and groups who emulate these avant-gardes or else embark on the creation of new theatre work for new audiences by means of other production modes, employing their own ideas and their own artistic, cultural, political motifs.

The conditions for the formation of new kinds of theatre art in which leitmotifs crystallise are also very different from one nation's theatrescapes to the other – as Manfred Brauneck has shown.

At the same time, his depictions are characterised – and for this reason also become somewhat bewildering and remain rather incomparable as 'theatre landscape paintings' parsed in individual national contexts – by the fact that the elements (structures of the production and presentation of theatre, in connection with its conception, shaping and financing through the public hand on state/provincial and municipal levels) of theatrical-literary and theatrical-artistic productions are handled according to their varying weights in their respective theatrescapes. That being said, Brauneck's descriptions are to be understood under the rather rhapsodic, diffuse term 'theatre sector'.

An overview of the Western-European theatrescapes described by Brauneck shows that in most countries of Western Europe[74], efforts were undertaken to reform and modernise the structures of both state, or 'national' theatre, and bourgeois municipal theatre, both of which had, historically, emerged during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Precisely these reform endeavours determine the conditions of emergence for the new, postmodern theatre forms.

As this process unfolds in all West-European countries[75], impulse-functions lie in store for social protest movements as well as for the emergence of new, independent theatre groups that defected in spirits ranging from critical to rebellious against social, political and cultural circumstances and structures, and against the bourgeois, high-cultural theatre sector.

74 | The German situation – the 'German system' consolidated in the Weimar Republic, whose origins in the late eventuation of national unity and the after-effects of a system of small allied states pose a special case to this day – is not discussed in this essay.

75 | Spain and Portugal are not discussed here, since other 'special circumstances' – the dictatorial regimes of Franco and Salazar – prevailed here during the times of late-sixties youth revolt.

Model Structures: the Netherlands and Belgium

Figure 6: 'Allemaal Indiaan', Victoria & Les Ballets C de la B, Kampnagel, Hamburg, 2000. Photograph: Friedemann Simon

The Dutch model[76] can be considered a special 'type' of theatre sector whose theatrescapes was built into singular structural forms already immediately after the Second World War – and which in turn has also been 'undergoing reform', quite fundamentally and with far-reaching consequences, since 2011.[77]

76 | Cf. the chapter on the Netherlands (*Theater in den Niederlanden*) in Brauneck *WaB*/V. 5, pp. 842–860; Martin Frey, *Creatieve Marge: Die Entwicklung des Niederländischen Off-Theaters*, Vienna and Cologne: Böhlau, 1991 (Institut für Theaterwissenschaft an der Universität Wien (ed.), *Maske und Kothurn: Internationale Beiträge zur Theaterwissenschaft*, appendix 14), and for more recent developments:

77 | 'The Netherlands and Flanders, Theater der Zeit spezial', Berlin: Theater der Zeit, 2013 and Simon van den Berg, 'Mit dem Rücken zum Publikum? Theaterbrief Niederlande (1), Die Subventionskürzungen im niederländischen Kunstbetrieb, http://www.nachtkritik.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5815:die-subventionskuerzungen-im-niederlaendischen-kunstbereich&catid=622:theaterbrief-aus-den-niederlanden&Itemid=99 (15.07.2015); and Simon van den Berg, 'Zerstörerische Debatte, Theaterbrief Niederlande (2), Ein halbes Jahr nach den Subventionskürzungen wird das Ausmaß langsam deutlich', http://www.nachtkritik.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6687:theaterbrief-niederlande-2-ein-halbes-jahr-nach-den-subventionskuerzungen-im-niederlaendischen-kunstbe

These structures, which in the 1980s and 90s produced the most advanced and successful theatre companies of postmodern European theatre, were based, on the one hand, on the spectacular actions and processes occurring in the course of the 1960s Dutch crisis of modernisation, which brought about radical, lasting changes in the theatre sector built after the war: in the Netherlands, as a country occupied by German forces during the war, where sharp separation from German culture played an important role in post-liberation reorganisation[78], the theatre sector and support system was shaped upon the two discrete pillars of, firstly, ensemble funding[79] – the funding of theatre productions – and secondly, of theatre venues.[80]

On the other hand, the 'Actie Tomaat' – an action on the part of independent artists who protested on 9 October 1969 against the artistic encrustation of Dutch theatre by throwing tomatoes at a performance at the Nederlandse Comedie[81] – has a lasting impact as an impulse for contemporary innovations in funding practices.[82] The new system enabled the incorporation and (financial) support of many groups who were beginning to produce and show another theatre with political and artistic motifs[83] – groups like Publiekstheater, Baal and Het Werktheater in Amsterdam[84] and newer production and presentation venues such as Mickery, Shaffy und Felix Meritis[85].

Without fathoming the advantages and disadvantages of this 'system' here, it undoubtedly offers artists and troupes the opportunity to independently work, form and constantly reinvent themselves according to their own criteria and aspirations; and theatre houses (and festivals) can shape their programmes with distinction and diversity based on their local and regional audiences, not to mention invite guest performances representing a wide variety of approaches.

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reich-wird-das-ausmass-langsam-deutlich&catid=622:theaterbrief-aus-den-niederlanden&Itemid=99 (15.07.2015).

78 | The decentralised *Holland Festival*, founded in 1947, arose, according to Brauneck, in explicit separation from festivals like Bayreuth or Salzburg. Cf. Brauneck, 'Theater in den Niederlanden', *WaB*/V. 5, p. 845.

79 | E.g. Amsterdams Toneelgezelschap, de Haagse Comedi, Rotterdams Toneel, Nederlandse Comedi and the children's theatre Ensemble *Puck*. Cf. Brauneck, 'Niederlande', *WaB*/V., p. 844.

80 | Cf. ibid., p. 844.

81 | Cf. ibid., p. 842f and Frey, *Creatieve Marge*, p. 33f.

82 | Frey, *Creatieve Marge*, p. 43ff.

83 | Frey gives a rather comprehensive account of the political 'Formingstheater' (ibid., p. 49ff) and the MIME movement (p. 63).

84 | Cf. Brauneck, 'Theater in den Niederlanden', pp. 850–852.

85 | Ibid., p. 849f; and in much more detail: Frey, *Creatieve Marge*, pp. 54–122.

Since 1947, central decisions on the disbursement of structural and financial support are met by a 'Raad voor de Kunst' (council for the arts), which has functioned as an independent organ since 1955. Yet this structure is continually subjected to revisions. For instance, in 1984 funding is limited to four-year periods[86], and yet fundamentally the structure has endured into the immediate present (2015). At the end of the twentieth century, the theatrescapes of the Netherlands consists of 125 municipal stages and 60 studios[87] that show the work of approximately 1,000 producers and combos.[88]

This is the basis for essential artistic innovative developments that radiate across Western Europe[89], especially since the 1994 founding of the theatre school DasArts in Amsterdam by Ritsaert ten Cate and Marijke Hoogenboom[90] and due to international cooperations, coproductions and festivals (see section on *Theaterschrift* above). Since the expansion of Dutch theatre legislation in 1973, all theatres are funded publically, whereas a crucial funding instrument lies in subsidies earned through ticket sales, of which approximately fifty percent are procured by public funding.[91]

Yet a system that enables flexibility and dynamism also makes it possible to cut the ground from underneath the theatrescapes through simple budget measures: 'This Monday, June 27 [2011], the Dutch Parliament will decide on profound cuts to the cultural budget in the Netherlands. The minority government under the liberal VVD and the Christian-conservative CDA, with the support of the right-wing populist PVV (chaired by Geert Wilders), plans to sink the art budget from around 950 to 750 million euros. These cuts are not evenly distributed. The performing arts in particular will be burdened with an approximately 46 percent reduction in budget', writes Simon van den Berg in his June 23 2011 report on the Dutch theatrescapes (1) on Nachtkritik.de.[92]

Since these cuts first went into effect at the end of the four-year allotment period in 2013, many groups evidently had prepared themselves for the shift and began seeking other funding sources to compensate for their losses – in

86 | Cf. Brauneck, 'Theater in den Niederlanden', p. 859.

87 | Ibid., p. 859.

88 | Ibid., p. 860.

89 | For example, Hans Man in't Veld, artistic director of Kampnagel Hamburg from 1990 to 1994, comes from the troupe Het Werktheater.

90 | Cf. Brauneck, 'Theater in den Niederlanden', p. 849; and Dasarts – Amsterdams Hogeschool voor de Kunsten, http://www.ahk.nl/theaterschool/opleidingen-theater/dasarts-master-of-theatre/about-dasarts/history/ (15.07.2015).

91 | Ibid.

92 | Simon van den Berg, 'Mit dem Rücken zum Publikum? Theaterbrief Niederlande (1) – Die Subventionskürzungen im niederländischen Kunstbereich'.

any case, the initially feared cultural clear-cutting of 2013[93] seems not to have occurred.

Structures fundamentally similar to those in the Netherlands – albeit with two state-funded national theatres in Brussels and Antwerp for francophone Wallonia and Flanders, respectively – can be found in its neighbour Belgium, which has, above all in its Flemish areas, produced a range of outstanding companies in international postmodern theatre during the last quarter of the twentieth century:[94] Jan Fabre's Troubleyn, Jan Lauwers' Needcompany, the dance company Rosas and most recently the young troupe FC Bergman[95]. And Luc Perceval, who in the late nineties turned to working with municipal theatre ensembles in Germany, initially developed his first works with such a troupe (De Blauwe Mandaag, founded 1984[96]), before his production *Schlachten*[97] opened the way into German municipal theatre in 1999.

Brauneck characterises the 'trend' in Flemish and Dutch theatre in the eighties and nineties thus as follows:

'It was a development that largely gave up on previous decades' ambitions towards theatre work that made – sometimes very direct – reference to current problems in society, in favour of artistic autonomy and issues cut from a more universal cloth. General problems of humanity increasingly came into view, as did a concern with the rudiments of stagecraft itself, with language and the body of the actor. This stance finds expression also in the new production-structures employed by a number of groups. With Jan Fabre's production office Troubleyn as a yardstick, they create their own, mutually cooperating centres. They develop their projects to a great extent outside the established theatre sector and also establish their own educational institutions.'[98]

93 | 'There will be no further renewal. The avant-garde is dead and buried,' feared Johan Simons, interviewed by Sebastian Kirsch: 'Was macht das Theater, Johan Simons?' In *The Netherlands and Flanders*, special issue, *Theater der Zeit* (2012), p. 49.

94 | Cf. Brauneck, 'Belgien', pp. 861–872.

95 | Cf. Jörg Vorhaben, 'Arbeiten ohne Regisseur: Zur Geschichte der Schauspieler-kollektive in Flandern und den Niederlanden', in *The Netherlands and Flanders*, special issue, *Theater der Zeit*, pp. 30–33, here p. 32.

96 | Cf. Braueck, 'Belgien', p. 865.

97 | Text by Tom Lanoye, premiered in 1997 as *Ten Orloog* in Ghent. Cf. *Schlachten!*, Wikipedia, https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schlachten! (15.7.2015).

98 | Brauneck, 'Belgien', p. 869.

Theatre (almost) Without the State: Great Britain

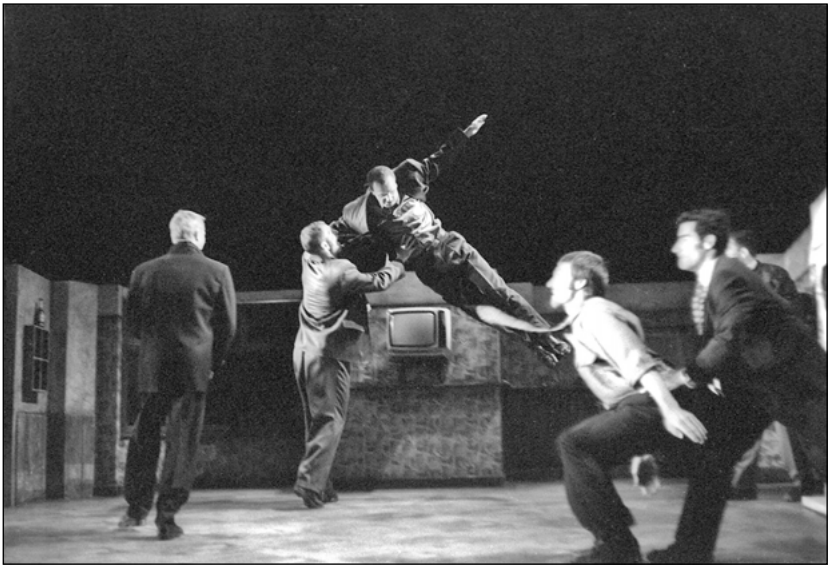

Figure 7: 'Enter Achilles', DV8 Physical Theatre, Kampnagel, Hamburg, 1998. Photograph: Friedemann Simon

As a now and again abhorred antithesis[99] to the system of public – federally and locally – funded infrastructure and production praxis in the Netherlands and Belgium, the Anglo-Saxon system is directed, to the greatest possible extent, at governmental diffidence in all things related to the formation of culture and theatre.[100] Britain's overwhelmingly auto-financed theatre sector has certainly 'also prevented [...] that the theatre in England alienated its audience through experiments that went to far'[101], as Manfred Brauneck reckons. At the same time, besides the four state-financed national theatres—the Royal Opera

99 | Simon van den Berg writes about the 'ideal of the Anglo-Saxon model—in Great Britain and the USA, the state assumes only a few responsibilities related to the support of the arts, leaving the financing to market dynamics or private sponsors'—which is going to be adopted in the Netherlands. Cf., Simon van den Berg, 'Mit dem Rücken zum Publikum?' Theaterbrief Niederlande (1).

100 | Theatre censorship—i.e., the obligation to submit theatre texts which are to be performed publicly for approval through the Lord Chamberlain—was not, however, done away with until a 1968 Act of Parliament. Cf. Manfred Brauneck, 'Englisches Theater in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts: Großbritannien und Irland', *WaB*/V., pp. 873–943, here p. 874.

101 | Brauneck, 'Großbritannien', *WaB*/V., p. 875.

House Covent Garden, Sadlers Wells, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre—a large number of regional 'reps' (Repertory Theatres)[102] exist that play much of the time with their own ensembles.

Both Peter Brook, who left England in 1970 and since then has lived and worked in Paris[103], and Peter Zadek[104] had their first practical theatre making experience in this system, which is in fact no stranger to public funding – above all from the Arts Council, founded in 1946[105]. But the same system is nevertheless still quite broadly dependent on private financing and sponsorship, nonetheless boasting, at the end of the twentieth century, an astounding ca. 500 theatres and ca. 300 cultural centres where theatre is also played.[106]

Great Britain in the sixties and seventies also experiences the emergence of a larger number of theatre groups that constitute an 'underground' and also inhabit the 'Fringe'— Edinburgh's major theatre festival. And instrumental production venues like Traverse (founded as early as 1963) and the Open Space (1968) in London come into existence.[107] And apart from Peter Brook, the Pip Simmons Theatre Group, founded in 1968[108], and the troupe Forced Entertainment, which formed in 1984 around Tim Etchells[109], sent out extraordinarily significant impulses for this system's new postmodern theatre.

Here the British *fringe* movement distinguishes itself 'from most alternative theatre groups in theatre centres across continental Europe' by virtue of 'the porousness, from their inception on, of fringe productions as well as of subsidised theatre of literary sophistication such as the Royal Court; but also of commercial stages in London's West End.'[110] In reality, the British system seems to benefit theatre which stages contemporary authors: John Osborne, Edward Bond, Tom Stoppard, Harold Pinter and later, during Margaret Thatcher's time

102 | According to Brauneck ('Großbritannien', *WaB*/V., p. 879f), in the thirties there were ca. 50 and in the seventies around 180 houses.

103 | Cf. Oliver Ortolani, *Peter Brook*, Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1988, p. 20: Brook, together with Micheline Rozan, founds the *Centre International de Recherches Théâtrales (C.I.R.T.)*.

104 | Cf. Günther Rühle, *Theater in Deutschland, 1945–1966, Seine Ereignisse, seine Menschen*, Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2014, p. 694f.

105 | Cf. Brauneck, 'Großbritannien', *WaB*/V., p. 875.

106 | Cf. ibid., p. 885ff.

107 | Cf. ibid., p. 882ff.

108 | Cf. Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pip_Simmons_Theatre_Group (15.7.2015).

109 | Cf. Forced Entertainment, http://www.forcedentertainment.com/about/ (15.7. 2015).

110 | Brauneck, 'Großbritannien', p. 908.

as Prime Minister, Caryl Churchill, Sarah Kane, Mark Ravenhill, Raoul Walsh and others.

To say the very least, the slightness of state and public 'interference' in the shaping of theatre conditions is plainly not disadvantageous to artistic developments of the contemporary order, even when the artists who are paving the way for the international postmodern avant-garde, or who are to be counted among it (and before mentioning Peter Brook one must absolutely mention the Irishman Samuel Beckett), are finding their focal points outside their home countries – which, incidentally, also applies to Pip Simmons, who worked during the seventies with Ritsaert ten Cate at Mickery in Amsterdam and has, in his home city, Nottingham, managed an office for the German-English collective Gob Squad, which was founded in 1994 and meanwhile lives and works mainly in Berlin, while also showing his work internationally on all continents (apart from Antarctica).[111]

Theatre Culture as a Service to the Social Welfare state – Sweden, Norway, Denmark

Figure 8: 'Planet Lulu', Michel Laub/Remote Control, Kampnagel, Hamburg, 1997. Photograph: Friedemann Simon

An additional type of European theatrescapes – and its significance for the development of alternative contemporary, postmodern theatre forms can be

111 | Gob Squad, http://www.gobsquad.com/about-us (18.07.2015).

found in Scandinavia. In the sixties and seventies in these tendentially welfare-state-oriented societies, the state took over primary financial responsibility for the 'provision' of theatre to the population. On the one hand, state-run national theatres are supported; theatres that cultivate the classical traditions and national repertoire in the capital cities. On the other hand, in the three countries of Denmark, Sweden and Norway, relatively similar forms are developed both to be available to the whole land and for population groups who don't stand within any notable proximity to the ideals of the educated middle classes.

In 1963 in Denmark, theatre legislation put into effect the state's responsibility to cover half of Danish theatre's operating costs: in addition to the State Theatre in Copenhagen, which produces works as a repertoire opera, a literary theatre and a ballet, there are also larger municipal theatres in Odense, Arhus and Aalborg as well as a regional travelling theatre.[112] The sixties saw the formation of around 40 free groups that carry as much as 60 percent of the theatre praxis in the country but only have the opportunity to draw on five percent of public subsidies.[113]

In Sweden 'a politics of culture and the theatre [was] a central element' of the social-democratic reformist programme after World War II: 'Hence the sixties and seventies witnessed an enormous expansive development and an obligatory social organisation and design of the entire theatre sector'[114] – not least through Olof Palme, who was the Minister of Culture from 1967 to 1969. The subsidy in full of the theatre sector – besides the state's national theatre, Dramaten, there also exist almost 50 municipal and regional theatres – was simultaneously connected to sociopolitical terms and evaluations whereby even unions engaged in efforts to democratise and reduce ticket prices. Theatre groups without their own venues, which were being founded more and more during the sixties and seventies, received funding and turned ever more intensively to enhancing what they could offer to groups on the outskirts of society.[115] This policy led to a system in which 'the state and municipal theatres, the Riksteatern, the free groups and amateur groups [...] in Sweden form a well-rehearsed cooperative federation, which in turn characterises this theatre culture's profile'[116], a profile which also features a highly elaborate children's and youth theatre, fostered by Ingmar Bergman in his time as artistic director of Dramaten (1963–1966).[117]

112 | Brauneck, 'Dänemark', *WaB*/V., p. 859.
113 | Ibid.
114 | Brauneck, 'Schweden', *WaB*/V., p. 809.
115 | Cf. Ibid., p. 810f.
116 | Ibid., p. 813.
117 | Cf., ibid., p. 820.

This system has, to be sure, also been the object – as has welfare state policy in general – of bourgeois-conservative and also artistic critique: Peter Oskarsson, director of the Skanska Teatern, criticises the 'Swedish theatre sector in its institutionalisation and subordination to obligations related to production and pay-scale'; Oskarsson also demands – with reference to Peter Brook – 'an exclusively project-oriented working, in which he saw the preconditions for a renewal of the social meaning of theatre'.[118]

In Norway too, since the mid-1930s, 'the theatre had so convincingly secured its position in cultural and social life that the state subsidy of theatre was considered a cultural-political matter of course.'[119] Since 1960, a subsidy fund has existed for all segments of the performing arts, including children's and youth theatre, and in 1970 the fund was expanded to include independent theatre groups. At the end of the twentieth century, one could speak of a 'supply system' consisting of eleven permanent houses, with three of these in Oslo as well as one in Bergen and one in Stavanger[120], a state touring theatre (Rijksteatret) and theatre available to be seen in the 'Nynorsk' dialect as well as for Sami and Finns, and lastly radio theatre and open-air performances.[121]

Even here, complaints are made regarding a lack of creativity, and Eugenio Barba leaves Oslo in 1967 with his Odin Teatret, which he had built up there in 1960, settling in Holstebro, Denmark[122], where he had been offered better funding and working conditions. But with the Black Box in Oslo, the Avantgarden in Trondheim and the Teatergarasjen in Bergen, centres of artistic modernisation and innovation are erected and also fostered through the festival Bergen Internationale Teater (BIT Festival).[123] In Bergen the BAK-Truppen can establish itself as a group whose name is to be understood as an ironically inverted reference to the demand for an artistic avant-garde, and who tour during the nineties throughout European international festivals and venues for postmodern theatre, which in the nineties is apostrophised and analysed by its supporter Knut-Ove Arntzen as 'post-mainstream theatre'.[124]

On the whole, however,

'theatre in Norway is bound by the subsidy allocation system to a comparatively rigid framework with stipulations on content and institutional structures [...] Jon Nygaard supposes that a pivotal creative momentum would be expected should theatres get

118 | Ibid., p. 823.

119 | Brauneck, 'Norwegen', *WaB*/V., p. 831.

120 | Cf. ibid., p. 834.

121 | Cf. ibid., p. 835.

122 | Ibid.

123 | Ibid., p. 836.

124 | Cf. *www.inst.at*, http://www.inst.at/bio/arntzen_knut.htm (16.07.2015).

involved with smaller and locally delimited projects, above all in cooperation with Norway's most highly developed amateur theatre groups'

writes Brauneck.[125]

Well organised and solidly financed theatrescapes have thus formed in the Scandinavian countries, where also niches exist for 'free groups' who initially 'provide' parts of society, for the most part those on the fringes, with theatre productions that take a project-orientated approach. Alongside this feature, an important role beyond purely recreational free-time activities is played by the amateur theatre movement, which has fused to form the North European Amateur Theatre Association (NEATA).[126]

Professionals and Amateurs – Finland

The theatrescapes in Finland[127] only partially matches the 'Scandinavian' model, even though here too the state holds a decisive part in the formation of the theatre sector starting with the country's independence (1917) and on a greater and greater scale since World War II. At the beginning of the 2000s, Finland has 30 Finnish-language and four Swedish-language theatres as well as a total of almost 70 ensembles. 75% of stationary theatres' operating costs are covered by the state or municipalities, as the case may be.[128] In proportion to its ca. 4.5 million inhabitants, Finland boasts 'an extraordinarily dense network of theatres.'[129]

This significance of theatre for the society is strengthened by the 'enormous role played by amateur theatre': there are ca. 6,000 amateur theatre associations of which ca. 150 execute regular performance operations; furthermore, 'until well into the 1960s, several ensembles in subsidised theatre, which in Finland, generally speaking, keeps comparatively small staffs, were composed of professional actors and amateurs.'[130]

However, 'as positive as the explicit engagement of the state and state administration in theatre subsidy is, the theatres are also thereby closely intertwined with the structures and regulations of each respective cultural administration. These administrative bodies have instituted a supervisory

125 | Brauneck, 'Norwegen', p. 837.

126 | Cf. North European Amateur Theatre Association (NEATA), http://www.neata.dk/index.htm (16.07.2015).

127 | Brauneck, 'Finnland', pp. 777–785.

128 | Cf. ibid., p. 778.

129 | Ibid.

130 | Ibid., p. 779.

board to which theatres must submit their performance programmes', and which also exert influence on personal and artistic decisions.[131]

Independent groups established in the sixties also turn against these structures, but they soon enough receive public funding: 'The work of independent groups pursues the goal of bringing about a greater relation to the present, by focussing, for instance, on current and social centres of conflict within Finnish society'.[132]

Cultural Modernisation of the 'Grande Nation' – France

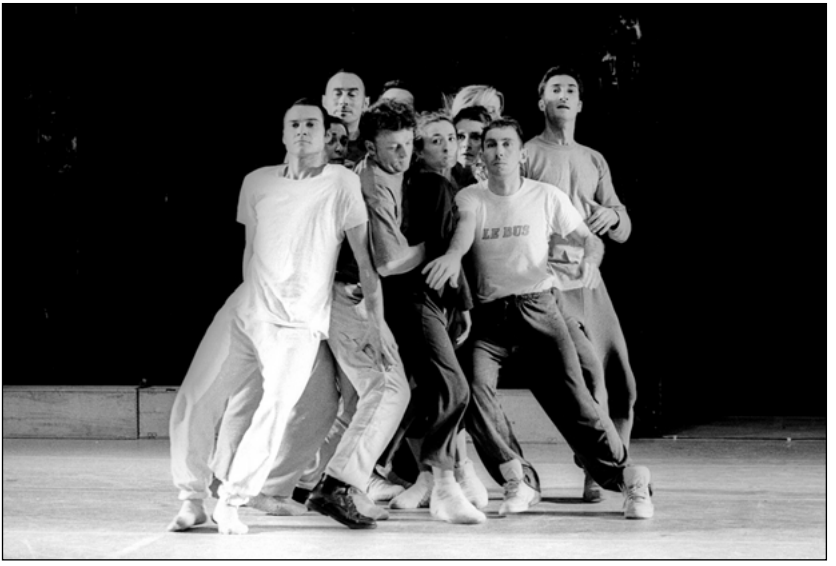

Figure 9: 'Aujourd'hui peut-être', Compagnie Maguy Marin, Kampnagel, Hamburg, 1986. Photograph: Friedemann Simon

In France, since the nineteenth century, theatre – like language in general – is endowed with a leading role in the edification and representation of the nation. Here the Théâtre National is conceptualised as the specific bourgeois form that should bridge the social and cultural schism between the aristocracy's courts and the 'people', especially the plebian 'fourth estate'. It maintains its central position well into the twentieth century and is reflected in the development of culture by a central state: the most essential institutions of national culture, thereby also the theatre, are concentrated in the capital city.

131 | Ibid., p. 781.

132 | Ibid., pp. 781f.

In this sense, after the Second World War 'the question of theatre's position in society [becomes] a well-nigh mandatory topic in the general renewal debate held amongst the French public after 1944.'[133] A Théâtre National Populaire (TNP) is fostered, although 'the setting of [...] [was] predominantly cultural-political rather than aesthetic. The point was to bring theatre as an institution closer to the majority of the French population as an institution that could make a crucial contribution to the national upheaval so yearned for in the second half of the 1940s.'[134]

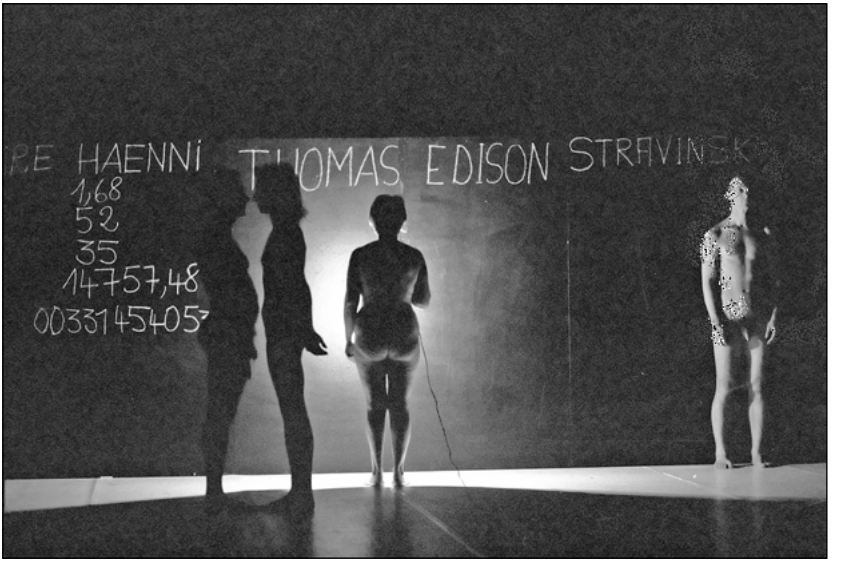

Figure 10: Performance 'Jérôme Bel', Jérôme Bel, Kampnagel, Hamburg, 1998. Photograph: Friedemann Simon

Amongst these aims was a demand for the decentralisation of the culture and theatre system, which had previously functioned largely according to a pattern where the products of Parisian cultural institutions were 'exported' into the provinces.[135] Still in the early 1970s, Paris had more theatres than the entire 'rest' of the Republic: only 200 houses in all of France, of which only forty maintain constant operations.[136]

As instruments of decentralisation, at first five regional Centres Dramatiques are set up in Rennes, Toulouse, Aix-en Provence and Strasbourg, amongst

133 | Brauneck, 'Frankreich', *WaB/V.*, pp. 2–190, here p. 9.

134 | Ibid.

135 | Cf. Ibid. p. 12.

136 | Ibid.

other places; and from 1959 to 1968, six regional Maisons de la Culture are built under the minister of culture André Malraux.[137] Not until 1981 under the minister of culture Jack Lang is the system of the Centres Dramatiques extended to twenty-seven houses, six of which are for children's and youth theatre alone. Additionally, these Centres are constructed such that they are directed by prominent artists who work there with their ensembles ('troupes permanentes') and conduct tour operations throughout the region, basing themselves at the centres: as such, from 1957 to 2002, Roger Planchon, for example, directs the Théâtre de la Cité Villeurbanne near Lyon, which in 1972 is given the title Théâtre National Populaire and from which outstanding aesthetic impulses felt Europe-wide are emitted.[138]

The first Théâtre National Populaire (TNP) under the direction of Jean Vilar, and in the spirit of social integration, is founded in 1951. It should become accessible to workers and convey its bourgeois-elitist character back to the society. Organisational changes are also made in service of this aim, such as the reduction of ticket prices and the rescheduling of performances from the traditional 9 to 8 pm, in order to accommodate the rhythm of life and work of the wageworkers. Vilar gets rid of the proscenium arch stage, the curtain and the proscenium itself, introduces audience discussions – but insists on the highest possible dramaturgical and aesthetic standards for the work: 'The emancipatory effect that, say, performances of classics would have on audiences would result – according to Vilar – from the mere fact that these pieces were made available to them.' Until 1961, Vilar directs the Parisian TNP and founds the Festival d'Avignon in 1947, where he initially shows the most important French stagings of the season.[139]

Especially under Jack Lang – who directed the theatre festival in Nancy from 1963 to 1977 and was the director of the Parisian Théâtre National de Chaillot from 1972 to 1974, assuming control of the Ministry of Culture twice under the presidency of the socialist Francois Mitterand, first from 1981 to 1986 and again from 1988 to 1993 – federal cultural-political and theatre-political reform programmes are developed which open the field in France for artistic modernisation and contribute to its taking root extensively in society. But even as early as the 1970s, France and Paris count, mainly on the basis of state-run programmes, amongst the most important strongholds for the artistic modernisation of theatre in Europe and the world: The Nancy Festival (1962–1983) becomes a meeting place for international theatre avant-

137 | Cf. ibid., p. 15.

138 | Ibid. Cf. also Wikipedia, https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger_Planchon (16.07.2015).

139 | Cf. Brauneck, 'Frankreich', p. 19.

gardes[140]; in 1970 Peter Brook settles in Paris with the Centre International de Recherches Théâtrales (C.I.R.T.) and in 1974 Ariane Mnouchkine founds the Théâtre du Soleil in the Paris Cartoucherie;[141] in addition to the already-existing dramatic centres, in 1984 Jack Lang's administration institutes a number of Centres Choréographiques according to a model similar to that of the Centres Dramatiques. Today (2015) 19 such centres are at work.[142]

Besides these, there is also a broad field of independent 'free' theatre troupes – at the turn of the millennium, Brauneck mentions the existence of 1,200 groups whose works are seen by ca. 5 million visitors[143] – who, among other things, flood the city of Avignon annually during the festival.

Thus the French theatrescapes and the impulses related to artistic and structural innovation there are quite massively discharged from the central government and will be carried during the second half of the twentieth century by the reformist endeavours of the socialist government, who make rather large scale investments through public funds towards this goal – which, however, also leads to the 'decentralised', publicly funded institutions' function as relatively elite centres where European and international 'top-notch art' is produced.

Theatre as the Edification of Civil Society – Switzerland

Switzerland's theatrescapes provides us with a completely different picture. Here things are organised on the basis of an understanding that 'culture is the business of individuals, of private organisations and municipalities, perhaps of regions', as Brauneck writes.[144] Not until 1975 is a Bundesamt für Kulturpflege (federal ministry for the fostering of culture) established. The support of theatre does not belong traditionally among the duties of the public, but is instead civil society's business. Posing a blatant contrast to Schiller's conception of theatre and culture, Swiss theatre views 'the bourgeois-enlightened notion of the theatre stage as a moral establishment' as a rather foreign idea.'[145]

In that sense, Swiss theatres, without exception, go back to civil activities related to the founding of entities, and are carried – with Lucerne, and since 1992 also Chur as exceptions – by associations, foundations, cooperatives,

140 | Cf. ibid., p. 146.

141 | Cf. ibid., p. 145.

142 | Cf. CultureCommunication gouv.france, Danse, http://www.culturecommunication.gouv.fr/Politiques-ministerielles/Danse/Organismes-danse/Creation-Diffusion/Centres-choregraphiques-nationaux (16.07.2015).

143 | Cf. Brauneck, 'Frankreich', *WaB*/V., p. 137f.

144 | Brauneck, 'Schweiz', *WaB*/V., pp. 514-536, here p. 514.

145 | Ibid., p. 515.

corporations or theatre societies.[146] And yet this total of 146 professional theatres is meanwhile also supported financially by the municipalities and cantons, albeit in fewer numbers and under requirements to gross higher amounts than in Germany or Austria.[147]

Switzerland also sees the emergence of independent theatre groups during the sixties, whose numbers Brauneck calculates in 1990 to equal around 110 groups.[148] They are supported predominantly by the municipalities and cantons. This also holds true for the production houses (Theaterhaus Gessnerallee and Rote Fabrik, Zurich; Kaserne Basel; Dampfzentrale Berne, and later Südpol, Lucerne).

Regardless of independent theatre groups, however, Switzerland is time and again a centre for artistic innovation. With Zurich as the birthplace of Dada during the First World War; the artists' colony on Monte Verità near Ascona; Zurich as the centre for the exiled German-language theatre avant-garde under Kurt Hirschfeld; Frank Baumbauer's tenure as intendant in Basel, when and where Christoph Marthaler (who then himself becomes intendant from 2000 until 2004 in Zurich) produced his first stagings, and Théâtre Vidy in Lausanne, artistic home since 1987 to Maurice Béjart after he left Belgium – all this indicates that the theatre-political public spirit indeed seems to feel responsible for innovation and modernisation of the arts; and in Lucerne, a large, almost comprehensive circle including cultural-political actors has been working since 2013 towards a completely new, integrated model for the municipal theatre – TheaterWerk Luzern – for all genres of the performing arts, which could conceivably begin operations in 2020.[149]

Austria, a Cultural State

'The cultural marginalisation of the theatre that many countries saw at the end of the twentieth century is hardly imaginable in Austria', Brauneck remarks in reference to the social and cultural significance of this country's theatre system[150], which doesn't especially differ in its structure from the 'German system'. Yet the meaningfulness of theatres in the capital city, and, above all, of the Staatsoper and the Burgtheater, as national theatres is incomparable: in Vienna, where at ca. 1.8

146 | Cf. ibid., p. 516.

147 | Cf. ibid., p. 517. Of the 146 theatres, 92 are German-speaking, 48 francophone and 6 Italian-speaking.

148 | Cf. ibid., p. 518.

149 | Cf. Theaterwerk Luzern, http://www.theaterwerk-luzern.ch/#post/15 (16.07. 2015).

150 | Brauneck, 'Theater in Österreich', *WaB*/V., p. 459–513, here p. 459.

million inhabitants you have around one-fifth of Austria's population, 4 million annual theatre goers are counted. As concerns federal as well as municipal funding, the alimentation of the theatre and of the Festspiele[151] are still counted as core responsibilities, even though since 1999 the state has gone through with a plan to release houses from its immediate administration.[152]

This process allots a certain space to alternative production modes and aesthetics: Although in 1956, soon after the end of the Soviet occupation, the leftist, communistically oriented Scala Theater, itself founded in 1950 with the support of the Soviet occupation[153], was denied a license by the social-democratically governed city of Vienna[154] at the time, during the seventies – much the same as in Munich – a structure of independent theatres could establish itself here, a publically funded structure which traces back to the movement of independent groups.[155] These had rapidly 'seized' a range of production venues for the benefit of alternative theatre and had followed through with those venues' funding, after which this structure solidified into a structure of 'middle stages' that – as city-appointed experts criticise – had lost their connection with international developments in 'free theatre'.[156] These expert assessments constitute the beginning of a process known as the Wiener Theaterreform, which alters the funding system and is intended to dissolve the separation between institution/real-estate ownership and artistic theatre direction (the 'rehousing' of free theatre[157]) – which was successful in the case of the group dieTheater, established in 1989 for the work of free groups through the merging of the Künstlerhaus and the Konzerthaus: in 2007 the Viennese coproduction venue known as *brut* joined to work with these other venues once it advertised and filled its open position for director.[158]

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151 | This concerns chiefly *the Salzburger Festspiele, the Wiener Festwochen, the Bregenzer Festspiele, the festival Steirischer Herbst in Graz and Ars Elektronica* in Linz.

152 | Cf. Brauneck, 'Österreich', p. 475.

153 | Cf. Günther Rühle, 'Theater in Deutschland', p. 332ff.

154 | Cf. Günter Rühle, 'Theater in Deutschland', p. 638f and Brauneck, 'Österreich', p. 469.

155 | Cf. Lackenbucher, Mattheiß and Thier, *Freies Theater in Wien, Reformvorschläge zur Förderung Freier Gruppen im Bereich der Darstellenden Kunst*, Vienna, 2003, p.10, http://www.kulturmanagement.net/downloads/theaterstudie.pdf (19.07.2015).

156 | Cf. Lackenbucher, Mattheiß and Thier, *Freies Theater in Wien*, p. 4ff and 9ff; although with regard to artistic innovation, in 1987 the likes of George Tabori settled with his troupe in the Viennese theatre Der Kreis. After this theatre failed in 1990, Claus Peymann brought Tabori to the *Burgtheater*, where he experienced his biggest successes. Cf. Brauneck, 'Österreich', p. 481.

157 | Cf. Lackenbucher, Mattheiß and Thier*, Freies Theater in Wien*, p.10.

158 | Cf. Wikipedia, 'Künstlerhaus Wien', at https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/K%C3%BCnstlerhaus_Wien (19.07.2015).

Theatreland Italy

'But if one's wish is to follow up on the origins of European theatre construction, one has to repair to Italy. This part of the world witnessed the birth and evolution of this architectural form that would remain determinant for theatre construction until our time,'[159] which is how the description of a 'European road of historic theatre' summarises one side of a paradox; Brauneck formulates the flipside: 'In Italy theatre had no real chance, due to the complete lack of stationary theatres, [...] of establishing theatre in the nineteenth century as an institution with firm roots in the national understanding of culture.'[160]

To be sure, the art form of opera has had a uniquely popular significance in Italy since the eighteenth century, a significance which has not, however, spread to the theatre sector as a whole; Brauneck describes Italy's situation as 'one of a kind in Europe inasmuch as Italy, since the beginning of its more recent history and finally until now, is a theatre landscape of wandering troupes and ensembles'.[161] In the 1990s, he counts 26 *teatri stabili*, which do not, however, dispose of their own ensembles or devise uninterrupted programmed seasons, but rather host the making of two to three productions per year that then tour throughout the other *stabili*; and over 600 theatre groups or cooperatives, which are counted almost exclusively, however, as local urban cultural establishments.[162]

The state financing of this theatre sector is rather modest and remains limited to annually deferred compensation. Productions therefore must, as a rule, be pre-financed through (bank) loans.[163]

The scope of our examination here does not allow us to answer whether it is in spite of, or thanks to, its 'weak constitution' and lack of backing that the Italian theatrescapes produced significant theatre artists who influenced postmodern European theatre substantially – Giorgio Strehler, Lucino Visconti, Federico Fellini, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Dario Fo, Luca Ronconi, Romeo and Claudia Castellucci, and Giorgio Barberio Corsetti.

This outcome could have also been nourished in part by a short period of funding for *ricerca e sperimentazione* ('research and experiment') in theatre, which took up the impulses emitted by the 1968 revolts and whose furtherance was abandoned already as early as the mid-eighties.[164]

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159 | Kultiversum – Die Kulturplattform, http://www.kultiversum.de/All-Dossier/Ander-Quelle-Die-Europastrasse-Historische-Theater-Teil-7.html.

160 | Brauneck, 'Italien', *WaB*/V., p. 537f.

161 | Ibid., p. 542.

162 | Ibid., p. 542f.

163 | Ibid., p. 545

164 | Ibid., pp. 574f, 584.

It would remain necessary to engage in more precise examination to answer the question of whether indeed the weak shaping of an institutionalised or otherwise-backed theatrescapes in Italy can be traced back to the fact 'that in Italy, more so than in other European countries, film and television quite speedily occupied the market for recreational activities' and 'also tended [...] [to adapt] to the cultural politics of these circumstances'[165], as Brauneck reckons – whereas the early and furious opening of the market to the privatisation of television (in 1976) might possibly have served as a factor of extraordinary significance in culture-political terms.[166]

Post-Postmodernism?

This overview clearly indicates that new forms of postmodern theatre encounter different conditions for evolution and realisation in the different (re)formed theatrescapes of Modernity, determining their influence, their meaning and their feedback-effects on existing systems. It also clearly indicates that they owe their emergence above all to artistic impulses that made their presence known far ahead of the political and social movements of the sixties. These impulses can be read as engagements with the cultural phenomenon of mass-medialisation (Mc Luhan) and with the twentieth-century catastrophes of civilisation, which establish massive uncertainty as to the future of Modernity; and with crises of decolonisation – amongst which the Vietnam War must also be counted. These impulses also announce, as it were, the revolt movements against the stewards of the project of an enlightened Modernism.

This almost global connectivity of revolts against the project of Modernism during the 1960s allows one to read them also as revolts against the well-nigh 'excessive' dominating force with which this project's stewards, who simultaneously represented the 68-ers' parents' generation, adhere all the more vigorously to the defence of their value system, itself built on the promise of an enlightened future and motivated by the threat of totalitarianism and of existential dangers to the future. In this sense, the revolts' ousting of teleological ethics in the late 1960s goes together with the needs and praxis of alternative production modes and forms of communication to make their global image as postmodern intelligible.

Meanwhile, however, after roughly fifty years, is this postmodernity possibly nearing its end? If we read the signs in developments in the arts and amongst performing artists, we find, since a relatively brief period of

165 | Ibid., p. 541.

166 | Cf. 'Privatfernsehen: Nur noch Volksverdummung?' *Der Spiegel*, 51 (1979): pp. 39–61.

time, forms that point beyond the canon of postmodern theatre as a critical art of perception. Vegard Vinge's *Johan Gabriel Borkmann*, SIGNA's *Schwarze Augen Maria*, Nya Rampen and Institutet, Tino Sehgal, the collectives Cobra, Machina X and others very likely announce, in turn, new production modes, new dramaturgies and new aesthetics in the performing arts which react to the current supersession of the postmodern age of McLuhan's mass media, the atomic age and raging imperialist colonial wars by globalised digital communication, the algorhythmic age, the overcoming of man-made climate change as well as shifts in the international division of labour and in the demographic distribution of humankind across the globe.

Yet the stewards of the project of modernity have in no way, to be sure, really been superseded, and the stewards of postmodernity are just now becoming parents. And the more recent history of culture could teach us about the advantages of very precisely listening to and looking at what these artists have to tell us.

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