

# Theatre and Migration

Documentation, Influences and Perspectives

in European Theatre

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Position in Context

Many people have migrated voluntarily or involuntarily out of, to or within the European continent in the last centuries. But with the break-up of the colonial empires and the economic rise of Europe, migration to Europe has reached an unprecedented level, particularly regarding the migration of people from former European colonies in the second half of the twentieth century. The fall of the Berlin Wall, the subsequent end of communism, and the expansion of the European Union have contributed to a considerable increase in migration within Europe. In the meantime, refugees from all parts of the world, above all from the so-called “crisis areas”, are constantly migrating in the hope and with the idea of settling in Europe, only to discover that today’s Europe resembles a well-guarded fortress in many ways.<sup>1</sup>

The hegemony of Western Europe has been challenged by the post-colonial, post-socialistic and Mediterranean migration. The transnational movements have become the driving forces behind a transformation of Europe by creating an “inner” globalization and therefore a “cosmopolitisation”<sup>2</sup> of national Euro-

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**1** | Regina Römhild, “Aus der Perspektive der Migration. Die Kosmopolitisierung Europas”, in: Sabine Hess, Jana Binder and Johannes Moser (eds.), *No Integration? Kulturwissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Integrationsdebatte in Europa*, Bielefeld: transcript (2009), p. 225f.

**2** | Ulrich Beck and Nathan Sznaider, “Unpacking Cosmopolitanism for the Social Sciences: A Research Agenda”, in: *The British Journal of Sociology* 57/1, (London, 2006), pp. 381-403.

pean societies.<sup>3</sup> Migration has become constitutive for the present social conditions in Europe. Some European countries have acknowledged this fact sooner than others due to their colonial history and confrontations in their post-colonial societies.<sup>4</sup> Yet, the respective governments do not see migration as a “cosmopolitan force”, but rather as a marginal phenomenon taking place on the periphery of society. As a consequence, migration needs to be regulated or partly promoted, culturally integrated or even assimilated with instruments of national and European politics.<sup>5</sup>

The different forms of migration have cast the European cultures into a so-called “flux”.<sup>6</sup> A great number of people, from different geographical locations with different cultural experiences, who have had little or no connection with each other, encounter on European soil and live alongside each other. The migratory movements have triggered a cultural transformation whose traces are also perceptible in the European theatre landscape, although the political conditions of artistic work of these theatre makers are crucial and have an impact on their presence in the respective theatre scenes.<sup>7</sup> This implies that many immigrant theatre makers are excluded from public subsidies due to their residence status. Despite these systematic reprisals, there is a growing number of immigrant theatre makers who are professionally active in almost every Western European country. This study will examine the influence that these artists actually have on the European theatre scene. It is due to the vision of Manfred Brauneck, who acknowledged sooner than others that the development of theatre and migration has a special focus in his research project. In the early eighties, Brauneck published a study on theatre made by “foreign” theatre professionals in Germany, *Ausländertheater in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und in West-Berlin* (1983), examining the development of “foreign” theatre makers. The scene, which at that time was only burgeoning, has changed significantly in the last thirty years. Artists of colour and Postmigrant theatre exert a sustainable impact on the structural and aesthetic level of the contemporary theatre scene.

**3** | Römhild, “Aus der Perspektive der Migration”, p. 225f.

**4** | Germany, for instance, has only officially declared itself to be a country of immigration since 2005, although migration researchers were already referring to Germany as a “migration country” by the nineties. See also Rainer Münz, Wolfgang Seifert and Ralf E. Ulrich, *Zuwanderung nach Deutschland. Strukturen. Wirkungen. Perspektiven*, (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus Verlag, 1999).

**5** | Römhild, “Aus der Perspektive der Migration”, p. 225f.

**6** | Christina Boswell, *European Migration Policies in Flux. Changing Patterns of Inclusion and Exclusion*, (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2003), p. 1.

**7** | Jude Bloomfield, *Crossing the Rainbow. National Differences and International Convergences in Multicultural Performing Arts in Europe*, (Brussels: IETM, 2003), p. 3.

This study attempts to analyze these trends and their importance for social and cultural processes in Europe. It pursues two goals. The first is to present and discuss the questions of the general study concerning the role of independent theatre in the contemporary European theatre scene with a focus on migration: What are the characteristics of independent theatre? What changes in the European theatre landscape have independent theatre groups brought about? And where can processes of artistic changes and changes in cultural policy be found?

The second is to explore the significance of the migration phenomenon for the contemporary European theatre landscape. What shift in production, distribution and reception have artists of colour and the Postmigrant theatre initiated? And how have the state theatres and cultural institutions reacted to it? It is important to mention that no clear distinction will be made in this study between the theatre makers in the independent scene and theatre makers in institutional structures. For a long time, artists of colour were not present in the national and European theatre landscapes; the reasons for this will be presented in due course.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the theatre makers were reliant on working in independent structures. The efforts to achieve recognition and participation in the institutional structures strongly characterize this “scene”.<sup>9</sup> If the European Postmigrant theatre scene had not been included in its entirety here, it would not have been possible to present the efforts of the artists as a whole. Therefore, no dividing line has been drawn between the independent scene and institutional structures; instead, a development towards professionalization and institutionalization is presented.

## 1.2 Theoretical Contextualisation in Existing Discourses

### 1.2.1 Theatre and Migration

The main focus of this study is migration. Therefore, it is important to define migration and to specify it in the context of theatre. In the following overview, existing discourses will be presented that have taken place simultaneously.

It is important to mention that there is no standard, official definition of migration within the European Union. Migration as a sociological term describes the process in which persons relocate their centre of life across national boundaries. Essentially, all non-European citizens who have immigrated to the EU are considered to be migrants, (i.e., persons from countries not belonging to Western Europe with ethnic origins in Asia, Africa and Latin America). Pri-

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**8** | See also Bloomfield, *Crossing the Rainbow*; Manfred Brauneck, *Ausländertheater in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und in West-Berlin*, (Hamburg, 1983).

**9** | See also Rasheed Araeen, *The Art Britain really ignores. Making myself visible*, (London: Kala Press, 1984).

or to 1990, persons from the so-called “guest worker countries” (Southern and Eastern European countries) were also considered immigrants. Indeed, there is a large migratory movement once again within the countries of Europe which is referred to as internal migration. This has become relevant since the global economic crisis in 2007 and the subsequent European financial crisis, since many people from countries like Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain migrate within Europe in search of work.<sup>10</sup>

Beyond the purely economic view, migration is understood as a phenomenon with far-reaching social consequences. It not only affects the persons migrating but also those (European) societies as a whole. Consequently, it is a matter of how these societies react to the changes, shifts and diversity of their citizens and how they negotiate living together in these changed circumstances.<sup>11</sup>

In discussions concerning the theatre, migration is not usually dealt with as an issue within theatre structures but as a societal-social phenomenon which happens outside in society. This means that migration is usually assigned to a group of persons who have their own personal experience of migration but are not represented in these institutions. This becomes evident from the fact that migration is often presented as a phenomenon and experience of social peripheries. Images of migrants are created by artists without any migration experience who try to grasp and comprehend the phenomenon without their own involvement. The play *Innocence* by Dea Loher is an example. It presents migration from the perspective of society – as a danger from the outside – and it is only recognised as a socially immanent phenomenon during the course of the play.<sup>12</sup> Not until recent years has this discourse changed by establishing theatre groups and artists of colour.<sup>13</sup> The discourse on making cultural institutions accessible for everyone is taking place all over Europe. However, the emphasis is placed on the side of the audience and not on the artists in the institutions. The state theatres want to create diversity within their audiences – a diversity which does not exist in their own structures.

**10** | See Béla Galgóczi, Janine Leschke and Andrew Watt, *Intra-EU labour migration: flows, effects and policy responses*, (Brussels: European Trade Union Institute, 2011).

**11** | Paul Mecheril, Mario do Mar CastroVarela, Dirim İnci, Annita Kalpaka and Claus Melter, *Migrationspädagogik*, (Weinheim, 2010).

**12** | The danger represented by the figures, Fadoul and Elisio, is already apparent in the introduction, where they are already portrayed as “illegal, black immigrants”, who, at the beginning of the play, do not try to prevent the suicide of a white woman. The portrayal of the figures, as well as the guilt assigned to them from the outset, identifies them as intruders. See Dea Loher, *Unschuld*, (Frankfurt a. M., 2003).

**13** | The term “artists of color” is used in this study and will be explained later.

In addition to the state theatres, there are intercultural<sup>14</sup> and migrant theatres that deal with migration but that are recognized in terms of pedagogical or sociocultural contexts. These theatre groups are usually classified as “lay-theatre” or semi-professional theatres from a theatre-immanent perspective. The limitation of financial, personnel, and aesthetic resources and the strategies for creative implementation under such circumstances are often considered deficient.

Finally, a more detailed discourse on Postmigrant theatre will be presented later in this study.

### 1.2.2 Theatre and Racism – Is European Theatre White?

Another important discourse in the context of theatre and migration is racism and exclusion of artists of colour in European theatre. This exclusion is in fact intersectional, i.e. overlapping forms of discrimination, the rare presence of female, black or physically or mentally disabled theatre makers. Despite the intersectional discrimination, this paper will focus only on racism.

Racism in this context is used in reference to Stuart Hall’s definition. Hall describes racism as the social practice of exclusion which is not based on any distinct theory of “race”:

‘Racism is a social practice whereby the physical characteristics of certain groups in the population are used for the purpose of classification, e.g. if the population is not divided into rich and poor but, for instance, into white and black. In short, in racist discourses physical characteristics function as signifiers, or conveyors of meanings, as signs within a discourse on difference.’<sup>15</sup>

According to Hall, the result is a racist classification system: a differentiation which is based on “racist” characteristics. Racism makes it possible to “produce identity and to safeguard identification”. It is a component of the consensus and consolidation achieved by one social group in opposition to another group subordinate to it. In general, this is described by Hall as a construction of the “Other”.<sup>16</sup> By stereotyping the “Other”, the construction of a society seems homogeneous – a structure into which the “Other” does not fit.

Racist ideologies always arise, says Hall, “when the production of significance is linked to power strategies, and these are used to exclude certain

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**14** | “Intercultural theatre” is not in the sense of the theatre work of Peter Brook, Ariadne Mnouchkine or Robert Wilson, but refers to concepts which, taken from the context of an “intercultural opening”, can be defined as “interculture”. See Mark Terkessidis, *Interkultur*, (Frankfurt a. M., 2010).

**15** | Stuart Hall, “Rassismus als ideologischer Diskurs”, in: *Das Argument* 178, (Hamburg, 1989).

**16** | *Ibid.*, p. 919.

groups from cultural and symbolic resources”.<sup>17</sup> These exclusion practices can often be traced back to a naturalisation, i.e. the depiction of certain cultural or social circumstances as natural characteristics. In this sense, the concept of race is understood as a social construct whose pseudo-biologicistic classification structure is based on skin colour and other external characteristics like body shape, hair structure, etc., and is solely used to rationalize and justify unequal treatment.<sup>18</sup>

In the context of theatre, racism is clearly visible in different connections. There is the Europe-wide and much criticised practice of “blackface”, in which white actors use black theatrical makeup; there is the practice of casting actors of colour in ethnic roles and characters, but also the practice of contracting artists of colour only for “migrant” theatre productions. Racism strongly influences the subject of theatre and migration on both a structural and an aesthetic level. These influences will be examined and analysed in this paper.

### 1.2.3 Postmigrant Theatre

In the past ten years, a new category called “Postmigrant theatre” has established itself. Based on the fact that a change in the structure of the population has taken place which is “not only demographic and sociostructural but also identitary and ideological”,<sup>19</sup> a moment occurs, at the latest in the second generation of migration in which the identitary “belonging” can no longer be carried out one-dimensionally with respect to the country of origin. Whereas for most first generation migrants a relationship to the country of origin remains because of an active migration experience which, in many cases, is linked to the emotional possibility of return, the relationship to the country of origin in the following generations and the thought of “returning” contain an aspect of “invented tradition”.<sup>20</sup> These ethnicised and racially discriminated

**17** | Ibid., p. 913.

**18** | Paul Gilroy describes this in the following way: “For me, ‘race’ refers primarily to an impersonal, discursive arrangement, the brutal result of the raciological ordering of the world, not its cause.” Paul Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 39.

**19** | Naika Foroutan, “Neue Deutsche, Postmigranten und Bindungs-Identitäten. Wer gehört zum neuen Deutschland?” in *Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung: Aus Politik und Geschichte* 46/47 (2010), p. 10.

**20** | “Invented tradition” is an ideological concept which was created in 1983 by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger and introduced in the collection of essays *The Invention of Tradition*. Invented traditions, i.e. traditions constructed in their respective present but projected into a specific past, and which should serve as a historical fiction to solidify and socially legitimise certain norms and structures in the light of an existing pressure to change. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, (New York, 1992).

persons are socialised and live not as Germans but as a successor generation of a migrated group in the supposed “country of destination”.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, there exist cultural fixations in this group which are strongly fought over by national and hegemonic powers. The use of the term “post-migration” is an attempt to address this situation.

The term has been borrowed from American literature studies; in an analysis of texts written by authors born in Germany, but of immigrant origin, the term “post-migration” is used to indicate that an interpretation of their works should not focus solely on the aspect of migration.<sup>22</sup> It is an attempt to define the heterogeneous phenomenon of migration and, at the same time, to appropriate this discourse by introducing separate terminology which, in turn, should make it possible to establish a common association and thinking space.

Post-migration cannot only be understood in a temporal and periodic sense but as an analogy to the known “post” trends of the twentieth century (postmodernism, post-structuralism, post-colonialism, post-Fordism, etc.) and as a theoretical term which critically and reflexively grapples with that particular phase of migration.<sup>23</sup>

In Germany, the term was first introduced into public and media discourse by the theatre ensemble Ballhaus Naunynstraße. The self-designation “Postmigrant” stands for the “stories and perspectives of those who themselves have not migrated but who have this migration background as part of their personal knowledge and collective memory”<sup>24</sup> and whose artistic achievement is understood as part of the German theatre landscape.<sup>25</sup>

Through the work of the Ballhaus Naunynstraße, the expression spread very quickly in the European theatre scene. In the European project *Europe Now*, which took place from 2011 to 2013, it was used to describe the situation in European society.<sup>26</sup>

**21** | Ceren Türkmen, *Migration und Regulierung*, (Münster), p.13.

**22** | See Nora Marianne Haakh, “Islamisierte Körper auf der Bühne. Identitätspolitische Positionierung zur deutschen Islam-Debatte”, in *Arbeiten des postmigrantischen Theaters Ballhaus Naunynstraße Berlin*, (Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin, 2011).

**23** | Karin Lornsen, *Transgressive Topographien in der türkisch-deutschen Postmigranten-Literatur*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2007), p. 211.

**24** | Shermin Langhoff, Tunçay Kulaoglu and Barbara Kastner: “Dialoge I: Migration dichten und deuten. Ein Gespräch zwischen Shermin Langhoff, Tunçay Kulaoglu und Barbara Kastner”, in Artur Pelka and Stefan Tigges (eds.), *Das Drama nach dem Drama. Verwandlungen dramatischer Formen in Deutschland seit 1945*, (Bielefeld: transcript, 2011). Quoted from Nora Marianne Haakh, *Islamisierte Körper auf der Bühne*, p. 4.

**25** | *Ibid.*, p. 4.

**26** | See <http://europenowblog.org/about>

### 1.2.4 Artists of Colour – The Use of the Term in this Study

Finding an adequate term to describe the artists and theatre makers who are presented here under the title “Theatre and Migration” poses a real challenge. This is particularly difficult because terms such as “migrant” or “Postmigrant” artists do not cover all persons. The superordinate subject of this study is migration; most of the persons presented, and their families, immigrated to Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Yet, the diversity of their origins, including class, cultural traditions, religion, and sex, distinguishes the members of this group from each other more than it connects them. The experiences of these persons are based more on social exclusion and marginalisation than on the reality of migration. Therefore, the term artist of colour is used, which corresponds with the term “person of colour”.<sup>27</sup> The expression is also used by the artists to designate themselves as “non-white” and to position themselves in the tradition of the American civil rights movement.

The term people of colour was coined in the United States during the emergence of the Black Power movement in the late sixties. As an anti-racist self-definition, it became a political term which was intended to mobilise and connect racially marginalised groups and their members beyond the boundaries of their “own” ethnic, national, cultural and religious group membership. It does not describe persons based on an ethnic classification but according to racism as it is experienced in its everyday and institutional forms. The orientation of the whole societal and international developments led to a situation in which many people adapted the term people of colour in the motto “all power to the people” in the hope of achieving a worldwide democratisation by committing themselves to the civil rights, women’s liberation and anti-Vietnam War movements.<sup>28</sup>

The term people of colour refers to all racialised persons who, to varying degrees, are of African, Asian, Latin American, Pacific, Arab, Jewish or indigenous origin or background. It connects those who are marginalised by the culture of white dominance and collectively degraded by the force of colonial traditions and presence. In this way, an analytical and political space can be created in which differences, commonalities and intersections of different relationships of oppression and exploitation situations involving people of colour can be examined in a post-colonial context. On the one hand, the (ascribed) ethnical, gender-related, cultural and sexual identities and subject positions will be taken into account. On the other hand, this study will go beyond an

**27** | Rinku Sen, “Are Immigrants and Refugees People of Colour?”, in *Colourlines*, (2007). [http://Colourlines.com/archives/2007/07/are\\_immigrants\\_and\\_refugees\\_people\\_of\\_Colour.html](http://Colourlines.com/archives/2007/07/are_immigrants_and_refugees_people_of_Colour.html)

**28** | Kien Nghi Ha: “People of Colour als Diversity-Ansatz in der antirassistischen Selbstbenennungs- und Identitätspolitik”. (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Berlin, 2009). [http://www.migration-boell.de/web/diversity/48\\_2299.asp](http://www.migration-boell.de/web/diversity/48_2299.asp)

examination of these particular affiliations in order to circumvent a strategy of “dividing and conquering” by attempting to find a common positioning.<sup>29</sup>

### 1.3 Historical Turning Points of Migration

Throughout the study, a historical turning point will be referred to which is marked by the political upheavals and transitions in the former socialist countries of (Eastern) Europe.<sup>30</sup> However, other factors and historical events will also play a role in the findings presented here.

Globalisation and its consequences mark a turning point for worldwide migration.<sup>31</sup> Globalisation is driven by technological progress but also by political and ideological change. After the fall of the Berlin wall, liberalisation, privatisation, and deregulation of the global market were significant elements of the economic change.<sup>32</sup> These have led to political changes and to a “universalisation of the Western liberal democracy”<sup>33</sup> in the whole world. In another sense, globalisation represents a continuation of imperialism, capitalistic development and expansion, to which researchers from Asia, Africa and Latin America react with post-colonial criticism.<sup>34</sup>

On the one hand, the increasing international and national inequalities, the continuing demand for highly qualified and low-skilled migrant labour

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**29** | Ibid.

**30** | For a further explanation I refer the reader to the work of Andrea Hensel. Lepenies points out that the label “Eastern Europe” is rejected by intellectuals from Poland, Czechia, and Hungary who use the term “Central Europe” instead. Wolf Lepenies, *Kultur und Politik. Deutsche Geschichte*, (Bonn, 2006), p. 330.

**31** | Globalisation can be defined as “a broadening, deepening and an acceleration of the global interdependence in all areas of contemporary social life”. Globalisation should be understood as a technological as well as a political process. Technological change has greatly increased global migration in many respects. On the one hand, travel and communication have been facilitated so that migrant networks and transnational relationships have improved. On the other hand, the access to education and the decreasing illiteracy can be attributed to the technological changes brought about by globalisation. David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt and Jonathan Perraton, *Global Transformations. Politics, Economics and Culture*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), p 2. Thomas Faist, *The volume and dynamics of international migration and transnational social spaces*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

**32** | Joseph Stiglitz, *Globalisation and its Discontents*, (London: Penguin, 2002), p. 67.

**33** | Francis Fukuyama, *The end of history and the last man*, (New York: Free Press, 1992).

**34** | Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity At Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

in the segmented labour markets of the affluent societies, and, on the other hand, the lack of opportunity, population growth, oppression and violent conflicts in developing countries are factors which expedite the rising migration worldwide.<sup>35</sup> In the last three decades, this has triggered an unprecedented wave of immigration in Europe and to the doors of Europe which has, in turn, given rise to social, political and cultural change in European countries.<sup>36</sup>

Another event which represents a turning point for persons from the Near East and from Islamic countries – regardless of whether they embrace a religious belief or not – was the attack on the World Trade Center and the consequences of 9/11. After 11 September 2001, persons of Muslim faith, or persons from Islamic countries in general, were targeted and became victims of racism.<sup>37</sup> In Europe, the “irreconcilability with Western values” became the focus of the political discussion. Thus, Muslims and persons from Islamic countries are often stereotyped by the media as a homogeneous, deeply religious group which adheres to a fundamentalist Islam.<sup>38</sup> A study which was carried out by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights between 2002 and 2005 found that people of colour – in particular, persons of Muslim faith and persons from Islamic countries – were, to a significant extent, subject to discriminatory behaviour. Almost one-third of those surveyed indicated that they saw themselves exposed to discrimination in recruitment and promotion processes or to harassment at work.<sup>39</sup>

It is easier to follow up these general findings by taking a closer look at the individual European countries. For example, the murder of the Dutch filmmaker, Theo van Gogh, in Amsterdam on 2 November 2004, resulted in a strong Islamophobia. Van Gogh was apparently critical of Islam and known for his controversial statements regarding the religion. Among other things, Van Gogh produced a film with the Dutch parliamentarian, Hirsi Ali, on do-

**35** | Robert Hunter Wade, “Is Globalisation Reducing Poverty and Inequality?” in *World Development* 32(4), (London, 2004), pp. 567-589.

**36** | Christina Boswell, *European Migration Policies in Flux*, p. 1.

**37** | Whereby animosity towards Muslims and Islamophobia existed in Western countries earlier, see Christopher Allen, “Justifying Islamophobia: A Post-9/11 Consideration of the European Union and British Contexts” in *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, issue 21, (2004). Not only practicing Muslims are affected by anti-Muslim slurs – the category “Muslim” has been racialised. The terms “Turk” or “Arab” and “Muslim” are used almost synonymously. See Yasemin Schooman, “Islamophobie, antimuslimischer Rassismus oder Muslimfeindlichkeit? Kommentar zu der Begriffsdebatte der Deutschen Islam Konferenz”, (2011), [http://www.migration-boell.de/web/integration/47\\_2956.asp#1](http://www.migration-boell.de/web/integration/47_2956.asp#1)

**38** | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Muslims in der europäischen Union. Islamophobie und Diskriminierung*, (Vienna, 2006), p. 38.

**39** | *Ibid.*, p. 39.

mestic violence against Muslim women which caused a storm among critics. The murderer was a 26-year-old man with a dual Dutch-Moroccan citizenship. Besides the racially motivated acts of violence and arson attacks, Dutch people of colour were exposed to verbal abuse on the street, in public transportation, and at sports events.<sup>40</sup>

In Switzerland, the “minaret controversy” became a public symbol of the existing resentment against persons of Muslim faith. In 2006, Muslim communities in various Swiss cities and towns – including *Wangen bei Olten* in the Canton of Solothurn, Langenthal in the Canton of Bern, and Will in the Canton of St. Gallen – submitted building permit applications for minarets. These applications provoked some fierce reactions in the local population and among politicians, although until that time building permit applications for Muslim prayer rooms had not had any political impact.<sup>41</sup> At first, a parliamentary initiative in the Canton of Zurich was launched by the Swiss People’s Party which was aimed at changing the building laws so that the building of structures with minarets would no longer be approved. After this initiative failed, the Swiss People’s Party and the Federal Democratic Union of Switzerland formed the Swiss people’s initiative “Against the Building of Minarets”.<sup>42</sup> In the referendum carried out in 2009, the Swiss people opted for a ban on minarets.<sup>43</sup> This decision triggered an international debate which resulted in lawsuits before the European Court for Human Rights on grounds of infringement of the basic right to religious freedom and the principle of non-discrimination.<sup>44</sup>

Not only individuals of Muslim faith but also Roma and black Europeans are subject to the anti-Muslim racism described here. A closer look reveals that this involves marginalisation processes in which religion is used as a means to justify collective ascriptions with the purpose of excluding members of minorities.<sup>45</sup>

Globalisation as the catalyst for a global migration movement which, in particular, impacts Western European countries, and 9/11 as a historical point in time at which the racist exclusion of people of colour – and, more specifically,

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**40** | *Ibid.*, p. 92.

**41** | Ralph Zimmermann, “Zur Minarettverbotsinitiative in der Schweiz”, in *Zeitschrift für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht (ZaöRV)* 69, (Heidelberg: Beck, 2009), p. 812.

**42** | *Ibid.*, p. 813.

**43** | <http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/pore/va/20091129/det547.html>

**44** | The law suits have been rejected to date since they have not been filed by so-called “victims”. <http://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article13476092/Muslims-scheitern-mit-Klage-gegen-Minarett-Verbot.html>

**45** | See Schooman, “Islamophobie, antimuslimischer Rassismus oder Muslimfeindlichkeit”, (2011).

people of Muslim faith and persons from Islamic countries – becomes most visible, are relevant turning points for those countries considered in this study. They must be seen as the backdrop for the migration policies in the respective countries.

#### 1.4 Overview of the Research

Only one study of theatre and migration in Europe has been published to date; it was contracted by the International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts in 2003. *Crossing the Rainbow – National Differences and International Convergences in Multicultural Performing Arts in Europe* by Jude Bloomfield depicts, on the one hand, the general national conditions for migration and integration in Western European countries and, on the other hand, gives an overview of the “multicultural”<sup>46</sup> theatre and dance scenes in Great Britain, The Netherlands, France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. The study shows that racism is, in general, the greatest obstacle which theatre makers of colour encounter in the performing arts.

The work of artists of colour is limited to their ethnical background and is reduced to “social” or “community” art – just not professional art. This downgrading of the artistic quality also takes place on a state level with respect to funding. There is an institutional separation of funding for white artists and artists of colour. The study indicates that this classification – at least in Germany, Austria, and France – is used to justify access to and denial of funds.<sup>47</sup>

The study also shows that certain EU programmes have supported the “intercultural” theatre scene in Europe on local, regional and international levels. However, there is no specific obligation to promote cultural diversity and artists of colour. It is necessary to open the “cultural institutions which are still closed” for artists from the second generation of immigrants and to provide resources for the long-term artistic development of their creativity.<sup>48</sup>

Bloomfield’s work is the basis for this study in which she takes up trends and describes them. In general, it can be said that minimal material is available on the individual countries.<sup>49</sup> There is a great need for documentation and contextualisation of the theatre work done by artists of colour in Europe.

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**46** | The term “multicultural theatre scene” is used by Bloomfield without a more precise definition of what is meant. Therefore, the term appears here in quotation marks.

**47** | Bloomfield, p. 113ff.

**48** | *Ibid.*, p. 115.

**49** | A major exception here is Great Britain, where the “Black British” and “Asian British” theatre scenes are well documented.

## 1.5 On My Own Behalf

I would like to conclude this introduction by positioning myself, defining the subject of this study and an explaining the methodological approach.

As a German theatre and cultural scientist (of colour), I have approached this task from a German perspective. This manifests itself in the use of German literature but also in the German view of the European theatre scene. It seems necessary to mention this fact, since the claim has been made that trends will be examined here in a European theatre dominated by a predetermined Western European perspective. The subject of this study is, therefore, artists of colour and Postmigrant theatre from Germany, Switzerland, Austria, The Netherlands, Sweden, Great Britain, and France. I will return to the choice of countries in the next chapter.

I have collected materials from archives and research literature from the relevant scientific disciplines and have critically analysed existing theatre texts and presented my research for discussion in colloquiums and conferences throughout Europe. Finally, current trends were traced and examined by means of on-site research, interviews with artists and persons from the relevant environment, and participative observation.

In the following chapters, these trends will be described. First, an overview of the national theatre scenes will be presented. In a short summary, historical and political contexts relating to migration in the respective countries will be established, and the political situation and forms of participation and representation will be explained. In addition, in the second chapter, the development of the respective theatre scenes and the most important artists of colour will be described. In an excursus in the third chapter, the “minority theatre” will be presented, and its demands and aims will be contextualised within Postmigrant theatre. In the fourth chapter, structural changes that have been triggered by artists of colour and Postmigrant theatre in the European theatre landscape will be presented in terms of the most important dimensions. In the fifth chapter, the aesthetic means used by artists of colour will be discussed.

This study cannot compensate for the lack of research and archival materials which would be necessary to engrain the subject matter in the collective memory of the European theatre scene. This study attempts to outline the trends in the theatre from a Postmigrant perspective based on structural and aesthetic changes. In the given format, only an overview and an attempt at a contextualisation are possible.

## **2. OVERVIEW OF THE COUNTRIES**

The overview of the countries examined and the national Postmigrant theatre scenes is a crucial part of this study. Seven Western European countries were selected: Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, The Netherlands, Great Britain, and Sweden. The selection resulted from the scientific focus of a German theatre expert whose perspective is influenced by Western European precepts. For this reason, mainly German-speaking theatre scenes were considered. In order to be able to present a coherent picture of trends of the Postmigrant theatre in Europe, it was necessary to include countries whose artists work in cooperation with German and German-speaking theatre makers of colour. It was obvious that collaborations between the Ballhaus Naunynstraße and theatre houses in Sweden, Great Britain, and The Netherlands would also be examined. Another reason was the migration movements in the individual countries and the resulting societal participation which has led to an emancipation and to the Postmigrant theatre scenes. Thus, countries like France, the Netherlands and Great Britain were selected. Because of their colonial pasts, these societies have gone through a long development process in terms of migration. Other countries, such as Austria, Sweden, and Switzerland, have trends resembling those of Germany in terms of development and social debate on migration. By contrasting the countries and their scenes, European trends can be revealed and restricted to countries in Western Europe. A Postmigrant theatre landscape could not be found in Middle and Eastern European countries, since their historical and political history has taken a different course. Finally, the Postmigrant theatre scene, if it can be referred to as such, is relatively small. The included countries with their theatre makers, theatre groups and theatre houses represent the most important players in the scene.

The following chapter will present the historical and political connections in the selected countries with respect to migration and its societal turning points, followed by an overview of the development of the Postmigrant theatre scene in the respective countries. In this context, the most important theatre makers and theatre groups and their work will be set out in brief.

### **2.1 Germany**

#### **2.1.1 Migration in Germany**

Germany denied its transition to a country of immigration for a very long time. Despite the immigration of labourers since the fifties and the influx of refugees, German policies on immigration and foreigners were characterised

in the past decades by the idea that Germany was not a country of immigration.<sup>50</sup>

From the fifties, the Federal Republic of Germany endeavoured to recruit foreign workers. However, it was intended that the so-called “Gastarbeiter”, or guest workers, should only remain in Germany temporarily. Recruitment agreements for labourers were first signed with Italy, Spain, and Greece, and later with Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia, and Yugoslavia. As a consequence of the economic recession, the number of jobs for recruited workers decreased between 1966 and 1969. Finally, there was a recruiting stop in 1973 which put an end to the government-organised labour migration. However, at the same time, family members of those workers began to migrate to Germany. Moreover, the number of those persons seeking asylum in Germany increased in the following decades. In the nineties, the idea prevailed in Germany, as in all other European immigration countries, that in the case of continued immigration pressure, a recognisable delimitation to the outside should be the prerequisite for future immigration and integration policies and their acceptance by the indigenous population. After the reunification, racism and discrimination against persons of colour increased in Germany. Acts of violence by right-wing extremists in Hoyerswerda and Rostock-Lichtenhagen were the appalling climaxes of a “partially campaign-like, intensified discussion” on the alleged “mass abuse” of the basic right to asylum anchored in the constitution (Art. 16 GG) by so-called “economic refugees”.<sup>51</sup> The volatile climate then led to the so-called “asylum compromise”, according to which the basic right to political asylum was radically restricted in 1993.<sup>52</sup>

A paradigm shift did not take place until the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, because of the international division of labour, the demographic development in Germany, and the increasing need for foreign workers in German society. Two

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**50** | In 1982 the CDU/CSU and FDP specified in their coalition agreement: “The Federal Republic of Germany is not an immigration country. All humanitarian measures must be taken to prevent the influx of foreigners.” See Klaus Bade, *Deutsche im Ausland – Fremde in Deutschland. Migration in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, (Munich, 1992), p. 52.

**51** | Carolin Butterwege, “Von der ‘Gastarbeiter’-Anwerbung zum Zuwanderungsgesetz”, (Bonn, 2005), <http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/dossier-migration/56377/migrationspolitik-in-der-brd?p=all>

**52** | The racially motivated attacks led to a mobilisation in the civilian population which primarily took place in the form of demonstrations and chains of lights. The belief that the violence committed by right-wing extremists at that time was over was refuted with the disclosure of ten murders committed by the National Socialist Underground (NSU). The extent of government involvement and structural racism is being investigated to date by a Parliamentary Investigation Committee. See <http://www.bundestag.de/bundestag/ausschuesse17/ua/2untersuchungsausschuss/>

important legal decisions reflected Germany's new understanding of itself as a country of immigration: A new immigration law was passed, and the German citizenship law was changed. With the reform of the law governing the right to citizenship (which had been in force since 1 January 2000), a considerable step was taken towards recognising the immigration situation long in existence. It ended the one-sided orientation towards the principle of hereditary transmission of citizenship ("ius sanguinis") and its relatively restrictive supplement by which citizenship could be acquired based on a territorial principle through birth in the country ("ius soli"). That was a profound break with ethno-national concepts which could be summarised in the basic principle that one could be a German but not become one. Since then there have been different initiatives on the so-called integration of immigrated persons in Germany. In 2007, a National Integration Plan was published in which the federal government presented a concept for the integration of "persons with a migration background" on all political and social levels.<sup>53</sup>

A special role was assigned to the sectors of society such as media and culture. Cultural institutions were expected to make a particular contribution toward cultural integration. The reason for this request was the finding that the necessary analyses and compilations of data concerning the participation of migrants in the cultural sector were lacking on national, regional and community levels. It was also criticised that migrants were underrepresented "in the audience as well as on the stage". In general, "theatre, opera and museums, often even the music and youth art schools, are said to be institutions which are seldom frequented by foreigners".<sup>54</sup>

### 2.1.2 The German Theatre Scene

This recognition correlates with the fact that although artists of colour began working in Germany in the sixties and seventies, they did not have access to municipal and state theatres. Erol Boran describes the situation as follows: "The history of Turkish-German theatre projects is almost as old as the history of Turkish migrant labourers in Germany".<sup>55</sup> This history is in no way limited to the guest workers from Turkey but can also be extended to include other groups of immigrants.

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**53** | Integration is described by the German Federal Government as the involvement in the social, economic, intellectual-cultural, and legal structures of the receiving country without forfeiting one's own cultural identity. See *Die Bundesregierung: Der nationale Integrationsplan. Neue Chancen – neue Wege*, (Berlin, 2007).

**54** | Ibid.

**55** | Erol M. Boran, *Eine Geschichte des Türkisch-Deutschen Theaters und Kabarettts*, (Ohio: The Ohio State University, 2004), p. 3.

Manfred Brauneck's study, *Ausländertheater in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und in West-Berlin*, was the first research paper on theatre and migration in Germany.<sup>56</sup> Brauneck observes that artistic activities are left to the "personal initiative and self-organisation of the foreigners".<sup>57</sup> According to the prevailing understanding of integration in the eighties, which "aimed at the dissolution of the original national and cultural identity of the foreigners and an all-embracing assimilation",<sup>58</sup> it was initially socio-politically committed institutions which promoted the theatre work of the first generation of immigrants. It provided an opportunity for political, social, and aesthetic articulation which was not to be taken for granted. Thus, the theatre work of immigrants in the Federal Republic of Germany remained virtually unknown until the end of the nineties.<sup>59</sup> Boran analyses that the German reception had little understanding for the cultural productions of immigrants and was extremely narrow. The same applies to the German theatre scene, which was too exclusive and too nationally oriented. It was, in his opinion, a "closed party".<sup>60</sup> This statement is particularly true for municipal and state theatres in Germany. The independent scene was vitalised by artists with diverse migration biographies thanks to its international orientation and its flexibility. Some theatre ensembles were established at this time.

One of the most important theatres founded in Germany in the eighties was the Theater an der Ruhr, established in 1980 by the Italian expatriate Roberto Ciulli and the dramaturg Helmut Schäfer. Ciulli had already been the artistic director of the Globe Theatre in Milan in the sixties. The basic concept behind "Theater an der Ruhr" was to develop a structure which was flexible enough to adapt to the respective needs of the theatre work and the circumstances of the theatre makers. The theatre quickly became one of the most internationally renowned stages; not only was Ciulli himself distinguished for his artistic achievement and as a cultural ambassador, but the Theater an der Ruhr achieved international acclaim as an ambassador for Germany. For this reason, international tours were financed by the German Foreign Office.<sup>61</sup>

In Cologne, the Arkadas Theater was founded in the eighties by the Turkish teacher Necati Sahin, who wanted to give the children of Turkish immigrants the opportunity to learn the Turkish language through theatre. Since then the Arkadas Theater has been renamed the "Bühne der Kulturen", and the German-

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**56** | Manfred Brauneck, *Ausländertheater in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und in West-Berlin*, p. 6.

**57** | *Ibid.*, p. 12.

**58** | *Ibid.*, p. 12.

**59** | Sven Sappelt, "Theater und Migrant/innen", in Carmine Chiellino (ed.), *Interkulturelle Literatur in Deutschland*. Stuttgart, (Metzler, 2000), p. 276.

**60** | Boran, *Eine Geschichte des Türkisch-Deutschen Theaters und Kabarettts*.

**61** | See A. Sharifi, *Theater für Alle*, (Frankfurt a. M., 2011), p. 59ff.

Turkish theatre focuses on the diversity of Cologne's population.<sup>62</sup> At the same time, at the end of the seventies, the Turkish ensemble of the Schaubühne Berlin was founded.<sup>63</sup> After the project at the Schaubühne ended at the end of the eighties, the actors of Turkish descent founded the theatre group, Tiyatrom, in 1984.

Tiyatrom is publicly funded by the Senate of Berlin and was founded as a Turkish-language theatre in Berlin-Kreuzberg in 1984. After many years during which the group frequently had to endure criticism from Berlin's Turkish population, the senate set up a commission to evaluate Tiyatrom and to furnish an expert opinion on the group since its work was supposedly neither of an artistic nor of a socio-educational nature.<sup>64</sup> The fight is still going on today. Theatres in Berlin with an "intercultural" focus must compete with each other for subsidies.

The Theaterhaus Stuttgart was also founded in the 1980s and is still an important venue for many immigrant theatre makers. The non-profit-making organisation Theaterhaus Stuttgart e.V. was founded by Werner and Gudrun Schretzmeier and Peter Grohmann in 1984. Since the beginning Werner Schretzmeier has been the artistic director. Many theatre makers and actors of colour, such as Asli Kislal and Emre Akal, have worked for and with Werner Schretzmeier on a regular basis. The Theaterhaus Stuttgart was initially an international venue where internationality was paramount, and the stage language was very often English. As years passed, however, it became clear that not internationality but Germany's multicultural nature should be reflected in the work on the stage.<sup>65</sup> The last very successful production was in 2011, *Twelve Angry Men*, under the artistic direction of Werner Schretzmeier and in which only actors of colour participated.

In the past decade, the theatre scene in Germany has been particularly changed by artists of colour who belong to the second generation of immigrants. In the study "Report on the Performing Arts" (Report Darstellende Künste), commissioned by the foundation for the performing arts (Fonds Darstellende Künste), it was determined that the chance of "persons with a migration background" and other nationalities to find adequate employment in the independent theatre and dance scene increased or decreased in relation to their representation in the overall population. They are employed under the same working conditions and receive remuneration comparable to that of German

**62** | The Bühne der Kulturen houses a Russian, a Turkish, and a Yiddish theatre ensemble. See <http://www.buehnederkulturen.de>

**63** | Boran, p. 133.

**64** | *Ibid.*, p. 133ff.

**65** | Werner Schretzmeier in a personal interview.

theatre and dance professionals. Only the Russian and, above all, Turkish theatre makers are underrepresented.<sup>66</sup> Yet persons in Germany with a Turkish or Russian background make up the largest immigrant population. With the recognition that only an institutionalisation could open up the scene and make the theatre makers of colour more visible to the public, the Ballhaus Naunynstraße in Berlin was founded by Shermin Langhoff. Ballhaus Naunynstraße has been used as a venue by migrant theatre groups since 1983, because Kreuzberg is a district of the city with a high percentage of guest workers where “work migration [...] has already left its mark”.<sup>67</sup> Since 2004, Shermin Langhoff has worked as a curator for the theatre Hebbel am Ufer in Berlin and for other events such as the festival Beyond Belonging – Migration, which was concerned with art and politics in the context of migration. Due to the great demand on the part of the artists, a permanent platform for Postmigrant cultural practice was established.<sup>68</sup> “The theatre is devoted to Postmigrant theatre work which the artists pointedly call “beyond belonging”.<sup>69</sup> The Postmigrant theatre, with its artists of colour, can be seen as an exploratory movement with diverse cultural perspectives which is “nurtured by imagined pasts and visions of the future”.

Since the success of the play *Verrücktes Blut*<sup>70</sup> by Jens Hillje and Nurkan Erpulat, the Ballhaus Naunynstraße has been successful. To date, it is the only Postmigrant institution which has established itself in the theatre landscape in Germany. The Ballhaus Naunynstraße is the only institutionalised production venue for Postmigrant theatre in Germany. In autumn of 2013, Shermin Langhoff became the first director of colour of the Maxim Gorki Theater in Berlin. She established the term “migration mainstreaming”, which alludes to the fact that diversity is part of the institution in all its parts.

**66** | Fonds Darstellende Künste, *Report Darstellende Künste. Wirtschaftliche, soziale und arbeitsrechtliche Lage der Theater- und Tanzschaffenden in Deutschland*, (Essen: Klartext-Verlagsgesellschaft, 2010), p. 155.

**67** | Website Ballhaus Naunynstraße as of 2008. <http://www.ballhausnaunynstrasse.de/HAUS.8.0.html>

**68** | Azadeh Sharifi, “Postmigrantisches Theater. Eine neue Agenda für die deutschen Bühnen”, in Wolfgang Schneider (ed.), *Theater und Migration. Herausforderungen für Kulturpolitik und Theaterpraxis*, (Bielefeld: transcript, 2011).

**69** | “Theater kann eine Identitätsmaschine sein”, Interview with Shermin Langhoff, in *Nah & Fern*, issue 43, (Karlsruhe: Loeper Literaturverlag, 2009), p. 21.

**70** | *Verrücktes Blut* premiered in the Ballhaus Naunynstraße in 2010. In 2011, it was invited to the Berlin Theatertreffen. It received the audience award at the Mülheim Theaterstage and was chosen “German-language play of the year” by an independent jury of German-speaking critics in the magazine, *Theater heute*.

## 2.2 Austria

### 2.2.1 Migration in Austria

Austria still holds fast to the myth of not being a country of immigration, although historically there was a high degree of migration within the Habsburg Empire and sixty percent of the population of Vienna has a migrant background. Especially after the Second World War, immigration began because of a recruitment agreement (which was also the case in Germany). At the beginning of the fifties, a labour shortage was evident which was exacerbated by the emigration of Austrian workers to Germany and Switzerland. In 1961, the Raab-Olah Agreement was signed, under which the immigration of foreign workers was specified.<sup>71</sup>

The year 1989, and particularly the political upheaval in Romania as well as the subsequent wave of refugees, marked a turning point in Austrian asylum and refugee policies. Influenced by the strongly emotionalised domestic discussions, the right of asylum was dismantled little by little. To “prevent the abuse of asylum”, “accelerated court proceedings to determine a person’s right to political asylum” were introduced, visa requirements for the countries from which most asylum seekers originated were imposed, and deportations were facilitated. These measures, however, had only minimal influence on the total number of refugees. The collapse of the Yugoslavian state and the ensuing military conflicts in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo led to the largest refugee movement in Europe since the Second World War. Many of these migrants sought refuge in Austria, if only because of the geographic proximity.<sup>72</sup>

At the beginning of November 2007, 16.3% of all Austrians had foreign backgrounds. The largest group of immigrants are people from the countries of former Yugoslavia, followed by people from Turkey. The third largest group already consists of immigrants from Germany.<sup>73</sup>

### 2.2.2 The Austrian Theatre Scene

As is the case in Germany, the theatre scene is divided into the independent theatre groups and the state theatres. Also similar to Germany, artists of colour are only active in the independent theatre scene. In a study on the Austrian theatre scene, Kevin Leppke observes that authors of colour as well as “executives in administrative functions of public theatres” with migration background do not exist.<sup>74</sup> This has caused public theatres to begin hiring artists of colour in

**71** | Werner T. Bauer, *Zuwanderung nach Österreich*, (Vienna, ÖGPP, 2008), p. 5.

**72** | *Ibid.*, p. 6.

**73** | *Ibid.*, p. 9.

**74** | Kevin Leppke, *Theater als interkultureller Dialog*. Dschungel Wien – Theaterhaus für junges Publikum, (Marburg: Tectum, 2010), p. 162.

recent years. For instance, Asli Kislal staged the play *Verrücktes Blut* by Nurkan Erpulat and Jens Hillje at the Landestheater Linz in 2012. However, such collaboration has only taken place in particular cases.

In the Austrian independent theatre scene, artists of colour have been able to establish themselves. Places like the Werkstätten- und Kulturhaus (WUK) in Vienna were venues for production and presentation. The creation of individual structures strengthened the development. In the meantime, Austria has a small but very productive Postmigrant theatre scene, a development resulting in the appointment of Shermin Langhoff as deputy director and head curator of the *Wiener Festwochen* in 2011, among other things. In the invitation to tender published by the city of Vienna, “concepts to ensure gender mainstreaming, intercultural and participation” were requested; “the intercultural structure of Vienna with its historical roots should be reflected in the programme planning for which an active involvement of the cultural scene in Vienna and diverse, ‘low-threshold’ venues are desired”.<sup>75</sup> Shermin Langhoff had to resign from the position for personal reasons in 2012.<sup>76</sup>

The independent theatre groups are primarily located in Vienna. In 1998, the Lalish Theaterlabor was founded by Shamal Amin and Nigar Hasib in Vienna as an experimental centre for the research of rituals and intercultural performance work.<sup>77</sup> In June 2000, they opened their own centre. With the research project *no shadow 2006–2011* and the further investigation of Songs as a Source, the Lalish Theaterlabor devotes itself mainly to the now largely forgotten archaeological search for the human voice, its impact, and its individual and cultural origin.<sup>78</sup>

With the beginning of the season 2009/2010, Harold Posch and Ali M. Abdullah took over the Theater am Petersplatz and renamed it GarageX. They began their collaboration with the project Drama X, which created quite a stir in 2004. The venues were not typical theatre stages, but rather vacant industrial and commercial properties which temporarily – often only for one evening – were used for the theatrical performance. In the Theaterhaus GarageX, Posch and Abdullah set up an artists’ negotiation room for socially and politically

**75** | <http://derstandard.at/1304428463416/Hinterhaeuser-und-Langhoff-als-Intendanten-Duo>

**76** | <http://derstandard.at/1336697481118/Designierte-Leiterin-Shermin-Langhoff-zurueckgetreten>

**77** | See Nigar Hasib, “Lalish-Theaterlabor. Aufbruch zur Quelle der Feierlichkeit”, in Monika Wagner, Susanne Schwinghammer and Michael Hüttler (eds.), *Theater. Begegnung. Integration?*, (Frankfurt am Main: Iko-Verlag für Interkulturelle Kommunikation, 2003), p. 221ff.

**78** | See <http://www.lalishtheater.org>

relevant issues in which critical discussions on the present social order in Austria could take place.

In 2004, under the direction of Asli Kislal and a thirty-person ensemble, the art and cultural organisation *daskunst* was founded, which is closely associated with the Theaterhaus GarageX. *daskunst* sees itself as a “neo-original Viennese, multi-citizen theatre ensemble”<sup>79</sup> and would like to represent the heterogeneous migrant society in Austria through its artists, through content and its implementation in order to present this perception of reality to an equally heterogeneous audience.

The first piece, *Dirty Dishes*, staged by Asli Kislal, was a social satire about “illegal foreign women” and was performed in Vienna, Graz, and Linz. The first big successes *daskunst* achieved were at the theatre festival *Spectrum best of(f) Austria* in 2007. In the 2009/2010 season, Asli Kislal took over as artistic director of the Theater des Augenblicks. In the following season, she worked with *daskunst* as artist in residence in GarageX. With the co-production *Wienerblut, Operette sich wer kann*, which was developed together with 3raum and co-directed by Hubsi Kramer, *daskunst* attracted a higher degree of media attention. With the festival series *Pimp My Integration*, *daskunst* and Asli Kislal definitely secured a position in the Austrian theatre scene. The festival was set up as a project series of Postmigrant positions and various artistic positions which examine (post)migrant experiences as well as works which focus on current social reality. *Pimp My Integration* was performed from the end of October 2011 to the end of February 2012. Asli Kislal, Carolin Vikoler from *daskunst*, and Ali M. Abdullah and Harold Posch from GarageX were the festival curators. The festival mainly featured international Postmigrant theatre productions, accompanied by sessions in which the opening of Austrian art and cultural institutions was discussed.

The Verein Boem, an interdisciplinary group led by the artist Alexander Nolic, is also located in Vienna. Alexander Nolic devotes himself and his projects to the histories of guest workers from all parts of former Yugoslavia, focussing on questions concerning the former common culture and language in relation to Austrian society. These issues are then made manifest in some form in the Vereinsbar, the bar of the club – a local pub which hardly differs externally from other neighbourhood pubs – in the adjacent exhibition rooms or in the WUK. At the *Wiener Festwochen 2012*, the new piece by Alexander Nolic, *New Bohemian – Gastarbeiter Opera*, which was commissioned by the organisers, was performed as part of the Festwochen Forum. In the play, Nolic uses lay actors who mainly work in the Vereinsbar Boem as waiters and barkeepers to deconstruct Theodor Adorno’s treatment of music in social classes. This contradictory relationship is aesthetically challenged in the *Gastarbeiter Opera* by means of Serbian tavern music.

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79 | In an interview with Asli Kislal.

God's Entertainment is another independent theatre group in Vienna. Its founders, Boris Ceko, Simon Seinhauser, and Maja Degirmendzic, are mainly concerned with people on the periphery of society. A production which was also shown as part of the *Festwochen Forum 2012 was Österreicher integriert Euch*. This production, which took place at different locations in the city of Vienna, was inspired by the artistic work *Ausländer Raus* by Christoph Schlingensiefel from the year 2000. Prior to the performance, artists interviewed people on the street on the subject of migration, and some of those surveyed gave very prejudicial and racist answers in a kind of camp with lay actors from marginalised groups of the population such as Roma-Austrians, black Austrians, refugees, etc. In the camp it was then possible for white Austrians to “integrate” themselves by means of various activities in order to break down existing resentment.

## 2.3 Switzerland

### 2.3.1 Migration in Switzerland

Switzerland has also long denied that it is a country of immigration. With the strong economic upswing after World War II, foreign labour was recruited, and the recruitment of migrant workers largely influenced the second half of the twentieth century. However, not only the needs of the labour market but also xenophobic attitudes influenced the immigration policies, which became more and more restrictive.

After 1950, there were several waves of refugees to Switzerland from different countries: Tibetans, Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, and Tamils. Their arrival initiated a series of solidarity movements in the Swiss population. Until the seventies, representatives of business and industry voiced reservations regarding the regulations which only allowed seasonal labour. It was not productive for businesses to have to send workers back home who had been trained to do a particular job only to recruit them again at the beginning of the next season.<sup>80</sup>

The basis for a new integration policy which allowed immigrants to have a better legal status was laid in the seventies. The new policy made it easier for the subsequent migration of family members and improved the right of residence. As a result of the economic crisis in the seventies, however, many immigrants left the country.<sup>81</sup>

Another economic upturn, beginning in the mid-eighties, brought about a rise in cross-border immigration. Although the economy experienced a recession in the nineties, the number of immigrants continued to grow. Between 2000 and 2010, most immigrants to Switzerland had migrated to reunite families or find employment.

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80 | <http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/dossier-migration/139678/schweiz>

81 | <http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/dossier-migration/139678/schweiz>

In a comparison of European countries, it has been determined that a relatively high percentage of the Swiss population has a migrant background. In 2009, the share of the population of migrant origin amounted to approximately 22.9%. The foreign residential population was mainly made up of immigrants from European countries. The largest group of permanent foreign residents is Italian. The second largest group is German, followed by people from Portugal, Serbia, and Montenegro.<sup>82</sup> As has already been stated, since 2006 there has been a major public debate in several Swiss cantons – a referendum – on the building of minarets. This course of action against people of another faith, although internationally criticised, has recently taken on even greater proportions in the form of sanctions against refugees.<sup>83</sup>

### 2.3.2 The Swiss Theatre Scene

There is no homogeneous Swiss theatre culture or theatre scene, because of the federal form of government and the multilingualism. Every language region has its own theatres, and these tend to nurture contacts to its same-language neighbours rather than to the other language regions of Switzerland. German-speaking Switzerland looks to Germany and Austria, Western Switzerland to France, and Tessin to Italy. The research on theatre makers of colour in this study focuses on the German-speaking region of Switzerland.

Because of the existing diversity in the theatre scene, deficits can be observed with regard to perception and reflection of demographic change. On the one hand, migration movements and other factors have led to a pluralisation of cultural forms of expression. On the other hand, such influences are not of such importance to the theatre programmes as is assigned them with respect to the active cultural participation of the population in the theatre scene. In the context of the UNESCO Convention, a group of experts composed of Swiss theatre makers was established to formulate proposals to implement the diversity of cultural expression in Switzerland.<sup>84</sup> In the course of the research, few theatre projects could be found which were realised in Switzerland by theatre makers of colour. Some artists are active in Switzerland, but their work is restricted (albeit involuntarily) to the independent scene. This is the case with Diana Rojas, who, after her studies of economics and dance in Bogota, Colombia, studied at the

**82** | Italians (16.7%), followed by Germans (15.5 %) and Portuguese (12.5%).

**83** | A so-called “bathing prohibition” for asylum seekers was issued. The prohibition was justified by authorities in the person of the municipal official, Raymond Tellenbach (FDP) in an interview with the weekly newspaper (WOZ): it was a “precautionary measure to prevent sexual harassment of female pupils and the sale of drugs by asylum seekers.” <http://www.woz.ch/1332/behoerdlicher-rassismus/ein-amt-schuert-angst>

**84** | This can be found at the following website: <http://www.kulturellevielfalt.ch/visio.php?de,0>

École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq. Since 2005, Diana Rojas has lived in Zurich and has worked as an actress and performer in the independent scene. She founded the artists' platform "Mandarina & Co." and presented such productions as "Y tu? Wer bisch du?" (2007), "Choco Loco" (2009), "Was gisch mer für d'Welt?" (2010), and "200mm – thinking about social distance" (2012) on different stages, including the Schlachthaus Theater Bern, Rote Fabrik Zurich, Theaterhaus Gessnerallee Zurich, and *Züricher Theater Spektakel*. She has no chance to perform in the classical theatres: "I don't speak 'stage German', i.e. I am not accepted in many theatres or I am only cast as a foreigner."<sup>85</sup> Diana Rojas, in her own words, is reduced to her appearance and thus to clichés. In the theatre as well as in films, she is offered the roles of "the sexy Latina, Colombian terrorist, and drug dealer, etc."<sup>86</sup> In a personal conversation, she added that many of her friends and colleagues of colour find themselves in similar situations.

An "intercultural" venue is the Maxim Theater, which is located in Zurich. Work with "immigrants and second and third generation residents"<sup>87</sup> began in 2006, from which an ensemble was established: the Maxim Community, consisting of 150 persons from over 30 countries of origin. Presently, four groups are working at the Maxim Theater and are supervised by two professional theatre directors. The course "Learn German through Acting" is offered in collaboration with a theatre pedagogue and a teacher for German as a foreign language. Theatre productions are developed through improvisations which are presented at least ten times after a six- to eight-month rehearsal period. The fourteen theatre productions and two films which have been produced so far were shown, in part, in very different venues in Zurich. In 2007 and 2009, two youth projects (*Third Eye I and II*) were created, in which over sixty young persons from Switzerland and Bosnia participated. In 2009, the Maxim Theatre participated in the project "*Creating Belonging in Immigrant Cities*" at the Institute for Cultural Studies in the Arts at the Zurich Academy of the Arts.<sup>88</sup>

## 2.4 The Netherlands

### 2.4.1 Migration in The Netherlands

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, The Netherlands became one of the greatest colonial powers in the world, the largest colony being Indonesia. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Indonesia rebelled against this colonisation. After violent conflicts lasting until long after the Second World War, Indonesia finally became independent in 1949. One of

<sup>85</sup> | Personal interview with Diana Rojas.

<sup>86</sup> | Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> | See <http://www.maximtheater.ch>

<sup>88</sup> | <http://www.maximtheater.ch>

the results of this was the immigration of people from Indonesia and Surinam to The Netherlands after the war.

Until the late seventies, however, the prevailing opinion was that The Netherlands was not a country of immigration. This changed after two periods of immigration. The first wave of immigrants came in the sixties and was comprised mainly of temporary workers from Turkey and Morocco. Although The Netherlands did not consider itself a country of immigration, there were no restrictions with regard to family reunification, as was the practice in other countries, so that in the late seventies the numbers of immigrants rose because of the subsequent immigration of family members.<sup>89</sup> At the same time, there was a second wave of immigrants, mainly from the post-colonial areas of Indonesia, Surinam, and the Dutch Antilles. In addition, in the larger Dutch cities, the number of illegal immigrants “sans-papiers” rose.<sup>90</sup>

The right to citizenship introduced in 1985 automatically granted the third generation of immigrants Dutch citizenship and facilitated the acquisition of citizenship for the second generation. As a result, more than half of the immigrants have a Dutch passport. The Netherlands was long considered one of the most liberal and immigrant-friendly countries in Europe, but the mood changed in the nineties when multiculturalism was strongly criticised and immigrants were accused of being unwilling to integrate. The perspective of society shifted to the different cultures of the immigrants. A different culture was no longer considered an asset but a possible obstacle to integration. A strong Islamophobia developed, and Muslim immigrants were accused of not accepting social values.<sup>91</sup> In recent years, various new laws have been enacted which require immigrants to learn the Dutch language and accept certain liberal and democratic values.<sup>92</sup> The mood changed dramatically when in 2010 a minority government was established which was tolerated by the right-wing populist party, PVV, led by Geert Wilders.<sup>93</sup> This government distinguished itself in the first year through reduced funding to the performing arts, which were hard hit by cuts of up to 40%. The independent scene and its twenty-one production houses were no longer to be subsidised.<sup>94</sup> As is the case in other European countries, artists of colour are primarily active in The Netherlands in the independent scene.

**89** | Jan Lucassen and Rinus Penninx, *Newcomers: Immigrants and their Descendants in the Netherlands 1550-1995*, (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1997), p. 149.

**90** | Bloomfield, p. 9 ff.

**91** | <http://focus-migration.hwwi.de/index.php?id=2644>

**92** | <http://focus-migration.hwwi.de/index.php?id=2644>

**93** | This failed after 18 months. <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/niederlande-grosse-koalition-nimmt-ihren-dienst-auf-11950527.html>

**94** | <http://www.die-deutsche-buehne.de/Magazin/Leseprobe/Euro%20-%20Krisen%20-%20Theater>

### 2.4.2 The Dutch Theatre Scene

One of the few successful artists of colour at a municipal theatre is Jörgen Tjon A Fong, who holds the position of programme director for the area of cultural diversity at the Stadsschouwburg Amsterdam. He founded the theatre group “Urban Myth” in 2002, which works together with classically trained theatre makers. He works with them at the Stadsschouwburg Amsterdam on his own theatre productions.

Another theatre located in Amsterdam which was founded in recent years is the MC Theater. At the beginning they organised theatre workshops in which stories about diaspora and “street” were told. Because of the lack of structures in which artists of colour could work professionally, Marjorie Boston, Maarten van Hinte, and Lucien Kembel joined forces and founded the theatre. Their productions reflect the perspective of today’s multiethnic, multicultural, urban Europe. For every project, artists from different disciplines are invited to participate. This approach makes it possible to generate and present innovations, to set up a network of talented artists of colour, and to attract a more diverse and younger audience to the theatre. Besides its artistically innovative concept, the MC Theater has also distinguished itself by trying new structures. The cost cuts which have affected the entire Dutch theatre scene hit the artistic projects with a so-called “multicultural focus” the hardest. Therefore, the founders of the MC Theater decided to run the theatre without public funding.<sup>95</sup> They applied for a one-off start-up grant which would end after four years and which would make it impossible for them to receive further public funding. The financial independence of art has to be achieved through commercial dance and music events. MC Theater has in the meantime been able to establish itself as a venue, and it is regularly invited to present productions at international theatre festivals and theatre houses.<sup>96</sup>

The theatre group Rast Theater from Amsterdam has also made a name for itself through international as well as European co-productions. It was founded by Saban Ol, who stages stories about persons from the periphery of Dutch society. The theatre productions show perspectives of an intercultural public in The Netherlands. The Rast Theater works mainly with young theatre makers and would like to advance the development and promotion of theatre makers of colour. The theatre work has three focal points: it produces several plays annually which are attended by a broad public, it promotes the development of young talents of colour with the programme Jong RAST, and it implements an exchange between Europe and Turkey with RAST International which is organised in international co-productions and workshops during the annual summer theatre academy in Turkey. The Rast Theater has now established an

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95 | Lucien Kembel in a personal interview.

96 | Ibid.

international profile. It participated in the Europe Now project and produced the play *Elsewhere Land* under the direction of Saban Ol in connection with this project.

## **2.5 France**

### **2.5.1 Migration in France**

Immigration in France has always been strongly influenced by its colonial history and a long tradition of acquisitioning foreign workers. Immigration has become more and more important and has had a sustainable influence on French society. Although immigration was long considered to be a success, at least from an economic point of view, this perspective has changed (especially in the last three decades) and immigration is now perceived as the cause of social problems. Electoral victories of right-wing extremist parties – particularly the Front National (FN) – underline this fact, as does the unrest which flares up time and again in the suburbs of French cities. With regard to the political development, the French immigration policies have become restrictive in recent years. As is the case in other European countries, French authorities are attempting to control immigration more strongly by criteria based on economic benefit.<sup>97</sup>

Immediately after the Second World War and during the economic boom in the fifties and sixties, France recruited workers mainly from Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, and Yugoslavia. At the same time, immigration from the former colonies increased as a result of the process of decolonisation. Particularly in connection with the Algerian War (1954–62) and the subsequent independence of Algeria in 1962, there was a massive migration to France. In 1964, France entered into an agreement with Algeria regulating the recruitment of Algerian workers. In the economic crisis of the early seventies, France followed the example of other European countries and ended all recruitment agreements for foreign labourers in 1974. The end of the recruitment did not result in immigrants returning to their home countries or to a reduction in the numbers of immigrants. Many stayed in France and had their families follow. Since then, family reunification has become the most common reason to immigrate even though the current trend is falling.

In the late eighties and early nineties, the conservative Minister of the Interior, Charles Pasqua, pursued a zero-immigration policy. Countless regulations were tightened. Especially the “fight” against irregular migration became the centre of attention. The introduction of the so-called “Pasqua Laws” was extremely controversial. Protests reached a peak in 1996 when a church in Paris was occupied by people from several African countries and by refugees from China who had been living in France without a proper residence permit and who hoped to call

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**97** | <http://focus-migration.hwwi.de/index.php?id=1231>

attention to their precarious situation in this way. Thousands supported the protest actions of the “sans-papiers”, people without a legal residence status in France.

The government under Prime Minister Lionel Jospin withdrew or mitigated many of the restrictive regulations and introduced a special immigration status for highly qualified workers. In 1997, a legalisation programme was drawn up for immigrants who were residing in France illegally. Since the election of a conservative government in 2002, there has been a return to more restrictive immigration policies. This course was continued under the administration of Nicolas Sarkozy.

At the beginning of 2008, approximately five million immigrants were living in France. Despite the restrictive policies, immigration to France has steadily increased in the last years.<sup>98</sup> The immigrants of the second and third generations make up a large part of the French population. Estimates for the year 2010 indicate that about 6.4 million persons living in France are members of this group. This amounts to 10.4% of the total population.<sup>99</sup>

A French universalistic concept of integration which still prevails today would like to turn immigrants into “citoyens”, since the cultural prerequisites for citizenship are acquired through socialisation rather than inherited. Thus, great importance is attached to language and education. The French national culture is very strongly dominated by “high culture”, which is represented and protected by the state. The preservation of cultural traditions and the French language dominated cultural policies for a long time. In the past decade, a shift has taken place towards the promotion of culture for each individual.<sup>100</sup>

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**98** | The influx of foreign students rose from about 50,000 persons in the years 2007 and 2008 to about 60,000 persons in 2010 and 2011. See <http://focus-migration.hwwi.de/index.php?id=1231>

**99** | The composition of the group of descendants of immigrants reflects France’s migration history. 3.3 million persons with a migration background had at least one parent who immigrated to France from another European country, especially from Italy, Spain, and Portugal, countries which provided the major share of foreign labour in France during the early phases of the labour migration beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Another 1.8 million persons were descendants of immigrants from the Maghreb, former French colonies in North Africa. The remaining 1.3 million persons with migration backgrounds have roots in other regions of Africa and Asia, the countries in which the more recent immigration influx to France originated. <http://focus-migration.hwwi.de/index.php?id=1231>

**100** | Bloomfield, p. 42.

### 2.5.2 The French Theatre Scene

The republican concept of citizenship is based on the equality of all those born in France and of all those naturalised citizens, but it refuses to recognise ethnic, religious, linguistic or other cultural minorities.<sup>101</sup> Because of these legal framework conditions, it was almost impossible for migrant artists to found their own theatre groups until far into the eighties.<sup>102</sup> In this time, the “friches” – the independent scene in France – represented the only theatrical space in which artists of colour could work. In France – as in other European countries – the “friches” emerged from the socially engaged artists’ movement of 1968. Thus, an artistic practice which was embedded in a social context developed which included the artists of colour in their work and relationships.<sup>103</sup>

Now in the last twenty years, some artists of colour have been able to establish themselves, including Moïse Touré and his theatre group “Cie Les Inachevés”, which he founded in Grenoble as an amateur ensemble. Touré worked as an assistant to George Lavaudant at the Odéon-Théâtre de l’Europe. From 2000 to 2003, he was active in the Scène Nationale Artchipel Guadeloupe, where he created the basis for a dramatic repertory in the Creole theatre. From 2010 to 2012, Moïse Touré was hired by the National Theatre in Tokyo, where he staged *Quai Ouest* by Bernard-Marie Koltès, and he developed the project *Ville-monde / ville utopique* in San Francisco.

He produced three plays by Marguerite Duras together with his theatre group in Burkina Faso. The ensemble toured with their plays through Vietnam in autumn of 2012 and through France in 2013. The originality of this work lies in the preparation for staging. At every venue, professional actors and amateurs were cast and prepared for the rehearsals in workshops for theatre, singing and dance. Touré calls his actors “acteurs témoins” – active witnesses – because they experience every step of the creative process of staging as well as the participation in the workshops prior to the rehearsals.<sup>104</sup>

Mohamed Rouabhi is an artist from Paris. He dropped out of school when he was fifteen and did odd jobs before he was accepted at the École Nationale Supérieure d’Arts et des Techniques in 1985. He is an actor, director, playwright, librettist, and screenwriter. After first working as an actor, he founded the theatre group “Les Acharnés” together with the director Claire Lasne in 1991. Since then they have produced many plays, including *Les Acharnés* (1993), *Les Fragments de Kaposi* (1994), *Ma petite Vie de Rien du tout* (1996), and *Jeremy*

**101** | <http://www.ericarts.org/web/index.php>

**102** | Bloomfield, p. 44.

**103** | *Ibid.*, p. 49.

**104** | <http://www.franceculture.fr/emission-sur-les-docks-ouagadougou-guantanmo-sanaa-14-marguerite-duras-en-afrique---i-moise-toure-e>

Fisher (1997). Rouabhi's plays were also staged by other contemporary directors in France as well as internationally. From 2007 to 2008, Rouabhi produced the play *Vive la France* in the Théâtre Gérard Philipe, a large-scale production in which more than forty artists are on stage at one point. In 2007, his play *Jeremy Fisher* was adapted as a libretto and performed at the Opéra de Lyon under the direction of Michel Dieuaide.<sup>105</sup>

Another successful contemporary artist is Lazare – writer, director, actor, and improviser. He studied at the École du Théâtre National de Bretagne and named his theatre group “Vita Nova” in reference to Dante's *Divine Comedy*.<sup>106</sup> As of 2008, a hard core of artists formed around Lazare with whom he produced the trilogy *Passé – je ne sais où, qui revient*, followed by *Au pied du mur sans porte* in 2011 – two pieces which were inspired by the works of Pessoa. The last part, *Rabah Robert*, has been completed since then. The trilogy is about the figure “Libellule”, an alter ego of Lazare, and his family. It connects the parts of the family history taking place in France and Algeria with Lazare's own biography. Lazare's plays are documentary and utopian at the same time. They are about reality and the dreams of the protagonists. He does not judge his figures, but gives them the fictional space of the theatre to develop their own realities. Lazare and Vita Nova were invited to perform their play *Au pied du mur sans porte* at the Festival D'Avignon in 2013.<sup>107</sup>

Finally, there is Leyla Claire Rabih. She studied theatre sciences and Romance languages and literature in France and then changed to acting direction at the Hochschule für Schauspielkunst “Ernst Busch” in Berlin. She acquired her first practical experience in Germany municipal and state theatres (Deutsches Theater Göttingen, Staatstheater Cottbus). Her responsibilities included working as assistant director to Thomas Ostermeier. She works mainly on and with texts by young and contemporary authors and publishes the series *Scène – Neue französische Theaterstücke* with Frank Weigand. In January 2007, she took over the direction of the theatre company “Grenier de Bougogne” at the Théâtre Mansart in Dijon. In January 2008, she founded the theatre company “Grenier/Neuf” with the intent of making contemporary theatre more accessible to the public, who had had little contact with this type of theatre before then. She also works in Germany, and staged *Der Schnitt* by Mark Ravenhill in 2008 and *Nordost* by Torsten Buchsteiner in 2009 at the Theater Konstanz.<sup>108</sup>

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**105** | <http://www.lesacharnes.com/Mohamed-Rouabhi-Biography.pdf>

**106** | <http://www.franceculture.fr/personne-lazare.html>

**107** | <http://www.festival-avignon.com/en/Artiste/208>

**108** | Leyla Rabih in a personal interview.

## 2.6 Great Britain

### 2.6.1 Migration in Great Britain

Contrary to other European countries, Great Britain's colonial history has caused it to attract many artists and people engaged in culture from member countries of the British Commonwealth. They came to Great Britain because they were seeking artistic freedom and exchange with European artists. Until the sixties, Great Britain did not grant immigrants participation rights. Racist attacks and political exclusions in the sixties and seventies led to a political mobilisation and self-organisation among immigrants. The civil rights movement which emerged in the sixties was the catalyst for black activists and creative artists to initiate a movement of artists of colour in the art and cultural scene in Great Britain.

In the eighties, the neoliberal administration under Margaret Thatcher promoted the privatisation and commercialisation of culture which was referred to as the "Thatcherising of the Arts Council".<sup>109</sup> Under the new social movement against Thatcher's neoliberal administration in which many artists of colour participated, the access to "high culture" was expedited. Festivals were organised which promoted the diversity of the collective memory in Great Britain by featuring artists of colour and supporting cultural institutions.<sup>110</sup> This reactivation of the black art movement was advanced by representatives of the second generation of immigrants who had grown up in Great Britain and were dealing with questions regarding identity and representation in the British society.

The Arts Council England specified "cultural diversity" with a focus on "ethnicity" as one of its major focal points.<sup>111</sup> The reason for this announcement was the publication of the *MacPherson Report* in 1999, after which anti-discrimination measures were introduced in all public institutions. Although the fight against institutionalised racism seems sensible, the measures also provoked criticism. The critics, mostly artists and cultural theorists of colour, considered such measures to be wise and identified noticeable effects on the art scene; at the same time, these measures led to a greater differentiation between artists from the majority society and those from ethnic minorities. The initiative of the Arts Council England did not succeed in nullifying the existing polarisation

**109** | The term "Thatcherism" is attributed to Stuart Hall, among others. In his essay "Marxism Today", Hall used the term in a cultural-theoretical context. Stuart Hall, "The Great Moving Right Show", in *Marxism Today*, (London, 1979); Wu Chin-tao, *Privatising Culture. Corporate Art Intervention since the 1980s*, (London: Verso, 2002), p. 65.

**110** | Helen Jermyn and Philly Desai, *Arts – what's in a word. Ethnic minorities and the arts*, (London: Arts Council England, 2000), pp. 11-12.

**111** | See [http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/What\\_is\\_the\\_Creative\\_Case\\_for\\_Diversity.pdf](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/What_is_the_Creative_Case_for_Diversity.pdf)

between ethnic arts and mainstream arts. Another criticism was that the measures did not bring about any change in the national profile but in fact led to generalisations in the discussion on racism in art because of the schism in the art community and what was referred to as “alibi” actions.<sup>112</sup> The artistic director, Jatinder Verma, questions the effectiveness of these “good” intentions: “And will showcasing culturally diverse work – as the Decibel initiative purports to do – help that critic to drop his ethnic lens? I very much doubt it.”<sup>113</sup> The Arts Council England places ethnicity and inclusion above the aesthetic importance of art. It is necessary to set aside the Eurocentric view of art which could be made possible by politicians responsible for cultural policies who have cultural competence as well as knowledge of cultural traditions.<sup>114</sup>

Artists of colour have brought about far-reaching changes in the British theatre landscape whose archiving and creating of traditions have been advanced by cultural theorists like Stuart Hall, but also through controversial cultural and political measures introduced by the Arts Council. Nevertheless, the artists still have to fight against the stereotyping and downgrading of their work to their ethnicity.

### 2.6.2 The British Theatre Scene

There is a long list of theatre groups which have been able to establish themselves in England since the seventies. Tara Arts was the first Asian-British theatre group which became a platform for Asian-British artists. Tamasha, Temba, and Nitro are all theatre groups of colour which have made a name for themselves in the British theatre scene in the last decades.

At this point, however, three theatre houses will be presented, because their international and political theatre productions in recent years are worth mentioning.

One of them is Tara Arts. The artistic director Jatinder Verma is a highly esteemed artist who was the first British-born Asian to stage productions at the National Theatre in London. Verma has no theatrical training; he found his way to art, like many artists of colour, because of the prevailing situation in the seventies.<sup>115</sup> Verma says, “Our impetus at the time was to find a voice”.

**112** | Richard Hylton, *The nature of the beast: Cultural Diversity and the Visual Arts Sector. A study of policies, initiatives and attitudes 1976–2006*, (Bath: Icia Institute of Contemporary Interdisciplinary Arts, 2007), p. 19.

**113** | See Jatinder Verma, *The Arts and Cultural Diversity*, (London, 2003). <http://www.butterfliesandwheels.com/articleprint.php?num=29>

**114** | Ibid.

**115** | Graham Ley: “Tara Arts 1977-1985”, in Sarah Dadswell and Graham Ley, *British South Asian Theatres. A documented history*, (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2011), p. 13ff.

Verma thought it was only possible to encounter the voicelessness of the time in a confrontation through the arts on stage. He founded Tara Arts as the first British / South Asian theatre group in Great Britain. In his opinion, there was a need for an independent theatre group of “black artists” with its own aesthetics and self-determined content. Verma wanted to oppose the Eurocentric British theatre scene, which perceived Asian theatre as ethnic art in the sense of folklore and did not leave any space for artists of a non-white background.

After ten years and a hard fight to resist the existing funding structures, Tara Arts finally received revenue funding from the Arts Council. Revenue funding is the ultimate financing for theatre houses in Great Britain since it is granted for three years and thus allows medium-term planning. It can also be renewed again and again. This was the case for Tara Arts from 1986 to 2008, until the funding was reduced and the theatre group was forced to concentrate on a collaboration with the community and schools.<sup>116</sup>

The second important theatre from a Postmigrant perspective is the Arcola Theatre, founded by Mehmet Ergen and Leyla Nazli in 2000. Arcola became known for the diversity of its programme, which comprises both new and classic drama. The group presents its own productions and guest performances by British and international theatre groups. Arcola Theatre played a significant role in the project *Europe Now* and staged the production *Mare Rider*. The play is about Selma, an independent, modern woman who is lying in a delirium after the stillbirth of her child in a hospital in East London. In a surreal nightmare, she is beset by Elka, a mythical figure. In Turkish mythology,<sup>117</sup> Elka hunts down mothers who have just given birth and snatches their children away. She rides through the steppes of Asia and lives out her freedom on horseback. “To me, Elka is a representation of early feminism,” says the author, Leyla Nazli. “She represents freedom – to ride horses and get drunk, hunt and do all those things which for thousands of years women were probably forbidden to do.”<sup>118</sup> Selma has heard the stories of Elka since her childhood, a subtle indication of her Turkish origins in the play without them being explicitly mentioned. In *Mare Rider*, migration is presented from a feminist point of view. Leyla Nazli was distinguished as one of England’s most important contemporary playwrights by the Royal Court in 2007 (Royal Court Fifty).

Finally, the Bush Theatre is also an important theatre. It has established itself as a theatre house since its founding in 1972. With the appointment of Madani Younis as director in 2012, the focal point of the theatre was placed on the new artists of colour. Younis was previously artistic director at the Freedom

**116** | Jatinder Verma in a personal interview.

**117** | <http://hackneycitizen.co.uk/2013/01/15/leyla-nazli-arcola-mare-rider-interview/>

**118** | Leyla Nazli in an interview. <http://hackneycitizen.co.uk/2013/01/15/leyla-nazli-arcola-mare-rider-interview/>

Studios in Bradford, Yorkshire. His most successful production was *The Mill – City of Dreams*, which is based on the narratives of local and immigrant mill workers and concerned with the history of the city as well as questions regarding urban life in the future.

The Bush Theatre shows plays which tell contemporary stories from different social perspectives. The theatre's success is particularly evident in the makeup of the audience, which largely consists of persons of colour. Like many other British theatres, the Bush Theatre provides the possibility of direct forms of vocational and advanced training for talented artists of colour.<sup>119</sup>

## 2.7 Sweden

### 2.7.1 Migration in Sweden

Sweden has a relatively high rate of immigration; about 200 different nationalities can be found among the 9.4 million inhabitants of the country. 19.1 percent of the inhabitants of Sweden had a migration background in 2010, with the Finns making up the largest group of immigrants. In recent years, the immigrants have come mainly from Iraq, Somalia, and Poland.

The Swedish integration policies were considered to be some of the most liberal and successful in the world for a long time.<sup>14</sup> The Scandinavian welfare model has a large public sector at its disposal which offers extensive social security systems to all inhabitants. Equal opportunity, solidarity, cooperation, and consensus are the key elements of this system, although the system has been repeatedly called into question in recent years.

In the sixties and seventies, immigrants could easily find employment in Sweden. Industry also provided them with accommodation, and trade unions helped with the integration process. In schools, children from immigrant families had the right to be instructed for several hours a week in their native language. The local libraries received funding to purchase dictionaries, newspapers, and books in the languages most commonly used by immigrants. Sweden at that time had a strongly social-democratic orientation, and it was assumed that the immigrants had come to stay. In 1968, the egalitarian approach mentioned above was already anchored in the *Guidelines for Immigration Policies*: Immigrants should have the opportunity to achieve the same standard of living as the rest of the population. In this phase, Sweden began to develop into a multicultural country. In 1975, the government granted immigrants the active and passive right to vote in local elections and in elections for the provincial parliaments.

In the eighties and nineties, when the stream of refugees and their families to Sweden increased, Sweden's image as a country whose immigration policies

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119 | See <http://www.bushtheatre.co.uk/futures/>

had been characterised by generosity and equality for years was increasingly seen as a liability. The government felt forced to demonstrate that Sweden was in a position to restrict immigration. Stricter immigration controls were now seen as a prerequisite for a functioning integration process.

In 1991, the populist, right-wing party “New Democracy” (Ny Demokrati) succeeded in gaining representation in the Swedish parliament, and right-wing extremist groups attacked centres which housed asylum seekers and mosques. The image which many Swedes had of Sweden as being an open and tolerant country was tarnished. In order to avoid a right-wing shift in public opinion, new integration policies were introduced. The reduction of social benefits as a countermeasure and a facilitation of processes to recognise foreign educational qualifications were intended to expedite the integration of immigrants into the Swedish employment market. However, anti-discrimination measures and family reunification policies still make up a large part of the integration policies.<sup>120</sup> The bombing in 2010, in which the assassin, an Iraqi-Swedish man, committed suicide and injured two other persons in the centre of Stockholm, had a long-term impact.<sup>121</sup> The bombing and its consequences on Swedish society will be discussed in more detail later.

### **2.7.2 The Swedish Theatre Scene**

The concept of participation was reflected relatively soon in the Swedish art and cultural scene. Over the past ten years, artists of colour have made their way into Swedish cultural institutions. An institution which promoted this development from a very early stage is Intercult, an independent production and distribution institution. Since 1996, the collective around Intercult has worked in Sweden and in Europe as an initiator of collaborative cultural projects and networks. It initiated large-scale co-productions in Europe and connects local and international initiatives. Intercult offers possibilities to share experiences in seminars, conferences, lectures, and mentoring. Chris Torch is Intercult’s artistic director and one of its founders.

Rani Kasapi worked for Intercult for a long time until she changed to Riksteatern and took over the area of international collaboration. The national theatre company Riksteatern is the largest theatre company in Sweden and considers itself a national touring company. Under Kasapi’s direction, the area of international collaboration has been expanded and many productions by and with theatre makers of colour have been developed. Over the past eight years, many theatre makers have been able to establish themselves in Sweden and attract a public of colour. Rani Kasapi and the Riksteatern played a major role in initiating the European project Europe Now.

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**120** | <http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/dossier-migration/57839/schweden>

**121** | See [http://www.spiegel.de/thema/selbstmordattentat\\_stockholm\\_2010/](http://www.spiegel.de/thema/selbstmordattentat_stockholm_2010/)

An important Swedish playwright is Jonas Hassen Khemiri. In 2003, he attracted attention to himself with his debut novel, *Das Kamel ohne Höcker* (in English, *The Camel without Humps*), for which he received the prestigious Borås Tidnings Debutant Prize. His next novel, *Montecore*, was awarded the Per Olov Enquist Prize in 2006. He first appeared as a dramatist with the play *Invasion!* at the Stockholm City Theatre in 2006. In 2008, Khemiri presented *God Times Five*, his second play. *We Who Are A Hundred* followed in 2009, premiering at the Gothenburg City Theatre and receiving the HEDDA Award for the best play in 2010. In his plays he concerns himself with current social events and features the experiences of people of colour with racism and marginalisation in Swedish society. His plays are performed in many European theatre houses. His most recent play, *I Call My Brothers*, was written as part of the project *Europe Now* and was performed as a co-production with Ballhaus Naunynstraße and the Landestheater Niederösterreich in 2013.

Farnaz Arbabi is a director, dramatist, journalist, and author who works very closely with Jonas Khemiri. She studied acting direction at the Dramatiska Institutet in Stockholm. She stages classical Swedish dramas at state theatres as well as new plays and her own productions from the perspective of persons who have experienced social exclusion in Swedish society. The last joint project with Jonas Khemiri was *I Call My Brothers*, which premiered at the Stockholm Stadsteater.

Another very successful artist is Nasim Aghili, director, author, and performer, who deals with issues concerning racism primarily from a queer-feminist perspective. Her performances, theatre installations, and compositions focus on the experiences of people who have fled to Sweden for political or economic reasons and who now live there in exile. Her pieces are mainly performed in public spaces and focus on the human body and how it is perceived. Her theoretical and practical pieces reflect her perspective of a Swedish woman with a diaspora background. In her own publishing company, Nasim Aghili produces the magazine *Ful*, which has a queer-feminist, and post-colonial orientation and which was named Sweden's best cultural magazine in 2010. *Ful* is also the name of the theatre group with which Aghili works. One successful production was *Blood Wedding*, which was produced as a sound installation with eleven Iranian-Swedish actors in Swedish and Farsi and which was performed in the Auditorium Stockholm. Another play is *Om vi kunde gå hem till mig (If we could go to my place)*, which deals with homeless and illegal children in Sweden (some of whom actually participated in the performance of the play). Nasim Aghili is also a member of the Swedish Cultural Council and is active in the steering team which awards grants to independent artists and theatre groups. She is also on the jury of the first Swedish Biennale for Performing Arts.

## 2.8 Italy

### 2.8.1 Migration in Italy

For a long time, Italy was a country of emigration; at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century many Italians from the South of the country emigrated to the United States, and after World War II many guest workers emigrated within Europe.

The development from a country of emigration to a country of immigration happened in a very short period of time. At the end of the 1970s, more and more immigrants came to Italy. In contrast to the northwestern European countries, the immigration didn't occur in a time of reconstruction and economic growth, but in a time of deep economic crisis marked by increased unemployment.

Migration was not regulated in Italy until recent years. The other countries of the Schengen Area forced to a clear political act, so the government of Italy established the Martelli-Act in 1990, which enforced border controls and made a Visa mandatory. It also implemented the deportation of illegal immigrants. For the first time, Italy took action to measure and regulate immigration, but migration increased in the following years.<sup>122</sup>

In 1998, the Turco-Napolitano Act, Italy's first systematic migration act, was constituted. The laws were intended to reduce the numbers of "clandestiner" (illegalized persons) and impose the return of illegal immigrants to their country of origin. But the law also equated legal migration with the rights of Italian citizens, ensured the family reunion as part of legal immigration, and made it possible for foreigners to apply for permanent residency after living in Italy for five years.

When Silvio Berlusconi became Prime Minister in 2002, the so-called "Bossi-Fini Act" was passed, under which immigration was handled restrictively by limiting legal immigration and enforcing drastic actions for the "fight" against illegal immigration. Therefore, immigration of persons from third countries was only allowed if they had a working contract.<sup>123</sup>

In the following years, because of the global conflict zones in African and Middle Eastern countries, migration to Italy increased drastically: about 400 percent between 2000 and 2010. Today the rate of increase of the immigrated population is one of the highest in the European Union.

The majority of immigrants are refugees and asylum seekers who flee from the Mediterranean Sea to Italy. Through the European border controls, which are regulated by the organisation Frontex, Europe has become a fortress. Frontex is ensuring that refugees will not come close to the European water borders. After several disastrous incidents – especially the drowning of 400 people on the coasts of Italy in the autumn of 2013 – the Italian marine started

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**122** | <http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/laenderprofile/145487/italien>

**123** | <http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/laenderprofile/145487/italien>

a rescue mission under the name “Mare Nostrum” in order to help the people until 2014.<sup>124</sup> The Italian government is now demanding more responsibility on the part of refugees from other European countries.<sup>125</sup>

### 2.8.2 The Italian Theatre Scene

In a classical sense, the Italian theatre scene is intercultural through the work and influence of Eugenio Barba and his intercultural research of theatrical articulation. He evoked the internationalisation and “Europeanisation” of the scene, but because of the political situation it did not produce a scene of artists of colour or artists with migration backgrounds. In contrast to the other northwestern European countries, many different projects with refugees and asylum seekers have been created within recent years.

The project *H.O.S.T. – Hospitality, Otherness, Society, Theatre* – aims to work on the complex dimensions of migration through aesthetic research and artistic praxis. The artistic work which is called “sociological research” is a cooperation between artists from the Eufonia-Astràgali Teatro in Lecce and academics from the university in Salento. The projects intend to give immigrants and refugees a voice to make their experiences through theatrical methods perceptible for other persons, especially persons with the same experiences. The project was funded by the European commission from 2007 until 2013.<sup>126</sup>

The project *Acting Diversity* is being organised by three cultural institutions in Italy, Palestine and the UK. It seeks to work with asylum seekers, immigrants and young adults from around the world in intercultural theatre workshops. The workshop’s goal is to create an intercultural dialogue and actively promote diversity in a democratic and inclusive society. They produced two productions where racism, stereotypical ideas on the “Other” as well as migration, citizenship and civil rights were discussed.<sup>127</sup>

“Teatro di Nascosto – Hidden Theatre” is making theatre reportage under the leadership of Annet Henneman. Teatro di Nascosto uses the stage so stories of people without a voice, persons from marginalised communities, can be heard. The theatrical work is being brought between Europe and the Middle East.<sup>128</sup>

**124** | [http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/generalnews/2013/10/15/Immigration-Italy-launches-Mare-Nostrum-400-saved\\_9466386.html](http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/generalnews/2013/10/15/Immigration-Italy-launches-Mare-Nostrum-400-saved_9466386.html)

**125** | <http://www.dw.de/eu-denkt-über-quoten-für-flüchtlinge-nach/a-17985303>

**126** | <http://www.astragali.org/project!20>

**127** | <http://www.annalindhoundation.org/granted-projects/2012/acting-diversity-project-intercultural-theatre-political-refugees-and-young#sthash.awdclwGJ.dpuf>

**128** | <http://teatrodinascosto.com>

Another theatre which deals with refugees and the human rights of immigrants is Teatro Aperto, which was founded during the “Nuovo Teatro Popolare” in 1974 by Guido Ferrarini. At the beginning the theatre focused on the intercultural collaboration of artists, but since then they have concentrated on telling the experiences of immigrants as part of contemporary European history. Since Lampedusa became a symbol of the tragedy of European borders and the Italian programme “Mare Nostrum” was created, the artists of Teatro Aperto feel obliged to make the inhuman European politics visible on stage.<sup>129</sup> The journalist and author Jeff Biggers, who is part of the “Mare Nostrum” Project at Teatro Aperto, has written about their project:

‘For Ferrarini and other international members of Teatro Aperto, including myself, the theater – as the stage for Europe’s unfolding Mare Nostrum challenges – can at least provide for a safe, healing and creative space, as well as a historical and narrative context, for such stories to be voiced and heard.’<sup>130</sup>



*Figure 1: ‘Verrücktes Blut’, Ballhaus Naunynstraße, Berlin, 2010.  
Photograph: Ute Langkafel*

**129** | <http://www.teatroaperto.it>

**130** | [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeff-biggers/beyond-mare-nostrum-ital-i\\_b\\_5634746.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeff-biggers/beyond-mare-nostrum-ital-i_b_5634746.html)



Figure 2: 'Verrücktes Blut', Ballhaus Naunynstraße, Berlin, 2010.  
Photograph: Ute Langkafel



Figure 3: 'Telemachos - Should I stay or should I go?', Ballhaus Naunynstraße, Berlin, 2013.  
Photograph: Ute Langkafel



Figure 4: "Telemachos - Should I stay or should I go?", Ballhaus Naunynstraße, Berlin, 2013.  
Photograph: Ute Langkafel



Figure 5: 'Beg Your Pardon', Ballhaus Naunynstraße, Berlin, 2012.  
Photograph: Ute Langkafel



Figure 6: 'Jag ringa mina bröder', kulturhuset stadsteatern, Stockholm, 2013.  
Photograph: Petra Hellberg



Figure 7: 'Jag ringa mina bröder', kulturhuset stadsteatern, Stockholm, 2013.  
Photograph: Petra Hellberg



Figure 8: 'No Mans Land' Das Kunst, Garage X, Vienna, 2006.  
Photograph: Bernhard Mrak



Figure 9: 'No Mans Land' Das Kunst, Garage X, Vienna, 2006.  
Photograph: Bernhard Mrak

### 3. EXCURSUS: MINORITY THEATRE

#### 3.1 Theoretical Considerations

The aim of this chapter is to put minority theatre in context of this study. In the exposé for the research project, the study intended to be an examination of theatre makers with migrant backgrounds and those who belong to a (cultural, religious, ethnic, etc.) minority. In the course of the research, it became clear that it would not be possible to do justice to both subject areas if they were combined, since the interests and identity aspects have to be considered from different perspectives.

First of all, reasons will be given to explain the general importance of a minority theatre. Using three theatres as examples, the diversity of minorities as well as the conditions for and necessity of a minority theatre will be presented. These three examples alone suffice to demonstrate that the framework conditions within could not be more different. Finally, in the last part of this excursus, a comparison will be made with Postmigrant theatre to point out possible differences and common interests.

How can minorities be described? Minorities – whether indigenous or immigrant – can differ from the mainstream population in many ways. The difference can lie in the ethnic origins, in cultural traditions, in the language, the religion or in a combination of these aspects. Different minorities are often falsely thrown into one group and referred to under one label, as, for example, when people from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Morocco, and Turkey are all referred to as Muslims, regardless of their geographical, ethnic, or actual religious backgrounds.

A description of minorities which does not include the attribution of being alien was attempted by Gilles Deleuze. In *Pour une Littérature Mineure (Towards a Minor Literature)*, Deleuze defines minorities not only by means of their numbers but by means of a certain characteristic: “Its (the minority’s) capacity to become or, in its subjective geography, to draw for itself lines of fluctuation that open up a gap and separate it from the axiom constituting a redundant majority”.<sup>131</sup> The majority is understood as what is homogeneous, that which requires a normativity to maintain power, to be able to exercise self-control in order to achieve self-affirmation.<sup>132</sup> The so-called “minority” can resist by withdrawing to escape the pressure of homogeneity. The minority can devise lines of flight, interspaces, and “being different” to resist the constraints of the majority. The minority in Deleuze’s sense has the strength of variation on its side, as opposed to the constancy and

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**131** | Verena Conley, “Minoritarian”, in Adrian Parr (ed.): *The Deleuze Dictionary*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), p. 164f.

**132** | Conley, p.164f.

security of status which the majority strives for: “Minoritarian is seen as potential (puissance), creative and in becoming. Blacks, Jews, Arabs and women can only create by facilitating a “becoming”, but never through ownership.<sup>133</sup>

The minority is in a state of becoming and has no fixed identity – therefore it cannot be counted: “[A] minoritarian politics does not have a pre-given (or transcendent) measure or norm for inclusion or identity. Each addition to the group changed [!] what the group is”.<sup>134</sup> The attributed identity of the minority is always provisional and is constantly changing.

How can subjects related to minorities be dealt with? Contemporary theatre is apparently often selected as a medium to deal with issues (ethnic, cultural, religious, etc.) of the minority, to negotiate social injustice and discrimination or to present topics of general interest for discussion from the perspective of minorities. In minority theatre, the collective memory, among other things, is transported to the stage. Theatre is a privileged place in which traumas of the past can be illuminated, in which the disposition of one’s own identity can be explored and challenged. Theatre can contribute to the catharsis (reactivation) of the crisis of the group’s collective identity and is thus a crucial space and a chance for minorities to make themselves seen. It is a place in which authenticity can be reaffirmed and in which a different public can legitimise the cultural specifications. Minority theatre is not present or visible in the national theatre scenes, but it addresses important topics like the construction of minorities, the process of exclusion and difference. According to Deleuze, minority theatres can be elements in the process of creating self-awareness in which “a minority consciousness [is transformed into]...a universal-becoming”<sup>135</sup> and a dynamic impulse for change can be set against how the minority is represented. Theatre is also the space in which predefined identities in a historical, economic, social, or cultural context or in the context of colonisation can be contested.<sup>136</sup>

### 3.2 Roma in European Societies and the Theatre of the Roma

One of the groups most severely affected by racially motivated marginalisation is the Roma. They have a special status as a minority because they have been resident in Europe since the Middle Ages. Their exclusion began in early modern times with the emergence of territorial states, and persecution, expulsion, and

**133** | Ibid., p. 164f.

**134** | Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze*, (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 117.

**135** | Gilles Deleuze, “One Less Manifesto”, in Timothy Murray (ed.), *Mimesis, Masochism and Mime. The Politics of Theatricality in Contemporary French Thought*, (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1997), p. 256

**136** | Madelena Gonzalez and Patrice Brasseur (eds.), *Authenticity and Legitimacy in Minority Theatre. Constructing Identity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010).

discrimination defined their living conditions. Under the National Socialists, the persecution of Sinti and Roma reached a dreadful culmination in the racially motivated annihilation of over five million Sinti and Roma in Germany and occupied Europe. There are currently around nine million members of this group in the population, the largest minority in Europe. They are distributed all over Europe, but most of them have settled in southeastern Europe. In Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia there are over three million Roma.

Sinti and Roma still struggle against massive prejudices. One of the last defamation campaigns against Roma which attracted international attention took place under the government of Nicolas Sarkozy. Sarkozy referred to the alleged illegal Roma communities as “hotbeds of crime”.<sup>137</sup> The subsequent mass deportations of Roma met with harsh criticism. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination demanded an immediate stop to the deportations on the grounds that collective deportations violate human rights. The EU Commission also reacted and accused France of violating the right to freedom of movement of EU citizens which is anchored in the Treaty of the European Union. EU Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding threatened France with criminal proceedings on the grounds of breaching the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. As a result, France gave in and announced that it would fully comply with EU law.<sup>138</sup>

This brief overview of the political status of the Roma in Europe indicates that the century-long marginalisation of this minority is still continuing in parts of Europe. It is all the more important that individual perspectives and historical accounts on an artistic level are set against these stereotyped images. The most successful theatre group in Europe is Theater Pralipe. Theater Pralipe was first active in Skopje in Macedonia, where their plays dealing with the situation of the ethnic minority led to public opposition and an end to their funding. Roberto Ciulli, the director of the Theater an der Ruhr, granted the theatre group artistic asylum when the war in Yugoslavia broke out in 1991. As part of the Theater an der Ruhr, Theater Pralipe developed its own aesthetic language and staged classic pieces like Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, Brecht’s *Mother Courage and Her Children*, and Lorca’s *Blood Wedding* and *Yerma*. As of 1995, the theatre work of Pralipe took on a stronger political dimension by presenting topical fields of interest. Thus, in protest against attacks on the Roma population in the Austrian Oberwald, they were invited to the Burgtheater in Vienna and toured East German cities under the motto “culture against violence” to protest against the racially motivated attacks on residences for asylum seekers in Rostock and Hoyerswerda.<sup>139</sup> Contemporary productions

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**137** | See <http://focus-migration.hwwi.de/index.php?id=1231>

**138** | See [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-10-384\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-10-384_en.htm)

**139** | <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13687521.html>

are intended to present the life of the Roma aesthetically on stage, as in the play *Tetovirime Vogja (Tattooed Souls)* by Goran Stefanovski, which deals with the living conditions of Roma as well as the roots of the Roma culture. It was presented at the Intercultural Theatre Festival in Vienna in 1996. Another of Theater Pralipe's successful plays is *Z 2001, die Tinte unter meiner Haut (Z 2001, The Ink Beneath My Skin)*, which is about the annihilation of the Sinti and Roma during the National Socialist era.

Despite their international success, financial support for Theater Pralipe was cut by the state legislature of North Rhine-Westphalia as early as 2001. The theatre, heavily indebted, was dissolved.<sup>140</sup> Nedjo Osman, a Pralipe actor and co-founder of the TKO Theater in Cologne in 1996, established the first European Roma theatre in Cologne in 2008 which aspired to cooperate with professional Roma actors from Hungary, Romania, Macedonia, and Serbia. The theatre makers wanted to promote the professionalisation of Roma culture in Europe.<sup>141</sup>

In 2010, an EU-sponsored project entitled *Romanistan – Crossing Spaces in Europe* was set up by the IG Kultur Austria. The project was intended to create a European cultural programme with three Roma self-organisations such as the Roma Cultural Centre in Vienna, the FAGiC in Barcelona and the Amaro Drom in Berlin. *Romanistan* was envisaged as an emancipatory project which would present not only folklore, but also contemporary cultural activities of the Roma. By utilising self-organisation, networking, and sustainable structures and strategies, a greater freedom of action could be created to make the cultural activities of the Roma known and acknowledged in Europe in all their heterogeneity and diversity. Key issues were self-empowerment and self-organisation, networking, and media and public relations. The artistic conceptions included the cultural activities of the Roma in the communities, so that by means of participation they could be transformed medium-term into something ground-breaking. A public discussion on the mechanisms of stigmatisation and discrimination was to be held, in which specific topics like identity, cultural self-determination, opportunities for cultural and political education, the importance of one's own language, participation and empowerment as well as cultural diversity and a politicisation of the Roma culture would be dealt with. Roma artists were to be in the foreground, and the focus was to extend beyond the usual ethnicising and romanticising to their artistic approaches and circumstances.

The aim of the two-year project was to organise a cultural festival and to establish a cultural think tank which was to deal with the subject "Roma

**140** | Bloomfield, *Crossing the Rainbow*; <http://www.minderheiten.org/pralipe.htm>

**141** | [http://www.tkotheater.de/logicio/pmws/indexDOM.php?client\\_id=tko&page\\_id=roma&lang\\_iso639=de](http://www.tkotheater.de/logicio/pmws/indexDOM.php?client_id=tko&page_id=roma&lang_iso639=de)

and Culture Production” critically and in a multi-disciplinary fashion.<sup>142</sup> In April 2013, the Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst in Berlin organised a two-day festival at which films, music and dance productions were shown and discussions were held on the creation of space for culture productions which could bring forth and visualise new ways of thinking in the work against stigmatisation and racism.<sup>143</sup> *Romanistan* is considered a starting point and should establish itself long-term as an arena for autonomous culture and discussion.

### 3.3 German-Sorbian Folk Theatre Bautzen

How different the situation of minority theatre can be becomes apparent when the study turns to the German-Sorbian Folk Theater in Bautzen, which is famous nationwide for its minority theatre. The West Slavic Sorbs have lived in Upper and Lower Lusatia (in Saxony and Brandenburg) since the sixth century. The Sorbian people comprise approximately 60,000 persons and are recognised as a national minority. They have maintained their own identity through the centuries and have successfully resisted all sorts of attempts to be assimilated.<sup>144</sup>

In Bautzen there are two Sorbian theatres: the German-Sorbian Folk Theatre and the Sorbian National Ensemble.

The German-Sorbian Folk Theatre is a bicultural theatre, since productions are staged in both German and in High and Low Sorbian. In 1948, the Sorbian Folk Theatre “Serbske ludowe dźiwadło” was founded, which initially was only a production location because performances took place in inns in Sorbian communities. In 1963, the Bautzen City Theatre and the Sorbian Folk Theatre together became the German-Sorbian Folk Theatre Bautzen, which since then has built up a large repertory of plays and pieces for puppet theatre. The target group is defined as “everyone”; the theatre is a folk theatre with the respective programme and sees itself as the opposite of the “big city expert theatre”.<sup>145</sup> The repertory includes classic folk plays such as *Im weißen Rössl* by Ralph Benatzky and subject matter of more local interest such as *Das Volksstück vom Johannes Karasek, genannt der Schrecken der Oberlausitz* by Ralph Oehme.

The Sorbian National Ensemble was founded in 1952 as an initiative of the national umbrella organisation of the Lusatian Sorbs. The ensemble is sponsored by the foundation for the Sorbian people, and it endeavours to preserve,

**142** | <http://www.amarodrom.de/romanistan>

**143** | [http://romanistan-berlin.de/pdf/ROMANISTAN\\_flyer\\_web\\_230313.pdf](http://romanistan-berlin.de/pdf/ROMANISTAN_flyer_web_230313.pdf)

**144** | <http://www.mwfk.brandenburg.de/cms/detail.php/bb1.c.250117.de>

**145** | See <http://www.theater-bautzen.de>

maintain, and develop the cultural tradition of the Sorbs in three professional sectors: ballet, choir, and orchestra.

In this self-portrayal, the “living habits and customs of the Sorbian people” are presented as the source and “inspiration for a unique ethnic performing art”.<sup>146</sup> Emphasis is placed on the Sorbian language, Sorbian history and local traditions. An attempt to merge the German-Sorbian Folk Theatre and the Sorbian National Ensemble Bautzen at the end of 2003 failed.

### 3.4 Bimah - Jewish Theatre Berlin

Yiddish theatre developed from the Purim plays, which, like the Christian Passion plays, originated in the Middle Ages. The basic prerequisite for the emergence of the Jewish theatre was reforms by Moses Mendelssohn in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which created a new spiritual and intellectual orientation and enlightenment under which restrictions prohibiting costumes, acting and images were relaxed or abolished. Abraham Goldfaden is generally considered to be the founder of the first professional Yiddish theatre company, which was established in Iași (Jassy or Iassy) in Romania in 1876 and later moved to Bucharest. While most companies at that time specialised in musical vaudeville and light comedy, Goldfaden devoted himself to relatively heavy operettas with biblical and historical content, especially on a longer tour through the cities of Imperial Russia. The works of Scholem Alechem were also of great significance for the Yiddish theatre. The Yiddish theatre spread to Russia, but many Jewish actors emigrated to the West because the Russian government prohibited theatre performances in Yiddish in 1883. Yiddish theatres were founded in Paris, London, the United States (especially in New York), and South America. In New York, the Yiddish theatre experienced its “golden age” in the first decades of the twentieth century with the plays of Jacob Gordin.<sup>147</sup>

Since Yiddish was spoken mainly in Eastern Europe and many well-known theatre groups were founded there, there were also Yiddish theatres and theatre ensembles. However, they played a relatively minor international role since Jews were usually assimilated into the majority society in Western European countries. However, plays were also developed by theatres in Western Europe which were performed internationally on Yiddish or Jewish stages. Beginning in the thirties, the scene concentrated more and more in New York, where Yiddish film also experienced its heyday. After the end of the Third Reich, Jewish theatre was not performed in Germany for many years.

**146** | <http://www.sne-bautzen.de/index.php?id=2351&L=0>

**147** | Joel Berkowitz, *Avrom Goldfaden and the modern Yiddish theatre. The Bard of Old Constantine*, (Winter: Hebrew Publishing Company, 2004).

Not until 1996 was the “Verein zur Förderung der jüdischen Kultur und zur Errichtung des ersten jüdischen Kultur- und Theaterhauses in Deutschland e.V.” (Association for the Promotion of Jewish Culture and Establishment of the First Jewish Cultural Centre and Theatre in Germany) founded, and with it the first Jewish theatre and cultural centre in Germany in the post-war period, the Theater Michoels. In 2001, the Israeli director and actor Dan Lahav founded the Jewish Theatre Bimah in Berlin. Since autumn of 2011, it has had its home in the Admiralspalast in Berlin. The permanent ensemble is committed to presenting contemporary plays by Israeli, English-language and German-Jewish authors. On the programme one can find such plays as *Bent* by Martin Sherman, *Das Zimmer* by Harold Pinter, or plays like *Das Geheimnis der Pianistin in der 5. Schublade* with strongly autobiographical traits of the director Dan Lahav and content from his Hamburg-Jewish family history. *Esther Glick* is the fictional story of the first Jewish female detective, who gets inspiration while cooking that helps her solve her cases. A great sensation was caused by the production *Eine unglaubliche Begegnung im Romanischen Café*, in which a fictional meeting of Lotte Lenya, Else Lasker-Schüler, Erich Kästner, Kurt Tucholsky, and Friedrich Hollaender is staged on the day before their emigration from Nazi Germany. In *Shabat Shalom*, the audience experiences a Friday evening in a Jewish family.

The theatre is also committed to political and socio-political upbringing and education – a commitment reflected in the support it provides to finance educational and vocational measures for migrants and the police force.<sup>148</sup>

### 3.5 The Minority Theatre and Postmigrant Theatre

In the presentation of Minority theatre, it is evident that they could hardly be more different because, depending on ethnic, religious, or cultural grouping, the theatres pursue different interests. Commonalities can be found only in the external characteristics and framework conditions. All three theatres of minorities described here consider it very important to define production, distribution, and reception themselves and to represent themselves. Roughly classified, they either deal with issues which concern their own community or issues which are imposed by society. In this way, marginalised positions are visualised aesthetically and the active and complex evolution of their own positions in the society are dealt with on stage.<sup>149</sup> Minority theatre makes it possible to present positions and oneself in a social context which is created by means of an aesthetic space. And it is here that

**148** | <http://www.juedischestheaterberlin.de/Theater.php?Bereich=Geschichte>

**149** | Madelena Gonzalez, “Introduction. The construction of identity in minority theatre”, in Madelena Gonzalez and Patrice Brasseur, *Authenticity and Legitimacy in Minority Theatre. Constructing Identity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010).

one can identify intersections and commonalities with the Postmigrant theatre. The artists are in both cases marked as not belonging to the mainstream; they are artists whose art is ethnicised or related to the biographical context of the authors and who are impacted by exclusion. Artists of colour deal with these mechanisms of social exclusion in their productions.

Nevertheless, differences between a theatre of a minority and a Postmigrant theatre can be identified with regard to expectations and conclusions. In Postmigrant theatre it is understood that there is a migration society in which migration in different manifestations is considered to be the norm. The heterogeneity of the society is reflected on stage and assumed to be a normal state. Their own structures secure artistic positions which are lacking in subsidised structures because of marginalisation and racism. Postmigrant artists find themselves in “transitional stages” with the long-term perspective of producing and performing in established theatres. The heterogeneity of the artists is the main focus. It is paramount to point out specific differences in the overall social context.

Minority theatre should be seen as an independent structure. Its aim is a long-term preservation of its own stories, the perspective of national history, and local traditions and linguistic idioms. Minority theatre deals with community-specific issues, and its ultimate aim is to preserve the homogeneity of the ethnic, cultural, or religious group.

Artists of colour, whether they are assigned to the theatre of a minority or the Postmigrant theatre, share a feeling of solidarity which can be traced back to their experience with racism and structural exclusion. This is illustrated by the regular cooperations between Roma artists and the Ballhaus Naunynstraße.

In this very brief presentation, the different approaches and aims of the minority theatres have been strongly generalised. A study devoted solely to the phenomena and subjects of minority theatre would be necessary to provide a more complete picture.

## 4. STRUCTURAL CHANGES

A debate is taking place in each of the European countries examined here over the institutional – and thus political, social, and cultural – participation of the immigrant population. The necessity to respond to the change in the population by means of structural changes is usually referred to as “intercultural opening”.<sup>150</sup> Unfortunately, one can observe an inflationary use of this term; it is now used indiscriminately without considering what it really means and

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**150** | In Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and The Netherlands a discussion has arisen on an “intercultural opening” in almost every sector of society. See Hanspeter Fent, *Die*

what it should achieve. A broad understanding of culture underlies the term “interculturality”. Interculturality is not limited to aesthetic dimensions, but includes everyday culturally connoted interactions. Culture is understood as historically context-related and as a dynamic process which is in a constant state of flux and which includes affiliations, delimitations, patterns of interpretation, forms of articulation, as well as realities of life.

Interculturality is not understood, however, in the sense of the intercultural theatre which was primarily set in the seventies and influenced by directors like Ariane Mnouchkine, Robert Wilson, Peter Brook, or Tadashi Suzuki. Put simply, they appropriated “Eastern” theatre traditions in order to transport them to Western stages. Erika Fischer-Lichte described this as follows: “Elements are broken out of the different cultural systems of at least two distinctly different cultures and set in relationship to each other in the theatre production.”<sup>151</sup> This appropriation of cultural elements and the one-sided participation in the discourse of theatre was criticised by many theatre makers from post-colonial contexts.<sup>152</sup>

Mark Terkessidis gives the term “interculture” a different twist. For Terkessidis, the term suggests a rethinking of stereotypical attributes and is extended to include a “‘culture in between’ as structure in flux”. His definition refers to the barrier-free access to all possibilities of cultural, political and social participation in a diverse German society.<sup>153</sup>

Intercultural opening can therefore be seen as a process by and between different persons, living beings and organisational forms, in which barriers preventing access to organisations are abolished and segregation mechanisms are dismantled.

The process of intercultural opening has also been promoted by cultural institutions. Policy recommendations have been devised by the state (e.g., the National Integration Plan of 2006).<sup>154</sup> On the administrative level, more and more cultural and political guidelines are being implemented whose aim is to facilitate the participation and representation of artists of colour. The cultural and political guidelines apply equally to state theatres and are now being implemented in various programmes for migrants, such as urban

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*interkulturelle Öffnung von Verwaltungsdiensten*, (Winterthur: Edition Soziothek, 2007); Mark Terkessidis, *Interkultur*, (Frankfurt a. M., 2010).

**151** | Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Das eigene und das fremde Theater*, Tübingen 1999. 179f.

**152** | See Rustom Bharucha, *The Politics of Cultural Practice. Thinking through Theater in an Age of Globalization*. (Hannover, 2000).

**153** | Terkessidis, p. 131.

**154** | <http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/StatischeSeiten/Breg/IB/2006-10-27-ib-nationaler-integrationsplan.html>

neighborhood projects with lay actors. Artists of colour have mainly achieved structural changes in the European theatre scene through a steady process of institutionalization, and thus of the creation of their own structures. These three areas will be more closely examined in the next chapter.

#### **4.1 Cultural and Political Measures as Exemplified by the Arts Council and its Programme of Cultural Diversity**

Cultural and political measures which are initiated by the government as a means of reacting to migration societies can be found in all of the countries included in this study. In this chapter, British cultural policies will be presented in detail and used exemplarily to describe the different stages of confrontation with institutional access barriers and structural segregation mechanisms.

Although artists of colour have long been active in Great Britain, it was not until the seventies that they were officially recognised by the public funding institution Arts Council. *The Arts Britain Ignores* by Naseem Khan, which was commissioned by the Arts Council in 1976, focussed on the “arts of ethnic minorities” for the first time.<sup>155</sup> It was established that since artists of colour lacked access to institutions, their artistic work was not considered professional. This study was, on the one hand, the first official examination of the situation of artists of colour in Great Britain, but it also led to the first controversy, because artists of colour were reduced to their ethnicity. In the eighties, there was a revival of the black art movement. Representatives were mainly immigrants of the second generation who had grown up in Great Britain and were preoccupied with questions concerning identity and representation in British society. They were supported by experts on cultural studies who invoked the ideas of Antonio Gramsci and the Black Movement as well as those of the feminist movement. Antonio Gramsci’s<sup>156</sup> concept of cultural hegemony attributed a privileged status to the individual as an artist of colour in the process of cultural production. The artist was no longer to be identified as a member of an ethnic minority but as a black artist whose artistic works reveal individual history and an individual aesthetic approach. The discussion on aesthetics conducted by the theatre

**155** | Naseem Khan, *The Arts Britain Ignores*, (London: Arts Council England, 1976).

**156** | In connection with his concept of cultural hegemony, Antonio Gramsci determined that every person lives in his or her “social class”, and although this social class is not consciously perceived, everyone’s lives are significant to the social class. See James Martin, *Gramsci’s Political Analysis. A Critical Introduction*, (Bristol: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), p. 161f.

makers of colour followed a course quite contrary to the prevailing colonial discourse.<sup>157</sup>

The Arts Council England took the subject to heart and established a subsidy fund for ethnic minority art which was aimed more at social integration than artistic recognition.<sup>158</sup> Theatre makers criticized the fact that their artistic work was reduced to their ethnicity and their individual artistic talent was inadequately acknowledged. The Arts Council reacted to the criticism and introduced the term “cultural diversity” so that the emphasis no longer lay on ethnicity.<sup>159</sup>

At the end of the nineties, the focus of funding shifted to “cultural diversity” with “specific reference to ethnicity”.<sup>160</sup> The catalyst for this shift was the direct reaction to the publication of the Macpherson Report<sup>161</sup> in 1999. According to the Arts Council England, the Macpherson Report marked “a sea change in the understanding of the significance of institutional racism”.<sup>162</sup> Anti-discrimination measures were indeed introduced on a compulsory basis in all public institutions. However, the Arts Council England had set itself the objective of introducing cultural and political measures to combat racism. A conference was held at which, together with theatre makers of colour, strategies to fight racism in the English theatre scene were developed.<sup>163</sup> Recommendations for action were formulated which would create participation and access opportunities for

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**157** | Michael McMillan and SuAndi, “Rebaptizing the World in Our Own Terms. Black Theatre and Live Arts in Britain”, in Paul Carter Harrison, Victor Leo Walker and Gus Edwards (eds.), *Black Theatre: Ritual Performance in the African Diaspora*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), pp. 120-121.

**158** | See Sharifi, *Theater für Alle?*, p. 222.

**159** | See H. Jermyn and P. Desai, *Arts – what’s in a word?*, pp. 11-12.

**160** | With particular attention paid to ethnicity.

**161** | The fatal stabbing of the black British teenager Stephen Lawrence at a bus stop in South London caused a public uproar. Police investigations were initially based on the assumption that the victim had committed a crime. Finally, five suspects were arrested but not convicted. It was assumed that the crime was racially motivated and the boy had been murdered because of the color of his skin. In 1999, the former judge Sir William Macpherson examined the documentation of the police investigations and determined that they had been influenced by an “institutional racism”. The public was outraged, and the Macpherson Report has since then contributed to a considerable change in the understanding of institutional discrimination. See [http://news.bbc.co.uk/vote/2001/hi/english/main\\_issues/sections/facts/newsid\\_1190000/1190971.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/vote/2001/hi/english/main_issues/sections/facts/newsid_1190000/1190971.stm)

**162** | See Arts Council, *History of Arts Council*, (London, 2004).

**163** | See Stuart Brown, Isobel Hawson, Tony Graves and Mukesh Barot (et al.), *Eclipse Report. Developing Strategies to Combat Racism in Theatre*, (London: Arts Council London, 2001), p. 4.

artists of colour. Beginning in 2003, every publicly financed theatre in Great Britain was compelled to employ artists of colour.<sup>164</sup>

One of the initiatives was the project *Decibel*, designed to address the problem of underrepresentation and to ensure a significant increase in the number of artists of colour in employment.<sup>165</sup> Production, distribution, and reception possibilities were to be increased. The programme comprised three main instruments: *Performing Arts Showcase*, *Visual Arts Platform*, and *New Audiences Programme*.

The *Decibel Performing Arts Showcase* is an annual festival which has taken place every year since 2003 and which showcases the works of theatre makers of colour.<sup>166</sup> The Visual Arts Platform was active from 2003 to 2004 and financed an artists' programme. This included traineeships and mentoring programmes for future curators as well as one-year scholarships for artists of colour and artists with a migration background.<sup>167</sup> In addition, promotion programmes were created to involve audiences of colour. The New Audiences Programme was financed by the Arts Council England from 1998 to 2003 with the intention of attracting new audiences to the theatre and so-called "non-visitors" and marginalised groups of the population, like children and young persons, the elderly, families, and people with disabilities.<sup>168</sup>

Although the fight against institutionalised racism seemed to make sense in all areas of society, including the theatre, the measures also gave rise to criticism. Artists and cultural critics voiced the opinion that such measures only made sense to a certain extent and had a significant impact on the art scene. They said that they segregated artists from ethnic minorities from those in mainstream society. The initiative of the Arts Council England did not succeed in eliminating the existing polarisation between ethnic art and mainstream art.<sup>169</sup> Some critics even felt that the Decibel programme not only did not lead to any kind of change in the national profile, but that it even trivialised the discussion on racism in art through segregation and "alibi" actions.<sup>170</sup>

Harsh criticism was aimed at the Arts Council's inconsistent designation of African, African-Caribbean, and Asian groups. Critics alleged that old, imperialistic terms which nourished racial discrimination were once again being applied to describe the work of the artists. They were being "ethnically

**164** | Ibid.

**165** | See Arts Council, *Decibel. Performing Arts Showcase*, (London, 2011).

**166** | See <http://www.decibelpas.com/en/about/decibel>.

**167** | Hylton, *The Nature of the Beast*.

**168** | Ibid., p. 133.

**169** | Ibid.

**170** | Ibid., p.19.

stigmatised” and thus were not given the space or the right to define themselves and their art.<sup>171</sup>

Another critical aspect was the interpretation of cultural diversity. The Arts Council England interpreted cultural diversity as social integration and the use of art as a kind of social policy. But this would mean that the essence of art would disappear and only a visualisation of the “ghettoised” activities would be in the foreground, causing ethnicity and inclusion to take precedence over the aesthetic importance of art itself. It would be necessary to eliminate the Eurocentric view of art, which could be facilitated by politicians of colour responsible for cultural policies who have the cultural competence as well as the knowledge of black cultural traditions.<sup>172</sup>

The prominent debate between British cultural policy makers, institutions, and artists of colour is exemplary for other European countries in which the discussion has not progressed as far. In Germany, the report *Kultur in Deutschland* by the Enquete Commission, which was requested by the German Parliament, was published in 2005.<sup>173</sup> The report also deals with migration and migration society as well as artists of colour. In a special section entitled “Areas of particular importance eligible for funding”, there is a chapter which deals with “Migrant Culture/Interculture”. Terkessidis criticises that, in the report, artists of colour are apparently not named because of their artistic qualities but only in connection with their contribution to “integration”.<sup>174</sup> “Today, for example, many German-Turkish directors or authors are famous representatives who have found specific artistic forms to express the contradictions in integration as a subject matter.”<sup>175</sup> In general, Terkessidis points out the inadequate perspective applied when presenting the people of colour in the Enquete Report.<sup>176</sup>

All in all, it can be observed that in the last ten years a public reaction (and therefore a cultural and political one) to the changes in European society has taken place. Special subsidies have been introduced for artists of colour which, as Jude Bloomfield pointed out in her 2003 study *Crossing the Rainbow*,

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**171** | Graves, Deepening Diversity.

**172** | Ibid.

**173** | Deutscher Bundestag (ed.), *Kultur in Deutschland. Schlussbericht der Enquete-Kommission des Deutschen Bundestages*, (Bonn, 2008).

**174** | Terkessidis, p. 179.

**175** | Deutscher Bundestag (ed.), *Kultur in Deutschland*, p. 212.

**176** | The report refers to the “integration deficits” of persons with migration backgrounds. They have deficiencies in education and vocational training, and they do not have an adequate command of the German language. A study which would substantiate these statements was not named. Terkessidis, p. 180.

separates them from the subsidies for white or mainstream theatre makers. Thus, in all the countries surveyed, there are particular promotion institutions for “intercultural culture projects” whose budget is far lower than those which are allocated to “normal” funding projects. As a result, artists of colour cannot apply to institutions for subsidies other than to those specially established to finance “intercultural” projects. In Bloomfield’s study it was pointed out that the artistic work of artists of colour is still assigned to a social sector. Therefore, the work produced by artists of colour is denied the aesthetic quality and thus the significance otherwise attached to art, and this remains one of the greatest problems which limits artists of colour in Europe today.

## 4.2 Structural Changes in State Theatres

While state theatre houses in all European countries had long been “white”, i.e. places in which only white theatre makers worked, not only on but also behind the stage and in the governance structures, there has been a change in recent years. Great Britain has made progress in comparison to many countries, but even here there is still a lack of representation, and theatre makers of colour still encounter existing access barriers in cultural institutions.

In the study published by the Centre for Audience Development in Berlin in 2009, “migrants as an audience group in public German cultural institutions” were examined.<sup>177</sup> For the first time, a representative study investigated the extent to which German cultural institutions deal with the subject of migration.<sup>178</sup> Over 50 percent of cultural institutions which participated said that they deal with this “thematic area”, but, as Mark Terkessidis quite correctly noted, “about 70% of those responsible only dealt with the subject to the extent that it was necessary to demonstrate that they ‘wanted to make a contribution’ to integration.”<sup>179</sup> The state theatre houses have actually introduced various programmes for “migrants”, and this indicates a certain understanding for the problem. It is not only about artistic positions and positions in ensembles which should be filled by theatre makers of colour but about socio-cultural projects which should primarily motivate the “migrant” with a stereotyped image – from poorly educated social strata, with a poor command of the German language, and living in a “parallel world” – to visit the theatre.<sup>180</sup> These projects usually take place outside the theatre houses

**177** | Centre for Audience Development, *Migranten als Publikum in öffentlichen deutschen Kulturinstitutionen. Der aktuelle Status Quo aus Sicht der Angebotsseite*, (Berlin, 2009). Online publication.

**178** | *Ibid.*

**179** | Terkessidis, p.174.

**180** | See Sharifi, *Theater für Alle*, (2011).

in socially disadvantaged districts and which mainly work with “experts from everyday life”, or residents from these districts, on stage.

The example described here is a case in which, for the first time in Germany, an urban neighbourhood project was implemented because of a need and the hope to examine and present urban stories. In 2004, the Munich Kammerspiele triggered the first major discussion when they produced *Bunnyhill*, which was staged with residents of the Hasenberg district.

The project was first developed from the story of the German-Turkish youth called *Mehmet*, who had already committed sixty criminal offences by the time he was fourteen and who was deported to Turkey on the initiative of the city of Munich. The case attracted international attention, because for the first time a child of foreigners legally resident in Germany was deported to the original home country of the family unaccompanied by relatives. The play, *Ein Junge, der nicht Mehmet heißt* (*A Boy who was not named Mehmet*), was produced together with youths from the Hasenberg district, one of the districts in Munich with the highest percentage of migrants and the district with the highest crime rate. Artists used the deportation as a metaphor and starting point for artistic research of German society. The artistic approach of Peter Kastenmüller, Björn Bicker, and Michael Graessner raises the question of whether artistic practice cannot be defined as social practice and vice versa.<sup>181</sup>

The project, *Bunnyhill*, which the artists defined as a “state” and whose national territory was the Neue Haus of the Kammerspiele, became the space in which the urban reality of Munich could be exposed to artistic scrutiny. For eight weeks, the artists from different genres participated in the project and immersed themselves in the phenomenon. For at least two months, the peripheral districts of the city and their inhabitants were the centre of cultural life in Munich.<sup>182</sup>

In his article “Theatre as a Parallel Society?”<sup>183</sup> Björn Bicker self-critically pointed out the danger that the subject could be exploited and degraded to a “voyeuristic migration and diversity peepshow”. At the same time, he feels that the search for form which the theatre is undergoing at this time could create the possibility of “playful, political and open discussion” through which “multicultural networking and border-crossing” could be achieved.<sup>184</sup>

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**181** | See Munich Kammerspiele, Programme “Bunnyhill – Eine Staatsgründung”, (Munich, 2005).

**182** | Ibid.

**183** | Björn Bicker, “Theater als Parallelgesellschaft. Über das Verhältnis von Theater und Migration”, in Sabine Hess, Jana Binder and Johannes Moser (eds.), *No Integration? Kulturwissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Integrationsdebatte in Europa*, (Bielefeld: transcript, 2009).

**184** | Ibid., p. 32.

One of the few examples of a state theatre which has involved itself in the process of urban change (but a very good one) is the Theatre Zuidplein in Rotterdam. The theatre is located in Rotterdam-Zuid, which is primarily inhabited by immigrants. When Ruud Breteler became the new theatre director in 1998, he wanted to encourage people from the surrounding district to participate in the theatre. In his own words, he chose the path of “empowerment”.<sup>185</sup> By means of an invitation for applications, he put together a commission of ten people who were to mirror the composition of the population in Rotterdam. The ten commission members had no professional theatre training (some had never been to the theatre before), yet they were asked to create the theatre programme for the new season. A change took place from a theatre based on offers, which prepares productions and then seeks an audience for them, to a theatre of demand in which the audience determines what should be performed.

Thanks to the commission, which consisted of people of different cultural backgrounds, more and more plays by and with persons of non-Western European origin were included in the programme which, at the same time, attracted a more diverse audience. Besides the commission, organisations of people of colour were commissioned to organise “monocultural” festivals.

“Gradually more and more people from the different cultural target groups found their way into the theatre. These different audience groups began to mix as time passed, at first in stand-up comedy and cabaret, later in (world) music and dance performances. The time had come to take leave of the monocultural festivals, but not, of course, from the self-organisations; they remained involved in the theatre.”<sup>186</sup> That is one possible reaction to the changing social reality and a reaction to the “intercultural opening” of an institution. The theatre programme of the Zuidplein does not make theatre *for* persons of colour but *with* persons of colour. Even the employees are artists of colour. This is really a rarity because artists of colour are still cast based on their ethnic backgrounds or not cast at all. More and more artists of colour are employed as guests at state theatres, but the cooperation is usually a one-off engagement restricted to productions which deal with “migrant” topics.

### 4.3 Institutionalisation and Independent Structures

In addition to all the efforts on the part of cultural policy makers and public cultural institutions to enable the participation of theatre makers and a public of colour, the initial structural change can mainly be traced back to the creation of independent structures by artists of colour. This can at least be deduced

**185** | Lecture at Bundesfachkongress Interkultur Hamburg, 2012. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3BKBNVqfz4>

**186** | Ruud Breteler, (Hamburg, 2012).

based on the examples from the countries included in this study. Discussion platforms were used for relevant topics when artists of colour appropriated them and created their own positions in the respective theatre scene by virtue of their numbers. The so-called empowerment led to a change on the institutional level. Empowerment is the “process in which people who are deprived, disadvantaged or excluded begin to take things into their own hands by becoming aware of their own abilities and developing their power in order to use their individual and collective resources to determine their own lives.”<sup>187</sup>

In the light of structural power imbalances in the society, the empowerment concept aims at creating equitable distribution and democratic participation, i.e. at strengthening the involvement of citizens in decision-making processes.

As has already been explained, artists of colour were not present in the national and European theatre scenes for a long time. It was suggested that a lack of artistic quality might be the reason.<sup>188</sup> In order to overcome this, the foundation of independent structures and venues became necessary. The change in Germany would not have been possible without the founding of the Ballhaus Naunynstraße and the theatre maker Shermin Langhoff. Langhoff, who first worked as assistant to Fatih Akin, wanted to use the theatre to show “migrant perspectives and stories”.<sup>189</sup> As of 2004, she worked as curator for transcultural festivals at the theatre “Hebbel am Ufer”, including *Beyond Belonging*, in which established theatre makers and playwrights like Nurkan Erpulat, Feridun Zaimoglu, Maral Ceranoglu, Neco Çelik, Tuncay Kulaoglu, and Ayse Polat participated. The festival, which was supported by the German Federal Cultural Foundation, led Langhoff to realise the necessity of an independent and permanent theatrical space which could offer young artists the chance to experiment and gain experience. “When I created the *Beyond Belonging Festival* at the Hebbel theatre with productions on the subject of migration, I noticed that we would need much more than only one festival, but rather a forum where we could stage experimental theatre and where a special promotion would be possible.”<sup>190</sup>

**187** | Norbert Heringer, *Empowerment in der Sozialen Arbeit*, (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2010), p. 20.

**188** | This experience is shared by all theatre makers of *color* and theatre makers with migration backgrounds. This experience is perceptible in interviews and personal conversations. See Onur Suzan Kömürçü Nobrega, “Alienation in Higher Education. Lived Experiences of Racial and Class Based Inequality in Film and Drama School”, in *The Living Archives. Kulturelle Produktionen und Räume, Dossier Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung*, (Berlin: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 2013); Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters. Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*, (London, 2000).

**189** | Interview with Shermin Langhoff, *Nah & Fern* 43, p. 18.

**190** | *Ibid.*, p. 20.

From the opening of the first “Postmigrant” theatre in the 2008/2009 season to its establishment in the German theatre scene in 2010/2011 with the invitation to the Berlin Theatertreffen, not much time passed. Nevertheless, the artists of colour have to fight hard for the funding of their house. The Ballhaus now has funding until 2014, but must reapply for subsidies.

In addition to the theatre houses, independent production venues or access to institutionalised production venues are very important. People like Rani Kasapi managed to acquire theatrical rooms. Kasapi first worked for Intercult and changed to the Swedish national theatre, Riksteatern, in 2005. She was head of the international department at the Riksteatern, where she was in charge of international collaborations and co-productions. She considered it one of her duties to initiate a debate on and with the Swedish multicultural society and demanded the involvement of theatre makers of colour. Over time, more and more theatre makers, such as Farnaz Arbabi and Jonas Khemiri, could produce their own plays at the Riksteatern and go on tour in Sweden. She used her position not only to internationalise the Riksteatern but also to implement a strategy to empower theatre makers and the public. Many artists of colour are currently active in the Swedish theatre scene.

Together with other European theatre makers of colour, Rani Kasapi founded the project *Europe Now*, in which the artists met to discuss what Postmigrant Europe could mean in an aesthetic context.<sup>191</sup> *Europe Now* was a collaboration of theatre makers of colour who came together under the premise of Postmigrant Europe to create artistic productions. Authors, directors and producers of colour met to work artistically in dialogue with each other. Five theatres from Sweden, the Netherlands, Turkey, Germany, and Great Britain were involved.

The starting point was the premise that the European theatre was dominated by a “white, middle-class elite” which excluded artists and spectators from other cultures or classes, and yet there is a cultural diversity in Europe which is not sufficiently represented. Moreover, migrant artists were being “ethnicised”. “Diversity in my view should be interpreted beyond the current fetishism for ethnicity.”<sup>192</sup> The *Europe Now* project was intended to reflect precisely this cultural diversity.

Five plays and productions were created which toured in at least two countries in order to reach a larger audience and to create a European mobility and possibilities for Postmigrant theatre makers. The Riksteatern (Sweden) was represented by Rani Kasapi, Farnaz Arbabi, and Jonas Khemiri with the play

**191** | See <http://europenowblog.org/>

**192** | Özkan Gölpinar, Programme Manager for Cultural Diversity for The Netherlands Foundation for Visual Arts Architecture and Design. See <http://europenowblog.org/blog/69>

*I Call My Brothers*. Deniz Altun (author), Lerzan Pamir (director) and Hakan Silahsizoglu (production director) came from the Talimhane Tiyatrosu (Turkey), which produced the play *Pippa*. The theatre RAST, from The Netherlands (with Saban Ol and Anouk Saleming), produced the play *Elsewhereland*; the Arcola Theatre London produced *Mare Rider* by Leyla Nazli and Mehmet Ergen. Marianna Salzmann and Hakan Mican Savas from the Ballhaus Naunynstraße produced *Beg your pardon*.

The plays were about reflections on a European society seen through the eyes of figures living in Postmigrant Europe and presented in stories dealing with the same.<sup>193</sup>

The theatre makers did not allow themselves to be assigned to a particular geographical frame of reference and positioned their theatre practice in a transnational context. Since their work was now presented in a European context, it was internationalised at the same time. The rudiments of a Postmigrant European theatre were advanced through the exchange and joint development of ideas.

It is important to mention the importance of theatre festivals in this connection. Theatre festivals are an important format for the distribution of works by theatre makers of colour. The festival series *Beyond Belonging* created a basis for the networking and presentation of Postmigrant theatre from which the necessity of an independent platform for a Postmigrant theatre house in Berlin was born. Another example is the *Europe Now* festival in Amsterdam, which took place in April 2013. A final presentation was the culmination of months of theatre work, and the participating artists were given the chance to exchange ideas and network with other European artists.

The structures developed by the theatre makers of colour in the last twenty years have made production, distribution, and reception of Postmigrant perspectives and plays possible. Without these theatrical venues and aesthetic space, all cultural and political measures and programmes of institutionalised theatres would not make any sense.

## 4.4 Professional Training

### 4.4.1 Artistic Training

There seems to be no difference between theatre makers of colour and white theatre makers in terms of vocational and professional training - at least, that is what the study "Report on the Performing Arts"<sup>194</sup> might lead one to believe.

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**193** | Ibid.

**194** | Fonds Darstellende Künste, *Report Darstellende Künste. Wirtschaftliche, soziale und arbeitsrechtliche Lage der Theater- und Tanzschaffenden in Deutschland*, (Essen,

The study, which only deals with the situation in Germany, points out that theatre makers and dance professionals in Germany are predominantly highly qualified professionals, two thirds of whom have university degrees. Two thirds of the theatre and dance professionals who have graduated from university have a degree in some area of the arts.<sup>195</sup> This study also included theatre and dance professionals with a migration background. According to the study, there are no differences between theatre and dance professionals in Germany with a migration background and those without.<sup>196</sup>

The results of the study could absolutely be confirmed through talks and interviews with theatre makers of colour, as well as in the other European countries, at least by those artists who were contacted. Many have professional training in some area of the arts; however, acquiring such professional training is considerably more difficult than for their white colleagues. In personal talks, it becomes clear that the theatre makers of colour often encountered more difficulties in completing their secondary school education because of their background.<sup>197</sup> Creative abilities remained unrecognised because of the discrimination experienced early on, a situation typical of almost all the biographies examined. In a face-to-face conversation, Emre Akal, a young actor, author, and director, talked about his early school experiences in which his teachers relegated him to a kind of extended primary school for children up to the age of fifteen because of his Turkish migration background. After finishing school, he completed vocational training before he began his artistic career and was able to attend drama school.<sup>198</sup>

Many artists have experienced such marginalisation prior to fighting their way into drama schools and art academies. Onur Kömürçü Nobrega refers to the important role which drama schools and art academies play for artists of colour.<sup>199</sup> Schools like the Berlin Academy of Dramatic Arts Ernst Busch or the Folkwang University of the Arts have indeed reacted to the need and have at least one to three graduates of colour in every graduating class. At the

2010).

**195** | *Ibid.*, p. 130.

**196** | *Ibid.*, p. 152.

**197** | Onur Suzan Kömürçü Nobrega commented on this in her dissertation on “Rasse, Prekariat und künstlerische Arbeit am Beispiel des Ballhaus Naunynstraße. In the article “Alienation in Higher Education: Lived Experiences of Racial and Class-Based Inequality in Film and Drama School”, she describes the theatre makers of the Ballhaus Naunynstraße who all come from working class families and have all experienced racism and discrimination in acting school or other institutions offering artistic professional training. O. S. Kömürçü Nobrega, “Alienation in Higher Education”, p. 31ff.

**198** | In a personal interview. Munich, April 2012.

**199** | Kömürçü Nobrega, p. 31.

Folkwang University of Arts, this has also been put into practice with respect to those teaching. Thus, Adewale Teodros Adebisi is a teacher for acting and for special tasks.<sup>200</sup>

Nevertheless, artists of colour are also confronted with racism at drama schools. Onur Suzan Kömürçü Nobrega interviewed Nurkan Erpulat on his experiences at the Berlin Academy of Dramatic Arts Ernst Busch. “It was horrible! After several racist incidents in school, my self-confidence was completely gone, and I thought for a while that I could not continue with my studies until Shermin Langhoff asked me ‘Do you want to direct a play at the *Beyond Belonging* festival’ and I was like, ‘Wow, of course I want to’.”<sup>201</sup>

In this context, it seems relevant that many artists first completed social and pedagogical-artistic vocational or professional training prior to embarking on an artistic career. Nurkan Erpulat, who had already graduated from a drama school in Turkey, studied theatre education at the University of Arts in Berlin before he studied at the Berlin Academy of Dramatic Arts Ernst Busch in 2003.

In Great Britain, one can observe similar trends. A good example is the Talawa Theatre, which was founded in 1986 by Yvonne Brewster, Carmen Munroe, Mona Hammond, and Inigo Espejel. The aim of the Caribbean-African artists was to help Caribbean-African women to enter the theatre scene and to give them a chance to participate.<sup>202</sup> The position of artistic director was held by Yvonne Brewster, who was the first black artist to attend Rose Bruford College<sup>203</sup> and the Royal Academy of Music. As of 2003, Paulette Randall took over the direction of Talawa. Randall’s biography is typical of the path that black artists in the second generation frequently take in the British theatre scene. She attended the Community Arts Course at Rose Buford College, then worked with young people with difficult backgrounds. Thanks to a scholarship from the Arts Council for young directors – the Royal Court Young Writers’ Scheme – she found her calling in the theatre. First she worked at the Tricycle Theatre, another contemporary theatre for black artists, and finally became artistic director at the Talawa.<sup>204</sup>

In contrast to Germany, where artistic training is linked to drama schools or universities, artistic training in Great Britain is offered at theatre houses. The Bush Theatre gives young theatre makers from 16–24 years of age the opportunity to start an artistic training in the programme Bush Futures

**200** | <http://www.folkwang-uni.de/de/home/theater/lehrende/detailansicht/?mehr=1&detaildozent=346&cHash=581601ecd3>

**201** | Kömürçü Nobrega, p. 35.

**202** | Keith D. Peacock, *Thatcher’s Theatre. British Theatre and Drama in the Eighties*, (Westport: Praeger Frederick, 1999), p.181

**203** | The Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance is a prestigious drama school in London.

**204** | Peacock, p. 182.

Project. Such programmes are also offered at other theatres, such as The Young Vic Directors Program. At the Talawa Theatre, master courses have been held since 1996 in creative writing, performance, poetry, and music to promote young theatre makers, especially those of colour.

#### 4.4.2 Lateral Entrants or Twofold Security

The study “Report on the Performing Arts” indicates that a quarter of the theatre and dance professionals with university degrees have taken up their work in the theatre and dance scenes as lateral entrants.<sup>205</sup> Research and personal interviews show that this percentage is higher among artists of colour.

On the one hand, there are political reasons behind the decision to express oneself through aesthetic means. The racially motivated riots in the sixties and seventies led to the founding of Tara Arts:

‘In the summer of 1977, race riots were erupting across the capital. [...] Everywhere my friends and I looked, it seemed black people, as we identified ourselves, were victims of white oppression. [...] I set up a theatre company, Tara Arts, with four friends who felt the same way, and who were migrants like me’.<sup>206</sup>

In the summer of 1976, the Sikh teenager Gurdeep Singh Chaggar was murdered in Southall, London, for racist reasons. Jatinder Verma was studying at the time, but not for the theatre. Verma and the other co-founders of Tara Arts found that they could put on theatre productions with rudimentary means to present young “Asian British” in the cultural sector.<sup>207</sup> For them it was about self-determination of their aesthetic concepts. They wanted to be able to decide which subjects should be addressed on the stage and how the contents should be presented. Tara Arts wanted to resist the Eurocentric theatre and cultural scene, which perceived black arts as ethnic art in the sense of an art which is oriented toward the traditional culture of the country of origin and which did not permit non-white artists access to the mainstream.

The fact that the artists of colour as lateral entrants – and not as classically trained theatre makers – took up theatre work can be traced back to an important biographical aspect. For the so-called “lateral entrants”, it is important to safeguard their livelihood by taking up a second vocational or professional training and thus ensuring employment in some area. The Swedish author, Jonas Hassen Khemiri, and the young author, Deniz Utlu, who curated a series of readings at the Ballhaus Naunynstraße and has headed the literature workshop with Marianna Salzmann at the Gorki Theatre since the autumn

**205** | Fonds Darstellende Künste, *Report Darstellende Künste*, p. 131.

**206** | <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2008/jan/10/theatre1>

**207** | Ley, p. 13.

of 2013, both studied economics. The reasons do not differ much from those of white theatre makers. It is not possible to earn a living solely from work in the theatre. However, in the case of many theatre makers of colour, the dual professional background is also a result of their migration history and the need to have a secure professional or vocational training which, if necessary, will allow them to pursue a profession long-term outside their work in the theatre.

#### 4.4.3 Autodidacts

In recent years, there has been a trend in all of the European countries included in this study to try to reach all groups in the population with theatre – even groups which are educationally disadvantaged and remote from the theatre. Traditional professions like those in the area of theatre education or applied theatre have gained in importance, but also new occupational sectors which are related to the theatre have emerged. The participation of people from socially deprived strata in the population should be made possible.

In the last ten years, more and more programmes for different groups in the population have been offered in the institutional theatre houses as well as in the independent scene, including programmes tailored to young people of colour. Almost every theatre group offers work with young people, but very few seem to manage without a paternalistic approach. This would mean not only developing theatre for young people but also finding a language and form together with young people.

The Ballhaus Naunynstraße offered arts education projects right from the start. One very successful project is the *akademie der autodidakten* (academy of the autodidacts). Youths and young adults, mainly with a migration background, who have artistic talent but no academic training, can participate in art and cultural production. Some of the successful graduates of this academy are Neco Çelik, Hülya Duyar, and Tamer Yiğit. The projects of the *akademie der autodidakten* are supervised by directors and artists from the Ballhaus Naunynstraße. Theatre and acting workshops are offered on a regular basis which are open to young persons interested in theatre. By working on theatre and video productions, young participants can learn to deal with different topics in their texts and their own productions and develop their own creative form of expression.

The *akademie der autodidakten* staged their first successful project in 2007: *Klassentreffen – Die 2. Generation (Class Reunion – The Second Generation)*. The second part of the cycle, *Ferienlager – Die dritte Generation (Summer Camp – The Third Generation)* was produced by Lukas Langhoff and was invited to the *Theatertreffen der Jugend* in 2010. The third part, *Pauschalreise (Package Tour)*, was a collaboration by Lukas Langhoff and Hakan Savas Mican. Another successful format was initiated by Neco Çelik: *Kiez-Monatsschau – Nachrichten aus der Naunynstraße (Neighbourhood News of the Month – News from the*

*Naunynstraße*), in which experienced artists from different disciplines offered their support.

One artist who has been very successful in her work with young people is Asli Kislal from Vienna. The co-founder of *daskunst* also initiated the founding of the club “Echo” with young persons of colour. As is the case in the *akademie der autodidakten*, the young people are involved in the processes in all the work areas in the theatre. One of the successful young people from Echo is Oktay Güneş, who now works as an actor for *daskunst*, *GarageX*, and the children’s theatre “*Dschungel*” in Vienna. Echo received the prize for the best young people’s theatre group in Austria in 1995. In a combination of spoken theatre, elements of dance theatre, and acrobatic interludes, plays are developed there which look at society from a young person’s perspective. A collaboration with *daskunst* in 2004 gave rise to the production *Dirty Dishes*, a socio-critical comedy from England which is about the lives of migrants who are illegally employed in the kitchen of a pizzeria. The play is performed in colloquial speech which is announced on the website and in the printed programme with the warning, “Caution: no stage German”.<sup>208</sup>

In another production cast with young people from Linz with migration backgrounds, the play *Verrücktes Blut (Crazy Blood)* by Nurkan Erpulat and Jens Hillje was successfully staged at the *u:hof: Landestheater Linz* in 2012. The theatre work, which lasted over three quarters of a year, brought forth highly motivated young actors whose enthusiasm for the theatre was expressed on stage as well as in the interview.

## 5. AESTHETIC TRENDS AND INFLUENCES ON THE EUROPEAN THEATRE

What are the aesthetic influences which the artists of colour have exercised in the national and European theatre scenes? Can one even refer to aesthetics of migration?

One of the concepts borrowed from the fine arts which was coined by the cultural theorist Mieke Bal is “migratory aesthetics”.<sup>209</sup> Mieke Bal describes migratory aesthetics as an attempt at a theoretical positioning of migration as a metaphor for artistic practice in art.

**208** | <http://www.daskunst.at/dirty%20dishes.html>

**209** | Mieke Bal, “Lost in Space, Lost in the Library”, in Sam Durrant and Catherine M. Lord (eds), *Essays in Migratory Aesthetics. Cultural Practices Between Migration and Art-making*, (New York: Editions Rodopi, 2007), p. 23ff.

She refers to the “relational aesthetics” of Nicolas Bourriaud, the “emphatic aesthetics” of Jill Bennett, and political art, all of which are subject to the idea that a work of art is empty as long as the act of beholding it is not inherent to it. Only through the beholder and his view does a work of art achieve meaning and thus become an expression of a political act.

In migratory aesthetics, the migrant quality should be thought of as an attribute or a modification which refers neither to the migrants, the act of migration, nor the experienced state of migration, but which creates a complex of discrepancy of attribution, ambiguity and vagueness. Migratory aesthetics can open the field of possibilities and become the basis for experiments in order to illuminate the context of migration without reducing it to an association – for example, with the migrant himself as a subject.

In order to better comprehend the nature of migratory aesthetics, Mieke Bal uses an example from her own artistic practice in which she and an Iranian artist developed a video installation on the subject of “home, security, and borders” which included interviews with persons who were or had been refugees. In connection with this project, whose aesthetics were influenced by displacement, shift in meaning, and the appropriation of linguistic and aesthetic space, she describes her concept of migratory aesthetics. One moment in which, according to Bal’s descriptions, the idea of migratory aesthetics is manifested in her project was during the interview with an Iranian man who, at the time of the interview, had been an asylum seeker in Germany for several years. The man who had only a limited command of English was only able to adequately express himself – not only linguistically but also sensually and thus in an aesthetic manner – when he spoke in his “own language”. When given the chance to speak in his native language, the liberation experienced by the man being interviewed, however, meant a vagueness and discrepancy for the interviewer who, at that moment, did not understand him. However, by accepting the space and acquiescing to a double discrepancy – between language and understanding but also between meaningful and meaningless sounds – migratory aesthetics are created. The man’s language defined the aesthetics of the film.<sup>210</sup>

Based on this, she describes the word “migratory” as a constructive view of an aesthetic occurrence which, detached from the certainty of a geopolitical allocation, becomes a vague experience in which self-empowerment and self-representation are the key elements.<sup>211</sup>

How can one deal with the problem of vagueness or, the other way around, how can one proceed in a culturally specific manner in the analyses of cultural processes and works of art without defining the individuals or the works of art

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**210** | Bal, “Lost in Space, Lost in the Library”, p. 27.

**211** | *Ibid.*, p. 30.

by means of classification to which they no longer belong or to which they no longer feel a sense of belonging?

Mieke Bal suggests, in the absence of a clear cultural identity, to assume a “distinctive multicultural feature” which cannot be assigned to the concept of multiculturalism but which is based on the idea that there is no central culture in the globalised world and that culture has to be defined in particular contexts which, in turn, are inherent to diverse relations.<sup>212</sup> It is only possible by suspending the label of “cultural origin” which describes them as being “foreign” and accepting the synaesthetic whole – the distinctive multicultural feature – of presentation.

Drawn from practice, these theoretical considerations on migratory aesthetics can be transferred in their essence to the aesthetics of artists of colour. As stated above, the “labelling” – the national-cultural classification – is a problem which is continually at the centre of the artistic practice of artists of colour. As expressed in the following section, these are precisely the political demands and contents which are visualised on stage by artists who attempt to manifest migratory aesthetics. In the vagueness and lack of classification, as well as in the fight for aesthetic freedom, trends which reflect Postmigrant perspectives can be identified. They are the perspectives of those marginalised, the obsequious who often speak of racism and discrimination (and thus of cultural stagnation) in the receiving countries and who are confronted with the voyeuristic gaze of mainstream society which is directed at their labelled aesthetic productions.

## 5.1 Metaphor of Migration, Metaphor of Displacement

The metaphor of migration is an aesthetic figure of speech used to describe a series of shifts in artistic practice for several different purposes: to visualise the increasing fragmentation of subjectivity in the (post-) modern age, to reflect the semantic instability of constructions of (personal/cultural/national) identity, to stress the homology between the experiences of displacement and those of destabilisation of essentialistic ideologies and fixed paradigms and patterns of thought.<sup>213</sup> Migration inevitably leads to the alteration of traditions which make the frame of reference for interpretation and translation of a universal assessment and categorisation impossible and produce incommensurable aesthetics

**212** | Bal, “Lost in Space, Lost in the Library”, p. 32.

**213** | Graham Huggan, “Unsettled Settlers: Post-colonialism, Travelling theory and the New Migrant Aesthetics”, in Sam Durrant and Catherine M. Lord (eds.), *Essays in Migratory Aesthetics. Cultural Practices Between Migration and Art-making*, (New York: Editions Rodopi, 2007), p. 131.

or aesthetics of incommensurability.<sup>214</sup> The dimension of incommensurability is visualised again and again as a metaphorical construction in the works of artists of colour. The metaphorical constructions can be detected in plays whose subject is migration as a phenomenon or which portray such persons whose subjective experiences become a metaphor for migration and displacement. Subjectivity is often described as a placeholder for structural influence and thus for the phenomenon of migration. Together, the metaphorical interpretations of migration represent the basis of knowledge and changing descriptions of political, social, and cultural views of history. The metaphor of migration and the metaphor of displacement will be explained here with two examples. Both plays and their respective stage productions are concerned with life in a migration society in which individuals are defined by their race, ethnicity, nationality, etc., in which subjects become objects and the subjective perspective or the subjective view is not permitted socially.

### 5.1.1 *I Call My Brothers*

The Swedish playwright Jonas Hassen Khemiri wrote *Jag ringer mina bröder* (*I Call My Brothers*) based on an incident which took place in Stockholm in 2010. A young Swede of Iraqi origin, Taimour Abdulwahab al-Abdaly, detonated a bomb, thereby committing suicide and injuring two other people. Although only the assassin was killed in the bombing, the events led to a public discussion in Sweden centred around the threat from (and thus the general suspicion directed at) the Muslim population in Sweden.

Khemiri treats this suspicion to which people of colour are subject because of their race, ethnicity, and nationality, in the play *Jag ringer mina bröder* (*I Call My Brothers*), which Farnaz Arbabi produced for the Stadsteater Malmö in 2013. *I Call My Brothers* is about Amor, whose name suggests an Arab background and who uses some Tunisian-Arabic words and speaks of the “second country” in the course of the play. The meaning of this ethnic designation is revealed as the plot develops, since it does not represent any kind of self-perception but is an external ascription which has been internalised. What is disguised as a dialogue, but what is actually a monologue going on in the head of the protagonist, takes place in a period of 24 hours.

Amor calls his brothers on the telephone to tell them about the explosion and the suicide bomber. As the play progresses, it becomes clear that the calls are not to his biological brothers. They are to his brothers in spirit, brothers who share the experience of social exclusion and structural racism.

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**214** | Sam Durrant, “Storytellers, Novelists and Postcolonial Melancholia: Displaced Aesthetics in Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*”, in Sam Durrant and Catherine M. Lord (eds.): *Essays in Migratory Aesthetics. Cultural Practices Between Migration and Art-making*, (New York: Editions Rodopi, 2007), p. 145.

'I call my brothers and say: Something really sick happened just now. Have you heard? A man. A car. Two explosions. In the middle of town. I call my brothers and say: No, no one was arrested. No one was suspected. Not yet. I call my brothers and say: Here goes. Be prepared.'

Supposedly in search of a spare part for an electric drill, Amor walks through the centre of Stockholm which is still in an uproar and full of police. Amor tries to act as normally and inconspicuously as possible.

'I call my brothers and say: Now it's time. The day has come. The hour has struck. Wake up! Hey – wake up! It is time to get up. Get out of your beds. Shave your faces. Put on clean and respectable clothes. Watch out: The clothing must be anonymous. The clothing must not be anonymous. It may not be so anonymous that it is conspicuously anonymous. Exactly. The aim is to blend in. The aim is to be invisible. Leave the Pali scarf at home. Do not carry any suspicious bags. So – now you are ready. Now you can leave your flats. But before you go out, you must arm yourselves. What? No, why that? Take a carving knife with you. Sharpen a screwdriver. Smuggle a razor blade in your wallet. Is that really necessary? Now you are ready to leave your flats. Transform yourselves into representatives. Smile at everything and everyone. The neighbours, The pets. The dummies in the shop windows. Say thank you VERY loudly if someone holds the door open for you. Apologise for being. Whisper in the underground trains. Giggle quietly in the cinema. Transform yourselves into invisible gases.'

But what is normal? And who is a potential suspect? He asks himself what will happen if he becomes the object of the suspicious looks of passers-by, policemen and Swedish society? Amor realises that he outwardly resembles the assassin. He is not white like the rest of society – he is black, he is an Arab. He could be the assassin because he has black hair and dark skin. He is a suspect because he is made a suspect by the public voice. The paranoia of the city becomes his own. In the course of the play, Amor loses hold of himself and doubts his innocence more and more:

'I call my brothers and whisper: Okay. I admit it. It was me.  
Pause.  
What do you mean?  
I did it... the car. The explosions.  
What are you talking about? Of course, it wasn't you.  
Yes, it was.  
But... no, it wasn't you. We know it wasn't you.  
But, of course, it must have been me. Everything points to it. I did it.'

And then there are the experiences of his friends and family who have been victims of racist attacks just because they are not white:

‘As I came closer, I remembered the policeman who came at Houda’s cousin and beat him bloody with the back of his rubber truncheon just because he couldn’t keep his mouth shut, and I remembered the policemen who broke Nasim’s shinbone and then charged him with attacking a police officer, and I remembered Maribel’s sister, who wasn’t allowed into the soul club and when she shouted discrimination, the bouncers called the police, and the police came and found a packet of weed in her handbag although she had never smoked grass in her entire life.’

In the end, he loses his “fight” against the hegemonic description of his person, which he finally takes to be his own because of the constant repetition in the mass media and by politicians. The play ends with the words:

‘I call my brothers and say: Something really sick happened just now. I was on my way home when I saw a very suspicious person. He had black hair and an unusually large backpack, and his face was covered by a Pali scarf.

Pause.

I call my brothers and say: It only took a fraction of a second until I realised that this was my reflection.’

Even if *I Call My Brothers* was written as an intimate psychological journey of one young man, it is a parable of European societies which does not disclose the “doctrine” of the assassin but the doctrine of society. The metaphor of displacement and marginalisation is revealed in the omnipresence of social (anti-Islamic) racism. The moment of “migratory aesthetics” is the moment in which the attributes which have been created in public discussion are accepted and in which, nevertheless, Amor calls out to his brothers and invokes them to become “visible”.

### 5.1.2 What Fatima Did

Another play which deals with a similar phenomenon is *What Fatima Did*, which premiered at the Hampstead Theatre in London in 2009.<sup>215</sup> Fatima’s headscarf is a metaphor for an ongoing European debate on the lack of perspective which women who wear headscarves have. It shows how others see them and reveals the prejudices and fears fuelled by this proxy debate.

The main figure is Fatima, a modern, young girl in London who, like all other English girls, drinks alcohol, smokes and parties. Suddenly she decides to

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**215** | In 2011 *What Fatima Did* was produced by Mina Salehpour at the Niedersächsisches Staatstheater in Hannover.

wear a headscarf (the hijab – the traditional headscarf worn by Muslim women to cover their hair). The effects the decision has on her family and friends constitute the subject of the play. The main figure, Fatima, remains unseen and silent throughout the play. She is not present and is either quoted by others or presented in form of written statements. Fatima's decision is discussed in her absence.

For her mother, the headscarf represents a betrayal of her values. The mother, Ruckshana, is a resolute, hard-working woman who likes to drink wine. She tells how she had to fight her ex-husband for the right to wear "Western" clothing and how her mother before her had to fight for the right not to wear a headscarf. On stage she says about her daughter:

"She looks like a bloody fundamentalist postbox, I told her I'd be happier if she'd turned out to be a one-legged, pregnant prostitute than a hijab wearer."

Fatima is not the only Muslim; her best friend Aisha is afraid of the headscarf. For her it is a piece of cloth stained with blood because many women were forced to wear it.

When Fatima's ex-boyfriend George first sees her wearing the headscarf, he complains:

"My girl just came in looking like she'd come from sucking Bin Laden off."

George would like to continue his relationship with Fatima, but his attempt to save it ends in disaster. In desperation, George pulls Fatima's headscarf off. After that, she registers a complaint at school accusing George of racially motivated harassment. Fatima's twin brother Mohammed can't understand why everyone is so upset about Fatima's decision at first, but as the situation in their circle of friends escalates he is forced to take his sister's side. In an argument with his mother, he blames her for giving her children Muslim names and then acting surprised when they "grow into them".

And thus the satirical banter about a piece of cloth – which could not have a greater importance regarding questions of identity in contemporary England – remains unresolved. Fatima does not appear on stage, remaining veiled, invisible, and silent. While others discuss the advantages of wearing the hijab, the only person who really understands is not allowed to explain her own motives.

Atiha Sen Gupta wrote *What Fatima Did* as a reaction to the events of 9/11. The play presents the current public discussion on the headscarf as female attire on the one hand and a form of concealment on the other. Is the hijab a patriarchal form of control, a symbol of political autonomy, or simply a fun fashion statement? In an interview, the author points out that the hijab has always been a political symbol. "Part of the problem is that the hijab and the burka tend to make the wearer visible as a Muslim and invisible as a woman."<sup>216</sup>

On the other hand, it was important for her to show how the “other” person is marginalised and excluded in the public media discussion. The absence of Fatima as the subject and the absence of her voice on stage refer to the provocative post-colonial thesis in Gayatri Spivak’s book, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Spivak writes about racism and power relationships which expressed themselves in the context of the prohibition of the practice of widow burning in India. She writes that everything which could be discovered about widow burning originated from the British colonial rulers or Hindu leaders but that there was no information from the women who chose to be burned as widows. Spivak mentions the lack of an independent voice in this context in order to contemplate whether the subaltern – the women allegedly deprived of power – would be allowed to have their own opinions, their own voices, in the public discussion.<sup>217</sup> Sen Gupta’s *Fatima* brings this theoretical discussion to the stage and substantiates Spivak’s thesis which describes the practice of talking about and on behalf of the subaltern but which does not allow the subaltern themselves to have a voice.

## 5.2 Postmigrant Perspectives in Theatre

Another aspect of theatre made by persons of colour is the political one. In the reflections on post-dramatic theatre, theatre experts and theatre makers have grappled with the political dimension in theatre. The political is considered part of the theatre, inscribed in the theatre and structurally inherent to it. Jan Deck points out that in the theatre it is possible to physically and symbolically intervene in a real environment by means of specific actions, although the intervention is primarily an aesthetic one intended to change the audience’s perception. In this way, the implicitness of societal relations is challenged and socially normed control mechanisms can be undermined. Those who create political theatre intend to make the artistic process a political act.<sup>218</sup> Deck refers to Rancière in this context when the point is to understand the political dimension of the theatre as the creation of space and relationships in order to materially and symbolically re-establish common ground.<sup>219</sup>

Hans-Thies Lehmann suggests that in the case of theatre one should not think “from the centre out to the edges” but “from the edges to the centre”. As an example, he refers to the essay written by Jacques Derrida on the occasion of the theatre project *Karl Marx théâtre inédit* by Jean-Pierre Vincent and Bernard

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**217** | Gayatri Spivak, *Can the Subaltern speak? Postkolonialität und subalterne Artikulation*, (Vienna, 2007), p. 214.

**218** | Jan Deck and Angelika Sieburg (eds.), *Politisch Theater machen. Neue Artikulationsformen des Politischen in den darstellenden Künsten*, (Bielefeld, 2011), p. 28.

**219** | Jacques Rancière, *Das Unbehagen in der Ästhetik*, (Vienna, 2007) p. 32.

Chartreux at the Théâtre des Amandiers in Nanterre. The play is about the situation of the “sans-papiers” (illegal immigrants in France). Derrida writes that “the theatre will make something happen, but not by presenting, imitating or staging a political reality on the stage which otherwise takes place somewhere else in order to pass on a message or a doctrine, but by allowing politics or the political dimension into the structure of the theatre, i.e. by breaking open the present.”<sup>220</sup>

Breaking open the present means allowing other voices to be heard in the theatre. According to Lehmann, Derrida speaks in the same context about the necessity of a genuine re-politicising of the theatre which changes “the form, the time, and the space of the theatrical event”:<sup>221</sup> theatre that breaks through its aesthetic boundaries by assuming political responsibility, by exposing itself to foreign voices which are otherwise not heard and have no representation in the political order, thereby opening the theatre as a place which can accommodate the “political outside”.

In Derrida’s understanding, the political dimension can be understood in Postmigrant theatre as a Postmigrant perspective. Postmigrant is then a political dimension through which society is no longer defined by its nationality but understood as a society defined by migration. As Mieke Bal showed in her “migratory aesthetics”, a Postmigrant perspective of society would no longer be accepted (or simply tolerated) as the exception, but would be understood as a constant social determinant. In the theatre, this primarily means the representation of “unheard” voices and “unseen” perspectives. The fact that these must first be liberated from discriminatory attributes and racist stereotypes seems to be a continuous element in the theatre work researched for this study.

### 5.2.1 *Verrücktes Blut*

The two plays already presented here both exhibit perspectives on a theatre which can be described as Postmigrant. In this chapter, the play which made the so-called Postmigrant theatre famous will be presented.

With the play, *Verrücktes Blut* (*Crazy Blood*), Nurkan Erpulat made an international name for the Ballhaus Naunynstraße and attracted international attention to Postmigrant theatre. In an interview which he gave prior to his success and breakthrough, he spoke of the classification of his person and work as “ethnic” or “labelled art”:

**220** | Jacques Derrida, “Marx, das ist jemand”, in H.-J. Lenger, J. Sasse and G. Ch. Tholen (eds.), *Zäsuren. E-Journal für Philosophie, Kunst Medien und Politik*, No. 1 (2000), *Ökonomien der Differenz*, p. 65.

**221** | Hans-Thies Lehmann, “Wie politisch ist Postdramatisches Theater?”, in Jan Deck and Angelika Sieburg (eds.), *Politisch Theater machen. Neue Artikulationsformen des Politischen in den darstellenden Künsten*, (Bielefeld: transcript, 2011), p. 33.

‘I will go so far as to claim that I am more familiar with Shakespeare than with stories from the streets of Neukölln [a district of Berlin with a high percentage of foreign residents]. But the theatre directors have, up to now, not had the courage to let me stage such plays.[...] Until this very day, I have been exclusively responsible for intercultural subjects.’<sup>222</sup>

The fact that Erpulat had already enjoyed professional artistic training in Turkey and had graduated in Germany with degrees in theatre education and acting direction seems to have had no influence when production work was commissioned by the artistic directors of the theatre house. His experience shows that only his ethnic background is relevant; a director of Turkish origin seems predestined to direct the *Neuköllner Straßengeschichten*. The play *Crazy Blood* can be seen as an examination of these stereotypes and classifications applied by mainstream society. Erpulat deals with the deconstruction and appropriation of the stage for people of colour.

The story is about a teacher who is insulted and harassed by her pupils who are mostly “visibly of foreign origin”. Schiller is on the project plan for the theatre workshop *The Robbers* and *Intrigue and Love*. The teacher talks about Schiller’s aesthetics, but no one is listening. The pupils have other problems. Macho posturing and threats fill the room until in a struggle a revolver falls out of a backpack. The gun is real and loaded. The teacher grabs it and becomes an “education terrorist”. She takes her pupils hostage and forces them at gunpoint to act on the school stage. In an absurd way, she achieves her mission of aesthetic enlightenment by means of violence.

In the production by Nurkan Erpulat at the Ballhaus Naunynstraße, all of the roles are played by young actors of colour, which was interpreted by most of the audience and the press as “authentic”. This interpretation had less to do with what is “authentic” than with the demonstration of precisely those stereotypical attributes. The actors of colour were selected because of their “authenticity” rather than their quality.

At the beginning of the play, the actors are on stage and can be seen dressing for their roles. After they have slipped into their roles, they begin to spit on the audience in the truest sense of the word. At this point the play begins; the audience witnesses a scene in which the pupils humiliate the teacher. This humiliation is presented to justify the “violent” transfer of power in which the teacher acts out the humiliation she has experienced on the pupils – physically and psychologically. The pupils should act out a play by Schiller, true to his

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**222** | Nurkan Erpulat and Patrick Wildermann, “Menschen zu besseren Menschen machen. Der Autor und Regisseur Nurkan Erpulat im Gespräch mit Patrick Wildermann”, in *Theater der Zeit. Zeitschrift für Politik und Theater*, issue 11/2010, (Berlin: Theater der Zeit, 2010), p. 48.

maxims on aesthetic education; man is only “an entire being when at play”.<sup>223</sup> But as the “play in the play” continues, the roles are increasingly reversed. The roles of Franz and Karl Moor, Amalie, Ferdinand and Luise are broken when usurped by the pupils’ reality. The poisoning of Luise by Ferdinand in *Intrigue and Love* is exposed as an “honour killing”. In *Crazy Blood*, this scene is not meant to be an identification with the “tradition” of the pupils but as a demonstration of a super-cultural phenomenon. It is not a pupil but Ferdinand, a figure from German Classicism, who commits the murder because his honor has been injured.

As the hostage-taking situation progresses, a slow deconstruction of all supposedly clear identities takes place. Little by little the pupils make the Schiller texts their own in order to describe their own situation. In the process, the classical stage language is repeatedly broken. The “wog gestures”<sup>224</sup> and incorrect pronunciation of the pupils are interrupted by German folk songs sung in “correct German”, thereby creating a new order on the stage. The stage is designed as a rectangular fighting arena and supplemented by a prim chorus formation which intervenes between the scenes to give warning and which serves as a connecting element. At the end of the play the teacher seems to have achieved her mission. The pupils are “enlightened”, quote Schiller and the maxims of the French Revolution and rebel against psychological and physical violence. But the teacher cannot accept the change in her pupils and wants to continue to wield her power. In the middle of this play for power, the actors drop out of their roles; the teacher outs herself and reveals she is Turkish. She has lost interest in the “wog self-hate act”. They all decide to leave the stage together to have a kebab, but one youth who was initially a meek pupil does not want to give up his role as Franz Moor and confronts the audience with the “responsibility” addressed in the “play”. He takes the gun and, as a last resort, shoots into the auditorium.

In *Crazy Blood*, the supposed stereotypes of cultural identities fall apart Erpulat turns our view (and thus the focus) away from the stage to the audience which, as the representative of the German society, is the creator of discriminatory classifications. The voyeuristic perspective is unmasked, and the audience is held responsible for discrimination and racism.

**223** | Friedrich Schiller, *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen. In einer Reihe von Briefen*, (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2005).

**224** | Director’s notes by author.

## 5.3 Formats of Empowerment: Documentary Theatre

### 5.3.1 *Telemachos*

When asked about the aesthetic orientation of Postmigrant theatre in an interview, Shermin Langhoff said:

‘Aesthetically we are oriented towards, among other things, documentary theatre, researching real situations, putting real protagonists on the stage. We go outside the theatre, presenting not only in the theatre but performing, for example, in Anatolian cafés frequented only by men as well as on stage in the Naunynstraße. It’s about gaining access to new producers and stories as well as acquiring new recipients. This happens when people can identify with stories, and here we are especially successful with the Ballhaus.’<sup>225</sup>

The means provided by documentary theatre and the research of real circumstances become formats of empowerment in Postmigrant theatre. One theatre project, which was a collaboration between the Ballhaus Naunynstraße and the Onassis Cultural Center in Athens, is *Telemachos – Should I stay or should I go? Telemachos* (English “Telemachus”) is documentary theatre in the sense of projects produced by the theatre group Rimini Protokoll, in which the actors playing in the respective events are present on stage and preserve their authenticity as well as the authenticity of their stories within the artistic framework of the theatre.

The framework story of the play is the ancient Greek myth about Telemachus, the son of Ulysses and Penelope. Telemachus is a child when his father leaves home to fight in the Trojan War, and later he cannot prevent Penelope’s suitors from plundering Greece. Ulysses’ whereabouts are unknown, and his young son Telemachus asks himself, “Stay or go?” The story of Telemachus is linked to the stories of the actors on stage who have asked themselves the same question because of the economic situation in Greece. The German-Greek directing duo Anestis Azas and Prodromos Tsiniokoris attempt to present this dilemma on stage together with a number of actors of different generations who spend their lives in a back-and-forth situation between Greece and Germany. Their life stories and the reports on their emigrations, immigrations and remigrations are linked to songs about the wanderings and adventures of Ulysses. In the play one of the actors asks: “If we go to Greece, they say the Germanos is here. The German is here. Well, then... in Germany we are foreigners; in Greece we are foreigners. Where are we not foreigners? Perhaps in Turkey?”

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225 | Interview with Shermin Langhoff, *Nah & Fern* 43, p. 20.

Another level in the play is shown in a depiction of life in Germany and the story of the Greek guest workers. Two of the actors came to Germany as guest workers in the sixties and seventies. The director Prodromos Tsinikoris, also on stage, is himself a child of immigrant Greek workers and was born in the German city of Krefeld. They describe life in Germany from their perspective.

Telemachos uses self-images and public images to present the current dispute on the crisis in Greece and then uses the subjective stories of the actors on stage to deconstruct those images. It is, however, a format of empowerment, since the artists on stage relate their own stories and present their own perspective on the situation in Greece.

#### 5.4 Influences on Aesthetic Discourses

A study published by the International Network for Contemporary Arts in 2003 found that the theatre of artists of colour developed its own aesthetic orientation from a political and social commitment. Apart from the national differences which have to be taken into account, it is apparent that the artists demonstrate commonalities and share a common path. The most important aspect on which the social and cultural changes are based is the emergence of a theatre scene of the second generation which takes part in the public discussion and has established its own position in the theatre landscape.<sup>226</sup>

This trend has increased in recent years. The importance of theatre makers of colour and their artistic practice for the European theatre scene is growing. In the European independent theatre scene, the topic of migration is omnipresent: in the origin of the persons, in the working language, and in research. As the theatre makers say themselves, the language is no longer in the foreground, but the bodies, the research and the subject.<sup>227</sup>

Yet, the state theatres continue to be closed shops. Günther Heeg puts forward the thesis in his research on “transcultural theatre”<sup>228</sup> that the municipal theatre will in the long-run become part of a transcultural theatre landscape. Transcultural theatre does not originate from demarcated, distinct cultures which must be brought into contact with each other. This holistic cultural concept no longer works in the age of globalisation. Wolfgang Welsch describes this in the following way:

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**226** | Bloomfield.

**227** | Mieke Matze in an interview.

**228** | Günther Heeg, *Fremdheitserfahrung ohne Exotisierung*, (Hildesheim, 2013). [http://www.nachtkritik.de/index.php?view=article&id=7645%3Ahildesheimer-thesen-xi-die-zukunft-liegt-im-transkulturellen-theater&option=com\\_content&Itemid=84](http://www.nachtkritik.de/index.php?view=article&id=7645%3Ahildesheimer-thesen-xi-die-zukunft-liegt-im-transkulturellen-theater&option=com_content&Itemid=84)

‘Transculturality wants [...] to point out that today’s make-up of cultures lies far beyond their old [...] form and that the characteristics of this difference [...] can be found in all cultures today as cultural determinants so that cultures are no longer defined by a clear demarcation but through interrelationships and commonalities.’<sup>229</sup>

Thus, it can be assumed that cultures do not primarily exist in themselves but only take on form through intercultural contacts. In the “third space” and in the translation of cultural differences, cultures are constituted externally as processes of overlapping and mixing.

Heeg adds that transcultural theatre “begins at the point of experiencing what is foreign inside the cultural phantasms which surround us”. It is important that theatre “should not exoticise what is foreign, and that it should not presume to speak for others or to represent them vicariously.”<sup>230</sup> Therefore, it is essential for transcultural theatre to rethink forms of presentation and open new possibilities.

One approach would be, for example, to eliminate the prevailing labelling of artists of colour and to consider these artists as a part of the overall existing theatre scene. The labelling makes sense in connection with identity policies<sup>231</sup> but only produces injustice in the context of artistic production. Mieke Bal says that the culturally specific and enduring dominance of the so-called “mainstream”, which does not consider the unequal distribution as an intellectual problem, continues colonial historical elements in an age of decolonisation. The exploitation of the “other” goes on when, for example, an exhibition is furnished with a “made in” label so that the meaning of the artwork is not purely conditional on aesthetic aspects.<sup>232</sup> This statement referring to visual art can also be applied to the performing arts. In the debate on blackface, which has cropped up frequently in the last ten years in all the European countries included in this study, it becomes clear how much colonial images are still present in today’s theatre scene. For some time now, the racist connotations of the “Zwarte Piet” (Black Peter) have been discussed in The Netherlands every year around St. Nicholas Day. The figure was originally meant to represent the devil, who had no name and was supposed to represent all that is bad. In 1850, the character first appeared in a book by Jan Schenkman as a companion of Sinterklaas and is commonly depicted as a blackamoor: a Moroccan slave. To this day, white Dutch men who play the role of

**229** | Wolfgang Welsch, “Was ist eigentlich Transkulturalität?”, in Lucyna Darowska, Thomas Lüttenberg and Claudia Machold (eds.), *Hochschule als transkultureller Raum? Kultur, Bildung und Differenz in der Universität*, (Bielefeld: transcript, 2010).

**230** | Heeg, *Fremdheitserfahrung ohne Exotisierung*.

**231** | Mark Terkessidis points out that only by identifying the institutional structure can the deficits in the representation of groups in society with migration backgrounds become visible. Terkessidis, *Interkultur*.

**232** | Bal, “Lost in Space, Lost in the Library”, p. 25.

Zwarte Piet paint their faces black and their lips red and put on afro wigs. Critics point out the colonial context of blackface. Until now, their criticism has generally gone unheard. This debate has also surfaced in Germany in recent years.<sup>233</sup>

In 2012, the Schlossparktheater in Berlin hung up posters with a blackface to announce its production of *I'm Not Rappaport*, a play by the American playwright, Herb Gardner. This led to a public debate in the theatre community throughout Europe. Critics of this stylistic device, mainly artists of colour, pointed out the racist and colonial connotations in comments and opinions presented in different media.<sup>234</sup>

Blackface also has a long tradition in the German theatre, since white actors wearing blackface can be designated as “foreign”. While “white” figures remain unmarked on stage, “black” figures – or figures of colour, whether Asian, African or Aboriginal – are made “visible” with blackface.<sup>235</sup> The aesthetic tradition is based on the assumption that the persons on and behind the stage as well as those in the audience are white, and persons of colour are not present.

Furthermore, blackface on German stages is reminiscent of the theatrical device as it was used in minstrel shows. In American minstrel shows of the 19th century, clichés of black plantation workers were portrayed by white actors wearing blackface and painted thick red lips. This kind of characterisation can be found again and again in German productions in which “black” figures appear.<sup>236</sup>

The Schlossparktheater dismissed the criticism as inappropriate and explained that blackface was used because there was no qualified black actor available.<sup>237</sup> At the same time the theatre formulated a plea for artistic freedom:

‘It may be that the feelings of some African-Germans were hurt. However, up to now, running the risk of injuring feelings was justified by the sanctity of artistic freedom. Be-

**233** | There was also a debate in Sweden about the use of blackface because of a production of Dea Loher’s play *Illegal*. Personal interview with Nasim Aghili and Famz Arbabi.

**234** | See also [http://www.migration-boell.de/web/integration/48\\_3355.asp](http://www.migration-boell.de/web/integration/48_3355.asp)

**235** | An example is the traditional presentation of Othello.

**236** | According to Edward Said, an analysis of the Western construction of the Orient can be helpful. Said refers to the theatrical representation which adopts as its own what is “foreign”, the construction of the “Orient” through images and portrayals. “The idea of representation is a theatrical one: the Orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined. On this stage will appear figures whose role it is to represent the large whole from which they emanate. The Orient then seems to be not an unlimited extension beyond the familiar European world, but rather a closed field, a theatrical stage affixed to Europe.” Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (London: Vintage, 1977), p. 63.

**237** | See “Network community criticises Hallervorden’s Schlossparktheater”, *Nachtkritik* 2012. [http://www.nachtkritik.de/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=6457&catid=126](http://www.nachtkritik.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6457&catid=126)

cause the principle of the theatre is that people there can act as if they were someone else and that in doing so they sometimes show things which do not please everyone.<sup>238</sup>

This comment denies the fact that the criticism of blackface was expressed in the aesthetic frame of reference of the theatre. The theatre makers and theatre critics of colour are degraded to persons whose “feelings” have been hurt. Their historical and aesthetic knowledge is denied and with it the possibility of formulating aesthetic criticism. The critics retaliated vehemently: not only individual artists criticised the theatre’s position but also the initiative Bühnenwatch,<sup>239</sup> an association of artists, theatre makers, political activists and academics. They criticised the racist practice from an aesthetic standpoint in panel discussions, conferences, and public statements.<sup>240</sup> Public interventions of this sort can also be observed in other European countries. Artists of colour enter the discussions on theatre aesthetics and actively influence them with their own positions.

## 6. PROSPECTS FOR A EUROPEAN THEATRE

### 6.1 Theatre and Migration: From the Independent Scene to Institutionalisation

The sub-study “Theatre and Migration” observed that in the past decade artists of colour and Postmigrant theatre have evoked structural and aesthetic changes in the independent scene of contemporary European theatre. In each of the countries surveyed in this study, there were artists of colour. Independent structures have formed almost everywhere; either Postmigrant theatre houses have been established or production venues have shifted their emphasis to cultural diversity. And finally, there are funding institutions especially for theatre makers of colour and Postmigrant theatre. There seems to be a trend in which artists of colour are moving more and more into the focus of the theatre scenes, away from the independent scene to institutions and institutionalisation.

As part of this study, a conference entitled “Postmigrant Perspectives on European Theatre” was held in March 2013 with the Goethe Institute in London and with the support of the foundation of the German newspaper *Die Zeit*. Artists, academics, and politicians dealing with cultural policy from Germany, Sweden,

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**238** | Matthias Heine, “Rassismusvorwurf gegen Dieter Hallervorden”, *Die Welt* of 10 January 2012 <http://www.welt.de/kultur/article13807516/Rassismusvorwurf-gegen-Dieter-Hallervorden.html>

**239** | <http://buehnenwatch.com>

**240** | *Theater und Diskriminierung*. Heinrich Böll Stiftung, (Berlin, 2012). [http://www.migration-boell.de/web/integration/48\\_3355.asp](http://www.migration-boell.de/web/integration/48_3355.asp)

Great Britain, and The Netherlands were invited. Postmigrant positions were presented in the forum, and questions concerning representation, cooperation and institutionalisation were discussed.<sup>241</sup>

The outcome of the conference was the conclusion that there is still a need for a social reality in which there are equal access opportunities and equal representation for different narratives. As was established in the study published by the International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts in 2003, “Racism remains the generally unacknowledged barrier to cultural diversity in the performing arts.”<sup>242</sup>

The existing social, political, and economic distribution of power makes it unnecessary for those with decision-making authority to consider the issues, experiences and problems of marginalised persons. “The centre doesn’t have to think about the periphery.”<sup>243</sup> Those who are marginalised, on the other hand, have learned to adopt the perspective of the centre and, at the same time, have not only learned to voice their own cultural perspective but also to take a different view of the existing situation. Thus, the potential which could be derived from stories, experiences and primarily from the artists of colour remains untapped within prevailing production and promotion conditions.

How can the stories, aesthetics and formats which are labelled as being ethnic and which exist on the periphery of cultural events be made visible?

‘Just look at what we are doing as theatre makers. By taking refuge in a dream, aided by imagination and a bit of poetic exuberance. When the borders of the political reality no longer play a role, the scene of action also changes, irrevocably, and faster than you could believe. Only then does the viewer regain his freedom, and the awareness returns that theatre is truly magical, that theatre creates life rather than taking it.’<sup>244</sup>

Or to include Chakrabarty’s pessimistic view of history which stresses its limitations and impossibility, financial support must have as an objective that the theatre “deliberately makes its own repressive strategies and practices visible which lie in the structure of its narrative forms.”<sup>245</sup>

**241** | See Maximilian Grafe, *I am not a postmigrant artist!* <http://azadehsharifi.wordpress.com/2013/04/22/i-am-not-a-postmigrant-artist/>

**242** | Bloomfield, p. 127.

**243** | Hassan Mahamadallie at the conference.

**244** | Özkan Gölpinar, Programme Manager for Cultural Diversity for The Netherlands Foundation for Visual Arts Architecture and Design. See <http://europenowblog.org/blog/69>

**245** | Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Europa provinzialisieren: Postkolonialität und die Kritik der Geschichte”, in Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Europa als Provinz. Perspektiven postkolonialer Geschichtsschreibung*, (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus Verlag, 2010), p. 65.

It is not only about *what* Postmigrant theatre can bring forth in the theatre landscapes of the individual countries or in Europe with regard to aesthetic and structural changes, but *how* theatrical perspectives can become utopias for societal positions which do not follow the existing political traditions in which ethnicity or race or gender are used as distinguishing characteristics (and thus characteristics of exclusion), and how Postmigrant theatre can use its aesthetic resources to expedite a re-thinking and a re-imagination.

‘If the future of the intercultural has to be posited in tangible terms, and not just as an empty fantasy, we will have to open ourselves to those realities that resist being imagined easily.’<sup>246</sup>

## 6.2 Postmigrant Perspectives for European Theatre

In my final observations, I would like to take up the thoughts of the historian Dipesh Chakrabarty, who criticises Eurocentric historiography and demands an emancipation of (Western) European histories by “provincialising” Europe, i.e. by putting the importance of Europe in relation to global history into the correct perspective. In this connection he expounds the problem of post-colonial historiography: The conceptual instruments like “nation”, “revolution” or “progress” of European social and cultural sciences contribute to making European experience a universalistic perspective and prefigure and “Europeanise” the importance of the respective local pasts. He demands a history of a modern age which is able to think through its own repressive foundations, exclusion mechanisms and marginalisations. Chakrabarty adds that “we” all, who, with our different and frequently non-European archives, nevertheless “practice” European histories, should have the possibility of a policy of alliances and an alliance project between the prevailing metropolitan histories and the subaltern pasts from the periphery. The resulting project would be the “provincialising of Europe”. It means underwriting the narratives which have been privileged up to now, which are nourished by imagined pasts and visions of the future in which collectivity is neither defined by rituals and European nationalities but only by the “tradition” created by a modern age. Since there are no places in the existing structures in which such “dreams” can be institutionalised, they must continue to recur until the “subjects of nationality and nation state dominate our narratives of a historical transition because it is precisely this oppression of our dreams to which the modern age owes its existence.”<sup>247</sup>

Theatre in the migration society could be put into the context of this difference and in the impossibility of the project of “provincializing” Europe. Theatre could open a space which would not be possible in other areas of

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**246** | Rustom Bharucha, *The Politics of Cultural Practice*, p. 162.

**247** | Chakrabarty, p. 19 ff.

society. From the position of a “provincialised Europe”, in which stories of a new reality are presented on the stages, a new perspective achieved by overwriting European (theatre) histories could be addressed.

Another important element for a societal change of perception is the necessity to rethink the canons of national art. In an essay entitled “Art History as a Common Heritage”, the British-Indian artist and publicist Rasheed Araeen deals with the national identity of Great Britain. His aim is to point out that the construction of a national concept of British art has always implied an exclusion of non-white artists. The works of non-white artists have always been appraised from an ethnicised perspective. British post-war art has mainly been influenced by the post-colonial and multiethnic society. Araeen makes a plea for the recognition of the influence of migrant artists on the overall cultural history of the country: “Without a recorded history, nothing else can follow: no celebration of achievement, no development of a common cultural heritage. This results in immigrant populations looking outside these shores for their history and cultural points of reference.”<sup>248</sup>

By means of a change of perspective and a paradigm shift on the part of theatre makers, which would mean an acceptance of the social reality in Germany and the diverse cultural histories, the theatre can become a place for all people. This would require that the authority to define art must be reconsidered and new possibilities of self-representation must be created.

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**248** | Rasheed Araeen, *Art History as a Common Heritage*, (London: Third Text Publications, 2009).

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