

2.6 Conclusions

Until 1947, the Romanian theatre landscape benefited from the influx of various theatrical approaches of Ibsen, drawing plentiful of intersection lines in space and time. The French, the Italian, the German, the Hungarian and the Yiddish theatre practitioners provided the multilingual Romanian spectators with contrasting perspectives on Ibsen. The contrasts between the approaches they conveyed on stage pointed at the ongoing changes in the acting and the directing traditions in the European theatre of the time. In addition, the immediate impact on the audience also contrasted with the long-term influence on the techniques employed by the Romanian theatre practitioners when staging Ibsen. The foreign Ibsen events on the Romanian map depict the national theatre culture as a space marked by entanglements, embodied in a mainly free performance environment. If these touring performances were only exceptionally allowed to be presented in the National Theatres, the private theatre market was much more open to receive them.

The foreign productions brought numerous acting and staging techniques to the local theatre culture. While they were staged mostly in Bucharest, they rarely met in Romania at the same time. However, the temporal overview indicates that the impact of the various productions differed significantly. The timespan between 1890 and 1910 reveals the highest number of events, mainly because of Gustav Lindemann's ensemble and because of the Hungarian actors touring Transylvania. This timespan coincided with Ibsen's global breakthrough due to actors and managers who contributed to an intense international dissemination of his works, and, implicitly, to his emergence as a canonical playwright both on the stages of the world and on the Romanian stage. For instance, foreign Ibsen production were presented to the Romanian spectators almost yearly until 1911, in contrast to the period that followed, when the frequency of such performances started to sink, reaching a very low number between 1927 and 1947.

The question here is whether all these national theatre traditions merged into a hybrid Romanian tradition. The concept of *histoire croisée* becomes useful here, as it emphasizes the probably unique capacity of the Romanian theatre to carry the divergent influences brought from different national traditions by the foreign Ibsen performances. The main result is visible when we see them all employed in the local Ibsen tradition to a lesser or greater extent. Tensions and rivalries did occur, but what is specific to the Romanian Ibsen story is that there was no dominant theatre tradition at the acting level. All the genres introduced by foreign artists – romanticism, naturalism, symbolism, realism and Expressionism – co-existed within the Romanian Ibsen production until 1947. Thus, the tensions between them did not lead to a final confrontation, but contributed to a fluid framework for creative acting and directing.

Only one dominant element emerges in this fluid framework, stemming from the distinction between the actor-system and the ensemble-system. The foreign Ibsen performances nourished an already actor-based Romanian theatre revolving around a star-performer, even at the cost of the play. The ensemble-productions that empowered all characters equally by focusing on their interaction as a whole was less pursued and less influential. Thus, the Romanian Ibsen tradition of theatre production until 1947 displayed a constant tension between an actors' and a playwright's/ensemble's theatre, significantly favouring the star-actors. Their initiatives to stage Ibsen and their choices on how to

stage his plays make even clearer the co-existence of the multiple acting genres in the Romanian Ibsen production. In other words, the Romanian Ibsen tradition was highly dependent on actors until the Communist period; they moved freely in-between acting genres, being both conservative and open to experiments. The many different versions of Ibsen presented by the actors demonstrates their importance in the dissemination of his plays in Romania prior to 1947.

Eventually, the intercrossing of the various Ibsen approaches presented on stage demonstrate that the Romanian Ibsen tradition until the middle of the 20th century was a considerably complex, if not even contradictory, *histoire croisée*. Whereas the French, Italian, German and Hungarian theatre traditions displayed characteristics associated with specific national cultures tied to more or less fixed boundaries, the Yiddish example sits outside a national framework. Yiddish theatre traversed national and territorial boundaries, it borrowed from various national theatre traditions and melted these various influences into a new, singled hybrid theatre culture. By contrast, the Romanian theatre was framed by the national state and national boundaries and its Ibsen tradition did not merge the influences brought into the country by the foreign tours, but allowed for different styles to coexist visibly in the interpretative work of actors. The industrial organisation of the Yiddish and Romanian theatre cultures further enhanced these differences. On the one hand, the Yiddish ensemble-based approach privileged homogeneity, so that techniques adopted from different genres would blend harmoniously on stage. In the Romanian theatre culture actors could employ more freely their own approach, as long as the star still emerged as the strongest performer in the production. In other words, the Romanian theatre tradition resisted a unique, hybrid recipe for performing Ibsen and allowed foreign elements to interact within a single production. Finally, the status of the national theatre as state institution in Romania was completely different from the free, private Yiddish theatrical enterprises that constantly wandered across national borders as in a perpetual exile. The institutionalisation of the Romanian theatre resisted an invisible absorption of foreign influences, preferring a visible re-working of local and foreign techniques in multiple forms. An invisible boundary existed between the various national theatre traditions coming into the country, it favoured their coexistence, yet subtly controlled their assimilation into the local theatre tradition. Ibsen's further establishment on the Romanian stage reveals precisely the theatre practitioners' consciousness of the intersections between the local and the foreign theatre traditions, associated with a deliberate borrowing process, which fostered constantly new ways of performing and staging Ibsen.

