## "BABEŞ-BOLYAI" UNIVERSITY OF CLUJ-NAPOCA FACULTY OF THEATRE DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF THEATRE AND FILM

## **PhD. THESIS**

- summary-

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# The Spectacle of Violence - from Hypnotic Power to Social Responsibility -

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#### NOTES

(1) This is to certify by Ion Alexandru Berceanu that:

(a) The thesis includes the original research work of Ion Alexandru Berceanu (author) in order to obtain the Ph.D. title; the research was scientifically supervised by Professor Doctor Miruna Runcan.

(b) The interdisciplinary study *The Colleagues* was supervised by professor PhD. Daniel David and conducted in collaboration with lecturer PhD Bianca Macavei, lecturer PhD Silviu Matu and will be further published. Parts of the thesis have already been published; appropriate citations for these publications were included in the thesis. All the parts published were authored by Berceanu Ion Alexandru, scientific researcher PhD. Grigore Burloi, scientific researcher PhD. Cătălin Crețu and associate professor phd. Dragoş Cârneci. The Study *Variations of MU rhythm in respect to agent and environment* was conducted in collaboration PhD. candidate Alexandra Huh which will be further published. There are no other coauthors included in the publications.

(c) The thesis was written according to the academic writing standards (e.g. appropriate scientific acknowledgements and citations have been made in text by the author of the thesis).

All the text of the thesis and its summary was written by Ion Alexandru Berceanu, who assumes all the responsibility for the academic writing. In the studies involving collaboration processes, Ion Alexandru Berceanu conducted research, designed experiments, formulated hypothesis, discussed and wrote results. Analysis of data was done as it follows: EEG data for *Inter@face* experiment was analyzed together with Grigore Burloi, statistical analysis for *The Colleagues* experiment was done by Silviu Matu, EEG signal processing and analysis of *Variations of MU rhythm in respect to agent and environment* was done by assistant researcher Alexandra Huh.

(2) All the tables and figures are numbered within the corresponding chapter.

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**Keywords:** theatre, violence, aggression, psycholgy, neuroscience, therapy, emotion regulation, trauma, peace, EEG.

#### Preamble

Around the age of four, I went to the first theatre performance for grown-ups, *The Keys* to Breda City, at Sala Atelier of the National Theatre, staged by Sanda Manu, probably in the spring of 1982. The play was written by my grand-father, Ştefan Berceanu (Berceanu 1981). In the performance was about to take place an execution that I found impossible to watch because of the fear that overwhelmed the awareness that I am the spectator of a fictional reality. The perspective of a possible public execution, paralysed my capacity to fight against the capacity of fighting against the fear. A part of me believed it, while another part knew it was not true.

Remembering the sensation, I realised it is the shift between the suspension of disbelief and reinstating of disbelief. This process had the rhythmicity of the turning on and off of the light, putting the same context in a completely different perspective according to the direction where the light was coming from, with a different emotional result. The phenomenon had a rhythm independent of my will, as if there were two *self-s* playing hideand-seek.

This saccade corresponds to a biological fact put in perspective for the first time by sir Roger Wollcott Sperry through his research regarding the cerebral lateralisation, in the beginning through experiments on animals and, later on, through the testing of patients that had suffered neurosurgery interventions of separation of the two cerebral hemispheres in order to prevent the spreading of epileptic cerebral lesion. Through experiments, he concluded that if there is a symmetry when it comes to the structure there is neither a functional symmetry nor a neuro-anatomic one. Each of the cerebral hemispheres its own functions and, moreover, each generate a particular *self*. Each hemisphere thinks, has memories and emotions, all at the specific human level so that each hemisphere can be aware at the same time of different mental experiences (Sperry 1969. 532)<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>"In the surgically separated state, the two hemispheres appear to be independently and often simultaneously conscious, each quite oblivious of the mental experiences of the opposite hemisphere and also

This type of discontinued perception is described as *split* by practitioners or in detailed observations, such as the description of scenic process made by Stanislavski described in *An Actor's Work* (Stanislavski 1926).

The sequential processing type and, more specifically, experimentation of reality as a suite of discontinuations is a consequence of "different transfer rates" between brain processes and chains of perception (Llinás 2001)<sup>2</sup>. Llinás proposes in his book *I of the Vortex* the fundamental objective of the brain the ability to make predictions; we can consider the contradictory experience that we would describe as being a conflict between realistic prediction and prediction at the level of fictional reality: at the fictional level the execution is imminent, while at the real level it is impossible.

When the danger approaches, as long as it is at a certain distance, there is freezing reaction in both humans, as well as in the other species, which persists until the danger element reaches the limit which will trigger the automatic aggressive defense response (Gregg 2003).

I believe that the position of the "classic" spectator places the individual, traditionally, in a safe area so that the "fright" limits would never be crossed. The negative fascination state is highly related to the "fight or flight" response. From the observation of the example and its interpretation we find that performing arts cause behavioral, psychological and physiological reactions close to the real experience, reactions derived from the simultaneous presence of the actor and the spectator in the physical and fictional space.

In the present PhD thesis I aim to analyze the limits of these types of reactions caused by the performance of violent acts at the level of the performer and the spectator, in order to emphasize the" effectiveness" of the types of representation of violence. I define the effectiveness of representing violent action as the degree of similarity between fictional sedimentation and actual experience. This "efficacy" leads to the question "*What is the social responsibility of representing violent actions?*", as well as to the possibility of using theatre as an active instrument in controlling negative behavior.

of the incompleteness of its own awareness". R. W. Sperry, A modified concept of consciousness, în: Psychological Review, Vol. 76, No. 6, 532-536, 1969.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> "If the control system operates discontinuously (to avoid high computational overhead), a pulsatile nature is ideal. Although this is a step in the right direction for lowering our functional overhead, without gaining something in return, the risk of running motor control discontinuously could easily lead to choppy movements, with the uncertainty of whether muscle groups will synchronize appropriately in time through the execution of a given movement. What else might be gained by pulsatile control through time, apart from easing up on the brain's workload?" (Linas 2011 p. 32)

#### Introduction

If at social level there is the pressure to exclude violent behavior, in the sphere of performative representation the violent act has a main role. Whether we think about the violence of the action of the Greek and Roman theater tragedy, whether we think about *In Yer Face* drama or realistic theater, drama or comedy, the representation of violent actions occupies a central space and often gets pathological dimensions, representing an indispensable aspect of the action dramatic. Starting with Aristotle, dramatic action is defined as a confrontation between opposing entities, the action engine being the pursuit of purpose by the characters. René Girard (1972) links the existence of this field of freedom to unleash violence to a purifying social function of the Greek tragedy, which he describes in detail in his book *Violence and the Sacred*. By re-establishing the sacrificial ritual at the fictional level, the tragic hero assumes a collective "guilt" and is annihilated by it, like a goat or other sacrifice, which led, in archaic times, to the purification of the community.

Excessive violence is one of the most accessible ingredients for a public, critics, or professional success. Its occurrence at such long distances of time and space argues that there is a link between these types of performative representation of violence that seems to come from specific human needs. The study of the representation of violent action in theater is significant for deciphering many fundamental elements of human interaction. The interdisciplinary research theater-psychology-neuroscience develops knowledge about the specific elements of art such as: character, mimesis, empathy, metaphorical thinking, sublimation and transfer by emphasizing the cognitive, emotional, social processes involved and their physiological bases. This type of research produces new knowledge for the field of theater, but also brings new models for psychological and neuroscience experiments, increasing knowledge about the impact of the representation of violent action leads to the possibility of increased insertion of theater into society.

My Doctoral Thesis *The Spectacle of Violence - from Hypnotic Power to Social Responsibility* is formed of two parts. The first, theoretical, analyzes the constituent elements of the representation of violent actions and their broad framework. The second part, in practical terms, presents the results of my research and practice on the subject of violent acts.

In the first chapter I investigate the image of violence in European culture, analyzing the position assigned to violence at conceptual and scientific level. I will present opinions and conceptualizations from philosophy, ethology, neuroscience and psychology trying to form a holistic image of the subject. In this chapter I present statistical data on the incidence of violent behavior and their effects in order to assess the social impact of violence.

In the second chapter, *Representation of Violent Actions in Theatre*, with the help of the theoretical instrumentation in the previous chapter, I will follow some revealing cultural moments for the representation of the violent action in the theater. The objective is to capture the function of representing violent action in each of the cultural moments approached. This part of the chapter will be structured by moments and cultural trends.

The second part of the chapter analyzes examples from modern to contemporary times from international and national theatre performances. Here, the approach is of case study, displaying the specific situation of each creator presented.

The last part of the chapter analyzes relevant situations in artistic acts, related to the theater, starting from literature to performance-art and film, in order to analyze the limits and mechanisms of the representation of violence in other artistic forms of expression.

The third chapter of the paper will present the research steps and the results obtained until the present in personal experimental studies through artistic and scientific practice. These aim observing at psycho-neuro-physiological levels the effects of performing and observing violent acts within the theater. This is, to my knowledge, one of the first attempts to capture these aspects in a suite of experiments combining data collected both as laboratory and as theatre performance.

The first part of this chapter will present the experience of *Inter@face* and *Bucureşti 41 Round Trip* performances created during my doctoral research, analyzing personal choices in representing violent acts and the answer to applied strategies in both actors and spectators.

In the second part of this chapter I will present three interdisciplinary experimental studies developed during my doctoral research in collaboration with other researchers. The studies have as central element the representation of violent acts. At the same time with their presentation I will describe the tools and methods that I believe are more applicable in the field. I consider this step to be the most fascinating of my research, because of my own sense of entering a white, unknown territory. Its source was primarily due to a lack of knowledge of the fields of interdisciplinarity, which were psychology and neuroscience, but also to the relatively small number of researches in this direction, both at a at national and international level. In the experimental studies I conducted three researches. The first study was based on

self-reporting through psychological evaluation questionnaires and which aimed at highlighting the effect of representing violent action at the level of the observer towards the performer, study conducted in collaboration with PhD lecturer dr. Bianca Macavei and PhD. lecturer dr. Silviu Matu from the psychology faculty of Babeş Bolyai University Cluj under the guidance of professor dr. Daniel David, in the process of publication, whose partial results I will present in the paper.

In the second study we conducted, the EEG monitoring of several subjects during the *Interface* theatre performance. Subsequently, the data were analyzed and used to create an algorithm for recognizing the change of emotional valence based on real time EEG analysis, and to evaluate the impact of representation of violent acts on the power valence in the prefrontal cortex. These results were published in *Studia Dramatica 2/2015* (Berceanu 2015), and the PhD thesis develops the importance of the emphasis in the EEG study on the representation of violent acts in the theater. EEG analyzes were made for this study in collaboration with PhD researcher Dr. Grigore Burloi from CINETic and the interpretation of the results were performed in collaboration with Grigore Burloi and researcher doctor Cătălin Crețu from the UNMB.

The third study regarding the desynchronization of the mu rhythm to the observation of the action of the hand in different contexts, an EEG study, is a reply to the study *EEG Evidence for Mirror Neuron Activity During the Observation of Human and Robot Actions: Toward an Analysis of the human qualities of interactive robots* (Oberman 2008), adding to the original study a sensory stimulus in the experiment in order to see to what extent an emotional stimulus, overlapping the observation of an action, brings a change in the electro-physiological level.

Through this study, my aim was to emphasize, in an experimental situation, the desynchronization in the mu power spectrum between the occipital zones as a result of watching an action having as an agent a robotic hand, a human hand and an animated hand, compared to the application of a perceptual stimulus. The objective was to verify to what extent the desynchronization in the mu band, which is highlighted to be correlated with the intentionality of the movement, is dependent on the type of representation or the degree of "humanity of the agent", thereby becoming intimate in the process of observing violent action. In the present thesis I will present the context of this study, its data and its results, its possible follow-ups and possible implications for the representation of violent action in the

performing arts. The processing of the EEG signal and the statistical data were conducted by PhD. student Alexandra Huh.

The last chapter of the paper outlines the responsibility involved in representing violent acts, as well as how the representations interact with society. I will try to draw action guidelines for improving the social role of the theater and the development of theater interventions to regulate aggressive behaviors. In the present thesis, the performative act, especially as it is lacking in mediation of its expression, being a process in which the author of the script is also a performer, has a "self-therapeutic" value. This self-therapeutic tool for regulating the social interaction of the artist is necessary for a harmonious individual development, which is why the intimacy of the performative mechanisms must be understood and accessed at the level of practical knowledge by all. In particular, I will analyze the limits of the possibilities of intervention on aggressive behaviors through performance.

#### 1. Theoretical Aspects of Binominal Violence-Aggression

#### 1.1 Short Defining of Terms

The word "violence" comes from Latin and contains the root of the word "vis" power and the participle "latus" of the verb "fero" - worn, taken according to Newton Garver's article (Garver 1968) "What violence is?" from Violence in Modern Literature. Etymologically, in the language of origin, it would have translated word by word - the power carried or, more precisely, the exercise of power. In the Oxford dictionary, the primary meaning of the word violence is: behavior made with intent to do harm. Then the meaning of "against the law" is specified and, as a second meaning, the root of the power becomes destructive. In French, "violence" according to Larousse is "the character of what manifests, produces or produces effects with intense, brutal and often destructive force." The Romanian explicative dictionary defines violent as something that occurs with power, intensity, intense, strong, loud. The word Gewalt corresponds to the word "violence" in German, but has several meanings: first, it has a meaning of power or empowerment to do something. The second meaning is that of an illegal procedure by which someone is bound to something. The third meaning is that of overwhelming force, such as the forces of nature. The root of the word is "walten" - a verb that means to exert a power that naturally flows, at whose strength you cannot resist.

The common element we find in the different types of semantics presented by the word "violence" implies the making of an action with a power that goes beyond purpose and causes consequences with a destructive or at least disruptive effect on the object or entity upon which the action is directed. In general, the use of the adjective "violent" in the contemporary languages is pejorative and, only in extremely special situations, becomes a positive quality, most often when referring to a work of art or the response to another violent action. At the semantic level, we notice a shift from the conceptual sense of the exercise of power to the effect of the exercise of power, namely the consequence of the destruction or deterioration of the object upon which the power is exercised. If in the sphere of art-related human actions we talk about violence, at the level of sciences studying behavior, the notion used for the sphere of violent behaviors is aggression.

Since ancient times, violent behaviors have been condemned as human actions, existing a continuous attempt to control or self-control through norms, rituals and laws. Human societies attempted to exclude violence against members of a society and put in place ways to regulate the types of violence that are acceptable among the categories of members of that society. In this case, the violent action is emptied of its negative character; in many societies, the violence exerted by an agent who has the right to exercise his power over another individual, such as a slave-master relationship, teacher-student, man-woman, or parent-child is no longer or, especially , was no longer reprehensible, but an exercise deemed to be justified by the power position.

If we move towards the areas of feelings and passions, their violent character, though dangerous, is often appreciated, stimulated and rewarded. Feelings, strong passions are violent because their appearance leads to the transformation of the person and to the appearance of a new person by destroying the individual's old reality or leading to the disappearance of the individual. The same elements are specific to the artistic field, so we can describe the artistic works with words like: "it is strong," "it is wild," "it is earth-shaking," or "it struck me like a punch in the chest," all of these expressions being compliments to a theatre performance; and the negative alternative "it did not move me" or "it did not touch me" reveals the lack of a transformative capacity of the artwork. The atrocity contained in some of the greatest masterpieces of contemporary art is tremendous, the confrontation with these masterpieces increases the quantity and quality of emotion. Why is the violent effect of the power of art desirable, but not that of other powers?

Looking at the ethology approach to aggression, we observe that we have intraspecific aggression (aggression among the same species) and inter-specific aggression (aggression against other species). By switching to violent actions on an inter-species scale in general, inter-species interaction is seen as almost necessarily violent as the basis of the food chain. Thus, we can have violent action directed on individuals of the same species or on different species.

At the human intra-species level we can distinguish two main directions of violent action: individual and collective. The human being is not the only one performing systemic violence within the species, many other species with a high degree of social organization practice this, up to the complete elimination of the opposite group, from bees to rats or primates such as baboons (the latter do not extinguish each other completely most of the times, but steal their territories and females after inter-clan wars).

#### 1.2 The Impact of Violence on Contemporary Society

Intra-specific human violence is predominantly manifested in several areas of expression of violent human behaviors or actions: war, the application of various coercive strategies, the so-called "criminal phenomenon", which includes but is not limited to gang violence, organized crime, pathological criminals, violence to obtain goods, etc., rivalry and self-violence. Statistics tend to say we are living in a less and less violent world. World Population has risen in the last century, despite the fact that at the middle of the last century, gathering the victims of the Second World War, including the Holocaust victims, the genocide against the people by Stalin and Mao in less than twenty years more than 150 million people were violently killed - about 8% of the world's total population at that time.

If we delimit from the great catastrophes of the last century, such as the Second World War, which alone represents the greatest loss of human lives, with an estimated of 75 to 85 million deceased, and the coming years with the great catastrophes in Russia, and China, as we pass through the 1970s, although conflicts do not disappear, conflicts are becoming increasingly local and with fewer victims. Here is the great importance of the perspective: if the Second World War will remain the last great war on the planet, we will be forced to surrender to the evidence: we live in a world closer to peace. Until we get this certainty, we can only have a reserved attitude, noting the power with which global conflicts have grown up to the unprecedented destruction that World War II has brought us, and how terrified we could be at the prospect of a new global confrontation.

Some of the most atrocious genocides belong to recent history: Cambodia, where between 1.5 and 3 million people, Indonesia, at least 0.5 million people, and culminating in Rwanda, where, within 100 days, they were killed, mainly by machetes or bats, between 500,000 and 1,000,000 people. Indonesia is a great example of a country where those who were the main rulers of genocide are still in power, which brought this genocide to the public attention much later. The new millennium has perpetuated extermination in Sudan, Myanmar, and the conflicts in Yemen (about 15,000 victims), Syria (over 400,000 victims) and Congo have produced the largest number of casualties. The global conflict analysis, according to *Human Security Report* (2012) of Simon Fraser University, after the end of the Cold War, shows that the trend in armed conflict has fallen by half, with an intensification

of around 40 armed conflicts on average per year in 2008, but with a decreasing number of victims. Therefore, at the present moment, the number of war victims per year is less than one million for more than 20 years and is below the number of violent deaths globally recorded for reasons other than armed conflicts.

According to the World Health Organization's 2002 *Global Status on Violence Prevention* report on the situation of violence prevention and incidence, at the present moment, from an annual number of violent deaths, 10% are the result of armed conflicts, 10% of accidental deaths, 30% are the result of interpersonal violence, and the remaining 50% (of the over 1.5 million annual deaths caused by violent causes) are suicides.

According to the 2014 report, the number of deaths caused by the war is rising but still does not exceed the number of victims of suicide (further estimated by the WHO in 2018 for 2017 to 800,000) and that of other violent deaths.

Death-provoking violence is the most carefully and consistently reported and archived by reports. The 50% suicide rate of the total number of violent deaths is an extreme indicator of the violence and pressure society pressures its individuals. Of these approximately 800,000 people who commit suicide annually, about 10% of them do this for health reasons other than mental health, this being almost at the same level as financial deficits, according to the WHO.

An extremely important aspect is the huge gap between gender relations in violent actions. 84% of the victims are men in 2016 as well as in 2015 according to the Small Arms Survey-2017 *Global Violent Deaths*. The main intervention strategies recommended by the World Health Organization report are directed towards vulnerable groups: women, children and the elderly, thus trying to solve the effect of aggressive behaviors rather than the cause, which is male behavior. Status disputes between males are the most important source of violence, but this is precisely what is left out of the main policies of action to prevent violent acts. An extremely important aspect of this report is to highlight the links between poverty and violence, poverty being a risk factor, existing poor (or very low-income) communities with a low incidence of violence as well as communities with similar income, but where violence is extremely widespread.

Successful policies to reduce the number of victims of violence at local level range from the spectacular transformation of New York, especially of a neighborhood like the Bronx, to progress made in Colombia after it was devastated by conflicts between the various cartels involved in drug trafficking and between them and state forces. Following detailed studies, the Mayor of Cali, a city that in the 1990s had an incidence of 124 homicides per 100.000 inhabitants, following the New York model, discovered which are the outbreaks and specificities of escalating violence, links between alcohol and homicides (*The Economist* 5.04.2018).

In the case of unprovoked deaths, an extremely tough chapter is violence against women and children, WHO estimating that this violence has a major effect on their health in all its aspects. Also, statistical data show that access to the study of this type of violence is greatly diminished, with studies showing that at least 20% and in some cases up to 60% of women do not report violence committed by an intimate partner even when injured, and of 48% injured women only 36% sought medical help for the injuries they suffered. Reported as population incidence, it varies from 25% in Europe to 35% in Southeast Asia and 24% in the Western Pacific. At the same time, WHO estimates that there is about a quarter of the adult population of the globe who had suffered physical abuse in childhood, with a higher incidence in Africa. These data are only estimated, but offer a tough but realistic perspective on human relations at present moment.

In Romania, according to Eurostat, between the analysed periods 2007-2009 and 2010-2012 there has been a decrease from 2 homicides per 100.000 inhabitants to just under two, which places us in a place 5 in the European Union somewhere immediately after Finland. The next Eurostat report will be published in July 2018, preliminary data indicate the downward trend in the incidence of homicides and a very spectacular fall in injurious attacks, from over 17,000 in 2013 to just 2009 in 2014. These data must be viewed with caution, especially as we move towards types of violent actions that are not reported or investigated by the police, the cultural factor being an extremely important one. Thus, when it comes to sexual offence, Germany (27,000), France (19,000) Sweden (11,000) and Britain (over 40,000 in 2014) lead the European Union, with only 508 sexual offences reported in Romania, less than rapes, which were 1016 reported in Romania, but rising in recent years, while in the Western countries mentioned before, there is a fraction of about one-third of rape against sexual assaults. Concluding on the statistical incidence of violence, it is noteworthy that the global estimate is that for each death causing violent incident there are at least 20 unprovoked death incidents and that data on them are much more difficult to manage, according to WHO 2004. Suicides are the most common cases of violent death in our society.

On a global level, however, there is a drastic decrease in the assessment of the reality of the Second World War and, in particular, the Holocaust, which poses a big question

to global capacity to prevent new major conflicts. The rising of globalized conflicts would have devastating effects and even if the incidence of these conflicts seems to be decreasing, the danger of their outbreak should not be minimized at all. The tensions in the contemporary world are major and in danger of rising because of the profoundly polarized character of society, both at the level of access to resources or different cultural horizons, but especially the degree of education different from education (primary resource of harmonious development).

#### 1.3 European Sociocultural Raport with Violence in Modern Age

Europe is, currently, one of the regions least affected by violence, which is not the case for the continent's past. The biggest wars started and took place largely in Europe, and the history before 1914 consists of a long suite of armed confrontations, in which peace periods correspond more to the conquest of internal or external powers than to of good understanding.

In an effort to systematize European conceptions of violence, Coady (1986) distinguishes in political and philosophical thinking three types of definition of violence: narrow, extended and legitimate.

Galtung (1969) considers violence, in its many forms, to be attacking the bodily being or any other form of its integrity. Therefore, a society that eliminates physical violence but perpetuates inequality can not be called a pacified society.

Hook makes a major distinction between the role and the position of violence in democratic society, opposite to the despotic or anarchic one. Hook is the lawyer of exercising power in the context of the system, that is, a proper conduct of power (Hook 1970).

Walter Benjamin, in *Critique of Violence* (1921), considers that the right to violence is "confiscated" by the state, the state being an entity that has the right to exercise violent actions under certain conditions. In Benjamin's view, the state grants in certain "exceptional circumstances" the right to resort to violence. Walter Benjamin draws attention to peaceful conflict resolutions focusing on participants in the dispute, as opposed to law enforcement resolutions that focus on the subject matter of the dispute. Benjamin's non-violent conflict resolution means courtesy, trust, pacification and resolutions will completely

exclude violent solutions. Benjamin's central point of thought is that violence can not be ethical, Benjamin's proposal to identify new means capable of delivering resolutions without violence in human disputes, the so-called *means without end*.

Arendt defines violence as "man's power over another man", thus becoming the opposite of power: "violence can always overthrow the power," "violence and power are opposite; where one absolutely reigns, the other completely lacks "(Arendt 1970.2). At the same time, Hannah Arendt defines power as "man's ability not only to act, but to act in concert" (Arendt 1970.8). For Hannah Arendt, political life (city-polis life) is free of violence and is characterized by the use of language as a tool of communication and persuasion, violence being moved in relation to conceptual language. For Hannah Arendt, the human condition is nonviolent and achieved through dialogue (Arendt 1958).

#### 1.3.1 Michel Foucault: dramaturgia pedepsei

The "script of punishment" originates in a collective layer of its acceptance, a direct consequence of this type of acceptance leads to the "sovereignty of collectivization". Given that the punishment is socially consensual, it causes anonymity and leads to the formation of a collective entity that has no face but has a much larger symbolic dimension than that of each individual (Foucault 1975).

The author of a dramatic script (the author of a theatre play) is in a direct dialogue with this unreadable being who, in the shelter of the pack, hunts individuals for their mistakes or weaknesses. The author can become a voice in the group, or he can turn against it because he empathizes with the one who does the wrong, the punished being seen by him as a victim. In the case of public executions, indifferent of the nature of the crimes of those who suffered from the crime, they, through the torment to which they were subjected, could gain an aura of exemplary beings, becoming glorified. Foucault sees in this phenomenon one of the reasons why corporal punishment has been abolished, and its atonement has been extracted from the public sphere (Foucault 1975).

Foucault notes the correlation between the economic "social interest" and the type of punishment applied. In monarchical society, the primary interest was to celebrate the authority of the king, a divine entity sent to Earth. This is why the murders against the kingdom were the most severely punished. Foucault opens one of the most important chapters in the study of violence: the function of symbolic entities in violent behavior. Touching objects, such as insignia, or breaking rules has the same value as touching the physical body and, therefore, causing the unitary reaction of the entire body with all its strength. The goal of the excess of violence is to purify the victim and the world by eliminating the mistake as if hidden somewhere, probably in the mind of any individual who might think to repeat it, trying to impose fear.

Theatrical dramaturgy is extremely sensitive to paradigms and scripts of punishment, evolving from "servitude to reality", when it strengthens the norms existing in the cultural context, in which case the character is punished for the hybris. Sometimes, the dramaturgy proposes to overturn them by empathy towards the negative or positive character due to the punishment and even the "dissolution of punishment." An extremely important disruptive element in the hero's punishment comes from the public nature of the representation, almost indifferent to the character's negative traits (see *Richard III*): for many, empathy projection and natural repulsion toward violence deconstruct the punishment. Investigating the artist's implications and appearances for the position he adopts, sometimes without being aware, will provide a case material that is extremely relevant to the limits that the author assumes or imposes on the representation of violence and the consequences he causes in relation to their reception by the public.

#### 1.3.2 Judith Butler: The Right to Suffering

This essay argues that mourning can provide resources for the rethinking of community and of international relations and that the military preemption and derealization of loss undermines fundamental human ties.

Judith Butler: Violence, Mourning, Politics 2003

By studying Judith Butler's essay (Butler 2003), I take a first step towards the practical steps taken to minimize or, ideally, eliminate violence in human society.

What Judith Butler proposes (2009) is a post-traumatic recovery perspective: how can we be so as to minimize trauma and how to prevent the emergence of a chain of revenge caused by the violent event, which in the most dramatic form is death, in her terms, "loss"? The chain of revenge is one of the most powerful constructs in inter-human relationships.

Judith Butler believes that society is unequally responsive to individual suffering according to the origin of victims both at the media level and at the level of rights. The fragile condition of the human body is the second premise upon which she builds her argument: "Loss and vulnerability seem to follow from our being socially constituted bodies, exposed to others, at risk of violence by virtue of this exposure." (Butler 2000, 8).

Given the fact that the will of the individual appears or manifests after the appearance of the body and that, for the survival of the individual, the human relies on other individuals or society, it is understood the "multiple" owner of the body, the owner of the body being the master, the sovereign, father, state or divinity. For Butler the body is engaged in a system of relationships that all are part of the body. From this perspective, the "loss", especially of a person, is felt as a loss of body integrity, as an amputation. The originality arises from its conception of individual integrity as a physical and symbolic integrity, as well as from the notion of a common body on which a common responsibility is exercised. By building links, knowing and recognizing mutual suffering would automatically build a new "common body." Certainly, recognizing the public or political value of suffering can be a lever for the creation of this common body.

#### 1.3.3 Giorgio Agamben: Recognizing the Body and the Right to Life

Agamben examines the relationship between power and life, starting from the paternal right to the life of the offsprings, and reaching the right of authority over its subjects, which he defends: without the protection of authority, the subjects are reduced to naked life (vita nuda). Agamben distinguishes two categories, a form of life and a naked life, but establishes a quasi-identity between the concept of life form and naked life, considering that there is no distance between the two terms or that the life form can not be detached from or exist without naked life. Agamben believes that, by politicizing human relations with life (establishing of conventional relationships that give a status of inclusion or exclusion), the primary right to life is denied, which should stem from the mere existence of life.

Agamben's second fundamental work is *The State of Exception*, where Agamben reiterates the statement in *Means without End* that the authority has established the state of exception indefinitely. The exceptional state, Agamben explains, is the suspension of the law during the war and the entrustment of the power of the armed authority law. The decisions taken by the authority during a state of necessity can not be subsequently judged

by current laws, and the actions of the authority have the power of laws. Agamben opposes this anathomy of the law in an exceptional state with effects on the body, another form of law anomaly, found this time in the carnival. Thus, during the carnival, the law was overturned not to allow the authority to act without consequences, but to allow those who lacked authority or rights.

His life is protected indifferent to the fact that his actions are against the consistency of authority; life should not need the defense of authority but contain in itself the lack of the need to defend itself. In Agamben's view, both the force of the law and the inactivation of the law are conventions, fictions, the first being a violent convention, while the second is a cheerful convention: "One day humanity will play with law just as children play with disused objects, not in order to restore them to their canonical use but to free them from it for good. What is found after the law is not a more proper and original use value that precedes the law, but a new use that is born only after it. And use, which has been contaminated by law, must also be freed from its own value. This liberation is the task of study or of play." (Agamben 2005. 64)

## 1.4 Etology's Perspective on Aggressivity. Konrad Lorenz, the Birth of Moral and Natural Mechanisms of Redirecting of Aggressive Instincts

Lorenz determins the aggressive instinct at the level of independent instinct, with "equal rights and values" with the other instincts of conservation, reproduction or defense, present in all forms of life, regardless of their complexity. He establishes a principle of its functioning according to the "hydraulic" model of the aggressive instinct: we can see man / animal as a container that gradually fills with a liquid: in time, the pressure in this vessel increases due to the flame of instinct and the force gathered would have to unleash at some point because, otherwise, the vessel will break as a result of pressure (Lorenz 1963).

According to Lorenz, when the power of weapons becomes a killer inside the species, the behaviors automatically fit into the ontogenetic imprint of each individual in order to prevent self-destruction of the species. The way in which these behavioral imprints are achieved is by "rendition" after an experience, namely the attack of another individual, and the instinctive response of the individual to this attack. By repeating this pattern, behavior is ritualized, gaining independence, and a special function in the behavior of a

species that functions as a result of essentialization and becoming sedimentary at the genetic level.

For Lorenz, aggressive behaviors within the species lead to the appearance of the organization of social hierarchies and cohabitation rules that develop in morality not only at the level of man, but for most diverse species. "Moral" becomes a sort of inhibitor or redirector of intraspecific violence that increases the survival chances of that species. Unlike other species, humans have developed other weapons than "natural" ones, thus surpassing, by invention, the speed of evolutionary adaptation. Consequently, man is the owner of weapons that are used without having developed at the ontogenetic level the behaviors to prevent the unloading of these weapons.

Ritualization is the repetition of a series of gestures that gain independence from the motive that initiated them, constituting themselves in an independent behavior that has either a role of signaling the state of the individual, or solidifies the redirection towards another object of unleashing violence. By simply executing the ritual, the hydraulic vessel is emptied, and Lorenz notices it in the formation of couple relationships or the connections between geese, animals predominantly studied by Lorenz (1966).

By identifying ritualisation in behaviors that can channel human violence, Lorenz raises a great challenge to performative arts, a challenge with which they have always converged and where the beginnings of theater and collective or public representations can be linked.

Lorenz's view of the mechanisms of aggressiveness has often been debated and contradicted, especially his "hydraulic" model by E. Wilson in *Human Nature* and Lehrman in 1953 in *A critique of Konrad Lorenz*'s *Instinctive Behavior*. The fundamental controversy between the two scientists (Lehrman and Lorenz) between culture and nature lasted for more than twenty years and, in fact, still animates the scientific and philosophical world at different levels.

Within the species, confrontation does not normally lead to the death of individuals, the exceptional situation where fatalities occur within the species is if there is unequal ratio of "arms" to individuals, for example when a dominant female attacks a baby chimp or a chimpanzee attacks a man. In the other situations, even if the chimps are capable and able to kill, this does not happen, but leads to a restructuring of the hierarchical structure within the group. De Waal believes that the sense of justice is deeply embedded in emotiona, monkeys, and dogs having the sense of equity highlighted by the reaction of anger or dissatisfaction in the case of unjust reward as well as that of guilt.

#### 1.5 Psychology's Perspective on Aggressivity and Violence

Psychology offers, probably, the widest variety of patterns and ways to understand aggressive and violent behavior. Psychology aims to understand violence-related behaviors, to explain their integration among other human behaviors, to develop means of measurement and methods of intervention to prevent aggression.

This chapter highlights the contributions and perspectives on violence offered by Darwin, Freud, Lacan and then are developed the Miller-Dollard, Berkowitz aggression frustration models of neo-cognitive association are developed. Berkowitz believes that cognitive levels often reorient aggressive behaviors having an inhibitory role. Associations may produce a conditioning or inhibiting effect on aggressive behaviors.

A major direction of conceptualization of psychology regarding aggression is that of socially learned behaviors, Bandura's theory that highlights man's ability to learn large units of behavior through observation. Bandura did not consider that social learning theory demonstrates a direct influence of television on aggressive behaviors, nor does it refer to the long-term effect of learning violent behavior, its goal being to develop the model of behavioral learning through observation. Bandura considers anger or frustration as a coping mechanisms in front of the obstacles. As a development of Bandura's theory, a long line of research has been opened on the influence of media on violence, the results being often deformed by those who produce it. Therefore, there are many studies that highlight alarming effects, null effects and beneficial effects.

Furthermore, there are presented several basic models: Megargee's Aggression Algebra that emphasizes an algebra that unconsciously calculates a cost-benefit ratio obtained by performing violent behavior (Megargee, 1982); Social Information Processing: Appropriate Social Information Processing (SIP) has a tendency towards hostile attributions, interpreting ambiguous events, such as an accidental hit on the corridor of the school, as hostile one; this trend is a powerful predictor of aggression; The Theory of Scenarios assigns an increased importance to the media and the environment in forming behavioral reference scenarios for people especially at the childhood stage (Huesmann 1988); Zillmann's Excitation-Transfer Theory (1983) highlights the transfer of the state of excitement from one type of emotion-stimulus to another. If two stimulating events take

place shortly, one of the other excitement related to the first may be attributed to the second one with particular reference to anger.

Bushman and Anderson developed the general aggression model, GAM, model which includes neo-associations, social learning, personality and physiological aspects (Bushman & Anderson 2002). The two build an integrative model in which the determinant role has personal factors and external factors and systematizes and unifies the concepts of aggression. In GAM personal features such as gender, attitudes, beliefs, values, long-term goals in interaction with external elements such as aggressive stimuli, drug or psychotropic substances, frustration, pain and biological issues placed in a situation that has the potential to give rise to aggressive behavior determines whether or not aggressive behavior occurs. Personal variables interact with situational stimuli resulting in specific emotional stimulation and, following cognitive evaluation, triggering aggressive behavior or not (Bushman and Anderson 2002).

Another important concept among the concepts of aggression is empathy. Intuitively, there is a great interaction between empathy and aggression, but the results of *The (Non) Relation Between Empathy and Aggression: Surprising Results From a Meta-Analysis* (Vachon 2013) found that only one of the empathy measure scales correlated with aggressive behaviors, the rest showing no correlation effects.

From the point of view of the representation of violent action through theater, all theories imply responsibility. Concerning the complex relationship between the media and violence, Feshbach (1971) notes, along with the negative effects of violence on television, the positive effects of its media coverage, observed in the generalization of widespread protests against the Vietnam war, later transformed into attitudes global violence against violence. Responsibility for how we represent violence is increased by this observation, highlighting the major importance of a media against violence.

#### 1.6 Neurosceince's Perspective on Aggressivity and Violence

Neuroscience studies the functioning of the nervous system at all levels: structures in the order of centimeters, millimeters and nanometers, each of which constitutes a specific branch of neuroscience, having its own instruments and studying different phenomena, scientists rarely conducting studies to different magnitudes (Llinás 2001). Neuroscience reversed the major nature-culture opposition developed in the disputes between Lorenz and Lehrman, transforming the opposition into a dynamic bi-directional interaction system between the biological and the environment. The influence of the environment in certain critical stages modifies the biological and changes at the biological level involve changes at the behavioral level.

Within this chapter we present the structure of the central nervous system and the elements related to its functioning at electrochemical level as well as the most important elements emphasized at the present moment regarding the physiological bases of emotions and cognitive processes.

Neuroscience does not abound in classifications of types of aggression in the way that psychology does. In general, the dichotomy between instrumental-premeditated aggressiveness and impulsive-reactive aggression is applied. Another division specific to neuroscience is made between defensive agression and offensive aggression. Strategies and resources involved in both animals and humans involve different resource allocations as well as different techniques and, in particular, different neuro-vegetative states (Blanchard et al 2003).

Aggressive behaviors have been highlighted primarily on animal models, many studies being conducted on cats that have a diverse and visible range of signs of aggressive, somatic, behavioral and acoustic behavior. Each of these is linked to different brain structures, some of which have the role of effector, the central gray matter of the mezacental (PAG), the inhibitor, the prefrontal cortex and other modulators: tonsillium, hippocampus, hypothalamus, septal nuclei, accumbens nuclei and basal nucleus terminals (Gregg 2003), as we observe with the composition of both the structures of the cerebral trunk, the cortex and the limbic system. To understand the relationship between PAG and amygdala in initiating the aggressive response, it is noteworthy that it occurs under conditions of PAG stimulation even if the amygdala is extirpated, but does not occur if the amygdala is stimulated but the PAG is extirpated, which led to the granting of the generic state or the PAG structure effector (Blair & Charney 2003). For each structure, the role or roles are described in detail as well as their interaction.

The aggressive emotional response is defined as an aggressive response modulated by emotions in the case of a stimulus that causes a threat. In this case, the amygdala appears to strengthen the aggressive response to a new stimulus, but to decrease it to some learned stimuli, which is evidenced by the different response at the somatic level correlated with a different response of the amygdala in the reflex of thrilling to new stimuli, pleasant stimuli and threat stimuli (Gregg 2003).

For humans, the proposed model is generally a *top-down* and *bottom-up* interaction (Figure 1.6). The limbic system initiates aggressive behaviors, being inhibited by the prefrontal and the cingulate cortex. The cortex acts as a brake in the motor and verbal triggering of aggressive behaviors. Aggressive behaviors are pathologically increased when there is an imbalance at one of these levels (Siever 2008). Thus, as highlighted in psychology, learning can modulate aggressive behaviors. Neuroscience highlights two layers involving neuro-plasticity (the basis of neural learning) about aggressive behaviors: the prefrontal cortex level and the limbic system and the relationship between them.

A series of neurotransmitters have been shown to have a particularly important role in inducing or inhibiting aggressive behaviors: serotonin (5-HT), dopamine, gabb, acetylcholine, norepinephrine, glutamate, noradrenaline, GABA and NO are the most mentioned but it is also evident the interaction with other compounds of the steroid hormone range such as testosterone or cholesterol (Blair et al 2003, Siever 2008, Nelson et al., 2014). The listed neurotransmitters are practically the main non-transmiters, being involved in most processes, which makes their role in aggressive behavior complicated and difficult to highlight, and in the case of neurotransmitters, the role highlighted is described in detail at the present moment.

Neuroscience highlights the electrophysiological manifestations of aggressive behaviors, mainly through scalp EEG, electrical conduction of the skin, electromyogram and the variability of heart beats. There are indications reported at the EEG level for exacerbated aggressive profiles (eg serial killers), but the most interesting results come from GSR and HRV, which are very effective predictors of the incidence of violent behaviors. The general explanation for the strong impact of low excitability in generating antisocial behaviors is that the under-excitement state is unpleasant. People living in such a state seek stimulation by factors that are normally advertised to get out of the substimulation state (Raine 2013).

Taylor (2009) introduces, between the brain structures involved in exacerbating aggressive behaviors, the island involved in the vomit reflex. In the case of man, real stimuli, whether they are already obstructed, or stimuli that are only seen or imagined, can initiate the vomit reflex. The same reflex can be trained by stress or confrontation with repulsive moral categories. The aspect is valid at the social and personal level; often in interpersonal relationships the categorization of a person as disgusting in a certain aspect attracts the accumulation of multiple labels as disgusting that can lead to indirect aggression or revenge

in case of real or imaginary harm. Taylor introduces the concept of "otherisation", which is the process of distanceing oneself from different ones, and establishing a lower position that constitutes the reason for aggression or subordination of those considered inferior.

The personal testimonies of the Holocaust survivors, collected during the *Inter@face* theatre performance (Berceanu 2014), bring the appearance of disgust in the mass killing scheme in a much more direct and less speculative way, confirming Taylor's hypothesis. In their interviews, both Miriam Bercovici and Liviu Berish evoked the loss of social state and self-image with the loss of the possibility of keeping personal hygiene. After only two days of imprisonment, the smell of Jews became unbearable for others, and incapacity to keep hygiene destroyed self-respect (Berceanu 2014). Cleanness is one of the main concepts of human culture of all time. The dialectic clean-unclean, pure-impure is present all the great religious traditions at a central level in all cultures, and there are elements that attract loss of purity and proper purification rituals.

Thomas Elbert, James Moran and Maggie Schauer in Lust for violence: Appetitive Aggression as a Fundamental Part of Human Nature (2015) propose a two dimensions model of aggression: a horizontal one of affective valence and a vertical one of intensity (Elbert 2017). The model implies that the same violent action that initially causes negative emotions over time will produce positive emotions to some people. At the neurochemical level there is a shift from the release of cortisol and adrenaline to the release of endorphin (Elbert 2017). The shift from perceiving violence as traumatic to exuberant violence is equated with the shift from defensive violence to predatory attack (Elbert 2017). Although the source of the group's research, proposing the "two-pedal" model aggressiveness as a reaction and aggression as a pleasure, is deeply anchored in the social value of these behaviors, they do not introduce such a dimension into their basic pattern. Considering that the model proposed by them has support in the action of hunting, which in all mammals living in groups has an aspect of attacking the pack, I think that to this model we could add a third dimension, that of social acceptance of violence. This factor is a catalyst that greatly accelerates the moment when valence attributed to aggressive behavior turns from negative to positive.

Neuroscience helps us to see more precisely which are the limits of possible interventions to regulate aggressive behaviors, namely processes that can generate neuroplasticity. In the same way that in martial arts the repetition of a movement must be done until the moment of proprioceptive internalization, a lesson learned about violence without integration and practice in the real regime of engaging in violent action is of no value. Methods of theater presentation can provide this type of experience that engages the proprioceptive system to such an extent that we can enter into dialogue with the brain structures involved in aggressive behaviors and managing to intervene in the chain of conditioning.

In a natural way, the theatrical and cinematic representations cause changes in the state of excitement of the parasympathetic system, the high level of sedimentation of the information and even conditioning specific to these media being illustrated by the success of the advertising industry. Methods of psychological therapy are still primarily developed through verbal interaction, and therapists have very little access to information other than verbal information, although behaviors are mostly determined by contextual physiological reactions.

As Miruna Runcan remarked, theater, film, and books have the force to instil in us the desire to imitate characters, especially when the innate desire to imitate is not inhibited by adult seriosity (Runcan 2005). The ability and reflective action of imagining us in the place of others has always been exploited by artists. Whether it is the dancer or tribal priest, the theater actor or film director knew how to exploit the dynamics of body perception to translate us into the privacy of the story, to immerse us in the character's point of view.

#### 2. Representation of Violent Actions in Theatre

#### 2.1 The Dialogue Between the Juridic Script and the Dramaturgic Script

The basic principles of the dramaturgic structure indicate a major relationship between the specific natural setting of human life: birth-death, life-adventure and the interconnection of all stories in an unique epic arch developed largely by Propp's fairy tale unity theory or the monopoly of Joseph Campbell (Campbell 1949). Campbell's monomite can be seen as a complementary theory to the *hamartia* - the tragic fault - with the replacement of the of the trigger element, the hamartia mistake, with a call to adventure. If the call to adventure is a mistake, its consequence will be a form of punishment; if the call is of another nature, the call will be rewarded after confronting the obstacles. The obstacle is seen as a constituent part of drama and aggressive behavior. For Dollard and Miller (1939), aggressive behavior arises when an obstacle appears to be an objective that an individual can reach. We find here the frustration-aggressive motor at the base of the conflict, the main building element of the dramaturgy; it is generated by the interaction between characters with opposing purposes, which constitute obstacles for each other.

Contemporary theater structures dramaturgy beyond the traditional paradigms of the conflict and punishment, mainly by engaging other types of spectatorial relationships than those determined by suspense.

The spectatorial relationship proposed by the post-Brechtian dramaturgy is one of detachment, or of play outside the tension of action; therefore, the spectator no longer "looks" in action but acquires a critically active role in which dramatic action does not end at the final of the show but continues to overcome the obstacle by the spectator in real life. The proposed paradigm is not the representation of confronting a hero with an obstacle, but the revealing of obstacles to the spectator. If the traditional relationship of the theater proposes observational catharsis, the elimination of the frustration tensions by observing confrontations, contemporary theater often has a deeply agitating component.

# 2.1.1 From the Purity of Representation of Violence in Greek Antic Theatre to the Roman Excess

From the point of view of the representation of violence, ancient Greek theater seems to be the result of an extremely careful, subtle regulator and an extremely knowledgeable psychology and neuroscience of aggression, seeming to follow exactly the wishes or guidance of a responsible author such as Kathleen Taylor in the representation violence. In Violence and Greek, Alan H. Sommerstein (2010) sums up the reasons why he could have reached this state, the most plausible reason being the religious one. Violence was considered to be contamination not accepted in the sacred, implicit in the theater (Sommerstein 2010).

In Latin theater violence is present in the theatre performance, including directly by describing performances in which the slaves were mutilated, killed or forced to self-inflict. Beacham attributes to the differences in political organization the different objective of the Greek and Latin theater, considering that the latter aims to provide fun to citizens who do not participate in the city's decisions, which has led to the amplification of the sensational (Beacham 1991, Fagan 2017). For the Romans, entertainment was a form of social therapy of forgetfulness or escapism through fun, a very functional one and important arguments in neuroscience and psychology.

The theater performance was excluded and banned from the life of the Romans, as well as the gladiator battles. Christianity had a critical attitude towards theater. Tertullian, in *De spectaculis*, shows that all forms of theatre performance are violent and harmful. We find here the sources of opposition between the church and the theater and, in fact, any form of amusement, but also a comment on the right to punish. Tertullian denies the right to apply the punishment to the body, noting that regardless of the guilt of a man, the exercise of his power over him automatically decays the one who exercises it from the state of superiority. Punishment automatically produces blame on the one who punishes (Tertullian es.197-202). The right to commit the punishment will move, in Christianity, to those who are God's messengers, kings or prelates, as we have seen at Foucault.

#### 2.1.2 Shakespeare and the Action of Emphaty in the Sphere of Punishment

As in many other Elisabeth-era pieces, the last *Hamlet* scene is invaded by blood. Only one notable person, Horatio, who wants to take his life, remains alive from the list of characters.

The force of the conflict comes from the fundamental antagonism of the forces it opposes - to act or not to act, to take revenge or not to take revenge, punish or not to punish. Through Prince Hamlet's hesitation to act, his whole family withdrew his right to exist. Hamlet's murder is a crime against survival, and it must be punished exemplarily.

From the point of view of the punishment scenario, Prince Hamlet's tragedy brings a first paradigm shift attempt, the main character hesitating to take revenge. The play can be read as a confirmation of the punitive scenario of the era, confirming the duty towards the king and father, as well as the demystification of the punitive scenario through empathy toward the main character that casts doubt on the need for vengeance.

Although Shakespeare does not completely overturn the paradigm of the punishment scenario, he puts it at a highly corrosive level. Shakespeare grants an equal human condition, regardless of condition or guilt. As violent as atrocious, even if it becomes appetizing for characters in some situations, the viewer, by the author, does not lose sight of looking at the suffering of the other.

## 2.1.3 Ibsen, or from the Inheritance of a Dirty Blood to the Things Worth Fighting For

Ibsen's dramaturgy is built on several coordinates: duty to God, duty to society, duty to ancestors, duty to offspring, and duty to oneself. A very special case in dramaturgy is Nora. The real story from which Ibsen left is that of Laurel Kieler, who wrote a novel in 1860 in response to the theatre play *Brand*, and became a close friend of Ibsen's. Laura needed money, like Nora, because she had secretly lent it to treat her tuberculosis-infected husband in Italy. To pay, she faked a check to the bank that refused the pay; she was discovered and then incriminated by her husband, who had hospitalized her in a crazy asylum, accepting her back much later (Byad 2009).

Nora is an unique character in dramaturgy. She is the only one that the writer escapes from any punitive scenario - Ibsen leaves her free from any constraint to say, "I have other duties just as sacred, duties to myself."

Every night when Nora is playing, a door opens through which Nora leaves without a hair on her head being touched, because the hand that would hit her is stopped by Ibsen.

#### 2.1.4 Chechkov and the Extinction of Collective Punishment

From the point of view of dramatic construction at all its levels, Chechkov brings

major changes. Chechkov realizes the complexity of the psychological levels and the contradiction between them. The system of stakes created around the conflicts in Chechkov's plays makes the characters more often than to be part on several sides of conflict.

The traditional stakes of the dramatic construction are extinct, the conflict as an interaction of two opposing forces or entities is no longer a complete meaning in Chekhov's dramaturgy. Obviously, we have elements of the conflict, we have conflicting scenes, but under no circumstances do we find punishment or do we trace the scenarios of punishment, and that's not because there are no mistakes. Chechhov's characters, and through them the author, refuse aggression, but are subject to extensive aggression as Galtung conceives (1969): the aggression coming from the sum of inequities and social pressures.

#### 2.2 Systemic Approach of Stage Directors and Stage Representation of Violence

The twentieth century has, from its beginnings, an increasingly rich component of the representation of scenic action due to the development of the director as the author of the show. Antonin Artaud is one of the main thinkers of modern theater. At the beginning of the subchapter I analyze my report on body integrity and find a self-therapeutic function in the theatrical approach.

An extremely exciting example in setting the boundaries between these spectacular forms is the *US* theatre show by Peter Brook in 1974. The theatre *US* spectacle militated against the Vietnam War and, in particular, against the use of napalm by US troops. One of the challenges that Peter Brook addressed was the audience's report with the image of mutilated bodies, often children's bodies burned with napalm, often present in the media. What could the performance bring to get a reaction?

The climax of the theatre performance was the moment when an actor burned a butterfly on the stage. The audience was shocked; the Royal Shakespeare Company's mail was blocked by entire bags with mail from people protesting against the butterfly's burning. The emotion and reaction of the spectators, in front of the burning of a paper that looked like a butterfly, including the post-show action of sending letters, was caused by the fact that they thought the butterfly was alive. The example demonstrates the efficacy of theatrical representation and suggestion that succeeds in creating similar reactions to those of the performed action.

Cruelty to the body is an integral part of humanity, its own way of talking about it is

not mere exposure, and Brook chooses in his directorial speech a process of deconstructing violence.

Jerzy Grotowsky's performances almost always had violence at their center. Grotowsky builds theatrical performance of the signs, transforming the text into sound whose logic and sound load are more important than the semantic. For Grotowsky, theater is a ritual that has a psychotherapeutic effect. Grotowsky was influenced by Jung's archetypes and his concept of collective psychic.

Grotowsky's central concept is the *poor theater*, opposed to the rich theater, full of decorativism. Poor theater is a theater that relies mainly on the actor's ability to communicate through his body and who does not use fireworks, decors and costumes. Grotowsky brings through the poor theater a first response through theater to the concept of widespread violence as defined by Galtung, for which inequality is a form of violence (Galtung 1969). Grotowsky moves the theater out of the position of being a space of inequity and material excess, the affluence of affluent social strata, in the position of being a space of the human body seen in action.

Further on, there are evaluated the positions of some great directors of the twentieth century such as Eugenio Barba, Bob Wilson, Richard Schechner. Between the artists analyzed with significant activity in the 21st century, we analyzed the productions of Pippo del Buono, Back To Back Theater and Rimini Protokoll. The action of their performances is not mainly epic, and one of the main results is the highlighting of economic power relations in society, revealing the violence in the sense of Galtung as an expression of any form of inequity. In the late 20th century, since the 70's in the theatre more and more effective spectacular methodologies have been developed to create off-site performances based on suspense and representations of violence that deconstruct it. Although these are extremely important and have a wide artistic impact and are generally recognized as the most valuable theatrical experiences, these ways do not come to constitute normality, but an exception. At the individual level, theater creators at the end of the 20th century have made the responsibility for representing violence in the scenic space and have developed appropriate creative strategies, thus contributing to the future release of the man of violence.

#### 2.3 Representation of Violence in Contemporary Dramaturgy, Case Studies

The chapter analyzes dramaturgical texts that provide an important relationship with

the representation of violence: José Triana, *The Night of the Assasins*, brings in a cyclical representation the act of killing of their parents by their three children, Beba, Cuca and Lalo.

Triana builds empathy for one of the most reprehensible acts, parricide. During the play, the three children played by adult actors are placed at different times in the act of killing: post factum, before the time of the crime, during its planning immediately afterwards. If Lalo's game was not essentially violent, it would be a possible response to Agamben's call for means without end, while Lalo's image recalls the prophecy of the philosopher over a time when people will play with laws in an immaterial juggle (Agamben 2000).

Marius von Mayenburg's *Fireface* also contains the possession of the decision to impose punishments by an unqualified individual. Kurt punishes the society by fire. And Kurt, like Lalo, questions the order of the world, but still unconsciously. The dramatic scenario of punishment produces in *Fireface* a subjective condemnation of the world to an atomic death that seems ignorant of any form of social responsibility. The play of Mayenburg is a play that is directly disturbing to the audience because it questions the way to live and the right to live of an individual who deviates so loudly from the norm.

In *Marisol*, José Rivera condemns to death the existing order. Polarization of errorpunishment, blame-revenge is reinforced with a militant purpose, the scenario of punishment is strengthened in the case of Marisol by the social pressure to which the Puerto Rican community is subject to the country to which they belong, but in which they are secondhand citizens of the country: a hundred years without political rights.

The pressure of the need for social change is manifested in Dollard's frustrationaggressive model (Dollard 1939), re-editing Caplan's remarks about African-Americans engaging in violent protests in the 1970s (Caplan 1970) at the Puerto Rican level. Rivera's approach is unequivocal, attackers have the legitimacy of angels because they act as a necessity, since they have been ignored when it comes to the possibilities of democratic change.

**Caryl Churchill** tells how one day she realized that she writes plays like all the other plays, all having a beginning, the development of the action, the outcome, all based on a story and are built on the basis of a conflict. Then she realized that this is a dramaturgy model developed over time by the plays written over the past two thousand years by men and she wondered to what extent this dramaturgical model is representing her. One of the results of this question is *Top Girls* play that brings a fundamental rupture of many of the ways in which it was supposed to be a play to be able to exist (Caryl Churchill 1982 p. 5).

#### Sarah Kane

In one of the few articles written by Sarah Kane in 1998, *Why Can't Theatre Be as Gripping as Footie?*, she compares the performance of football to the theater, and she wants the same type of emotional involvement for both of them. Her position of effort and pain brings an important insight into her artistic approach. Sarah Kane proves a surprisingly Spartan conception of art. She believes that there is a need for physical effort and physical danger to excite the audience. For Sarah Kane, the theater is needed to produce an activation of the senses corresponding to the state of fight or flight.

**Mark Ravenhill** is another author for whom social violence has become a priority issue. *Polaroid* or *Shopping and Fucking* focus on violent interpersonal relationships, the characters are unable to build relationships outside domination, slavery and power. *Shopping and Fucking* brings to an epidermis level the mercantile violence of capitalism by exposing violent nature of sexual relations seen as a battle of possession forced. Mark Ravenhill brings to the center of attention the violence of society on sexual orientation as well as Tony Kushner in the United States.

Suzan Lorry Parks exposes cycles of violence and racial oppression.

In all analyzed cases we observe a profound contextualization of violence. The theater is for each of the mentioned authors a tool for dialogue with society on the forms of apparent violence in society. Insofar as the public is recognized in the type of violence exposed, the theater performs a polarizing phenomenon, contributing to the formation and affirmation of communities and micro-communities.

## 2.4 Elements of Representation of Violent Actions in Romanian Contemporary Stage Directing

In direct contact with the violence of society, both the film and the post-decade theater were naturally concerned with the representation of violence. Unlike the Nazis' film, which brings a representation of trivial and repulsive violence, theater generally presents a mediated violence through the classic, very often poetized, abstract, and profoundly aesthetical text, whose peak is represented by Silviu Purcărete. Purcărete builds fascinating images of cruelty, such as the hypnotizing end of the *Danaids*, with the dominion that kills each of Danaos' daughters. In this landscape of metaphors, suffering and violence, exceptional performances in both the quality and eccentricity appear in the 1990s: Alexander Hausvater after the text of Fernando Arrabal, *And They Put Handcuffs on the Flowers*; and

second, *Ghetto* by Joshua Sobol, at the National Theater, directed by Victor Ioan Frunză, *Richard III* by Mihai Măniuțiu after Shakespeare at the Odeon Theater, performances analyzed alongside other national productions from the point of view of the representation of violence.

After December 1989, the performances mirror at all levels the violence of the Romanian revolution and of the years that followed. The preoccupation with violence remains constant in the Romanian theater, but the ways of expressing it to the generation that witnessed at the end of childhood Mineriade, revolution and execution of the Ceausescu family (for stage directors such as Gianina Cărbunariu, Andreea Vălean, David Schwartz and others) build their discourse not on profound sensory participation; reality seems to be more easily perceptible without the pollution caused by the depiction of abused bodies. When body completeness is reached, the representation is made by emphasizing the fragility of the body in rather minimalist images.

#### 2.5 The Limits of Public Representation of Violence

Are there limits to the representation of violence and aggression in art? The answer seems to be "not, in any case, not at present moment." In contemporary art, violence is not only represented but also preformed. In this subchapter, the works of Marina Abramović, Franco B, Santiago Sierra and others are analyzed to see to what extent can we talk about limitations in the violent action in the artistic field. Freedom of exposure to violence in the Euro-American culture is currently unlimited, with the amendment that its exposure to media channels is subject to specific rules.

## 2.6 The Functionality of Aggressive Act and Its Representation in Arts. Trauma and Self-Therapy

The public representation of violent acts varies widely and follows a highly sinuous evolution over time. The experience of the two World Wars completely changes the perspective on aesthetics and its limits. The unprecedented carnage and the hardness of the disfigurement of the human body, to which many artists participated or witnessed, questioned the integrity of the human being in all possible aspects.

The opening of the Cabaret Voltaire in 1916 can be seen as the immediate reaction to

the war on the Dada group, the inability of Henry James's language as a personal reaction to the horrors of the war became programmatic with the dissolution of logic and reason in their manifestations. The integration of hazard, intuitive and illogical into their work, coupled with the anti-war and anti-bourgeois character of the movement laid the foundation for new aesthetic relationships that completely changed the artistic traditions.

Behind the words of Henry James there is emotion, with all its homeostatic characteristics, as described by neuroscience. Likewise, behind Dada's destruction of the word we discover an emotional action that regulates the balance of the social and individual body at the level of homeostasis.

Antonio Damasio proposes a vision of the system of emotions and feelings as a regulator system; in his vision, emotions are what determines the actions (Damasio, A. 2014). The action of these artists becomes a self-therapeutic action of regeneration and balancing, following the attack from the outside. This approach is a natural human process, the exercise of which must be developed and which, as we have stated in the introduction of the paper, must be made available to all individuals.

The author is immersed in society, and to the extent that he feels a direct aggression or witnesses an aggression, the author will represent it directly or metaphorically in his work in a self-therapeutic act of remembrance and exorcism of trauma.

# 3. Personal Studies in the Domain of Representation of Violent Actions

In the doctoral research, we have carried out several researches in the field of the representation of violent action in the theater, both through artistic practice and through interdisciplinary research. In the framework of the artistic research, we have made two performances that have involved deep violent actions: *Inter@face*, documentary performance around discrimination in Romania, and *Bucharest 41 Round Trip*, a theatrical tour about the pogrom in Bucharest (Berceanu 2014, 2015, 2016). The artistic approach was formulated from the perspective of the theoretical apparatus accumulated in the doctoral research. The three research experiments, one of which in the Inter@face theatre performance, aimed at verifying the hypotheses formulated in the doctoral thesis, namely to what extent does the representation of the violent action constitute an engine of the spectator's action and interest? To what extent does the direct representation of violent action have a traumatic effect on the spectator and the performer? To what extent can violent action represent a therapeutic role at the social level?

## 3.1 Studies through Artistic Practice

#### 3.1.1 Inter@face

*Inter@face* starts from Kathleen Taylor's concept of "otherisation". The *Inter@face* theatre performance was made using specific methods of the devised theater type on discrimination, a theme that was presented to the creative team at the beginning of the project. The creative team was chosen to achieve a cultural diversity representative of the proposed theme. We initiated a joint research within the team<sup>3</sup> starting from the gloomiest episode of discrimination in Romania, the Holocaust. At the beginning of the rehearsals,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Project team: Alexandru Berceanu – stage director and playwright, Andreea Chindriş playwright, actors: Cătălina Bălălău, Paul Dunca, Ionuț Niculae, Liviu Popa, Ana Costea – coreographer, Cătălin Crețu – music coordinator, Grigore Burloiu – programmer, Maria Draghici – video artist, Adina Babeş - researcher, Sabina Pavel-scenographer.

interviews were made between the members of the creative team, starting from a set of questions on identity, discrimination and violence, some of the interviews being included in the show.

For *Inter@face*, we intended to use symbolic value for brain electrical action by monitoring the EEG and generating sound from it, a performative action associated with the continuous interaction with the stimulus environment offered by the performance of the show. A special point of interest in the project was the EEG's relevance to emotions, the current BCI interfaces being in the process of developing this type of application for recognition of some emotional parameters.

The show alternates moments of intense excitement with those emotionally tense, in order to produce "refreshments" of the spectator's emotional state. The theatrical mode used is that of the suggestion, the spaces being suggested by the actions of the actors, or by the spoken indications of the theatre play.

Almost all the subjects interviewed for the performance, insofar as they have suffered violent actions, have been traumatized, remembering the event having a traumatic effect and at the time they were expressing it. In the case of the elderly Holocaust survivors, I was able to distinguish two directions of relationship with the stories told: the duty of stories and the closing, or, more precisely, the effort to cope with the traumatic effect of the narrative. Almost all those who told the Holocaust experience were somehow performers, Judith Muresan, Vasile Nussbaum and Silviu Beriş mentioned that they know their physical and emotional reactions to what they are saying.

The same type of reporting was also found in the communities where I interviewed survivors of the Rroma Holocaust, called *Poraimos-Devouring*. Remembrance of the Holocaust is equally traumatic to the Jewish survivor or the Rroma, but the latter is much more physical. The Jews we interviewed were all university graduates and word is the main instrument that tells the experience, the emotional reactions being ordered according to it. But in the stories of Marin and Elena Rupita, and in those of Belgianu, RRoma survivors, the main element is the gesture. Repeating the gesture of shooting with the machine gun, dropping corpses, or imitating stepping on the corps act as the trigger of emotion. Memory is structured by gesture, and it trains the resurgence of physiological experience. A recurrent remark is the change in saliva consistency, perhaps more acid after the story of traumatic memories, which often causes coughing, saliva spitting and water drinking.

In this context, we considered that the exposure of the spectator's subjectivity gains a symbolic value, trying to outline the dialectics that create identity through an approximation / rejection process. We have tried in the performance to offer elements that open the spectator's imagination to self-analysis on this subject, creating an emotional interface with symbolic value.

#### 3.1.2 Bucharest 41 Round Trip

In *Bucharest 41 Round Trip*<sup>4</sup>, a theatre performance directed at the State Jewish Theater on a text written in collaboration with Andreea Chindriş and Alexa Băcanu, we went through a comprehensive documentation of the Bucharest pogrom that took place on January 21-23, 1941, during to which more than 150 Jews were killed, some in the street, others executed after being tortured to be extorted of money or goods. We found that both those who remembered their traumatic experiences (Holocaust survivors) and those who saw them for the first time (some of the spectators), the process of participating in a Holocaust-themed show may be traumatic. Although mediated, exposure to Holocaust violence reached a toxic level in *Inter@Face.* In *Bucharest 41 Round Trip*, we intend to offer a spectator's journey from the present cultural moment to the year 1941.

Therefore, we included the idea of traveling in time, starting with great personalities such as Mihail Sebastian, Nae Ionescu, Marieta Sadova and Winston Churchill, who meet the victims of the pogrom: Rabbi Guttman and Mauras Brickman's mother, because Churchill has a machine that can travel in time and see anytime and anything that has happened or will happen. Through a conventional accident, the public travels over time (with a coach in the initial version of the show) between locations in the Dudești's neighborhood, a Jewish neighborhood burnt down during the pogrom, the Great Synagogue, burnt down during the pogrom, and at the Telephones Palace, one of the main places of confrontation between the army soldiers led by Antonescu and Legionnaires. The trip ends in the Jewish Theater building, where the audience watches the premiere of Mihail Sebastian's theatre

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> București 41 Tur Retur was written by Andreea Chindriş, Alexandru Bercenau and Alexa Băcanu following a documentary led by CSIER researchers Adrian Cioflâncă and Anca Ciuciu Tudorancea, the scenography of the show was made by Andrei Dinu. In the research, with the help of an eyewitness, it was identified for the first time the exact location of the executions in the Jilava forest was, where a commemorative plaque was placed on January 21, 2017.

play, *The Star Without a Name*. The first text from the Pogrom experience is the testimony of Rabbi Guttman as it was typed in the process of authorities to establish responsibilities in the Jilava Forest Massacre.

In the *Great Clean* scene, the viewers are placed towards the center of the synagogue, the action happening around them. Shouting actions are spoken orally, actors behaving as if the Jews gathered to be tortured were visible and the audience invisible. Fictional reality is left to be obvious, the text is clear where it is documentary, where the intervention of one of the authors has a literary, slightly unreal character. This is also evidenced by the opposition with the direct memories of the Jewish district exposed by my father, a non-Jew who lived in the 1960s-70s in the Jewish community, being a direct witness of the second Jewish disappearance in Romania, the one produced by migration. Thus, the spectator gets access to information at the first hand, the unreal reality of the violence of the pogrom being established in the mental map of Bucharest.

#### 3.2 Experimental Studies

As part of my doctoral research, I wanted to highlight the effects of representing violent acts. The effects of representing violent acts can be designed to take place on at least three different levels: author, performer, spectator-society. In the developed studies, I set out to try to highlight mainly the effect of representing violent actions on the performer and the public.

#### 3.2.1 Inter@face

During *Inter@FACE* performance in 2014, alongside the traditional means, we used an EEG monitoring of an actor and a spectator as a performance element. EEG monitoring has had this role on two coordinates: sound generation from the monitored EEG signal, and a subtle coordinate related to the symbolic-semantic level of the show, by using real-time predictive emotion-prediction software in - a performance on discrimination.

Post-performance analysis of the data was done using the EDF browser, which generated the visual differences of potential between AF3 and AF4 sensors (the odd number indicates the location on the left hemisphere, while the lettering indicates the positioning on the skull region, AF-front). An alpha spectrum analysis of the potential difference between the AF3-AF4 sensors was performed, after the graphs were obtained, the graphical reporting

of the graph was switched to the scenarios. Areas have been noted in a topic where a few minutes are in the reverse of the previous average. The displacement of the monitored power from the left front hemisphere to the right and the other is reported in the literature as associated with the status change of the monitored subject.

We remark the moments with a maximum over average of which at 1h:19 of the performance, maximum for both the subject A2.2, but also compared to the other subjects, the moment corresponding to one of the climatic points of the show, the notation of Notti Gezan, which tells how the Jews were tortured to confess where they hid their treasures, how they were beaten and controlled in intimate areas, including minors. The moment is the strongest brutality in the show. Generally, there was a great deal of relevance to the changes in the graph for the ups and downs of the show, and their occurrence was associated with them. From literature, this phenomenon has been associated with the attention-avoidance complex associated with the prefrontal cortex activity in the alpha spectrum. Putting this point in the analysis of the EEG data collected in the Inter@face performance in times of increased violence leads to the hypothesis that this may be a physiological explanation that contributes to the hypnotic state felt in the observation of violence both in reality and in fiction. Alert activity also involves neuro-chemical activation under alert status, as well as activation of special levels of memory recording, so that it can lead in the future to capitalize on avoidance experience. Neurochemical activation in case of resurgence of violent experience is similar to that of the initial state, being visible, as we mentioned during interviews with Holocaust survivors. At the same time, avoiding high-violent performances can be considered an adaptive strategy to move away from negative stories in memory. The public is willing to go through negative emotions as long as at the end it will feel reconciled in one way or another. Beings give most of the energy and attention to avoiding negative states that can harm the state of health; an animal that does not cleanse its fur or plumage is a sick animal.

#### 3.2.2 Interdisciplinary Study: *The Colleagues*

An experimental investigation of the impact of violence performed and simulated in the theater on emotion and cognition

The interdisciplinary psychology and theater study *The Colleagues* ran from 2014-2105 as part of my doctoral research in a collaboration between the Faculty of Theater and the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences at UBB Cluj and with the support of UNATC IL Caragiale. The study was conducted in collaboration with lecturer dr. Bianca Macavei and lecturer dr. Silviu Matu from the Psychology Faculty of Babeş Bolyai University Cluj, under the guidance of prof. dr. Daniel David and is currently published, partial results are presented in the paper.

In the present study, we tried to focus on how the representation of violent action affects viewers and performers of violent acts in two types of representation, one performed realistically and one suggested.

The two types of immersion in fiction are very different; as far as the first (SV) is concerned we assume that it is based mainly on imagination and autobiographical memory; and the second (PV) is based on imagination, autobiographical memory, as well as new sensations and emotions, caused by the new real stimulus and interaction with the partner. Since there are significant differences between the processes involved in the two types of scenarios, we can assume that the emotional experience of an acting actor should have a different consistency than the one in which he remembers something during a monologue, but also that this would trigger another type of emotional and cognitive response from the public, first of all the cognitive schemes defined by Huesmann (Huesmann, 1998).

We focused on our study of psychological measurements at cognitive, emotional and memory-related stress. Our overall hypothesis is that the impact on actors involved in interpreting a violent theater performance will be greater on the actors. The goal was to identify psychological mechanisms useful in generating theater-based interventions to manage aggressive behavior.

Subjects interpreted aggressive behavior (actor, interpretation of a violent script), thought or talked about aggressive behavior (actor, violent scenario suggested), noticed aggressive behavior (spectator, violent screenplay) or heard someone talking about aggressive behavior (spectator, violent scenario suggested).

For our study we had as a subject a group of 40 volunteer students in acting, coming from two Romanian universities, all native speakers of Romanian. All participants were randomly assigned to the experiment, either as a performer or as a spectator in a type of performance, Interpreted Violence (PV) or Suggested Violence (SV) and the role of Victoria or Dana, respectively Victor or Dan, the script being adapted to the sex of the actor randomly distributed in a role. The scenario was specifically designed for the experiment and followed the same action and time units in both SV and PV. Dan, Victor's office colleague, forces him to stay after work to finish an important project for the company. Dan assaults Victor verbally, mentally, and physically, finally locking him in a room. While Victor is alone, he destroys the project he's working on, wiping it off the computer. Dan is annoyed and destroys Victor's laptop that the latter has just received, and Victor attacks Dan, hurts him with a pencil and throws hot coffee on him.

The following tools have been used: *The affective distress profile* (PDA, Opris, & Macavei, 2007), *The Word Recall Task*, PNAS Scale Negative and Positive, IBSC, Atlas of Attitudes towards Workmates, ATQ Attitudes and Beliefs, ASLM, ERS-attitudes towards aggression and violence, Assessment of the degree of closeness to the main characters - 3 items, Evaluation of actions in the scenario causing the most intense emotions - 3 items (Witmer & Singer, 1994).

# 3.2.2.1 Results

We found a significant effect on the depression sub-scale, these results indicate that the performed piece had a consistent effect on the mood experienced by the participants and led to an increase in emotions in terms of hostility and depression in the case of the performed action.

Then we analyzed the most intense emotions experienced by the participants and what were the moments in the artistic play they generated (using the three items we developed in this study). The results showed that, compared to the actors, spectators more frequently reported moments that made them experience anxiety, the actors reported more frequently that they experienced positive emotions.

## The Effects of the Play on the Cognitive Process

We made a separate analysis for both the true words in the list and the false memories (words that fall into one of the categories above but are not on the list). We watched this interaction using pair comparisons, and the only difference that had significance was that of actors and viewers, in the context of the violence being interpreted, the actors remembered more words about violence. There was a significant difference in comparing roles in the play with violence. The actors in this case have remembered more pro-violence words than spectators. Several other effects above the statistically significant threshold were highlighted by the results being presented in detail.

#### **Conclusions and discussions**

Exposing aggressive behavior in an interpreted violence scenario alters the emotional experience of actors and spectators and actively differentiates cognitive structures that have and are unrelated to violence and aggression. However, only thinking and talking about aggressive behavior (ie a suggested violent scenario), just observing aggressive behavior or hearing things about aggressive behavior has less impact on these emotional and cognitive processes. These findings suggest that the experience of perceptions and body feelings associated with aggression could have a major impact on emotional reactivity and cognitive processing. In addition, we have found that interpreting aggressive behavior leads some subjects to experiencing positive emotions. These combined results seem to suggest not only a priming effect of a cognitive aggression scenario or scenario, but also a complex internal simulation of thoughts, emotions, behaviors, psycho-physiological reactions, perceptions, body sensations, moral judgment and judgments, in accordance with the concept of embodiment. The complexity of the results suggests that multiple mechanisms could be involved in processing the representation of violent action, which requires further exploration.

# 3.2.3 Variations of MU Rhythm According to the Agent of Action and the Environment of the Representation of an Action

As we have seen before, an extremely important indicator of the audience's level of involvement in the show is given by the level of attention and the type of attention: to what extent the type of attention differs according to the form of expression, the author of the action and the type of action? Some of the things that most strongly affects us emotionally is the destruction of the physical integrity of the body, a profound aspect embedded in our system of assessing the consequences of actions and consequently of justice and implicitly by the allocation of attention resources. To what extent are there differences in impact on resource allocation perception of physical integrity destruction by agent? In the experiment, I proposed to follow Lindsay M. Oberman's model of experiment, described in their paper *EEG Evidence for Mirror Neuron Activity During the Observation of Human and Robot Actions: Towards an Analysis of Human Qualities of Interactive Robots* (Oberman, L. 2018). In this experiment, the authors of the paper highlighted the hypothetical activation of the mirror neuronal system by observing disturbances in the MU range of EEG activity in observing an act of grasping, perturbation considered to be related to the activity of the neuronal mirror system.

Oberman's conclusion to the experiment is similar to the performative practice: a puppet theater show activates the same empathic processes as one performed by human actors. Spectator practice tells us that there is no limit to man's empathy capacity, and that the human being can empathize with a point in a cartoon.

In constructing the experiment, we came to three types of condition - the robotic hand, human hand, animated human hand - each of them in three conditions - static, grasping a ball, standing over a candle flame and raising the hand. By choosing the stimuli, we wanted to see first of all the extent to which we would have the same results as the model study, which concluded that there were no differences in the execution of the robotic or human hand dissonance; secondly, we wanted to emphasize whether the conclusion would be similar in the case of the same action by the animated hand; and, thirdly, I wanted to observe the possible changes induced by the introduction of a sensory stimulus that determines the movement of the hand.

The final sample consisted of 12 participants (6 women and 6 males) aged 21 to 30. EEG data was collected from a total of 25 participants, but 13 participants were excluded because they did not have enough good trials for each condition (minimum 8 out of 10). The trials were excluded if they exhibited muscular or ocular artefacts after the data preprocessing step.

EEG data was continuously collected at a 500 Hz sampling rate using a highdensity EEG system. The study was conducted using an EEG helmet (Waveguard, ANT-Neuro, Germany) with 64 Ag / AgCl electrodes, positioned according to the international system 10-10. The impedance was checked at the start of the study and adjusted to 20 k $\Omega$ . For recordings, the reference electrode used was CPz.

Our results showed statistical differences only between the dynamic conditions of the robot's hand and those of the human hand and the drawn hand, the results being opposite to those in the work from which we started, but according to other studies. Between the conditions with and without candle stimulus no statistical differences were found at the level of the mu mismatch. This may be due to methodological reasons or may relate to aspects of the way in which motor stimuli are differentially processed. However, the different response between the robotic hand and the human or drawn hand indicates a role that is not limited to the perception of motricity, the desynchronization was used in literature as an indicator of changes in the band that would reflect the extent to which the person perceives the intentionality of an action. The statistical analysis could not capture significant differences between the conditions of interest, the synchronization being similar whether it occurred in the ball or flame / man / robot / drawing condition.

# 4. Theatre Script in Violent Social Action

Communication at the society level occurs both through words as well as through action. Actions are the basis of interpersonal communication, but at the social level, actions are the most telling. Often, actions that have the role of communicating take scripted forms whose meanings are decoded very strongly and build extremely powerful emotional responses. One such example is the administration of punishment, a scripted form of communication. The chapter analyzes ways of communication through violent action and presents the theorization of this system by Naomi Klein (2007). A special space is given to the study of Joshua Oppenheimer's intervention in *The Act Of Killing*, both at the socio-political level, where his film produced changes in the perception of genocide in Indonesia in the 1960s and Britain and the United States with it, the perpetrators of this genocide who first come to question their mass murder actions and have a reaction to repel the violence they have committed.

I continue to examine several moments of extreme violence in the contemporary era, terrorist attacks and their reaction, the suppression of the revolution, highlighting the role of state communication on the way in which an aggression is perceived and implicitly determining the social reaction.

Analyzing the public discourse, escalating it has an extremely important stake, the human society experience so far providing enough material to prevent the escalation of conflicts. Globally, the paradigm of the penalty scenario is the dominant one. Political discourse and military action respond to aggressiveness with aggressiveness. The pressure exerted in the conflict zones is so strong that it becomes destructive, more and more strongly in geographical areas away from the conflict - from the Middle East to Europe and the USA, but also to India, Malaysia etc. Multiplication by copying highly aggressive behavioral patterns, such as terrorist acts, brings with great need new types of conflict resolution that do not act by using power and violent coercion.

The model of psycho-dramaturgy or socio-drama intervention has proved its effectiveness alongside other models of psychotherapeutic intervention, being an already systemic way of intervention. To what extent will the theater have the power to take further steps in this endeavor, bringing the new types of socio-human relationship proposed by philosophers such as Judith Butler or Agamben into a dramaturgy aimed at raising a common global consciousness? The theater has over time been a major opening tool, as we have seen in

a previous chapter, bringing empathy towards excluded categories. Identifies three levels of theater action to reduce the incidence of violent behaviors. The first is to increase the weight of theater representativeness in social life through the development of programs and spaces for the performance of theater at a professional level, but especially amateur. Decreasing direct social contacts, increasing communication between people in the digital environment can be counterbalanced in the formation of social relations through direct interactions in the theatrical space.

A second major action line is the development of theater-specific instruments in theater therapy programs aimed at managing and preventing violent behaviors.

The third line of action I consider to be the introducing of new narratives into dramaturgy. The theater can bring into the public space new types of human interaction and new perspectives on life. The abandonment of old dramaturgic patterns and traumas accumulated in Sysific, castrated, oedipal or devilic myths and so on could produce new mentalities. The project "The Spectacle of Violence - From Hypnotic Power to Social Responsibility" aimed to understand the effect of representing violent acts in the theater and to investigate the possibilities of generating the positive social and individual effect through this type of representation.

The most important contribution of my doctoral research is the development of three experimental interdisciplinary theater-neuroscience-psychology studies on the effect of the representation of violent action. The first experiment, carried out by collecting and analyzing EEG data during and after the theatre performance *Inter@face*, highlighted the relationship between attention, the representation of violent actions and the changing affective state, depending on these, providing a possible explanation at the neuronal level for spectator's fascination against conflict and suspense.

*The Colleagues* study confirmed the assumptions to a large extent: the representation and observation of violent action has direct effect on the psyche of the observer and the performer, which mirrors primarily the activation of cognitive schemes. The phenomenon was highlighted by memory tests and psychological evaluation scales. Representation led to the activation of cognitive schemes related to violence and mood swings for both actors and spectators depending on the type of performance, the negative emotions of spectators of the performed action being higher. Also, spectators had a higher level of anxiety and actors experienced positive emotions about the violent actions they performed. In order to emphasize the differences between spectator and performer as well as between different types of representation, it is important to increase the number of subjects per condition. A very important aspect is the reporting of positive emotions related to the actors' performance of aggressive actions, basically experimental confirmation of Elbert's (2017) model of aggressiveness with two pedals.

The qualitative assessment confirms the personal observations, but also of other practitioners, about the force with which performing of a violent action has on the performer. In order to highlight the long-term effects, a design that has this objective is needed and containing specific data collection tools at different stages.

The findings of the study on the observation of robotic hand action are currently the most diffuse, primarily due to a complex working methodology, but also due to the general volatility of the terrain. Our study highlighted a de-synchronization in the different band between the robotic hand on the one hand and the actual or the animated hand, on the other hand, other significant differences not being obtained from the first analyzes. The unequivocal

nature of the stimulus, interpreted by some subjects as adversely, by others as positive, may have contributed to the lack of noticeable significant differences between the conditions in which the intention was sustained by a perceptual cause (flame burning). The lack of significant differences in desynchronization can also be interpreted as a confirmation of the lack of intersection between the processes of the motor cortex, the understanding of the agent (intention) and the perception of the stimuli with the perceptors. The subject is fascinating and deserves development, to achieve more conclusive results requiring a reduction in the number of conditions, the use of standardized stimuli, and an increase in the number of exposures. A possible follow-up of the study would be to introduce multimodal stimuli, including sound.

The reflection of the theoretical elements accumulated in the doctoral research in the artistic practice was crucial, developing the possibility of producing performances on the topic of discrimination and leading to a new vision regarding the ways of representing the violent acts on stage. A great deal of human action is loaded with violence, and the pressure of past atrocities on the present manifests itself directly in many cases. I believe that the elements of doctoral research contribute to the possibility of addressing these subjects in a way that does not perpetuate the trauma of the violence committed in the past, and which leads to a defusing of the conflicts by a therapeutic social action.

The general theatrical practice of the new millennium develops a new type of theatre performance, which has at its heart the debate or the deconstruction of obstacles, not action and suspense. The conflict, which, in classical dramaturgy, opposes the character of an obstacle from which the action emerges is replaced by the collective deconstruction of obstacles, the main action being that of the spectator's awareness, once returning to everyday life. From this point of view, it is necessary to create new scenarios and dramaturgical and / or spectacular evolutions to get out of the chains of violence. Since Shakespeare's dramaturgy, European space has begun to get rid of punishment dramaturgy, contemporary philosophers bring new models of thinking, their application in dramaturgy can have wide social consequences. The answer to the question To what extent can we invent a new path for our hero in the new millennium? will come from each of the creators, as until this moment.

Alongside the direct impact of theater as art, in the last century, along with the development of Moreno's psychodrama, the theater develops its social function, through the therapeutic or personal development. The rigorous, scientific research of these possibilities can lead to a new effervescence of the theatrical practice, perhaps less spectacular but more anchored in everybody's life. Dramatherapy is widespread nowadays, as well as psychodrama, and is used for a wide range of disorders and disorders, the development of intervention

methods directed directly to the regulation of aggressive behaviors is supported by many empirical and theoretical elements and the results of doctoral research confirms them with new evidence. All these directions can constitute in a deep, long-lasting research with a wide social impact.

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