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- Summary -

**DRAMATURGY AS THINKING: A DELEUZIAN APPROACH TO
THOUGHT CREATION IN CONTEMPORARY THEATRE FORMS**

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Summary

In the contemporary artistic and political context dramaturgy as a practice of content creation is not restricted anymore to the theatre field. Historically, the notion has been applied in the sense of a house dramaturg and referred to as a secondary function in the theatre institution (Luckhurst, 2006; Romanska, 2014). From the perspective of creation processes dramaturgy appears more and more as an individual or collective practice related mostly to devised theatre projects, contemporary dance or interdisciplinary projects. Philosophical and aesthetical approaches, as well as movement related theories and practices have brought a great contribution to the redefinition of dramaturgy as a meaning creation tool in post-narrative interdisciplinary forms.

However, most of the approaches concentrate on the process of dramaturgy in the creation stage and exclude the attending process. Even if some approaches define the process dramaturg as “the outside eye” or “the first spectator” or „the third eye”, the complexity of contemporary theatrical devices and the moment of attending can not simply be reduced to the perception of a constructed subjectivity and/or to sign interpretation. Following Performance Studies scholarship that links performance to Philosophy and conceptual thinking, this paper investigates the possibilities of dramaturgy to function as work of actions in the moment of attendance. The main research question considers whether dramaturgy as work of actions may function as thinking and what kind of thinking this would be? In order to answer this question, I start from the hypothesis of a parallel between theatre practice and philosophy via the notions of representation and Expression as two different strategies of creating thought and communication.

Therefore, dramaturgy is analysed in parallel with a few Deleuzian notions, as a thinking mode, a process of creating thought in the moment of attendance, different from more conventional communication schemes, where meaning is a matter of decoding a specific message. Conventionally, from a dialectical perspective on art (and theatre) as representation of reality, dramaturgy may be viewed as a tool of meaning creation allowing the viewer to ask: what does this mean? In this sense, the notions of dramaturg and dramaturgy may be considered intermediaries between content and expression, artist and viewer, inside and outside. In this process of objectification dramaturgy is concerned,

on the one hand, with meaning construction (in the creation process) and, on the other hand, with meaning decoding (from a spectatorial perspective). Alternatively, Deleuze offers a critique of the model of representation, where thinking does not happen anymore via a thinking subject who perceives objects. For Deleuze, thinking is concerned with the process and the connections that escape a juxtaposition of perception and recognition. Following Deleuze, thinking is only happening when there is a clash between form and content. Therefore, the focus is on the potentiality of the performative dispositive to express in case studies that are no longer based on dramatic elements, linearity or any recognizable structure. The examples illustrate new interactions with the Deleuzian thought (e.g. Sensation, Becoming Animal, Affect) and consolidate what Josette Féral (1994) defined as the “practico-theoretical” research perspective in the arts.

Specifically, the analysis focuses on how specific concepts coming from Deleuzian philosophy function in the proximity of dramaturgy as work of actions in the three chosen cases: Boris Nikitin’s “Die Sänger ohne Schatten” (2014), Antonia Baehr’s “Abecedarium Bestiarium”(2013) and Ivana Müller’s “While we were holding it together”(2006). Furthermore, the interest is to analyse dramaturgy as work of actions in the sense of an applied thinking method, and to ask what the specificities of this „thinking” might be? In this sense, this thesis hopes to bring a contribution to the theory and practice of dramaturgy as a practice of organising thought in artistic practice.

Moreover, it may be viewed as an alternative to a mere critique of the theatre mechanism, as a proposal for new ways of thinking in theatre beyond the general gap between theory and practice. The paper aims to influence both attending and creation practices, working and viewing methodologies by shortening the distance between academic research and artistic practice. Also, it hopes to bring a contribution to the newly emerged field of Performance Philosophy¹ and to other disciplines such as Drama Studies, Theatre Studies, Performance Studies, Dance Studies and Deleuzian Studies.

Keywords: Dramaturgy, Attendance, Deleuzian Studies, Representation, and Expression

¹ Brings together artists and researchers interested in the interactions of performance with philosophy; also the name of the international network and online journal.

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