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*Mircea Eliade's outlook on the performance
in the context of 20th century theatrical doctrines*

or

"Introduction to a theatrical art and technique suitable for our time"

Abstract

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In the afterword of the book *Ordeal by Labyrinth*, Claude-Henri Rocquet, struck by the systematic presence of actors and theater in Mircea Eliade's short stories and novels, wonders if anyone has dedicated a doctoral thesis or a study to this topic.

This research starts from the rhetorical question of Claude-Henri Rocquet and consists, on the one hand, in a process of designing and putting together the component parts that make up the book about theater "hidden in the pyramid or in the labyrinth" of Mircea Eliade's work. On the other hand, the same approach seeks to place this "book on theater" in the context of European theatrical art of the twentieth century.

Regarding the title of this work, it refers to Mircea Eliade's "outlook of the performance", because his interest is mainly directed towards the spectacular performance. Eliade considers dramatic art a place of debate of artistic, philosophical, religious ideas, but has the conviction that the theatrical play can offer the possibility of a *different* understanding of them, one likely to trigger enlightenment and human spiritual liberation.

This paper comprises four chapters, illustrating a research in which four major stages of study were completed.

The first stage consisted in extracting and reconstructing the ideas related to the performance and the dramatic text that Mircea Eliade expresses through his characters (in the novel *Noaptea de Sânziene* and the "theatrical" short stories). The second was the selection of references to the show and the dramatic text that Mircea Eliade makes, directly, in journals, memoirs, correspondence and interviews, as well as in scientific writings. The results of these two stages are included in the second chapter entitled *Ideas about dramatic art and performances of Mircea Eliade or the recovery of the "book about theater"*.

The third stage - but, in fact, almost simultaneous with the first two - was to highlight the echoes of Indian thought and culture on Mircea Eliade, specifically, to highlight the analogies between Indian thinking about the sacred and about the show, and Mircea Eliade's thinking about the sacred and his outlook on fantastic literature. These aspects are found in the very first chapter of the paper, *Resonances of Indian thought in the work of Mircea Eliade*.

The fourth stage consisted in comparing Eliade's spectacular conception with the theatrical theories and practices of the twentieth century, based on the common denominator of the preoccupation with the Indian culture and religious and aesthetic thinking of Eliade and some show creators. In the preliminaries of this chapter, characteristic aspects of some religious techniques - yoga, shamanism, alchemy - are synthetically exposed. Then, throughout the chapter, we look at how these spiritual techniques are adapted or reformulated as acting training techniques.

The third chapter - *A comparative view of Mircea Eliade's ideas about performance with European theatrical doctrines* - consists in the dialogue of spectacular ideas, meant to highlight affinities, similarities, differences and influences that can be identified between Eliade's theories and the corpus of some doctrines, such as that of Stanislavski, Artaud, Craig, Grotowski, Barba, Brook. It will be possible to observe how these doctrines materialize the suggestions and ideas which, with Eliade, remained in virtual form.

In the fourth chapter - *Adio! ... programmatic ouverture or epilogue* - the prose *Adio! ...* is discussed, seen as a synthesis of Eliade's creative thinking, which contains both his ideas about the show and force-ideas that appear, recurrently, in his scientific work.

Keywords: actor, fantastic prose, director, ritual, performance, yoga, soteriology

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