

PRAXIS: An Editorial Statement

By Kent Neely

The release of Disney Studios *Toy Story* during the 1995 Christmas season commanded a great deal of attention as the first animated film created entirely from computer generated art. A cartoon world created by and within micro technology; only the voices were reliant upon a human facsimile. *Toy Story* will not be championed as an artistic achievement (its technological feats notwithstanding) but it does raise issues about the operation of film as different from live theatrical performance. Of primary concern is the creation of a paradigm among young generations, unfamiliar with live performance, that is characterized by limitless expectations. They are blasé about the operation of such elements of human expression as the voice and incredulous that film cannot represent any event or human emotion. These issues become acute as theatre aficionados lament the popularity of film compared to live theatrical performance while others see no concern, blithely dismissing the objections as they enthusiastically purchase their next movie ticket. This editorial statement serves as a modest response and as a means of introducing four pieces that explore the extraordinary circumstances in which theatre occurs.

Two statements from very different eras summarize the unique operation of the film. Adolph Menjou, that actor of the early part of the century known for style and sartorial splendor, was surprised by the way film expanded gesture when he made the transition from the stage. He had expected to increase his gestures, his voice and movement to accommodate the medium but was surprised when he realized he must contract and simplify instead. His plain spoken and perceptive description of film acting remains accurate. Menjou's comment lies as one bookend to the corpus of films created over the last half century. The other is created by Jonathan Demme, a director known for his deft compositions. Some years ago, he observed that the primary organ involved in film making is the eye.

These two comments reveal the most basic cinemagraphic points. Film remains a realistic form reliant upon the connotation of a two dimensional photographic medium. It is removed from experiential time and space yet hovers in a simulation of reality that provokes psychological effect unparalleled in its sheer emotional and sensual impact.

Cinematic grandeur might be best exemplified by David Lean, a film maker/editor whose oeuvre exploited the dimensional limitations of film coincidentally with its explicit depiction of detail. Few of his peers, certainly

fewer of his successors, understood how to make hyperbolic images from the most simplistic visual clues. Photographic representation was redefined by him. One can still marvel at the sensation of confinement in Lean's *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (Columbia Pictures, 1957), the frigidity of a Russian winter in his *Doctor Zhivago* (Metro Goldwyn Mayer, 1965) and the expanse of the Sahara Desert in his *Lawrence of Arabia* (Columbia Pictures, 1962).

Understanding natural environment as metaphor and film stock as the equivalent to literary metric feet, John Ford was likewise able to place his stories within a representational context that simultaneously magnified the story as it diminished the impact of self determination. His *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (Argosy Pictures/RKO Pictures, 1949) is melodramatic in structure but insightful in chronicling the changing Southwest. Told against the changeless environment of Monument Valley, it is a hallmark of location shooting in the United States.

Cinematography has changed in the last two decades. Most obvious is the extraordinary mass production and industrialization of the form. Few marvels lie beyond the reach of Industrial Light and Magic with their innovative use of micro technology and photographic special effect. Consequently, few events are beyond the depiction of the film maker whether based in fact or whimsy. Most assuredly, the film audience expects the full panoply of technical tools to be used in arousing sensual response and the most servile of emotions.

There are exceptions, of course. Patrice Chereau's 1994 *Queen Margot* (Miramax Films) retells the horrible strife between Huguenots and Catholics in Charles IX's court in a sweeping rhythm filled with extraordinary recreations of 16th century dress and custom. Jane Campion's *The Piano* (Miramax, 1992) is a feminine story told in feminist style that does not overburden a tale about music and sensuality by pandering the film with a contrived underscore and prurient sexuality. And for sheer imagistic beauty, few contemporary films surpass Tran Anh Hung's *The Scent of Green Papaya* (Columbia Pictures, 1993) or Ang Lee's *Eat, Drink, Man, Woman* (Samuel Goldwyn Company, 1994).

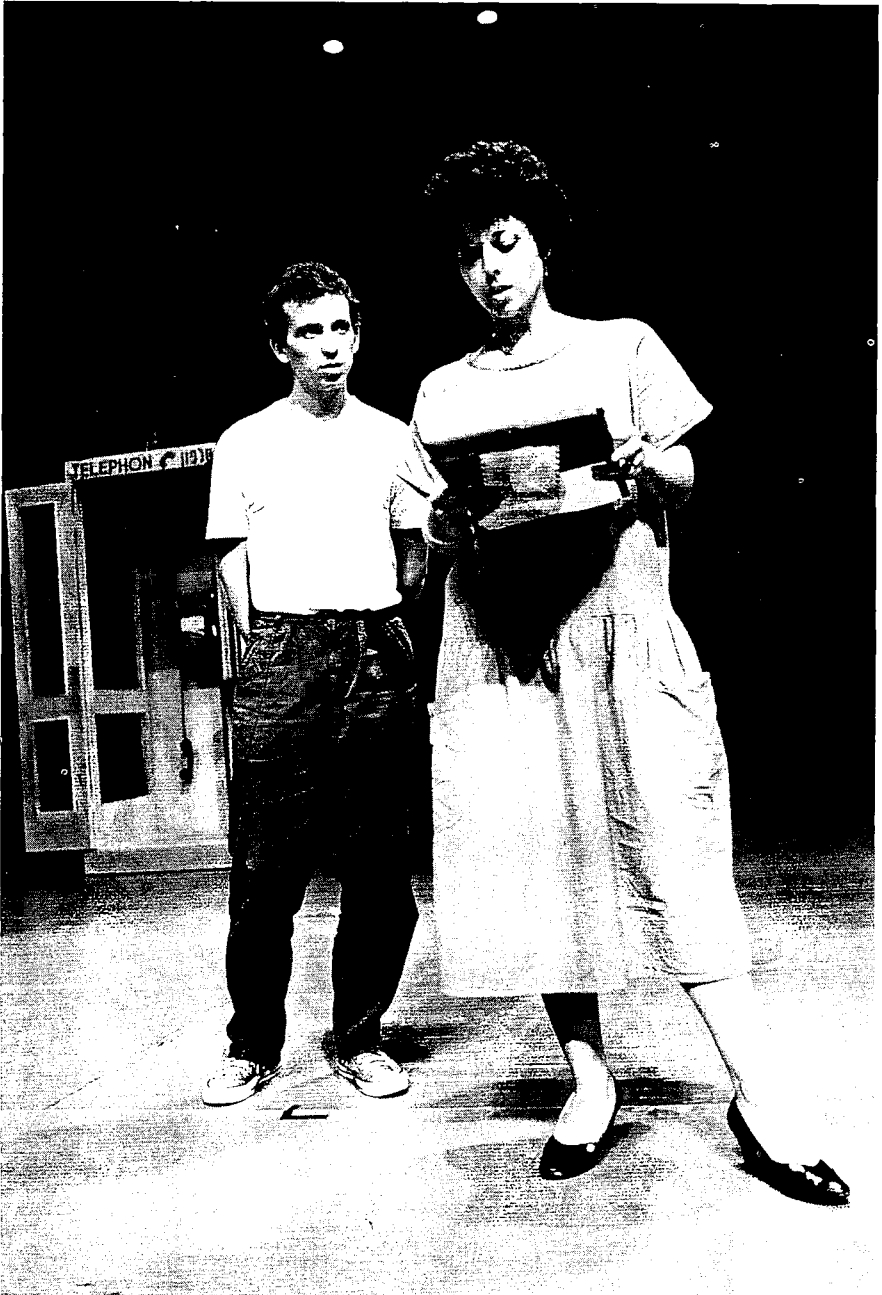
These few films represent the modern manifestation of Menjou's revelation while not betraying Demme's profundity. They prove that Lean's vision is difficult to improve (emphasize the elements, the surroundings, nature).

Without such exceptions as those offered above, one is awash in a plethora of films meant to cut to the quickest emotion and payoff with a happy ending. Ironically, such films merely accentuate the limitations of their vocabulary. They are simulacra par excellence; able to achieve perfection without a grounding in experience. Their ilk primes the film audience to praise *Toy Story* as extraordinary.

This preface may seem an odd companion to essays concerning performance but it is meant to highlight the distinct and fundamental essence of theatrical

performance. Performance is a phenomenon of simultaneously shared representation between performer and audience in an architecturally enclosed space and time. Theatre performance is constant counterpoint to Baudrillard's simulacra—it valorizes idea within nature and experience. Unlike the cinema, which at its worst, can be reduced to mere photographic effects that serve as a dull shadow of experience, theatre performance may approximate the quintessence of humanity—idea committed to consequence played before us within interaction. Consequently the space and time of theatre performance may carry far greater import than its mediated relative. The physical and temporal limitations of theatre performance expand finite aspects of experience into infinite possibilities. Menjou's observation is turned upside down; the performance space expands from its simplicity to suggest potentiality. The vocabulary of the cinema then pales against the multivalent performance space.

The limitlessness of the theatre remains a marvel. The essays in this edition of PRAXIS remind us of the fascination of difference and invention that the theatre offers. Freddie Rokem's consideration of the female voice is unusual in this regard. He addresses one of the most ancient elements affecting the reception of theatrical performance as he differentiates between the Greek and Hebrew paradigms operating on the female voice. Donnalee Dox raises questions about the limitations of theatre performance that confront the separation of experience from representation. The final two essays are reviews of performances reconstituting theatricality. Marvin Carlson's review of *Measure for Measure* examines the impact of a reverse gender adaptation. Yvonne Shafer reviews a production of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* replete with scenographic marvels. Together these four pieces give the reader a broad range of considerations for how the theatre constantly reinvents itself and expands its efficacy in novel ways.



Scene between Samira (Salwa Nakara) and Udi, who plays David, Samira's boyfriend, (Yiftach Katzor) from *Palestinait* by Joshua Sobol, Municipal Theatre, Haifa, Israel, 1985. (Photo: Morel Derfler, courtesy Israel Goor Archives, Jerusalem)

The Female Voice: 'Greek' and 'Hebrew' Paradigms in the Modern Theatre

Freddie Rokem

Introduction

The voice of women as an expression of a female presence in different forms of performance, primarily theatre and cinema, has received considerable attention by recent feminist criticism. In particular the attempt to reconstruct an historically and culturally fragmented or even rejected female voice has been given high priority on the feminist ideological as well as aesthetic agendas. This critique, in what is probably one of its more extreme versions, has been formulated by Rosemary Curb in an article on the American dramatist Sandra Shotlander. Here Curb asks if "the silenced oracle 'can' re-member her originary voice and vision?", and goes on to claim that:

The lesbian artist, mystic, visionary activist awakens like the slumbering dragon to re-member herself. She refuses to reproduce the male Logos, refuses to be fragmented or minimized into a reflector/magnifier of male primacy. The Delphic dragon flashes forth transmitting signals in a new language. (Curb, 1989, 317)

The revolt against this phallic reign, in what Curb considers to be a totally male-gendered logo-centric universe, can evidently serve as the basis for a radical reformulation of feminist art and theatre.

Jill Dolan in her somewhat less utopian examination of existing theatrical traditions, partly relying on Laura Mulvey's distinctions regarding the male centeredness of the cinematographic machinery, (Mulvey 1975) argues, that from a female perspective:

the separation of body and voice . . . disrupts the identification process by fragmenting any sense of coherent identity and denying the spectator an enunciative point of entry into the text. (Dolan, 1988, 103)

For Dolan the "classical realist conventions" have established a culturally accepted perspective where "male subjectivity" is the "ideal spectatorial position" while she considers Helene Cixous' *Portrait of Dora*, on the other hand, to be an

important example of a refusal to accept "the signifying practice that denies her (i.e. Dora's) self-articulation" (ibid.). The materials that Cixous has focused on concerning Dora were marginalized by Freud (1977) who literally put them in the footnotes of his famous case-study of Ida Bauer, whom he gave the name of Dora (see also Beunheimer & Kahane 1985). From a Freudian perspective, if we are actually not confronting a total silencing of the female voice, or a complete separation between body and voice, there are many indications in Freud's own text about the so-called 'talking-cure' of a very strong dichotomization between the male subject and the female object. The initial impulse of Freudian psychoanalysis is no doubt based on the position of the male scientist gazing at the female hysteric, and modern performance and film have in many ways continued to generate this position.

Freud, at least on some level, no doubt listened to Dora's voice, even if he did not actually hear what she said. I will, however, not reopen the 'pan-Dora' box that this case study has led to here. The fact that certain aspects of psychoanalytic theory from its very beginnings no doubt developed a strong bias against the existence of such independent female voices, however, does not contradict the existence of a female Logos in culture as well as in the theatre. It is possible to show that such a female voice and its corresponding female presence cannot only be found in the signals of the gradually emerging feminist languages and voices which Curb is calling for, but in the ancient and the more modern ones as well (even if it has been subjected to different forms of marginalization and fragmentation—which is very different from annihilation or extinction). In this respect the theatre is particularly interesting as a field of investigation, because this art form is based on the staged vocalization of texts explicitly written for this purpose.

The human voice is the medium which mediates between the text—the logos—and the body of the actor or the actress through the 'act' of performance. In this respect the voice holds quite a unique position among the different performative expressions, because the voice is both text and body at the same time, or as Helga Finter has argued,

The voice is par excellence the 'object' of theatricalization because of its status as between: inscribed in a text, the voice indicates a carrying eternity . . . But at the same time the voice is a part of language; it is body, but as product of body it manifests the separation of the two. (Finter, 1983, 505)¹

In several cases, this form of vocal liminality creates a meta-theatrical dimension where the presence of the voice is employed as a self-reflective comment on the medium of the theatre itself.

The interaction between text and performance is no doubt one of the most important topics of any theoretical discussion on the theatre. One possible point of departure is that different aspects of the body, including the voice, have been inscribed in the dramatic text. When the text is transposed or translated into a performance these bodily representations, as they appear in the text, are transformed into scenic action or individual gestures by a certain actor or actress playing a certain role. They can also serve as the basis for a meta-theatrical dimension in the performance itself. The actor's or the actress' physical body is one of the primary materials of the theatrical performance. Since transforming the body into a work of art in the eyes of the spectators is one of the aims of such a performance, the thematization of the body will in one way or another also lead to the thematization of the art of the performance itself. This in turn can serve as the basis for the creation of such a meta-theatrical dimension. When a character on the stage is talking about her voice or drawing attention to it, she is at the same time emphasizing the meta-theatrical dimension of the performance itself.

By focusing on the thematization of speech and voice, which are some of the major means of theatrical communication, and in particular on those cases where there is some kind of problem or disturbance in the female voice, it will be possible to analyze specific examples of texts and performances and to formulate some of the principles constituting the performing voice. One such disturbance which seems to have a very important function in the modern theatre occurs when the normal flow of the female voice becomes interrupted and transformed into a scream. Another possibility happens when the female character speaks with voices that in some sense are not really her own. Such 'disturbances' are in a way also meta-theatrical, because the art of acting can be perceived as a form of irregular speech. The actor and the actress are in fact 'lending' their physical voice to the fictional character whose speech has been given a literary form in the dramatic text. The theatre has institutionalized these forms of 'disturbances' and liminal forms of voicing speech on the stage.

One could argue that the vocalized mediation between the word—logos—and body through the performance is not unique to the female voice. It is no doubt an important feature of the male voice as well. But in certain areas of performance the differentiations and the hierarchies between male and female are not as strict as we are often made to believe. In some cases the female voice is even given primacy. In others there is a complex androgynic interaction between the male and the female voices. As it problematizes both the

male and the female presences in the theatre, it can also give rise to quite stunning theatrical effects. And it is such effects which on the most basic level must be considered to be one the primary aims of performance

When discussing the female voice we also have to take into consideration that within most of the existing theatrical institutions actresses have to perform roles which are in fact both authored and directed by men. On the basis of this basic theatrical situation, where the actress speaks with the voice of another, any form of disturbance in the fictional character's speaking capacity will add to the meta-theatrical dimensions of the performance mentioned. It also will illuminate the ideological, social and psychological dimensions of a specific performance as well as the traditional forms of the institutionalized theatrical hierarchies. This in turn reflects and reinforces the ideologies and the structures of power and authority already existing in the society where the performance takes place. The fact that the female voice sometimes becomes muffled or totally silenced, does not mean that it does not continue to echo in the discursive space of a certain text or a specific performance. The signifying practices of theatrical performances are often so oxymoronic and contradictory, that even when there prima facie is some form of absence, this can, at least from the point of view of the spectator, be understood as a form of presence. Signifying practices have to be considered from a paradigmatic perspective, where all the available options of the female voice are weighed against those which are realized on the stage.

In the examples analyzed here, I have tried to make a 'cultural' distinction between a 'Greek' and a 'Hebrew' paradigm. This distinction will help uncover and explore certain aspects of the presence of the female voice in the modern theatre which have been usually unnoticed. By looking at and, in particular, by trying to listen to the female voice in different classical texts from these two traditions, it will be possible to 'hear' the female voice more clearly in the modern and contemporary theatre.

In many ways this is quite a risky project. The Greek and Hebrew paradigms do not by themselves necessarily reflect the two cultures from an historical point of view or their respective performance practices. But these two cultural traditions have a long and intricate history of mutual interaction. The interaction has been of primary importance in forming our notions of modernity. Several central texts that have formed these two distinct traditions also have served as the basis for some of our most central notions of performance and theatre. This makes it possible, and in the present ideological climate, even necessary, to make an attempt.

The Greek and Hebrew Paradigm

The two paradigms which will serve as the basis for analysis will be represented by different classical texts or sources where there is a strong presence of the female voice. The pronouncement of the oracle at Delphi and the riddle of the Sphinx as they have been represented in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* will represent the Greek paradigm, while two books from *The Old Testament*, *The Song of Songs* and *Lamentations* will represent the Hebrew paradigm. On the basis of the distinctions which will be made in this section I will analyze some specific examples from the modern and contemporary theatre.

The first point to be made is that none of these paradigmatic texts are dramatic in the strict sense. They are, however, in different ways closely related to dramatic texts or different theatrical or ritual practices. Second, central parts of these texts are in different ways pronounced by a female voice, which even if not always 'heard', is situated in the very center of these discourses. The female presence is the origin of what could be termed the dramatic action of these texts. And third, and this is a central point for my argument, in several cases the notion of voice—sometimes male and sometimes female, but most often the human voice in general—is itself a central theme of these discourses, as they are pronounced by women or quoted from them.

The famous riddle of the Sphinx, referred to several times in Sophocles' drama, clearly exhibits these three aspects. It is never directly quoted in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, it is a text pronounced by a mythic female voice, and it refers on several levels to the central themes of the play and to the notion of voice itself. According to the myth about Oedipus, he was the first person who supposedly knew the right answer to this riddle, and this induced the Sphinx to destroy herself. As a result of this 'knowledge' Oedipus became the triumphant ruler of Thebes as well as the husband of his mother, fulfilling the last part of the pronouncement of the Delphic oracle.

The oracle is quoted in Sophocles' text but the riddle of the Sphinx is not. We have to go to other sources for its exact formulation. In *The Library* by Apollodorus, it was given the following wording: "What is that which has one voice and yet becomes four-footed and two-footed and three-footed?" Oedipus answers: "Man; for as a babe he is four-footed, going on four limbs, as an adult he is two-footed, and as an old man he gets besides a third support in a staff." (Apollodorus, 1967, 347ff) Oedipus significantly says nothing about the oneness or the unity of the voice, a feature which generally appears in the extant versions of the riddle. This very important aspect of the riddle was not included in the answer given by Oedipus, which the Sphinx accepted to be the right one. On the basis of Oedipus' answer to the riddle, the second half of the curse pronounced

by the Delphic oracle, before Oedipus' birth was realized. After killing his father he would sleep with his mother.

In order to understand the riddle formulation and the answer, we have to ask which voices actually shaped the life of Oedipus and the oedipal drama as formulated by Sophocles in *Oedipus Tyrannus*.² There are two such female voices which were crucial for the fate of Oedipus—for his triumphs as well as for his final downfall. Neither of these voices has been directly included in the text of the play. Before he was born Oedipus was singled out for this fate by the oracular voice at Delphi. In order for her prophesy to become realized it was necessary for the Sphinx with her voice to ask the riddle. Even though both of these supernatural, primeval voices are in themselves not included in the dramatic text it is no doubt their respective pronouncements which have given the drama its basic structure. On the metaphoric level they represent the 'one voice' which lies behind the existential enigma of the individual human being as his/her 'essence' was formulated in the riddle itself, as the creature with one voice and many legs. On the philosophical level the human being according to the riddle is a paradoxical creature who contains oneness (the voice) and multiplicity (the constantly changing number of legs) at the same time.

It thus seems that any discussion about the presence of the female voice in the theatre has to take this narrative point of departure (or to use Dolan's term quoted above, "enunciative point of entry into the text") into consideration. In response to Curb's position, about the Delphic dragon transmitting signals in a new language, I would argue that the voice of the Delphic oracle is the very basis of the theatrical tradition which Curb criticizes. This is the voice which Oedipus cannot escape. The theatre, it seems, has constantly been struggling with the enigmatic unity of this voice, as it is personified by the Delphic oracle or by the Sphinx. As a response to these voices we are presented with the reaction of Laius, placing his new-born son on the mountain of Cythairon, and the momentary self-confident male voice of Oedipus presenting what, at least for a moment, seemed to be the correct answer to the riddle of the Sphinx.

The tensions between unity and multiplicity, represented in the riddle through the one voice and the many legs, are one of the principal underlying sources of the dramatic conflict in *Oedipus Tyrannus*. The solution to the more specific enigma to be solved in the play (i.e. who killed Laius) actually focuses on whether there was one or many who attacked the old king at the place where the three roads meet. As Oedipus defends himself against possible accusations, "One and many cannot be one and the same."³ The irony, of this almost proverbial pronouncement, is that it is exactly what the riddle says: that one voice and many legs coexist in one and the same creature, which Oedipus interprets as being man. It is possible to argue that the fact that Oedipus has

been singled out for his tragic fate by the voice of the oracle and is led into the final realization of this oracular pronouncement, the nuptial bed of his mother, by another female voice, the Sphinx. It is not these female voices which are victimized and transformed into a 'pharmakos' in the oedipal drama. It is rather some kind of deep fear of their actuality and overwhelming presence which are revealed in the drama of Sophocles. The voices inside the dramatic text, ending with the suicidal screams of Iocasta, and the female voices of the Oracle and the Sphinx, outside of the text, create an intricate polyphonic network, which on a certain level, contradict each other. It is possible to view the struggle between these different female voices as one of the central cores of the oedipal drama.

Listening to the text of *Oedipus Tyrannus* means that we have to call back these female voices and what seems to be the much weaker and more wounded male voice of Oedipus. This is a form of listening which would no doubt enrich our understanding of the polyphonic nature of the theatre. In our attempt to understand this polyphonic nature we also have to account for the fact that some of these female voices have been excluded from the text. They have metaphorically been written out of it (as opposed to being in-scribed), just as Freud listening to Dora marginalized the female voice. At the same time it is necessary to take the presence of these voices into consideration, in formulating and realizing the fate of Oedipus. This gesture of silencing or muffling the female voice (which is literally not given room in the text) has often been transformed in the modern theatre into a scream of protest or desperation, where the pain and the suffering it reveals have ideological as well as psychological implications. I want to examine this paradigm more specifically in Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children*, as well as in his production of this play.

The Hebrew paradigm of representing the female voice in the theatre is based on two texts from the Biblical tradition, *The Song of Songs* and *Lamentations*. The former is traditionally attributed to King Solomon and is an extended erotic poem situating the female voice in a very central position. This text probably has some form of dramatic or at least ritual origin in wedding ceremonies and because of its straightforward language it has always been considered quite remarkable in the context of the Biblical canon. With regard to the representation of the female voice *The Song of Songs* is complemented by the book of *Lamentations* which in poetic form, literally, gives voice to the collective loss caused by the destruction of the First Temple. And the Midrashic, post-Biblical elaborations of this text, *Lamentations Rabba*, stories about women, thematizes the female voice as a source of consolation and of redemption (Hasan-Rokem 1995). *Lamentations* and its elaborations in the traditional sources realize the female role of mourning for the whole community as opposed to the situation expressed in *The Song of Songs*, where an individual woman's desires are

expressed. As examples below show, the female voices and discourses of love and of mourning have also entered the theatre, where they may intermingle.

When looking more closely at a text like *The Song of Songs*, it becomes evident that it contains several speakers. The most important one is the woman who tells about her love and her desire for her lover in different ways. The interchange between the two lovers is rendered in several passages in a literary form where the woman is actually quoting her lover. The female voice carries or contains the male voice in a way which is actually a metaphor for the very act of 'making love with him. In the following verse the representation of the woman's voice is in itself a reflection of the erotic character of the text. At the same time, his voice, as it is contained in hers, is thematized as the sexual contact point between them:

It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. (V.2.)

Here is clearly an integration between the two voices and it is the woman who has absorbed the voice of the man. Her voice has, on the basis of Dolan's terminology, become "the enunciative point of entry" into the text.

The second paradigm of dramatic texts and theatrical performances I shall analyze places a female figure in the center of the action and, in various ways, the male voice is represented or carried by the female voice. In its most extreme form this can be found in An-Ski's play *The Dybbuk*, where Leah, the young bride, literally becomes possessed by Hanan, her dead lover, and he speaks through her body. This form of absorption or integration of the male voice with the female voice holds a very central position in the Israeli theatre, and it could be regarded as a specific feature of a national tradition.

As it appears in several plays of the Israeli playwright Joshua Sobol, but also others, the integration of male and female voices does not have to be a form of hysterical behavior caused by a woman's inability to conform to social norms, as is the basic point of departure in *The Dybbuk*, but it is not necessarily the point where it ends. A woman's voice containing a male voice and speaking with the words of a man, is not necessarily an expression of madness or submission. It may be a way of presenting different aspects of female revolt against certain social values, as an expression of strong personal courage and integrity, as in *The Song of Songs*.

Mother Courage and Leah

What I have termed the Greek paradigm will be exemplified with Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children*. The production directed by Brecht himself has been preserved in the 1960 filmed version by Peter Palitz and Manfred Wekwerth. Brecht no doubt gave a special place for women not only in his plays and on the stage and in the whole production process. In his most recent research on Brecht, John Fuegi (1987 & 1994) has pointed out that many of the plays attributed to him were actually written by the women with which he surrounded himself. This does not change the texts and the productions themselves, but it is certainly an aspect which has to be kept in mind when dealing with the representation of the female voice in the theatre of 'Brecht'. I confine myself to the female voice in one of his plays and in one particular production. The role of women in his plays need a far more careful examination than can be carried out here.⁴

Mother Courage is no doubt one of the most talkative female characters in the modern theatre. In *Mother Courage and Her Children* Brecht has shown that in spite of the initial self-confidence expressed most strongly in her almost never-ending flow of words of the first scene, where she 'introduces' herself as well as her three children to the recruiting soldiers and to the audience. The speech and the voice of Mother Courage are gradually emptied of their moral and emotional authority. In this respect she is diametrically opposed to her dumb daughter Kattrin who despite her physical handicap develops an independent understanding of the situation and communicates with other people. She relates to the war in a manner which is morally significant in spite of its cruelty. Only when Mother Courage refuses to follow the Cook to Holland, who refuses to include Kattrin, does the mother make a moral choice. But then it is too late.

Kattrin's dumbness is a result of the war. Mother Courage says a soldier put something in her mouth when Kattrin was a child. Another soldier wounds her eye during the play's action. Kattrin's struggle against her physical limitations and her vulnerability are a protest against the consequences of the war. The climax of this struggle occurs when she climbs the farmhouse roof and beats her drum to save the inhabitants of Halle from the Catholic attack. She saves Halle's inhabitants but Kattrin sacrifices her life, leaving Mother Courage alone with her wagon.

In the Modell-Buch which Brecht wrote after his own Berlin and Munich productions of the play, he particularly stressed the intelligence the actress playing Kattrin has to emanate, emphasizing it is the war which finally breaks her down, not her handicap. According to Brecht it is important that Kattrin be played to show that, despite her physical vulnerability, humanity remains in her, and the war can still destroy it. Kattrin's muteness, as played by Angelica

Hurwitz in the 1949 Berliner Ensemble production and the film, expresses the personal stance of the character and the message of the whole performance. A protest against moral and human weakness aroused by war that ruthlessly transforms her mother into its victim.

In the visual images of the performance as directed by Brecht, and by a others after him, Katttrin's muteness was 'transferred,' in an emphasized manner, to Mother Courage in the third scene, when the Finnish soldiers execute her son Swiss Cheese. During the execution, not shown on stage, we see Mother Courage's reactions which culminate in a 'silent scream' while sitting down, she turns her head backward. The scream of Mother Courage expresses her submission and even acceptance of the 'rules' of the war. In the framework of the whole performance and through our criticism of her for what she does, it must be interpreted as a protest against those very 'rules'.

In the *Modell-Buch* Brecht wrote about the source of inspiration for this scene as it was performed by Helene Weigel:

Her look of extreme suffering after she had heard the shots, her unscreaming open mouth and backward bent head probably derived from a press photograph of an Indian woman crouched over the body of her dead son during the shelling of Singapore. Weigel must have seen it years before, though when questioned she did not remember it. That is how observations are stored by actors. (Brecht 1972, 360)

In her creation of this 'Gestus' of the silent scream, Helene Weigel reproduced or returned to the already existing silent scream on the photograph. The photograph is inherently silent and Helene Weigel/ Mother Courage gives 'voice' or 'body' to it through the silent scream on the stage. The conclusion Brecht draws from this procedure concerning the ways in which actors store observations is completely in line with the notion of 'emotional memory' introduced by Stanislavski in his psychologically oriented theory of acting, and which Brecht, at least officially, opposed. It seems that this process of recollection also corresponds to the inner structure of the oracular voice, which is not directly represented on the stage.

George Steiner's reaction to the acting of Helene Weigel in his book *The Death of Tragedy* points at a similar inner structure. When he watched the performance Steiner felt that he heard different primeval voices through the silent scream of Mother Courage. Steiner is referring to the scream when the body of Swiss Cheese is carried in on the stage. Mother Courage, in order to save her own skin, claims that she does not know him.

At least in the filmed version there is no silent scream at all at this point, while the silent scream is 'heard' when her son is shot. Mother Courage falls down on the stage floor when her dead son is brought in by the soldiers. It is interesting in this context how Steiner interprets the silent scream, emphasizing that:

(a)s the body was carried off, Weigel looked the other way and tore her mouth open. The shape of the gesture was that of the screaming horse in Picasso's 'Guernica'. The sound that came out was raw and terrible beyond any description I could give of it. But in fact, there was no sound. Nothing. The sound was total silence. It was a silence which screamed and screamed through the whole theatre so that the audience lowered its head as before a gust of wind. And the scream inside the silence seemed to me to be the same as Cassandra's when she divines the reek of blood in the house of Atreus. It was the same wild cry with which the tragic imagination first marked our sense of life. (Steiner, 1963, 354)

The complex, composite image of the two women, Mother Courage and her daughter Katrin, basically presents a fragmented female voice. When the total message of this image is interpreted we receive a female 'voice.' By being muted, it literally cries out in protest against the atrocities of the war. At the end of the play, after Katrin has been killed for waking the citizens of Halle with her drumming, for creating a 'voice' in spite of the fact that she does not have one, Mother Courage also becomes almost totally muted. And on the mythic level, it is even possible to claim that at this stage Katrin and her mother in some sense have become transformed into the riddling Sphinx, partly repeating her self-destructive action of self-muting by jumping from the cliff from which she guards the city. Katrin, who just like the Sphinx, guards the city gates, is killed warning the sleeping inhabitants of Halle. Katrin speaks in spite of her muteness and her silence is transferred to her mother. After departing from her dead daughter, Mother Courage, stooped in complete capitulation, continues the grim task of drawing the carriage. This 'Gestus' of muted protest which leads to their gradual collective fall seems to be the very basis through which the female voice is constituted in the Western theatre.

Leah from *The Dybbuk* is a realization of what I have termed the Hebrew paradigm. The central events of the play are caused by the fact that she will marry Menashe, selected by her father with his bourgeois norms. Her true lover, Hanan, died mysteriously when the wedding was announced in the synagogue. His untimely death and his transformation into a spirit, a 'dybbuk', possessing

Leah's body at the wedding are all the result of the vow, Leah's and Hanan's fathers made before their children were born. That vow had not been fulfilled.

According to the mystical Kabbalistic teachings, an important subtext of this play, their souls had become unified in the heavenly spheres before they were born, and they will be after their death as well. The play describes how, after Hanan's death, they become unified in this world through his possession. These Kabbalistic teachings, which are quoted at the beginning of the play, describe the mystical descent of the soul to its bodily abode, in the material world, a temporary state in preparation for its renewed ascent to the heavenly spheres. There the true, utopian reality can be revealed and hopefully also realized. It is important in this context to point out that the subtitle of *The Dybbuk* is *Between Two Worlds*.

When Hanan enters Leah's body, during the wedding, where she is supposed to marry a man she does not love, it presents a complex structure of vocalities. Several hints are given that something may happen before the possession itself: for example, Leah dances with the beggars who have been invited to the wedding. The beggars, and in particular the way their dance was performed in the Habimah production of this play directed by Vakhtangov (Moscow premiere 1922) are a representation of the primary erotic forces which have been both socially and psychologically repressed. During the preparations for the wedding, these forces gradually burst to 'open up' Leah's soul for her possession by her dead lover's spirit. Leah's possession can be seen as both a social and an individual protest. This form of protest against the bourgeois society represented by her father very much suited the revolutionary ideology of the Soviet Union in 1922.

It is no doubt possible to view the gender ambivalence in *The Dybbuk* in the social and cultural contexts of the early Soviet society. Spencer Golub has observed that the male artists of the pre-Revolutionary period, and after the Bolshevik revolution, often masked their faces with a female image. In Blok's and Meyerhold's *The Little Showbooth* such images were quite strong, but, notes Golub:

(n)either Blok nor Meyerhold realized in the period 1905-1917 that the co-opting of female iconicity by male artist-intellectuals to express their own rather than woman's social and existential dilemmas would soon conspire with the state's desire to marginalize and silence the creative intelligentsia. (Golub, 1994, 67)

It seems, however, that the Jewish theatre company was able to play out these voice crossings much more openly than their non-Jewish colleagues, partly

because of the direct tradition leading to the courageous female voice from *The Song of Songs*. For the non-Jewish Russian intellectuals the figure of the sphinx, which they regarded both as male and female, lead to an impasse of "a deadly or deathlike state" (ibid., 83), while the Habimah-production of *The Dybbuk* contained a utopian energy which was inspired by different sources.

The text of the famous 1922 production of *The Dybbuk*, which was performed more than 1000 times over a period of more than forty years, differs in many ways from the dramatic text of An-Ski. Vakhtangov and the actors of the Habimah collective made many radical revisions for their production. One of these changes occurred at the critical point when Leah was sitting on a chair just before the start of the wedding ceremony. Menashe is just about to cover her face with a veil when Leah jumps up from the chair, pushes him away and forcefully exclaims: "No, no, you are not my groom!" Immediately afterwards, the voice of Hanan bursts from the mouth of Leah. Instead of having this voice say that "You buried me and now I have returned to my bride whom I shall never leave", (An-Ski 1983, 43) (as the voice coming from Leah's mouth announces in the printed version of the play), in the stage version Hanan quotes *The Song of Songs*, saying "You are so beautiful . . ." (I, 15 & IV, 1).⁵

This short quotation is enough for Hebrew speakers to recognize the first half of a verse from *The Song of Songs*. The last act of the Habimah production takes place at the house of the Rabbi who is trying to exorcise the spirit of Hanan from the body of Leah. This verse is completed by the voice of Hanan now saying "my beloved" through Leah's mouth. In the extremely complex theatrical situation of the aborted wedding an additional voice, the voice of the Meshulach, can also be heard. He is the messenger who connects the two worlds in the play. Immediately after Hanan has quoted the verse from *The Song of Songs* the Meshulach appears from behind the chair and announces that "A dybbuk has entered the bride!" (An-Ski, 1983, 43)

The entry of Hanan's voice into Leah's body is both erotic and aggressive and creates a kind of androgynous unity on the stage where female and male elements are brought together on the level of the voice. Just as in *The Song of Songs* the two lovers' voices are intermingled as an expression of their mutual desires. One of the remarkable features of the Biblical text is that the female voice, who openly expresses her love, is coincidentally, brave, forceful and even daring. Leah, through her desires, is revolting against her individual and her social situation. Leah's love is utopian. It cannot, just as in the commonly accepted mode of comedy, be realized within the existing social structures, but only in another world where she and Hanan will finally become fully united. This supposedly happens after her death which occurs the moment when the Rabbi unsuccessfully tries to expel Hanan's spirit from her body in the very last scene.

The performance of *The Dybbuk* also contains a meta-theatrical dimension which points directly at the art of acting in the theatre. The actor or actress is an individual whose body, while acting, has been possessed by a 'dybbuk' and speaks with the voice of a fictional character from another world. This 'device' of drawing the attention to the fact that acting is speaking the words of another, was an important basis for the Habimah actors' performance poetics as they developed the ritual style of acting which so clearly distinguished their early work. Historically the first task of the Habima-theatre was to find a theatrical expression through which the traditional contents of Jewish village life could be given an aesthetic form. Traditional Jewish culture, which accepted the recital of the holy Hebrew texts only in religious and ritual contexts, totally rejected the theatre. Habima on the other hand, was attempting to transform the canonized language into a language of speech for the stage. Using a quotation from *The Song of Songs*, a text which was traditionally interpreted as an allegory about the love of God for his people, in the secular and even iconoclastic context of the theatre is an act of revolt.

The Contemporary Israeli Theatre

This complex mixture of voices where the female voice holds a central position can also be found in several contemporary Israeli plays, in particular by the contemporary Israeli playwright Joshua Sobol. His plays like *Soul of a Jew: Weininger's Last Night* (1982), *Ghetto* (1984) which is the first part of a trilogy about the Vilna ghetto, as well as *Shooting Magda (Palestinian or Palestinian Woman, 1985)* all contain a clearly defined female voice which is of central importance for the development of the dramatic action but is also very clearly defined from a meta-theatrical point of view.⁶ In *Soul of a Jew*, Otto Weininger, who lived in Vienna at the turn of the century, is depicted in the play, as is his suicide. Sobol explores various aspects of the combination of the female and the male elements in the soul of the individual based on Weininger's own theories. Weininger meets his female 'Doppelgänger' several times in the play. On the basis of these meetings the ideological consequences of this two-voiced personality for the contemporary Jewish soul are examined (as it has become realized in the contemporary Israeli consciousness and politics, in particular, during the war in Lebanon). The male aspects of the Jewish soul are aggressive and 'Aryan,' while the female aspects are humane and 'Jewish,' and it is clear that Sobol favors the female aspects of this complex soul.

Ghetto depicts the tragic fate of a Jewish theatre company in the Vilna ghetto during the time of the Nazi occupation. The singer Chaya expresses with her singing voice the suffering, as well as the hopes, of the inhabitants in the ghetto. The theatre is actually established because of her beautiful voice, when

the Nazi officer Kittel takes more than a strong liking to her and her singing. After she flees to the partisans in the forests, Kittel destroys the theatre. The voice of Chaya has made it possible to postpone the tragic end of the theatre in the ghetto. It has also created a culture of resistance and survival. In the Berlin-production of *Ghetto* directed by Peter Zadek at the Volkstheater in 1984 Chaya was played by the Israeli born singer Ester Ofarim who has a thin but very clear voice. There is no doubt that when she sang the Yiddish songs in the play there was a very strong emotional response to the powerful presence of her voice.

Ghetto is based on the narrative device of recollection. Srulik, an actor-ventriloquist, is the only survivor of the theatre company. He retells the short history of the ghetto-theatre by recollecting the theatrical performances as they were presented in the ghetto. Through his memory the past becomes a theatrical reality, where Chaya and Srulik's doll and daily ghetto life are presented on the stage. The play uses a great number of devices where one person literally speaks with the voice of another. Even if the central consciousness of the play is not a woman, the voice of Chaya is central for the creation of the theatre, the existence of which is recollected and retold in the play itself.

In *Palestinait* the voice of Samira is even more developed than the female voices in Sobol's other plays. It is the story of a Palestinian woman in today's Israel, who has written a TV-script about the violence she has suffered from a group of Israeli right-wing extremists. It led to the loss of her unborn child fathered by an Israeli man. The central action of this play depicts the 'shooting' of her script as directed by Benesh, a Jewish director who helped Samira put the final touches to the script. In the film the role of Magda, the fictional character created by Samira is played by Dalia, a Jewish actress. As the action of the play focuses on the shooting of the script in a TV studio, it simultaneously tells about Samira's love affair with David, played by an actor named Udi, and the painful experiences which led to the writing of her script. In this play Sobol has created a series of Chinese boxes telling the tragic story, all of which emanate from the voice of Samira.

Palestinait is a play about the power of love and the pain of loss as told from the point of view of Samira. She becomes the voice through which all the other voices in the play are talking. The authorship of the dramatic text, the play itself, must be ascribed to Sobol, but his play gives remarkable authority to a woman who at the same time is also a Palestinian. In the political context of today's Israel, where Palestinians in many ways are a repressed minority, this is quite an unusual form of theatrical expression. At the Haifa theatre, where the play premiered in 1985, Samira also was played by a Palestinian actress, Salwah Nakara. She is present on the stage almost throughout the whole performance, because Benesh, the director, wants her to be present during the shooting of the



Scene featuring Chaya (Riki Gal, in front) with members of the theatre company (Giora Shamai and Dalia Shinko) in *Ghetto* by Joshua Sobol, Municipal Theatre, Haifa, Israel, 1984. (Photo: Morel Derfler, courtesy Israel Goor Archives, Jerusalem)

film. The comments she makes in it, on how she felt as the events depicted in her script unfold, will be more authentic, he argues. In the Haifa-production Samira stood in front of a video-camera when these narrative sequences were recorded (as a part of the fictional events in the play) and her face was projected in close-up on several TV screens that had been placed on the stage. This turned out to be a very effective way to project the female voice and the female presence on the theatrical stage.

As the recording of the script is almost finished and the team is about to shoot the scene where Samira is beaten up by right-wing extremists, she says in her comments:

They surprised us while we were asleep. They entered through the open window. They sneaked up to the mattress on which we were sleeping and hit us in our sleep . . . (She becomes quiet. To Benesh) I can't continue. (Sobol, 1985, 93)

At this point she is unable to confront the memory of her painful experiences which led to the abortion, and her voice fails her. Recollecting the physical and mental pain caused by the loss of her unborn child (seen as some utopian or symbolic unification between the Jewish-Israeli and the Palestinian parts of the complex society she lives in) she reaches the point where the mingling of all the voices she has represented through the writing and shooting of her script reach a peak. Her voice fails her and she becomes totally silent.

Just as Sobol in his Ghetto trilogy has focused on the reconstruction of certain aspects of the Holocaust through the retrospective re-telling of the survivors, Samira's remembering her past brings back the pain of that past directly. Sobol is confronting a paradox, most forcefully formulated perhaps by Elaine Scarry (1985) about the inability of the body to remember and to recall pain; for the individual who has experienced it, to give this pain an authentic voice. Scarry takes a view opposed to Freud's who claimed that the 'talking-cure' will transform the experience, which inevitably becomes more distant in time and the memory of it as well. In the theatre, however, the 'truth' lies somewhere between these two positions. It is possible on the stage to re-enact both the desire and the pain by letting the actors and the actresses reflect those feelings in the polyphonic echo-chamber of the theatrical fictional space. There the female voice is literally transformed into the witness of the collective desires as well as the collective suffering.

In her study on narratives of hysteria in nineteenth century France, Janet Beizer has examined the notion of "ventriloquy as performance." She makes a distinction between the older sense of ventriloquy where "the ventriloquist would

be one who has an evil spirit speaking from within" and a modern sense, where there is a separation between

subject and object of ventriloquy, making the ventriloquizing agent external to the body from which it appears to emanate. (Beizer, 1994, 47)

This is in fact also the process which has occurred between *The Dybbuk* and the Sobol plays, gradually making room for a female voice which becomes a representative for a collective experience. At the same time, it is able to integrate important aspects of the erotic voice from *The Song of Songs* and the mourning voice from the book of *Lamentations*.

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Notes

1. See also Martin (1991). In Silverman (1988), there is a very interesting theoretical discussion of the female voice, in particular of its representation in the cinema.
2. For a detailed analysis of the riddle of the Sphinx and the solutions of it that Oedipus supposedly did not know see my article (In print 2).
3. Line 845 of *Oedipus Tyrannus* as translated in S. Goodhart (1978).
4. For different feminist readings of Brecht see e.g. Reinelt (1990), Patraha (1992) and Bryant-Bertail (1992).
5. On the basis of the recording of *The Dybbuk* done in Tel Aviv in the 1950s accompanied by a textual notation of the performance. The printed version of the play, An-Ski (1983, 43) is only slightly different, with Leah saying "No" only once. But there are many major changes in the Vakhtangov version of the play which are not directly relevant in this context.
6. For more detailed discussions on Sobol's plays and various productions of them see my articles, (Rokem, 1989, 1991, and in print 1).

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**Representation in Tadeusz Rozewicz's *The Trap*:
The Dramaturgy of Silence.
University of Minnesota Theatre,
May 1993**

Donnalee Dox

How dramatic images connect to thought, objects, history, memory, theatrical space, and the space outside the theatre has become, in the late twentieth century, a fascinating challenge to dramaturgy. Perhaps no play in contemporary European theatre problematizes reference more eloquently than Tadeusz Rozewicz's *The Trap*. Dramaturgical questions for this particular play center around the presentation of its imagery: how to sustain, amid Rozewicz's complex interplay of visual references to World War I, World War II, Franz Kafka and his own autobiography, the intellectual discourse on history and memory which give the play its movement and energy.

Rozewicz's interplay of referents is caught in the trap of representation articulated by Theodor Adorno:

(w)orks of art that react against empirical reality obey the forces of that reality. There is no material content, no formal category of an artistic creation, however, mysteriously changed and unknown to itself, which did not originate in the empirical reality from which it breaks free. (Adorno 314)

That is, neither the play's referents nor the laws of (dramatic) form really define the play's representational strategy. Representation may be defined instead as how a text breaks away from empirical reality. *The Trap* comes close to truly challenging the impossibility of self-referential dramatic imagery. A performance of *The Trap* must invite an audience to appreciate not only the play's intricately layered historical and literary references, but also the impossibility of representing death, and the barbarity of the attempt. This paper deals with theoretical and practical quandaries inspired by *The Trap* during its production at the University of Minnesota in 1993, namely, how to articulate the play's discrimination between representation and an impossible reality. There are two immediate issues for this dramaturgy.

First, the links between words, objects, and images in the play and their referents in empirical reality must be fluid. The nature of the links between what is staged and what is real continually transform during the performance. For example, a large wardrobe functions at different moments as a clothes closet, a hiding place for a child, a hiding place for refugees, and a wedding gift. To achieve the fluidity required by the text in this production, the same wardrobe was wheeled on and off stage for each scene. The wardrobe's position on the stage, how the characters reacted to it (including not recognizing or remembering it from previous scenes), and the ease with which such an apparently solid object was manipulated by the actors destabilized the object—like a word repeated over and over until its meaning disappears.

Second, there are points at which *The Trap* itself, as a representation, seems to split from its empirical referents to become self-referential. This happens in the image of the Animula, a single, silent and ambiguous figure which moves randomly through the play and is never acknowledged by the characters. The 1993 Minnesota production used a slim, light-haired, light-skinned actress costumed in a translucent shift as the Animula. The delicacy of the performer's movements, her silence, and a costume of lighter fabric and color than any other on the stage set the figure apart. Yet, the Animula could not escape signification based on referents outside the play of Rozewicz's memory: silenced female, Victorian virgin, impoverished waif/child, concentration camp victim.

The play itself seems to work with different representational strategies simultaneously. Its language, sets, props, and characters link to the biography of Franz Kafka. The Kafka referents are clear in scenes of Kafka's family life, his engagement and marriage, the death of his sisters, and his artistic crisis, which are taken directly from biographical record. Rozewicz's own memory, however, seems to emerge in strategies distinct from language and physical objects. Rozewicz's characteristic sense that literature veils, rather than clarifies or reveals, empirical reality emerges in imagery which is less accessible than the almost realistic scenarios of the "Kafka" family: the Animula, enigmatic executioners, and a gradual disintegration of logic.

This dramaturgy suggests that a production must avoid stylistic absurdism or, following Adorno, risk the sacrifice of Rozewicz's referents (e.g., the death camps of World War II) to aesthetic concerns. The links between language, objects, images and their historical referents must be allowed to shift continually through the play, as Rozewicz jumps in time and place between Kafka's biography, (which encompasses World War I), and Rozewicz's own memory of World War II death camps (in which his own sisters died). The play of representational strategies—physical and linguistic, mimetic and imagistic—creates at the end of the play a representation of genocide, which

erases not only its referent (World War II), but also negates language and mimetic imagery as representational strategies. It is at this moment when the play is at its simplest but is most difficult to stage. At this moment, Rozewicz's *Animula* remains alone onstage as a witness to that which cannot be represented. The dramaturgical project is to clarify for a director the shifting relationships between language, imagery, and referents which allow the mind to configure and reconfigure the events and the characters.

The Trap is structured in fifteen loosely chronological scenarios, which do not construct a linear narrative or offer explanatory exposition. The scenarios dramatize Kafka's childhood memories of fear and guilt (I); his home life with his Father, Mother and siblings which focuses on the relationship with his father (II, V, XIII, XIV); the Old Testament legend of Abraham and Isaac re-enacted as Franz's nightmare (III); Kafka's courtship and two attempts at marriage (IV, IX); the limitations of the physical body, dramatized in Kafka's intellectual struggle with sickness, sexuality, and food (VI); Kafka's law practice and relationship with Max Brod (VII, VIII); and the mental world of the writer or artist against society (XI). The recurring image of the wardrobe serves as an example of how links between representation and reality shift from scenario to scenario. As an object, the wardrobe is a stable reference point on the stage, though *how* it links to the action happening around it changes.

In scene I, inside Franz' memory, Franz as a child experiences the wardrobe as a place to hide from his father. His nurse, Josie, tells him, "as soon as we hear your daddy's steps I'll hide you under the eiderdown or in the chest" (3). In scene IV, in which Franz and his fiancé Felice purchase furniture for their married life, the wardrobe is a commercial transaction, a status symbol of marital and social stability. For Franz, it has a psychological dimension unique to his own struggle for artistic self-justification:

I have no wish to become a prisoner, a slave, I can't bear a wardrobe on my shoulders [. . .] maybe that's my cross? A wardrobe. (13)

Scene X is set in a vast garden. The wardrobe appears this time as a metaphysical object, an object in a memory, where its function and appearance are perplexing and ambiguous:

I can't even tell now whether it was a dream or just my thought [. . .] eating through my skin, trying to become a reality. That was some enormous wardrobe or a linen cupboard with a drawer at the bottom. I was alone in the darkness [. . .] I was nauseated at the thought of opening the drawer and inside suddenly there was silence. I began

opening it slowly, slowly, until I could see inside, and there was this crowd [. . .] a human antheap. They were wearing overalls like Jews from the east [. . .] It seemed they were short of air, they had no food because they were pushing towards the opening, squealing and grunting, but suddenly I felt a cruelty that you get in quiet, well-behaved children. (45)

In *The Trap's* final scenario the wardrobe reappears—not in material or psychological spaces, nor in a remembered premonition—but with its ultimate utilitarian purpose, that is, to hide human bodies from an encroaching enemy presence. The father speaks:

I have no time for your inventions and laments. I have the whole family on my head [. . .] where to hide them all [. . .] (opens the wardrobe) [. . .] how many people can get in [. . .] standing? Or sitting [. . .] after all I can't keep standing all the time! And we need some grub and water and blankets and coats [. . .] (75)

The language and visual imagery which represent these Kafka episodes require somewhat realistic representation. In these examples, Rozewicz uses a representational strategy in which meanings shift, but physical objects or bodies define the stage space and link the content of the play with Kafka's biography, historical events of World War I, and Rozewicz' personal history in World War II.

However, the representation of the *experience* of the two World Wars seems to displace time, the marker of narrative, and physical objects. The onset of World War I is represented in *The Trap*, as scenographic and psychological reality:

(t)hrough a basement window we can now see the feet and boots of marching soldiers and there is the sound of a lively march. All the characters are now drawn towards the window and watch fascinated [. . .] flowers can be seen falling among the marching feet. (40)

The representation is essentially realistic. The war has interrupted Franz's obsessed marriage proposal to a shoemaker's daughter. The characters clustered in the basement are, like the audience, spectators to a war which takes place elsewhere. The 1993 production gave the moment a slightly surrealistic cast, without visually representing the marching boots. The effect of a small basement, an enclosed space and the character's excited distraction contrasted sharply with

the end of the next scene on the open stage, in which Franz (standing in a "cold dead light, smoke, mist and ashes") cries out to his missing sisters. This shift between the two scenes is from a literal representation of World War I, its active presence, to the effects of World War II: fear, loss, no-thing-ness, no-where-ness. This image is not grounded mimetically in Kafka's biography, but sensorily in Rozewicz' memory. The action is not constituted and defined by the stage. The stage is defined by memory in which the boundaries between representation and reality, between observation and participation, between present experience and the experience of memory, between one war and the next, blur.

Together, these two different representational strategies begin to erode the power of language, objects, and dramatic imagery to codify reality. In production, the dramaturgical negation of representation suggested that the play begin in realism, so that the power of realistic representation could be dismantled gradually. The opening image of the Kafka family supper, presented in period costume, was designed and directed to evoke an image of a traditional patriarchal family unit, arranged precisely around a rectangular table. This production replaced the Biblical image of scene 2 with a deconstruction of the supper. In pantomime, each member of the family repeated a gesture from the supper scene with increasing ferocity, then stopped abruptly in silence. The result was a sound-movement vacuum, a sensorial absence not unlike that which, on a much larger scale, would end the play.

If *The Trap* offers a dramaturgy for representing the unrepresentable, a production must take apart the idea of representation. As this particular production progressed, the thrust stage was gradually littered with found objects, junk, paper, overturned furniture, and bodies until its viability as a performance space collapsed under the weight of objects which made no sense. But the issue is more complex. If the staging does not attempt to take apart the very idea of staged representation, the play and its audience are caught in Adorno's paradox of the representation:

[t]he so-called artistic representation of the sheer physical pain of people beaten to the ground by rifle butts contains, however, remotely, the power to elicit enjoyment out of it. The moral of this art, not to forget for a single instant, slithers into the abyss of its opposite. The Aesthetic principle of stylization, and even the solemn prayer of the chorus make an unthinkable fate appear to have had some meaning [. . .] something of its horror is removed. (Adorno, "Commitment" 312)

This is the dilemma, theoretical and practical, that the 1993 production attempted to work out of.

Scene X introduces executioner-guards who enter through a black "wall of death" at the back of the stage. They cannot literally re-present the guards of Rozewicz's memory, but they must signify or invoke the terror which is a lived trace of that memory. The stage directions read:

(t)hey may enter the dining room during a meal, a bedroom at night, they may enter the garden [. . .] they may enter in silence and may stop in front of selected people. The executioners' activities are unpredictable. Sometimes the characters notice them, sometimes only one character does while the others behave as though they weren't there. (42)

In this production, the executioner-guards, dressed in vaguely military costumes with face coverings resembling (again the impossibility of escaping signification) World War I gas masks, removed characters at random from the scenes in which they had been actors representing dramatic characters. This action is, in a sense, "real." That is, the production seems to be disrupted as characters are removed by outside, unpredictable forces. The audience may question whether it is the characters or the actors playing the characters who are being removed. There is, in performance, an element of surprise, of breaking character, at these moments.

In scene XI, an unknown character is taken out of a barber shop, forced to strip, then beaten. This action is clearly representation—the actor's exposed flesh was not "really" beaten. However, the two distinct representational strategies—one evocative of the real action and one representing the real action—both make vivid on stage the impossible situation wherein, in Lyotard's words,

the law is not known, wherein it cannot be just, wherein the command, "Die I decree it," cannot obligate, wherein man loses what is proper to him, namely his we. (Lyotard, "Discussions" 375)

In this juxtaposition of two distinct wars with two distinct representational strategies, *The Trap* has the potential to tear apart familiar notions of representation. Language disappears and bodies, objects, and images no longer link directly to Kafka's biography. They become sites on which Rozewicz' remembered history is written: Franz muses over garden trees while his sisters are stripped and reclothed in rags upstage; a barber shaves faces, while in a parallel scene reflected in a mirror his assistant strip-searches and shaves the head

of an anonymous Jewish gentleman. Finally, while Franz reads quietly, two men squeeze themselves and the wardrobe onto the stage from the upstage back wall and the father hides himself in it for fear of being taken to the "hell" in which his daughters died. The father's words, "they are coming already [. . .] they are coming for us" (78) end the script text. The audience is left with a verbal torrent of fear, terror, and chaos as the father frantically forces his own body into the ubiquitous wardrobe, erasing his presence from the stage.¹

The text ends here. The play, however, continues beyond this "final moment" of language and imagery, but it ceases to rely on traditional notions of realistic or stylized representation. As the actors emerge for their curtain call, the executioners appear. They herd the actors (who have broken character for the curtain call) into a wooden supply wagon. Now the actors—not their characters—disappear with the executioners into the upstage wall, extending the image of annihilation beyond the characters to the actors themselves, to the meaning of language, and (dramaturgically) to the idea of dramatic representation. In this production Animula, who is still ambiguously inside and outside the play at the same time, and still reading as an actress in a white shift, remained on the stage until the last audience member left the theatre, according to the script.

These final moments oppose two concepts which must be clarified: how to represent the death of the speaking subject (which is precisely what Rozewicz dramatizes in the final moments) and the nature of dramatic representation itself (which presumes some speaking presence to be heard and seen). The "dead cold light, mist and ashes" at the end of scene 10, for example, can be read with a symbolic or semiotic strategy. The images can be linked to the name, Auschwitz, which has come to articulate the death camps, and to represent a cleavage in Western history. The presence of Animula on stage is, in contrast, an affirming presence which denies the death it would be called upon to represent in a theatrical representation of death in World War II concentration camps. As Lyotard and Adorno have indicated, this representation is both barbaric and impossible.

There are several ways of negotiating the dramaturgical problem of subjectivity and the representation of death. One can think through Julia Kristeva's reading of Artaud's *Theatre of Cruelty*, and "the progressive extinction of the visible field," or symbolic death. Animula's effect would be to "send the subject back to that region of the structure of the speaking being where a lethal drive operates, a drive of forgetfulness or of death" (Kristeva 133). Kristeva's theatre of cruelty is limited by signifying links, and it cannot escape the control that theatre's technical devices have over it. In contrast, Derrida's reading of theatre of cruelty requires an historicized, affirming "manifestation of negativity." Here, the theatre of cruelty does not symbolize an absence or void, rather "it



The Animula. *The Trap*, University of Minnesota Thrust Theatre, 1993. Director: Gulgun Kayim. Courtesy: University of Minnesota Archives.

affirms, it produces affirmations itself in its full and necessary rigor" (Derrida, *Writing* 232). This is an issue for program notes, for post-show discussion, and for theoretical analysis.

The problem in production, however, is Adorno's aesthetic double-bind—that the representation of unthinkable death is made perversely pleasurable in the act of representing it. This is a dangerous problem for *The Trap*, especially in light of Lyotard's concern that the experience of representation insults its referent, the "real dead in the real barracks and gas chambers of real concentration camps" (Lyotard, "Discussions" 364). The only memory of death is erased by the death of the one who is dying.

Given the complexity of the play itself, and the complexity of readings offered by contemporary thinkers on the problem of representation and death, how can *The Trap* be produced? The 1993 production's answer was not neatly described in a stylized representation of the death of language and meaning. In production, visual images of the war in Bosnia projected on screens upstage right and left, and voice-overs from news broadcasts re-played throughout the production. The imagery and text gave an immediate and powerful referent for the play, but could not approximate a memory (cultural or personal) of war, or the kind of destruction written of by Lyotard and Adorno.

Can the Animula escape categories of representation—similitude, illusion, resemblance, symbolism, semiotics, realism, the avant-garde?² As noted earlier, this Animula did not escape signification (nor does the Animula Rozewicz describes in the script). However, its presence at the "end" of the play does begin to contest or confuse its possible readings. The attempt in this production was to make Animula resist symbolic or metaphoric links to any external referent—to the Christian *anima*, the animation of inanimate objects, Kafka's unconscious, to a Victorian waif, to the silent victims of either world war or the Bosnia conflict. Animula sat alone on the empty stage after the curtain call, in the liminal space between the illusion of the *mise en scene*, the reality of the theatre, and European history. Ideally, Animula's silence carried the voice of the subject "we" from *The Trap*—its characters, the actors, Rozewicz' memory—to the audience, but were referenced specifically to *The Trap*, a virtual reality with its own laws, the laws of memory.

Dramaturgically, Animula has the speculative voice in the play. This voice is, ironically, silent. Animula attests to the horror we cannot know by speaking the voice of the victims: silence. Animula cannot represent the reality of the death camps, but it can exist as a trace of a historical moment wherein known laws of humanity collapsed, wherein there was no speaking subject. Similarly, at the end of *The Trap*, the known laws of theatre have collapsed, there is no speaking subject or image with any meaning beyond the play itself. Animula is

a trace of that void which cannot be thought from the inside, or known from the outside (Lyotard, *Differend* 3).

In this way, Rozewicz' Animula is no less an empirical reality than Jozef Szajna's memory, which he expressed in language:

In the camp there were punishment bunkers, worlds where one could measure space with one's extended arms: 90 centimetres by 90, 180 centimetres high, no openings. You're surrounded by walls and this is your entire world and you enter it stooped because the door is only 90 centimetres too. You stand, like someone born into a chimney or a phone booth except that there's no phone, no contact with anybody, no light [. . .] you don't know when it's day or when it's night. (Szajna XX)

Through Animula's silent presence, in the theatre after the curtain call, *The Trap* takes a position in the discourse on representation after Auschwitz which is no less precise or any more transparent theoretical language. If, as Derrida has written, "the word is the cadaver of psychic speech," Animula's silence is an eloquent and painful testimony to the unspeakable, to what cannot be known in language (Lyotard, "Beyond Representation" 156).

The Trap presents two dramaturgical problems for staging which subsequent performances and continued work can address. The first problem is to create an Animula which will not itself be subject to referential readings. The image cannot be neutral, but it cannot be read as a sign for something else. Gender, ethnicity, costuming, body type, and movement—normally criteria for identifying an image on stage—have to be, somehow, abandoned. The Animula must be, in a sense, a visual as well as aural silence. Its presence must signify nothing. It must witness to the play and the audience which watches the play.

The second problem is to allow, within the performance of the play, for Animula not to become a part of the play's action and imagery, but to suggest speculation. It must not be defined by its appearance, or by language, but by its function in a given scene. The Animula is connected to Franz as a soul, and does not participate in the action of the play. It is a persistent, almost nagging presence—a memory of death that will not die from the mind, a memory of a history that once forgotten by the survivors insults the dead as surely as, for Lyotard, its representation is an insult. The Animula cannot represent the victims, or the memory of the survivors. It testifies to absence. At this level the Animula enters the intellectual discourse on representation after Auschwitz and escapes theatrical illusion which elicits, going back to Adorno, enjoyment in the representation of horror.

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Notes

1. Mirrors have been used as objects in scenes IV and VII, both in connection with marital bedrooms. With a Lacanian reading, the mirrors reflect Franz' development in the empirical world, or reflect the empirical world back to Franz. Here, in the alternate mode of representation, the mirror is a window into another dimension or universe, a space in which the laws of the empirical world have ceased to function.

2. Historically, the Polish avant-garde subverted state imposed realism only to become a mainstream aesthetic. Rozewicz, in this context, took the position that literature, specifically poetry, masks the brutality and superficiality of existence. More ontological than ideological or aesthetic, Rozewicz demanded a calculated dismantling of form, genre, convention, religion and illusion in theatrical presentation and poetry.

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Scene between Angela (Gretchen Koemer) and Isabello (Kip Veasey) from *Measure for Measure*, M.A.R.S. Theatre Company, New York, May 18, 1995. (Photo: Bob Klein)

Measure for Measure, by William Shakespeare, a reverse-gender adaptation by Connor Smith. M.A.R.S. Theatre Company. Ubu Repertory Theatre, New York, May 18, 1995.

Given the wide-spread interest in gender roles, in gender expectations, and in the operations of theatrical performance and dramatic narrative in the affirming or questioning of such roles, it is a bit surprising that reverse-gender productions of canonical works, a marvelous device for highlighting the unexamined gender assumptions of these works, remain fairly uncommon. They are perhaps even more uncommon than same-sex productions like the recent all-male *As You Like It* by London's Cheek by Jowl Company or the all-female *School for Scandal* several years ago at the WOW Cafe. The recent reverse-gender production of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* by the M.A.R.S. Theatre Company in New York reminded me in several ways of the memorable reverse-gender *King Lear* by Mabou Mines but also suggested how uncommon this particular sort of experiment remains.

Both the Mabou Mines *Lear* and the M.A.R.S. *Measure* combine the gender-reversal with moving the play to modern times and to a culturally highly coded modern setting. *Lear* was placed in the rural South and *Measure* in the modern offices of "A Major Corporation." The rural Southern setting allowed Mabou Mines to layer a variety of racial, ethnic, and class messages onto the gender issues foregrounded by the gender-reversals, but the very complexity of the result, while stunning in some sequences, was confused, ambiguous, and outright unbelievable in others. Although I found this work in its totality one of the richest and most provocative created by Mabou Mines, I also felt that it might well have been just as intellectually and emotionally interesting, and distinctly more coherent, if it had simply presented the play with reverse gender casting and without the extra codings of the modern South.

These concerns came back to mind as I watched the current M.A.R.S. production. Unquestionably certain scenes gained enormously in power, relevance, and often in understanding and humor, from the corporate context, and the central dilemma of the attractive young man sexually pressured by a woman corporate boss certainly played directly into current fears, founded or unfounded, of men as well as women becoming potential victims of sexual harassment in the modern workplace. On the whole the search for gender-reversed contemporary equivalents was very ingeniously resolved, at least on a character-by-character basis. Angela, the Deputy (Gretchen Koerner), with her designer dress suits and hair styles, perfectly captured the hard edge of the driven contemporary woman executive. Escala (Helene Gresser) was equally effective, played as an attractive

younger woman in the same mold but with a distinctly softer manner. The Duchess (Carol London) was less clear (though this is often a problem with Shakespeare's Duke, also). Although she delivered the lines with authority, she seemed to lack whatever drive might be necessary to place her in this high corporate position (perhaps she was the daughter of the founding president?). Lucio, Shakespeare's "fantastic," here becomes Lucia, an executive secretary, and Jeannie Naughton has a fine time with her, as a brassy, wisecracking, big-city know-it-all, heavy on the jewelry and loud clothes. Her scene with the "two gentlemen" becomes a gossipy coffee and cigarette break with two other secretaries, one older with a severe air and hair in a tight bun (Helen Coxe), the other cheap and flashy with a shocking blond wig (Ellen McLaughlin). A Shakespearean "gentleman" scene was surely rarely more entertainingly presented. This persona serves Lucia well in the subsequent scenes, especially in her eagerness to invent gossip about the absent Duchess (Her delivery of the line "I believe I know the cause of her withdrawing," with arched eyebrows and a conspiratorial smirk, was virtually in itself a justification for the whole gender-reversed production).

Master Overdone is introduced in the program as "a salesman," but there is little doubt that his "sales" are of questionable morality. Andrew Crawford presents him as an overweight but rather endearing monument to bad taste, with astonishing suit, vest and tie combinations tending to reds, greens and maroons, and heavy plaids and strong patterns. His companion, Shakespeare's clown Pompey, becomes Pamee, a shyster lawyer played by Sally Goodwin with a thick Southern accent and an insinuating, almost serpentine manner. The lines "for being a bawd" have been changed to "for being a lawyer," but for Pamee, there is in fact little distinction. The two gentlemen/secretaries also appear in the smaller roles of the dissolute Bernadine, wheeled in drunken in a prison laundry cart, and a comic S/M domatrix Abhora, the executioner, both a bit over the top, but not offensively so.

The gender reversal of Claudia (Terri O'Neill) and Isabello (Kip Veasey) on the whole works well and certainly opens up the scenes between these characters and with Angela in striking new ways. Claudia is not entirely convincing as she is taken to prison, but her appeal there to Isabello (apparently a novice, in dark clothes and always wearing a clerical collar) to save her takes on a fascinating new edge when it becomes a sister's appeal to a brother. On the line "What sin you do to save a sister's life, nature dispenses with the deed so far, that it becomes a virtue," Claudia seizes Isabello's hand and presses it to her breast, a shockingly erotic gesture that stimulates his response: "O you beast . . . Is't not a kind of incest to take life from thine own brother's shame?" The edge of corruption in the prisoner and the offended virtue in the sibling is

foregrounded in a quite different manner than in Shakespeare, but in one that is highly effective.

The production could use more such moments, since it is difficult for Isabella to avoid seeming a bit of a prig in this gender reversed situation. Still he comes off much better than the friars with whom he is first seen, who flee in silly confusion when threatened with encountering a woman. The actors, or perhaps director Kathe Mull, also should be commended for introducing a tender moment between the Duchess and Isabella when they part in the prison. Isabella kisses the disguised Duchess' hand, and they exchange a passionate glance, a helpful foreshadowing of the final moments when the Duchess claims Isabella as consort, a moment that usually comes as a bit of a jolt in the original (some directors have outright resisted this abrupt pairing, such as Mark Lamos, who in his Lincoln Center version of the play left the Duke with his hand outstretched and Isabelle unmoving).

On the level of individual characterizations, therefore, this reworking is entertaining and often both illuminating and ingenious. There are some problems, however. Angela's rejected betrothed, Marion, is engagingly portrayed by Tony Reilly as a good-natured electronics repairman, but I could not help worrying about the fact that he was noticeably stockier than Isabella and moreover had a beard and mustache while Isabella was clean-shaven. Angela, it seems, must have been lustful indeed if even in the dark she was unaware that the lovers have been shifted on her. Another problem was the disguises of the Duchess, who, unlike Shakespeare's Duke, returns in two different disguises. The first is as Elbow (here Elba), a security guard in the corporation, a disguise that makes no particular sense. It is, moreover, inconsistent with the gender reversals elsewhere since Elbow is feminized but the long interchange about his wife is left intact. More consistent, but still a bit odd, is Shakespeare's "friar" disguise, converted here into what appears to be some sort of Voodoo priestess, perhaps in part because the actress playing the Duchess is black. The figured orange robes, sash and turban are theatrically effective, and give a striking new resonance to certain lines (e.g. "I am not of this country," or "my ancient skills."). Nevertheless, one can hardly help wondering what sort of a prison this is that allows such free access to wandering Voodoo priestesses, or more seriously, why a pious and conventional novice like Isabella would place such trust in so odd and clearly pagan a figure. Perhaps the fact that Isabella was a man of the cloth caused director and costumer to look elsewhere for contrast, but surely the parallel to Shakespeare's arrangement, which would have put the Duchess in a nun's disguise, would have been both more consistent and more believable, even in a contemporary setting.

More serious, and more troubling, was a tension within the fictive world of the production. The general patterns of sexual and personal relationships transfer well enough to the new milieu, and as I have suggested, often profit from the fresh angle, but the power relationships and the actual operations of the plot are very troubling if one stops to think about them at all. Even in the world of late capitalism the heads of major corporations do not have the power to hold court in the offices, send people to prison, command their legal execution, and even request their heads in sacks. Thus, even though individual exchanges and scenes often work well enough, the entire central plot element of the play continually resists the adaptation, even more seriously than did the Southern *Mabou Mines Lear*. Clearly the temptation presented by placing Angela and Isabella in a modern corporate office drove this decision (some of the production advertising even foregrounded the "sexual harassment" theme), and this whole part of the plot (along with the comic subplot) provided many effective sequences, but the entire legal mechanisms of court, prison, and punishment, were so unacceptable and distracting that the price of the decision was a very high one. Unquestionably the contemporary setting freshens a difficult and, at times, obscure text, but unless the script is even more radically reworked than it was in this case, creating almost a new play (like Israel Horowitz' *Henry Lump*, a reworking of *Henry IV*), such distraction seems almost inevitable. Another alternative, which I would like to see more often attempted, would be a simple reverse-gender production without the machinery of moving to another highly coded locale like the recent South or the contemporary corporate world, but with only the gender references changed. It seems to me highly likely that such a project, much more clearly than either the *Mabou Mines Lear* or this *Measure for Measure*, whatever their other attractions, would provide a clearer "alienation" from the traditional Shakespeare text and its gender assumptions and thus provide a more clearly articulated fresh look at both.

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The Magic Flute by Mozart. Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Berlin, December 14, 1994.

An event which created a great deal of excitement in Berlin was the premiere of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden. The opera is a perennial favorite with adults and children and is in the repertoire for all three opera houses in Berlin. What gave this particular production a special quality was the design based on the original 1816 production by Karl Friedrich Schinkel. He is familiar to Germans not only as an architect, but as a painter and scene designer. Similarly, the librettist Emanuel Schikaneder is a familiar name, an important figure in German theatre history as an entrepreneur, playwright, and an actor (who played the role of Papageno in the original production of the opera).

Schinkel's designs alone would have provided an evening of entertainment. For the modern viewer, particularly the theatre historian, there is a peculiar tension in viewing this production. On one level, the scenery relies entirely on artifice—one is clearly aware of the elaborate perspective, the painted shadows, the *trompe l'oeil* columns, the panoramas, and all the other elements of 19th century staging striving toward realism. Nevertheless, the artistic work is so convincing and the changes so quickly accomplished that one is drawn entirely into the production, admiring and accepting the "realism" and complexity of the settings.

The sheer number and scale of the settings was impressive. The first of more than a dozen was a space surrounded by cliffs and backed by an elaborate panorama. The hero Pamina entered crying for help, pursued by not one but three fabulous monsters breathing fire. Saved by three handmaidens of the Queen of the Night, he was then joined by the birdcatcher, Papageno, who appeared on the cliffs with his great bird cage on his back. This setting was followed in swift succession by the many others including one used only once, and briefly at that, for an aria by the Queen of the Night: parts of the first setting sank into the stage, others moved offstage, and a great dome with rows and rows of lights appeared fully with hanging clouds underneath it. The Queen was lowered onstage sitting on a new moon. This was really a sensational effect but it was equaled by the palaces, prisons, and the scene with the "test by fire and water".

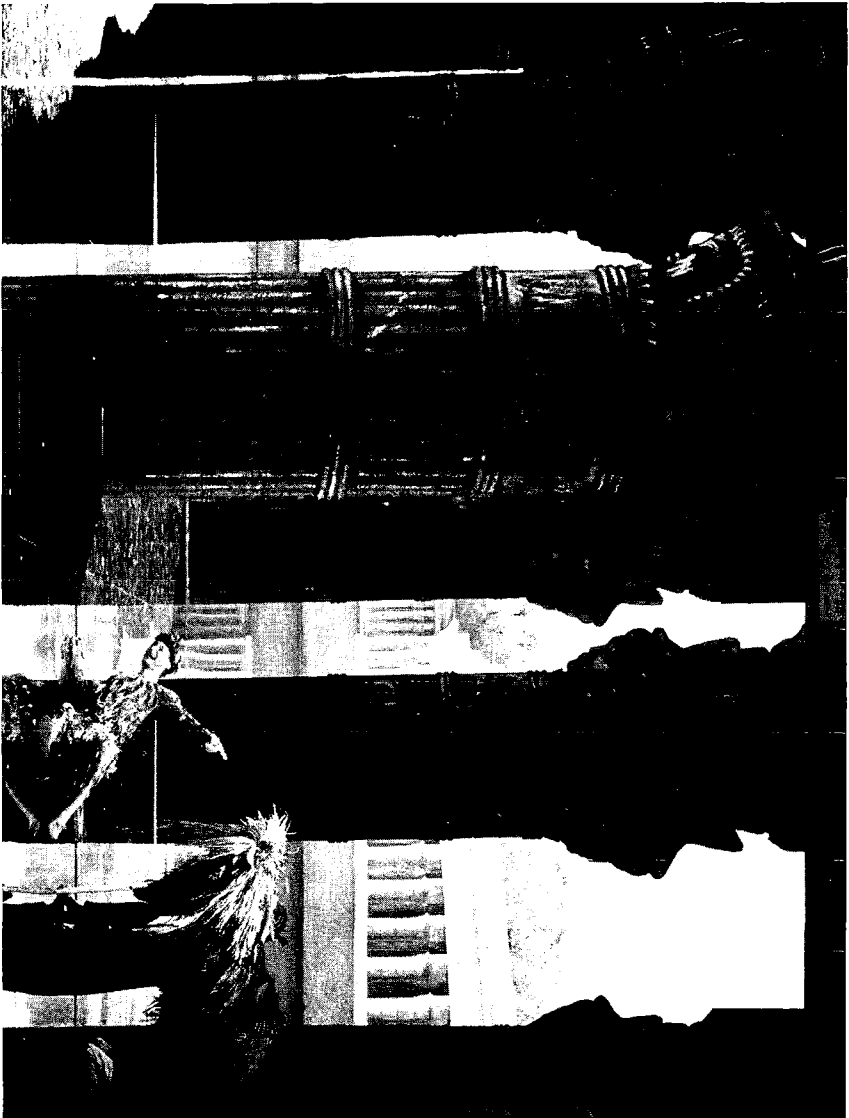
Schinkel's costumes were another delightful part of the design. The enchanting outfit for Papageno of green and blue feathers made him look indeed half-bird, half-man with feathers growing from his body. He was joined by his bird-like Papagena in a similar costume, and finally by twenty tiny children romping and rolling in their feathered costumes. The Queen of the Night, her

handmaidens, and her daughter, Tamina, created a stunning effect in their pale blue costumes, with faces and bosoms made up the same shade of blue, contrasted by black hair and bright red lips. There was a magical quality to the settings and the costumes wholly appropriate to the opera. In addition to the singers, there were wonderfully costumed animals including a unicorn and a rhinoceros which enchanted the audience. The chorus was effectively costumed in white pleated garments like those seen in Egyptian paintings, complementing the Egyptian architecture and the great Sphinx in the background.

This production could easily have been a museum piece of mild interest, but under the direction of August Everding (long famous for his productions in Europe and America) it was lively, fun-filled and dramatic. Much of the scenery was practical so performers ran up and down flights of stairs. Papageno entered by climbing down a cliff, and Tamino and Pamina passed into a deep cave filled with fire and smoke, then through "waves" of water, singing all the while, finally reappearing with him carrying her as he sang. Papageno and Papagena piled their many children on a wagon, he hoisted one on his back as she scooped up another and they made their exit singing. A ramp around the orchestra allowed the performers close contact with the audience and Everding directed them in scenes of fluid movement within the scenery and on the ramp. Like much of the staging of opera in Berlin, this was truly music theatre and as such was very popular.

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Scene of Papagena (Dorothea Roschmann) and Papageno (Roman Trekel) from *The Magic Flute*, Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Berlin, December 14, 1994. (Photo: Marion Schöne).



Scene of Tamino (Peter Seiffert) from *The Magic Flute*, Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Berlin, December 14, 1994. (Photo: Marion Schöne).

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