

Apart from the innovative and handy label of “post-hoc”, search for a new angle from which to reflect on one’s own work indicates the existence of certain institutional and aesthetic values that have triggered the quest and made it inevitable. The specific way of circulating money and therefore ideas in the world of progressive (in absence of a more productive term) dance and theatre, the specific geopolitical configuration of the metropolises in which artistic value is certified, the specific trajectory of academizing reflection on performativity during the past two decades, through the dispersion of the research field and the struggles against the established patterns of conventional teatrology, the specific trajectory of artistic reflection on one’s own work through the import of terms and categories from other fields, especially contemporary philosophy, which have acquired their autonomous careers after the demise of the epistemological customs control and become the instrument of recognition instead of supporting various production and explanatory models, and the specific clashes and contacts between all these specificities in various local contacts, force us to clear the field. If not for the sake of evaluating the possible impact on changes or at least destabilization of the presented relations, then at least for the sake of one’s own artistic or theoretical dignity. The concept of post-hoc dramaturgy, as a modest entry point in this vast field, condenses all short-circuits and frictions of economic, institutional, cultural, and aesthetical levels of organization and regime in dance and theatre production. It encompasses the temporality of production, the logic of reception, and the logic of creation. It has also left traces in the dramaturgy of production, which always presupposes the logic of circulation of the final product, be it purely economic or artistic, together with the recognition that it is impossible to divide these two poles clearly. In this essay, I will dedicate myself to the pole of artistic circulation. There are several reasons behind my decision. For a more comprehensive overview, one would need to conduct some empirical research and to corroborate the hypotheses with production patterns, festival logics, and the relations between power and symbolic capital; and it would be necessary to introduce further distinctions, for which there was neither time nor space in this format. Certain premises and insights will inevitably appear throughout the text that add some liveliness to the discussion on the issues of the aesthetic logic of the “post-hoc” dramaturgy in the strict sense, but they also serve to demonstrate, by the very logic of argumentation, the indivisibility and interdependence of fields and clusters defined by historical and analytical reasons.

Apart from condensing short-circuits and frictions, post-hoc dramaturgy ensures a safe distance, unburdened by the ballast of the traditional models of production and reflection. It is not a matter of some formal innovation of postmodernist provenance, in which borders are erased, perspectives become fluid, and so on; it is a reaction to the specific material and poetic conditions of production. The rhythm of producing performances, the mechanisms of subsequent distribution of the produced knowledge, and the disparateness of the fields of reflection and production in the world of performing arts, provoke us to be innovative in terms of creating new epistemological

models. The purpose of the new model is not to be a phase in the development of innovation, according to the criteria of commodified artistic practice or academic research logic, but to make the first step in avoiding the familiar cul-de-sac and activating certain self-transparencies. It may be inaccurate to label it as an epistemological model, since it implies intervention rather than announcing a new paradigm. As the very term post-hoc suggests, it is a strategy of abandoning the practice of reaching for the ever-present ad-hoc dramaturgies in order to solve problems in the process, an attempt at articulating the mechanisms that generate problems. Or, let me cite perhaps the most famous culprit in the field of contemporary performing arts, be it in terms of self-legitimizing or in theoretical analysis, Gilles Deleuze — the way you articulate the problem is a part of the problem itself.

It is also necessary to identify the place and the subject of the statement of post-hoc dramaturgy. The name itself indicates certain temporality, as well as destabilization of the established temporalities of production and reflection on contemporary arts. And yet, it is not a classical postmodernist gesture, but a reaction to the concrete current situation. Subject of the statement would be the cluster of deficits accumulated by subjects owing to the inertness of the present fields, which operate according to the old wisdom that they are supposed to know things, and that supposition is what reproduces the field. The place of its generation is any place where there is a manifest need for it. The place and the subject are determined primarily through the crucial motivational switches of post-hoc dramaturgy — how should we detect, document, distribute, and activate knowledge that was produced while working on performances? Or find the place and the time from which one could venture into this project? What type of knowledge is produced in the field of contemporary dance and theatre? What are the dominant patterns of its production? What is its specificity and is there some autonomy with regard to the other, neighbouring fields of knowledge production, and what is the effect of the ever looser borders, legitimized by the simple statement that it is all cool and progressive? Progressive it is, I guess, with respect to the ahistorical collage of cold-war mythologemes. How can we instrumentalize that knowledge in later artistic projects? How does that knowledge circulate through the audience or through the institutions, are there productive and non-productive (de)contaminations, and how should we reinstall them? Questions arising from the confusion of specific commodification, academization, and institutional division of labour in the contemporary performing arts force us to ask an additional supreme question — what do we know by that knowledge, and what do we want to know?

A useful methodological crutch is the division into the visible and the invisible in the world of theatre. The anti-representational attack of post-dramatic theatre, armed with the procedures of performance art and contemporary dance, used to take as its starting point the identification of mechanisms of dramatic representation with the representation as such, and the relationship between what is seen on stage and what is not. The stage event was autonomized and the dramaturgical coherence no longer had its anchoring point in the construction of an image of fictional worlds beyond the stage, focusing instead on the established tools of representation, such as the physical body of the actor or the temporality of the theatrical act, in order to abolish the ontological difference between theatre and the world repre-

sented by theatre. The fragility of that distinction has always been subject to various theatrical interventions, but in the past 30–40 years it has become the foundation of poetics. The anti-representational impulse of autonomization was soon spent under the pressure of identifying drama with representation. However, the cleared space of theatrical event has left the mechanisms and tools at the disposal of knowledge accumulated through the process of settling accounts with the dramatic or civic theatre. That initially endogenous theatrical knowledge has always been corroborated by an exogenous one, be it the knowledge of history or of the cosmos, ever since Brecht and Artaud. Gradually, as the new theatrical practices were gaining art historical and public/financial legitimacy, their combination became auto-nomized with respect to the theatrical dispositive as such. Moreover, that knowledge has been entirely defined in terms of discipline and epistemology, whereby it often takes over the functions and distinctions of the aesthetical field that was to be abolished, or at least suppressed, in the aforementioned settling of accounts. It has also been taking over the educational role. Beside the recent hype around research and education in the contemporary performative circles of Western Europe, this is also visible in the theatrical practice, through the inflation of performances that take as their generative matrix other performances from the closer or more distant past, in which they find certain historical interest that they can then reconstruct by using methods of accumulated knowledge.

It is precisely that “knowledge”, in the absence of a more precise designation, which interests us here from the perspective of post-hoc dramaturgy. Its uses, functions, and achievements vary in value and utility, but what is crucial is the specific genesis of its autonomization that is not reducible to epistemological, disciplinary, or functional frameworks. Answers can also be sought in the reductively formulated history of coming to terms with dramatic theatre and the amount of money circulating in the field, since its lack, for example, leads to cuts in the spectrum of stage events, both premieres and repertoires, by using the knowledge that was created through research and circulating it without the financial burden of transferring and paying the performers, renting the venue, or transporting the equipment. It is sufficient to have the one who knows, a small room, and a Mac, and perhaps some unpaid workshop participants. The process of academization in the performance studies has also had an inevitable impact on the geographical, institutional, and epistemological trajectory of “knowledge”. Even though they show considerable similarity and have some points in common, the performance studies have been subject to the norms of academia in their development — in terms of publications and conferences, the logic of producing theories through the practice of doctoral dissertations, by taking place next to the cultural studies, certain weakening of classical teatrology, and the vacuum that was created in the humanist academic field by post-structuralizam, which disposed of all great narratives, primarily Marxism. The main epistemological premise of the performance studies, which detects performativity in all human activities — in work and the issue of distributing the surplus of that performativity — and even in the movement of clouds, gives them pervasiveness that crosses all disciplinary borders and can be identified with political progressiveness and a perfect academic choice for American and Western European hipsters. The academic trajectory of the “performative turn” does not differ a bit from that of the visual or linguistic turns, which consist in

gestures in which a productive analytical layer is hypertrophied into a banal statement that people act, see, or speak, on the basis of which departments are formed. There are certainly analyses of exceptional value in the field itself, but the problem resides in its social, epistemological, and institutional function and the angle of analysis it generates.

The effect of academization of the performance studies on theatrical production is evident in the very fact of informing “knowledge”. Despite the aforementioned disciplinary pervasiveness, a direct correlation with what is produced in theatre is missing on the systemic level. One can list very few books that were written with that intention. Pressed between this lack of systemic reflection, the fact that theatre is losing its influence on other media, the accumulation of methods by which to deal with civic theatre, and the logic of production and presentation, theatre and dance performers are forced to produce knowledge as surplus, something that their position enables them to articulate. The aim of this attempt at describing the situation, at least superficially, is not to endorse implicitly the division of labour between artists, who produce something intuitively, and theoreticians, who then explain it to themselves, the artists, and the world, but to present the division of labour which is there, producing something that we have called the specific “knowledge” in the field of the performing arts. “Knowledge” is treated as a symptom: not of the disease, but of the specific historical contradictions within a particular field, which are not to be solved by reflecting upon that symptom, but only indicate the coordinates for its understanding. The basic question is how that knowledge is informed and whom it serves, and how.

The two forms in contemporary dance and theatre — perhaps not quite dominant, but certainly symptomatic — are the single-issue performance and performances dealing with various variants of complexity. There are also reconstructions and deconstructions of cinematic texts or patterns by using theatre mechanisms, as well as many other forms, yet these two have revealed themselves to be the most interesting with regard to our subject, especially the latter, with the former serving as a sort of its antipode. In terms of form, single-issue performance is somewhere between single-issue parties and gigs of stand-up comedians. The issue gets isolated from its historical situation and its mechanisms are disclosed with more or less humour, everything becomes clear, and the audience go home with a finely packed portion of knowledge, the fabrication of which they enjoyed and will enjoy it even more on the next day, when they will explain the tricks of dramaturgy over a cup of coffee. Single-issue performances are primarily suited for festival circulation, since they are mostly cheap and offer a packed instrument of knowledge to the audience that is good for the festival’s PR, which is still grappling to solve the old problem of elitism and the audience numbers. At the second pole, there are those performances that seek to legitimate themselves by insisting on the complexity of relations that they either produce on stage or as a by-product of activating references around stage. Their problem lies in articulating complexity as an aesthetic value in itself. The content of these complexities becomes completely arbitrary, legitimated by name-dropping in the list of references, while the complexity itself is generated by connotative relationships between completely different types of references. Here complexity is not the consequence of understanding the reality, but an aesthetic form: all that beyond the stage which used to be a fictional, narrative cosmos

where one enjoys oneself by recognizing references and accepting the dance of connotations, or rather accepting the fiction produced by some forms that, in its original space, had an explanatory function. It is not about discrediting the introduction of various references into theatre production, but quite on the contrary, about the way in which these references are used, how they are treated in isolation and brought into relationships by means of arbitrary connotativeness. Moreover, it doesn't mean that there are no performances that handle these various references in an intriguing and clever manner. The Marxist answer to the cause of these symptoms would be broader than the endogenous problems of the field, and aim at a similar logic in a wider field of cultural policy, while the manifest variant of the problem in the form of "knowledge" has in this case been caused by the specific history in question. It is the lack of history, of the material and ideological conditions of its reproduction, and its absence from the explanatory discourse has been evident throughout social space for the past thirty years of the neoliberal counterrevolution. What dominates is the logic of connotative links that tend to be ideologically generated in the crucial fields, whereas in the less important ones they serve to produce aesthetic experience. British Marxist Richard Seymour has offered a case from the field of politics in his recent article *How Can the Left Win*, where he comments on the political reactions to the economic crisis: *"There was something very Thatcherite in the manner in which the Right sought to mobilize a certain residual culture of masochism behind austerity — you have over — indulged and must now repent. They operated on a series of connotative linkages, e.g. between household and state expenditure, in which the private fear that one has borrowed more than one can afford to pay back is bonded to the ideologeme which holds that the state is always inefficient, always over-spending, necessarily unproductive, and always in need of perpetual downsizing. This is the petit-bourgeois manner of thinking, universalised — the nation imagined as a corner shop that has to balance its books and keep an eye out for thieves."*

That is not economic reductionism, but an ideological form that can be detected in all social fields and has its political function. As I have already emphasized in relation to the field of the performing arts, every field contains its own articulation of that ideological form. Post-hoc dramaturgy, with its condensations, new angles, and an inscribed temporal dimension, serves as a practical tool for dealing with the ideological form of connotative relations, deprived of their own historicity in the field of the performing arts. It indicates problems rather than offering solutions. Its function is to use the autonomized "knowledge", informed in the historical trajectory, to occupy that place, and to ask productive questions.

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