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NEW CROATIAN PLAY //

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Dear readers,

This is the new issue of the Croatian Theatre in front of you, with its main purpose: to present actual events and trends in the Croatian theatre with accent on everything we think could be interesting and transparent to the audience abroad as well.

This time, we paid special attention to one institutionalized theatre which, in spite of its attribute “national,” boldly investigates new trends in search of innovativeness. This is the Croatian National Theatre Ivan pl. Zajc in Rijeka, and theatre critic Matko Botić provided contribution about this theatre.

As in previous issues, this time we also present survey of events in Croatian theatre houses in last season, written by theatrologist Mira Muhoberac.

Dance critic Maja Đorđević writes about especially interesting and strong artistic personalities, projects, and choreographers, internationally active dance-performance art groups by analyzing Croatian dance scene, hit by the wave of recession.

On multiculturalism in theatre, Dr. Vitomira Lončar, assistant lecturer at the Academy of Dramatic Art in Zagreb, carried out a research through the project “Borges” which was presented by New Project Group at the 31st World Congress in Manila in 2006.

In the second part of the publication, we present a dramatist of the middle generation, Mate Matišić, and this with translation of his entire text Woman without a Body, which could be interesting to theatre houses abroad.

And finally, we provide report on activities by the publisher of this magazine, the Croatian Centre ITI. Here, one can of course find addresses of all relevant Croatian theatre institutions with hope that perhaps exactly some of our texts will motivate you to contact them. And, on the other hand, if you are interested in previous issues of our publication, we would like to remind you that you can find them on our website: http://www.hciti.hr.

Editorial Board
In a country in which the majority of truly significant theatre events occur in the capital and ossified institutions of large national houses with united drama, ballet and opera ensembles most often deliver unenthusiastic mainstream performances, one provincial theatre imposes itself as a welcome exception, a *primus inter pares* among the few theatres of quality located outside Zagreb. This is the Croatian National Theatre “Ivan pl. Zajc” in Rijeka, a town situated in the northernmost part of the Croatian side of the Adriatic Sea, one hundred and sixty five kilometres from the capital.

The liveliness of the Rijeka Theatre is determined to a large extent by the tumultuous history of this port centre. Its natural resources and ideal geostategic position were usurped by many, with the Austrians and Hungarians, French and Germans alternating in their rule over the town the last several hundred years and, of course, the Italians who formed a large portion of its total population up until the mid-20th century. Italian language and culture marked the very emergence of the Rijeka Theatre, which was built on land taken from the sea, on its very shoreline, by Viennese architects Ferdinand Felmer and Herman Hellmer, authors of some forty similar Neo-Baroque theatres throughout Europe. Apart from already acknowledged Middle European masters who helped in the creation of the Rijeka edifice, established Mediterranean artists such as Venetian sculptor Augusto Benvenuti also participated in its making. The theatre was completed in 1885, almost ten years before King Francis Joseph I ceremoniously opened Zagreb’s theatre centre by the same architectural duo. Rijeka’s dynamic history is also reflected in the functioning of its theatre centre, which from the 1950s carries the name of the great Croatian composer Ivan Zajc from Rijeka, and from the 1990s the title “Croatian National Theatre” together with the theatres in Zagreb, Split, Varaždin and Osijek. Along with the Opera, Ballet and Croatian Drama, Italian Drama which, apart from its artistic value, also possesses a permanent cultural-political value, has been active at the Rijeka Theatre since the end of WWII. The Italian Drama ensemble is the only Croatian professional collective serving a national minority, and is also the only permanent Italian theatre ensemble outside Italy.

The multicultural milieu of the largest town in the Northern Adriatic has always enabled the lively and propulsive activity of the Rijeka Theatre, which is also distinguishable in the thematic tendencies of its most significant successes. Multiculturalism was the basis of key performances during the 1990s, including *Practising Life* by Nedjeljko Fabrio, an ingenious chronicle of Croatian-Italian coexistence in the twentieth century, and *Kraljevo* by Miroslav Krleža, a tormenting anticipation of the war, directed at the time by very young Slovene Vito Taufer. Openness to the “Other” and an inclination for involving artists from neighbouring countries has also remained a constant through to recent times, in which the most significant mark was left by the artologist and dramaturge Mani Gotovac, the first female director of the Rijeka Theatre. She retained the positive achievements of her predecessors; however, with her choice of provocative repertoires and collaborators,
she drew extraordinary media attention to the Rijeka Theatre. Her mandate started in 2003 with the pompously announced version of famous local legend Caroline of Rijeka which Lary Zappia, its director and adapter, created as a “heroic piece with singing and shooting” and where the lead role was given to Croatia’s famous pop singer, Saverina Vučković from Split. Although the media potential of this performance was significantly larger than its artistic value, this move drew the attention of the entire public to the Rijeka Theatre, and created a lively artistic centre from a serious but somewhat lethargic theatre.

In the continuation of Mani Gotovac’s mandate passions did not cool down, rather artistic achievements increased, and several extraordinary titles are remembered from those four years. Belgrade director Jagoš Marković inventively staged De Filippo’s sumptuous, Mediterranean-style comedy Filumena Marturano, and with this performance paved the way for a series of mostly very successful collaborations with Rijeka’s Drama and Opera ensembles. Mani Gotovac was also responsible for initiating “Rijeka Summer Nights”, whereby the northern part of the Adriatic received its summer festival, modelled after those in Dubrovnik and Split. The first performance at the new festival was director Ivica Buljan’s staging of the unconventional and playful Jazz by actor and writer Filip Šovagović, taking Rijeka Theatre to many noticeable guest performances as a result. Early into the 21st century, the Italian Drama ensemble also experienced aesthetic improvements with performances directed by Neva Rošić (New York Marathon by Edoardo Erba), Lary Zappia (Maria Callas Masterclass by Terence McNelly) and, in particular, Slovene director Damir Zlatar Frey who staged the award-winning Crime on Goat Island by Ugo Betti in a choreodrama key. With the mentioned performances Italians from Rijeka proved that they were not merely a cultural phenomenon needed to preserve the minority community, but also a full-blooded and talented collective capable of the highest artistic achievements. In the 2004/2005 season, Damir Zlatar Frey also successfully collaborated with the Croatian...
unendurable social situation not only in Croatia, but also in the entire region. The fact that one such brutal and unpleasant piece of political theatre could have been created without any pressure and censorship in a theatre which carries the prefix “Croatian” and “National” is great praise and recommendation for the Rijeka Theatre. The theatre toured many European cities with this largely successful performance, including Berlin and the “Wiener Festwochen” in Vienna. In the last few years, apart from Frijč, several more powerful theatre director personalities have been working in Rijeka including Slovene Tomi Janežič, who has been creating memorable performances.

Drama in the excellent choreodrama interpretation of Lorca’s Blood Wedding, and Croatian film director Vinko Brešan débuted at the Rijeka Summer Nights with the widely praised and watched adaptation of the cult novel Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh by Croatian writer Slobodan Novak. During the time of Mani Gotovac, creative improvements also occurred with the Rijeka Opera, headed by young conductor Nada Matošević, while the Ballet, headed by young choreographer and dancer Staša Zurovac, staged a series of his youthful energetic, humorous, and well-conceived original works. Mani Gotovac’s term ended in the same way it started, raising much dust, and with the wide and exceptional media coverage of the premiere of The Glembaj Family, written by Miroslav Krleža and directed by the champion of alternative Croatian theatre, Branko Brezovac, which again stirred up endless polemics and starred the queen of Croatian pop music – Severina. After Mani Gotovac, another woman succeeded to the head position of the Rijeka Theatre in 2007 – already mentioned female maestro Nada Matošević, who had until then successfully managed the Rijeka Opera. Her programme was somewhat more traditional and calmer than the Mediterranean impulsiveness of Mani Gotovac; nevertheless, every year several excellent theatre events were created in Rijeka within this concept as well. Young Croatian director Oliver Frljić came to Rijeka during Nada Matošević’s first season and staged Turbo Folk, the most important performance in the first decade of the 21st century in Rijeka with mostly young members of the Croatian Drama. Turbo Folk is a furious and uncompromising settling of scores with the time in which it was created, possessed of unnecessary theatricalization and very direct in naming guilty parties for the

Turbo Folk is a furious and uncompromising settling of scores with the time in which it was created, possessed of unnecessary theatricalization and very direct in naming guilty parties for the
in Rijeka continuously since 2002. In 2008, he staged his own adaptation of the novel Nigger by Tatjana Gromača in a very original manner. The Italian Drama has also been mainly retaining the level of quality as the mentioned successes, primarily with the noticeable multicultural chronicle Riva i Druxi, directed by Lary Zappa, and especially with the awarded staging of Luigi Pirandello’s drama Tonight We Improvise under the directorial leadership of eminent Paolo Magelli. In the opera repertoire, along with presenting the lesser known scores of the Croatian music heritage and the engagement of the best Croatian opera directors, such as Ozren Prohić and Krešimir Dolenčić, what is also notable is the tendency to invite directors who have not had a chance to create on the opera stage, including Janus Kica, Ivan Leo Lemo and Damir Zlatar Frey, who all have brought necessary fresh blood in imagination and inspiration to this old-fashioned artistic expression.

Even in recent projects the Rijeka Theatre has not abandoned researching the aesthetics of risk, which is not all too convenient for a “serious” national house in a Neo-Baroque environment. The occasionally incident-prone and experiment-inclined performances of Oliver Frljić (Molière’s The Miser staged in a shipyard that had gone into bankruptcy) and François-Michel Pesenti, the authorial project centred around the works of Daniil Kharms as directed by Aleksandar Popovski, and announcements of guest performances in the near future by young European directors, such as David Doiashvili and Anica Tomić, eloquently reveal the intentions of the “strangest” national theatre in Croatia. The Rijeka Theatre, built on the very seashore and only a few meters away from the Rijeka market and port, inevitably shares its destiny with the town that surrounds it. Multicultural and open, it is always able to accept diversity as an advantage, and artistic risk as an unavoidable integral part of any relevant theatre act.
IDENTITY CRISIS AND SOCIAL CRISIS ON THE STAGES OF CROATIAN THEATRES
A Season of Croatian Authors, Directors, and Actors of the Middle Generation

Even though Croatian professional theatres staged diverse titles in 2010 and 2011, the performances that came into prominence with their intrigue and quality were those that emerged from the works of contemporary Croatian authors and classics of world literature that provocatively staged themes of identity crisis and social crisis. Since name and body in every society act as fundamental factors of identity and since theatre is a place where identity is self-formed, created, and transformed, a survey of the staged titles at Croatian theatres of different names, with different spatial definitions and various repertoire profiles in a year that marked the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century reveals a medley of authorial, directorial, dramaturgical, histrionic, visual and other creative identities. In the most motivating realizations, this medley is presented as a shared image of Croatian theatre, drowned in European identity, which offers provocativeness and an interesting multilayered quality.

The Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb, the oldest Croatian national theatre house with its Drama, Opera, and Ballet ensembles, dedicated the first part of its season to classics, a customary choice for a theatre that nurtures the theatre mainstream. Although Polish director Janusz Kica directed The Possessed, based on Camus’s adaptation of Dostoevsky’s novel, as a performance about loneliness in the vortex of a merciless world, the audience and critics paid the greatest attention to the performance The Middle Class Gentleman, after the work by Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Molière and Jean-Baptiste Lully. That performance, which combined the elements of French Classicism and the theatre within a theatre mechanism with the all the more detested Croatian lyricism reality and the new primitivism of politicians who have amassed riches, won the Croatian Theatre Award as the best performance of a Croatian professional theatre in the last season. In the second part of the year and the first part of the new jubilee theatre season, the Croatian National Theatre boldly turned away from staging classics and moved to the promotion of works by contemporary Croatian authors. The 2010/2011 season opened with the staging of a drama by young Croatian author Ivor Martinić, and directed by a member of the younger generation, Anja Makeš Jugundžić. Minimalist dramaturgy, a precise rhythm of sentences and exchange of events which stress the rhythm of everyday work, school and hospital obligations, but also the rhythm of drinking coffee, its greatest value is in the passing behind behind the subject, behind the chronotope of the present, in the space of memory, desire, pain, uncertainty, in the humorous replicas which hook into life attempting to cure its unbearable lightness – heaviness of being. Seemingly fragmented in the manner of a film mosaic and edited structurally, the drama’s greatest value is in the silence in which the voices around the subject are eavesdropped on, souls and spirits, in the unusual mixture of recalling painful situations from Shakespeare, Chekov, and one’s own life, similar to ritual theatre. The stretching and anticipating of time, in which the mother’s death (stroke) also takes place, hides the rhythm of soul music deep in the text structure of the drama. It is this soul structure that is crucial for the genre-determined form already in the title A Play About Mirjana and Those Around Her, just as the jazz-structure is crucial for the provocative dramas based on disappointment in reality and politics by Croatian drama author of the middle generation, musician and lawyer Mate Matišić. The authors of the performance, almost all young and/or awarded authors, created it as a structure that develops codes of soul-culture as a way of life, and not as a soul or subject moving in intimate spaces, presenting spaces that came into being from media perception, wishing “to destabilize our perception of space, and therefore our perception of the subject.” Concretization of the subject in the performance occurs on several Bachelardean floors, from the swimming pool to the mother’s departure on the top floor of piled up boxes. The semiotic code of the “relocated subject” is self-ironically realized by Croatian actors of the middle generation: Vanja Matužec, Livio Badurina and Alma Prica. The performance opened on 15 October 2010 and was connected to the famous opening of the so-called National Theatre. In co-production with the Vukovar Theatre, the performance Adagio was created after the play of the same title by Lada Kaštelan, Croatian writer, translator, and dramaturge of the middle generation who is employed at the stage of Zagreb’s Croatian National Theatre at the beginning of 2011. It is based on revealing unpresentable layers and
after the disillusionment with some leading politicians who were trusted without reserve and in the moment of spiritual, social and existential crisis. It is this art of acting, for which the Gavella Theatre has been known since its establishment in the early 1950s, and several powerful guests (Gavella’s last student, principal national actor Božidar Boban as the Great Boog, Button-Moulder, bringing back hope of the return to the acting archetype, Alma Prca, principal actress of the Croatian National Theatre as Peer’s mother Aase, reaches her most tragic moments with utter simplicity and inner acting energy), that holds this performance on the tense edge of reality and imagination as faith in the return to theatre and life, and transforms it into a wandering of one’s own dreams and realities. At the beginning of 2010, the impressive and distressing play Alabama by contemporary Croatian author, dramatist, and dramaturge Davor Špišić, directed by young Croatian director Dario Harjaček, was staged at this theatre, illustrating the difficult Croatian wartime and post-war reality and tragedy of mothers. Marina Nemet, a leading Croatian actress of the middle generation who died of a serious illness at the end of 2010, received the prestigious acting award at the Marulić Days in Split for her role of Ruža. The end of the year was marked by the performance Wit by American author Margaret Edson, translated from English into Croatian by Tomislav Kuzmanović and directed by Slovene director Samo M. Strelec, with Anja Šovagović Despot in the leading role of Dr. Vivian Bearing, a university professor of literature.

the multilayered musical-like background that strikes at the stifling of emotions in unrealized or unrealizable relations.

The second Croatian mainstream theatre, Gavella Drama Theatre in Frankopanska Street in Zagreb, also recognized the present-day spirit in Molère’s dramaturgical tendencies, characters, and types by entrusting the directing of Tartuffe to guest director from Italy, Marco Sciaccalugi, who gave the leading role to Ozren Grabarić, one of the leading young Croatian actors. The same actor is brilliant in the title role of Peer Gynt in Ibsen’s drama Peer Gynt, directed by guest director from Macedonia, Aleksandar Popovski, who chose Grabarić two seasons ago for the later awarded comic role of Bottom in Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream in the same theatre. In staging Ibsen’s play, Gavella’s ensemble surrounds Grabarić-Gynt with positive actor energy, forming impressive drama personalities that in the epically structured performance in the first part and the theatre’s shadow of life and death in the second part are felt like a multi-identity and mobile group role based on Ibsenian illusion and reality, showing up as short and concise, wondrous appearances combining the otherworldly and fantastic. Grabarić as Peer Gynt carries the mystery of wandering, solitude, human sorrow, happiness and warmth, exactly those characteristics that are the conceptual drivers of directing and dramaturgy, as well as the reason for performing the Norwegian play here and now, in Croatia,
Croatian actor and playwright Elvis Bošnjak, and directed by Krešimir Dolenčić, Croatian director of the middle generation. Situated in the Dalmatian Zagora (hinterland) and the town of Hvarce, with the focus on a garage in which the rhythm of seasons is recognized by rituals, by which a raw pork leg is turned into prosciutto ham and must into wine, and the rhythm of life in the exchange of deaths and weddings, the destiny of a family marked by tragedy is presented: the present death of the mother of three adult sons and one daughter is interwoven with the aunt’s loss of a son in the past and the daughter’s son indulging in vices in his student days in the present. Zoran Gögić as the oldest brother Stipe, Darko Milas as the middle brother Nikola, Amar Bukvić as the youngest brother Jerko and Anja Šovagović Despot as Seka, their sister, and also Vlasta Knezović as the Aunt, Sinija Ružić as Seka’s more recent husband and Perica Martinović as the Bride use wholly simple acting accompanied by impressive movements and brutal words with reduced acting means to realize an almost documentary-like convincing illustration of the difficult present time and life outside city centres with associations of the links between Croatian, Irish and Scottish social environments. The four-act structure with the exchange of seasons and movement of the soul in pauses and silences, in the agon of the silence of unde-
termedness and painful scream, stirs up associations of Chekov, and the death in the river of Shakespeare and Ophelia. The performance convincingly integrates the drama of life alongside a river that takes lives, and the silent men who find powerful support in the capable and sometimes cunning women, who push life forward.

The Zagreb Youth Theatre, which promotes the values of contemporary deconstructive theatre outside the Croatian mainstream, had the premiere of the performance Garage, directed by Ivica Buljan, after the novel of the same title by contemporary Croatian author Zdenko Mesarić and made in co-production with the theatre La MaMa, in February 2010 after its pre-premiere in New York in January. Young authorial duo, Jelena Kovačić, dramaturge, and Anica Tomić, director, decided to present the performance This Could Be My Street with the Zagreb Youth Theatre ensemble. It premiered on 23 October 2010 and was motivated by the violence and murder on the streets of Croatia among groups of teenagers, in this case of young Luka Ritz. On the small stage of the same theatre, „Mlčko Polapec“ Scene, exists the provocative performance by director and co-author Borut Separović Generation ’91-’95 [or Croatian History Class] by Boris Dutilovčić and Goran Fečer about the destiny of people who were born during the Croatian War of Independence.

With the death of Fadil Hadžić, doyen of the Croatian theatre, on 3 January 2010, Kerempuh Satirical Theatre was left without the founder of the contemporary satire and cabaret scene only two months after staging Hadžić’s comedy Tricksters, directed by Goran Paro, on 20 November on the occasion of sixty years of his artistic work. The Miracle in Poskokova Draga, an adaptation of the novel by contemporary Croatian writer and journalist, columnist and scriptwriter Ante Tomić, directed by Krešimir Dolenić and adapted by dramaturge Željka Udovičić, was staged on 25 September 2010. The Histrion Acting Company presented the performance After the Rehearsal after a text by Ingmar Bergman, directed by Aida Bukvić, and starring the father and daughter acting pair Pero Kurgić and Ana Kurgić. The Company also presented a drama by actor and contemporary Croatian dramatist Amir Bukvić, Who Took down the Berlin Wall, directed by Zoran Mužić, which premiered on 19 November 2010. In this drama, guest-actors Dragan Despot and Sima Popović, principal actors from the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb, embody the Croatian destiny of banned, and imprisoned for political reasons, writers and of their investigators who become ministers and former ministers. Theatre KNAP presented the play Amateurs by contemporary Croatian author Borivoj Radaković. The play was directed by one of the most prominent Croatian directors, Petar Veček who died on the day of the premiere, 18 December 2010. The play is a sarcastic comedy about amateurism which spreads into all pores of society, from everyday life to art and the buying of love.

In 2010, Theatre Exit offered performances dealing with the crisis of the artistic identity and life split into soul and body: a monodrama performance by Rene Medvešek in the performance Contrabass after the text by Svetiž. Theatre Gavran, privately owned by married couple Gavran, presented The Craziest Show in the World by author Miro Gavran, the most widely translated contemporary Croatian dramatist. In the performance, a number of roles are virtuously played by theatre actors Dragan Despot and Sima Popović, principal actors from the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb, embody the Croatian destiny of banned, and imprisoned for political reasons, writers and of their investigators who become ministers and former ministers. The Zagreb Youth Theatre, which promotes the values of contemporary deconstructive theatre outside the Croatian mainstream, had the premiere of the performance Garage, directed by Ivica Buljan, after the novel of the same title by contemporary Croatian author Zdenko Mesarić and made in co-production with the theatre La MaMa, in February 2010 after its pre-premiere in New York in January. Young authorial duo, Jelena Kovačić, dramaturge, and Anica Tomić, director, decided to present the performance This Could Be My Street with the Zagreb Youth Theatre ensemble. It premiered on 23 October 2010 and was motivated by the violence and murder on the streets of Croatia among groups of teenagers, in this case of young Luka Ritz. On the small stage of the same theatre, „Mlčko Polapec“ Scene, exists the provocative performance by director and co-author Borut Separović Generation ’91-’95 [or Croatian History Class] by Boris Dutilovčić and Goran Fečer about the destiny of people who were born during the Croatian War of Independence.

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In the most intriguing performances, Croatian professional theatre shows the suggestive layering and dramatic vibrating of authorial, acting, directorial, artistic identity as ... under the dramaturgical, directorial, and acting baton of the members of generations born in the turbulent 1960s.

1Compare with: David J. de Levita, Der Begriff der Identität, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1976

In the Croatian National Theatre “Ivan pl. Zajc” in Rijeka, within the production of Croatian Drama, Aleksandar Poposki, guest director from Macedonia, directed the exceptionally well accepted performance Circus Destetika, which represents a magic of theatre art with traces of post-drama tendencies. The Croatian National Theatre in Osijek staged the performance Parallel Worlds, a successful drama excursion into something new by Miro Gavran, based on uncovering the secret identities of managers, scientists and university professors in an inventive and multi-layered, awarded direction by Robert Raponja who, in a contemporary schizophrenic reality, certainly leads an interesting ensemble of actors, led by awarded protago-
In the shadow of recession, the past season as if highlighted the situation, characteristic for the Croatian dance scene. The powerlessness of the situation is obvious, along with the absence of a vision as well as strategy that would announce a change in the attitude of the politics of culture. Within the politics, there were efforts to maintain, with a smaller budget, the existing situation. This meant – from the point of view of the contemporary dance scene, which is entirely non-institutional – that the basic idea was the following: to survive the season! To carry out, without “impossible” pretensions, the opening night of a project for which minimal funding by the City or the Ministry of Culture was justified and to add another title to a CV which would then help the approval when the revision of one’s independent artist status is being carried out.

The majority of theatre and dance works is, as a result, on the level of a “work in progress.” Unfortunately, this prescribed and accepted modesty in requirements giving up scenography or some more significant props and simple costumes – in the end is also reflected in spiritual “simplification.” In one word: abandonment. Out of mainly good ideas, interesting starting points, merely the first level is realized; there is no time or space for research, no right to quit, and certainly no right to “correct,” elaborate... “There is no right” means that artists have consented to that. The number of further running of performances is terrifyingly small, and anyway, what is the point when only new projects are funded? In fact, it seems as if part of the scene is already doing performance art! This is not bad in itself, nevertheless, it seems as if activism “has choked” art, and now both the audience and critics are tired of the insistence on the part of artists to have incomplete and imperfect or invisible works in accordance with the transparency of the principle “what you pay is what you get.”

There is no “fun and games” in this profession at any place, and especially at such a present time, so the question is for how far and why is personal dissatisfaction being pushed forward? Is someone else always the problem and should the audience be exposed to the problems of the artists who (after taking responsibility) have decided to stand in front of them on the stage? Luckily, someone strong enough (read: recognized on the international scene) always comes along, inspired to preserve the criteria (in this medium of such quick oblivion), or rather, to set new ones. It could be said that this season was marked by Matija Ferlin, at this moment the most interesting and powerful artistic personality, an artist from Pula (with residences in New York, Toronto, Vienna, and Ljubljana). He appeared in Zagreb in the autumn as a guest at the Young Choreographers Platform (organized by Dance Centre TALA) in several roles: as the exposed artist of the new episode of personal series/Almost 6; as the choreographer of the performance Onformance with the Studio Contemporary Dance Company (for which he received the Croatian Theatre Award for best dance performance); and as a performer and complete support to Aleksandra Janeva Imfeld in the project 2women2brothers2matries. Everywhere he goes Ferlin introduces a new, fine quality. Spiritual and inconspicuous, more and more mature and self-confident from one project to another, in his own way he opens up a new space of being in theatre with a stage humbleness (I use his own syntagm), and – in an international context – definitely offers a specific answer to this year’s questions posed with the Platform: What is contemporary dance? And what is a choreographer?

BADco. is undoubtedly the most visible (collaborative performance) collective in international terms, and – in its open fluidity – a model of a contemporary artistic organization (apart from the dancers/choreographers, it consists of two dramaturges, one philosopher and one producer). Although the collective is connected with the Centre for Drama Art and only partly with the field of contemporary dance scene, the four choreographers/dancers of the group: Nikolina Pristaš, Pravdan Devlahović, Ana Kreitmeier and Zrinka Užbinec are extremely visible. SEMI-INTERPRETATIONS or how to explain contemporary dance to an undead hare, a solo work by Nikolina Pristaš, was created as a certain summary on the subject of sedenitated (historically, in the sense of ten years of BADco.’s activities, but also in the sense of contemporary dance) choreographic procedures, as cognition that dance does not convince by means of gestures, but by means of procedure and that dance can be clearly observed only if dancers persist on a certain procedure. BADco. celebrated their ten years of work with a series of events in Zagreb; they won the award by the Association of Dance Artists of Croatia for their exceptional contribution to Croatian dance. They are also representing Croatia at the Biennale in Venice in 2011. Unfortunately, one of the main “aces” of the Croatian dance scene and one among the rare possible bridges towards spaces of contemporary ballet, the author-dancer duet of Maša Kolar and Zoran Marković, had to cancel the already announced and actually completed performance due to injury. After returning from leading European troupes, they significantly changed the domestic dance scene in their two performances BoNet and The Morning After the Night Before (realized with the support of the Sisak Town Theatre) in terms of high professionalism, having the artistic starting point in the quality of the craft itself. Since the academic level of education has still not been established, and with this I do not mean a document, but
Snježana Abramović Milković has been managing the Zagreb Dance Company (as well as the Festival of Contemporary Dance and Nonverbal Theatre in Svetvinčenat) with integrity and without any oscillations. This group, in terms of its organization, is closest to the notion of an institution and a representative example of the mainstream in contemporary dance. Interface, the new choreographic project by Abramović, is in continuation of the same style, a performance that is skilfully led, precisely performed, and formed in high aesthetics.

Another group, actually in terms of the years of existence of its first assembly, Studio Contemporary Dance Company has for a long time now been without a clear artistic vision, and has ... activist conceptualism and larger scale productions, such as the exceptional Ferlin’s Onformance.

Marjana Krajač, Sonja Pregrad, Petra Zanki, Sanja Tropp Frühwald (who, apart from her own projects, also works on initiating a scene in Varaždin) and Bruno Isaković belong to the group of protest, or who have their own scene and audience a little on the side (Mark Boldin, Ana-Maria Bogdović in Ribnjak, or Ljiljana Zagorac who returned with the dance visual artevent Spirals at the Centre for Culture Trešnjevka). Some are currently more successful in another medium, such as Irma Omerzo and Ljiljana Mikulčić in dance film. Some are part of the international scene and visit merely from time to time, like the always full of inspiration Andrea Božić did this year.

On this occasion, I would like to mention another performance, a “black ballet” by Natalija Manojlovic, The Plumber (after motifs by Boris Vian). It is an excellent example of the theatre of movement (or physical theatre) and already for three seasons it has been attracting audiences in Teatar &TD.

And in the end, said with a touch of optimism, there is a new and interesting name among the authors, namely Nataša Mihoci (otherwise a noticed dancer in the productions by dance_lab collective, Studio Contemporary Dance Company, and Montažstroj), who staged her first choreography Nobody is Innocent within the Zagreb Youth Theatre College programme.

All the above listed belong to Zagreb’s production, the undoubtedly and ironclad centre of events, where approximately thirty new projects were performed. In all other cities combined (Rijeka, Zadar, Split, etc.) the number is less than ten. And out of those that were performed, five mostly were not able to see them, but merely read reviews or talked to colleagues. Nevertheless, in principle there are even greater problems of production, and especially post-production, than there is the case with Zagreb.

With regards to Croatian ballet and the three national ensembles in Zagreb, Split and Rijeka—somewhat I think that they should at least be mentioned when we talk about dance as theatre art—this is about institutions that function regularly and in a planned manner. Zagreb had an excellent season with even two premiers: The Silence of My Murmur by Leo Mujić and Air by Krešimir Seletković and Martino Müller. In Split, Valentina Turco staged her vision of Carmen. And Irena Pasarić and Almira Osmanović make efforts to harmonize classical ballet literature with new, contemporary ballet productions. They, in relation to the artistic managing of Staša Zurovac, performed Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie, an interesting choreodrama work with which they actually came close to the contemporary dance scene.

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MULTICULTURALISM IN THEATRE: 
CASE STUDY OF THE “BORGES PROJECT”, 
APPLICATION OF THE “HUMAN ENVIRONMENT” MODEL
2. Introduction to the Analysis

2.1. Cultural heterogeneousness (diversity)

In the last thirty years of the 20th century, cultural diversity became the motivation and power of development, not only from the aspect of economic growth, but also as the leading element that improves intellectual, emotional, ethical, and cultural awareness of and loyalty to one's own ethnic identity. The promotion of cultural diversity, the shared heritage of humankind, and dialogue are central themes with which UNESCO has been dealing. This means that it is necessary to ensure space and time for the exchange of ideas and expectations. Thus, the development of differences and strengthening of awareness of one's own ethnic identity is a driving force.

Multiculturalism and interculturalism are two most frequent approaches to cultural diversity, and dialogue and dynamic quality in opposition to static quality and closeness are the key words of a changed paradigm which came into being at the end of the 1970s.

In more recent times, interculturalism is more desirable than multiculturalism due to its dynamic quality and openness.

The “Borges Project” belongs to the multicultural approach in contemporary theatre which, in this concrete case, is in theory approached in different manners and is being analysed from a number of different perspectives; however, from the point of view of practical work, it is possible to make strict divisions. In practice, many elements are present which overlap from one approach to another. Globalization and glocalization develop parallel and simultaneously, therefore one can say that globalization moves in two directions – homogenization on one hand, and ever growing fragmentation and pluralization on the other hand. Exactly due to this twofold process in the context of globalization and international political climate, cultural dialogue has a new meaning in maintaining peace and prevention of violence. Cultural diversity has an emancipatory character and because of that, the development of differences and strengthening of awareness of one’s own ethnic identity is a driving force.

Multiculturalism and interculturalism are two most frequent approaches to cultural diversity, and dialogue and dynamic quality in opposition to static quality and closeness are the key words of a changed paradigm which came into being at the end of the 1970s.
into another, and therefore exclusiveness is unacceptable. Individual elements of theory can be more or less detected, but theatre opens different vistas from the ones offered by theory. The “Borges Project” investigates the need and manners of achieving visibility, as well as the possibility of expressing this visibility, but also of establishing a dialogue with others along with strengthening one’s own visibility. Since reasons for diversity are different in individual participating countries (post-colonialism, globalization, international migrations, reaffirmation of national minorities, raising awareness of indigenous peoples, politics of identity), approaches to the theme on the part of the artists are also different. The performance “Borges Project” was conceived as the beginning of a dialogue.

The goal of this analysis of the “Borges Project” is twofold: on one hand, there was an attempt to understand the interpretations of Borges’ short story “The Circular Ruins” in individual performances which were produced by artists from the participating countries with their teams and, on the other hand, there was the intention to create a summary analysis of shared characteristics and inter-differences. The focus of this analysis of a multicultural approach to theatre performance is from the point of view of human communication, in other words, this analysis deals with the question of how groups of artists from different cultures communicate their distinctive and unique interpretation of a shared theme in space. Within the analysis, special attention was paid to symbols which were used by artists and to the manner in which these symbols were expressed by means of artistic skills in a certain space.

The assumption is that theatre comes into being at the moment when an actor and audience (people) are at a certain location (place), and if we add dialogue (process) to that as well, it is possible to include theatre into scientific research that leads to a higher quality of appreciation of differences.

2.2. Description of the analytical approach

The process of analysis was created on the basis of video materials and a possible scenario was produced from them. By means of observing the newly produced scenarios, answers were found to the questions of who were the subjects (people), what kind of space they occupied (place) and what actions and interactions were developing among the subjects in this space (process). The sources used as the basis for the analysis were Borges’ short story “The Circular Ruins,” watching of the performance, video recording of the performance, personal participation in the project, and conversations with participants of the artistic and production teams.

All teams used different means to achieve the same goal, which was to create an image of Borges’ “new man.” Within this goal, there were many differences in the choice of means and the manner of interpretation, which was obvious already during the first watching of the performance/video material.

2.2.1. Grice’s Cooperative Principle

The supposition for the analysis was that all teams had used Grice’s Cooperative Principle as the starting point, this being that in human communication, participants stick to four basic maxims implicitly. These maxims are: the Maxim of Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner.

The Maxim of Quality refers to the truthfulness of what is communicated; it demands that participants tell the truth and that others will accept them in this way.

The Maxim of Quantity demands that participants are informative, i.e., that what is presented should introduce new information into a communication situation.

The Maxim of Relation demands relevancy, i.e., the adequacy of what is said according to the situation in which it is said.

The Maxim of Manner is clarity, i.e., in each and every act of communication, the one who communicates should do so in a way he or she thinks other people will find clear.

In the concrete case of Borges’s short story, this means that participants of the project followed the agreed pattern, specifically, that the theme of each individual performance was Borges’ short story (the Maxim of Quality), that performances by the teams provided an insight into their interpretation, that they were informative, bringing an understanding of Borges’ short story (the Maxim of Quantity).

Relevancy was communicated in that each action by the participants was related to elements of the story and to aspects of their interpretation (the Maxim of Relation), and that the participants had the desire to be clear in order to familiarize the audience and other subjects in the project with Borges’ story and their interpretation (the Maxim of Manner).

According to Grice’s Cooperative Principle, this is the foundation for the creation of “mutual expectations” of all subjects who participate in a certain communication situation.

In the concrete project, mutual expectations were not always realized. Only some performances were understandable after the first watching. In order to come closer to the incomprehensible interpretations, an additional analysis was necessary and this included the breaking down of each and every movement, sound, image, symbol, context, musical instrument, and other elements which were available in the narrative, presented by means of video material.

2.2.2. Frame “People, Place, and Process”

“People, Place, and Process” is an analytical frame on which the “Human Environment” model was based. The frame and model were created during the European project SANE(25 Sustanaible Accommodation for the New Economy). This theoretical basis was created for the analysis and forming of moving working space and served as the starting point for the analysis in this project.

By means of observation and with the help of the “People, Place, and Process” frame, an intuitive interpretation of video material was created. By the process of decoding symbols and other offered elements and using the “People, Place, and Process” method, at first sight incomprehensible narratives became clearer, while some sections of interpretations remained unexplained even after a detailed analysis.

Significant progress in understanding was achieved while reading the Japanese story which was based on symbols and associations via the “People, Place, and Process” model which enabled a wide range of interpretations. In contrast to the Japanese story, the Philippine story, based on inaccessible language, still remained unexplained in some aspects.

25 www.sane-eu.com

26 www.sane-eu.com
The African-American part of the American presentation based on familiar language this time was not completely decoded because the poetic form of speech on the part of the artists prevented understanding of the content. After the process of breaking down each and every section of the performance, those interpretations that were clear on first watching to a great extent changed their meanings and brought about new readings. Therefore, the procedure of analysis by means of the “People, Place, and Process” method which was used due to insufficient knowledge about the cultures of countries outside European circles, also contributed to new understandings of familiar narratives. Language, as an important element of every ethnic group (and, therefore, of the teams of the participating countries as well), temporarily took a marginal position in this analysis and the focus was transferred to the role of symbols in the creation of a common ground and mutual expectations all within the context of “People, Place, and Process.”

3. Summary Analysis

3.1. Shared elements
• All participants are members of NPG and ITI
• Borges’s short story “The Circular Ruins”
• Participants in the project are theatre artists (actors, directors, dramaturges, dancers, musicians, producers)
• Artists express themselves in symbols
• They want to create an image of Borges’s new man
• They express a desire for new experiences and exchange of experiences
• They express a desire for communication
• Curiosity is characteristic for artists
• They use the English language as the language of communication in NPG

All teams consisted of artists, therefore all the participants shared dealing with the arts in common which produced certain consequences: artists, no matter what kind of art they deal with, express themselves in symbols. Since participants in the project were not, for the most part, institutions obligated to send their employees, it can be assumed that the artists came into the project of their own free will, led by a desire for new experiences, exchange, and because of their desire to communicate with other, different cultural identities. What is also imminent to all artists is curiosity that moves them toward new artistic experiences and solutions. Observing the "Borges Project," all participating artists shared Borges’s short story “The Circular Ruins” upon which they built their vision of creation of the new man. Therefore, with different but always artistic means, the same goal was achieved, creation of the new man, through symbolism within one’s own culture, traditions, or again a deviation from those.

3.2. Differences
• Seven countries, six different approaches
• Creation of the new man as a being connected to his own tradition: the Philippines
• Creation of the new man as a political being: the Philippines, USA
• Creation of the man as a combination of the corporeal and spiritual: Switzerland
• Creation of the man of communication: Croatia, Belgium
• Creation of the new man through transformation of personality: Germany
• Creation of the new man by means of symbols: Japan

As can be concluded, not one team took a descriptive approach in relation to Borges. The closest to the descriptive approach was the interpretation by the Cameroon team, but since only a synopsis was accessible, this could not be established with certainty. According to their own affinities, the seven teams chose six different approaches in order to express their vision of the new man and Borges’s short story.

3.2.1. Ethnic discourse
• With the use of ethnic elements: the Philippines, USA
• Without the use of ethnic elements: Switzerland, Belgium, Croatia, Germany, Japan

The Philippine and American teams used elements characteristic for ethnic groups from their countries. The Philippine story is about the island of Mindanao and the problems of ethnic groups there, more precisely, of the indigenous tribe Moro. The American story involved the theme of hurricane Katrina through the discourses of a Hispano-American male, a white male, an African-American male, and an Asian-American female, while the Swiss, Belgian, Croatian and German interpretations could be replaced and happen in any country. Not one of the European countries decided on specific recognizable features or folklore elements and in this sense, they remained unrecognizable.

The Philippine artists were dressed in folk costumes, they sang folklore melodies, played traditional musical instruments and the theme of their interpretation of Borges’s short story was deeply rooted in Philippine history. The Cameroonian interpretation (according to the synopsis) contained traditional dance, drums as traditional musical instruments, and the American interpretation insisted on ethnic presentations by the very choice of artists.

3.2.2. Emotional involvement
• Rational: Switzerland, Belgium, USA (white male), Japan
• Emotional: the Philippines, USA (a Hispano-American male, an African-American male, an Asian-American female)
• Both: Croatia, Germany

The relation to the theme by artists from Switzerland, Belgium, and the USA (white male) was objective, not emotionally engaged, there was no personal relation to what the artists discovered, analysed and brought into connection. The problem they
chose for the analysis in Borges’s story was not a personal matter and therefore their rational approach was a logical choice.

For the Japanese approach, we could only assume that it was rational, and this assumption resulted from a possible scenario in which the female artists who participated in the interpretation had the role of symbols and did not interpret their own personality.

A question that is posed here: Why, for example, did the Swiss team choose the rational and the Philippine team the emotional approach?

Contextual answers are possible. Switzerland is a country without wars for more than three centuries; it is one of the wealthiest countries in the world; it is a neutral, multinational and polyethnic state with multiculturalism in its roots. It is a multilingual, liberal democracy with a high gross national income; it is rich, rather open for new immigrants and migrants; it is physically compact, in the heart of Europe, and without one dominant ethnic group.

The Philippines were colonized for centuries; this country is a young democracy, with mostly one nation and a majority Catholic population, a low gross national income, and widespread corruption; it is a poor, island country in Southeast Asia, a country of great segregations and a fertile ground for dissatisfaction and emotional manifestations. On the island of Mindanao, which is the location of the events in the Philippine story, conflicts among three groups – the Muslims, Catholics, and indigenous people – are an everyday occurrence. There are 63% Catholics on the island of Mindanao, 32% of the population is Muslim and indigenous people, who make up approximately 5% of the population, are without any rights. Apart from economic and inter-ethnic problems, as well as physical distance from the centre, a political and emotional approach by one of the parties without rights in the conflict is not unexpected.

The cognition of details outside the text of the project was important for recognizing what the individual teams created and in which manner they interpreted Borges’s short story; therefore it can be concluded that context helped in decoding the text and helped with the possible interpretation of the incomprehensible parts.

This division could also be compared with an ethnic/non-ethnic discourse. The Philippine artists and the American artists (all parts except the part by the white male) were emotionally engaged, which brings to the conclusion that ethnic engagement often includes emotions.

3.2.4. Process

• Process: Dying of the old man and birth of the new one is included/or excluded
  • Included: Croatia, Germany, Switzerland, and Japan
  • Excluded: the Philippines, Belgium, and USA

Borges ends his short story “The Circular Ruins” with the thesis that we all are a dream of another man. Observed in a broader sense, all teams included this element in their interpretations, even the Philippines, Belgium and USA, which are listed here as countries with interpretations that did not include dying and rebirth of the new man. However, in the Croatian, German, Swiss, and Japanese interpretation this element was clearly expressed as opposed to the other countries, where such an interpretation was possible, but not clearly indicated.

3.2.5. Use of language

• Verbal: the Philippines, USA, Belgium (by means of technology), Germany, and Switzerland
  • Non-verbal: Croatia and Japan

For the Belgian story it can be said that it contained elements of voice communication, but not directly verbal in the classical sense of the word.

Croatia and Japan opted for non-verbal theatre.

3.2.6. Use of colours

• White: Switzerland and Japan
  • Black/white: Germany and USA (white male)
  • Black: Croatia
  • Multicolour: the Philippines (red and black prevailing) and Cameroon (according to the synopsis)

The colours of the costumes in most cases helped the analysis, especially in the stories of Switzerland, Japan, USA (Asian-American female and white male American), Croatia, and the Philippines. It can be said that colours were an additional element for better interpretation of individual parts of performances.

3.2.7. Use of costumes

• With traditional elements: the Philippines and Cameroon (according to the synopsis)
  • Without traditional elements: Switzerland, USA, Japan, Germany, Belgium, and Croatia

Participants of individual groups used costumes as an important element in theatre in accordance with their interpretations. The Philippine costume clearly displayed the direction of the Philippine production; the
American costume was very clear in the part of the white male: a black suit with a white shirt and tie (clothes clearly indicated to which social group the person belonged). The Hispano-American and African-American males did not have traditional costume elements, nevertheless, the red dress of the Asian-American female had a powerful symbolic meaning, but without traditional elements.

In the Croatian interpretation, HIS costume clearly said that the person was a business man and that SHE was becoming his copy, therefore we could say that costume played a significant role in the analysis. In the German interpretation, SHE was wearing a skirt which emphasized her gender, and in the moment when HE took off his shirt and remained with a bare torso, his costume informed about his becoming vulnerable, in other words, his costume did not protect him.

In accordance with their approach, the Swiss team wanted to communicate neutrality with their costumes – white space-suits, while the Japanese team’s choice of costumes was also in accordance with their approach in which they interpreted Borges’s short story with symbols.

3.2.8. Use of elements of costumes – shoes
- Barefoot: Japan, the Philippines, USA (Hispano-American male, African-American male, Asian-American female), Cameroon (according to the synopsis)
- Taking shoes off and on as a sign: Croatian and Germany
- Shoes do not have any importance: Switzerland and Belgium
- With shoes on: USA (white male)

In their interpretations, the Croatian and German artists used shoes as part of the costume, specifically, as an important element of transfer from the private into public space; the white male was wearing shoes as a sign of being public, but also of domination over other groups in his team, while in the case of the Philippine and Japanese artists (who were barefoot), this fact was not related to public/private space in the performance itself. The Philippine artists were barefoot which was connected with the climate (high temperatures throughout the year on the island of Mindanao), nevertheless, not wearing shoes could be explained in a broader interpretation as that of a subordinated position in relation to colonizers. In the American performance, only the white male was wearing shoes, and the other ethnic groups were without shoes, which was an additional element that confirmed the assumption of the subordination of these groups to the white male, in other words, on deprivation in the same country.

3.2.9. Use of music
- With concrete musical instruments: the Philippines, Japan, and Cameroon (according to the synopsis)
- Music, but without concrete musical instruments: Switzerland, Belgium, and USA
- Without the use of music: Croatia and Germany

Only two countries used musical instruments in their interpretation and among them, the Philippines brought traditional musical instruments to the stage while Japan brought the violin as a neutral musical instrument and as a symbol for music. In the Swiss, Belgian, and American (the part of the Hispano-American male) performances, music highlighted the plot.

3.2.10. Question of birth
- The question of birth is present: Croatia (the new man is a woman), Germany (a woman builds the new man), Belgium (male-female relationship)
- The question of birth is absent: Switzerland, the Philippines, USA, Japan, and Cameroon (according to the synopsis)

Not one team that interpreted the short story by means of ethnic elements (USA and the Philippines) dealt with the question of birth in the interpretation of the model, the same as Japan. Performances by countries of the European cultural circle (3 out of 4) could be interpreted in this light; nevertheless, each of them did it in a different way. The broader view of multiculturalism does not exclusively deal with ethnic problems and divisions, but also aspires to acknowledging other different disadvantaged groups as well, among which are women, persons with invalidity, senior citizens, and persons with different sexual orientations. The theme of Borges’s short story – creation of the new man – interpreted in the Croatian, German, and Belgian stories had the problem of birth included in that they did not include man as merely a human being, but also dealt with the problem of woman in contemporary society, but each in different ways from one another. While in the Croatian interpretation this new man who was being created was a woman, in the German interpretation the woman was the one who was building the new man, and the Belgian interpretation, in its one segment, dealt with the male-female relationship. The Swiss, Philippine, Japanese, and American stories did not take this distinction into consideration and we assume that Borges’s short story did not motivate artists from these countries to this kind of reading.

3.2.11. Manner of processing the theme
- Liberal/personal/individual: Croatia, Belgium, Germany, and Switzerland
- Communitarian/group: USA and the Philippines
- Outside this division: Japan

Although multiculturalism has more than one division and each are different from one another, the most interesting one for this analysis is that according to group rights or individual rights, or rather, choosing between liberal or individual and communitarian or group multiculturalism. The American and Philippine teams dealt with advocating acknowledgment of the rights of groups (USA – white male, Hispano-American male, African-American male, and Asian-American female; the Philippines – the right to acknowledge the indigenous people Monobo on the island of Mindanao). In contrast, Croatia, Switzerland, Belgium, and Germany dealt with individual problems and they represented the liberal, that is, individual line of multiculturalism. Teams from the European countries did not insist on cultural diversity and presentation of their own ethnicity, i.e., group identity, as opposed to other participating countries/countries outside the European circle that insisted exactly on ethnic representation.

The Japanese approach was again outside these divisions since the foundation of their interpretation were symbols.

3.2.12. Sectorial affiliation of the artists
- Sectorial manner of organization of artists/participants – 1st, 2nd, or 3rd Sector
- 3rd Sector: Switzerland and Belgium (independent groups)
As it has already been mentioned in this work, the artists/ participants in this project were organized in different ways in which they fulfilled their tasks. Only the representatives from Germany came from an institution, namely from a public institution/the first sector in contrast to the others, who are independent artists or members of non-profit organizations and therefore part of the third sector.

3.3. Conclusion of the analyses

After completing the process of investigation, it became clear that the reason why the European narratives were easier to understand was the fact that not one among the European countries used cultural differentializations, dealt with specific ethnic identities, and used symbols which were typical for the climate of the countries from which the artists came. In contrast, other (non-European) countries mostly dealt exactly with this aspect in their theatrical reading of Borges’s short story. Since each and every individual ethnic/ cultural identity is unique and has its own specific signs, symbols, indicators, and rituals, it was extremely difficult to recognize them and explain them due to a lack of information.

The universal symbols and elements which were offered by the European countries were significantly more accessible for recognition than those of other countries, who offered specific symbols of individual cultures.

The frame “People, Place, and Process” helped in solving the enigma of entirely incomprehensible stories and enabled the understanding of other interpretations. It can then be concluded that the “Borges Project” was an important and valuable project in the first decade of the 21st century, and that it has enriched and improved with its results not only NPG, but also ITI as a whole.

Note:
The integral text and research was carried out at the ICOM Centre at the Royal Holloway University, London, UK. It is accessible upon request at the e-mail address: vljoncar@inet.hr

1 Dichotomization is a dual process which appeared as a consequence of the fast expansion of capital, migrations of workers and refugees, revolution in communication technologies and transportation means. On one hand, there is globalization which creates interconnectedness and interdependence through which the awareness of one’s own uniqueness and group identity in a foreign environment (homogenization) increases; and on the other hand, increasing fragmentation and pluralization, that is, dichotomisation comes into being. According to Beck (2000) and Bauman (1998) in Muci (2006).

2 Further in text: NPG

3 Further in text: ITI

4 The mission of the New Project Group (NPG) is to be a laboratory for the international work of artists who in the process retain their individual identities. The aim is to create works of art by means of intercultural dialogue with an emphasis on cultural diversity. The focus is primarily on the creative process, and the final result is only the secondary focus. http://www.npg.iti-worldwide.org. 30 September 2008.

5 According to Bhikhu Parekh (2000), a society with more than one cultural community can be multicultural and multiculturist. The one that gives and gives differences with respect for special cultural demands of minority communities is multiculturalist, and the one that only signifies the fact of diversity and attempts to accommodate these communities into a central culture is multicultural; NPG came into being after the initiative of several artists at the ITI Congress in Zagreb, Bosnia and Herzegovina in June 1995. The first country members were Germany, Mexico, Bangladesh, Switzerland, the USA, and Uruguay.

7 ITI functions through committees. Each committee has its own field of activities and carries out projects (International Playwrights’ Forum, Communication Committee, International Dance Committee, International Monodrama Forum, Dramatic Theatre Committee, Music Theatre Committee, Theatre Education and Training Committee, etc.).

8 The first performance by NPG was in Seoul, Korea in 1997. On that occasion, a group of artists from different countries created the performance “King Lear” for the opening of the Congress. The project proved interesting and it was decided to continue the work. In Athens in 2002, the second project (Daniel) was created. NPG is an informal group and it does not include working bodies like other committees within ITI do. In the spring of 2008, NPG gathered 31 members from 17 countries.

9 Jorge Francisco Isidoro Luis Borges (1899-1986), Argentine writer, wrote short stories, essays, poetry, literary criticism, and was also a translator. He is one of the most significant authors of the 20th century. He is a representative of fantastic literature.

10 Actors, directors, dramaturges, producers, dancers, musicians, composers, video artists, etc.

11 Günther Bielitz, director, a member of ITI Germany, at that time a theatre manager in Heidelberg.

12 Elisabeth English, dramaturge, a member of ITI USA.

13 Emilia Cachapero, producer, a member of ITI USA, and Vitorina Lončar, producer, a member of ITI Croatia.

14 Unfortunately, the team from Cameroon did not come to the Philippines as they were not issued entry visas. The Cameroon team had sent a synopsis of their vision of the project one year earlier and this was the document on the basis of which it was possible to draw conclusions.

15 Ferdinand Marcos, President of the Philippines from 1965 to 1986.


17 According to the universal “Declaration on Cultural Diversity” by UNESCO.

18 It is a static principle which implies a fitting of different identities into a certain frame, and ensures the same social and cultural options for all different cultures that make a country. Dраговић, Sanja: Multiculturism, Interculturism, Transculturism, Pluriculturism: Opposed or Supplementary Concepts? In: Culture, Ethnicity, Identity. Edited by Jadranka Ćaćić-Kupres. Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, Zagreb: Naklada Josenski i Turk, Croatian Sociological Association, 1999, pp. 77-90.

19 Ibid.

20 The term multiculturalism was introduced for usage in 1971 by Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.

21 The year 2008 was proclaimed as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue according to the decision by the European Parliament and Commission (Decision 191/2006/EC) on 18 December 2006.


23 Charles Taylor, Will Kymlicka, Bikhu Parekh, Iris Marion Young, Ronald Dworkin, Bruce Ackerman, and others.


26 Within the SANE project, Mała Scena Theatre from Zagreb, with researchers Vitorina Lončar and Iva Šimčić, was one of the partners, and the leader of the entire project, Prof. Diakova Rosenberg, was a contributor in the investigation of this work.

27 The exception were actors from the German team who were employees of a theatre in Heidelberg and involved as a result of a decision by the head of theatre, member of ITI Centre Germany. Nevertheless, before entering the group, they had also been asked if they wanted to work on the project.

28 The first colonization from Europe was by Spain, the country was given its name after Spanish King Philip II, and in more recent times, it was colonized by the United States.

29 The Philippines have been a democracy since 1965, but this is also questionable since they were a country under the autocratic regime of President Marcos. Therefore, this year cannot be marked in practice as the beginning of democratization of the country.

30 Mindanao is the southernmost island of the Philippines.

31 Iris Marion Young is the most important representative of liberal multiculturalism.

MATE MATIŠIĆ (1965)

Mate Matišić was born in the village of Rucice near Imotski on 17 January 1965. He has lived in Zagreb since he was six. He debuted as a dramaturge in 1987 when his Gastarbeiter chronicle “A Flash of the Golden Tooth” premiered at the Croatian National Theatre in Split. Other drama texts have been performed in a dozen Croatian theatres, on Croatian Radio, as well as in theatre houses in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Russia, Turkey, Slovenia, Serbia, and Montenegro.

Mate Matišić has written screenplays, on his own or in collaboration with other authors, for seven feature-length films, cooperating with the film directors Krsto Papić, Dalibor Matanić, Arsen Ostojić, and Vinko Brešan. He has also composed music for numerous theatre performances and eight feature-length films, as well as several TV series and short feature and documentary films. He has played in reputable jazz groups from Zagreb (Branko Kralj Quartet, The Cute, and Zagreb Dixieland Ensemble). Since 1990, he is a member of Hot Club Zagreb.


WOMAN WITHOUT A BODY

Title: WOMAN WITHOUT A BODY
Premiere: 15 December 2006, Kult Varaždin, director Dražen Ferenčina
Number of characters: 2 female + 3 male
Length: 2 acts with epilogue
Translation: English, Turkish, Russian
Contact: matematisic@yahoo.com

SUMMARY
Martin is a thirty-four-year old retiree, war veteran, who has cancer and wants to face the demons of his past before death. One evening he brings Ema, an older prostitute, to his flat and instead of sex, he asks her to marry him. Martin has a simple plan: he has two or three months left and he would like to do a good deed; he would like to marry her in order to leave her her war disability pension. The choice of Ema is not a coincidence – this is the wife of a notorious Chetnik leader, a war butcher who massacred Martin’s war mates. Martin and his group found him, broke into his house, hanged him by his feet, and left him hanging until he was dead, meanwhile raping his wife, whose real name was Ruža. Her tragic life story began, says Martin: “The night we paid her a visit…” Martin’s comrades prevent him from carrying out his plan because they cannot allow the truth to be discovered – later on in the play, Martin’s former commander Mladen tells Martin that Ema will be killed if no other choice is left. This other choice is Martin’s suicide – the men hire Ema as clients and they wait for his final decision… In the epilogue of the play, Ema recognizes the soldiers who raped her at Martin’s funeral and begs Martin’s mother to bear witness in court about what she knows. But the mother refuses to denounce her son’s fellow soldiers. “Lady, pray for your son…” This is what he needs most now,” says Ema to her at the very end.

Woman without a Body is the central part of the Post Mortem Trilogy, Mate Matišić’s dramatic triptych, in which there is interest for some of the crucial ethical uncertainties which resulted from the war conflicts in former Yugoslavia. Post Mortem Trilogy, which apart from the mentioned play, consists also of the plays Sons Die First and Nobody’s Son, is full of retirees in the prime of their lives, the living dead in their thirties who are collateral victims, abandoned by everybody, of the aggressive conquering politics in this region. In his inductive approach, Mate Matišić does not attempt to describe a broader picture. Instead, he sublimates, in individual destinies, all the pointlessness of annihilation of a Croatian Anyone in merciless events of war destruction. The entire Post Mortem Trilogy has retained the characteristics of Matišić’s playwriting from earlier works and as such: Woman without a Body is also read as impeccable in terms of a style mixture of black humour acccents and a complex, almost thriller-like plot which skilfully culminates in hopeless resignation. Nevertheless, Post Mortem Trilogy does not share the playful elements of grotesque and warm humorous atmosphere of the rural milieu which emanated from the pages of his popular youthful works. Woman without a Body is written maturely and with craft, without the use of obvious mannerisms and is entirely focused on the convincing dialogue among the protagonists. Although they communicate with interest, it is clear from the very beginning that they cannot help one another and this bitter feeling of hopelessness is masterly transferred by Matišić into a convincing dramatic document of the time.
MARTIN: Why?
EMA: Well, I mean, there were younger women... But, I don't mind if you like them older... You know how they say in the song: "Years are not important." Several years ago, a boy... at her funeral... You won't regret having picked me up... The young ones think that it's enough to spread their legs...

(produces a flask from her purse and drinks) My circulation, isn't so good... so I have to take a sip. I'll take a chewing gum before we start, so you won't smell anything...

(Telephone rings. Martin does not pick up the receiver.)

EMA: Aren't you going to answer it?

MARTIN: It's probably nothing important.

EMA: (goes towards the sofa) Shall we do it here?

MARTIN: As you wish... It's a bit lumpy...

EMA: Excuse me, but... I would like the money first...

MARTIN: (confused) Of course... I'm sorry...

EMA: (white Martin is looking for the money) I do trust you, but you know how it is... There are all kinds of people out there... They say they'll pay, and then after the job is done they play stupid... They run away without paying, and then Žak beats me up, because he thinks I'm cheating him.

MARTIN: There you are... (hands her a 100 Euro bill)
(EMA looks at the money.)

LADY: Excuse me, but... I would like the money first...

MARTIN: (confused) Of course... I'm sorry...

EMA: (while Martin is looking for the money) I do trust you, but you know how it is... There are all kinds of people out there... They say they'll pay, and then after the job is done they play stupid... They run away without paying, and then Žak beats me up, because he thinks I'm cheating him.

LADY: You can pay me in kunas if you like. I only negotiate the price in Euros, but you can pay in kunas as well...

EMA: No, no, it's OK.

LADY: You can pay me in kunas if you like. I only negotiate the price in Euros, but you can pay in kunas as well.

MARTIN: No, no, it's OK.

EMA: You can pay me in kunas if you like. I only negotiate the price in Euros, but you can pay in kunas as well.

LADY: (stretches out her hand) My name is Ema.

EMA: (they shake hands) Thank you for agreeing to this...

LADY: I'm grateful to you for picking me up...

EMA: Imagine how it feels to stand outside at minus 15ºC... Although, I was a bit puzzled...

MARTIN: What?

EMA: Because of ..., well... because you chose me...

MARTIN: Why?

EMA: Well, I mean, there were younger women... But, I don't mind if you like them older... You know how they say in the song: "Years are not important." Several years ago, a boy used to come to the beat, he couldn't have been over twenty five, and he always asked Žak to find him a woman who was over sixty... Žak offered me, but even I was too young, so Žak had to hire again a woman who used to work for him before and who had been living in a retirement home for several years. They did it regularly at least twice a month until she died... He cried harder than her grandchildren at her funeral... You won't regret having picked me up... The young ones think that it's enough to spread their legs...

(produces a flask from her purse and drinks) My circulation, isn't so good... so I have to take a sip. I'll take a chewing gum before we start, so you won't smell anything...

(Telephone rings. Martin does not pick up the receiver.)

EMA: Aren't you going to answer it?

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EMA: (goes towards the sofa) Shall we do it here?

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EMA: Excuse me, but... I would like the money first...

MARTIN: (confused) Of course... I'm sorry...

EMA: (while Martin is looking for the money) I do trust you, but you know how it is... There are all kinds of people out there... They say they'll pay, and then after the job is done they play stupid... They run away without paying, and then Žak beats me up, because he thinks I'm cheating him.

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EMA: No, no, it's OK.

LADY: You can pay me in kunas if you like. I only negotiate the price in Euros, but you can pay in kunas as well.

EMA: No, no, it's OK.

MARTIN: You're very observant, I must admit.

EMA: When you are in my line of work, you must watch everything closely like a film detective. As soon as I enter somebody's flat I can see who he is, what he's like, what his wife's like, what religion he is... You needn't lie to me. You're neither the first nor the last to cheat his wife with one of us. But we must be careful, some of them can be very dangerous when they realise that their husbands are cheating on them... Two months ago God himself saved my life. Otherwise I'd be in the morgue now, not here with you.

MARTIN: Someone attacked you?

EMA: Not me, but my colleague Nikolina... It was even in the paper. The wife suspected that her husband was cheating or her, so she told him that she was going to visit her mother in the country for the weekend... Naturally, the husband came to the beat straight away and he wanted to pick me up because I used to work with him before... But fortunately, a minute before he came, Žak fixed me a truck driver, an Italian, on the motorway, so that bloke picked up my friend... And the wife, instead of going to visit her mother in the country, hid in the closet... When they undressed and lay down, the fucking wife jumped out of the closet with a kitchen knife in her hand, like in a movie... She stabbed Nikolina a dozen times...

MARTIN: And the husband?

EMA: The cunt, he escaped through the window... He's happy now... He got rid of his wife; since she's been in prison he comes to the beat every other day... Now he doesn't need to worry that she will jump out of the closet...

MARTIN: There is nobody in my closet... You can check yourself... The shoes belong to my mother...

EMA: (knowingly) They can be even more dangerous...
MARTIN: Mothers?
EMA: Ah, I know a case of an invalid whose mother ruined his life.
MARTIN: What did she do to him?
EMA: It's what he did to her. Would you really like to hear that story, or shall we start?
MARTIN: Yes, yes, I'd like to hear it.
EMA: It's your call. I mean, you've paid for the whole night so we're no hurry... It's just that I don't want to waste your time with my stories.
MARTIN: No, it's OK. I really want to know what happened to him... Was he a war invalid, or...?
EMA: He had a car accident. The father was driving, the boy was sitting shotgun, they drove into a truck, and he ended in a wheelchair... Several years later the father saw that the boy was all nervy because he was interested in the male-female stuff, and he probably also felt guilty because he'd been driving... So he came to the beat and picked one of my colleagues, Ljerka. He paid and went for a walk. Ljerka has just started... (shoves with the hand the movements of male masturbation)... when the mother appeared out of nowhere. She started shouting... You whore, get out... The boy begged and entreated, let her be mammym, please mammym, but she called the police but Ljerka left in time. Žak would kick her ass if he had to bail her out of the police station... The next morning we read in the paper that the kid killed her...
EMA: You mean you never go to parks, and places like that...?
MARTIN: I do now, but... I try to avoid them as much as I can... The good thing is that because of that I got the disability pension... (Pause) And you are OK now, right?
EMA [nods affirmatively]: I’m just fine. I’d even stop working if it weren’t for my youngest one... One always has to take something to the doctors and nurses.
MARTIN: And her father? Why doesn’t he help you...?
EMA: He’s in prison, in Lepoglava. He used to work the railway swing-gate... He didn’t shut the gate, and a the train came and... ran over a car... Everyone thought there were not a lot of casualties, because the car was a little Fiat 126, but when they started to pull them out they found six passengers... Can you imagine?
MARTIN: In a little Fiat?
EMA: Even the judge didn’t believe it so he asked for conformation... Three died on the spot... Instead of punishing the survivors for traffic violation, he sentenced my husband to nine years in prison... And then he beat up two men in the prison, and one of them died on the way to the hospital... What can I say? He’ll be lucky if he gets out before he dies.
(EMA is still eating.)
EMA: Your mother’s a great cook... I haven’t eaten such good chicken in a long time... (eating) And you... you’re not married...?
MARTIN: No.
EMA: So you are divorced?
MARTIN: No, I was never married...
EMA: And kids, I mean, do you have any?
MARTIN: No.
(The front bell rings.)
Martin and Ema exchange surprised looks.)
EMA: I hope it’s not your mother...? How do you mean in prison?
MARTIN: So she told me...
EMA: And children?
MARTIN: Three.
EMA: Maybe she’s lying about that too... I mean, if she’s lying about her husband...
MARTIN: You... shit... You know well enough she’s not lying...
(EMA looks at Pišta again, and then exits. Silence.)
PIŠTA: Is that her...?
MARTIN: Yes.
PIŠTA: Fuck, I thought she was prettier... She’s really ugly.
MARTIN: She was fifteen years younger.
(EMA looks at Pišta once again, and then exits. Silence.)
PIŠTA: Have you asked her?
MARTIN: Not yet.
(Short pause.)
PIŠTA: Have you talked about the husband?
MARTIN: Yes. She told me that her husband is in prison.
PIŠTA: In prison? How do you mean in prison?
MARTIN: So she told me...
PIŠTA: So, in addition to being a whore, the cunt is lying...
MARTIN: If I’d known you’d react like this, I wouldn’t have told you anything...
Please go...
PIŠTA: And children? What does she say about children? How many does she have?
MARTIN: Three.
PIŠTA: Maybe she’s lying about that too...
MARTIN: You shit... You know well enough she’s not lying...
(EMA is still eating.)
PIŠTA: So, you’ve not changed your mind?
MARTIN: No.
(EMA looks at Pišta again, and then exits. Silence.)

MARTIN: I don’t know where to start...

PIŠTA: And will you fuck her, or only...?
MARTIN: Please.
PIŠTA: No, really... Why not fuck her first and ask her afterwards...
(EMA is still eating.)
PIŠTA: [confused, noticing that Martin is watching him coldly] I’m only asking... As far as I remember she’s got a good cunt... A bit too hairy for my taste, but... warm and juicy...?
MARTIN: [cuts him short] Goodbye...
PIŠTA: Dooh, I see, you’re really horny...
(EMA looks at Pišta once again, and then exits. Silence.)
PIŠTA: And when will you ask her?
MARTIN: Tonight.
PIŠTA: Don’t you think she’ll find it strange?
MARTIN: She probably will... I don’t know...
(EMA looks at Pišta once again, and then exits. Silence.)
PIŠTA: I’ll have to tell the others...
MARTIN: I know.
(EMA looks at Pišta once again, and then exits. Silence.)
PIŠTA: OK. Bye.
MARTIN: Bye.
(EMA leaves.)
PIŠTA: [making sure that Ema cannot hear]: I’ll have to tell the others...
MARTIN: Martin shows him out and then returns to the room. Silence.
PIŠTA: Martin’s bottle has a gulp as if he wants to pluck up courage for something he intends to do. At that moment Ema appears at the door...
EMA: Your friend’s not very polite... A person greets him politely with “good evening”... If you are especially turned on by something, don’t hesitate to tell me. I can do anything, I just don’t allow fucking in the ass... I’m telling you straight away.
MARTIN: No, I don’t have any special wishes...
EMA: [takes condoms from her purse]. Here... You can choose the one you like best... These are from Austria... coloured... Ljera bought them for me when she was in Iako... You don’t have to pay for them separately; they are included in the price...
MARTIN: Martin’s holding the condom in his hand. You don’t need this with me.
EMA: [in an experienced manner] Never mind that... You never know... Better safe than sorry... And anyway, it is safer with this... It protects you from me... I mean, I go to regular check ups, but still... You can never be hundred percent sure...
MARTIN: With my diagnosis I really do not care...
EMA: I see what you mean, but... you must see my point of view as well... True, you do seem more decent that my regular customers, but... Where would I be if I believed everybody...? In six months I’d be dead... We can start if you like...
(EMA lies down on the sofa in her clothes. Martin stands motionless.)
Silence.
EMA: [baﬄed]: Do you want me to put it on for you?
MARTIN: What?
EMA: The condom...
MARTIN: [uncertain] No, no...
EMA: All right then, since you have cancer we can do it without it. But it will be ﬁfty Euros more...
MARTIN: Please don’t be angry, but... I haven’t called you for that... [EMA looks at him mystiﬁed. Silence.]
EMA: I’d like to talk to you about something important...
(EMA looks at Pišta. Silence.)
MA- To: Please, sit down...
(EMA sits down on the sofa uneasily.)
MARTIN: I don’t know where to start...
EMA [anxiously, decisively]: I told you that you couldn’t fuck me in the ass. Don’t even try to persuade me...

MARTIN: No, no… It’s not that...

[Silence.]

MARTIN: This, what I am going to tell you, maybe it will seem to you… I don’t know, frivolous… But...

EMA: For your money you can say whatever you want… I have heard all sorts of things in my time… Such stories that there are few things that could shock me…

MARTIN [unexpectedly]: Would you like to marry me?

[Short pause.]

EMA: I beg your pardon? [laughing] Are you joking, or…

MARTIN: No, I’m asking you sincerely…

EMA: This is not that film… what’s it called… The one with that actor and that pretty actress with a big mouth…

MARTIN: I know it’s not… But… I’ve thought about it for a long time and I want you to know that I haven’t said what I said just like that…

EMA: Well, now I really must have a drink… [she drinks] And why do you want me to be your wife? I’m almost twenty years older than you. I’m not sure that your devout mother would want a woman her age for a daughter-in-law…

MARTIN: That’s just it… You don’t have to be my wife, just marry me…

EMA: Excuse me, but now I really don’t understand anything…

MARTIN: I mean that we don’t need to live together. Just get married… After that we needn’t even see one another… There, if you want I can vouch in writing that I will never contact you after that…

EMA: So you won’t mind if I continue working after I marry you?…

MARTIN: Perhaps you wouldn’t need to, especially not after I die… Here… Look… Here are all my papers… [Martin takes his medical diagnoses and documents from a drawer.]

MARTIN: Here, you can see the X-rays, so you don’t think that I have made all this up… Cancer and disease… Although my mother goes on pilgrimages I know that I do not have much time left… The thing is that you’d get my pension after my death… You’d be better off with that… you and your sick daughter… You’d need to rent a room because you’d be entitled to a flat as the widow of a disabled veteran… If you still don’t believe me you can ask doctor Nikolić… I wrote down his phone number for you…

EMA: Strange that you ask me that when I’ve told you that I have a husband…

MARTIN: I know that you don’t… I talked to your friend Ljerka… She told me that you always tell the clients that you have a husband – a murderer in prison to frighten them… But that you are a self-supporting mother who hasn’t known the whereabouts of her husband for over ten years…

EMA [slightly hurt]: So you have chosen me out of pity?…

MARTIN: No, that’s not the reason…

EMA: Why then?

[Short pause.]

MARTIN: It would be a pity that my pension didn’t help somebody after my death… It’s better that someone who needs it gets it… You don’t have to decide now… but please don’t wait long… Sometimes the illness can progress faster than the doctors expect…

EMA: I know women who are in far worse situation than me… If you want I can introduce you to them, so you can ask them… One of them’s bound to want to get married for the pension… I’ve decided not to look for a new husband till I found out where my first is… [Martin is silent.]

Pause.

EMA: I am watching him and trying to discover the “background” of the marriage proposal… Suddenly, she looks towards the door…

MARTIN: [afraid] There’s someone in the hall… I saw a shadow… [Martin looks towards the glass door.]

Suddenly a light is switched on in the hall. Ema rises quickly.]

EMA: And you told me that you weren’t married!!

MARTIN [confused]: Go into this room…

[Ema is frightened and quickly moves to the next room. At that moment the door opens and Martin’s mother Marija enters…]

MARTIN [surprised]: Mum… What are you doing here?…

MARIJA: What am I doing here?!! And why didn’t you answer the phone…? I called you twice from the bus station… You didn’t answer, and you’ve switched off your mobile… I thought that something had happened to you… I took a taxi and rushed back…

MARTIN: Well, now you have assured yourself that I’m fine you can rush back to your bus…

MARIJA: It’s too late… It’s gone already… [Walks toward the door of the room.]

MARTIN [anxiously]: Stop… wait…

MARIJA [becoming aware of his nervousness]: What is it?…

[Short pause.]

MARIJA [worried]: What’s happened?

MARTIN [uneasily]: She is there…

[Pause.]

MARIJA: Who is there?

[Silence.]

MARTIN: Ema…

[Mother looks towards the door and then towards Martin.]

MARIJA: Ema who?

MARTIN [confused]: My girlfriend…

MARIJA [Girlfriend? [laughing]: Why didn’t you tell me that in the first place? I’m dawns upon her and wags her finger jokingly: Aha, that is why you didn’t answer my phone calls? Come on, introduce us and then I’ll leave… I’ll sleep at Dragica’s tonight… She’s been inviting me over ever since her husband died…

Suddenly a light is switched on in the hall. Ema rises quickly.]

EMARJA [relaxed]: Why didn’t you tell me that in the first place?

MARIJA [laughing]: Why didn’t you tell me that in the first place? [it dawns upon her and wags her finger jokingly] Aha, that is why you didn’t answer my phone calls? Come on, introduce us and then I’ll leave… I’ll sleep at Dragica’s tonight… She’s been inviting me over ever since her husband died…

Suddenly a light is switched on in the hall. Ema rises quickly.]

EMARJA [relaxed]: Why didn’t you tell me that in the first place? [it dawns upon her and wags her finger jokingly] Aha, that is why you didn’t answer my phone calls? Come on, introduce us and then I’ll leave… I’ll sleep at Dragica’s tonight… She’s been inviting me over ever since her husband died…

Suddenly a light is switched on in the hall. Ema rises quickly.]

EMARJA: My girlfriend Ema…

MARTIN [Ema]: This is my mother…

EMARJA [My girlfriend Ema]: Ema looks at Martin questioningly, and then holds out her hand to the mother.

EMARJA: [holding out her hand] Nice to meet you… [they shake hands.]

MARTIN: Mum…

MARIJA: Yes, yes… It was in the paper…

MARTIN: A man fell in love while he was ill, and that helps in discharging certain substances from the organism…

MARTIN [knocks at the door of the room]: Ema…

[Silence.]

EMARJA [does not come out.]

Marija notices the flask on the table.]

MARIJA: What’s this?

MARTIN: It belongs to Ema…

MARIJA: I hope she’s not an alcoholic?

MARTIN: No, no… Today is her birthday, so we celebrated a bit…

[The door of the room opens. Enters terrified Ema who does not really look like an innocent girl.]

MARTIN [To Ema]: This is my mother…

MARTIN: My girlfriend Ema…

EMARJA [looking at Martin questioningly, and then holds out her hand to the mother]: Ema looks at Martin questioningly, and then holds out her hand to the mother.

EMARJA: [holding out her hand] Nice to meet you… [they shake hands.]

MARTIN: Mum…

MARIJA: Happy birthday… [To Martin] Now I’m even gladder that I didn’t leave… All my friends have grandchildren, now is my turn to have some… [smiling]…

MARTIN: Mum…

MARIJA: All right, all right… not immediate-ly… but you shouldn’t wait long… I’ll not be in your way… You can have this flat… I can go to a retirement home… so that you have more space… I’m rambling on, and you probably want to go to bed… [opens the door to the room] There is an extra pillow in the wardrobe, and a blanket too if you need one.

EMARJA [entering the room]: Thank you…

MARIJA: You’re welcome… I am really glad to have met you… [To Martin, confidentially]
ACT ONE

MARTIN: I’ve finished having coffee with Dragica. It’ll be lunchtime now.

MARTIN: Marija enters the room. Marija closes the door and gets ready to leave.

MARTIN: At that moment the phone rings. Marija picks up the receiver.

MARTIN: Hello… Yes, she is here… Who? Yes… I do not know now… Can you call back tomorrow, please? Yes… Confused. How do you mean, exchange of customers? Yes… Marija’s enthusiasm with Martin’s love affair dissolves quickly. Hang on… (goes to the room door, knocks) Somebody called Ljerka is phoning about the exchange of customers…

MARTIN: (comes out of the room, approaches the phone. Meanwhile, mother watches her suspiciously.)

MARTIN: (holding the receiver to her ear) Yes… All right… No… Please, I can’t talk now… All right, I’ll make it up to you… In a pleading voice Ljerka, please… I’ve told you that I’ll give you the money… (hangs up)

MARTIN: (Silence.)

MARIJA: Shame on you, woman… Making money out of some one else’s misfortune. As if he was not ill enough… The last thing he needs is to get a disease from you…

MARTIN: (appears at the door) Mum…

MARTIN: I brought her here.

MARIJA: I know women like her… Going into other people’s flats and looking for a chance to steal something…

MARTIN: (holding the receiver to her ear) Yes… Please, hang up…

MARTIN: (in a pleading voice) Ljerka, please… I’ve told you that I’ll make it up to you…

MARTIN: (hangs up)

MARTIN: (Silence. Mother looks at her son intently.)

MARIJA: I don’t understand how she can be in that business after that?

MARTIN: I don’t know. It is difficult to get any information from her… I think that her name is not Ema but Ruža… They say she remarried after a few years, but the husband found out what we did and left her, because he couldn’t forgive her… She started drinking, so the social service took her children away, put them into a home, and then with foster parents…

MARTIN: I don’t know… I only know that for her everything started that evening when we…

MARTIN: (Silence.)

MARTIN: For some time I felt safe… I knew nobody would ever know… And everything was OK until I started to be afraid of grass… And when they told me I had cancer, the first thing I thought about was that woman…

MARTIN: You should go with me to Medugorje and confess… Everything will disappear then…

MARTIN: I have… I have confessed… Several times…

MARTIN: (Silence.)

MARTIN: Poor priests, they didn’t know what to say when I told them what I’d done… They told me that this was such a sin that they could not simply grant me indulgence and penitence… They were probably afraid…

MARTIN: Awaft of what?

MARTIN: I don’t know. Perhaps that – if they give me indulgence – they will become partly guilty of this crime themselves… The last one I saw gave me indulgence, but I don’t believe in it. And when in two or three months the cancer definitely destroys me, I know what lies in wait for me…

MARTIN: Don’t say that…”

MARTIN: I can do only two things… Confess and denounce everyone who was with me, which would be, considering how much life I have left, immoral before God… He would realise that this is yet another deceit due to the fear of death… or… I can try to somehow help that unfortunate woman… But, bearing in mind the time I have left, I don’t have many options… so I decided to propose to her…

MARIJA: What?

MARTIN: You heard me… (Marija is silent.)

MARTIN: When I die she’ll have my pension… That’s the only thing I can do for her… to make amends in some way for what I did to her…

MARTIN: I am only desperately trying to save my soul when I cannot save the body… I feel terrible about what happened to that woman… I cannot forgive myself…

MARTIN: (Silence.)

MARTIN: Darkness.

MARIJA: Did she say yes?

MARTIN: (shaking his head negatively) Her friend – the one who phoned – told me that she thinks that no new marriage can work until she finds the body of her first husband.

MARIJA: Do you know where he was buried?

MARTIN: Yes. I buried him.

MARTIN: (going into the room) I am only desperately trying to save my soul when I cannot save the body… I feel terrible about what happened to that woman… I cannot forgive myself…

MARTIN: (Silence.)

MARTIN: Darkness.

MARIJA: Do you hear me…

MARTIN: (in a pleading voice) Ljerka, please… I’ve told you that I’ll make it up to you…

MARTIN: (hangs up)

MARTIN: (Silence.)

MARTIN: (Silence. Mother looks at her son intently.)

MARTIN: I don’t know now… Can you call back tomorrow, please? Yes… Confused. How do you mean, exchange of customers? Yes… Marija’s enthusiasm with Martin’s love affair dissolves quickly. Hang on… (goes to the room door, knocks) Somebody called Ljerka is phoning about the exchange of customers…

MARTIN: (comes out of the room, approaches the phone. Meanwhile, mother watches her suspiciously.)

MARTIN: (holding the receiver to her ear) Yes… All right… No… Please, I can’t talk now… All right, I’ll make it up to you… In a pleading voice Ljerka, please… I’ve told you that I’ll give you the money… (hangs up)

MARTIN: (Silence.)

MARIJA: I know women like her… Going into other people’s flats and looking for a chance to steal something…

MARTIN: (holding the receiver to her ear) Yes… Please, hang up…

MARTIN: (in a pleading voice) Ljerka, please… I’ve told you that I’ll make it up to you…

MARTIN: (hangs up)

MARTIN: (Silence. Mother looks at her son intently.)

MARIJA: I don’t understand how she can be in that business after that?

MARTIN: I don’t know. It is difficult to get any information from her… I think that her name is not Ema but Ruža… They say she remarried after a few years, but the husband found out what we did and left her, because he couldn’t forgive her… She started drinking, so the social service took her children away, put them into a home, and then with foster parents…

MARTIN: I don’t know… I only know that for her everything started that evening when we…

MARTIN: (Silence.)

MARTIN: For some time I felt safe… I knew nobody would ever know… And everything was OK until I started to be afraid of grass… And when they told me I had cancer, the first thing I thought about was that woman…

MARTIN: You should go with me to Medugorje and confess… Everything will disappear then…

MARTIN: I have… I have confessed… Several times…

MARTIN: (Silence.)

MARTIN: Poor priests, they didn’t know what to say when I told them what I’d done… They told me that this was such a sin that they could not simply grant me indulgence and penitence… They were probably afraid…

MARTIN: Awaft of what?

MARTIN: I don’t know. Perhaps that – if they give me indulgence – they will become partly guilty of this crime themselves… The last one I saw gave me indulgence, but I don’t believe in it. And when in two or three months the cancer definitely destroys me, I know what lies in wait for me…

MARTIN: Don’t say that…”

MARTIN: I can do only two things… Confess and denounce everyone who was with me, which would be, considering how much life I have left, immoral before God… He would realise that this is yet another deceit due to the fear of death… or… I can try to somehow help that unfortunate woman… But, bearing in mind the time I have left, I don’t have many options… so I decided to propose to her…

MARIJA: What?

MARTIN: You heard me… (Marija is silent.)

MARTIN: When I die she’ll have my pension… That’s the only thing I can do for her… to make amends in some way for what I did to her…

MARTIN: (Silence.)

MARTIN: I am only desperately trying to save my soul when I cannot save the body… I feel terrible about what happened to that woman… I cannot forgive myself…

MARTIN: (Silence.)

MARTIN: Darkness.

MARIJA: Did she say yes?

MARTIN: (shaking his head negatively) Her friend – the one who phoned – told me that she thinks that no new marriage can work until she finds the body of her first husband.

MARIJA: Do you know where he was buried?

MARTIN: Yes. I buried him.

MARTIN: (going into the room) I am only desperately trying to save my soul when I cannot save the body… I feel terrible about what happened to that woman… I cannot forgive myself…

MARTIN: (Silence.)

MARTIN: Darkness.

MARIJA: Do you hear me…
of him. Martin glances at the map and then draws something on the paper. The front door bell sounds. Martin leaves the drawings and goes to open the door.)

MARTIN: (off, affectionately) Oooh, Mladen… Come on in…

MLADEN: I say, it would not be right to pass by without dropping on my old friend…

MARTIN: I am really glad to see you…

MLADEN: Tell me first of all, how are you…?

MARTIN: Well… What can I say? There are good and bad days…

MLADEN: The worst thing is to become a pessimist… It’s important to keep a positive attitude…

MARTIN: I see that you’re reading the same magazines as my mum…

MLADEN: Where is she?

MARTIN: At church… Would you like a beer?

MLADEN: Sure… Thanks…

(Martin goes to the kitchen and takes two beers from the fridge.)

MLADEN: I couldn’t believe it, when I heard… If you need anything, I know some doctors… We can collect some money for you to go abroad… If the state we fought for has forgotten us, we shouldn’t let each other down…

MARTIN: Thank you, but there is no need… Really, everybody is doing their best, doctors and nurses… And your family, how are they? (hands him a beer)

MLADEN: OK… I rarely see my elder daughter; she’s always at the university. My son’s a musician… He has his own band, I bought him an electric guitar, and he’s strumming it all day long…

And the biggest news of all is that we are expecting another child…

MARTIN: Congratulations…

MLADEN: Four months to go… A son… They saw it on the ultrasound scan. (cynically) I mean, as a pessimist…

MLADEN: (very close to Martin): And me? What about me?

MARTIN: I won’t squeal on anyone that includes you too…

MLADEN: Oh, no… That’s just the problem. It doesn’t apply to me. Because, even if they don’t discover that it was you who sent the anonymous letter – the facts that they find the body will be evidence against me alone…

MARTIN: Why only against you?

MLADEN: Because I was the commanding officer… And according to the fucking chain of command responsibility – that everyone refers to nowadays – it’s only me who will get screwed… And I am not so stupid as to go to prison for something that all of us did together…

MARTIN: What do you want now?

MLADEN: I’ve come to ask you not to dig up the graves, if she knew? It’s only me who will get screwed… And I am not so stupid as to go to prison for something that all of us did together…

MARTIN: And what do you want now?

MLADEN: I’ve come to ask you not to dig up the graves, if she knew? It’s only me who will get screwed… And I am not so stupid as to go to prison for something that all of us did together…

MARTIN: (continuing his thought): Sorry, but…”

MARTIN: (off, affectionately): Ooooh, Mladen… Come on in…

Mladen and Martin touch bottles and drink.

MLADEN [in a slightly different tone]: I hear that you have some plans, too… I mean… regarding… marriage…

MARTIN: I wanted the drawing to be as accurate as possible.

(Short pause.)

MLADEN: I suppose that when she gets this letter you’ll help her with the excavation… (cynically) I mean, as a future husband…

MARTIN: You must know me well enough to be sure that I’m not the kind of man who’d get someone into a mess, and especially not you…

MLADEN [very close to Martin]: And me? What about me? You’ve not thought about me have you…

MARTIN: When I say I won’t squeal on anyone that includes you too…

MLADEN: (hands him a beer)

MARTIN: Thank you, but there is no need… Really, everybody is doing their best, doctors and nurses… And your family, how are they?

MLADEN: (hands Martin a beer)

MARTIN: Oh my God! (Short pause.)

MLADEN: The next day Pišta and the boys tracked down a few others who took part in the massacres with her husband… The earth was soft so we buried them there as well…

MARTIN: How many?

MLADEN: I don’t know. I have to ask Pišta, two or three. Why are you looking at me as if they were innocent? Man, their hands were covered with blood up to their shoulders. One of them raped a twelve-year old girl, and what could I do? Prevent her father from killing him? He would have killed me if I had tried to stop him. Anyway, your future wife knows that there were several of us. If you say you did it along that won’t satisfy her… She’ll start looking for us…

MARTIN: I only know that this woman is innocent. Do you remember how the villagers told us that that crazy husband of hers used to beat her regularly? If she left him, he’d probably have killed her… And then, we arrived on top of her misery…

MARTIN: Oh my God! (Short pause.)

MLADEN: The worst thing is to become a pessimist… It’s important to keep a positive attitude…

MARTIN: I see that you’re reading the same magazines as my mum…

MLADEN: I say, it would not be right to pass by without dropping on my old friend…

MARTIN: (off, affectionately): Ooooh, Mladen… Come on in…

Mladen and Martin touch bottles and drink.
Mladen (calm, but worried): If it were up to me I’d trust you that you wouldn’t squeal on us, but the others don’t trust you any more… They say you’ve changed a lot since you knew how bad you were.

Martin: Changed?

Mladen: That’s what the boys think… It’s too complicated and too risky to move the bodies, so the boys have proposed an indirect way of handling the problem…

Martin: Indirect? How do you mean indirect?

Mladen: It’s simple. There wouldn’t be many questions if a dead whore were found in a street…

Martin: I’m looking at him, terrified.

Mladen: Actually, we could have done it without even telling you… Even you wouldn’t suspect us… You’d think that some sick customer had killed her, and that would be the end of it, because then you’d have no reason to dig up graves…

Martin: Why are you telling me this?

Mladen: Because I think that since we’re old war friends we should give you the chance to decide.

Martin: About what?

Mladen: About everything… Will an unknown customer kill her or not…

Martin: I don’t understand.

Short pause.

Mladen: Just like whores, today nobody pays much attention when some war veteran kills himself… Especially when he’s terminally ill…

(Silence. Mladen looks at Mladen silently.)

Mladen: (looking at his watch) The boys picked her up half an hour ago… and now they’re waiting for me and in fifteen minutes I have to let them know what to do… If I don’t call… you’ll have nobody to discover the grave to… Except if I don’t call with other news.

(Silence. Mladen takes a sip of beer.)

Mladen: As regards your mother, I promise that we’ll take care of her like you would.

Martin: Who guarantees that she’ll not end up dead in the street too?

Mladen: I do. She’s no danger to us. It’s you who created a situation where we have no choice…

Martin: Then why don’t you simply kill me?

Mladen: Between you and her – we shall always pick her… You’re our friend… But, considering your illness, we’ll leave the decision to you…

(Silence.)

Martin: Tell them that everything will be OK.

(Silence.)

Mladen: I’ll take these drawings and the map… You won’t need them any more… (A mobile phone sounds – off.)

Mladen: (looks at the number) It’s my wife… (on the phone) Hello… Yes, I’m here with Martin… I know we arranged to do it, but… Yes, I’ll be there… I’ll hurry… OK… (finishes the talk) Vesna says hello… At that moment mother Marija enters unexpectedly.

Marija: Oh, Mladen… What brings you here?

Mladen: Well, I stopped by to see my old war friend…

Marija: You’ve really got fat since you retired… How are your wife and kids?

Mladen: Thanks for asking – they’re well.

Marija: Would you like some coffee, or…

Mladen: No, thanks… I’m drinking beer…

Marija: I won’t disturb you… carry on talking… Say hello to your wife…

Mladen: I will, thanks.

(Marija goes to her room. Silence.)

Mladen: (considerately, so that his mother does not hear) If you don’t have a grave, we can arrange that you be temporarily buried in one of the military graveyards…

Martin: No need, thanks.

Mladen: (looks at his watch) I must go… I am glad that we settled this like decent people…

Mladen: (putting the empty beer bottle on the table) I’ll wait on the staircase till I hear the shot… And then I’ll come back to the flat… so that your mother’s not alone.

Martin: Can I do it somewhere else? Anywhere, just not here… Because of my mum… I can go the Sava embankment… Or to Maksimir…

(Silence.)

Mladen: Fuck it now. I must ask the others.

Martin: Tell them that I beg them…

(Mladen punches the number on his mobile)

Mladen: Hello… It’s me… Nothing is OK… He only asks whether he can do it outside his home… Yes… Because of the mother… Yes… Good… (ends the call) OK. But, this is only because of you…

Martin: Thank you… (holds out his hand)

Mladen: (confusedly accepts to shake hands) For what?

Martin: For enabling me to do that for this woman… This is even more than I wanted… After all it seems that my mother didn’t go to pilgrimages in vain…

(Mladen looks at him in a baffled manner, and then leaves.)

Martin: And what about the gun?

(Mladen stops and turns to Martin.)

Martin: (confused) I thought you had one…

Mladen: Mum handed it over to the police last year, afraid that I might kill myself… I thought you have prepared that too…

Martin: (mutes the number on his mobile again) He glances towards the door of mother’s room.

Mladen: Hello… It’s me again… No, everything is OK but he hasn’t got a gun… Fuck it, I thought so too… Yes… Tell Blaž to go fuck himself… The man is our friend and I cannot ask him to jump off the roof… His mother lives here… Yes… OK… Yes… (ends the call) In half an hour Pišta will wait for you at the tram stop on the Adriatic bridge… He has one from the war that’s not been registered… Now I must go… Bye…

Martin: (ends the call) In half an hour

Mladen: Where are you going?

Martin: Mladen puts his jacket on.

Marija: Where are you going?

Martin: I am going for a walk… (kisses his mother on the cheek)

Marija: What’s come over you?

Martin: I haven’t kissed me since Christmas, and now out of the blue…

Martin: I don’t look myself on it…

Marija: I like it.

Martin: I’m going to visit the revered Sudan… A girl from our parish was diagnosed with epilepsy, and then her mother went to him with her picture, and when they visited the doctor the next time the EEG results were fine… (leaping through the photo album) I’ll take your photograph…

Martin: Which one?

Marija: I like this one…

Martin: I don’t look myself on it…

Marija: I like it.

Martin: I’m going to visit him this one… It’s just right for a deceased notice…

Marija: (revolted) I have already asked you not to talk about that… Anyway, you’ll see. God will listen to my prayers and you’ll get well… I’m not praying novenas for your health in vain… You’ll live to be older than I am…

Martin puts his jacket on.}

Marija: Where are you going?

Martin: I am going for a walk… (kisses his mother on the cheek)

Marija: What’s come over you?

Martin: I can kiss my own mother, I suppose…

Marija: You haven’t kissed me since Christmas, and now out of the blue…

Martin: I just felt like it… I haven’t felt this good in ages…

Martin goes towards the door… Once more he looks at his mother and gets out.

Marija is left in the middle of the room.

Silence.

She lights a candle and starts praying softly.

Marija: “Hail Mary, full of grace, The Lord is with you…”

While the mother is praying the lights fade out slowly.
Silence.

Darkness with the light of a single candle.

At that moment, Mladen’s voice sounds almost specially from the darkness.

MLADEN (off): Dear Martin. In this hour of great pain for all of us, it’s not easy to find the right words to express what we, your friends and fellow soldiers feel. I only know that with you we are also burying a part of ourselves, our lives and souls, and nothing will fill the empleness except our will that one day all of us will be together by the mercy of Him whose rosary we carried round our necks during those difficult years for the Croatian people. Before God we, your comrades-in-arms make a solemn promise that we shall never forget and that we will guard and protect the thing most sacred to us all – the free and independent homeland, of Croatia, for which her best sons and daughters gave the greatest gift of all – their lives. We know that the sacrifice was not in vain. May you rest in peace in the Croatian soil that you loved so much.

(Silence broken only by the sound of earth falling on a wooden coffin.)

EPILOGUE

(When the light is switched on again, we see Marija entering the flat together with Mladen and Pštů. Near the candle that is still burning we now see Martin’s photograph. Everybody is dressed in black. Silence.)

MARIJA: Come on in… Sit down…

MLADEN: No, thanks… You should have some rest now you need it. If you should need anything, please call us… Me or Pštů. At any time, day or night.

MARIJA: Now I see why Martin was always saying that you two were his the best friends he ever had…

MLADEN: I’ll never forgive myself for what has happened… If I’d known this would happen I’d not have left him alone.

MARIJA: Thank you for everything… (to Pštů) If you want you can come on one of these days to pick out something from Martin’s clothes… there are some suits he only wore once or twice… Maybe they’ll fit.

Pštů: There’s plenty of time… I’ll come by next week…

MLADEN AND Pštů: Goodbye. See you tonight at the mass…

MARIJA (to Mladen): Say hello to your wife… Thank her for the cakes she has sent for the guests.

(Mladen and Pštů leave. Marija is alone in the flat.

After several moments the front door bell sounds – off.

Marija goes to open it.)

MARIJA (off): Come in… Please.

EMA (off): I don’t want to disturb you…

MARIJA (off): You are not disturbing me… (Marija enters the room with Ema who is now dressed completely differently than in the first scene. There is no trace of the extravagant clothes she had on then.)

MARIJA (entering): I’m really glad to see you.

I wanted to find you and thank you for your telegram and for your presence at the funeral… (warningly) Would you like some coffee?

EMA: No, thank you. I don’t want to keep you…

MARIJA: I’m sorry I reacted like I did that the last time…

EMA: No, everything’s all right. I’d probably react in the same way if I found my son with a woman like that… I only wanted to give this back to you… (hands an envelope to Marija) This is the money I got from him that evening…

MARIJA (handing back the envelope): Please, keep it.

EMA: No, no… this is your money. You probably need it now more than I do… Since there was nothing between us…

MARIJA (insists that Ema keeps the money): I know that Martin would want you to keep it…

EMA (coldly): I don’t want anything from your son or his friends. Goodbye. (leaving)

(Marija watches her puzzled.)

MARIJA: Then, you knew about…?

EMA (stops): No, I didn’t… That night when they came to our house, they all wore masks and were quiet, because they couldn’t disguise their voices… all but one man who could not keep quiet at one moment… He said only: “Hold the whore!” I shall never forget that voice. Only a while ago when the man at the funeral talked about the courage and honour of your son, I realised who he was and why your son proposed to me.

(Marija is quiet.)

MARIJA: Why did you really come here? You could have returned the money by post.

EMA: I wanted to ask you what you thought about all this…

MARIJA (insecure, confused): I? I have no words to express how sorry I am because of what happened to you… I pray to God that he forgives my son… And if I can help you in any way, please tell me…

EMA (unexpectedly): If this is true, would you like to witness in court? (Short pause.)

MARIJA (worried): About what?

EMA: About that… You should only repeat what your son told you.

MARIJA: How do you know what he told me?

EMA: I know that he told you everything… That’s why you’ve become so nice to me all at once… I saw that by the way you looked at me at the funeral. (Marija is silent.)

EMA: Without your testimony not one of them will ever be convicted, and I will never find my dead husband. The fact that a whore remembers the tone of somebody’s voice even after ten years is no evidence at all…

MARIJA: If you really want to know? (Ema leaves, and then stops again and once more looks at Marija.)

EMA: Pray for your son, lady, pray… That is what he needs most of all now. (Ema leaves.)

MARIJA: Thank you for everything…

EMA: If I’d known this would happen I’d not have left him alone.

MLADEN: I’ll never forgive myself for what has happened… I pray to God that he forgives my son… And if I can help you in any way, please tell me…

EMA: (off): Come in… Please.

MARIJA: My son didn’t rape you…

EMA: How do you know?

MARIJA: He told me.

EMA: I know what he did that evening…

MARIJA: What did he do?

EMA: (Ema looks at Marija.)

EMA: You really want to know? (Ema leaves. Marija remains alone and in her thoughts, visibly shaken, and then she sits at the table and starts praying.)

MARIJA: ‘Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name… Thy kingdom come…’

(As the room gets darker Marija’s voice becomes quieter. The candle flickers in the darkness, and then somebody puts it out. Total darkness.)

THE END
CROATIAN ITI CENTRE

The Croatian Centre ITI was founded in 1994 as a non-profit professional and volunteer organisation. Sanja Nikčević was elected as the first President at the founding assembly. Željka Turčinović has been the head of the Centre since 2001. Throughout the years, the Centre has grown from a small organisation of theatre enthusiasts into a programmer of theatre projects (International Drama Colony, Motovun – From Text to Performance, Croatian Theatre Showcase, Foreign Drama, and Theatre Days) and promoter of Croatian theatre and drama on the international level. The Centre publishes a series of publications in English (Croatian Theatre, Theatres in Croatia, and Shortcut to Croatian Dance) as part of its promotion of theatre and dance.

The Croatian ITI strives to be equally present on the international scene by organising round table discussions, symposia, and meetings that raise burning issues of our theatre every-day life in the international context. It is also the publisher of the theatrological and drama series Mansioni, and two magazines: Theatre (for theatre) and Movements (for dance art).

Members of the Centre take part in many international meetings while being actively involved in the highest bodies of the ITI organisation.

Željka Turčinović – EXCOM, Executive Council of World ITI, International Dance Committee
Jasen Boko, President of the Playwrights' Forum
Želimir Mesarić, Theatre Education and Training Committee
Lary Zappia, Vice-President of the Dramatic Theatre Committee

MISSION

• Carrying out international cooperation and promotion of Croatian theatre, drama, and dance;
• Translating Croatian playwrights and introducing their texts through public readings;
• Inviting foreign selectors, programmers, directors, translators and theatre professionals to Croatia and enabling them to see the best theatre and dance productions;
• Striving for the visibility of Croatian theatre and playwrights on the European and world theatre map and making them sought after;
• Publishing promotional publications and magazines on Croatian theatre, drama, and dance in world languages;
• Instigating the exchange of writers on the basis of reciprocity (mutual cooperation) so that both theatre milieus present their best writers and pieces;
• Being active, transparent, and of service both internationally and nationally.

EXECUTIVE AND SUPERVISORY BOARD

Executive Board
Relja Babić, actor and director, UNESCO Artist for Peace
Marija Sekelj, actress and artistic director of Bird of Fire Theatre,
Ozren Prohić, director and artistic director of the Opera,
Croatian National Theatre “Ivan pl. Zajc”, Rijeka
Zoran Mužić, director
Želimir Mesarić, director

Supervisory Board
Katja Šimunić (President), dance researcher
Urša Raukar, actress
Dubravka Vrgoč, theatre critic and artistic director of Zagreb Youth Theatre
Hrvoje Ivančević, theatre critic and dramaturge
Radovan Marčić, director

THE CENTRE’S STRUCTURE

Members of the Centre may be individual and collective (theatres, associations, organisations, festivals, dance companies...).

Željka Turčinović, dramaturge and Editor of Croatian Radio’s Drama Programme is the President of the Centre; Mato Botić, dramaturge and theatrologist, is the Expert Councillor; and Dubravka Čukman is the Administrative Assistant.

Thanks to the Croatian ITI much information on Croatian theatre and drama has found its way to world theatre publications and magazines. Since 2002 the organisation’s office has been located in a representative space of Villa Arko in Zagreb’s historical Upper Town, in Basar-čekova Street 24. We share the space with the Croatian Writers’ Association and P.E.N. while the villa’s attic houses the atelier of Zlatko Bourek.

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DANCE COMMITTEE

The Centre has a Dance Committee, established in July 2000, with Executive Secretary Maja Durinović and Honorary President Milana Broš. The Dance Committee presents a stronghold and logistical support to dance companies and projects as a source of information and an outlet for joining dance touring networks. The Committee has supported tours of our ensembles to Mexico (Liberdance), Peru (Contemporary Dance Studio) and Cyprus (Dance Theatre Tala). The Dance Committee is the initiator of the dance art magazine Movements, various promotional publications, and the book series Movements which features dance theory through the Dance Studies edition and dance critique through the Small Hall edition.
This year for the first time we were not an international colony as we were unable to invite partners from other countries due to the economic crisis and lack of financial means. We hope that the year 2010 will remain a solitary example in the history of the Colony because this programme has proven to be an excellent model of international collaboration on the level of promotion of foreign drama writers in Croatia, and at the same time, a work-in-progress workshop for young and still not established Croatian playwrights.

Apart from that, this year we also changed the location of the Colony manifestation for the first time. Instead of Motovun, we chose another, equally unique medieval Istrian town, Grožnjan, known as the town of artists. The reasons for this change were again of a financial nature. Namely, the Hotel Kastel where the Colony used to stay and work was redesigned and has now become an exclusive hotel with a wellness centre, thus becoming unaffordable to us. So much about actual changes!

The International Drama Colony From Text to Performance (the first was held in 1999) is organised by the Croatian Centre ITI in cooperation with national centres or theatre institutes. Throughout this time the Colony has grown into an intriguing, useful, and relevant programme for presenting local and foreign playwrights.

The main idea and goal behind the launching of the Colony was the assessment of new foreign and domestic dramatic texts in affordable economic conditions, as well as the establishment of cooperation between Croatia and other countries through an exchange of playwrights and plays.

The main task of the Colony is to work on staging texts and assessing their scenic qualities. The results of this work are presented in the form of a stage reading, without costumes or sets. Actors hold the script in their hands, the characters and their mutual relations are defined and elaborated, and the overall work may be labelled as a “workshop” in which the process is more important than the end result of working on the text on the path from literary to theatre text. Participants of the Colony are professional actors and directors, as well as students of acting from artistic and drama schools in Croatia.

One of the goals of the Colony is to establish reciprocity, i.e., the exchange of writers and directors. By taking part in the Colony, foreign partners strive to enable the presentation of a Croatian author and his/her play in his/her country under the same conditions that the Croatian Centre ITI has provided for staging the foreign play in Croatia. This type of reciprocity to date has been realised with the USA, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Mexico, India, Greece, Chile, and Belgium.

As with the previous ones, the 12th Colony lasted for seven days and the last day was reserved for public presentations of “drama workshops” on the splendid ambient “stages” of medieval Grožnjan. As mentioned above, this year we did not have a foreign partner, but instead presented two young Croatian female dramatists: Ivana Karačonji and Nina Horvat, both graduates of dramaturgy from the Academy of Dramatic Art in Zagreb. Since the Colony is focused on the process of transforming a literary text into a theatrical one, it is desirable and almost obligatory for the author to be present and to participate in the workshop and work on the text, depending on the wishes and directions from directors and actors.

Below are the titles and participants of the 12th Colony in Grožnjan.

**PROGRAM**

Ivana Karačonji
**ON MONDAYS, ROOM 303**
Director: Nora Krstulović
Dramaturge: Maja Sviben
Actors: Lada Bonacci, Marcus Fernando
Band: Nenad Sinkauz, Alen Sinkauz, Vedran Peternel

Nina Horvat
**UNTIL DEATH DO US PART**
Director: Filip Povžemč
Actors: Maja Katić, Jelena Hadži-Manev, Petra Težak, Sanja Milardović, Sven Jakir, Damir Poljičak, Mladen Kovačić, Dado Ćosić
PROMOTION OF CROATIAN DRAMATISTS IN THE WORLD

On 23 March 2010, the promotion of the book “4 Croatian Plays” by Russian publisher Three Squares from Moscow was held in the Theatre Centre Meyerhold. The book includes plays by Lada Kaštelan (Before Sleep), Tomislav Zajec (Dorothy Gale), Dubravko Mihanović (The Frog) and Ivana Sajko (Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose), translated into Russian by Larisa Saveljeva. She was a guest of the Croatian Theatre Showcase in Zagreb in 2008 where she was introduced to contemporary Croatian plays, and the choice of plays was entirely her own. A public reading of texts by Tomislav Zajec and Dubravko Mihanović was organized at the promotion in Moscow, and the Embassy of the Republic of Croatia in Moscow covered the costs of the organization.

CROATIAN DRAMATIST MATE MATIŠIĆ IN ISTANBUL

Also thanks to participation in the Croatian Theatre Showcase, Fusun Gunesel, a translator from Turkey, translated the drama piece A Woman without a Body by Mate Matišić into Turkish and offered it to the Istanbul State Theatre. This offer resulted in the staging of Matišić’s play in the above mentioned theatre which had its opening night on 23 October 2010. The play was directed by Kazım Aksar. It was received extremely well by the audience, as well as by professional critics. The principal actor Reha Ozcan was nominated for the prestigious actor’s award, the Afife Jale Theatre Award, which is the Turkish theatre equivalent to the Oscar.

6TH CROATIAN THEATRE SHOWCASE,
3-7 November, 2010

The Croatian Theatre Showcase was first initiated in 2005 as a review of the best Croatian theatre performances in our selection and presented to foreign theatre professionals over a five-day period. Since Croatia as a theatre country is still fairly unknown on an international scale, we felt there was a need for such a manifestation that could be handled by us production-wise. Although the phenomenon of showcase is quite well-known in the world, it is mostly organised in theatrically unknown countries with small languages (Sweden, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Russia, etc.). The name is a synonym for a window, a display in which merchandise is being shown – in our case, theatre performances. One of the important goals is to invite theatre critics, festival programmers, directors of theatres, theatreologists, translators, and writers who would become acquainted with Croatian theatre through watching selected performances and write about them, invite them to festivals, translate our texts and include them in repertoires of foreign theatre houses. Apart from the performances, we organise conversations with authorial teams and actors, playwrights and all those from the theatre world that show an interest in presenting their work to our guests. We offer Croatian dramatic texts to be translated into foreign languages and establish a network of collaborators who could or would want to promote our theatre at home. All the selected performances are presented with English subtitles.
DANCE COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE CROATIAN CENTRE ITI
Promotion of the magazine for dance art Movements and the book series Movements in Belgrade on 7 November 2010

As part of celebrating fifteen years of publishing the Serbian dance magazine Orchestra, organized by its editor-in-chief Ivana Milovanović, a promotion of the magazine and book series Movements was held at ‘Bitef’ Theatre on Sunday, 7 November 2010. Promoters on behalf of the publisher, Croatian Centre ITI, were dance critics and theoreticians Maja Durinović and Katja Šimunić from Zagreb.

Maja Durinović spoke about the beginnings of setting into motion the Croatian magazine Movements in 2002 and presented the twelve issues published to date. She described the intentions and accomplishments of the recently initiated book series Movements.

Katja Šimunić presented in detail Poetics of Contemporary Dance by Laurence Louppe, the primary publication within the Dance Studies edition of the Movements book series. She also presented the context in which the Croatian Centre ITI publishing activities improve Croatian dance theory and practice. The promotion was attended by an extremely large number of Belgrade’s dance, theatre, and music experts.

The promotion was followed by the performance The Morning After, The Night Before, which was choreographed and performed by Maša Kolar and Zoran Marković and produced by the Sisak Culture Centre ‘The Crystal Cube of Brightness’.

2nd SYMPOSIUM ON THE WORK OF MILKO ŠPAREMBLEK [1928]
Zagreb, 28 November 2010

Milko Šparemblek is the most significant Croatian choreographer and dancer, an intellectual with an international and national career. The theme of this year’s symposium was the television ballet A gesture for Tin (a choreact in 13 episodes), and the participants were mostly younger scholars in the fields of literature, theatreology, puppetry and visual arts from Zagreb and Osijek. As guests in dance art, they agreed to cross the usual genre and media boundaries and approach the directorial and choreographic work of Milko Šparemblek from their positions.

PROGRAM

Olja Lozica (Croatia)
SCRATCHES
Director: Boris Lištević
Actors: Žarko Potočnjak, Mirna Medaković, Dunja Fajdić, Mia Krajcar, Goran Smoljanović, Danijel Radečić

Jordan Cvetanović (Serbia)
THERAPY
Director: Anja Maksić Japundžić
Actors: Kristijan Potočki, Tomislav Kristanović, Petra Težak, Amanda Prenkaj, Petar Cvirin

International Drama Colony FROM TEXT TO PERFORMANCE,
Grožnjan, Istria, Croatia 11-18 July 2011
THE “MANSIONI” SERIES

In the seventeen years of its existence, we have published 50 books with an ample scope of interests connected to theatrical and dramatic studies, dramatic texts, theatre travelogues, essays, and biographical writings. The series Mansions has profiled and established itself as one of the most important Croatian theatrical series. The publications in this series feature both domestic and foreign authors; beside books in Croatian, translations of plays by Croatian dramatists are published in foreign languages with the aim of promoting Croatian drama abroad.

The Editor-in-Chief is Željka Turčinović with guest-editors being invited for individual editions.
Franciska Ćurković-Major: New Hungarian Drama (2005)
The Anthology of New Czech Drama (edited by Kamila Černa, 2009)

TRANSLATIONS OF CROATIAN PLAYS
Tomislav Bakarić: La muerte de Stjepan Radić (The Death of Stjepan Radić – Spanish, 1998)
Maja Gregl: The Loves of Alma Mahler / Die Liebe der Alma Mahler (Croatian/German, 1999)
Mislav Brumec: Smrt Ligeje / Death of Ligeia (Croatian/English, 2000)
Tomislav Durbešić: Drames Choisis / Selected Plays – French, 2002
Different Voices – Eight Contemporary Croatian Plays (English, edited by Boris Senker, 2003)
Lada Kaštelan: Prije sna / Before Sleep (2007)

The Movements series was launched in 2009 as a natural continuation of the publishing activities of the magazine Movements. It is presented in two sub-editions: Dance Studies featuring dance theory and Small Hall featuring theatre critique and dance.

The Editor-in-Chief of the series is Iva Nerina Sibila and guest editors are invited to contribute to individual publications as needed.
CROATIAN THEATRES ABROAD

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

CROATIAN NATIONAL THEATRE IN MOSTAR
(In Hrvatsko narodno kazalište u Mostaru)
Trg hrvatskih velikana bb, 88000 Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Tel/Fax: +387 61 316 000; +387 33 316 000
Web page: www.mostarsko-kazaliste.ba
Manager: Branko Stanic
Time Held: July

HUNGARY

CROATIAN THEATRE IN BUDAPEST
(Hrvatsko kazalište u Pučkum)
Art Na 1; H-7501, Budapest, Hungary
Tel: +36 1 214 305; Fax: +36 1 214 191
Web page: www.hungariantheatre.hu
Manager: László Illés
Time Held: March

DAYS OF SATIRE, ZAGREB
(Festival of Annual Satire Production in Croatia)
(Dani satire u Zagrebu: Festival godišnje satiričke produkcije u Hrvatskoj)
Trg 31. 11. 19900 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel: +385 1 483 354; Fax: +385 1 483 348
E-mail: kerempuh@t-com.hr
Web: www.kazalistekerempuh.hr
Manager: Duško Ljubina
Time Held: July

EUROKAZ, ZAGREB (Festival of New Theatre)
Eurokaz, Zagreb (Festival novog kazališta)
Dizdimanov prolaz 3, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel: +385 1 487 111; Fax: +385 1 485 244
E-mail: eurokaz@t-com.hr
Web: www.eurokaz.hr
Manager: Goran Vlajkovic
Time Held: April

GOLDEN LION
(International Festival of Chamber Theatre)
(Mejunarodni festival komornog teatra Zlatni lav)
Trgovačka 6, 52470 Umag, Croatia
Tel: +385 52 743 447; Fax: +385 52 743 474
E-mail: zlatni-lav@inet.hr
Web: www.zlatni-lav.hr
Manager: Damir Zlatar Frey
Time Held: July

DUBROVNIK SUMMER FESTIVAL (Drama, Music)
(Dubrovčki ljetni priči - drama, glazba)
Od Sigurate 1, 20000 Dubrovnik, Croatia
Tel: +385 20 326 100; Fax: +385 20 323 736
Manager: Dora Ruždjak Podolski
Manager: Ivica Prlender
Time Held: July & August

SLUK, OSIJEK, Meeting of Croatian Puppeteers and Puppet Theatres
(SLUK, Osijek, Susret lutkara i lutkarskih kazališta)
Trg bana Jelačića 19, 31000 Osijek, Croatia
Tel/Fax: +385 31 501 220; +385 31 501 220
E-mail: djecje.kazaliste@os.t-com.hr
Web: www.djecje-kazaliste.hr
Manager: Jasminka Mesarić
Time Held: biannually / April & May

SPLIT SUMMER FESTIVAL
(Drama, Opera, Ballet and Concert Programmes)
(Splitsko ljeto – dramski, operni, baletni i koncertni program)
HNK, Trg Gaje Bulata 1, 21000 Split, Croatia
Tel: +385 21 314 799; Fax: +385 21 314 799
E-mail: tnk-split@hnk-split.hr
Web: www.splitsko-ljeto.hr
Manager: Nikša Bareza
Artistic Director: Senka Bulić
Time Held: July & August

CHILDREN

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL "THE VERY BEST"
(Naj naj naj festival)
Biennale 97, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel: +385 1 4872 354; Fax: +385 1 4872 354
E-mail: info@zadarsnovi.hr
Web: www.zadarsnovi.hr
Manager: Marija Pavić
Time Held: Summer

DREAMTIME ZADAR
(International Festival of Contemporary Theatre)
(Zadar snova)
Nikole Matafara 2a, 23000 Zadar, Croatia
Tel: / Fax: +385 23 254 177
E-mail: info@zadarsnova.hr
Web: www.zadarsnova.hr
Manager: Kristijan Mičić
Time Held: August

THEATRE SUMMER, ZADAR
(Zadarsko ljeto, Zadar)
Široka ulica 8, 23000 Zadar, Croatia
Tel: +385 23 314 586; Fax: +385 23 314 590
E-mail: hnk-zd@zd.t-com.hr
Web: www.hnk-zadar.hr
Manager: Renato Švorinić
Time Held: June & August

WORLD THEATRE FESTIVAL
(Festival svjetskog kazališta)
Teslina 7, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel: +385 1 4872 554; Fax: +385 1 4872 582
E-mail: vrgoc@zekaem.hr
Web: www.zagrebtheatrefestival.hr
Artistic Directors: Dubravka Vrgoč, Ivica Buljan
Time Held: September

Actors Festival, Vinkovci
(Festival glumca)
C/o HDDU, Amruševa 19, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel: +385 1 4920 717; Fax: +385 1 4920 718
E-mail: hddu@hddu.hr
Web: www.festivalglumca.hr
Manager: Renato Švorinić
Time Held: May

Split Summer Festival
(Drama, Opera, Ballet and Concert Programmes)
(Splitsko ljeto – dramski, operni, baletni i koncertni program)
HNK, Trg Gaje Bulata 1, 21000 Split, Croatia
Tel: +385 21 314 799; Fax: +385 21 314 799
E-mail: tnk-split@hnk-split.hr
Web: www.splitsko-ljeto.hr
Manager: Niksa Bareza
Artistic Director: Senka Bulić
Time Held: July & August
ŠIBENIK INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN’S FESTIVAL
(Medunarodni dječji festival Šibenik)
Kralja Zvonimira 1, 22000 Šibenik, Croatia
Tel. +385 22 213 123 Fax: +385 22 212 134
E-mail: sibenisko.kazaliste@sbensko-kazaliste.hr
Web: www.mdf-sibenik.com
Festival Director: Jasenka Ramljak
Time Held: June & July

INTERNATIONAL PUPPET THEATRE FESTIVAL (PIF), ZAGREB
(PIF, Zagreb, Međunarodni festival kazališta lutaka)
MCUK, B. Magovca 17, 10010 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel: +385 1 660 626 Fax: +385 1 660 619
E-mail: pif@mcuk.hr Web: www.public.carnet.hr/pif-festival/
Director: Josip Porjan
Time Held: September

DANCE
CONTEMPORARY DANCE WEEK, ZAGREB
(Tijedan suvremenog plesa, Zagreb)
HIPP, Blankvješa 5, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel: +385 1 4641 154; Fax: +385 1 4621 969
E-mail: hpp-tsp@zg.t-com.hr
Web: www.danceweekfestival.com
Artistic Director: Mirna Žagar
Time Held: May

FESTIVAL OF DANCE AND NON-VERBAL THEATRE, SVETIVINČENAT
(Festival plesa i neverbalnog teatra, Svetivinčenat)
ZPA, Hebrangova 36, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
E-mail: zpa@zg.t-com.hr Web: www.svetvincenatfestival.com
Artistic Director: Srećažna Abramović Milković
Time Held: July

PUF INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL, PULA, POREČ
(PUF - Pula, Poreč, Međunarodni kazališni festival mladih)
INAT Pula, Sergijevaca 32, 52000 Pula, Croatia
Tel/Fax: +385 52 223 875
E-mail: sakud@pu.t-com.hr Web: www.kazaliste-dir-inat.hr
Artistic Director: Branko Šušac
Time Held: July

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH THEATRE FESTIVAL (MKFM) PULA
(MKFM, Pula, Međunarodni kazališni festival mladih)
INK Pula, Matka Ljaginje 5, 52000 Pula, Croatia
Tel: +385 52 218 890 Fax: +385 52 214 303
E-mail: mkfm@ink.hr Web: www.ink.hr
Manager: Gordana Jeromeška Kać
Time Held: June & August

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