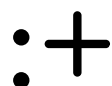


Editorial Board

Theatre and Community

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Instytut Teatralny im. Zbigniewa Raszewskiego

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The second issue of *Polish Theatre Journal* includes seventeen articles compiled to demonstrate the multi-layered structure of relations between theatre and society, with a focus on the contemporary Polish context. This multi-layered structure relates to fields of actions discussed (with questions including where theatre ends and where practices from other fields begin, and how much of theatre there is in social practices), discourses on theatre (including questions about the validity of languages from beyond the scope of what is assumed to be legitimate theatre and performance analyses), as well as cultural translation (questions concerning the transnational value of Polish theatre experience, and its potential impact on influential performance and social theories). To be sure, we have not managed to demonstrate the entire image of the network of these relations here; however, we do believe we have outlined its boundaries and accurately pointed out nodal points where particular lines of the discussed practices and discourses enabling these discussions meet.

This second issue of *PTJ* opens with four articles gathered in a section titled 'Performativity of Democracy'. Using sociological, performative and cultural studies analyses, these articles attempt to analyse social processes of producing democracy by means of performative tools. We believe they can contribute significantly to social theories and theories of democracy. A special place in this section is occupied by articles discussing mass protests in many Polish cities in 2014, which took the form of performative readings of Rodrigo Garcia's play *Golgota Picnic* after the playwright's production was cancelled during the Malta Festival in Poznań, Poland, because of pressure from conservative and church-related groups. In our opinion, this outburst was one of the most exceptional events in the intersection of art and society, while similar events were taking place across Europe. We understand the performativity of democracy as filled with the widest range of relations between theatre and society.

The section 'Expanded Field of Theatre' includes five articles closer to the analysis of artistic practice, yet reaching beyond the scope of activities of a theatrical nature and comprehending such practices from the perspective of discourses not rooted in lexicons of theatre and performance, but from the points of view of cultural studies and anthropological, economic and pedagogical discourses. Our editorial goal is to render less hermetic the field of theatre and reveal – as far as possible – the blurred boundaries of artistic practices directed at relations between art

and society. In this section, we elaborate on issues of relations between culture and social development, producing identity and space as well as questions of body and norms discussed from points of view of tensions between the private and the public.

The third set of contexts presents achievements of social theatre in Poland – though the examples analysed here go beyond cultural life in Poland. We demonstrate and discuss several crucial artistic undertakings directed at participation, empowerment and transformations of social reality which have been implemented in recent years. As a result, we receive a view of the art of community, of the theatre of community, of art created with a community and with performative practices of the non-fiction type, accompanied by deliberations on participation and emancipation, as well as on the social role of cultural institutions. This section is titled ‘Social Theatre’. It is a category we wish to introduce into the discourse on theatre because it describes a clearly visible tendency taking shape in recent years: artists of the theatre turning towards working with communities. It is no coincidence that this category recalls the expression ‘political theatre’. To a large extent, artists engaged in the field of social theatre have been inspired by that movement.

Both expressions, ‘political’ and ‘social’, are rooted in social sciences. The former refers to practices of an institutional nature (for example, left- or the right-wing politics will be reflected in right- or left-wing political parties), whereas the latter refers us to practices from the social arena (similarly, social left or right wings will be reflected in organisations, informal groups and social movements practising activities directed at impacting reality at the sub-political level). *Per analogiam*, political theatre would realise itself rather as a movement of performances created within the network of artistic institutions, while social theatre would realise itself as a movement of artistic practices developed beyond the institutional sphere, implemented directly within a community.

Thus we build a continuum between the premiere issue of *Polish Theatre Journal*, which focused primarily on political theatre, and *PTJ*’s second issue, presenting social tendencies in theatre today, in order to outline a comprehensive overview of the Polish theatre scene of the past fifteen years.

The two sections ‘Expanded Field of Theatre’ and ‘Social Theatre’ have a common feature. A special emphasis has been put on cultural institutions reaching beyond artistic production and seeking a form of activity which would directly contribute to improving the quality of social life. And which could thus turn our attention to non-institutionalised circulation of culture and theatre as a field of artistic, animating and pedagogical practices, within which tools for influencing society by means of actions realising the spirit of participation and empowerment have been developed – and which are notably efficient in terms of transforming our social environment.

Two articles included in the section ‘Experiencing Audience’ are devoted to addressing the question of how the experiences of social theatre, expanded field of theatre and performative democracy influence the constitution of a viewer – both the viewer of activities in non-theatrical spaces and within institutional theatre. These two approaches illustrate the phenomenon of a feedback loop within theatre or – in a wider sense – within artistic culture, demonstrating the interdependency of theatrical

experiments within the institutional framework and beyond it. Thus they explain, even if indirectly, a change which has been observed in Polish theatre in recent years. This consists of reorienting many theatre directors towards working with communities. This current *PTJ* issue reflects this change which we understand, as with mainstream theatre criticism, as a fact in the history of theatre. However, contrary to mainstream theatre criticism, we believe that the most efficient and most valuable instruments of social impact of theatre in recent years were created beyond theatre understood as a realm of professional high-art practice. We contend that the analyses of practices presented in this issue of *Polish Theatre Journal* – and developed within fields of creative activities other than theatre – will testify to the validity of our assessment.

There is a further layer of reflection on relations between theatre and society which we attempt to describe in the articles comprising this issue: the origin of social theatre in Poland. We concur with the diagnosis inscribing the present stage of this tendency into a wider phenomenon of European theatre, with special focus on the German-language aspect. We have two qualifications, however. First, this diagnosis tends to be too mechanical; therefore in the 'Social Theatre' section we publish a critical analysis of practices within German theatre. Second, we believe that insufficient attention is presently devoted to our own artistic tradition, especially Jerzy Grotowski's theatre. Articles included in the section 'Social Potential of Jerzy Grotowski's Theatre Tradition' contribute in complementing the map of practices which have attempted to influence the emergence of social tendencies in Polish theatre in recent years, along with practices developed by Polish and Italian followers of the creator of the Laboratory Theatre.

In discussing this topic of origins of social theatre in Poland, the time arose to reveal deficiencies we see in this issue of *Polish Theatre Journal*. They result mainly from insufficient research devoted to some topics we have been reflecting upon. There is a definite lack of analyses of movements other than Grotowski's theatre tradition, which would elucidate the origin of social tendencies in Polish theatre. These would include especially the tradition of the workers' theatre movement, as well as artistic experiments developed within independent theatre and alternative art of the 1970s and 1980s. The second area of relations between theatre and society which has not been properly researched is that of class analysis. The recently observed revival of sociological research and reflection on class structure in Poland has not brought about comprehensive answers to questions about class dimension of theatre, including its version oriented towards influencing society. This deficiency remains the widest gap in the network presented in this *PTJ* issue: of relationships between theatre and society.

In inviting our readers to study *Polish Theatre Journal's* second issue, we sincerely hope that we have succeeded in compiling a collection of articles which present important theatre and socio-theatrical undertakings, first and foremost, along with projects from beyond the field of theatre dedicated to aspirations directed at transforming reality in the spirit of participation and empowerment, and social events of the performative nature constructing a general framework for generating Polish community. Secondly are articles reflecting the scope of discourses supporting accurate understanding of relations between theatre and society; and third, the articles which can contribute to the development of practices

and discourses supporting vivid relations between art and society in Polish conditions, while extending far beyond Polish social, artistic and cultural experiences.

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