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Undoing Gender: Contemporary Women Theatre Makers in India

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ABSTRACT

This paper draws a framework outlining performance methods and processes within women's theatre in twenty-first century India, along with a conceptualisation of its objectives and aesthetics, by focusing on the politics and production processes of three contemporary women theatre creators in India – Maya Krishna Rao, Mallika Taneja, and Savita Rani. It analyses the themes, theatrical languages, production techniques, styles, acting, and production and performance settings of the three woman theatre makers, contextualising the emergence and development of feminist theatre in India. It aims to understand how these performers and directors create and re/present women and their issues in relation to gender, culture, and society in India and beyond. Drawing from Elain Aston's analysis of feminist aesthetics in theatre, this paper seeks to unravel the feminist politics of structural changes that have taken place in the three contemporary women theatre makers.

Keywords: Contemporary Women's Theatre, Indian theatre, Feminist Theatre, Dramaturgy, Feminism

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Introduction

Feminist readings of classical literary texts by women playwrights, which gained momentum following Simone De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*[1] and Kate Millett' *Sexual Politics*,[2] led to the creation of new women characters in dramatic literature and productions that were closer to real life women and their concerns and experiences, in contrast to conventional stereotypical masculinist literary and theatrical portrayals of women. Women [the majority of them identify themselves as Feminist] playwrights and theatre makers questioned the typical depiction of women in dramatic productions as the beloved, girlfriend, wife, mother, and vamp, with a presence based mainly on their familial and home-based relationships to heroes and other male characters in the productions. They reconstructed newer and varied autonomous theatrical re/presentations of women based on real life, everyday experiences and stories of women themselves.

Realising that a politics of patriarchy is embedded in theatre in India, women critics in India also analysed the construction and representation of women by men in theatre in India. Kinnari Vohra problematises male creations of women characters, which happens even in modern playwriting, asking women scholars, writers, and playwrights to create more and more real women characters in theatre. She emphasises the perpetual need for these women to be 'engaged in research with women in order to make better sense of women's life experiences',[3] since in conventional and traditional plays, as she says, 'women characters are [only] used to enhance or depict complexities of the emotions of male characters'.[4]

It is, however, not simply that male dramatists have not positioned women in progressive ways. There are modern male playwrights, in India as well, who have created non-conventional women characters. But, for the most part, they have failed to represent the everyday lives of women, their struggles, and their empowerment. As Vohra elaborates,

> *They have not been able to create women characters that are truly independent, equal, capable, intelligent, and questioning. At best, [their] women characters are victims of patriarchal values perpetuated by family, caste and class. These women do not in any significant ways challenge the system and find a way out for themselves without being destroyed.*[5]

---

[1] Simon De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Blanche Knopf Publishers, 1953).

[2] Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (US: Doubleday and co., 1970; US: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

[3] Kinnari Vohra, "Women That Man Created", *Theatre India: National School of Drama's Theatre Journal* 3 (May 2001): 111.

[4] Ibid., 114.

[5] Ibid., 114.

Women's theatre in India emerged resisting male centeredness in conventional theatre,[6] following the identification and realisation of 'male-stream'[7] in the field.[8] Women's theatre in India is, thus, in its infancy, and is still in search of methods, techniques and theatrical language to eliminate mainstream conventional settings, aesthetics, and the male gaze in theatre, which if at its worst does not overtly harass women, then it does, at least make women the 'other', alienated and vulnerable within theatre. It started in the late twentieth century with the continuing effort of theatre makers such as Tripurari Sharma, Anuradha Kapur, Kirti Jain, Amal Allana, Sabitri Heisnam, Anamika Haksar, A. Mangai, Nilam Mansingh Chowdhry, Manjula Padmanabhan, Faezeh Jalali, Jyoti Dogra, etc.[9] These women realised that the conventional method of play making and performance is in itself problematic and male-oriented, that the whole theatre tradition and aesthetics have been constructed by privileged men and through their worldviews.[10] Their efforts in creating a women's stream in mainstream theatre and their discoveries of new methods regarding this kind of theatre-making have shaped practices in theatre that are not subjugating, suppressing, or harassing for women, both within theatre and among spectators, in public, and in society. These women theatre makers' realisation of the overarching presence and dominance of male-stream in mainstream theatre led them to create new theatre grammars that are evolving with their new theatre creations, along with their own languages, processes, and gaze that critically resist the conventional, dominant, oppressive, male-centric theatre mainstream. Elaine Aston[11] has examined such processes and tools of women's theatre in the American context, which provides a broader framework for analysing women's theatre in the Indian context as well.

This paper will investigate theatre productions created by three such women theatre makers: Maya Rao, Mallika Taneja, and Savita Rani. It will examine how their theatrical themes, methods, techniques and tools create a theatre that serves the feminist purpose of undoing the dominant, patriarchally-constructed, binarised, stereotypical gender that is seen as natural, normal, and central in mainstream theatre and society. It will also examine how newer, changed, feminist, resistant aesthetics and gaze are constructed in the theatrical productions of the three theatre makers, and so in feminist theatre, and theatre generally, in India.

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[6] Nandi Bhatia, *Performing Women/Performing Womanhood: Theatre, Politics, and Dissent in North India* (England: Oxford University Press, 2010); also, A. Mangai, *Acting up: Gender and Theatre in India, 1979 Onwards (New Delhi: Left World Publication,* 2015).

[7] The field/stream is created and dominated by men, for men, and is propagated/controlled by men. In Indian theatre, women had been excluded from writing, creating, performing and even witnessing it for centuries. Until recently, mainstream theatre was dominated by men; consequently, it was oppressive and it harassed and neglected women. Feminist critiques have renamed mainstream 'malestream' for this reason.

[8] Anita Singh, "Aesthetics of Indian Feminist Theatre", *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies of Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2009): 150-170.

[9] Anuradha Kapur, "A Wandering Word, An Unstable Subject", *Theatre India: National school of drama's Theatre Journal* (May 2001): 5-12.

[10] Ibid, 5-6.

[11] Elaine Aston, *Feminist Theatre Practice: A handbook* (London: Routledge, 1999).

Realisation of Male-centric Conventions in Mainstream Theatre

Women theatre makers are challenging and changing the symbolic order of theatre and theatrical language, which developed over a thousand years.[12] Feminist theorisations have changed the conventional representation and image of women in theatre. Women's stories and experiences are now being told and represented with new, changed subjectivity and perceptions, with resistance and gender parity as the pillars of feminist theatre aesthetics. While mainstream theatre, continuing till now, represents women as objects, 'belonging' to men, women theatre making represents women as subjects in their own right, moving women's issues, stories, experiences, and perspectives to the centre stage. Women in contemporary theatre desire to be 'understood' or 'seen' not as a representation of masculinist imagination but as themselves, as women, fully.[13] Feminist awareness and women's exploration is, thus, underway in contemporary theatre in India, re/activating an imagination in feminist theatre to resuscitate women and their images and bodies from the dominant, oppressive, suppressive, offensive, and stereotypical male aesthetics and gaze of mainstream theatre.

Contemporary women's theatre believes in the efficacy of theatre as a tool for 'conscientization', that is for critiquing gender and social disparities and for initiating an in depth process of self-exploration and self-expression.[14] According to Laura Mulvey, while conventional and realistic visual and other narratives in theatre often produce plays that are a type of entertainment, with a certain sadism within it which demands a story,[15] including women's stories, these hardly ever leave any room within them for depictions of women's agency. Feminist awareness in theatre, on the other hand, produces 'the rebel' theatre maker whose emphasis on women's agency demands a story, and sometimes not even stories, but ways and processes in which women's voices can be heard. For example, Maya Rao does not tell a conventional story, but reiterates a series of incidents of sexual violence against women and the impending conviction.[16] This activates real, lived, and everyday re/presentation of the stories, experiences, and voices of women in performances, carrying forward this gendered sensitivity onto the spectators, simultaneously building an aesthetic of the oppressed and undoing dominant, binarised, stereotypical gender constructions, roles and identities.

The 'men's women' constructed in theatre and society as mainstream were and are different from how women themselves saw and see themselves. Recognising this problem of the male-stream within theatre, women theatre makers continuously undertook various theatrical experimentations and developed new methods of performance creation, with the intention of reaching out to and expressing women's own experiences and bodies, i.e. their bodily experiences. They intensified the writing of their own stories and narratives, magnifying the capacity of theatre to mark and re/present their desires and identifications. Women theatre makers, thus, strategically employed newer methods of theatre production to change mainstream representation of women, making them active social subjects, and not passive objects, in their theatres,[17] destabilising conventional phallocentric aesthetics in theatre.

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[12] Anita Singh, "Aesthetics of Indian Feminist Theatre", *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies of Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2009):164-166.

[13] Aston, *Feminist Theatre Practice: A handbook,* 6.

[14] Mohita Negi, "Rise of women's Theatre in India", Your Article Library; The Next Generation Library, accessed December 3, 2019, https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/essay/rise-of-womens-theatre-in-india/24346.

[15] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*," Screen* (1975): 8.

[16] Maya Krishna Rao, "Walk", video, last modified, February 9, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=msUvCWKcCVQ

Themes and Stories in Performances of Three Women Theatre Makers

As Aston argues, feminist theatrical efforts lead women towards the creation of new theatres,[18] where women can feel connected to the themes of their performances, expressing their own feelings and minds, addressing their own issues of suppression, and talking about their own desires and dreams. Here, theatre feels more real and natural, and is about, for, and by women. In this regard, women's theatre in India has explored a range of subjects, from domestic workers to sex workers, experiences from the home to the nation, from the business of sex to the business of arts, and more.

Women-based themes in theatre in India widely include various issues of women's rights, paving the way for the productions of the twenty-first century feminist and women theatre makers. By the 1990s, women theatre makers started centring themselves in their writings, developing and producing women's characters in theatre from their own life experiences.[19] They portrayed women's struggles by exploring women to women relations, such as those of mothers and daughters, women friends, women workers, sex workers, women with different, non-heteronormative sexualities etc., in different languages. Maya Rao's *Quality Streets* (2017),[20] for instance, re/presents a mother-daughter couple negotiating with the conventional meanings of marriage and culture, feudalism and democracy.

Women theatre makers brought in feminist subjects from across India, concentrating on women's issues, especially their struggles to be free of patriarchal oppression and inequality. Women playwrights and theatre makers, thus, began bringing new subjects and stories into theatre, portraying more 'authentic' women within it, focusing on 'their daily life, their sexuality and desire, and their relationships with other women'.[21] In this context of women's theatre in India, this paper will examine in depth Maya Krishna Rao's *Walk* (2013), Mallika Taneja's *Thoda Dhyan Se* (Be Little Careful)[22] (2017), and Savita Rani's *RIP*[23] (2017).

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[17] Teresa De Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction* (Indiana University Press, 1987): 109.

[18] Dee Heddon, "The Politics of the Personal: Autobiography in Performance" in *Feminist Futures? Theatre, Performance, and Theory*, eds. Elaine Aston and Geraldine Harris (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006): 139-140.

[19] Nandi Bhatia, *Performing Women/Performing Womanhood: Theatre, Politics, and Dissent in North India* (England: Oxford University Press, 2010): xvi-xxiii.

[20] Maya Krishna Rao, "Quality Streets," video, accessed January 3, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVxMrsXWPZk&t=10s,

In *Walk*, Maya dwells on the theme of a woman walking, going out, and being outside the home – the conventional, domestic, and confining sphere of activity for women – conceptually and practically, expanding the bounds of the woman self and feminising public spaces. Here, a woman's walk is an exploration of a woman being in dominantly patriarchal spaces – outside the home, on the streets, in the parks – while availing herself of her rights as not only a citizen of India but also as a full-fledged social human being.

Maya Krishna Rao performing ***Walk*,** without a conventional story, character, or set, with only a factual, dissenting woman's voice asking for recognition and overcoming the everyday sexual violence in India that makes it possible for rapes to occur in the first place.
Photo: mayakrishnarao.blogspot.com.

Walk is set in the context of the public discourse around sexual violence, which is conventionally centred on women's clothing place, timing, and her choices and freedom, but not on the criminal or the crime itself. While emphasising dismal rates of conviction for rape and sexual violence in India it sought to expand the discourse to include demands for equal rights, everyday freedom of movement, and gender justice for women, and more.

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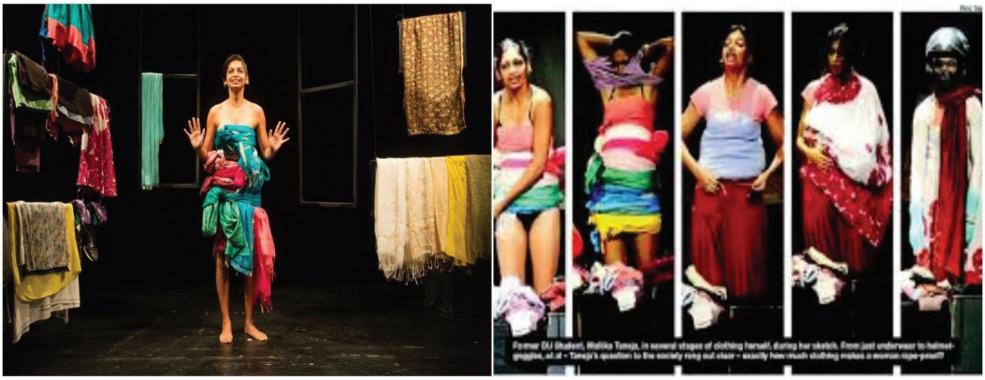
[21] Aishwarya Javalgekar, "How Feminist Theatre Emerged in India", Feminism in India, last modified August, 2017, https://feminisminindia.com/2017/08/30/feminist-theatre-india/

[22] Mallika Taneja, "Thora Dhyan Se (Be Little Careful)," video, accessed February 2, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=giNBlGGmxZg

[23] Savita Rani, "RIP," video, accessed February 4, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVxMrsXWPZk&t=10s

In *Thoda Dhyan Se (Be Little Careful)*, Mallika dresses herself repeatedly, starting from wearing nothing and adding more and more clothing, till she is almost buried in clothes and accompanying paraphernalia. Each added layer symbolises conventional female decency as the appropriate clothing for women that is supposed to prevent sexual violence and rape.



Mallika Taneja in Thoda Dhyan Se (Be Little Careful), questioning patriarchal notions about sexual harassment, especially victim blaming.
Photos: newsclick.com.

She repeatedly asks, with each added layer of clothing, if this new layer is guarantee enough for a woman to not be raped or sexually harassed. With this performance, Mallika opened up the debate on sexual violence while debunking the dominant myth that women's clothing, or the lack thereof leading to the exposure of women's bodies, is the cause of sexual violence, challenging patriarchal ideas regarding women's bodies and sexual violence against women in India.

In *RIP*, Savita, by subtly reimagining Sita of the Indian epic *Ramayana* as a modern woman with her own mind and desires, enquires into women's position in society and the gender performativity in Indian epics, theatre, and society that positions her as such, while at the same time re/presenting a journey of this woman finding her 'self', by herself. *RIP* explores the everyday politics of gender present in the institutions of family and marriage, reimagining why Sita, being a woman and the protagonist of the performance, actually leaves home in search of her own path. It is not merely to follow her husband as a devoted and obedient wife (even as she, Sita, initially and cleverly pretends that this is the case in order to get her way to fulfil her dream to travel when her options for this travel are otherwise limited) but to seek independence, freedom and growth for her*self*.

Spectators helping Savita put on a sari, symbolic of the relationship between women and culture.
Photo: Savita Rani.

The women in the three performances do not re/present extraordinary women characters or heroic subjects or themes, but depict ordinary women speaking of their own experiences, in their own voices, against the everyday subjugation and violence that they come up against in all spaces and at all times. With this, the theatre makers create new textualities of/for feminist subjects in their performances, of women voicing their real experiences, opinions, views, and thoughts, which are largely ignored in conventional theatre. Further, as Mallika[24] and Savita[25] forthrightly say, the theatre makers create their performances not only because they want to express themselves but also because they want to connect with themselves, with the themes of their performances, and with the spectators, and induce active participation and conversation amongst all concerned, especially the spectators.

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[24] Mallika Taneja, interviewed by Kalki Koechlin, "My Indian life, Part-2: A Body of Protest" by bbcnews, video, accessed December 22, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9JTlBPBZO3A

[25] Priya Srikumar, "Rest in Peace Throughout Life," *Deccan Chronicle*, 17 Feb, 2017, https://www.deccanchronicle.com/entertainment/theatre/170217/rest-in-peace-throughout-life.html?fbclid=IwAR1newED6TCPQUyQbxjzFsbUdXTdG1ePxs4DmjHWAwaUVpP4qDGIc2_hMDY

Treating Spectators as Subjects

Women's theatre has largely positioned spectators as not just passive viewing objects but as active, responsive subjects in theatre that speaks about, resists, and attempts to overcome gender and social discrimination. In an interview, Savita says,

> *While one feels that there must be a written text, lots of lights, set, music, make up and costumes in theatre…we must not forget that these are resources that also limit the possibility of theatre. The basic and foremost elements of theatre are the actor, the doer, the performer, and the spectator.*[26]

It does not consider spectators to be mere targets of performances, indulging in voyeuristic and distant theatrical pleasure, but as subjects fully participating in the performances, filled with possibilities for social change and justice. It aims at the transformation of spectators into subjects, 'to enable or initiate positive changes in women's lives through political and theatrical representations'.[27] As for Mallika, who chose a woman-centred performance because she wanted the spectators and the public to rethink their gendered notions and perspective and become gender sensitive, in her theatre spectators are subjects of change.[28]

These performances, thus, re/produce a gender and socially conscious spectatorship through new, changed, non-male-stream, non-mainstream theatrical textualities and expressions, and changed actor-spectator positions in theatre. With the new positioning of women's agency in theatre making, the actor-spectator relationship changes. Women's agency, brought forward in theatre through new stories, theatrical languages, and aesthetic creations of performances, becomes a new discourse for spectators. Conventionally silent spectators are taken by storm with this discourse, which stokes within them new perspectives and articulations of issues and experiences. This new positioning, made up of diverse women's agencies, is enabled by feminist theatre, which shifts the paradigm of a conventional, monopolist, male-centred, single narration of themes to include plural stories and perspectives of women placed differently and centrally in theatrical narration, with them telling their own stories on their own terms.

Devising: Overcoming Male-centric Structures in Conventional Theatre

Helene Keyssar, when examining feminist theatre in Britain and in the US, has articulated the overarching 'maleness' that is inherent within the traditional structure and making of theatre.[29] As feminist inquiries into dramatic literature conclude, conventional 'women's construction' within such literature is an attempt to make them secondary to men, who are always placed superior to women in these patriarchal discourses. Women's characters are represented as oppressed and subjugated, without any significant consideration for their varied real-life experiences or for their diverse thoughts, opinions and perceptions. Conventional, dominant, and scripted plays largely follow this same discourse and pattern of re/presentation of women, and men.

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[26] Priya Srikumar,"Rest in Peace Throughout Life", *Deccan Chronicle*, 17 Feb, 2017.

[27] Negi, "Rise of women's Theatre in India," Your Article Library; The Next Generation Library, accessed December 3, 2019, https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/essay/rise-of-womens-theatre-in-india/24346

[28] Gaurangi Dang, Interview with Mallika Taneja, mumbaitheatreguide.com, accessed 9 February, 2021, https://www.mumbaitheatreguide.com/dramas/interviews/mallika-taneja-interview.asp#

On the other hand, as Alison Oddey observes, devising, which is a non-scripted theatre production method, opens up the possibilities of changing this gendered conventional representation and positioning of women[30] and men within theatre. Women theatre makers in twenty-first century India, who have each arrived at this consciousness differently, have not only rejected conventional, well-written plays but have also evolved new techniques of theatrical productions by embracing the free-flowing method of devising as the core of their theatrical processes. As Aston articulated, these 'feminist playwrights and practitioners who felt alienated by the realist structures of "women-belonging-to-men" [in conventional theatre] wanted to explore other theatrical forms and acting styles to represent their experiences, themes or subjects'.[31] Considering the conventional relationship of women with culture, their un-real representation in male-stream, mainstream theatre, and the possibilities for political resistance opened up with devising in theatre, feminist theatre practitioners globally have used devising in/for their theatrical productions. Thus, although 'devising is not in itself a political practice… [it] does offer political possibilities'. As Aston, while highlighting the possibilities offered by devising for women theatre makers, says, this at least 'means that [the theatre makers] do not have to work on a "big daddy script" or, if constrained to do so, may assist in making a radical intervention in a "canonical" or "conventional play text"'.[32]

In India, devising as a method of theatre creation has enabled contemporary feminists and women theatre practitioners such as Maya, Mallika, and Savita and others to contest and destabilise conventional dramatic texts, offering a variety of ways to address and expand upon theatrical content and form for voicing a plurality of experiences[33] on themes of gender, women's repression, subjugation, and marginalization, in contrast to otherwise conventional single masculine narratives about women or gender in theatre and in society as well.

Maya, a pioneer in India in adapting devising techniques in theatre, has rejected and not used well-written dramatic texts for any of her performances in the last two decades, regardless of their genre, feminist or otherwise. For instance, Maya's *Deeper Fried Jam*[34] (2013) is a 'socio-political cabaret show' performed in Brechtian style where she transformed herself into characters ranging from a labourer's child to that of the narrator to being a commentator on the misery caused by social and political disparity in society. Her need for narrating the emotions of the child with a political awareness fragmented her performance, turning her into a child, a performer, an artist, and a woman activist, one after the other, throughout the duration of her performance. Her breaking into various characters and emotions also compelled spectators to become aware of and interrogate their own thoughts and feelings regarding the societal conditions underlying the performance. The sudden appearance of images of construction workers, the direct depiction of a labourer's child, Maya's becoming various characters all interspersed with one another, the minimal use of sets and props – there is no set to indicate a construction site in the performance – all resulted from Maya's theatrical explorations for the performance through devising. Devising, she joined together various feelings, descriptions, narrations and commentaries from a variety of perspectives, including those of a performer and a common civic woman. With the resulting performance, spectators are always aware that Maya is not only a dramatic character in theatre but a re/presenter responsibly responding to realities, situations, and events surrounding her and them, attempting to lay a path of personal, societal, and theatrical change for all concerned.

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[29] Helene Keyssar, *Feminist Theatre: An Introduction to Plays of Contemporary British and American Women* (Macmillan Education, USA,1985): 1-20.

[30] Alison Oddey, *Devising Theatre; A Practical and Theoretical Handbook* (New York: Routledge, 1994): 1-7.

[31] Aston, *Feminist Theatre Practice; A Handbook*, 7.

[32] Ibid, 15.

[33] Oddey, *Devising Theatre; A Practical and Theoretical Handbook*, 6-7.

With *Walk*, Maya offers a self-conscious narration of everyday gender brutalities across India. She uses techniques of agitation and explication in the performance, utilising only her voice to express agony, anger, and dissent, with the intent of sensitizing spectators regarding sexual violence against women in India. Her performance turns into activism, a perfect instance of a woman theatre maker exploring her 'self' in her performance, explicitly making clear that she too is a victim and survivor of violence and part of the protest against it. With such theatrical productions and interventions, feminist theatre decentralises conventional plays from their traditional settings and patriarchal aesthetics and representations, turning the bodies of women from conventionally being mere objects of masculine desire, pleasure, or sympathy into vocal and located bodies of activism. In *Walk* Maya does not take up a story or character as her content for her performance but works with facts about instances of rape and rape convictions in India, and closely associated everyday instances of seen and unseen gendered violence experienced by women that underlie and facilitate the rapes in the first place. With this, she exercises her civil rights as a dissenting woman, joining her voice with those of thousands of others regarding a current societal issue through theatre.

In *RIP*, Savita explores the relationship of women with culture. As a feminist performer, she feels the need to use her lived experiences and prevalent narratives about women and culture and present these juxtaposed and contested to spectators to not merely induce emotions among them, but to activate reflective thoughts and actions in them, something which conventional theatre fails to do. In revisiting cultural history from a modern woman's perspective, *RIP* required and introduced new theatrical techniques and styles for constructing and re/presenting non-conventional, lived, and progressive cultural meanings of femininity, intelligence, violence, rape, and freedom about women in India.

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[34] Maya Krishna Rao, "Deeper Fried Jam," accessed December 21, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uv7UdXvrybU

Savita envisions theatre in a Brechtian sense, as an interactive engagement between performer and spectators, and becomes compelled to devise her performance, resulting in the use of photographs, a map, commentary, emotions, and the transformation of her character from that of a performer to a commentator and reviewer, among other things, in her performance. Effectively, she makes the spectators participate in her narration and performance – for instance by making them take on performative parts in the performance, like wrapping a *sari* around her and helping her with her hair, etc., all while she narrates and questions the importance attributed to rigid conventional cultural beliefs and norms regarding women in India with humour and with the spectators' active physical and reflective involvement.

In *RIP* Savita performs a mythical story using narratives of the past and present, of myth and reality. Savita, being as a modern woman performer, travels through the ages as Sita or any other mythical woman, inspecting concepts of gender and its performance in our cultural lives, which still shape the lives of contemporary girls/women. Savita creates a new feminist reading of a patriarchal myth in her performance by filling Sita's silence with words, providing reasons and revealing the motivations of other characters, and by critical analysis of Ramayana's story using her own experiences, consciousness, and perspective on gender and violence against women. Devising gives Savita a way to be herself and yet a character, to be a commentator and yet a woman with lived experiences of gender, sexuality, class and caste, re/presenting all this as a performer in her performance.

Maya and Savita both choose devising as the method for the development of their performance because of the possibility that devising offers them for being them*selves,* that is being the women that they are and still being 'performers' simultaneously, without giving up but rather building upon their own consciousness, intelligence, and feelings in their performances, something that conventional scripted plays deny them. With this choice, they consciously and otherwise intensively problematise women's marginalisation and exclusion from conventional playwriting and role distribution in theatre, which objectifies and straightjackets women's roles and images in theatre and limits the range of emotive possibilities available to them as performers.

Realising the authoritarian, 'male-stream' nature of dramatic texts, Maya and Savita, among other women performers in India, have used devising techniques to make their own theatre performances, challenging the conventional authoritative theatrical textual tradition and production process. Mohita Negi articulates,

> *It has meant departing from the conventional way of producing and staging plays. It has also meant addressing modes of performances, idioms of expression and representation of women, and using training in theatre for articulating the perception and aspiration of women. From creation of the script through improvisation and visualization on to rehearsal, right up to performance and relating to the audience, the emphasis has been on collective function.*[35]

Rejection of written scripts is a political act of feminist consciousness in modern theatre in India. As Aston and Harries have observed for American feminist theatre, for Indian feminist [women-led] theatre as well, this meant that 'symbolic framings of women as Woman were contested as feminist theatre practitioners refused to be objectified, gazed upon, refused to be the "Other" in some (male) body else's story'.[36] As Aston says, 'creating texts through the agency and creativity of the performer is what characterizes devising work',[37] and this facilitates an agential embodiment of egalitarian consciousness in theatre, in India, and globally.

Rejection of Realistic Acting

It is well known that presentational, or realistic, acting leaves no creative space for the actor involved. The actor is merely presenting what is written in a script by a playwright or what s/he is told to present by a [male] director, within this conventional mode of acting. Rejecting this form of acting has, thus, been popular preference in women's theatre for two major reasons: one, for creating 'feminist subjects' in acting or in performance; and second, for critically reconstructing the dominant aesthetics of the oppressive representation of women created by the male-stream in theatre.

Realistic acting demanded by stereotypical characterisations limits the experiences and stories of women that can be performatively shared, because of the very presentation and process involved in it. As Ellen Sue Case has argued, 'the psychological construction of character, using techniques adapted from Stanislavski, placed the female actor within the range of systems that have oppressed her very representation on stage'.[38] Besides representation, the principles and process of presentational acting are in themselves oppressive for women actors, when within these explorations of her "self" she is blocked and her voice is silenced. In conventional theatre, production scripts are linear and women's roles are created in relation to the those of the men in the scripts, so that women exist in these productions as supplemental attachments to men, and not independently as a unit of society and the world. Women characters, with limited emotions and feelings, do not offer much theatrical scope and range to women performers. Further, as Aston says, 'the character roles made available for women to "get into" in this "method" invite the actress to identify with the oppression of the female character to which she has been assigned'.[39] Consequently, Women theatre makers do not find realistic acting fulfilling their concerns, neither for an enactment of issues concerning them nor for creating dialogic actor-spectator relations with an intent to induce a real change in conventional theatre, its aesthetics, and in women's position in theatre and society.

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[35] Negi, "Rise of women's Theatre in India," Your Article Library; The Next Generation Library, accessed December 3, 2019, https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/essay/rise-of-womens-theatre-in-india/24346

[36] Elaine Aston and Geraldine Harries, "Introduction" in *Feminist Futures? Theatre, Performance, and Theory*," eds. Elaine Aston and Geraldine Harries (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006): 5.

[37] Aston, *Feminist Theatre Practice: A handbook,* 143.

[38] Sue-Ellen Case, *Feminism and Theatre* (London: Routledge, 1988): 122.

As such, realist acting remains an obstacle to be rooted out for contemporary women's theatre in India,[40] as elsewhere. Maya, Mallika, and Savita, among others, have rejected realistic acting that promotes scripted and stereotyped characters, especially women characters, in performances, bound by limited emotions and contexts for the entirety of a play. They make use of estrangement effects[41] in their performances, as a fundamental way to rescue their performances from dominant realistic theatre, which largely involves merely presenting a character, a situation or a feeling in and as performance. For instance: in her each of her performances, Maya uses narratives to represent different characters, commentary to create humour and dialogue, and storytelling and mimicry to present emotions of women as women, within the same performance; Maya and Mallika use theatre exercises and varied sound effects to create alienation between performer and spectator, to reveal complex inner feelings of women regarding specific situations; and Mallika and Savita use commentary, dialogues and direct questions posed to the audience (for example, is it the clothing of a woman that causes sexual violence or the violator himself?). All three theatre makers embody a feminist need for changing common, dominant, and patriarchal perspectives surrounding gender violence and victim blaming, and other similar discourses and practices, which cannot be addressed by telling one woman's story, but by presenting many women-centred situations and perspectives regarding a situation or an issue in a performance directly to the audience and seeking their reflective 'self-experiences' on the matter.

The need for putting spectators in the position of activist is a larger feminist objective and method acting as such does not offer much to feminist and women theatre makers in this regard, leading them to experiment in theatre, with techniques such as inclusion of Brechtian principles of acting, folk songs, storytelling, impersonation, and fragmented presentation, in order to non-conventionally reframe gender in their performances. As a result,

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[39] Aston, *Feminist Theatre Practice: A handbook,* 7.

[40] Anita Singh, "Aesthetics of Indian Feminist Theatre", *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies of Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2009): 11.

[41] It comprises of different techniques of multimedia/posters/break-in-acting/ a third person narration that breaks the emotional involvement of the spectator from the performance, and remind them of artificiality of the characters, and aims to activate conscious and critical thinking on the issue being present on the stage.

> *Feminist plays do not always follow a linear narrative of exposition-conflict-resolution. They are focused on the recognition of bias or injustice, and often lead to open-ended conclusions. As such, feminist narratives are more fluid, juxtaposed between past and present or between the lived experiences of more than one protagonist.*[42]

Not only do women theatre makers reject realistic acting, they also use non-realistic and non-conventional costumes, make-up, and sets in their performances in order to undo gender and construct a women-centric theatrical aesthetic, not to realistically match with the characters or situations in the performance but to enhance the performance and its theme metaphorically and symbolically. This often entails the performers dressing and undressing themselves in the course of their performances. For instance, Maya dons absurd costumes, as per the theme of her performance. Mallika starts her performance nude and then adds layers upon layers of clothing, till her costume becomes more and more absurd, overtly pointing at the societal hypocrisy of victim blaming, which would highlight her not being decently dressed and behaved, in most instances, as the cause of the sexual violence inflicted upon her. Savita wears an elegant feminine dress to start with but then takes it off during her performance, indicating freedom from the suffocation that women suffer when compulsorily partaking in patriarchal societal dressing and behavioural norms. Similarly, women theatre makers do not use conventional, elaborate, or spectacular stages and props in their performance spaces, but explore their and their performance themes' relationships with often non-conventional rehearsal and performance spaces, with their bodies, and through their and spectators' everyday experiences, mostly making use of fabric and ordinary lights as/for props, lighting and sets.

Changing Conventional Image and Discourse about Women's Bodies

Women's bodies, when exposed in theatre, in the opposite order of the male gaze, become a site of protest, breaking not only the gaze, which is necessarily male in conventional patriarchal society and theatre, but also creating a feminist spectacle through such expositions, with its theatrical languages, gestures, actions, set and light designs, make up and costumes. Feminist theatre makers turn themselves into 'spectacles' with the objective of showing how women are objectified in dominant, patriarchal, social, and cultural systems of representation, as in conventional theatre. Savita does this in *RIP* when she, humorously, takes the audience through elements of conventional acting and performance, ridiculing how a woman should sit, walk, laugh, talk, and sleep on the performance stage and in society. As such, women performers break theatrical conventions regarding the body, and women's bodies at that, in order to register their physical, logical, and political resistance to patriarchy, creating new presentations and meanings of gender, equality, and reality.[43]

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[42] Javalgekar, "How Feminist Theatre Emerged in India".

[43] Anita Singh, "Aesthetics of Indian Feminist Theatre", *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies of Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2009): 9-10.

In *Thoda Dhyan Se*, Mallika goes naked to present to spectators and the public that sexual violence against women has nothing to do with her clothing, using her own gendered and sexualised body as a tool for fighting back against a patriarchal culture that blames the victims and survivors of sexual harassment and rape (women) for sexual violence against them, and not the men or the patriarchal system that perpetuates it, not in the least by managing and subjugating women's bodies and desires. With this act, Mallika becomes an integral part of changing conventional notions regarding women's bodies in public, highlighting and creating a different meaning for a naked female body in public, as a battle site for gender equality.[44] In the performance, her (a woman's) naked body refuses to titillate, to evoke lust or desire, or to assume any sexualised forms that while being considered immoral in public are implicitly more acceptable in/to society than this other, newer, portrayal of women's bodies as horrifying, powerful, and completely and autonomously naked.[45]

Acts of women performers, such as Mallika's, break theatrical conventions while simultaneously reclaiming themselves and women's bodies from conventional and restrictive socio-symbolic values of patriarchal order. Resistance against violence, objectification, and sexualisation on stage builds a new landscape of women's bodies and constructs a women-centric gaze in theatre and society. The aesthetics of feminist theatre in India bring together theatre of resistance, with its focus on social justice, and feminist theory and activism, with its focus on gender inequality, body politics, and explorations of women-*self*, using women's own bodies as sites of critique and liberation.

Maya, in *Walk* and *Comedies*, performs wearing non-conventional costumes, exposing and covering her body in ways considered neither sexy nor cultured. Donning *kajal* to highlight her eyes, which are covered in partly glittery make up, and enacting non-feminine physical gestures, she presents an 'unwomanly woman' in public and in her performance, while at the same time, in the same performance, mimicking a very feminine woman, she theatrically expresses the binarised dualities, ironies, and burdens that a woman faces in the dominant patriarchal system. Savita in *RIP*, in another vein, performs and expresses the artificial and external efforts a woman makes to be womanly and to please her husband and society, contrary to who she really is and what she desires to be and do. She mimics and exaggerates these efforts and associated gestures that women undertake in society and theatre, along with a commentary on how she and other everyday women are not automatically and naturally womanly, as is conventionally believed, and how it is the mainly invisible but all pervasive societal pressure and expectation, that makes a woman become a 'womanly woman', exposing the falseness and violence of gender performativity and dominant gender norms in society and theatre. Maya, Mallika, and Savita all question the conventional image of women in the public sphere and creatively reconstruct this image as they include their own perspectives, simultaneously overturning dominant norms of conventional dramaturgy and the centrality of the male protagonist in conventional theatre and society.

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[44] Claudia Pajewski, "The Indian Woman Using her Body to Fight for Equality," bbcnews.com, accessed December 3, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-42349844

[45] Trina Nileena, Banerje, "Written on the Bodies," *Agenda* 4, (January 2006): 20-23.

Conclusion

Contemporary women's theatre and the themes, agency, and gaze offered by it are creating new paradigms of spectatorship. It has changed the meanings and aesthetics of women's images re/presented in performances, transforming conventional vulnerable and sexual images of women into multiple egalitarian images of vocal, resistant, and free women.

In India, many women theatre makers have made gender, femininity, and sexuality and its varied lived experiences the theme of performance. For them, women are not conventional passive objects or the masculine creations of male theatre makers, but active subjects undoing gender and rejecting phallocentrism in theatre and society. Their theatrical productions about women and gender are creating new grammars in theatre through their explication of gender performativity in their performances. Their performances reiterate gender ironies, undoing gender by exposing the non-naturalness and constructed-ness of gender, which is fabricated by patriarchy.

Maya Krishna Rao's *Walk*, Savita Rani's *RIP*, and Mallika Taneja's *Thoda Dhyan Se* (*Be Little Careful*) are contemporary theatrical works undoing gender by consciously recounting and mimicking gender constructions and exposing its inherent, ironic inconsistencies in their performances. The three women theatre makers reject realistic acting for their performances, relying more on the use of narration and commentary instead, which helps them transform from being characters to being women in their performances, expanding their space for the theatrical sharing of themes and experiences that relate to them, and connecting with other women and the world. They recount their stories in their performances with their subjective experiences and thoughts, becoming a voice of feminist politics that speaks for women, a suppressed gender in theatre and society.

As can be seen, women's theatre in India inherently challenges the codes of gender construction and inequality, sexuality, and body politics embedded in conventional patriarchal social setups in India. Women theatre makers in India aim to encourage spectators to see differently from that of the male gaze that is conventionally presented to them by theatre. Their dialogic performances allow spectators to actively participate in the performances while generating newer and changed meanings of gender within socio-symbolic patriarchal orders. Newness and a variety of women-centric narratives in the performances provide spectators, theatre, and society with diverse critical perspectives on concerning issues.

Devising remains at the core of fostering newer and feminist styles of theatrical presentations, free of the encumbrances of conventional stagecraft, make up and costumes, making the performances free flowing, located in lived experiences, affordable, and accessible. This also enables and encourages many more women to be theatre makers, exploring their 'self', their experiences, and bodies and associated identity politics, resisting sexual and gender violence, and undoing gender by various means in public. As such, feminist models of non-realistic acting and presentation, have, in turn, canonised themselves, with their theatrical methods of creating dialogues, making discourses, and feminising public spaces compelling spectators to be critical and political, and ultimately strive for equality regarding gender and everything else.

The implication of the theory and practice of new spectatorship in women's theatre is that it makes it possible to change the conventional male gaze in theatre and society into a new, alternate, and progressive gaze of a different spectatorship. Using new themes and stories directly and indirectly from the lived experience of theatre makers and spectators regarding patriarchy and its operation, violence, struggles, and experiments, and by undoing gender, feminist and women theatre makers are part of changing the idea of woman, gender and culture. Still, more can be, and has to be, done. As Aston says, women and feminist theatre makers and spectators, that is the entire society, has 'more to gain through "undoing" the social, cultural and theatrical conditioning of their bodies'.[46]

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Commemorative Hospitality in Documentary Theatre: Revisiting the Collective Memory in Genco Erkal's *Sivas 93**

Merve Atasoy[1]

ABSTRACT

Focusing on *Sivas 93* (2008), a Turkish documentary play by Genco Erkal, this paper is going to explore the construction of hospitality with victimized individuals and communities, especially those who are dead and absent, through commemoration in documentary theatre. The manifestation of hospitality on stage, in which 'the host / the sovereign' turns into the 'hostage' of 'the guest / the foreign / the deviant' as Derrida elucidates in *Of Hospitality*, contributes to the development of alternative responses to the mainstream media and its impact on collective memories. In this regard, while the reinterpretation of collective memories is a fundamental function of documentary theatre, my goal is to explore how *Sivas 93* as a documentary play develops its own methods to revisit the past. Commemorating the absent and victimized people through performance, the play not only refreshes the collective memory but also underlines the society's ethical responsibility towards those who have been symbolically displaced from home.>

Keywords: *Sivas 93*, documentary theatre, collective memory, hospitality, mass media

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Introduction

In her 2010 book *Derrida and Hospitality*, Judith Still notes "it does not make sense to say that the state offers hospitality to its citizens, that the collectivity offers hospitality to itself."[1] Though Still conjectures an ideal condition of citizens belonging to the state, her comment about the reaches and dimensions of hospitality rather misses out the state's possible eliminative or negligent attitudes towards the minorities, or the communities dissenting the government. The states' internalization of the us vs. them distinction is not an uncommon case in their foreign policies. This separatist agenda is also often sustained in their treatments of refugees and asylum seekers within countries, which has been explored and problematized in a good number of plays using verbatim techniques as well.[2] However, the disintegration *among the very citizens* can turn the sense of harmony and homogeneity in the word 'us' into an illusion as well. At this point, the government's policies towards majorities and minorities in the country lead to the ascription of an identity to the state. As some communities appear to be comparatively akin to this identity, some do not consider themselves belonging to the country -or 'to home'- as much as the others. In other words, as the state power can affect different communities in varying degrees and because of the existing power relations among these communities, the dynamics of hospitality can apply to domestic politics as well, through which some communities at home are almost treated as the foreign.

Focusing on *Sivas 93* (2008), a Turkish documentary play by Genco Erkal, this paper is going to explore the construction of hospitality with victimized individuals and communities, especially those who are dead and absent, through commemoration in documentary theatre. It will maintain that the manifestation of hospitality on stage, in which 'the host / the sovereign' turns into the 'hostage' of 'the guest / the foreign / the deviant', as Derrida elucidates in *Of Hospitality*, contributes to the development of alternative responses to the mainstream media and its impact on collective memories. In this regard, while the reinterpretation of collective memories is a fundamental function of documentary theatre, my goal is to provide an insight into 'the methods' in which the genre develops to revisit the past. As documentary plays enable actors, dramatists and the audience to revisit the incidents highly debated and widely publicized in media, they metaphorically take them into 'a house' where the collective memory of the society is 'stored'. The re-evaluation of the past incidents in the play becomes an attempt to invite those who were treated as ghosts (the dead and the absent) to this 'house' and to embrace them. Yet at the same time, the play (in line with Derrida's *Of Hospitality*, which also delineates the relationship between hospitality and memory) suggests that the memory of the society becomes 'hostage' to those who have been excluded from the home country as well: it is haunted by them. Thus, the society cannot totally be the host and the master of its memory: the sovereignty of documentations, media footage and records, which make up the official history and influence the collective memory of a country is always challenged by other documents through which 'the ghost' speaks. As it will be elucidated in the following pages, memory undergoes change in time: 'the storehouse' or the 'the archive' does not always remain the same. Commemorating the absent and victimized people through performance, the play not only refreshes the collective memory but also underlines the society's ethical responsibility towards those who have been symbolically displaced from home.

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[1] Judith Still, *Derrida and Hospitality* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 11.

[2] See, for example, Ros Horin's *Through the Wire* (2004) or Sonja Linden's *Crocodile Seeking Refuge* (2005) which touch upon the problems of asylum seeking and immigration policies.

This paper is going to investigate the commemorative hospitality of the play and its attitude towards the formulation and mediation of collective memory in two parts: the first part will elaborate on the estrangement and exclusion of minorities. The play underlines that the attitude of the state with regard to the treatment of social communities can lead to the ascription of a character to the state, which is likely to oppress various communities. In this sense, especially minorities, even if they are very citizens of a country, are treated as a foreign and an uncanny community that can disrupt the existing order. The play, which includes ritualistic acts, points to the tensions between Alevi-Sunni and between left- and right-wing communities and emphasizes the state's control over the media in storing and circulating information (thus over the collective memories as well). It underlines the ethical responsibility of other communities to those who are dead and victimized. The second part of the paper illustrates the play's attitude towards the idea of collective memory and its re-mediations with references to Maurice Halbwachs and Aleida Assmann. Referring to Diana Taylor's remarks on the archive and the repertoire, the impact of a commemorated past incident on the present and the future is going to be discussed. The play shows that those who are deported from home haunt collective memories and identities within a country. Pointing to Derrida's views on memory and hospitality, this part will suggest that the audience and the absent voices (ghosts) become both hosts and guests at the same time. The re-mediation and commemoration of the incident through the documentary play contribute to the reconciliation with the victimized and marginalized.

Excluded from One's Own State: Estrangement of the Minorities in *Sivas 93*

Commemoration of a person or people, who were victimized, murdered or inflicted violence, is a practice that is often observed in documentary plays. Through this practice, not only are the dead and the absent ones remembered but also the relations among different social, racial, ethnic communities are re-evaluated. To exemplify, *My Name is Rachel Corrie*, directed by Alan Rickman (2005), commemorates the British activist of the same name, who is killed by an Israeli soldier, and presents her experiences from her own voice. Yet, it also points to the plight of Palestinians and criticizes the policies of the Israeli government. Likewise, Moises Kaufman's *Laramie Project* (2000) and *Laramie Project:10 Years Later* (2009) explore the violence against LGBT people through the memory of Matthew Shepard, who was murdered in Wyoming as a result of a hate crime. Through the memory of Shepard, the approaches of members of diverse communities to hate crimes and homophobia are scrutinized as well. In addition, the commemoration of the dead and the absent contributes considerably to the scrutiny of juridical mechanisms on national and transnational scale. In this sense, tribunal plays that enact trials include some degree of commemoration, too. As the aftermath of violent incidents is remembered together with the witnessing of the audience, it can be problematized whether the verdicts were sufficient and rightful. Re-examining the motives of the perpetrators and the effects of the crimes on victims can provide clues about the repercussions of the incident 'at present'. Nicolas Kent's *Srebrenica* (1996) and Richard Norton Taylor's *Nuremberg* (1996) can be counted among the plays that commemorate the victims through the demonstration of the processing of justice. Though *Sivas 93* cannot be classified as a tribunal play, it manifests a considerable preoccupation with justice toward the victimized. As it commemorates the victims by narrating the flow of incidents and with references to the overall approach of the state and media, it carries the effects of memory to the presence, questioning the ethical responsibilities of the society as a whole.

Staging one of the most bitter events in the history of Turkey, *Sivas 93* is based on the Sivas Massacre which took place in Madımak Hotel in Sivas on July 2, 1993. In this massacre 37 people were killed as the mob which consisted of Islamic fundamentalists set fire to the hotel. The incident marks a climactic point of the conflict between two Islamic denominations in Turkey: Sunnis, who constitute the majority of the population and Alevis, who make up the largest religious minority.[3] The conflict was particularly triggered after The Maraş Massacre[4] which took place in 1978 and it accelerated during the 1980s and the 1990s. The victims in Sivas massacre consisted mostly of Alevi intellectuals, poets, artists and caricaturists, who came to the city for a festival organized to celebrate the life and works of the 16th century Alevi poet Pir Sultan Abdal, to sign their books and meet the art-lovers. Among the intellectuals coming to the city was also Aziz Nesin, who had started translating Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* into Turkish and received violent reaction particularly from Islamic fundamentalists. Following his speech in the opening of the festival, during which a statue of Pir Sultan Abdal was also erected, the demonstrators, the number of whom was increasing, first started to stone the hotel and then set it on fire. The governor of Sivas was severely chastised for inviting the group to the festival as well. Furthermore, it is known that provocative notices which target Nesin were issued around the city just before the festival. Apart from being sprung from the ongoing Alevi - Sunni conflicts, the incident was also shaped by the clashes of Islamic fundamentalists and seculars as well as the right- and the left-wing. While Sivas was populated mainly by Sunnis and by people supporting right-wing politics, the Alevi visitors mostly consisted of leftist and secular intellectuals. The approach of the state and the politicians to the massacre during and after the incidents has been widely regarded as a scandal. For instance, the way Mayor of Sivas addressed to the demonstrators during the protests has been found to have a provocative tone which supported the attackers and ignited the violence. *Sivas 93* includes the most provocative words attributed to him during his speech to the attackers: "May your holy war be blessed."[5] As the government has been severely criticized around the country for not taking the process seriously despite the victims' pleas for help, it has been blamed for risking the Alevi intellectuals' lives for political concerns. As Turkey is mostly populated by Sunni citizens and the government of the time was made up of center-right wing politicians, the state's inability to intervene and save the victims' lives has played a substantial part in the attribution of 'Sunni and right-wing' identity, which is oppressive to minorities such as leftists and Alevis, to the state. The fact that some of the verdicts were abated following the escape of some defendants has raised strong doubts about the conduct of justice within the state.[6] As the play delineates that the lack of necessary attention by governments continued in the aftermath of the incident, it explicitly points to the way the targets feel themselves vulnerable and discriminated against due to the inability of their own state to protect them.

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[3] The distinction between Sunni Islam and Alevism dates back to the death of Prophet Mohammad. Following his death, the question who will be the legitimate successor carried disagreements with it. Basically, while Alevis follow the teachings of Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Mohammad, Sunnis follow the behaviours and sayings of the Prophet (which is called 'sunnah'). The exact number of Alevis in Turkey is disputable due to a lack of official statistics. The estimates generally range from 10 to 13 million.

[4] In December 1978, more than 100 Alevi and left-wing civilians living in Kahramanmaraş, Turkey (according to official records) were killed by extreme rightist and fascist groups, who targeted the Alevi neighbourhoods with bombs and machine guns, burned the buildings and raped women. The attacks lasted at least seven days.

Sivas 93 premiered on 11 January 2008 in Dostlar Tiyatrosu, an ensemble which is known for its dissident stance and which has pioneered in the staging of Brecht's plays in Turkey. Since the 1970s, many examples of epic, political and documentary plays, such as Weiss's *Die Ermittlung* [*The Investigation*], Alain Decaux's *Les Rosenberg ne doivent pas mourir* [*The Rosenbergs Shall Not Die*] and Hans Magnus Enzensberger's *Das Verhör von Habana* [*The Havana Inquiry*] have been performed together with visual materials. The performance of *Sivas 93* takes place simultaneously with the projections of photographs and videos that depict the locations and the moments of the attack throughout.[7] It also includes the recitation of poems by Metin Altıok, Behçet Aysan and Uğur Kaynar, who were among the poets killed in the massacre, and by Aziz Nesin during the performance. The music used in the play, which includes pieces from Nazım Oratorio and Metin Altıok Oratorio, is composed by the prominent Turkish pianist Fazıl Say. The play emerges as a product of detailed and dedicated research by Erkal, who is both the author and the director of the play. In an interview conducted in Boğaziçi University, he notes:

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[5] Genco Erkal(director), *Sivas 93*, script by Genco Erkal, performed by Genco Erkal et. al., Dostlar Tiyatrosu, Istanbul, January 11, 2008. All the quotes from the play are my translation.

[6] Many of the defendants were fugitives during the trials of Madımak massacre (and some of them still are.) The first verdict of the trials, which started in 1993, were given in 1994. According to the verdicts, punishments ranged from 2 to 15 years of imprisonment. The supreme court of appeals overturned the decision of state security court and finally 33 people got the death penalty in 2000, which was turned into life sentence with the abolishment of the death penalty in Turkey in 2002. In 2012, the punishment of 5 fugitive defendants were revoked due to the statute of limitations, which was also included in the playscript of *Sivas 93* later.

[7] In his interview in Boğaziçi University, Erkal points out that the synchronic video and slide projections from beginning to the end during the performance have first been used in *Sivas 93* among the plays staged in Dostlar Tiyatrosu.

> *First, I collected every material I could find: books, periodicals, interviews, a thousand paged court records of the Sivas massacre case which lasted five years, poems about the massacre, videotapes...Especially those that were recorded with the police cameras in Sivas Police Department and by İhlas News Agency. They hadn't been in the public view before... They had been used as evidence during the case.*[8]

Erkal's statements about the video records that haven't been circulated already provide significant hints about the lack of sufficient publication in the media. Even though the records demonstrate important evidence about the identities and acts of the attackers and about the course of the events, the national media does not seem to have raised sufficient awareness about the reasons for and the consequences of the incident. In the same interview, Erkal notes that the play received attention not only from Alevi citizens but also people from various backgrounds at home and in Europe (including the cities of London, Paris, Berlin and Brussel) during its staging, which implicates the interest and the need to gain more information regarding the incident.

Sivas 93, which includes four male and three (in some performances, two) female actors, does not specifically present them as characters. Rather, the actors both utter the testified statements of the victims and narrate the incidents. Meanwhile, they adapt their movements on stage with regard to the actions narrated in the play: e.g. they perform the way victims try to evade the fire or the way the crowd approaches the hotel as they narrate them. The fact that all of the actors are dressed in black, and holding red carnations gives the play a mood of mourning from the very beginning, which is supported by the darkness and emptiness of the stage. The play opens with a dance that echoes the dance that is performed during Alevi rituals (*semah*), which turns the commemoration into a ritualistic act. This is quite meaningful in the sense that rituals that "mark days and places of importance", signify "efficacy", which suggests that an action is fulfilled at the end of such performances –such as "forming and cementing social relations” and “remembering the past.”[9] Actors’ performance of *semah* from the very beginning stand out as an embracement of the victimized through embodiment. It also signifies the representation of performative language that has been ‘silenced’ after the massacre. This ritual, which is normally performed to approach the divine by the Alevis, is rather used on stage both to recollect the very performance of *semah* during the festival and to mourn and commemorate the Alevi victims. ‘The Other’ speaks through the actor’s performance. The collectivity inherent in the performance of *semah* contributes to making the audience part of this act of commemoration.

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[8] Genco Erkal, "Genco Erkal: An Interview", in *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Mithat Alam Film Merkezi Söyleşi, Panel ve Sunum Yıllığı 2008,* ed. Ayşegül Oğuz & Deniz Nilüfer Erselcan (Istanbul, Turkey: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2009), 220. My translation.

At the same time, the sense of mourning which is conveyed through the ambiance of the stage contributes to what Paul Ricour calls ‘reconciliation’. This reconciliation is not only with the absent Other who is hoped to be embraced, but also with the very collective identity. Here, I don’t refer to a single and homogeneous concept when I point to the ‘collective identity’. This is because communities can still involve different and smaller communities. However, violence inflicted on a specific group that lives together with the other ones inevitably becomes a part of their memories and –by extension– of their identities. In “Memory and Forgetting”, Ricour maintains “We could say that collective identity is rooted in founding events which are violent events. In a sense collective memory is a kind of storage of such violent blows, wounds and scars.”[10] At this point, not only the violence experienced by a community but also the one witnessed (or even inflicted on the Other) of it should be taken into account. Any kind of elimination, disregard or distortion of information about the Other within the memory of a community directly influences the latter’s identity as well: “diseases of memory are diseases of identity.”[11] Such a ‘disease’ implicates a gap in the mechanisms of news-giving / news-receiving and archives, which substantially shape the collective memory. Thus, media and mediation play a fundamental role in the formation of a community’s identity as well: the way members of a community treat the Other in their own media gives notable clues about their position as the host, as the ones who own the storehouse of the memory.

The idea of hospitality gains additional importance in *Sivas 93* as the play already dwells on an incident in which the life and security of the guest, which are to be guaranteed and protected by the host, are vitiated. In *French Hospitality*, Tahar ben Jelloun presents his definition of hospitality as "a reciprocal right to protection and shelter."[12] He underlines that the sheltering and entertaining the guests becomes a matter of honour for the host because it "makes the guest recognize [him/her] as someone capable of sharing" and "improves [his/her] status, as someone capable of existing in relation to others."[13] Yet, in this case, the inhabitants of the city not only abstain from protecting the guests but also – denying any sort of ethical responsibility – target their very shelter. Below anecdote from the play dramatically demonstrates the disavowal of the vulnerability of the Other: "'Is there any policeman in here?'/ We said 'no' and they left. / Then, the hotel was burnt down. / It had been ascertained that the hotel was in the clear. / Now it could be burnt down."[14] In this regard, the mob obviously does not feel any responsibility for the lives of the 'guest' whom they almost demonize throughout the play.

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[9] Richard Schechner, “Ritual and Performance,” in *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology,* ed. Tim Ingold. (London, New York: Routledge, 1994), 613. In “Ritual and Performance, while Richard Schechner associates theatre with entertainment and ritual with efficacy, he maintains that they are “not opposed to one another” (622). Underlining that “no performance....is pure efficacy and pure entertainment” (622), he argues that “neither has priority over the other” (614).

[10] Paul Ricour, “Memory and Forgetting” in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Trends in Philosophy*, ed. Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley (London, New York: Routledge, 1999), 8.

[11] Ibid., 7-8.

The play points to a huge incomprehensibility in terms of the identity of the newcomers: even though they are 'invited' by the governor of the city, references of the attackers introduce them almost as the invader or as the corrupted, which can be observed in the insults of the mob to women: "Have we invited you to Sivas? Go away bitches! Go where you come from, burn there and die".[15] Throughout the play, it is marked that the guests staying in the hotel are perceived as deviants disturbing the order. This idea is promptly mediated to the people in the whole city: the attackers overtly associate the victims and the city governor with the devil and depict their violence as a religious ritual: "Come on, join us! We are stoning the devil"![16] As Aziz Nesin's face is demonized both in the local media and in the notices which were delivered to houses and mosques before the festival, both his life and the lives of people associated with him begin not to be considered worthy of apprehension. At the same time, through their demonization, a collective identity for the public is sought to be formed, which would be used to justify the treatment of the Other. As the notices delivered by the provocateurs address "to Muslim public", they not only implicitly claim that those who do not agree with these statements could not be Muslims but also present this idea as a rule, a norm of belonging to the city (or even, to the country).[17] The abnormality ascribed to the visitors echoes Derrida's analysis of the relation between the host and the foreigner in *Of Hospitality.*

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[12] Tahar Ben Jelloun, *French Hospitality: Racism and North African Immigrants*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 1.

[13] Ibid., 2.

[14] Erkal, *Sivas 93*.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid. Stoning of the devil is a ritual that Muslim pilgrims perform in Mecca during their pilgrimage, which is called 'hajj'. During the ritual, pilgrims throw stones to three tall pillars called 'jamarāt', which represents the devil.

[17] Ibid.

Alluding to Xenos's (the foreigner) exchange with Theaetetus in Plato's dialogues,[18] he notes that the guest/ the foreigner may be considered to be delirious by the host, who feels an anxiety of not being able to control it.

> *Foreigner fears that he will be treated as mad (manikos)... 'I am therefore fearful that what I have said may give you the opportunity of looking on me as someone deranged,' says the translation (literally, mad, manikos, a nutter, a maniac), 'who is upside down all over (para poda metaballon emauton ano kai kato), a crazy person who reverses everything from head to toe, from top to bottom, who puts all his feet on his head, inside out, who walks on his head).'*[19]

Derrida suggests that the host can blame the foreigner for questioning the law of the master or the father, thus committing 'parricide'. As the provocateurs' notices claim that Nesin is "wandering around the city as if he is making fun of Muslims", one can speak of a similar anxiety of being 'reversed' by the newcomers.[20] At this point, the latter is perceived to have an uncanny or unhomely presence, which can be observed in the recitation of Metin Altıok's poem during the play: "you think I am uncanny, / one that should be burned / to be made an example."[21]

Accentuating the state's inability or neglect to stop the violence inflicted on the visitors, the play suggests that what is presented as 'the norm' in the city is also adopted by the state mechanisms themselves. This being the case, the state does not fulfil its responsibility to treat and protect its citizens equally and metaphorically deports the victims from 'home' or security: the sense of foreignness experienced on a local scale begins to be felt in the country as a whole. In this sense, though often studied with respect to postcolonial relations as in Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*, feeling unhomely or ''to feel at home and strange or estranged at the same time, or to feel not at home even when one is at home'' emerges as an experience gone through by the minorities which have been living in a country for a long time without a colonial history as well.[22] The opening words of the play effectively illustrate the victims' feeling of being betrayed: "We had trusted the state...We went there to sing our ballads and to perform *semah*. We did not take any guns with us as we left. We brought our books, our caricatures, photographs, our ideas. We visited there for peace and brotherhood, not for fight."[23] From the start of the play, as the tension between 'we' and 'they' is put forward, the connotation of 'they' includes state mechanisms and state people as well. In the play, the testimonies of victims and witnesses mark that state did not take sufficient precautions to stop the attack: "In the beginning there were only five hundred people. That crowd could have been dispersed and eruption of vehement incidents could have been prevented. Yet, things turned out differently. The security guards almost supported the crowd, protected it."[24] In addition, it is underlined in the testimonies that the physical and verbal violence left its place to systemic violence after the incident. The systemic violence mostly includes the silencing of the victims' voice and concerns by not carrying out the investigations efficiently and not filling the gaps of information: "The state did not want to probe into that. The facts have never been revealed."[25] The fact that sufficient documentation about the incident and perpetrators is not provided for archives, which are among the storehouses of the collective memory, is a different form of victims' exclusion from 'home'. In this sense, the play depicts the media as a remarkable factor that adds to systemic violence. The account of one of the witnesses in Madımak Hotel explicitly draws attention to the lack of information in media:

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[18] In Plato's *Sophist*, a stranger from Elea, whose name is never mentioned, visits Athens and meets Socrates and other Athenians. However, during the dialogues, the Eleatic stranger talks to Theaetetus while Socrates remains silent. Pointing to the questioning attitude of the stranger and the silence of Socrates, Derrida suggests that 'Socrates himself has the characteristics of the foreigner, he represents, he figures the foreigner, he plays the foreigner he is not.' Jacques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 13.

[19] Ibid., 9-10.

[20] Erkal, *Sivas 93*.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Eleanor Bryne, *Homi Bhabha* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 70.

[23] Erkal, *Sivas 93*.

> *In the hotel, we found a television that receives only one channel. The incident was reported in the news with just one sentence: 'Madımak Hotel has been stoned'. I cannot verbalize the hopelessness I felt at that moment. I won't forget. I mean, we are only mentioned, and it is purported that the incident has been settled. Whereas the crowd is getting bigger and bigger.*[26]

What is particularly frustrating for the speaker is the fact that their lives are not found and represented as 'grievable'. This also suggests that the grievability of life emerges as a problem among the communities within a nation as well. While the media composes the idea of a nation as an imagined and homogenized community, the lives of 'minorities' can be overlooked and eliminated from the public view. In other words, these communities can be treated as ghosts even when they are alive and present. In *The Spectatorship of Suffering*, Lilie Chouliaraki remarks that "imaginary reference to public in the textual practices of news which, in telling stories about the suffering 'other', always carve their own sense of 'we' out of a collection of watching individuals".[27] Whereas, the play implies that the perception of 'we' is also influenced by what is untold, or partly told about the suffering people who not only live outside but also live in the country. As the idea of 'we' connotes people who are familiar to one another, the suffering others whose vulnerability is not publicized within the country are metaphorically deported from home (Thus, the absent presence of these communities can make an *unheimlich* effect in the collective memory as well, which will be elucidated later in this article). The national media's designation of the public in the first person plural not only formulates a collective identity which privileges specific ethnical, religious or even political traits, but also shows its power to draw boundaries of 'home'. The practices of media in filtering, including and excluding implicate its position as a host. Presenting various politicians' statements following the outbreak of the incident, the play suggests that this power is predominantly shared with the state mechanisms: then President Süleyman Demirel's words about the event exemplify the way 'the public' can be a product which comes out of filtering and elusion: "the state forces and the public should not be pit against each other. This is what is striven for".[28] Likewise, then Prime Minister Tansu Çiller's remarks "Our citizens surrounding the hotel have not been hurt in any way" suggest how the politics can influence the perceptions about the grievability of the very citizens' lives.[29] In this sense, the play overtly criticizes the overall approach of the politicians: "Oh my! May our 'public' not be harmed! As if those burned alive were not the public... As if those who suffocated out of the smoke, those who were stoned were not the public".[30]

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Lilie Chouliaraki, *The Spectatorship of Suffering* (London: Sage Publications, 2006), 12.

While the mainstream media can provide homogenous depictions of nation, the dynamics of sharing the same city, sectarianism etc. can be more vividly observed in local media. The depictions of the Alevi intellectuals' visit to the city in the local newspapers set forth the appropriation of the city by the communities that live within the city. Besides, as different communities are in closer contact in towns and cities, the clashes among them and the dramatic effects of these clashes can be more concretely analyzed on local scale. A similar example to this situation in documentary theatre can be observed in *Fires in the Mirror*, where the clash between African American and Jewish communities in Crown Heights is explored and in Gillian Slovo's *Riots*, where the members of various communities in Tottenham, UK (such as blacks, whites, Muslims) interpret the development of 2011 riots, lootings and assaults. In these plays as well as in *Sivas 93*, the communities are not just constructed through imagination as in Benedict Anderson's views on nation formation: the inhabitants in towns and cities also have relatively more chance to contact other members of their communities and they can more promptly become organized because of the proximity. This being the case, local media can develop a more manipulative relation with its audiences, whose needs, interests and expectations it knows closely: it can address them more specifically when compared to national media. The play underlines how that kind of address has played a substantial role in provocation of people. The performers state: "Three local newspapers commented with distortion on Aziz Nesin's speech the day before. 'They sold snails in the Muslim neighbourhood'[31], noted one of them. It was as if the other one had responded: 'We won't let them do that'".[32] As the local media ascribes a collective identity to its audience, it plays a role in determining the boundaries of hospitality. In doing that, it depicts the newcomers as a danger to the very identity of the community, building up the anxiety that this identity is going to be changed by their intervention and ideology. The fact that the local media is closely acquainted with the sensitivities of its audience plays a substantial role in the provocation. The play also marks that the articles issued in the press supporting Islamic fundamentalism sustain the provocative tone after the incident as well. One of those articles comments on the incident as follows:

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[28] Erkal, *Sivas 93*.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] An idiom in Turkish, 'to sell snails in Muslim neighbourhood' suggests acting inappropriately and without following the rules of a region. The idiom alludes to the fact that the consumption of snails is considered forbidden (haram) in Islam. Here, the play alludes to the provocative headline of a local newspaper named *Hakikat*.

[32] Ibid.

> *The last month passed with full of action and blessings. One of the biggest resistances in the 70 years-old history of the republic took place on July 2. The outcome was a complete thrashing for the Western fundamentalists. Sivas witnessed Muslims' show of strength. What we want to emphasize is the fact that our people in Sivas used their rights to judge and punish. The right to judge and punish only belongs to Muslims. There are no ifs, ands, or buts about it. The illicit TC*[33] *has no authority. It is quite normal to overpower those who oppose to Islam. Yet, the real target of the Muslims in this country is TC itself: this should never be forgotten. May your wishes for revenge be everlasting.*[34]

Even though the mob's attack and the inability of security and state mechanism to stop the massacre were met with harsh reactions by a great many people around the country, the hateful evaluations of the incidents conveyed in the local media are part of the archiving of the incident. Besides, because such evaluations (even if they are made by smaller and fundamentalist groups) are more likely to appear in the newsfeed and be debated due to the provocation that they create, they remain in the collective memory of the public. The following section will take the concept of collective memory shaped by the mediation of social incidents as a starting point. It will scrutinize the ways Sivas 93, which -as a documentary play- explores collective memories, opens up spaces for re-encounter and reconciliation with absent and excluded individuals and communities.

Confrontation with the (G)hosts: Revisiting the Collective Memories

As the final lines of *Sivas 93*, which point to the goal of the performance, target the collective memories of the audience, the function of memory to speak to the present and the future is underlined:

> *We are finishing the play here.*
> *We have performed so that it shall not be forgotten*
> *So that it cannot be gone through again, so that there cannot be any time lapse in the crime of humanity.*[35]

Commemorations are not just directed towards recollecting an event but also re-exploring the existing collective identities and dimensions of the question who 'we' are. While commemorations often reinforce perceptions of national or religious identities, they also raise awareness towards the suffering experienced by the minority communities within the nation. In this sense, they can lead to the questioning of the ethical and humanitarian responsibilities of other people within the nation. As it has been noted before, this commemorative performance which includes ritualistic elements seeks for efficacy: at the end of the performance, something is expected to be achieved. In this sense, through references to possible human rights violations that can occur in the future, the play intimates its interest not only in revisiting the archive and the past but also in the repercussions of this memory on the present and the future. It is only through the interrelation of these time spans the collective memories of the society can be fathomed and processed. Paul Ricour states in "Memory and Forgetting" that knowledge and action are memory's two sorts of relation to the past: "In remembering or recollecting we are exercising our memory, which is a kind of action."[36] This action targets the present and the future as well: as the play stimulates the collective memories through narrativization and performance of the happening, it opens up ways to collectively interpret the materials coming from the past, through which humanitarian consciousness and ethical responsibilities can be activated. As memories constantly undergo alterations and eliminations, any injustice that can be forgotten by other members of the society (whether they belong to the victimized community or not) can threaten the society in the future as well: "the exemplary dimension of the same events is directed towards the future and regulated, 'towards justice', to quote Todorov. It is the power of justice to be just regarding victims, just also regarding victors, and just towards new institutions by means of which we may prevent the same events from recurring in the future."[37] In the light of this goal, the play allocates a remarkable space to court records and accentuates the problems pertaining to the operation of justice and to the disclosure of some of the perpetrators. At this point, it slightly bears similarities with tribunal plays towards its end as the audience hears the accounts of the witnesses and defendants' testimonies: just as in tribunal plays, the intention is less to judge (as most of the audience is already familiar with the verdicts) than to remember ethical responsibilities through refreshing the audience's memories.

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[33] TC is the Turkish acronym for the Republic of Turkey.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

To elucidate the impact of recollection on the development of collective memories and on the idea of hospitality built up on the stage, it is essential to focus on the theoretical views on collective memory as well as its interrelation with history. In his *On Collective Memory*, which paved the way for future research on memory studies, Maurice Halbwachs scrutinizes the idea of social frames, which stand for the groups that individuals position themselves and refer to in the first person plural. One can claim that these frames, which are closely connected to collective memories, function as homes where the borders of the familiar and the unfamiliar are internalized. As the members of these social frames memorize the narratives which unite them with the other members and which constitute their collective memories, their identities are also shaped by these frames. At the same time, Halbwach notes that within society there can be various collective memories that he differentiates from the concept of history. According to him, history is "unitary", "there is only one history" and "the historian certainly means to be objective and impartial"[38] Collective memories, however, are possessed by a community and correspondingly, they are subjective. Despite the binaries established with regard to history and collective memory, contemporary scholars elaborating on collective memory and its effects dwell on the interrelations and conflations of history and memory as well. In "Transformations between History and Memory", Aleida Assmann explains:

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[36] Ricour, "Memory and Forgetting", 5.
[37] Ibid., 9.

> *abstract and generalized 'history' turns into re-embodied collective 'memory' when it is transformed into forms of shared knowledge and collective participation. In such cases, 'history in general' is reconfigured into a particular and emotionally changed version of 'our history' and absorbed as a part of collective identity. While collective participation in national memory is enforced in totalitarian states coercively through indoctrination and propaganda, in democratic states it is circulated by way of popular media, public discourse, and forms of 'liberal representation' (William 1998).*[39]

Assmann's above quoted words effectively point to the impact of power relations and manipulations on the preservation of past incidents as part of a collective memory. In this sense, how the documents and materials are formed, put into use or concealed from the public view gains considerable significance. Any control on the circulation of the archive can affect the way a nation can perceive its history in the long run (critics such as Hayden White also argues that history-writing itself is a narrative which is based on the depictions of 'notable' events). Besides, considering that memory "bridges the past, present and future", the control of social and political groups in power can re-present, mis-represent or eliminate some elements of collective memories.[40] Thereby, different individuals can be alienated from their own memories or from memories of the previous generation. In "Invention, Memory and Place" Edward Said maintains that "the processes of memory are frequently, if not always, manipulated and intervened in for sometimes urgent purposes of the present".[41] Such a manipulation can particularly pose a danger to marginalized minorities whose memories can be eliminated and 'forgotten'. Or, their painful memories can be disconnected from the ethical responsibilities of other communities. In this sense, such minorities inevitably have a repressed presence in the latter's narratives of their memories and historiographies.

Considering *Sivas 93*'s attitude to media and state mechanism, an anxiety for the victims to be silenced can be observed. As the play refers to the problematic juridical process and the comments of political figures on the incident from the past to the present, it emphasizes the underestimation of victims' rights and experiences. In referring to the notices distributed around the city, the actors ask: "Who wrote out those notices? Who set them, printed and delivered them? It wasn't known. Nor is it known now. The state hasn't wanted to scrutinize it. The fact has never been revealed".[42] The play intimates that there is an unwillingness on the part of the state to provide documents for the archive, which would be integrated into the history. Considering that the lack of documentation about the identities of the perpetrators is likely to create a gap in the collective memory both of the victims' communities and others', the play resists the appropriation of the documents by mechanisms of power like media and state mechanisms, demonstrating an explicit distrust towards them. The actors note that even though there are numerous verbal and visual documents pertaining to the incident, these documents were not sufficiently examined. Pointing to the report which the chief prosecutor from State Security Court issued ten days after the incident, the play asserts that this bulk of documents cannot be analysed within such a short time. Thus, it does not credit the report, which asserts that the massacre resulted from a mob provocation rather than plans of various organizations. In this respect, *Sivas 93* is not interested in revisiting the incident with an objective standpoint because it maintains that the archiving and documentation have already been exposed to the manipulation of power mechanisms including the state. It correspondingly hopes to contribute to the sources and memory of the Other which is silenced. This approach of the play is quite in line with the prevalent functions of documentary theatre to "reopen trials in order to create justice" and "create additional historical accounts"[43] as well as to "celebrate repressed or marginal communities and groups, bringing to light their histories and aspirations."[44] Especially, the play's preoccupation with the justice (as it already believes that actual perpetrators have not been presented to the public and punished) leads it to re-present testimonies and evidences so that the audience as part of the public can apprehend the inequities stemming from the handling of the documents.

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[38] Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory,* trans. Francis J. Ditter, Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 83.

[39] Aleida Assmann, "Transformations between History and Memory", *Social Research* 75, no. 1 (2008): 65.

[40] Ibid., 61.

[41] Edward Said, "Invention, Memory, and Place," *Critical Inquiry* 26, no. 2 (2000): 176.

Considering Assmann's words that "collective memory is necessarily a mediated memory", *Sivas 93* as a documentary play opens up new ways of mediation to challenge it.[45] It reinterprets and refreshes the collective memory of a society in which its audience is also included. This collective memory is also a part of communal identities which the audience members cannot change or control individually. These identities are substantially influenced by media, which formulates 'imagined communities' as Benedict Anderson puts it. As yet a form of mediation, documentary theatre opens up new modes of articulation for cases which have not been effectively and sufficiently explored and discussed. In *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, Diana Taylor explores the processing of the memory through the relation between the archive and the repertoire. Her description of the archive emphasizes its characteristic as a closed space that bears strong similarities with the house: "Archival memory exists as documents, maps, literary texts, letters, archaeological remains, bones, videos, films, CDs, all those items supposedly resistant to change. Archive, from the Greek, etymologically refers to 'a public building', 'a place where records are kept'. From *arkhe*, it also means a beginning, the first place, the government".[46] The meanings of the archive as 'a building' and as 'the first place' imply the significance placed on the security of 'original' information and ur-document. Archive is where the information springs from and belongs to: it is the storehouse of the memory. Taylor goes on to express that this storehouse does not remain the same but it is exposed to constant changes emerging from its interrelation with the repertoire:

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[42] Erkal, *Sivas 93*.

[43] Carol Martin, "Bodies of Evidence" in *Dramaturgy of the Real on the World Stage,* ed. Carol Martin, (Basingstone, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 22.

[44] Derek Paget, "The 'Broken Tradition' of Documentary Theatre and Its Continued Powers of Endurance" in *Get Real: Documentary Theatre Past and Present*, ed. Alison Forsyth and Chris Megson (Basingstone, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 227.

[45] Assmann, "*Transformations between History and Memory*," 55

> *The repertoire, on the other hand, enacts embodied memory, performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing –in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, non-reproducible knowledge. Repertoire, etymologically 'a treasury, an inventory', allows for individual agency, referring also to, 'the finder, discoverer', and meaning 'to find out'. The repertoire requires presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge, by 'being there', being a part of the transmission.*[47]

The mutuality between the archive and the repertoire echoes the relation between the host and the guest. On the one hand, Taylor's reference to etymology in explaining the repertoire, which means 'to find out' reminds one of the mobility of the guest, his visitation of the home, his position as 'the newcomer'. Archive, on the other hand, through its connotations of being first echoes the sovereignty of the host. Even though documents can be kept by various power mechanisms like state and media institutions, revisiting them through performance and embodiment opens up new alternatives through which memory is recollected. The 'presence' of the repertoire contributes to the bridging of the past, the present and the future with regard to memory. Taylor underlines "[The relation between the archive and the repertoire] too readily falls into a binary, with the written and archival constituting the hegemonic power and the repertoire providing the anti-hegemonic challenge."[48] Despite that, she expresses that they "exist in a constant state of interaction", neither of them being superior to the Other.[49] Such an interaction is also found in the relation of the host and the guest. Even though the host conventionally signifies the sovereignty over the home and the guest, who visits the home (the archive) and stays there temporarily, can disarray the order of the host through his intervention, their roles can alter as a result of their interaction as well: "The very precondition of hospitality may require that, in some ways, both the host and the guest accept, in different ways, the uncomfortable and sometimes painful possibility of being changed by the other."[50]

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[46] Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 19.

[47] Ibid., 20.

[48] Ibid., 22.

[49] Ibid., 21.

As it has been expressed above, the information about the guest or the Other, who does not belong to 'home', can be exposed to repression. The Other, who is regarded as a threat to the order, can turn into a ghost as the power mechanisms within a society treat him as if he did not exist. Especially representations of the incidents which do not give enough space to the viewpoints, experiences and interpretations of the Other contribute to such a repressed collective memory. Yet, this does not necessarily mean that the call of the dead and victimized Other can be totally eliminated from the collective memory. Anna Dufourmantelle maintains in *Of Hospitality* that "ghosts haunt places that exist without them; they return to where they have been excluded from."[51] At this point, the ambivalence of the word 'unheimlich' applies effectively to the Other, who has been deported from home. In the essay *Das Unheimlich*, translated into English as *The Uncanny*, Sigmund Freud draws attention to the word 'heimlich' in German: while the word connotes the sense of belonging to the house, it also means 'secret' and 'hidden'. By association, the opposite of the word 'unheimlich' not only characterizes the unfamiliar: it also marks that which has been kept a secret and yet, revealed. Thus, as the word 'unheimlich' signifies 'the return of the repressed', it coincides with its opposite 'heimlich': "We can understand why linguistic usage has extended das Heimliche into its opposite, das Unheimliche; for this uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression."[52] To explain the effect of the unheimlich on *Sivas 93*, one can note that the play, which brings to surface the documents, records and people that are forgotten or pushed into the margins, builds a 'home' for the return of the repressed. Even though Madımak massacre is not an incident that has been totally eliminated from the contemporary collective memory in Turkey, the victims' position as a minority continually threatens them to be hidden by the control of the political and ideological power. As there are often forgotten cases of violence behind unified perceptions of a nation -as Ernest Renan puts it in "What is a Nation?", the play opposes the continuation of injustice through silencing and repressing the Other. At this juncture, it emphasizes the mutual dependence of the audience and the voices of the dead and the victimized, as well as the familiar and the unfamiliar. Thus, the audience emerges as yet another actor as well.

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[50] Miraille Rosello, *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 176.

[51] Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 152.

[52] Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVII (1917-1919): An Infantile Neurosis & Other Works,* ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1955), 241.

The act of 'revisiting' a memory, puts the (re)visitor on the shoes of a guest. Through revisiting, the temporal gap between the (re)visitor and the incident is acknowledged: due to this gap, the (re)visitor is often estranged from the 'original' incident. Yet, he has to reconcile the past with the present, too: He makes the past adapt and conform to his present memory, his present 'home'. Thereby, he also plays the role of a host. In *Sivas 93*, as the actors and the audience (who constitutes both the people from the victims' community and from other communities) revisit the Sivas massacre through narratives, videos, photographs as well as comments, those who are expelled from 'home' and turn into ghosts, make their way into the present. These ghost-victims who were wronged and treated inhospitably are re-embraced by the commemoration of dramatists and actors: "both 'remembering' and 'recollecting', suggest a connecting, assembling, a bringing together of things in relation to one another."[53] At the same time, commemoration makes it clear that the communities that the audience belongs to are inseparable from these 'ghosts', who are a part of their collective identities. In *Of Hospitality*, Derrida explains the host's responsibility to the guest and his memory by alluding to Oedipus's death in Colonus. Expelled from his homeland in Thebes and being a stranger in a foreign land, Oedipus wants Theseus, the ruler of Athens to properly bury him and not to reveal where he is buried to anyone including his daughters Antigone and Ismene. Through this example, Derrida suggests that Theseus becomes bound by his promise and turns into a hostage haunted by Oedipus's memory: "Oedipus demands that he not be forgotten. Because look out! If he were forgotten, everything would go badly...The host thus becomes a retained hostage, responsible for and victim of the gift that Oedipus, a bit like Christ, makes of his dying person...this is my body, keep it in memory of me."[54] From this point of view, the audience of *Sivas 93*, who learns about the violence inflicted on an excluded group of people, is bound by a similar responsibility towards them. Yet, while Theseus is bound because he has to keep a secret and his promise to Oedipus, the audience's responsibility to the dead and the victimized necessitates sharing the latter's experience with others "so that it shall not be forgotten".[55] In other words, to know about a case - especially when an injustice is in question- inevitably carries responsibility with it.

The responsibility towards the absent is impressively underlined in the play through the will of the victims as they are stuck in the hotel and attacked by the mob: "the survivors shall write poems for the dead."[56] In this relation, the survivors are assigned with a commitment to sustain the voices of those who were silenced and did not have the chance to express their viewpoints and emotions and to respond to the attackers. This commitment is shared by the actors and the audience as well. In a way, they are expected to develop a bond which the victims shared with the survivors. As the actors reiterate the narratives of the victims and witnesses, they develop the chain in which the latter's painful experiences can be transferred to the other members / generations of a community. In doing that they collaborate with the audience, who are supposed to remember, talk about and convey these experiences out of the boundaries of theatre. Hence, carrying them on to the present, the act of storytelling emerges as a way of coming to terms with the repressed Other. This condition is similar to what Helen Cixous expresses in the program notes of Théâtre du Soleil's *Le Dernier Caravansérail*, where hospitality towards the refugees and immigrants (who are commonly perceived as the Other) in France is expected to be built. Listening to their tapes, Cixous comments on the responsibility towards the Other with these words: "Here's my story, tell it, so that it doesn't die uncommemorated, so that we haven't lived our modest, precious lives without leaving a trace or issue."[57] Yet, one point that needs to be remembered is the fact that this commitment does not give a full authority on the actors and audience to "remake the guest in [their] own image": the actors and audience cannot be the absolute hosts as they confront the 'ghosts' or the guests.[58] To put in Derridean terms, the responsibility to articulate the injustice makes them hostage to the absent victims: the ghosts become the hosts.

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[53] Gayle Greene, "Feminist Fiction and the Uses of Memory", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 16, no. 2 (1991): 297.

[54] Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 107.

[55] Erkal, *Sivas 93*.

[56] Ibid.

The play's approach to the call of the Other bears similarities with Levinas's understanding of ethics as it underlines that the very humanity and vulnerability of the Other carry with it responsibility and call for justice: In this relationship, one "come[s] to others not through a common property that distinguishes them as the enemy, but through the face of the other whom [he/she is] responsible for, and in that responsibility responsible for all the others as well."[59] However, what sets the play in a different framework is the fact that it does not separate communities from their religious, political and cultural contexts: as the play explores the humanitarian responsibilities for the Other, it seems to be more interested in the way the collective responses to the call of the Other can shape collective memories and identities. As the play stimulates these responses through commemoration, it depends considerably on the humanitarian commitment which stems from watching the representations of violence and victimization, pointing to the affinity between commemoration and spectatorship.

Conclusion

Sivas 93 depicts the re-exploration of the past as a hospitable act through which the silenced and oppressed make their ways into the present and future. It also marks that collective memories, which serve as a home for various communities, are continually haunted by them.

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[57] Helene Cixous, "L'Hospitalité?" in *Théâtre du Soleil, Le Dernier Caravansérail (Odyssées) – Programme* (Théâtre du Soleil: Paris, 2003), n.p.

[58] Ibid., n.p.

[59] William Large, *Levinas' "Totality and Infinity": A Reader's Guide* (London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), 89.

The commemorative and ritualistic aspects of this documentary play contribute substantially to reconciling with the groups that constitute the minority and that are not sufficiently represented in media – an essential part of archiving the collective history. As they shake the audience's safe sense of belonging to a community by marking their humanitarian responsibilities to others, they also open up new archives and repertoires through which past experiences and relations can be evaluated and the emphasis on communities with specific profiles can be averted.

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Pandemi Sonrası Oyunculuk Eğitiminde Online Teknolojilerin Kullanımı Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme

An Evaluation of the Use of Online Technologies in Acting Courses after the Pandemic

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ÖZ

Bu çalışma küresel pandemi koşullarından çıkıp normalleşme sürecine geçtiğimiz bugünlerde, olağanüstü koşulların dışında da oyunculuk eğitiminde online ders içeriklerinden faydalanabileceğine dair argümanlar oluşturmayı, konuyla ilişkili yapılacak daha gelişkin akademik tartışmaların gerekliliğini ortaya koyan veriler ve başlıklar oluşturmayı hedeflemektedir. Görüleceği üzere oyunculuk eğitiminde online eğitimin sunduğu, esnek zamanlı, mekana ve öğretmen-öğrencinin fiziksel birlikteliğine bağımlı olmayan, öğretmenin öğrenme süreçlerindeki hegemonik işlevini kırıp otodidaktik öğrenmeye yol açan olanakların önündeki en büyük engel, konuyla ilişkili katı ve kalıplaşmış düşüncelere sığınma eğilimidir. Oyunculuk eğitimini tiyatro eğitimine sabitleyen, tiyatroyu da yalnızca onun performatifliğiyle açıklayan ve bu doğrultuda online teknolojileri işlevsiz ve yozlaştırıcı olarak gören algının tartışmaya açılması, genel geçer düşüncelerin yeniden gözden geçirilmesi kritik derecede önem arz etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Online oyunculuk eğitimi, Oyunculuk, Otodidaktizm, Ayna nöronlar, Ekran oyunculuğu

ABSTRACT

As we progress toward a release from the global pandemic conditions and a normalization process, this study aims to mount arguments about the possibility of benefiting from an online learning model for training actors aside from extraordinary conditions and to engender headlines and data that present the requirement of more advanced academic discussions in this situation. As will be seen, the main obstacle to the opportunities online education provides for acting training, which leads to flexible time, independence from space and instructor-student physical togetherness, autodidactic learning with the distortion of the instructor's hegemonic function in learning processes, is the tendency to take refuge in solid and preconceived ideas about the matter. It is of great significance to bring up for discussion the perception that pins acting training to theatre education, explains theatre only via its performance, and, accordingly, regards online technologies as functionless and degenerative. There is need to revise these mainstream notions.

Keywords: Online Acting Training, Acting, Autodidacticism, Mirror Neurons, Screen Acting

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Could it be possible for acting training to benefit from online class content aside from extraordinary conditions such as those experienced in the recent pandemic? There is a fundamental and rigid perception about acting training and, by predicating on theatre's ontological foundation, this perception shows the attitude of rejecting online technologies at first value regarding them as functionless or even degenerative. Considering that departments providing training for acting are mostly those of performing arts and theatre, this is an understandable situation to some extent. Theatre is a performing art. It possesses a realm of existence that is living, occurring in the here and now, and is based on the physical togetherness of the performers and the spectator. As Peggy Phelan emphasizes in her observations about performance, when being copied and reproduced or transformed to digital content, its "ontological engagement decreases" and it turns into something else. Acting training has a performative aspect. The "feedback" cycle that Erika Fischer-Lichte identifies in performance, comes to light in acting training, too. In acting classes, the roles of the students and instructors perpetually interchange. Together they compose an ensemble and, in just the same way as that which occurs in theatrical performances, this ensemble experiences different manners of physical encounter. The relationship between distance and closeness, the societal and the personal, a glance and a touch…

In the manner that Phelan and Lichte's notions support it, can the idea be argued that online education cannot be engaged for acting training regarding these ontological foundations of theatre? Or do the ontological foundations of theatre only consist of its performance? Moreover, does the fact that acting is embedded traditionally in theatre departments require us to consider theatre and acting training as being identical and interdependent to this degree? How much longer can we seek shelter in the stereotyped notions by sticking to traditional theatrical education that rejects the possibilities that online education offers, while it is obvious that today acting graduates practice their profession more in the cinema, TV, and on digital or social media platforms than on stage arts and that they require educational content for these areas?

Departing from these questions, this study aims to draw up scientific data, arguments, and points of discussion that will provide us with away to revise our mainstream ideas about the application of online educational content for acting training. Accordingly, it suggests considering the mimetic aspect of theatre as well against the stereotyped notion that rejects online education at first hand by predicating on its performative bases. Primarily, it discusses the mimetic learning processes that function with compositions such as mimicking, representation, reflection, establishing empathy, and identification, which Plato and Aristotle discussed around 2400 years ago. Thereafter, it interrogates why we do not consider online education by basing on mimesis, which is another foundation of theatre, but missed online education by taking only its performative aspect into account, while our biological device permits it in the manner the discovery of mirror neurons support it. Afterwards, autodidactic processes are discussed in detail, which have a significant role in acting training as in every educational field, and opportunities presented in this direction by online education are pointed out. In this regard, there is a focus on what kind of alternatives online education offers against traditional education, which cannot work beyond the physical togetherness of the student and instructor, all subject to the educational processes of the hegemonic relationship determined by the instructor and prepares the students only for stage acting after graduation. As for the last chapter, the content and practices of online acting training created in various platforms, establishments or programs are discussed. A considerable amount, quality, and variety of online practices carried out, constitute data and experiences that enable it to approach the subject with further thought.

Giriş

Dünya çapında yaşanılan pandemi (Covid 19) ile beraber büyük bir krizin içine yuvarlanan akademik alanlardan biri de oyunculuk eğitimi olmuştur. Bugüne kadar eğitmen ve öğrencinin fiziksel bir aradalığına endeksli ve uzaktan eğitimde kullanılacak yeni iletişim teknolojilerine yabancı olan eğitmenler-öğrenciler apar topar dahil oldukları uzaktan eğitim sürecinde birçok problemle yüzleşmek durumunda kalmışlardır. Bağlantı sorunları, ev ortamındaki koşulların elverişsizliği, senkronizasyon problemleri, gerekli teknolojik alt yapıya öğrencilerin eşit bir şekilde sahip olamaması ve belki de en önemlisi olarak sahne üzerinde verilen eğitime göre geliştirilmiş müfredatların, programların ve planlamaların online eğitime adapte edilememesi gibi sorunlar bu krizin en görünür taraflarını oluşturmuştur.

Tüm bu olumsuzlukların yanında oyunculuk eğitmenleri ve öğrencileri online eğitime dair önemli deneyimler elde etmişler, karşılaştıkları sorunlara yaratıcı, deneysel ve işlevsel çözümler getirmişlerdir. Bu doğrultuda bugüne kadar daha çok kuramsal çalışmalarla gündeme gelen, iletişim teknolojilerinin hızla geliştiği dijital çağda, oyunculuk eğitiminin gittikçe daha fazla dijital platformlara taşınacağı ve online eğitimin oyunculuk eğitiminin geleceğinde önemli rol oynayacağına dair fikirler somut pratiklere dönüşmüştür. Önceleri daha çok kaydedilmiş ya da kurgulanmış videoların kullanıcılar tarafından dijital ve sanal ortamlarda izlenilmesine dayanan online eğitimde, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Moodle gibi uygulamaların hayata geçirilmesi, canlı performansların gerçekleştiği, aynı anda bir çok öğrencinin birbirini ve eğitimciyi gözlemleyebildiği içeriklerin oluşturulabilmesini beraberinde getirmiştir.

Bu noktada şu soru akıllara geliyor: pandeminin olmadığı normal koşullarda da oyunculuk eğitiminde kuramsal derslerin yanında bazı pratik dersler online olarak sürdürülmeye devam edilebilir mi? Bu soruya ilk elden olumsuz cevap verecek çoğunluğun güçlü bir argümanı var ve bu argüman, tarih boyunca oyunculuk eğitimine yön veren tiyatro sanatının ontolojik temelleriyle bağlantılı. Buna göre tiyatro performansa dayalı bir sanattır ve canlılık bu sanatın birincil ontolojik tarafını oluşturur. Phelan'ın performans üzerine düşünceleri, tiyatro sanatı üzerinden düşünüldüğünde bu yaklaşımı daha da keskinleştirir. Buna göre şimdi ve burada gerçekleştiği için performans bittiği anda yok olmakta, kaydedilememekte, belgelenememekte, yahut korunamamaktadır. Tek yaşamı "şimdide" olduğu için temsilin temsilleri olarak işleyen dolaşım mekanizmasında var olamayıp, yeniden üretilip, çoğaltılamamaktadır. Aksi takdirde performanstan farklı bir şey olmakta, kendi ontolojisinin vaatlerini azaltmakta, hatta ona ihanet etmektedir.[1] Hiç kuşkusuz oyunculuk eğitimine dair genel algıya da bu ontolojik nitelik temel oluşturur. Sahne eğitimi de, canlı kanlı, şimdi ve burada gerçekleşen, eğitmen ve öğrencilerin beş duyu organlarının da aktif olduğu haliyle sineztezik, bedensel farkındalığı üreten şekilde somatik bir fiziksel ilişkiye dayanır. Bu bağlamda oyunculuk eğitimi de performatif bir nitelik taşır ve Erika Fischer-Lichte'nin tiyatral performansta tespit ettiği "feed back döngüsü" oyunculuk eğitiminde de iş başındadır. Tıpkı performans içerisinde oyuncular ve seyircilerin arasında rollerin sürekli değiştiği gibi öğrencilerin kendi aralarında, hatta öğrenciler ve eğitmenler arasında roller değişmekte, taraflar daima birbirlerinin yerini almaktadır. Herkes her an oyuncu, her an seyirci olabilmektedir. Döngünün ikinci başlığı olarak yer alan, oyuncuların ve seyircilerin birlikte bir topluluk oluşturduğu fikri de oyunculuk eğitiminde karşılık bulur. Oyunculuk sınıfı, tapınağı sahne olan yarı ruhani bir cemaat; gündelik yaşamın bencilliklerini dışarıda bırakmak "zorunda" olan kolektif bir kimliktir. Bu kimliği yeniden ve yeniden üreten ritüellerin katılımcılarından oluşan; bedensel bir topluluktur. Bedensel bir aradalığa dayanan bu topluluk hali, yine Lichte'nin tiyatral perfomansta tespit ettiği feed back döngüsündeki karşılıklı temasın farklı biçimlerini deneyimlemeyi tetikler. Uzaklıkla yakınlık, toplumsal olanla kişisel olan ve bakış ile dokunuş arasındaki ilişki...[2]

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[1] Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Perfomance* (London: Routledge,1993), 146.

Phelan'ın ve Lichte'nin performansa dair düşünceleriyle örneklendiği şekliyle, tiyatronun ontolojik temellerinden yola çıkarak "oyunculuk eğitimi uzaktan ya da online gerçekleştirilemez", düşüncesine bütünüyle varabilir miyiz? Ya da tiyatronun ontolojik temellerini yalnızca onun performatifliğiyle mi açıklayabiliriz? Dahası, yaşadığımız dijital çağ içinde oyuncuların daha çok sinema, televizyon, reklam, sosyal medya ve internet medyaları içinde sanatlarını icra ettikleri gerçeğini göz önünde bulundurursak, sahne, ses, konuşma, hareket eğitimi vs. üzerine kurulu sahne eğitimi ile oyunculuk eğitimini bu kadar özdeş kılmamız ne kadar doğru? Oyunculuk eğitiminin bugün daha çok sahne sanatları ve tiyatro bölümlerinde veriliyor olmasının doğal olarak sahneye yönelik bir eğitimi geçerli kılmasının yanında, bu eğitimleri alan mezunların çok azının sahne oyunculuğunda devam ediyor/edebiliyor olması nasıl bir çelişki ortaya koymaktadır? Tiyatro eğitimini merkeze almadan -ama aynı zamanda önemini yok saymayıp- onu oyunculuk eğitiminin bir parçası olarak koruyarak, dijital çağın olanaklarıyla daha gelişmiş bir oyunculuk eğitimi tasarlamak mümkün müdür? Bu çalışma, yukarıda sıraladığımız sorulara doğrudan ve kesin cevaplar oluşturmayı amaçlamıyor. Varolan problemleri ve online eğitimin sunduğu olanakları ortaya koyup oyunculuk eğitimine dair, yeni ve ideal bir modelin arayışında da değil. Ancak bu gibi sorularla beraber, ani ve sert bir şekilde gündemimize giren, ürettiği tüm problemlerin yanında akademiye önemli deneyimler kazandıran "online eğitime" dair genel geçer düşünceleri yeniden gözden geçirmeye yol açacak tartışma ve hareket noktaları oluşturmayı hedefliyor.

Bu doğrultuda çalışma ilk olarak oyunculuk eğitimini, sahne sanatları ve tiyatronun ontolojik temelleriyle açıklamaya çalışan bakışın gözden kaçırdığını düşündüğü şekilde mimesis kavramı üzerinden ilerliyor. Bugün tiyatro denilince aklımıza gelen sanatsal etkinliği ve toplumsal buluşmayı açıklamakta en az performatiflik kadar hayati ve kökensel olan mimetik nitelik, kuşkusuz oyunculuk eğitimine dair de çok şey ifade ediyor. Sonraki bölümde, oyunculuk eğitiminin formal olmayan, zaman-mekan-eğitmen bağımlılığından ya da baskısından kurtulmuş tarafı olarak, otodidaktik süreçlere odaklanılıyor ve online eğitimin otodidaktik öğrenmeye açtığı alanlar üzerinde yoğunlaşılıyor. Hemen sonrasında çalışma, oyunculuk eğitiminde online teknolojilerin sunduğu imkanları ilk elden reddeden, oyunculuk eğitimini bütünüyle sahne eğitimine sabitleyen geleneksel bakışın mesleki açıdan oyuncuların ihtiyaçlarına ne kadar cevap verdiğinden yola çıkıp alternatif pedagojik yaklaşımlara duyulan ihtiyaca işaret ediyor ve bu süreçlerde online teknolojilerin önemli bir rol oynayabileceğinin altını çiziyor. Son bölümde ise online oyunculuk eğitimine dair çeşitli pratikler ve örnekler mercek altına alınmaya çalışılıyor.

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[2] Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Performatif Estetik,* çev.Tufan Acil (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2016), 65.

Oyunculuk Eğitimi Performatif Olduğu Kadar Mimetik Bir Etkinliktir

Batı felsefesinin ve tiyatro teorilerinin kurucu düşünürleri Platon ve sonrasında Aristoteles, mimesis'e dair bugün hala geçerli olan önemli bir tespit yapmışlardı. İnsanlar mimesis yoluyla öğreniyor, tiyatro sahnesinde olup bitenle özdeşleşiyor, zararlı duygulanımlara, tutkulara kapılıyor ya da bunlardan bütünüyle arınıyorlardı. Aristoteles'e göre şiir sanatını doğuran iki doğal nedenden birisi insanların çocukluktan itibaren taklit etmeye eğilimli olmaları, ilk temel bilgilerini taklit yoluyla elde etmeleriydi.[3] Platon ise Devlet kitabında-olumsuz bir bakış açısıyla olsa da- mimesis'in insan karakterini etkileyen, değiştirip dönüştüren eğitici-öğretici gücünü etik bir çerçevede ele alıyordu.[4] Platon'un ve Aristoteles'in bu tespitlerinden yaklaşık 2400 yıl sonra, 1990'larda Parma Üniversitesi'nde başlayıp günümüze kadar süren deneyler ve araştırmalar mimetik etkinliğin, taklit, temsil ya da empati yoluyla öğrenmenin ya da deneyimlemenin beynimizin farklı bölgelerinde bulunan ayna nöronlarla ilişkili biyolojik bir donanımın uzantısı olduğunu bilimsel açıdan ortaya koydular.[5]

Bu nöronlara ayna nöronlar denilmesinin nedeni, başkası bir hareketi gerçekleştirirken ya da fiziksel ya da duygusal bir yoğunluğun içindeyken onu gözlemleyen kişinin beyninde de aynı bölgedeki nöronların etkinleşmesiyle ilişkilidir. Yani hareketi gerçekleştiren, ya da belirgin duygulanımlara sahip kişinin nöronları, gözlemleyen kişinin nöronlarını da dolaylı olarak etkinleştirmektedir. Etkinleşen nöronların işlevleri, sanki aynada yansıtılmış gibi karşıdaki kişide de gerçekleşir. Tıpkı bir aynanın görüntüyü yansıtması gibi, kişi kendisi yapmadığı halde, karşısındakini izlerken, aynı hareketi ya da duyguyu sanki kendisi yapıyormuş/yaşıyormuş gibi beynindeki etkinliğin artması söz konusu olmaktadır.[6] İzlediğimiz bir filmde oyuncunun üzerinde dolaşan bir örümcek bizi de terletir, bir sporcunun bitiş çizgisine yaklaşması bizi de heyecanlandırır, taklit yoluyla bir hareketi hemen kavrayıp uygulayabiliriz. Her birinde ayna nöronlarımız devrededir.

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[3] Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1448b-5-10.

[4] Arne Melberg, *Theories of Mimesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 10-11.

[5] Christian Keysers, Empatik Beyin, çev. Aybey Eper (İstanbul: Alfa Yayınları, 2011), 1-2.

[6] Abdurrahman Coşkun, "Ayna Nöronlar", *Bilim ve Teknik 557* (Nisan 2014), 64-65.

Ayna nöronların keşfinin de desteklediği şekilde, şayet mimetik etkinlik yoluyla öğrenebiliyor, empati kurabiliyorsak, başkalarının deneyimini kendi deneyimimiz olarak kolaylıkla alabiliyorsak bu, uzaktan/online gerçekleştirilen bir oyunculuk eğitiminin teorik açıdan önünün açık olduğu anlamına gelmektedir. Bu bağlamda online, senkronize ya da asenkronize, farklı medyalar, farklı iletişim teknolojileri kullanılarak gerçekleştirilecek oyunculuk eğitiminin imkansızlığı ya da işlevsizliğini ilk elden savunmak ne kadar doğrudur? Kaldı ki online eğitimden önce de eğitimciyle eğitmenin aynı uzam/zamanı paylaşmadan eğitim ilişkisi kitaplar (Stanislavski, Grotowski vb.) el yazmaları (comedia dell'arte oyuncuları) çizimler, (M.Chekhov), fotoğraflar-filmler (Grotowski, Meyerhold) ve videolar (Barba ve Odin Theatre) vasıtasıyla uzaktan sürdürülmüştür. Bu durum hiçbir eğitim alanın olmadığı gibi oyunculuk eğitiminin de tek boyutlu olmadığını, online eğitimin zaten varolan otodidaktik öğrenme süreçlerinin evriminin bir aşaması olduğunu işaret etmektedir.

Oyunculuk Eğitiminde Otodidaktizm Olgusu ve Online Eğitim:

Eğitimde fırsat eşitliği sağlamak, herhangi bir yerden herhangi bir zamanda eğitime devam edebilmek, eğitim maliyetlerini hem kurumlar hem de öğrenciler lehinde düşürmek, ulaşımda zaman kaybını önlemek, öğrencilerin kendi programlarını oluşturabilecekleri esnekliği kurmak, hem çalışıp hem de okuyabilmeye alan açmak, gibi başlıklar uzaktan eğitimin bütün alanlara sağladığı genel avantajlar olarak ön plana çıkmaktadır.[7] Tüm bu avantajların ortak bir getirisi olarak açığa çıkan ve belki de uzaktan oyunculuk eğitiminde en kritik rolü oynayan durum, öğrencilerin kendi kendilerine öğrenme süreçlerini tetikleyebilecek formal öğretmen-öğrenci ilişkisini kıran otodidaktik süreçlere kapı aralanmasıdır. Otodidaktizm, en genel anlamıyla "bir hoca, usta ya da öğretici olmadan kendi kendine öğrenme anlamına gelmektedir. Bu bakımdan otodidaktikler kendilerinin öğretmenidirler."[8] Diğer informal öğrenme süreçlerinden farkı bu sürecin bütünüyle öğrenen kişinin kontrolünde gelişmesidir. Otodidaktik kişi bir alana ilgi duyar, kendi çalışma materyallerini belirler, çalışma ritmini ve zamanının kendi ayarlar, yöneldiği alanın bütün derinliklerini öğrenmek, bütün inceliklerine hakim olmak için amansız bir çabaya girişir. Bu çaba içinde kütüphaneler, eğitmenler, kitaplar, internet vs. hepsi otodidaktik kişinin hizmetine girer.

Tıpkı resim, müzik, heykeltıraşlık ya da dans alanlarında olduğu gibi oyuncular da sanatlarının gereği otodidaktik süreçlere bağımlıdırlar. Formal bir sanat eğitiminde genel teknik bir bilgi öğretilir, fakat bu teknik bilginin nasıl, hangi alanlarda, hangi biçimlerde ve ne gibi bir ustalıkla kullanılacağı büyük oranda sanatçıya kalır. Bu bağlamda oyuncu adayı eğitmeninden metinleri nasıl analiz edeceğine, alt metinleri nasıl oluşturacağına, partneriyle nasıl ilişki kuracağına, konsantrasyonunu nasıl koruyup, dramaturjiye nasıl hakim olacağına dair çok şey öğrenir. Fakat mezun olduktan sonra oyunculuğa tiyatro da mı,[9] sinema ya da televizyonda mı devam edeceğine kendi karar vermek zorundadır. Bu kararı vermek yetmeyecek, hangi alanlara yoğunlaşacaksa o alana dair teknik bilgiye, entelektüel donanıma, hatta kendine has bir üsluba, kendi kendini eğiterek ulaşacaktır. Otodidaktik süreçler sanatın doğasında vardır, bu bağlamda sanatsal pratiklerin her biri sanatçı için kendi kendini eğitmenin önemli bir parçasıdırlar.[10]

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[7] Mamjeh Sadeghi, "A Shift from Classroom to Distance Learning: Andvantages and Limitations", *International Journal of Research in English Education* 4:1 (2019) 83-84. Erişim 13.09.2021 http://ijreeonline.com/article-1-132-en.html http://dx.doi.org/10.29252/ijree.4.1.80

[8] "Autodidacticism", erişim 03 Temmuz 2019, https://educalingo.com/en/dic-en/autodidacticism

Frank Camilieri, "Globalleşmiş Dijital Teknoloji Çağında Oyuncu Eğitiminin İncelenmesine Doğru" (Towards the Study of Actor Training in An Age of Globalised Digital Technology, Theatre, Dance and Performance Training) isimli makalesinde oyunculuk eğitiminin bir parçası olarak otodidaktizm'e değinmekte ve uzaktan eğitim, yeni medya ve öğrenme teknolojilerinin "güdümlü otodidaktizm" (guided auto-didactism) olarak adlandırdığı otonom süreçlere nasıl alan açtığı üzerine önemli tespitlerde bulunmaktadır. Camilieri'ye göre sahnede ya da stüdyoda öğretmen-öğrencinin fiziksel bir aradalığına ve müfredata bağımlı kurumsal oyunculuk eğitimi, global-dijital çağda yeni teknolojilerin gelişimi ile evrimleşmekte daha önce sadece kurumsal olmayan (alternatif, avangard ya da amatör tiyatrolarda vs.) ve ensemble'larda görülen otonom, otodidaktizme fırsat veren ilişkilenme biçimlerinin bir devamı olarak melezleşmektedir. Bu doğrultuda "güdümlü otodidaktizm ve melezleşme" kavramları, kurumsal oyunculuk eğitiminde (konservatuarlar, oyunculuk bölümlerinde öğretmen-öğrenci rollerinin keskin bir şekilde ayrıldığı, kuralların ve müfredatın katı bir şekilde belirli olduğu eğitim alanında) bir "devrim" ya da "bozulma"dan çok bir süreç ve evrimin söz konusu olduğunu tespit etmek için işlev görmektedirler.[11]

Güdümlü otodidaktizm, kendi kendine öğrenme ile rehberli, bir yol haritası vasıtasıyla öğrenme biçimlerinin bir araya getirilip harmanlanmasını işaret etmektedir. Buradaki güdümlü kelimesi, danışılan metinlerden ya da görüntülerden çıkan uzmanlığın ya da deneyimin modellenmesini ifade eder. Dolayısıyla, kurumsal eğitimin online, uzaktan ya da diğer dijital teknolojilerle girdiği evrimsel ilişkide belirleyici olan, otodidaktik süreçlerdeki gibi öğrencinin yalnızlığında, tek başına düzenlediği, kendi kendini örgütleyen bir planlama ve öğrenme edimi değildir. Online olarak gerçekleştirilen atölyelere katılım gibi yoğun ve zaman kısıtlı birliktelikler, özel olarak bir grup için organize edilmiş toplanmalar ya da özel bir tekniğin öğrenilmesi için bireylerin ya da topluluğun seçildiği organizasyonlar güdümlü otodidaktizm için bütünleyici çalışmalar olarak varolur. Bu bağlamda Camilieri'ye göre, güdümlü otodidaktizm, dijital çağda, bir tarafında otonom öğrenmenin, diğer tarafında ise öğretmen temelli öğrenmenin olduğu bir çizgi üzerinde, birbiriyle ilişkili bir çok öğrenme biçiminin olduğu geniş çaplı bir spektrum içinde ortaya çıkar.[12]

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[9] Tiyatroyu seçen ya da iş bulan bir oyuncunun işi burada da bitmez. Oyunculuk okullarında ağırlıklı olarak psikolojik gerçekçi bir eğitim alındığı göz önünde bulundurulursa, mezuniyet sonrası, fiziksel bir oyunculuğu temel alan bir toplulukta, absürd ya da epik metinlerin sahnelemelerinde yer alacak bir oyuncu için kendi kendini eğitme, otodidaktik öğrenme süreçleri kaçınılmazdır.

[10] Kerry Williams, "Self Directed Learning in the Visual Arts", presentation, Flexible Futures in Tertiary Teaching-Proceedings of the 9th Annual Teaching Learning Forum, Perth, 2-4 February 2000. http://lsn.curtin.edu.au/tlf/tlf2000/williams.html

[11] Frank Camilleri, "Towards the Study of Actor Training in An Age of Globalised Digital Technology", *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training* 6:1 (2015), 16.
Erişim 15.09.2021 http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19443927.2014.985334

Camilieri'nin de altını çizdiği üzere, dijital çağın ortaya koyduğu yeni teknolojik olanaklar, öğrencinin daha efektif, bir rehber vasıtasıyla da olsa kendi kendini eğiten, kendi eğitim programını planlayan, bu doğrultuda zaman-mekan, müfredat ve öğretmen kısıtlamalarından özgürleşen bir öğrenci tipolojisini ve öğrenme biçimlerini işaret etmektedir. Bu doğrultuda online teknolojileri oyunculuk eğitiminde bir devrim ya da geleneksel-kurumsal eğitimin kazanımlarına dönük yozlaştırıcı-bozucu bir değişim olarak görmenin düşünce süreçlerimizi daraltmaktan ve konuya dair realiteden uzaklaştırmaktan başka bir çıktısı yok gibidir.

Oyunculuk Eğitiminde Yeni Pedagojik Yaklaşımların Gerekliliği ve Online Eğitim

Michigan Üniversitesi'nden Rob Roznowski, Amerikan Çalışma İstatistikleri Bürosu'nun (U.S Bureau of Labor Statics) verilerinden ve raporlarından yola çıkarak oyuncuların profesyonel çalışma yaşamına dair şu notları derlemiş:

> *"Sinema endüstrisindeki iş artışı, yeni filmlere ve televizyon şovlarına yönelik devam eden güçlü talepten kaynaklanacaktır… Prodüksiyon şirketleri gelecekte oyunculara için daha fazla iş sonucunu doğurabilecek "seç izle" (video on demand) ve online televizyon gibi yeni içerik dağıtımı yöntemleri denemektedir… Streaming servisler*[13] *gibi, yalnızca internet üzerinden erişilebilir platformların sayısı, bu platformlar için üretilen şovların sayısıyla birlikte artacaktır. Sahne sanatları alanında çalışan oyuncuların, bu filmdekilere oranla daha yavaş bir iş büyümesi görmeleri beklenmektedir. Birçok küçük ve orta ölçekli tiyatro fon bulmakta zorlanmaktadır. Sonuç olarak performans sayısının azalması beklenmektedir."*[14]

Bu notların ABD'de oyunculuk mesleğini kuşatan koşullardan fazlasını tespit ettiği açıktır. Yirminci yüzyılın baş döndürücü teknolojik gelişmeleriyle birlikte tiyatronun yanında radyo, sinema, televizyon gibi medyalarda, reklam oyunculuğu, sunuculuk, spikerlik, seslendirmecilik gibi işlerle çalışma alanını genişleten oyuncular, dijital çağın dayattığı değişim ve dönüşümlerin eşiğindedirler. Sosyal medya ağları, online platformlar, video oyunları, sesli kitaplar, podcast'ler, dijital sinema ve televizyon yapımları… Bu dev gelişmeler oyunculardan mesleki açıdan her geçen gün daha fazlasını talep etmektedir. Bu bağlamda oyuncular sahne ve gösterim sanatlarının yanında bu yeni medya alanlarının ihtiyaçlarına cevap verecek ölçüde mesleki bir donanıma, teknik bilgiye, farklı medyalarda mesleklerini icra edebilmelerini sağlayacak esnekliğe ve tecrübeye ihtiyaç duymaktadırlar. Ancak oyunculuk eğitimi veren kurumlar, oyunculuk bölümleri, konservatuarlar ve özel eğitim kursları bu gelişmelere cevap vermeye ne kadar hazırdır? Dünya genelinde az sayıda istisna hariç, bugün üniversite bölümlerinde ve konservatuarlarda oyunculuk eğitimini domine eden bakış geleneksel tiyatro eğitimine aittir. Ve geleneksel eğitim müfredatının "sahne için ses, sahne için hareket (beden), sahne için rol"[15] eğitimi üzerine kurulu olduğu görülmektedir. Batıda daha fazla yer almakla birlikte, bizde daha çok seçmeli ders olarak karşılaşılan "Kamera Önü Oyunculuğu" gibi dersler, henüz sadece oyuncunun mesleki yaşantısını büyük ölçüde belirleyecek olan "çok yönlü oyunculuk profiline" bir giriş ya da başlangıç niteliğiyle sınırlı kalmaktadır. Diğer taraftan alıntıda raporlanan verilerden biri olarak "sahne sanatlarına ait performans sayısının giderek düşmesi ve sinema, dizi, reklam, dijital televizyonculuk gibi alanlardaki üretimlerin sayısının artması" gibi veriler, eğitimli oyuncuların ekonomik açıdan hayatlarını idame ettirebilmeleri için bu alanlara (da) yönelmek zorunda olduklarını, bir realite olarak önümüze çıkarmaktadır. Aldığı eğitim, sadece sahneye odaklanmış oyuncuların hayatlarını kazanacakları işlerde, kısa süreli de olsa kamera oyunculuğu ve audition eğitimi almış, film, dizi, reklam odaklı oyuncu koçlarıyla çalışmış oyuncuların karşında birçok açıdan dezavantajlı bir durumda kalmaları söz konusu olmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, üniversitelerin oyunculuk bölümlerinde ve konservatuarlarda dijital çağın oyunculardan taleplerine cevap verecek, oyunculuk mezunlarının mesleki hayatları için kritik olan alanlarda gerekli donanımı sağlayacak, yeni eğitim içeriklerinin ve müfredatların tartışmaya açılması, bu tartışmalar sonrasında yeniden düzenlenmesi bir ihtiyaç olarak kendini dayatmaktadır.

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[12] A.g.e, 22.

[13] Streaming'in alıntıda geçen içeriğinin Türkçede bire bir karşılığında kullanılacak akış, gerçek zamanlı veri akışı vs. terimlerin aynı anlamı veremeyeceği düşünüldüğü için çevrilmemiştir. Alıntıda geçen içeriğiyle streaming servisler, internet üzerinde bir videoyu, müziği vb. şeyleri indirmek zorunda kalmadan ve tv'de olduğu gibi belirli bir zaman kısıtı olmadan istediğimiz an izleyebilmemizi sağlayan hizmetleri tanımlar. Netflix, Spotify, Amazon Prime, ülkemizdeki Gain gibi platformlar ve kanallar streaming servislere örnek gösterilebilir.

[14] Rob Roznowski, "Transforming Actor Education in the Digital Age", *Theatre Topics* 25 (2015): E1. Erişim 13.09.2021 http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/tt.2015.0028

Böylesi bir eğitim içeriğinin geliştirilmesi ve uygulanmasında dijital teknolojilerin ve online ortamların çok yönlü bir rol oynaması mümkündür. Birincisi, henüz yeni bir alan olarak bu tür eğitimleri verecek alanında uzman eğitmenlerin ve mesleki profesyonellerin sayılarının düşüklüğü hesaba katılacak olursa, online eğitimle ya da Kitlesel Açık Online Ders (MOOC)[16] platformları işbirliğiyle yapılacak eğitimlerin, aynı anda birçok öğrenciye, düşük maliyetlerle ulaşması söz konusu olacaktır. İkincisi, medyası gereği online eğitimin görüntüye dayanması öğrencilere kamera çekimine dayanan sinema, TV programları, dizi, audition gibi alanlara ve pratiklere yönelik doğrudan deneyim kazandıracaktır. Üçüncüsü bu içeriklerin geliştirilmesinde, uluslararası ölçekte fiziksel açıdan bir araya gelmesi zor eğitim kurumlarının, eğitmenlerin ve meslek profesyonellerinin düşünce ve deneyim alışverişlerini Zoom, Microsoft Teams ve Moodle gibi teknolojiler üzerinden online toplantılarla gerçekleştirmeleri söz konusu olacaktır. Sonraki bölümde inceleneceği üzere, son on yıllık süreçte ve özellikle pandemi sonrasında online oyunculuk eğitimine dair üretilen pratikler, müfredatların yeniden incelenmesi ve yukarıdaki belirlenen ihtiyaçlara yönelik yeniden düzenlenmesine katkı koyacak yeterliliktedir.

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[15] A.g.e, E-2.

[16] Kitlesel Açık Online Kurslar (MOOC), herkesin kaydolabileceği ücretsiz çevrimiçi kurslardır. KAOD'ler, yeni beceriler öğrenmek, kariyer ilerletmek ve geniş ölçekte kaliteli eğitim deneyimleri sunmak için uygun maliyetli ve esnek bir yol sağlamaktadır. Dünya çapında milyonlarca insan, kariyer gelişimi, iş değiştirme, üniversite hazırlıkları, destekleyici öğrenme, yaşam boyu öğrenme, kurumsal e-Öğrenim gibi birçok başlıkta KAOD'leri kullanmaktadır. Nitelikli olanların yanında, niteliksiz, sadece kolay yolla para kazanmak için yapılan içeriklere rastlanılsa da KAOD'ler online eğitim için büyük bir alan açmaktadırlar.

Online Oyunculuk Eğitimi Pratikleri

Her ne kadar küresel pandemiyle yakıcı olarak gündemimize girmiş olsa da uzaktan ya da online oyunculuk eğitimi pratikleri dünya genelinde yeni bir şey değil. Dijital platformlarında oyunculuğa dair genel (klasik eğitim başlıkları, yöntemler vs.) ve mesleki spesifik başlıklarda (sinema, dizi, reklam oyunculuğu, audition pratikleri) oluşturulmuş video içerikleri, usta oyunculardan alınan master class eğitimleri, özel eğitim kurumlarının düzenlediği oyunculuk atölyeleri, üniversitelerin bünyelerinde oluşturdukları online eğitim programları ve ders içerikleri, online eğitime örnek oluşturan pratikler olarak şekillenmektedir. Birçoğunun eğitim içeriği olarak yetersiz ve kar amacıyla üretilmiş meta karakterine sahip olmaları bir yana, sürdürülebilirlikleri, teknolojik alt yapılarını günden güne geliştirmeleri ve yukarıda çizdiğimiz teorik çerçeveyi cisimleştirmeleriyle bu çalışmalar, online oyunculuk eğitimine dair önemli deneyimler olarak karşımızda durmaktadırlar.

Kitlesel Açık Online Ders (MOOC) ve Diğer Platformlar

Online oyunculuk eğitimi içeriklerine alan açan ve alanında uzman kişilerle o alanda eğitim almak isteyen kişilerin bir araya gelmesini sağlayan en önemli organizasyonlar olarak Udemy, Skillshare ve Lynda gibi dijital platformları görmekteyiz. Uzaktan ve online eğitimin bütün avantajlarını taşımasının yanında, kitlesel bir erişim sağlayan bu platformlar, bünyesinde barındırdıkları ders içeriklerini yalnızca önceden oluşturulmuş videolarla öğrenciye taşımamakta; çoğu zaman ödevler, modül geçme sınavları, öğrencilerin hazırladığı projeler ve öğrencilerin deneyimlerini paylaştıkları forumlar vasıtasıyla eğitimi boyutlandırmaktadırlar.

Bu platformlar arasında ön plana çıkan Udemy'de klasik oyunculuk eğitiminden (sahne bilgisi, ses, konuşma, hareket, metin analizi vs.) farklı oyunculuk yöntemlerine (Stanislavski, Meissner, Chekhov, Meyerhold gibi), sinema oyunculuğundan dizi ve reklam oyunculuğuna dair bir çok başlıkta sanatsal ve mesleki eğitim içeren online eğitimlere rastlamak mümkündür.[17] Benzer bir şekilde, en çok izlenilen video platformu olan Youtube'da da birçok eğitim içeriğinin taşındığını görmekteyiz. Udemy kadar kullanışlı olmasa da Youtube, imkanlar ve sınırlılıklar dahilinde kullanılabilecek araçlar içerisinde yer almaya devam etmektedir.

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[17] "Acting". Udemy. Erişim 20 Eylül, 2021. https://www.udemy.com/topic/acting/?p=1

Master Class Sınıfları

Eğitimle ilgili bir çok alanda olduğu gibi oyunculuk alanında da uzaktan-online eğitimin taşıdığı olanakları "fırsata çevirenler" ticari girişimciler olmuşlardır. 2015 yılında Stanford mezunu genç girişimci David Rogier silikon vadisinin önemli isimlerinden David Dearing'in sermaye desteğiyle online eğitim veren bir video platformu kurmuş, platformun oyunculuk alanındaki ilk eğitmeni Dustin Hoffman olmuştur.[18] Masterclass.com web sitesiyle hayata geçen online eğitim platformu, kısa zamanda dünya genelinde büyük bir öğrenci kitlesine kavuşmuş, günümüzde 11 kategori altında yüzden fazla eğitim sınıfına sahip hale gelmiştir. Kısa zamanda Natalie Portman, Steve Martin, Samuel L. Jackson, Hellen Mirren gibi Holywood yıldızlarını da eğitmen listesine katan Masterclass.com, eğitim sektöründeki diğer girişimcilerinde iştahını kabartmış, kısa sürede onlarca benzeri online oyunculuk eğitim programı hayata geçmiştir.[19] Bunlar arasında yine Udemy, Skillshare ve Lynda gibi dijital platformlarda bulunabilecek içeriklerin yanında, Miranda Harcourt gibi ünlü oyunculara oyuncu koçluğu yapmış isimlerin düzenlediği masterclass eğitimlerine ulaşmak mümkündür.

Özel Eğitim Kurumları, Stüdyo ve Topluluklarda Online Eğitim Pratikleri

Lee Strasberg Tiyatro&Film Enstitüsü diğer online eğitim programlarından olan farkının altını şöyle çizmektedir:

> *"Yalnızca tek yönlü öğretim sağlayan dijital öğrenme platformlarının aksine, bu program tamamen interaktiftir ve öğrencilerimizin yetişmesi için optimize edilmiştir. Bu eşsiz eğitimin bir parçası olarak sunulan tüm sınıflar, workshoplar ve etkinlikler CANLI olarak düzenleniyor!".*[20]

Enstitünün online derslerine baktığımızda, "Metot 101" ve "Metot Odakta" (Method in Focus) başlıklı birer aya yayılmış iki eğitim içeriğiyle karşılaşırız. Her iki eğitimin merkezinde Lee Strasberg'in oyunculuk yöntemi bulunmaktadır. Birinci ders içeriği Metot oyunculuğuna bir giriş niteliği taşımakta ve Strasberg'in "rahatlama", "duyu belleği", "konsantrasyon" egzersizleri üzerinde yoğunlaşılmaktadır. İkinci derste ise, Metot oyunculuğuna daha derin bir bakışla odaklanılmakta bu derse girmek için enstitünün Los Angeles ya da New York kampüslerinde eğitim görmüş olmak ya Metot 101 dersini online olarak almak gerekmektedir.[21] Strasberg enstitüsü, bu iki online ders için Zoom video konferans platformunu kullanmaktadır.

Zoom'u kullanarak interaktif oyunculuk eğitimi düzenleyen kuruluşlardan bir diğeri olarak Actors Stüdyo'yu görmekteyiz. Actors Stüdyo'nun online oyunculuk kursları 1-5 gün arasında değişen workshop'lardan oluşmaktadır. "Ekran Oyunculuğuna Giriş", "Yoğunlaştırılmış Ekran Oyunculuğu", "Shakespeare'in Sözcükleri…" gibi dersler bu kısa süreli workshop'larda Sarrah Hannah, Mel Churcher gibi eğitmenlerden online alarak verilmektedir.[22] Bu workshop'lara daha yakından bakıldığında, kamera önü performası, çok boyutlu karakter yaratımı, prova süreçleri, kadraj bilgisi, audition hazırlama gibi ders içeriklerini görülmektedir.

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[18] Carina Chocano, "What is Masterclass Actually Selling", The Atlantic, yayın tarihi Eylül 2020. https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/09/what-is-masterclass-actually-selling/614200/

[19] "Film, TV". Masterclass com. Erişim 23 Eylül, 2021. https://www.masterclass.com/

[20] "The Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute . Erişim 24 Eylül, 2021. https://strasberg.edu/online/

[21] "Method in Focus Online Acting Class". The Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute. 24 Eylül, 2021. https://strasberg.edu/online/method-in-focus/ Online Acting Classes".

Online eğitimlerini yine Zoom üzerinden veren diğer yapı, The Barrow Group (TBG) 1986'da New York'da kurulmuş bir topluluk ve eğitim merkezidir. İncelediğimiz diğer iki grupla karşılaştırıldığında daha fazla zamana yayılmış, çeşitli yaş gruplarına, türlere ve seviyelere göre düzenlenmiş eğitim içerikleri sunmaktadır. Sonbahar 2021 online eğitim programına baktığımızda 13 ana kategoride sınıflandırılmış ders içerikleri görmekteyiz: Oyunculuk Programları, Oyuncular için Audition& İş Sınıfları, Yeni Başlayan: Oyunculuk Sınıfları, Yeni Başlayan: Film/TV Oyunculuğu Sınıfları, Profesyoneller için Film/TV Sınıfları, Ücretsiz Deneme Sınıfları, Orta Seviye: Oyunculuk Sınıfları, Hareket Sınıfları, Profesyonel Oyunculuk Sınıfları, Özel Sınıflar, Genç Sınıflar: 10-13 yaş, Genç Sınıflar 14-17 yaş, Genç Sınıflar: 7-9 yaş. Bu kategorilere da yakından göz gezdirdiğimizde ise, bir yıl boyunca süren temel oyunculuk eğitimlerinden 6 haftalık kamera oyunculuğu ya da ses eğitimine, Alexander Tekniğini temel alan 8 haftalık hareket eğitiminden yine 8 hafta süren Shakespeare oyunculuğuna kadar daha birçok başlıkta ders içeriğiyle karşılaşmaktayız.[23]

Üniversite Bölümleri, Konservatuar ve Özel Eğitim Kurumlarında Online Eğitim İçerikleri

New York Film Akademisi, 1992 yılında Sinema eğitimi üzerine New York'ta kurulmuş, kısa sürede dünya genelinde birçok şubeye kavuşmuş bir özel eğitim kurumudur. Görüntü ve Performans Sanatlarında lisans ve yüksek lisans derecelerinde diploma ve çeşitli workshop eğitimleri sonrasında sertifikalar vermektedir. Oyunculuk alanında Sinema Oyunculuğu ve Müzikal Tiyatro Oyunculuğu olarak iki ayrı bölüme sahiptir ve bu bölümlerin online programları 1-15 haftada düzenlenen workshop'lardan oluşmaktadır. Sinema Oyunculuğu bölümünde Temel Oyunculuk Eğitimi'nin yanında, TV ve Film için Audition hazırlama, Ses Eğitimi gibi ders içerikleri mevcuttur. Stanislavski yönteminin temel alındığı oyunculuk eğitimi programının yanında "hareket ve doğaçlama" üzerine de çalışmalar yapılmaktadır.[24]

Bir diğer eğitim kurum olarak, Leeds Üniversitesi Tiyatro ve Performans bölümü, öğretim üyelerinden Jonathan Piches'in öncülüğünde oyunculuk eğitimine dair online bir eğitim içeriği oluşturmuştur. "Bilim ve Oyunculuğun Stanislavski Geleneği (Science and Stanislavski Tradition of Acting)", "Vsevolod Myerhold" ve "Dağları Performe Etmek" (Performing Mountains)" gibi kitapların yazarı, Jonathan Pitches 2014 yılında Meyerhold'un Biomekanik etüdlerinden Tokat çalışmasını online eğitim içeriğine dönüştürerek Kitlesel Açık Online Ders (MOOC) plaformlarına yüklemiştir. Teorik ve pratik iki aşamadan oluşan ve eğitim katılımcılarının birbiriyle ilişki kurup, birbirlerinin pratiklerini değerlendirebildikleri bir workshop niteliği taşıyan bu eğitim içeriği, sadece oyunculuk eğitiminde uzaktan/online bir örnek oluşturmaz. Aynı zamanda, tiyatronun fiziksel ve performatif temellerinden yola çıkıp, oyunculuk eğitiminin uzaktan ya da online gerçekleştirilemeyeceği fikrini üreten algıya karşı, fiziksel tiyatronun kurucu cephesinden, Meyerhold ve Biomekanik yönteminden dolaylı bir cevap verir.

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[22] "Online Screen Acting Courses". Actors Studio. Erişim 24 Eylül, 2021. https://actorsstudio.co.uk/home/online-screen-acting-courses/

[23] "Acting Programs". The Barrow Group. Erişim 26 Eylül, 2021. https://www.barrowgroup.org/events/class-schedule/category/fall-2021#acting-programs

[24] "Acting School". New York Film Academy, Erişim 27 Eylül, 2021. https://www.nyfa.edu/acting-school/

"Fiziksel Tiyatro: Tokatı Keşfetmek (Physical Theatre: Exploring the Slap) başlıklı online workshop'un birinci aşamasında katılımcılar yazılı olarak kendilerini tanıttıktan sonra, Pitches'ın önceden hazırladığı video eğitimiyle Meyerhold ve Biomekanik Yönteme dair teorik bir bilgi aktarımı gerçekleşir. Meyerhold'un bu yöntemi nasıl ve neden geliştirdiği, yöntemin gelişim tarihi, yöntemin etüdlerinin neler olduğu konusunda bilgi verildikten sonra, tokat atma etüdü çeşitli görsel materyaller, videolar ve animasyonlar desteğiyle ayrıntılı bir şekilde ele alınır. Arada interaktif mini bir quiz vardır ve aktarılan bilgiye dair beş tane soru sorulur. Doğru cevabı verene kadar denemeye devam eden katılımcılar, doğru cevabı bulduklarında Pitches'ın cevapla ilgili açıklamasına ulaşırlar. Bu bölümün sonunda katılımcıların programın içeriğine dair eleştirel düşüncelerine ve kendi aralarında tartışma yürütmelerine forum bölümünde fırsat verilir. İkinci aşamada ise, ısınma ile başlanılan tokat etüdü animasyonlar üzerinden detaylı bir şekilde analiz edilir. Etüdün hareket mekaniği katılımcıların kolaylıkla kavrayabileceği ölçüde yalın ve detaylı olarak Meyerhold'un terminolojisiyle (Otkaz-Posil-Tochka) aktarılır. Bu aşamanın sonunda katılımcılardan Meyerhold'un çalışmalarını 1920'lerde kayda geçirip ifade etme biçimlerinden yola çıkarak yazılı, fotografik, çizimsel ya da film yoluyla kendi tokat etüdü çalışmalarını kaydedip, diğer katılımcılarla paylaşacak şekilde forum bölümüne yüklemeleri beklenir. Her katılımcının çalışması yoruma ve tartışmaya açıktır.[25]

Pitches'in Meyerhold üzerine yaptığı araştırmaların sonrasında gerçekleştirdiği bu online eğitim içeriği, sadece oyunculuk eğitiminde akademik bir formasyon sağlamayıp sahneleme pratiklerine de yol açacak şekilde kafa açıcı ve ilham verici bir kaynak görevi görmüştür. Örneğin, 2018 yılında Tahran'da sahneye konulan "Hyppolytus" oyunu Meyerhold'un Tokat egzersizleriyle çalışılmış, prodüksiyon süreci boyunca Pitches çalışmaları takip etmiş ve sonrasında başrol oyuncularından Niyavesh Nahavandi ile oyunculuk üzerine bir tartışma yürütmüştür.[26]

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[25] "Phsycal Theatre: Exploring The Slap". Future Learn. Erişim 29 Eylül, 2021. https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/physical-theatre-exploring-the-slap

[26] Mohtadi, Niloofar. "Jonathan Pitches on Physical Theatre's Ability to Transform Written Text". The Theatre Times. Yayın tarihi 31 Mayıs, 2020. https://thetheatretimes.com/jonathan-pitches-on-physical-theatres-ability-to-transform-written-text/

İncelediğimiz uzaktan ve online eğitim veren okullardan en ilginçlerinden biri olarak, "Rose Brufford Koleji Online Tiyatro Çalışmaları Bölümü" lisans derecesi (BA) veren üç yıllık bir online eğitim programına sahiptir. Bölüm verdikleri online eğitim programlarını şöyle açıklar:

> *"...yaratıcı işlerde profesyonel bir kariyer sürdürmek ya da mevcut profesyonel konumlarını ilerletmek isteyenlere; tiyatro ve performans bilgilerini genişletmek ve beğenilerini geliştirmek arayışında olanlara hitap ediyoruz. İster tam zamanlı isterse yarı zamanlı olsun mezunlarımızı tiyatro ve performansa ilişkin konuların geniş bir yelpazesinin, pratikleri, tarihleri, bağlamları ve yöntemleri içinde titiz bir temelle donatarak, sizlere tiyatro ve performans alanında kapsamlı ama esnek bir eğitim programı sunmaya çalışıyoruz."*[27]

R. Brufford kolejinin bu doğrultuda üç yıla yayılan online tiyatro eğitimi, sıfırdan başlayan pratik bir oyunculuk eğitiminden çok zaten oyunculukla ya da tiyatronun diğer alanlarıyla ilişkili kişilere tiyatro sanatına dair bütünsel bir eğitim vaat etmektedir. Günümüzde tiyatro yapmanın koşulları, sahneleme estetiği, tiyatro işletmeciliği, menajerlik vs. temel derslerin yanında farklı oyunculuk ya da tiyatro yaklaşımlarından yola çıkarak metin analizinden oyuncunun dramaturjisine, makyajdan kostüme, performans türlerinden performatif oyuncunun bedenine, Stanislavski'nin, oyuncunun kendi kendine hazırlanma süreçlerinin analizinden Chekhov ve Brecht'in oyunculuk tekniklerine kadar geniş bir teorik ve estetik çerçeve öğrencilere sunulmaktadır. Bu bağlamda farklı ülkelerde, bölgelerde eğitimli ya da eğitimsiz oyunculukla uğraşan kişilerin online eğitim yoluyla estetik bakışları, politik duruşları, performans ve sahne bilgileri desteklenmekte, tiyatro oyunculuğunun sahne üzerinde rolünü icra etmekten ibaret olmayan zengin dünyasını kavratacak düşünsel bir zemin sağlanmaktadır. Brufford koleji, online eğitimini çok yönlü online araçlarla esnek bir eğitim içeriği sağlayan Moodle, Mahara ve Microsoft 365 gibi yazılımları kullanarak gerçekleştirmektedir.[28]

Sonuç

Pandemi gibi olağanüstü koşulların dışında da oyunculuk eğitiminde online derslerden faydalanabilir miyiz? Göründüğü kadar basit olmayan bu sorunun cevaplanması için başta oyunculuk eğitmenleri olmak üzere, oyuncuların, oyunculuk öğrencilerinin ve konu üzerine kafa yoran akademisyenlerin yürüttüğü bir tartışma sürecine ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Böylesi bir tartışmanın ilk ve en önemli çıktısı, oyunculuk eğitimi üzerine katı yargıların ve genel geçer düşüncelerin yeniden gözden geçirilmesi olacaktır. Bu doğrultuda, oyunculuk eğitimini yalnızca sahne eğitimine odaklayan, sahne eğitiminin de ontolojik temelini yalnızca tiyatronun performatifliği üzerinden açıklayan ve bu doğrultuda online eğitimi ilk elden reddeden algının kırılmalara uğraması kaçınılmazdır.

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[27] Theatre Studies Online" Rose Bruford College. Erişim 30 Eylül, 2021. https://www.bruford.ac.uk/learn/undergraduate-courses/theatre-studies-online/

[28] "Theatre Studies Programme Specification" Rose Bruford College. Erişim 30 Eylül, 2021.https://www.bruford.ac.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2021/07/Theatre_Studies_Programme_Specification_2018_B.pdf

Çalışmada irdelendiği üzere, ne tiyatro tek başına performatifliğinden ibarettir, ne de oyunculuk eğitimi sahne eğitimiyle bütünüyle özdeştir. Tiyatro ve oyunculuk eğitimi, her ikisi de performatifliğinin yanında mimetik birer etkinliktir. Ancak bu ortak yönleri de birini (oyunculuk eğitimini) ötekine (sahne eğitimine) sabit ve bağımlı kılmaz. Son kertede sahne, oyunculuk mezunlarının sanatlarını ve mesleklerini icra ettikleri alanlardan yalnızca birini, hatta günümüz koşullarında en dar olanını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu bağlamda oyunculuk eğitiminin mimetik yönü (ayna nöronların keşfinin de desteklediği gibi) zamana, mekana ve öğrenci-öğretmenin fiziksel bir aradalığına bağımlı olmayan bir şekilde sahne eğitimini aşmaktadır. Daha önce alternatif tiyatro pratikleri, kitaplar, fotoğraflar, çizimler, filmler ve videolar vasıtasıyla öğrenmenin zamansal açıdan esnek olduğu, öğrencinin sahnede öğrendikleriyle sınırlı kalmadığı ve klasik öğrenci-öğretmen ilişkisinin kırıldığı otodidaktik süreçler, online teknolojilerin sunduğu olanaklarla birlikte mimetik öğrenmeyi başka bir boyuta taşımıştır. Bu boyut, daha önceki araçlara erişimi ve öğrenme süreçlerinin örgütlenmesini kolaylaştırmasının yanında tiyatro bölümlerindeki formal eğitimin işleyişini melezleştiren, öğretmenin öğrenme süreçlerindeki hegemonik varlığını bir rehbere, planlama ve uygulama süreçlerinde bir danışmana dönüştüren bir işlev görmüştür. Camilieri'inin önerdiği terimle söylenecek olursa online ders içerikleri otododidaktik eğitim ile formal eğitimi harmanlayıp "güdümlü bir otodidaktik eğitime" dönüştürmüştür.

Online eğitimin, formal eğitimle öğrencinin bütünüyle kendi kendini eğittiği otonom eğitim süreçleri arasına yerleşen bu güdümlü otodidaktik yapısı, oyunculuk öğrencilerinin mezuniyet sonrası profesyonel yaşamını destekleyen eğitim içeriklerinin kolaylıkla oluşturulup, dolaşıma sokulacağı başka bir avantajı daha getirmiştir. Oyunculuk öğrencisinin mezuniyet sonrası mesleki hayatını daha çok sinema, TV, dizi, reklam, sosyal ve dijital medya alanlarında sürdürecek (ya da sürdürmek zorunda) olmasının gerçekliğiyle, bu alanlara yönelik audition, kamera önü oyunculuğu, kadraj bilgisi gibi ders içerikleri online eğitim ile büyük olanaklara sahip olmuştur. Medyası gereği görüntüye dayanması, bu alanda uzmanlaşmış az sayıda profesyonele ya da akademisyene aynı anda çok sayıda öğrencinin ulaşımını sağlaması ve mesafeleri ortadan kaldıran yapısı ile online eğitim, yukarıdaki iş alanlarının talep ettiği "çok yönlü oyuncu profilinin" yetişmesine alan açmıştır.

Çalışmada örneklenen online eğitim programlarının paralı olması, bazılarının yüksek meblağlara ulaşması ve global pazarda kolay tüketilebilir meta karakteri taşımaları, onları nitelik açısından tartışılabilir bir konuma yerleştirmektedir. Ancak bu durum, teknolojik alt yapıları ve sürdürülebilirlikleri ile oluşturdukları deneyimlerin, ticari kaygılardan arınmış, bütünüyle öğrencilerin gelişimine ve öğrenme süreçlerinin niteliğine odaklanmış alternatif eğitim içeriklerine ilham veremeyeceği, akademik ve bilimsel bir çerçevede dönüştürülüp başka görevlerle donatılamayacağı anlamına gelmemektedir.

Oyunculuk eğitiminde Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Moodle gibi online teknolojilerinin bu ölçüde kullanılabilirliği kuşkusuz yeni bir olgu. Bu bağlamda üzerinde tartışılacak ya da referans alacak

Türkçede ve yabancı dillerde üretilmiş akademik çalışmanın ve bilimsel verilerin yetersizliğinin altını çizmek gerekir. Erken sayılacak bu çalışma, bazı kritik noktalarda derinleşememe, kimi başlıklarda yetersiz ve yüzeysel kalma gibi riskleri de beraberinde getirmektedir. Ancak oyunculuk eğitimi veren bölümlerin, eğitim kurumlarının aralarındaki eşitsiz gelişim göz önünde bulundurulup oyunculuk eğitiminin yalnızca birçok olanağa sahip büyük şehirlerde gerçekleşmediği hesaba katıldığında bu risklerin alınması kolaylaşmaktadır. Her ülkede olduğu gibi ülkemizde de birkaç metropol şehrin haricinde oyunculuk eğitimi veren kurumlarda gelişkin müfredatlar oluşturmanın, alanında uzman eğitmenlere ulaşmanın ve öğrencileri deneyim kazanacakları profesyonel pratiklere dokundurabilmenin zorlukları ortadadır. Bu doğrultuda online teknolojiler, esnek bir eğitim sürecini organize etmeye, mesafeleri ortadan kaldırmaya, alanlarında uzman eğitimcilerin ve az sayıda mesleki profesyonelin aynı anda çok sayıda öğrenciyle buluşabilmesine olanak sağlamaktadır. Oyunculuk eğitimde fırsat eşitliğine yaklaşabilecek olmanın motivasyonu, online teknolojilerin sunduğu olanakların tartışılmasını acil hale getirmekte, böylesi risklerin alınabilmesini de bir ölçüde meşru kılmaktadır.

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“Everywhere is Warmer than the house”: ‘Traumaculture’ in Laura Wade’s *Colder Than Here*

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary British theatre is a crucial avenue for staging trauma as theatre provides both the potential of emotional identification and critical perspective. By making use of the unique possibilities of embodied performance, theatre allows for a safe space in which traumatic suffering can be reconfigured. Drawing on the notion of Roger Luckhurst’s ‘traumaculture,’ this paper interrogates the extent to which contemporary British playwright Laura Wade’s one-act play, *Colder Than Here* (2005), situates current traumatic experiences within social and cultural contexts. This paper deals with terminal disease increases, familial dysfunction, and ecological degradation as traumatic experiences that permeate daily existence. Therefore, by bringing into the spotlight the contemporary definition of trauma and traumaculture, this paper aims at exploring how *Colder Than Here* reflects multifaceted engagements with traumatic cultural experiences onstage with a focus on a middle-class English family.

Keywords: Trauma, Traumaculture, Trauma theory, *Colder Than Here*, Laura Wade

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Introduction

In contemporary culture, the term trauma has achieved a remarkable amount of coverage. The significance of traumatic experiences has probably never been more apparent, from the growing public awareness of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the aftermath of natural catastrophes, the terminal disease spread, and wars to the tangible feeling of communal, global trauma engendered by Covid-19. Trauma has taken one of the most diverse and, in some instances, extreme forms in the realm of popular cultural productions. The notion was first used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to describe externally inflicted physical injuries. The fact that its definition has shifted dramatically to include psychic and mental disorders indicates that exact explanations of the term are as contentious and historically driven as the mental symptoms it has come to refer to. Conventionally, the notion of trauma has been related fundamentally to veterans' post-war psychological and physical experiences; however, the notion has attained more expanded diagnostic criteria since the 1980s, coinciding with an increase in public awareness and interest in trauma narratives.

Trauma has always been a pervasive condition of the imagination; thus, a range of literary and critical works have tried to grapple with the effects of trauma, arising from experiences ranging from wars, abuse, rape to ecological disasters and diseases. The pioneering work of a group of scholars, including Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, Dori Laub, and Dominick LaCapra, has investigated literary forms of interpretation and persuasively argued that literature has been a binding site to articulate traumatic experiences, witness to trauma, and make the unspoken narratives more graspable. In *The Trauma Question,* Roger Luckhurst explores trauma with a focus on contemporary movies such as *Memento*, *21 Grams*, and *Elephant,* emphasizing that "*innovations around the traumatic flashback, the narrative mosaic, and the temporal loop,*" imitate the traumatic experience through "*memory dysfunction*."[1] In these representations of trauma, "*the demolition of body, memory, and self*" serves as a means of eradicating traumatic memories "*of burdened history and compromised, damaged selves*."[2] Recently, the notion of trauma has been expanded beyond the individualistic level of trauma, implying the account of global ecological trauma as investigated in *Eco-Trauma Cinema* and *Diseases and Disorders in Contemporary Fiction: The Syndrome Syndrome*, presenting a new and distinctive form of trauma literature. It is evident that the subject of trauma has been and is currently pervading scholarly attention and literary fields. However, it is worth noting here that trauma has been slow to take hold in the context of theatre and performance, both in scholarship and practice. However, theatre always provides a critical site to stage potential post-traumatic symptoms, including "*wordless and affectless states; loss of the ability to comprehend or*

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[1] Roger Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 206.

[2] Ibid., 206.

use syntax; distortions of vision, taste, sound and touch and hallucinations."[3] In this regard, Patrick Duggan's *Trauma-Tragedy: Symptoms of Contemporary Performance*; David Dean, Yana Meerzon, and Kathryn Prince's edited volume *History, Memory, Performance*; and Miriam Haughton's *Staging Trauma: Bodies in Shadow* have been invaluable contributions to addressing trauma in theatre and performance arts.

Conventionally, contemporary British theatre has always been a fertile ground for articulating trauma since it embodies 'liveness' and requires more individual attention than the written or digital can. To put it more clearly, theatre, by making use of the unique possibilities of live performance, can directly address social, cultural, and political issues. For instance, contemporary British theatre's distinctive playwrights such as Sarah Kane, Martin Crimp, Mark Ravenhill, and Anthony Neilson, among others, also known as "*Mrs. Thatcher's disorientated children*,"[4] staged images which ranged across multifarious notions of traumatic suffering, highlighting the ongoing concern with the violent, visceral, and traumatic in performance. Their dramatic strategies have been mostly regarded as a critique of Thatcher's socio-cultural legacy and England's participation in international crises. One can, then, suggest that the range of representations in trauma narratives shifts the emphasis away from unrepresentability and toward its specificity, which locates meaning by paying more attention to the social and cultural circumstances of traumatic experience. In light of those preliminary observations, the main objective of this paper is to analyze Laura Wade's first play, *Colder Than Here* (2005), in which traumatic experiences specific to contemporary culture are portrayed. Wade reflects inherently traumatic familial relationships, the condition of lonesome individuals, recent terminal cancer increases, and the anticipated death of the loved one. The paper, in this sense, first investigates the contemporary theoretical approach to the relationship between trauma and literary studies and then Wade's unique portrayal of 'traumaculture' in *Colder Than Here*. The paper, therefore, indicates that *Colder Than Here* convincingly refers to trauma in a contemporary cultural context with regards to the Bradley family's experiences in the face of the anticipated death of the loved one following the cancer diagnosis.

Contemporary Trauma Theory

Trauma has problematically become an increasingly over-used term in contemporary society. Central to the psycho-medical disciplines, the study of trauma has recently become more relevant in literary and cultural studies as Mark Seltzer convincingly contends that "*the modern subject has become inseparable from the categories of shock and trauma*."[5]

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[3] Suzanne Little, "Repeating Repetition: Trauma and Performance", *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 20 (5), (2015), 45.

[4] Amelia Howe Kritzer, *Political Theatre in Post-Thatcher Britain: New Writing 1995–2005* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), 28.

[5] Mark Seltzer, "Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Public Sphere", *October* 80 (1997): 3-26.

The word permeates all levels of our interactions in the world, from the most personal and private traumas experienced throughout life. In other words, we now live in a society that is bound to its traumatic experiences, a society in which trauma has become a "*cultural trope*."[6] Even though the rise of the trauma trope has pushed its meaning "*to the point of meaninglessness*," the relatively recent rise in trauma theory as a focus of academic interest has invigorated trauma as a frame through which cultural issues "*of experience, memory, the body, and representation*"[7] can be examined. Roger Luckhurst defines contemporary British society as a "*traumaculture*,"[8] emphasizing the fact that the related notion precisely reflects our current times and is commonly used in conjunction with the rise of "*technological and statistical society that can generate, multiply and quantify the 'shocks' of modern life*."[9] He further argues, "*Trauma has become a paradigm because it has been turned into a repertoire of compelling stories about the enigmas of identity, memory and selfhood that have saturated Western cultural life*."[10] There has been a notable academic turn to the questions of memory, trauma, and identity since 1980, triggering significant discussions in a range of critical and literary fields and considering trauma to exist not only in the physical and psychical realms but also in social and cultural contexts.

Contemporary trauma theory frequently draws on Freud, referring to a psychological 'wound'[11] rather than a physical one. Trauma is, according to Freud, "*an experience which within a short period of time presents the mind with an increase of stimulus too powerful to be dealt with*."[12] Caroline Garland points out that Freud's definition, together with his assumptions in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* "*provide the basis for all later psychoanalytic developments in the fields of trauma*."[13] In synch with Garland, Cathy Caruth revisits the Freudian model, in its more general terms, defines trauma as "*an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena*."[14] She further notes that "*trauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is the*

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[6] Christina Wald, *Hysteria, Trauma and Melancholia: Performative Maladies in Contemporary Anglophone Drama* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 3.

[7] Ibid., 3.

[8] Roger Luckhurst, "Traumaculture", *New Formulations* 50 (2003), 28.

[9] Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question,* 19.

[10] Ibid., 80.

[11] Trauma derives from the Greek word meaning wound. First used in English in the seventeenth century in medicine, it referred to a bodily injury caused by an external agent. See Roger Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 2 and Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996), 3.

[12] Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, *Part III: General Theory of the Neuroses*. Standard Ed. Vol. 16. (London: Hogarth P, 1963), 275.

[13] Caroline Garland, *Understanding Trauma a Psychoanalytical Approach*. 2nd ed. (London: Karnac, 2002), 18.

[14] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience,* 11.

story of a wound that cries out."[15] The responses to traumatic experiences such as war, rape, abuse, accidents, diseases, and natural disasters have been understood in terms of the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder since 1980. *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* defines post-traumatic stress disorder as "*the development of characteristic symptoms following exposure to one or more traumatic events*."[16] The traumatized individual also shows *"[m]arked physiological reactions to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event(s).*"[17] Garland further remarks on the phenomenon as follows:

> *It is because it is overwhelming and incapacitating, and cannot be managed psychically, that an event can be defined as traumatic. Flexible and creative thought is replaced by nightmares, flashbacks and at times unconsciously driven re-enactments of the event…The experience cannot, in the usual way, be contained in the mind through thought*.[18]

As the above quotation indicates, a traumatic event does not occur only once. Thus, the problematic point is not just the response to any terrible incident but, rather, the unique experience of surviving. As Caruth investigates, "*for those who undergo trauma, it is not only the moment of the event, but of the passing out of it that is traumatic; that survival itself, in other words, can be a crisis.*"[19] Since trauma "*resists simple comprehension*,"[20] it is worth reminding that trauma remains incomprehensible for the sufferer and cannot be fully incorporated into the individual's understanding of his or her own history. To put it more clearly, trauma experience can never be wholly comprehended; the traumatized individuals are "*liminal personae (threshold people,)*"[21] who are both drawn to and strive to relieve their trauma. Those individuals attempt to both recall and forget, thereby becoming detached spectators of their own trauma. Trauma is not intrinsically connected to the traumatized individual, but it does attach itself to the individual; thus, it can never be fully occupied or possessed.

Early scholarship has popularized the idea of trauma as an incomprehensible phenomenon. Caruth highlights the psychological dimensions of trauma, limiting its variability and cultural specificity, and notes that "*the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it*."[22] Contemporary trauma theory rejects this earlier definition of trauma as "*repetitious, timeless, and unspeakable, yet, it is also a literal, contagious, and mummified*."[23]

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[15] Ibid., 4.

[16] *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-5*. 5th ed. (Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Association, 2013), 274.

[17] Ibid., 271.

[18] Garland, *Understanding Trauma*, 64.

[19] Cathy Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1995), 9.

[20] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience,* 6.

[21] Victor Turner, "Liminality and Communitas", in *The Performance Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Bial, 2nd ed. (Didcot: Routledge, 2007), 89.

[22] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience,* 92.

[23] Michelle Balaev, *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 151.

With a particular emphasis on "*the ranging values and representations of trauma in literature and society*,"[24] contemporary literary trauma theory provides new methodologies to evaluate the traumatic experiences within social and cultural contexts. In this regard, the literary imagination allows for multifaceted engagements with trauma, providing both the potential of emotional identification and critical reflection. The capacity of literary imagination to recontextualize can provide a site in which trauma that resists comprehension and verbalization can be investigated from multiple perspectives. As Laurie Vickroy asserts, literary texts not only transform "*terrifying, alien experiences [into] more understandable and accessible*" but also provide a means of "*witnessing or testifying for the history and experience of historically [traumatized] people*."[25] In similar terms with Vickroy, Anne Whitehead writes, literary trauma texts contextualize "*the denied, the repressed, and the forgotten.*"[26] To paraphrase Whitehead, the fundamental contradiction of trauma narratives is exposed by literary trauma texts. In other words, they attempt to convey a traumatic experience that resists conventional processes of representation, narration, and comprehension. In this regard, literary imagination provides a binding site to present the unpresentable, narrate the unnarratable, and make sense of the incomprehensible.

Notwithstanding the implications regarding the early scholarship's emphasis on the incomprehensibility of trauma, it is significant to note that the representation of trauma in literary narratives "*issues a challenge to the capacities of narrative knowledge*," addressing the tensions between "*narrative possibility*" and "*impossibility.*"[27] The literary imagination, thus, challenges the capacity of language by creating imaginary spaces in which incomprehensible and unspeakable traumatic experiences can be reconfigured into new ones. In this sense, theatre's textual and visual possibilities render it a crucial site to perform trauma. When the words are inadequate to address the traumatic experiences, gaps, silences, and bodily articulations make the silence audible onstage. More importantly, theatre's distinctive features, including "*skills like radical empathy, deep listening, collective embodied practice, and a sense of community – all central to theatre*"[28] enable playwrights to address traumatic experiences of individuals and provide a safe space that inspires empathy and allows for testimonial encounters. The centralizing of the subject of trauma onstage can be manifested through various modalities, such as "*bodies, motion, space, affect, image, and words*,"[29] which function as a potential component to communicate traumatic experiences and thereby theatre emerges as a cultural representation to be celebrated due to its ability to stage trauma by appealing to the feelings through story and performance. As the following discussion explores, in *Colder Than Here*, Wade reflects the Bradley family's encounter with the idea of dying and their attempts to negotiate this traumatic experience. Wade uniquely portrays the characters' condition of trauma through specific traumatic incidents, gestures, bodily articulations, and silences onstage. In the play, trauma exists in the past, it remains in the present, and it will probably pervade the future, disrupting the narratives of self.

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[24] Ibid., 6.

[25] Laurie Vickroy, *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 221-222.

[26] Anne Whitehead, *Trauma Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 82.

[27] Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question,* 79, 80, 83.

[28] Theresa J. May, "Radical Empathy, Embodied Pedagogy, and Climate Change Theatre." *HowlRound* April 20, 2016.

[29] Shannon Jackson, *Professing Performance: Theatre in the Academy from Philology to Performativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 13.

The Reflections of 'Traumaculture' in Laura Wade's *Colder Than Here* (2005)

By then Laura Wade's one-act play, *Colder Than Here,* was premiered by the Soho Theatre London in 2005, Wade was a graduate of the Royal Court's Young Writers Programme. Philip Fisher reviews the play and writes, "*With its strong cast and sure direction from Soho's artistic director, Abigail Morris, Colder than Here is a wonderful introduction to the work of Laura Wade and its bittersweet combination of morbid black comedy and heartrending pathos is a pleasure.*"[30] The play presents the 'traumaculture' that confronts us in the contemporary world, afflicted by ecological discussions such as ozone holes and global warming, and terminal cancer types, which contaminate bodies. The play further tangles up the questions of family relationships, lonesome individuals, and ecological deterioration. Indeed, the play revolves around the issue of trauma, arising from "*these tangled objects*,"[31] whose causes and consequences have been knotted into the contemporary notion of trauma.[32] In this regard, Wade reflects the contemporary 'traumaculture' through white English middle-class family, the Bradleys, who "*are bodies of time and space in flux and in crisis, provoked by a forthcoming traumatic encounter, death, which is knowable and unknowable, a central paradigm of trauma*."[33] The family members are subject to this traumatic encounter and the anticipated death of the mother, Myra, who is "*riddled with [bone cancer]*."[34] Drawing on Rob Nixon's 'slow violence' theory, Miriam Haughton points out the relationship between cancer increases and the destruction of the natural environment, regarding the play's concern for both deteriorations of the body and the earth.[35] According to Nixon, "*Stories of toxic buildup, massing greenhouse gases, or desertification may be cataclysmic in which casualties are deferred, often for generations*."[36]

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[30] Philip Fisher, "Colder Than Here," *British Theatre Guide.* Retrieved from: https://www.britishtheatreguide.info/reviews/colderthanhere-rev.htm

[31] Bruno Latour, *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*, trans. C. Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 66.

[32] Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question,* 15.

[33] Miriam Haughton, *Staging Trauma: Bodies in Shadow* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 81.

[34] Laura Wade, *Colder Than Here* in *Laura Wade Palys One* (London: Oberon, 2012), 25.

[35] Haughton, *Staging Trauma,* 101.

[36] Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence, Gender and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011), 3.

That is, deterioration of the earth causes contamination of the body over the generations; however, the incidents whose effects, although devastating, are not immediate, profound, or impressive, resist comprehension and urgent attention.[37] It is, therefore, no coincidence that Wade strikingly draws attention to the phenomenon by creating liminal spaces where graveyards and living rooms are in fluid connection to each other. As the following discussion shows, the characters eat at the cemeteries and walk into the coffin in the living room. These stark images aim to shock the audience into recognition of this imminent crisis, revealed through the anticipated death of the matriarch and its effects on the survivor-sufferer family members.

On trauma and death, Caruth argues that the crisis at the core of many traumatic narratives often emerges as "*the oscillation between a crisis of death and the correlative crisis of life: between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival.*"[38] To paraphrase Caruth, it is not clear for trauma survivor-sufferers that the trauma occurs following the encounter with death or the ongoing experience of having survived it. In the play, this crisis lies at the heart of the play's traumatic thematic content. The members of the Bradley family search for ways to cope with Myra's cancer diagnosis, her anticipated death, and the uncertain future without her. Wade's representation of those characters' experiences of trauma onstage can offer a safe space in which they perform their stories to survive. The survivor-sufferers experience persistent dissociative symptoms of detachment from the world. Yet, they can perform their stories, which may help communicate the pain and uncertainty caused by the ongoing traumatic experience. According to Patrick Duggan, "*contemporary trauma theory suggests a performative bent in traumatic suffering*,"[39] using embodied performance as a vehicle and inviting silenced traumatic experience to take center stage for the purpose of healing. Jennifer L. Griffiths emphasizes that performance occurs through the body onstage; thus, the "*testimonial encounter*" that happens on a bodily level, "*rather than simply by creating a narrative language*"[40] makes it more appealing. Then, it is possible to argue that embodied performance enables the survivor-sufferers to perform the symptoms of their suffering. In Dominick LaCapra's terms: "*Working through trauma involves the effort to articulate or rearticulate affect and representation in a manner that may never transcend, but may to some viable extent counteract, a reenactment, or acting out, of that disabling dissociation*."[41] LaCapra suggests that survivor-sufferers 'act out' compulsive repetition of actions, words, and situations from traumatic occurrences. This process of 'acting out' paves the way for the process of 'working through,' which is defined as an active articulatory practice that enables the survivor-sufferers to realize the difference between the past and present, offering hope for the future.[42] This repetition compulsion is central to contemporary trauma theory, which offers a "*healthy analytic process of 'working through*.'"[43]

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[37] Cancer Research UK states that over the last decade, incidence rates for all cancers combined have increased by a twentieth (5%) in the UK .*Cancer Incidence Statistics*, Retrieved from: https://www.cancerresearchuk.org 5th March 2020.

[38] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience,* 7.

[39] Patrick Duggan, *Trauma-Tragedy: Symptoms of Contemporary Performance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 5.

[40] Jennifer L.Griffiths, *Traumatic Possessions: The Body and Memory in African American Women›s Writing and Performance* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 2.

[41] Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 42.

The encounter with death has always been a tough subject for playwrights to address, and any understanding of such an event will always be incomplete.[44] Perhaps the incomplete nature of this traumatic experience and its resistance to comprehension and temporal linearity are also what make it compelling viewing for the audience. However, Wade's representation of the Bradleys' encounter with death onstage reveals that trauma requires 'acting out' in order to 'work through.' In the context of contemporary trauma theory, trauma is an active phenomenon that pierces borders, creates new pathways for communication, and is transmissible beyond the initial sufferer and instance. Thus, trauma can allow splits between the past and present, has the power to fracture selfhood, and its instigation of processes of reconstruction and repetition defies linear boundaries. As Luckhurst and others have observed, it is capable of being transmitted beyond the sufferer. Thus, it shares similar performative communication and time-shifting properties with that of theatre. In this regard, the present approach investigates the traumatic bent in trauma in a creative and explorative way. As Sierz mentions, "*Colder Than Here is more honest and humane in unflinchingly showing the way that people face the inevitable, with humour, with silence, sometimes clumsily, sometimes stoically, and ultimately with love.*"[45] Setting death as its context, the play allows us to reconsider our responses to the traumatic encounter with the anticipated death of a loved one. In this way, the play presses us to re-think the status of death concerning dramatizations of trauma on the stage. Considering LaCapra and Luckhurst's point of view, the representation of the abstract idea of death through concrete images such as graveyard visits, the coffin in the living room, and the funeral wishes presentation enable the survivor-sufferers to perform their stories onstage and share a common space and time with the audience. Theatre, hence, offers splendid occasions to stage bodily whispers behind the words, where narrative language fails to communicate trauma.

The play opens in "*A burial ground in the West Midlands. The site is young, the trees just a few years old and still spindly. There are no headstones—graves are marked by shrubs or trees with the occasional wooden plaque*."[46] The depiction of the burial ground challenges certain long-held beliefs about cemetery design and mood, making the idea of death more accessible and graspable. Wade characterizes the site as 'young,' despite the fact that the usual connection of graveyards is with old age. The fact that the trees are still growing adds to the dynamism and vivacity of the scene, offering no static emptiness but growth. The gravestones with 'no headstones' are still marked, but in a manner that blurs the line between life and death. It is pertinent and vital to note here that the overall atmosphere of the graveyard is nuanced, and it becomes more interesting when Myra and her daughter Jenna appear on stage with a large picnic basket. Myra seems "*surprisingly energetic*" and Jenna "*wears mostly black, with a long stripy scarf*."[47] The scene further informs the audience that Myra is diagnosed with advanced bone cancer, perplexing the scene's atmosphere. The dramatic construction of the scene offers a stimulating perspective to the study of trauma. In other words, trauma studies mostly deal with past events, which overwhelm the individual's present condition of the senses and the mind, known as post-traumatic stress disorder. However, Wade reflects the individuals' contemporary "*structure of feeling,*" embodied in a performance mode that is acutely concerned with addressing the traumatic, which Patrick Duggan has termed "*trauma-tragedy*."[48] According to Duggan, individuals' contemporary social 'psychic' condition can be identified with Raymond Williams's notion of 'structure of feeling,' realized through the anticipated death of the loved one and the present moment of living consciously with the acknowledgment of death. As the stage instructions inform us, Myra and Jenna visit the graveyard to have a picnic. They begin to eat their sandwiches while talking about their daily routines. Suddenly, Myra asks, "*Do you think we should bury me here [in] Six months or so. Up to about nine*."[49] Myra goes on as follows, "*Perhaps you could tell your dad about it, the burial thing [...] I mean there may come a time when you two need to learn to talk to each other...*"[50] The quotation is indicative of the lack of communication between these nuclear family members. Wade portrays the Bradley family's disrupted selves who 'need to learn to talk to each other'. In this regard, it is possible to argue that any forms of post-traumatic stress disorder such as nightmares or hallucinations do not occur on stage. Trauma is revealed through recent cultural traumatic experiences, including each character's loneliness, cancer diagnosis, and the anticipated death. Thus, the Bradley family is inherently traumatic, and now they have to negotiate the expected death of the matriarch, performing their testimonies individually onstage.

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[42] Ibid., 21-22.

[43] Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question,* 9.

[44] Ibid., 6.

[45] Alex Sierz, "Introduction," in *Laura Wade Plays One* (London: Oberon, 2012), 7.

[46] Wade, *Colder Than Here,* 14.

As Duggan investigates, "*Trauma is a disruption of the self, or self-composure; it is a perpetual disruption of personal time which questions understandings of self because it recurs without anticipation continually to call into question our comprehension of the world and our movements through it.*"[51] It is, therefore, significant to emphasize that the family members' selves are disrupted due to the encounter with the idea of death, and the dysfunctional interpersonal relationships between them suggest a more comprehensive traumatic experience. As the play's title indicates, the overarching metaphor is the sense of the coldness of death, which is grounded in a feeling that the emotional atmosphere in the family is likewise cold and disrupted. Sierz convincingly contends that "*The coolness of their relationships is emphasized by the fact that the boiler in the household has broken down, and that daily life is lived in a damp chilliness, which feels like a symbolic preparation for the grave.*"[52] To paraphrase Sierz, the relationship between family members is frozen. The playwright refers to the coldness of the condition through the boiler, which has been broken down and remained broken until the end of the play. In each scene, Myra always complains about the coldness of the house; also, Jenna emphasizes it, saying, "*fucking cold here.*"[53] More strikingly, while Alec and Jenna are looking for a graveyard in "*A civil cemetery in Coventry*," Alec articulates that "*Well, it is warmer than the house. Everywhere is warmer than the house.*"[54] Alec's statement is crucial to highlight that Wade employs a compositional style, which intentionally tries to create a constant sense of traumatic presence, a traumatic reality through theatricality. In a society where representations of traumatic loneliness have become normalized, Wade's portrayal of it in a graveyard through Alec's statement seems too striking for the British public to ignore.

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[47] Ibid., 15.

[48] Duggan, *Trauma-Tragedy,* 7.

[49] Wade, *Colder Than Here,* 18.

[50] Ibid., 21.

[51] Duggan, *Trauma-Tragedy,* 27.

The following scene switches to the Bradleys' living room, where Myra talks about the process of "*more radio. Painkillers. Warm baths. Funeral Planning*," while Alec "*is immobile behind his newspaper*."[55] Jenna criticizes Alec's indifference to the situation, saying, "*Mum is dying and you're sitting there reading the paper.*"[56] The scene clearly addresses the anxious family interaction in unstable spaces regarding the anticipated death and the dysfunction between them. Their search for familial co-existence without Myra invites the audience to register the pain and sorrow in this simple character's voice. Therefore, the scene presents the entire traumatic narrative through the potentially overwhelming depictions of pain with pauses, fragments, and broken narration. When they realize that Alec buys the wrong cat food, the family members face the ongoing experience of having survived the trauma. Myra says, "*I'm sorry. Your Dad's been doing the shopping. I haven't been [...] (JENNA bits her lip) I should have told him which sort to get [...] (Pause) There'll be just your dad here and ... (Long pause) [...] (Harriet looks away [...] Another long pause. No eye contact: four people alone.)*"[57] As the quotation shows, trauma is presented as overwhelming, and it appears omnipresent in this scene. Here, Wade's voice in combination with the long reflective pauses conveys a sense of affirmation of trauma and invites the audience to witness others' traumas. As LaCapra emphasizes, "*The looks and gestures of survivors also call for reading and understanding. At times, nothing can be more graphic and significant than the body language, including the facial expressions, of the survivor-witness [...]*"[58] Considering LaCapra's point of view, the potential exists for the representations of contemporary psychic condition that can speak to the exigencies of our current traumatic experiences within the embodied performance. The survivor-sufferers relieve their individual grief in the safe space created by the particularities of live performance. This relief process occurs as a communal experience, providing meaningful and unique moments through which trauma can be comprehended. Hence, the testimonial encounter that happens on a bodily level can fill the gap left by our own psychic trauma of detachment from the world. Although the performers perform their testimonies individually, this process occurs as a part of a shared experience; thus, it can offer a variety of possibilities for the survivor-sufferers, defying linear boundaries and being transmitted beyond them.

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[52] Sierz, "Introduction," 8.

[53] Wade, *Colder Than Here,* 27.

[54] Ibid., 49.

[55] Ibid., 25.

[56] Ibid., 35-36.

[57] Ibid., 31.

[58] LaCapra, *Writing History,* xiv.

Myra inhabits a liminal space between life and the anticipated death that disrupts her perception of daily existence and linear time. Thus, she tries to negotiate her anticipated death by establishing new performed routines. She watches documentaries about dying, reads about funerals, and delivers a PowerPoint presentation to summarize her funeral wishes, including "*no funeral director [...] woodland burial [...] cardboard coffin [...] bury me in warm clothes [...] coffin to be carried by family [...] no throwing flowers*."[59] Myra states that she wants her coffin to be decorated with the sky and the stars. Myra's attempt to negotiate her ongoing traumatic experience is emotionally destructive for the Bradleys. Although Alec seems surprised by Myra's decision to be buried, saying, "*But we've always – I mean it's, it's in the wills*," Jenna supports this decision, arguing, "*Cremation's bad. For the environment. It is a pollutant*."[60] On the one hand, the quotation is indicative of the diversity of religious faith and society's approach to death, evoking prejudices surrounding the issues of religion, environment, social, and cultural trends. The quotation, on the other hand, offers that the play recontextualizes death as an open topic for family conversation, although it is not so easy. The Bradleys inhabit a threshold space, which restrains them from settling into a new structure that may exist. Along with Myra, they also establish new performed routines, including the repetitive graveyard and hospital visits and attempts to reconfigure their dysfunctional familial relationships. When Jenna complains about that, Harriet consciously responds, "*mum's disappearing and you're still fucking about like – Like it's your own disaster. It's not about you now.*"[61] The quotation emphasizes the fact that the anticipated death of Myra has altered their daily life in every respect, disrupting their linear narratives of self. Thus, negotiating this traumatic event becomes more complicated and destructive. Then, Jenna goes on, "*I miss her. Like the other day, I got home from work and it was a shit day and – I. Wanted her there. And I got home and. Just gripped by it. Desperately wanted her. Lying in bed, crying my eyes out and there's no-one else, no-one else is good enough*."[62] Obviously, this emotionally destructive traumatic experience disrupts their self-composure. Turning to LaCapra's notions of 'act out' and 'work through,' it is worthwhile to add one point here: the survivor-sufferers individually perform the symptoms of their suffering onstage. They 'act out' compulsive repetition of actions and situations from traumatic occurrences, such as frequent graveyard and hospital visits and attempts to establish more intimate familial relationships. The cycles of uncomprehending repetition forge the process of 'working through,' which allows trauma to repeat and represent itself. The dramaturgical construction of the play, thus, follows a structure that can be seen to mimic that of trauma symptoms.

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[59] Wade, *Colder Than Here,* 35-36.
[60] Ibid., 35.
[61] Ibid., 38.
[62] Ibid., 41.

To find an appropriate burial site for Myra, the Bradleys visit cemeteries in different parts of the country. In scene five, Alec and Jenna appear in a civil cemetery in Coventry, "*which has cordoned off a small corner of its land as a vague gesture to the natural burial movement. No-one has yet been buried here and it's not difficult to see why – the cemetery is run-down and grim, surrounded by industrial buildings. The natural burial site is little more than a patch of earth*."[63] Along with Myra's cancer diagnosis and her rejection of being cremated as it causes pollution, the cemetery design directs the play's attention to the current environmental degradation. As Houghton emphasizes, "*the contaminated body of Myra is calling to the contaminated earth-body*."[64] The cemetery design establishes a connection between the contaminated natural environment and contaminated bodies, inevitably reproducing death as the play suggests. Myra's body has been violated by cancer, which can be viewed as a tragedy of "*slow-motion of toxicity,*"[65] the consequences of which have been ignored for generations. Wade artistically employs the scenic space, turning prolonged instances of slow violence into dramatic narratives to evoke public awareness. The idea of an eco-friendly coffin, situated in the Bradleys' living room, also reinforces these instances whose ramifications have given rise to the most pressing concerns of our time.

Wade situates Myra's environmentally friendly coffin centre stage to make it a part of daily existence. Jenna touches it and says, "*need some cushions, make it nice in there*."[66] Then, Jenna and Harriet begin to draw the sky, clouds, and stars on the coffin. Situating the coffin centre stage, Wade encourages the family to touch it, draw on it, and, more importantly, normalize the idea of death and burial. In this way, Wade enables the Bradleys to negotiate death trauma, reducing their incomprehensible fear regarding it. Furthermore, the dramatized family attempts to make sense of and find value in their traumatic experience. Their repetitive graveyard visits, their daily conversations on cancer, Myra's funeral wishes take the issue of death out of the realm of the unspeakable and insert it into the daily routine. Thus, the play allows the subject of death to share a common space and time with the audience, making it more understandable.

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[63] Ibid., 49.

[64] Haughton, *Staging Trauma,* 98.

[65] Nixon, *Slow Violence,* 3.

[66] Wade, *Colder Than Here,* 54.

Considering LaCapra's aforementioned notions of 'act out' and 'work through,' the Bradleys individually repeat actions and situations from their traumatic experiences in order to enable trauma 'work through.' If the play loosely binds these elements together, then it may be because the dramatic construction allows the incomprehensible to be represented on stage. The family members and the audience witness Myra's present trauma, who tries to reappropriate herself to the situation, spending time in the coffin. Harriet remarks on the phenomenon as follows:

> *You know, I went to mum's the other day, just to check up on her and stuff. Walked in and she's sat in the coffin. Middle of the living room floor and she's—She's watching 'Have I Got News For You' and she's laughing. Sitting in it, laughing. And I just thought God, I can't cope with this I can't do this. I was looking at her and I missed her*.[67]

As the quotation indicates, the Bradleys individually perform their traumatic sufferings, bearing witness to each other's experience that cannot be entirely comprehended and that might have otherwise remained unspoken and unheard. In *Colder Than Here*, trauma acts out in the present, repeats and represents itself during the live performance, transcends comprehension, then works through. For the Bradleys, who have difficulty expressing their love, occupying the common spaces, and sharing their feelings, the scenic and dramatic spaces offer unique moments in which they bear witness to the survivor-sufferers' testimonies. Fostering intimate bonds that generate meanings in both personal and social contexts, the play offers promising possibilities for their familial co-existence without Myra. Jenna says, "*I used to notice, going to the loo in the middle of the night, I'd be walking down a corridor of closed doors. Like a hotel. Four separate people…. So, I don't know if—If we never had that even with you here, I don't know if we'll do it without you*."[68] The final scene reveals that the Bradleys are aware of the dysfunctional family relations, but it also offers the possibility of action by recognizing the condition. In this context, this inherently traumatic family, tied to the 'traumaculture,' attempts at making sense of and finding value in their traumatic experience. In this sense, the dramatic space allows them to search for possibilities for their unknown future without the matriarch Myra.

Conclusion

Trauma has always been a pervasive condition in the literary imagination, allowing for nuanced engagements with trauma. The potential of literary imagination to reconfigure provides an arena in which trauma that resists comprehension and verbalization can be explored from multiple perspectives. Even though trauma has been slow to take hold in theatre and performance arts, both in scholarship and practice, contemporary British theatre has been a crucial venue for playwrights to address individual and collective traumatic experiences. The aforementioned contemporary trauma critics, who convincingly challenge the earlier definition of trauma as incomprehensible and unspeakable, contend that trauma can represent itself in literary texts. Affirming this position, contemporary trauma theory situates trauma not only in the physical and psychical realms but also in social and cultural contexts. In the context of contemporary trauma theory, trauma offers a critical pathway to communication, expanding beyond the initial survivor-sufferer and occurrence. Trauma further creates splits between the past and present, has the power to fracture selfhood and, its instigation of processes of reconstruction and repetition defies linear boundaries. Hence, capable of being transmitted beyond the sufferer, trauma shares similar performative communication and time-shifting properties with that of theatre. By making use of theatre's textual and visual possibilities, the playwrights boldly stage traumatic suffering, highlighting the ongoing concern with the traumatic in dramatic and scenic spaces. Drawing on Roger Luckhurst's notion of 'traumaculture,' this paper indicates that the contemporary British stage reflects our current experiences, selves, and relationships as inherently traumatic. As the paper explores, in *Colder Than Here* (2005), Laura Wade reflects an English middle-class family whose traumatic experiences derive not only from the anticipated death of the matriarch but also familial dysfunction, a traumatic condition that pervades daily existence, and current consequences of environmental degradation. Wade reflects the sense of traumatic presence with striking images and occurrences, including repetitive familial graveyard visitations, an Ikea-like coffin situated in the middle of the living room, and a funeral wish list presentation. In this sense, Wade's theatrical strategy helps the survivor-sufferers 'act out' trauma in the safe space offered by the particularities of live performance. This process of 'acting out' enables trauma to 'work through,' opening up possibilities for the survivor-sufferers to make sense of and find value in their traumatic experiences. As analyzed in *Colder Than Here*, in a society where representations of traumatic sufferings have been normalized, Wade's portrayal of the traumatic experience with stark images, including burial sites, coffin, and Myra's contaminated body seems too difficult for British society to ignore.

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[67] Ibid., 63.

[68] Ibid., 74.

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Speaking of Beki Luiza Bahar: A Jewish Woman Playwright in Turkey & Negotiating an Ambiguous Identity in the Public Sphere

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on Beki Luiza Bahar, the first published Turkish-Jewish woman playwright. Her oeuvre includes prose, poetry, memoir and a wide spectrum of fictional and non-fictional works. To better grasp the author's writing praxis and prove how the merging of fiction, biography, and autobiography allows her to manage the contradictory elements of her identity, the study uses an inter-textual approach relying on both fictional and non-fictional works by the author. Beki Luiza Bahar's works highlight how understanding, remembering, and speaking of one's past are interwoven with selfhood and recognition in her opinion. The present analysis moves back and forth between these ideas, attempting to understand how she negotiates her minority subjectivity while writing.

Keywords: Beki Luiza Bahar, Jewish woman playwright, biographical drama, minority subjectivity, identity

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Introduction

In 1956, 27 years after Virginia Woolf declared in her famous “Professions for Women” speech that “*Killing the Angel in the House was part of the occupation of a woman writer*,”[1] a Turkish Jewish woman who wrote haunted by her own phantoms got published in a magazine for the first time. Beki Luiza Bahar[2], enamored with pens, had spent her childhood scribbling with them on everything she could get her hands on, as she recounts in the preface to her collection of essays *Ordan Burdan: Ne Kendi Tanır, Ne de Söz Edeni Vardır… (Here and There: Neither Do They Know, Nor Does Anyone Speak of Them…)*. Therefore, it is not at all surprising when she concludes the preface of her memoir with the testimony; “*The pen can sometimes overtake the person.*”[3] This statement comes after the candid admission that the particular piece of writing intended as an overview turned out to be a page that could easily have come from her diary. She then takes a step back and reflects for a moment, afforded by the punctuation mark “three dots,” and responds to the reader and herself with the aforementioned line, which is noteworthy because it not only points to the autonomy of the writing process but also shows an immediate self-reflection. It throws the reader back from the essay to the image of a woman in a room with a pen in her hand, writing in a state of flow.

In the same vein, in “Professions for Women,” Woolf describes a young woman in a bedroom with an inkpot, searching for herself after killing the “Angel” within her, the shadow of whose wings used to fall on her page as she wrote. For Woolf, this phantom embodied the Victorian idea of femininity associated with being a kind, endearing lady who had no thoughts or aspirations of her own, preferring instead to sympathize with the thoughts and desires of others. Certainly, this “Angel” had to be killed to rid herself of falsehood and be herself as a writer. But then the question immediately arises: what is ‘herself’? She elaborates:

> *I mean, what is a woman? I assure you, I do not know. I do not believe that you know. I do not believe that anybody can know until she has expressed herself in all the arts and professions open to human skill.*[4]

Woolf recognizably draws a link here between self-understanding, recognition and expression. By all means, the subjective and auto-referential nature of self-understanding is closely connected with others’ understandings, external categorizations, identifications, and representations. Moreover, the external categorizations in question are not always mutually exclusive. As Brubaker and Cooper put it in their comprehensive article on the discourses around the term “identity” in which they discuss the relationship between identity and self-understanding, “*In some settings, people may understand and experience themselves in terms of*

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[1] Virginia Woolf, *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1942), 237.

[2] Beki Luiza Bahar was born in 1926 and died in 2011.

[3] Beki L. Bahar, *Ordan Burdan: Ne Kendi Tanır Ne de Söz Edeni Vardır...* (İstanbul: Gözlem, 2000), 21. All translations are mine unless stated otherwise.

[4] Woolf, *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays*, 238.

a grid of intersecting categories."[5] Not to mention, if these intersections are between antagonistic discourses, practices and positions, people may experience their identities as fragmented and fractured. Expression, thus, can become a means through which the fragmented and fractured discourses, practices and positions are negotiated to construct a sense of subjectivity and claim recognition.

The present study aims to show that as a Turkish-Jewish woman who lived in times of warfare and nation-building, being situated in the intersection of several conflicting categories, identification was a constant negotiation for Bahar, and it took place in the tense space between recognition by others and defining oneself. What is more, her auto-referential writing praxis was a mediation on the way to creating a conception of selfhood via self-narration and disclosure. Indeed, her writing is a testament to her struggle with phantoms that hovered around the contradictory components of her complicated identity. Furthermore, this testimony reveals the conflicts accompanying the Turkish-Jewish subjectivity that function via cultural politics of memory, visibility, and belonging.

With that in mind, the title of Bahar's memoir, -Here and There: Neither Do They Know, Nor Does Anyone Speak of Them…- is worthy of attention. Foremost, Bahar alludes with this title to the Turkish Jewish minority's disconnectedness from its past, as she sees it. The title also suggests that historians in the broader society largely ignore this historical memory. Hence, this emphasis on knowing, remembering, and speaking of one's past shows that these deeds were undoubtedly interwoven with selfhood and recognition in her understanding.

Bahar's oeuvre comprises a wide range of fictional and non-fictional works, including prose, poetry, memoir, historical articles, and dramatic works, some of which are self-published.[6] This analysis focuses on her plays, adopting an inter-textual approach as a method, resorting to both fictional and non-fictional works of the author to understand her writing praxis.[7] Furthermore, as previously said, since her writing practice is auto-referential, her life story plays a significant role in this study. The following section hence, will give a general overview of her life events.

A Turkish- Jewish Woman in the 20th Century

Born in 1926,[8] Bahar's lifespan coincides with a period of significant local political and social changes and international life-threatening happenings. The Ottoman Empire saw substantial political, social, and geopolitical upheavals throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century and was regularly at war from the late nineteenth century until 1923. After the Ottoman Empire collapsed, the Turkish Republic was founded, and The Treaty of Lausanne (1923) defined the limits of the Turkish nation-state, which had a population of 96% Muslims. Nationalism was fueled in the Middle East and the Balkans, and active policies were implemented to realize the idea of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. It was a period in which all minorities sought their own identities and wanted to determine their destinies. The Turkish state enforced a process of "Turkification" on its citizens in the aftermath of the geopolitical changes and the formation of the Republic.[9] In the mid-1930s, as the world witnessed the rise of Nazism, the Turkish Republic first followed a policy that embraced the Jews. However, during the Second World War, as it approached Turkish territory and genocides towards Jews took place in Turkey's neighbors, the Jewish community felt under threat and fear and experienced economic difficulties with practices such as wealth tax. With the end of World War II and the establishment of the state of Israel afterwards in 1948, many Jews emigrated from Turkey. According to Rıfat Bali, Turkish Jews that stayed lived in a very restricted society, clinging to their cultural values and Jewishness as defined by Zionist ideology in communal life, while on the other hand publicly displaying eagerness to adopt the Turkification policies and take on a Turkish nationalist approach. The official approach undertaken by the Jewish Community leaders were offset by this public exterior. Nonetheless, keeping this exterior for centuries has had its share in the construction of a Turkish-Jewish identity.[10]

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[5] Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity'" *Theory and Society* 29, no. 1 (February 2000): 18.

[6] Later in her life *Mitos-Boyut* a well known publishing house for dramatic works published four of her plays. Also, her collection of essays came out of *Gözlem Yayınevi*, a Jewish publishing company.

[7] Likewise, inter-textuality was also a strategy used by the author in her plays. It is common to find references to her other texts in her plays. Later in the article this point will be supported by examples.

[8] In her memoir *Ordan Burdan: Altmış Yılın Ardından (Here and There: In the Wake of Sixty Years),* she explains how her parents registered her birth year as January 16th 1927, although she was actually born on December 16th 1926. According to Bahar, the reason was to give her an advantage in marriage worth when she would become older since the younger the girl to be married was, the worthier she was in those times in the Jewish society. The meticulous attention she gives to details even in this first page of her memoir, where she introduces herself, is an indicator of her factual approach to defining identity through a historical perspective. Beki L. Bahar, *Ordan Burdan: Altmış Yılın Ardından* (İstanbul: Gözlem, 1995), 7-8.

Bahar was born in Istanbul and then moved with her family to Ankara, where a smaller Jewish community surrounded her, because of her father's working situation. She went to schools where no other Jewish student was present other than her and her sister, which was very different from her environment in the Jewish School of Istanbul, which she went to in her early childhood. After graduating from T.E.D. Ankara College, she enrolled to Law School at Ankara University Faculty of Language, History and Geography, an exceptional undertaking for a Turkish-Jewish woman living in those times. In this period, she was also admitted into the military course, which was mandatory for women that went to university. She did not graduate from law school because she got married and gave birth. In an interview where she was asked if she quit university because of getting married, she expressed her regrets:

> *Yes, I took life too seriously. I am now married, I must look after my husband and I will have a child… My husband said, keep going if you wish. By no means! What a way of thinking at those times! Besides, this is what happens; you get married and already in the first month they wonder: "Have you got pregnant?"*[11]

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[9] Gila Hadar, "Turkey: Ottoman and Post Ottoman," Jewish Women's Archive, accessed July 6, 2021, https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/turkey-ottoman-and-post-ottoman.

[10] Rıfat Bali, "Politics of Turkification in the Single Party Period", *Swiss Society for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies*, Basel, Switzerland, 14-16 October 2004.

[11] Gülriz Türkoğlu, Zeynep Kutluata, and Beki Luiza Bahar. "Türkiye›de Yahudi Olmak: Beki Bahar ile Söyleşi." Interview. *Kültür ve Siyasette Feminist Yaklaşımlar* 7, 2009.

Bahar and her family returned to Istanbul many years later. She published her first prose in the magazine *Haftanın Sesi* in 1958, her first poem in the *Varlık Yeni Şiir Antolojisi* in 1959 and her first short story in *Çağdaş* magazine in 1964. Her earliest play, *Alabora,* was performed in 1970 at the Ankara State Theater. Her essays, research papers, travel notes and poems have been published in magazines and newspapers, and some of them are self-published.

A Marginalized and Ambiguous Identity

In her memoir and interviews, it is clear that one of the major conflicts Bahar experiences is between being an individual and being a member of a society through which the individual's experiences must be mediated. As a result of this conflict, she is always torn between adopting the majority discourses built around cultural modes and her individual ideals and desires. These cultural modes are determined by her position as a Jewish woman in the society of which she is a part, and by the characteristics of that larger society. According to Beti Hayim, this arbitration is crucial in self-development and identity in minority groups:

> *In order to understand self-development and identity within any ethnic group, one has to consider historical, geographical and cultural context. When the group in question is a minority group in a wider culture, the interrelation of the two groups should be considered.*[12]

Thus, Bahar's self-development is inevitably influenced by the politics of identity determined by the dynamics of this interrelation. On the other hand, her unique marginal position within the Jewish society in Turkey complicates her identification with the generic discourses of this closed, institutionalized, and politicized minority society and its relationship with the wider culture. Individually, she questions the discourses and politics related to her identity from a broader and more universal historical perspective. This is clear in her emphasis on defining the Jewish people in Turkey as "a society", rather than using the term "communion" which refers to a religious structure.[13] This approach also explains that although she had an extensive and deep interest in researching Jewish history and identity and expressing her Jewishness through her work, she was only partially a part of cultural production under the roof of Jewish communal institutions. More specifically, when İzzet Bana and Selim Hubeş, two Jewish theater lovers and amateur theater-makers working within the congregational institutions, discovered her while they were looking for texts related to Judaism to perform, she had already written several plays and one of them was in the repertoire of the Turkish State Theater and they did not even know about her.[14] After this chance encounter, she received commissions and wrote several plays for these theatre clubs under Jewish organizations. However, since she mostly worked alone apart from these encounters, one could say that she was a "lonely spirit" so to speak. In a panel discussion about Bahar's work that took place later in her career, a researcher, Rivka Bihar, also confirms Bahar's singularity in terms of her work:

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[12] Beti Hayim, "The Sense Of Self, Superego And Ego-Ideal In Turkish Sephardic Jewish Young Adults" (unpublished MA thesis, İstanbul: 2009), viii.

[13] Sevilay Saral, "Beki L. Bahar'ın Ardından ," *Mimesis* 19 (March 2012): 230.

[14] Uluç Esen et al., "Panel: Beki L. Bahar Tiyatrosu ," ed. Ayşan Sönmez, *Mimesis* 19 (March 2012), 235-262.

> *If we evaluate her within the Turkish Jewish community, we can claim that she is the only author who does not create adapted plays, deals not only with Sephardic topics and Judaism in her plays, does not focus on translated works, and fully preserves her uniqueness.*[15]

Of like mind, Selim Hubeş and İzzet Bana tell how amazed and impressed they were when they discovered this Jewish playwright and found out that her work was in the library of the State Theater. Hubeş points out that Bahar differs from the general population of the Jewish community in Turkey:

> *As for Mrs. Beki, Mrs. Beki is a person sui generis, a Sephardic Jew. First, in terms of where she lived, what she read, and what she wrote, do not think there are ten Mrs. Bekis in the Jewish Sephardic community of twenty thousand people in Istanbul. Mrs. Beki is one and only one. Her work on this subject drove us crazy. When we first saw her book, we looked at each other, surprised. A woman from the Turkish Sephardic Community wrote a book! This woman wrote a play! We went crazy. Was that possible? […] Mrs. Beki is a wonderful lady. She is very elegant. There is nothing more to say about her, because my grandmother, for example, is not like her. Or other people's grandmothers are not like her. Her children are fortunate people; their mother has such vast knowledge. Also, that Mrs. Beki has not only lived in Istanbul may have some influence. Mrs. Beki comes from a family that has a history in Eskişehir, Edirne, and Ankara. She also has an investigative personality.*[16]

These words infer the actors were astonished to find a Sephardic woman who had written plays that were included in the repertoire collection of the State Theatre.[17] It was not common at all to speak in the public sphere as a minority, let alone being a Sephardic woman born in the early 20th century having such a commandment of the Turkish language and who even had a university education.[18]

As a matter of fact, Rıfat Bali explains how Turkish Jews use the Ladino word '*kayadez*', meaning 'quiet' and 'low profile' in their everyday speech. It implies that they try not to live a too obvious lifestyle to the general public, fearing that it would cause jealousy among the larger Turkish population. According to Bali, the only way to maintain some sense of serenity and tranquility is to stay 'invisible' in the public domain. Besides, taking a 'silent' attitude is not just a survival strategy, but it also indicates a deep mistrust of both the government and the media at the same time. Examining historical events and their debate in the public realm has provided little or no value in the past and has frequently just cemented unfavorable attitudes.[19] On the contrary, Bahar speaks out through her plays and other works without shying away from expressing her point of view and discusses Jewish history and Judaism. One might say that her discourse coincides with the official discourse of the Turkish Jews who describe their existence in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic through a selective perception only highlighting the positive experiences they had to express their gratitude; therefore, it does not stand out as unique. However, a close examination shows that Bahar only relies on facts to shape her views. She articulates her gratitude to Turkey and includes the positive experiences in her historical texts, but she also considers the underlying economic reasons for this treatment, opening up a discussion of events and discourses.

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[15] Rivka Bihar et al., "Panel: Beki L. Bahar Tiyatrosu ," ed. Ayşan Sönmez, *Mimesis* 19 (March 2012), 235-262.

[16] Selim Hubeş et al., "Panel: Beki L. Bahar Tiyatrosu ," ed. Ayşan Sönmez, *Mimesis* 19 (March 2012), 235-262.

[17] Collection of potential plays to be performed accepted by the dramaturgy department. *Alabora* (*Capsizing*) was performed by the Ankara State Theatre in 1970. Although *Senyora/ Gracia Nasi (Madam/ Grasya Nasi)* and *Ölümsüz Kullar/ Pudu Hepa (Immortal Subjects/ Pudu Hepa)* were accepted to the repertoire collection, they were never performed.

[18] Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) was the predominant spoken language of the Jews until the mid-1950s. While most of the men spoke Turkish and some Hebrew, the language of women's talk was Ladino. The women's lack of understanding of the official languages, however, did not affect their ability to communicate with others because all of their neighbors knew and understood Ladino. The Jews coexisted in neighborhoods where they made up the majority. Their modest houses, which opened into common courtyards, were referred to as *yahudihane* by the locals and *cortijo* by the Jews. A massive wooden door strengthened with iron bands and secured with a vertical iron bolt guarded the courtyard's entrance. The women were able to walk from one enclosure to the next through a gap between the courtyards without having to exit onto the street. Hadar, "Turkey: Ottoman and Post Ottoman".

All this having been said, the unique positioning of Bahar in relation to the Jewish minority society in Turkey and her work gives an insight into the multi-layered narrative of otherness in her approach. The subsequent part displays how self-disclosure becomes a result and instrument of this otherness, resulting in a politics of visibility and recognition in the public sphere of writing.

Writing and Subjectivity

Bahar's dramatic works are multi-layered, in which the author presents historical identities within a fictional narrative while incorporating autobiographical elements from her own life. The merging of fiction, biography, and autobiography allows her to deal with the contradictory elements of her identity.[20] The characters who represent the fractures of the author's self, and the conflicting forces at play through which the author identifies herself, are often biographical identities. Yet, they are categorically neither biographical nor autobiographical plays. Rather, in the introduction to these texts, she makes a special point of making a "fictional pact"[21] with the reader. An example is the statement at the beginning of *Senyora/ Grasya Nasi (Madam/ Grasia Nasi)*: "*The heroes in this historical play really lived, and the events are accurately taken. But then again, this text is a play...*"[22] This pact evidently allows Bahar to reconstruct a self-ideal while reflecting on a society's shared history and collective memory. She assembles the fantasy of this idealized self by assimilating the biographical identity within her personality and inner desires. Nonetheless, her writing proves that she stands in the ambiguous zone of constantly negotiating her personal desires with existing cultural models of identity and the discourses in which they are expressed. Speaking is, in fact, the mechanism by which she avoids surrendering to the categories that would confine her existence by constantly re-interpreting her experiences. In this respect, Hülya Adak's observation that fiction is the most autobiographical form of confession relates well to Bahar's plays. Although there is no direct relationship between the author and the protagonist, Bahar's works' process is very similar to that of auto-fiction where "*writing becomes an integral part of existence, a never-ending process of producing subjectivity through language*."[23] Only, for Bahar, it is an impossible subjectivity, for she is always in the conflicting zone of becoming the subject and object of language as a Jewish woman. As Irzık and Parla put across, "*'Speaking' women, and especially women in the public sphere, have always been torn between subjectivity and objectivity, between having the word and being owned by the word, and have had to be divided both within and against themselves*."[24] This fracture is further deepened by the fact that, as a Jew in Turkey, she is a member of a diaspora society. Diaspora, a term demarcated by the complex relationship between land and dispersion, belonging and being marginalized, also makes the act of 'speaking in the public sphere' a political statement where ambiguous identities are positioned within language. This ambiguity is full of traps and potentialities that this article intends to trace within Bahar's body of work.

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[19] Ulrike Tischler and Rıfat Bali, "The Alternative Way to Come to Terms with Past. Those Who Try to Forget: Turkey's Jewish Minority," in *From "Milieu de mémoire" to "Lieu de mémoire" the Cultural Memory of Istanbul in the 20th Century* (München: Martin Meidenbauer, 2006), 100-110.

[20] At this point, Philippe Lejeune's suggestion that the unity of the author, narrator, and the protagonist is necessary and sufficient for a book to be considered autobiographical comes to one's mind. Yet, some claim that such a union is impossible to achieve. The question is whether there is something that binds experience and consciousness with identity and politics or, at the very least, with a concept of subjectivity. For more discussion on this subject refer to Philippe Lejeune, *On Autobiography*, ed. Paul John Eakin, trans. Katherine Leary (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1995).

She wrote many plays, only some of which are examined in this article. Her plays that tackle the Jewish identity are centered on the Sephardic Jews' history and sociocultural aspects and relations with other religions. The other ones deal with history, memory and being a woman. This study analyzes *Senyora/ Gracia Nasi (Madam/ Grasya Nasi)*, *Ölümsüz Kullar/ Pudu Hepa (Immortal Subjects/ Pudu Hepa)*, *İkiyüzbininci Gece (The Two Hundred Thousandth Night)* and *Demokles'in Kılıcı/ Flavius ile Demokles (Damocles' Sword/ Flavius and Damocles).* These plays are about the relationships between history, conflict, identity, Jewishness, being a woman, power, culture, and society. This analyses of her plays aim to show that Bahar voices her own subjectivity in a unique, sincere and bold manner through the dynamic relationships between these concepts without avoiding entering conflicting zones. Before examining the themes that interconnect these texts with elements of her identity, this article includes extensive summaries considering that they are lesser known.

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[21] The term "fictional pact" is used here as a counterpart of the novelistic contract that Lejeune talks about. As is known, Lejeune's conception of autobiography is founded on the notion of an "autobiographical pact". The reader is offered a contract: to read the text autobiographically. This "pact" is offered only if the author's name is the same as that of the narrator or protagonist and the subtitle of the book is "Autobiography, my life, etc." If this is not the case, that is, if the author, narrator, and protagonist have different names or their identities are unknown, or if the book self-identifies as a novel, then this text offers the novelistic contract and forces the reader to read it as a novel. 'Autobiography' is thus no longer an essentialist concept, but a dimension, or in other words, a fundamental part of the literary communication process. Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf, "Autobiography/ Autofiction Across Disciplines," in *Handbook of Autobiography/Autofiction*, ed. Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 1-9.

[22] Beki Luiza Bahar, *Toplu Oyunları 1: Ölümsüz Kullar ; Senyora ; Alabora* (İstanbul: Mitos Boyut Yayınları, 2005), 53.

[23] Claudia Gronemann, "Autofiction," in *Handbook of Autobiography/Autofiction*, ed. Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 241-246, 245.

[24] Sibel Irzık and Jale Parla, "Önsöz," in *Kadınlar Dile Düşünce: Edebiyat ve Toplumsal Cinsiyet* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2020), 7-12, 9.

The Plays: *Ölümsüz Kullar/ Pudu Hepa, Senyora/ Grasya Nasi, Demokles'in Kılıcı/ Flavius ve Demokles, İkiyüzbininci Gece*

Ölümsüz Kullar/ Pudu Hepa (1973-2005) is about a Hittite Queen from the 13th Century BC who was the companion of King Hattuşili the 3rd. The Hittites conceived the kingdom as belonging to the gods, with kings and queens being their representatives. Nevertheless, they were responsible for the actions they undertook during their reign. The queen had a significant role in the Hittite court and foreign diplomacy. She had her own seal, was in charge of the internal affairs of the royal palaces, and presided over the trials. In the king's absence, she had complete authority.[25] Obviously, by choosing Pudu Hepa as the protagonist, Bahar intends to demonstrate the status of women among the Hittites while questioning the nature of femininity. Following register from her notes on the play is an indication of this:

> *The protagonist Pudu-Hepa participated in wars alongside her husband, signed the Treaty of Kadesh (1278 BC), the first peace treaty recorded in history. She made her mark on history. Is it enough for a woman to become so famous that she achieves immortality?*[26]

According to Tunçel, in this play, the author places Pudu Hepa as an authoritative, respectable, strong-willed, ambitious, and wise woman against Haştayar, an attractive, ignorant, but also audacious woman whose only goal is to please her husband and who flaunts her femininity. The tragic conflict is based on this contrast while conveying the message that an ideal woman unifies these two modes of being.[27]

The play starts with news of a plague epidemic in the kingdom, while King Hattuşili is outside the palace. Pudu Hepa, who serves as regent, resorts to the historical clay tablets to find a solution. She finds out that there was a plague epidemic in the past and the reason was a sin that had been committed and had degraded the sacred institution of the family. As she struggles with the reality of the situation, a woman, Haştayar, enters the palace. Haştayar is worried since her lover does not speak to her and simply sleeps with her, so she seeks the advice of Pudu Hepa. Pudu Hepa makes out that Haştayar is actually talking about her husband, the king. This twist of fate makes her realize that she is partly to blame for her husband's infidelity. As a wife, she had treated him as a partner in ruling the kingdom and not a husband. Meanwhile, Hattuşili is killed just outside the palace because he cannot pronounce the entrance password, which is regularly changed as a precaution against the plague. Hattuşili, in reality, chooses not to recite the password on purpose, accepting responsibility for his crimes. To safeguard her husband's dignity, Pudu Hepa announces to the people that she caused the epidemic. Bahar has incorporated many historical facts about the Hittites into the play, but organized them into a fictional structure.

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[25] Ayşe Ulusoy Tunçel. "Beki L. Bahar'ın Oyunları ve Oyun Yazarlığı ." *MİMESİS Tiyatro Çeviri/Araştırma Dergisi* 13 (March 2007): 102.

[26] Bahar, *Toplu Oyunları 1,* 7.

[27] Tunçel. "Beki L. Bahar'ın Oyunları ve Oyun Yazarlığı", 103.

Another strong female protagonist of Bahar is Dona Gracia Nasi, in the play *Senyora/ Grasya Nasi* (1992), another biographical figure. Bahar presents *Senyora* as a documentary play. The play was awarded the Yunus Emre Achievement Award by the Bakırköy Municipality Theater in 1995 and has been translated into French. The play was written in honor of the 500th anniversary of the immigration of the Marranos[28] and Jews to the Turkish lands. It is about the life of the merchant Beatrice Luna de Mendes / Gracia Nasi (1510-1569), who lived in Portugal and in the Ottoman Empire after Kanuni Sultan Suleiman granted citizenship to save her from the Inquisition[29], which threatened to kill her because she practiced Judaism.[30]

Beatrice and Brianda are the daughters of the de Luna family, who fled the Inquisition in Spain and became Marranos in Portugal. Beatrice is a young lady who is interested in her ancestors and family history and so she discreetly studies Hebrew. She cannot hold back her rage and discloses her Jewish heritage when a knight she's dating insults the Jews during their conversation one day. She ends up being indicted by the Women of Lisbon, who represent the Catholic Community. Don Francisco Mendes, the king of spices whom Beatrice once refused, saves her from incarceration in a convent by marrying her. Soon enough, Francisco Mendes makes plans to flee to Antwerp, as the country is no longer safe. In the interim, Doctor Miguez, who goes out to help the wounded of the 1538 Lisbon Earthquake, is accused of bringing misfortune to the city because of his Jewish roots and is scapegoated and lynched by the angry aggrieved. After some time, Francisco Mendes also dies because of illness. After the death of her husband Beatrice devotes herself to the Jewish cause. The family leaves Lisbon soon after, then lives in Antwerp, Venice, and Ferrera, respectively. Meanwhile, Beatrice's sister Brianda and Francisco's brother Diego get married, but Diego dies too. Diego leaves his inheritance to Beatrice, whom he used to love, to spend it on ‘holy causes’. Wanting to seize the inheritance, furious Brianda reports her sister to the Venetian Inquisition. This situation puts not only Beatrice but also the whole family in a difficult position. They extricated from this challenging situation with the help of Moshe Hamon, the doctor of Kanuni Sultan Suleiman, and take refuge in the Ottoman Empire. However, this time, Brianda complains about Beatrice to Beyt-Din, the supreme judicial body of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire. The case ends in Beatrice’s favor. On top of all this, Beatrice learns that the Inquisition in Anacona killed one of her most loyal men. She calls on the community to boycott Anacona Port, but they cannot show solidarity with her. The play ends with Beatrice’s words expressing her disappointment. In his dissertation on Bahar’s plays, Özmen interprets *Senyora* as follows;

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[28] Marranos were the Jews that converted to Christianity because of the oppression in Iberia.

[29] In the 15th century an edict was issued in Spain according to which the Jews would either be expelled, convert to Christianity (become Marranos) or else they would be tortured and killed at the Inquisition Courts.

[30] Tunçel. "Beki L. Bahar'ın Oyunları ve Oyun Yazarlığı", 117.

> *Beki Bahar treats the survival struggles of Jews in Europe and Ottoman Empire from the second half of the 15th century to the end of the 16th century with her play Senyora, in the background of a series of conflicts of religion, individual-society, non-oppressive thought, spirit-emotion. She presents the reckoning remarkably. It depicts a period of almost a century in an outstanding plot, without deviating from the historical facts, with the psychosocial situations of the people. The inner conflicts of the characters about identity, religion, free-thinking and integration into the society they live in are given in the background, with the influence of humanism and Renaissance movements that started to affect Europe at that time.*[31]

Demokles’in Kılıcı/ Flavius ve Demokles (2004) is also a play based on biographical characters. Only this time, the characters are from different centuries. The play is about Flavius, who lived in the 1st century A.D., meeting Damocles, who lived in the 4th century B.C. in a cave where time stands still. In the introduction, Bahar gives historical background information about the characters and events. Yosef (Iosephos) Flavius comes from a family of religious officials. He was a mathematician, army leader, philosopher, and historian who lived in a time when the Roman Empire was a superpower. In 64 B.C., he was sent as part of a committee to negotiate the return of Jewish clergy who were being held as prisoners in Rome. He was able to succeed in the mission. After this accomplishment, he became a commander in the Jewish army and led the soldiers in defending Galilee against the Roman siege. However, when the Romans invaded the city, he and his soldiers had to take shelter in a cave where the soldiers were left with no other option but to surrender and so they decided to kill themselves. The Romans captured the sole survivor, Yosef. Soon after, he entered the service as a historian under the auspices of the Roman Emperor and was given the name Flavius. When the Roman army blockaded Jerusalem in 70 B.C., he was also part of the siege that famously brought down the Temple of Jerusalem, which is why the Jewish people scolded him for turning his back on his people. However, it is known that he never abandoned Judaism and, in his works, tried to show the Latin and Hellenistic world that it was a favorable religion.

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[31] Özmen, “Beki L. Bahar’ın Tiyatro Eserlerinde Sefarad Dünyası”, 47-48.

The second main character in the play is a court jester from the 4th century B.C., made famous through time by the phrase "Damocles' sword". Bahar, however, sets out on a mission to correct the misinformation surrounding this story. Damocles lived in the court of Dionysus, the 1st King of Syracuse. Legend has it that one day, Damocles told the king how wonderful and luxurious his life was. The king, wanting to show him what it was like to be in his position, made him sit on his throne with a feast before him and a sword over his head. This is the origin of the story, which is a symbol of the danger that surrounds people who are in positions of power.

There are two other characters in the play: Berenis (Berenike), a princess who is fictionalized in the play's story as being in love with Flavius, and Bannus, a philosopher who mentored Flavius when he was young. The play begins in the war's aftermath, which ends with the fall of Galilee. Flavius meets Bannus and Berenis in a cave, hoping for their help as he must make an honorable decision between life and death as his soldiers are about to commit mass suicide. Long discussions accompany his casuistry. After Bannus and Berenis leave, Flavius falls asleep, and when he awakens, he sees Damocles, who is as surprised as he is. Both are told that they will have a trial to defend themselves. Damocles is eager to correct the misunderstanding surrounding his life story and let the world know that he has no business having a sword associated with his name. Flavius wants to fix people's opinions of his actions and decisions by making his point. The scene continues with a mock trial, which the two decide to hold while waiting to prepare for their actual trial. Each defends themselves against the other, but it soon becomes clear that the actual trial is taking place in their own minds. The verdict is left to the audience as the play ends.

The last play to be examined here is *İkiyüzbininci Gece* (1986), written at the request of one of the Jewish associations to be staged on the five hundredth anniversary of the Sephardic people seeking refuge in the Ottoman Empire. The play is about the traditions of Jewish culture, customs, inter-communal and inter-community relations, cultural values and historical events. *İkiyüzbininci Gece* presents the life of Jews in the Turkish lands against the background of historical events such as the First World War, Balkan Wars, fires and cholera. It reflects the fundamental conflicts of the Jewish Community, domestic and foreign events, in accordance with historical reality. In doing so, Bahar questions certain traditions and values in the fictional space in which she positions the historical events.[32] While the themes of marriage, family relations, women and education are noticeable, how these events are fictionalized carries the author's questioning point of view.

The play contains 4 parts, each connected with a city and consisting of different episodes. The first part is set in Ankara during the First World War and the 16th century. In the first scene, which is set during the First World War, the economic difficulties, drought and livelihood problems of the Jews are depicted. Haymaçi, who does not understand that Aron wants to borrow his donkey Mercedes, thinks Aron wants his daughter instead of his donkey, and events develop because of this misunderstanding. In the second episode, Jewish women preparing winter provisions together give information about the Purim Festival. In the third episode, a play about the "blood libel"[33] is performed in the courtyard of the boys' school in Ankara in honor of the Purim Festival and the audience learns about the events in the 16th century through another play fictionalized in the play. The next three episodes are set in a Jewish neighborhood in the 16th century and provide information about the blood libel incidents of the time. Part two takes place in Bursa immediately after the Balkan War. Jewish marriage, involving the asking for a girl, and wedding traditions are introduced through the events that unfold on the axis of two young people named Yuda and Korin, who fall in love. The third part begins with the actors rushing through the stage, fleeing from the fire and cholera disasters in Edirne in the 19th century. After these time jumps, a woman remaining on stage says she is waiting for her husband's return, who has gone to the Balkan War. The first episode ends with a happy ending as her husband returns from the war. The next three episodes deal with the drama of 13-year-old Ester, who is married off to her late sister's widowed husband, so that the newborn baby of Sarah Kanetti, who died at a young age, will not go to a random stepmother. In Part 4, the author takes her readers to Istanbul. First, the Jews are mentioned who lived in Hasköy, Balat and Fener at the beginning of the 20th century. The actors speak half Turkish, half French. In the second episode, we learn that with the change in the social life of Jews in Istanbul in the 1930s, Hasköy and Balat lost their former popularity and now all shop in Pera. While the presenter tries to show the audience the modern Pera, he accidentally goes to the Byzantine era. In Pera, the city's tannery during the Byzantine Period, his wife abandons a man dealing with leather because of the unpleasant smell that permeates him. As the presenter tries to go to Pera in the 1930s, there is another time slip, and with it the readers learn about the Jews that contributed to Ottoman cultural life from the ghosts of the Nahmias family who brought the printing press to the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century. In the last scene, a Jewish family that owns a shop in Mahmutpaşa, the commercial center of Istanbul, search for a suitable groom.

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[32] Ibid., 176.

All the stories in this play are based on historical events. The spaces where the author introduces a critical approach are visible as the narratives and dialogues, in which she predicts how individual stories of the past might have occurred, as well as in the conflicts between the perspectives of the characters. Some stories and characters are based on Bahar's own family. In her memoir, she points out that the Edirne part of the play is based on the life story of her grandmother and great-great-grandfather, the poet Natan Malki, and his family. Moşe, a young soldier whose legs froze at the front during World War I and were therefore amputated, is indeed her mother's uncle.[34]

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[33] Allegations of the "Needle Barrel" or the "Blood Libel" are a myth that Jews put the blood of Christian or Muslim children in the bread they bake on Passover. It has been repeated from time to time since the 1st century with similar stories in different eras. In late 1553 or 1554, Suleiman the Magnificent issued an edict officially stating that blood libels against Jews were null and void.

Overall, the play is in line with the general discourse of tolerance and gratitude that characterizes the political discourse of the Jewish community in Turkey. However, as an individual, she does not see everything through rose-colored glasses deviating from the general trend, and this is visible in the play. She points out this discrepancy in the play's preface:

> *Contrary to the wishes of those who expected a play that begins in Balat, Hasköy, ends in Beyoğlu and Şişli, in which the women sing while hanging the laundry, and who refused to stage it that way after they read the draft during the first rehearsal and were surprised, I have finished it according to my heart's desire with a little editing. I apologize to them.*[35]

An Analysis Through the Texts

Bahar's plays put on trial all the concepts around her fragmented subjectivity from a historical point of view; her reckoning with her personal past and the history of the society she lives in merge. She firmly believes that one must know and question their past and origin and accept it to be a part of a future. In *Senyora* she has Beatrice speak on her behalf: *"Those who do not know the past cannot understand the present."*[36] Similar remarks come from Pudu Hepa the Hittite Queen, in Ölümsüz Kullar; "*One cannot win a war that's cause is unknown.*"[37] *"History is nothing but a repetition of itself through time."*[38] Whilst memory is crucial for a society to have an identity, traditions are bridges that connect the present to the past as Flavius' mentor in *Demokles'in Kılıcı* illustrates:

> *BANNUS- The important thing is that we stick to each other and hold on to our traditions, customs, beliefs, language, and value judgments... Not to deviate from them... As long as we can protect them and pass them on from generation to generation, we will live forever as a unique part of the colorful mosaic that makes up the world and will not disappear.*[39]

Moreover, in the preface to her play *İkiyüzbininci Gece*[40], Bahar, asks and answers the very simple but historically charged question; "who is a Jew?" In the precise way that she asks as can be seen below, the nuance already conveys her perspective; since she structures her question within a historical framework. "*Who is a Jew who has been in existence since the unknown ages of history?*"[41] When one studies this quote closely, it is evident that Bahar places the Jewish society in a historical context through which she constructs an idea of identity that is built up as a result of historical events. The trap here is that history itself is often institutionalized and politicized and can never be objective. But she shows she is aware of this. In the introduction to *Demokles'in Kılıcı* she questions:

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[34] Bahar, *Oradan Buradan: Altmış Yılın Ardından*, 80-81.

[35] Beki L. Bahar, *İkiyüzbininci Gece: Müzikal Oyun: IV bölüm*. (İstanbul: B.L. Bahar, 1986), 3.

[36] Bahar, *Toplu Oyunları 1*, 69.

[37] Ibid., 23.

[38] Ibid., 25.

[39] Beki Luiza Bahar, *Demokles'in Kılıcı Flavius ile Demokles* (İstanbul: Mitos Boyut Yayınları, 2004), 19.

[40] The play was written to be performed to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the arrival of the Jews in Ottoman lands after their expulsion from the Iberian continent in 1492. Here it must be noted that there were Jews in these lands before this event and Bahar expresses this fact on all occasions. In fact, the number of nights (two hundred thousand) in the title of this piece indicates that the Jews have lived in these lands for more than 500 years.

> *Can historians be objective? Someone who is praised to the heavens by one is referred to as "mad" by another one. Be that as it may, the people of the country demand its historians to glorify their ancestors and fill the pages of history with heroic epics.*[42]

This quote elucidates that she is critical towards historical narratives and discourses and is an advocate of a more analytical analysis of the past. Bahar is clearly fond of Ellis Rivkin, a historian well known for his acute analysis of the interrelationships between Jewish life and that of the surrounding culture and his application of innovative approaches to Jewish historical difficulties. His reconstruction of the Pharisees' dilemma and his idea of the "unity principle," which he considers as the primary constant in Jewish history, are the most well-known of these approaches. He believes that the Jewish people have faced and understood catastrophic upheavals throughout history without losing their identity or aspirations. Bahar takes on Rivkin's understanding of historiography; the historical continuum is not random and therefore incomprehensible, but rather is an explainable process. According to Rivkin, history is not accidental, nor is it the result of unexpected processes. Instead, it is the outcome of events and forces that are comprehensible and thus responsive to rational and analytic explanation.[43] Therefore, Bahar is after the analytic and rational explanations that cause events. In *Senyora*, she has her protagonist Beatrice explain the plausible reasons for Ottoman Sultan Suleiman saving her family from the Inquisition in Venice:

> *Suleiman the Magnificent risked a quarrel with the Pope and Venice by sending a special envoy to save us. He did this not only because the palace physician Hamon wanted it but also because of my fleet, which could sail far, my capitals, my great trading area, which included the whole of Europe.*[44]

The same remark is also found in the play *İkiyüzbininci Gece.* Indeed, it is critical for Bahar to interpret the past via an analytical lens that considers economic, political, and social forces rather than from an emotive perspective that can lead to fanaticism and aversion to change. Even more so, in *Demokles'in Kılıcı,* she places the past on trial in order to interrogate whether history's narration of the events or motivations of the individuals involved are accurate. Both

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[41] Bahar, *İkiyüzbininci Gece*, 4.

[42] Bahar, *Demokles'in Kılıcı*, 5.

[43] David Ellenson, "Ellis Rivkin and the Problems of Pharisaic History: A Study in Historiography," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* XLIII, no. 4 (1975): 788. https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/xliii.4.787

[44] Bahar, *Toplu Oyunları 1*, 108.

Flavius and Damocles are allowed to represent themselves, as the narratives surrounding their stories contain a great deal of hearsay.

She also criticizes suppressing one's identity by ignoring the past. The nurse's lines in *Senyora* are a typical example of Rıfat Bali's explanation of Jewish society's use of the word '*kayadez'* to silence those who dig into the past. Her protagonist, Beatrice, refuses to be silenced:

> *NURSE: Hush! It was Toledo; it was Roha. You play with the past, you always say what's on your mind. I don't have that problem with your sister Brianda.*
>
> *BEATRICE: Enough! I'm tired of you shutting me up and comparing me to Brianda. Hush! Hush! Hush! Who doesn't know we fled Spain?*[45]

This dialogue is an excellent example of navigating the dynamics at work in defining Bahar's identity. She weaves Nasi's journey of recognizing her origins and coming to terms with her Jewishness throughout the course of the play. The matter of descent is also discussed in *Demokles'in Kılıcı*. Flavius is accused of betraying his heritage by praising a Roman Commander and his son, as well as by integrating into Roman culture. He denies these accusations. He responds to the first accusation by stating that he was merely being objective, and that this is not treachery. Furthermore, he speaks of integrating rather than assimilating, unquestionably a value held by the Jewish minority in Turkish society.

Bahar does not hold back from further criticizing the way Jewish society responds to adversity and conflict. She blames ignorance and conformism in particular as Beatrice's following line shows: *"A society that defends itself against disasters by passive acts such as praying and fasting, and considers itself safe if it has three or five coins."*[46] Also, in the Edirne part of *İkiyüzbininci Gece*, the head of the school admonishes the schoolteacher Bella for attempting to innovate within the confines of the conventional school play. In a conversation with her friend Ester[47], she expresses her displeasure with this "*don't let it out of the room*" mentality.[48] There is little doubt that Bahar uses this phrase intentionally, as it is a characteristic phrase popular in Jewish society in Turkey. From both examples, one can infer that she relates conflict avoidance with blind devotion to tradition. It should also be noted that she favors these two characters that, after being subjected to the roles that society has imposed on them as women, they decide to break free as individuals and determine their own fate. Having been married twice for practical reasons, Ester is in a love affair with a man who loves her only for love's sake, but has become the object of gossip because she flirts with him. Therefore, she leaves Edirne and starts an independent life as a woman in Istanbul. Bella, the teacher, also wants to join her after her experience with the school principal. She wants to quit rather than get fired. This is a moving section of the play that strongly supports all the ideals that Bahar evidently holds dear as a woman. Independence, creativity, uniqueness, literacy...

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[45] Ibid.,, 61.

[46] Ibid., 118.

[47] Ester is the character based on Bahar's grandmother.

[48] Bahar, *İkizyüzbininci Gece*, 74.

Correspondingly, in *Senyora*, she emphasizes the individual's ability to choose his or her own destiny when Beatrice rebukes the nurse for attributing everything to fate: *"You cling only to fate. Did you see? You changed your fate by moving to Portugal."*[49] This question of deciding one's own fate as an independent individual vs. society's expectations is a conflict that Bahar certainly cares about. In fact, a sentimental piece is in her memoir where she writes about Berta, a woman she knew as a little girl who was her aunt's neighbor. Berta was a young woman without a drachma and lived with her brother, a bus driver. One night Berta disappears and everyone assumes someone has kidnapped her. By contrast, Bahar and her cousin recall seeing her in the past with a man with whom she was talking discreetly in the garden late at night. After some time, it turns out that she had run away with the driver, who wasn't Jewish. A few years later, news of her death arrives. Bahar is perplexed and cannot decide whether Berta pursued love with her own free will or had to settle for what she could find since neither her life with her brother's family was great, nor did she have a promising future. Even years later, when she writes about Berta in her memoirs, she confesses she cannot reconcile the story of Berta in her conscience.[50]

But it is not only individualism that Bahar problematizes in these instances. These characters have one thing in common: being women. There is an ache in Bahar's heart since she herself had to make certain choices as a woman, giving up her deepest desires. The following stanza from one of her poems, *Dişi Özlemi (The Aching Female),* is obviously about these longings:

> *Without answering to anyone*
> *as if she were a warrior*
> *and then, as a saint,*
> *if she could forget her femininity,*
> *seeing herself as equal to Adam*
> *and feel and live her personality, only her personality...*[51]

In *Ölümsüz Kullar*, she portrays the protagonist as a woman who has forgotten her femininity and is equal to her husband. This quality is shown as both a defect and strength as the character reconciles her understanding of being a woman throughout the play. One quality that the author absolutely favors is the literacy of this woman. This is obvious in the scene where Pudu Hepa studies the tablets to discover the cause of the epidemic. On another note, her dedication to her responsibilities as queen causes her to lose sight of her femininity and to neglect her husband.

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[49] Bahar, *Toplu Oyunları 1, 63.*

[50] Bahar, *Oradan Buradan: Altmış Yılın Ardından*, 23-30.

[51] Beki L. Bahar, *Kişi Bunalımı + Dişi Bunalımı* (Ankara: Ayyıldız Matbaası, 1970), 13.

Whereas the husband's mistress is presented as attractive but quite ignorant. She concludes that an ideal woman must have both qualities.[52] Nonetheless, she also expresses that it is a dilemma. This can be presumed from her advice to the mistress Haştayar, who wants to know how to become enlightened through knowledge. Pudu Hepa replies:

> *One cannot have what one desires so easily and quickly. You must go through sleepless nights. And this will cause you to lose many things. It will rob you of your beauty. You will have a hunchback because you read so much, and your eyes will become unhealed, your reflection will wither, and your lips will change color.*[53]

In this quote, she portrays a woman who dedicates herself to knowledge and society neglecting the society's expectations of femininity from a woman. This theme also echoes in her poem, *The Aching Female,* and it is expressed as the wish of a woman to fully embrace her real self, stripped of her femininity. However, as is seen in *Ölümsüz Kullar,* the society's expectations and the author's perspective is also inextricably linked causing an unresolved tension between the person's self-perception and desires and the discourses developed by society that the author also has naturally adopted.

Craig Calhoun's, discussion of the issues of identity in connection to the recognition problem to demonstrate that the matter of recognition is essential to any reflexivity help to illuminate this point:

> *We face problems of recognition because socially sustained discourses about who it is possible, or appropriate, or valuable to be inevitably shape the way we look at and constitute ourselves with varying degrees of agonism and tension.*[54]

It could be argued that for Bahar, the degree of agonism and tension caused by this problem in relation to conceptions of being a woman was quiet high and unresolved as is for the women in Pudu Hepa. In an interview where she tells the story of getting married to her husband, this unresolved conflict is reverberated:

> *The young man is staring at me. He is free to look as much as he wants! I used to be a tough girl. "What an elegant dress, it fits so well." "What's it for you?" I replied. I was a grumpy girl. But I knew he liked me, and I wasn't indifferent about it. Then someone else follows me around a lot; I get engaged reluctantly, then I break up with him. When he (my husband) finds out, he contacts my father. "I'd like to speak with you about a job," he says to my father. It never occurs to my father, and he says, "Don't come to me; I'll come to you." Anyway, when they meet, he says in the Jewish manner, "I want Beki's hand." My father is a shy man as well. He leaves the store without saying yes or no. He returns home and informs my mother. As I am preparing for the law exams, my father says, "Let's not say anything;*

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[52] Bahar, *Toplu Oyunları 1*, 36-37.

[53] Ibid., 37.

[54] Craig Calhoun, *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity* (Malden, Mass: Blackwell, 2003), 20.

> *now the girl is busy with the exam, let's not worry her". Will my mother relent? A husband is hard to find among us Jews, and there is the issue of money, which is customarily given from the girl's side, known as dowry. It was difficult to find a husband at the time. "How much money will this man want from us?" my father asks. Myself: "He would have put a man in the middle if he wanted money. Why be concerned about the drachma?" My father stated, "Is it free? What a pity!" I become enraged and say, "Dad, you won't give money." You call or send a man, you say yes, and you never discuss money. Do you understand me, dad? Nobody here says, "I want your daughter!" A man gets put in the middle, the man talks to him, and there's a bargain... My father finds a man and says, "Tell him I'll give him 3,000." "Thank you very much," he says. That is how we met and married.*[55]

As can be seen, she resists being treated as a commodity as the society expects her to be. The same manner is seen in Beatrice's initial refusal when Don Francisco asks from her brother her hand in marriage. It is almost a reenactment of Bahar's experience as a young girl:

> *That night, I forgot the rules of propriety that a young girl must follow. It was a pleasure to chat with Don Francisco. His answers and knowledge amazed me, and I listened to him without hiding my feelings. (Smiles meaningfully) He considers me a quiet, docile person who will look at him with admiration, listen to him, flatter him, and make him happy all his life. (Seriously) Give my thanks. If I need a library, I will consider it.*"[56]

This is the final and best possible example on the intimate manner in which she deals with the problems of identity as with other issues related to her experiences and understanding of selfhood. The themes and concepts in Bahar's plays are built around these experiences. Tracing these themes and concepts in her texts clarifies how Bahar negotiates her minority subjectivity in relation to writing.

Conclusion

Consequently, although there are unresolved issues and Beki Luiza Bahar's self is reflected in her texts as fragmented between the desires of the individual and the society, a struggle for identification and recognition is observable in the texts. Therefore, her playwriting can be described as a constant mediation between the contexts that define her identity; it is a search for subjectivity. The themes and concepts of memory, history, individualism, society, tradition, being a woman, independence and knowledge accompany this search that she voices in an intimate manner.

On a final note, considering the fact that she is the first published Turkish-Jewish woman playwright, theatre artists have paid little attention to her so far, an unfortunate fact that confirms the title of her memoir. One of the aims of this research was to demonstrate how valuable her works are as cultural products that reveal a society's fundamental dynamics.

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[55] Türkoğlu, Kutluata, and Bahar, "Türkiye'de Yahudi Olmak", 40.

[56] Bahar, *Toplu Oyunları 1*, 66.

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Araştırma Makalesi / *Research Article*

Fotoğraf, Ses, Kayıt Üçgeninde Tiyatro: Amazonlar’dan Televizyon Ekranına “The Encounter”

Theater in Terms of Photography, Sound and Recording: “The Encounter” from Amazon’s to Television Screen

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ÖZ

Bu çalışma, İngiltere temelli Complicité Theater’ın *The Encounter* adlı oyununun internet yayınını, dijitalleşen tiyatro bağlamında ele almayı amaçlamaktadır. Tiyatro yıllar içerisinde araçsallaşmış, dijital ile iç içe geçmiştir. Complicité Theater’ın prodüksiyonu *The Encounter*, sahnede tek bir oyuncu ve ona eşlik eden teknolojik altyapıyı barındıran bir prodüksiyondur. 2020 yılı itibariyle etkisini tüm dünyada gösteren pandemi döneminde seyircinin evlerinden kayıt aracılığıyla izleme olanağı bulduğu bu prodüksiyon, Simon McBurney tarafından Amazonlar’da mahsur kalan National Geographic fotoğrafçısı Loren McIntyre’ın hayatta kalma hikayesini anlatmaktadır. Hikaye, Petru Popescu’nun “Amazon Beaming” adlı eserinden sahneye uyarlanmıştır. Bu çalışma McIntyre’ın fotoğrafçılığını bir motif olarak ele alırken, ana akışında *The Encounter*’ın araçsallaşmış sahne uygulamalarını ve oyunun kaydedilmiş medya ile kurduğu ilişkiyi değerlendirecektir..

Anahtar Kelimeler: Fotoğraf, Ses, Kayıt, The Encounter, Complicité

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the Internet broadcast of the United Kingdom-based Complicité theater company’s play *The Encounter* in the context of digitalization in theater. Theater has been mediatized and intertwined with digital technology over the years. Complicité production *The Encounter* is a play that features a single actor on stage with the accompanying technological infrastructure. During the COVID-19 pandemic, which had its effect all over the world as of 2020, the audience could watch *The Encounter* from home through the recorded performance. In the play, Simon McBurney tells the survival story of *National Geographic* photographer Loren McIntyre, who was stranded in the Amazons. The story is adapted for the stage from Petru Popescu’s novel *Amazon Beaming*. Although this study considers McIntyre’s photography as a motif, it evaluates *The Encounter*’s mediatized staging and its relationship with recorded media..

Keywords: Photograph, Sound, Record, The Encounter, Complicité

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

From the 1990s, communication instruments have become widespread, and technological equipment has become more accessible to the public. In that situation, the theater has become more mediatized. Nowadays, the technology is developing with unavertable acceleration. Because the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the world for more than two years now, the theater has lost its ability to bring the audience and the actor together in a social environment. Although the future of theater becomes more debatable in this situation, many theorists have started questioning digitalization and live performance once again. Despite the difficulties of this period, Complicité’s production *The Encounter*, which will be discussed in this article, was watched by many people from many parts of the world via Complicité’s Internet broadcasting.

The Encounter is a performance in which technology has almost become the actor’s partner on stage. In that context, this study tries to examine the concept of mediatizing, which has been discussed by many theorists, in today’s conditions. This article discusses in four chapters the relationship between the performance and technology, sound, photography, and recorded media. Recorded media have become more important in theater practice during the pandemic. With this new experience provided by Internet broadcasts, the audience can see actors more closely and from different angles right from their homes, although they lack the company of other audience members. On the other hand, it is to be discussed whether this hybrid form, which offers a different theater experience for the audience, is closer to the practices of theater or cinema. In recordings, the presence of an actor on stage turns into a visual image. In this case, the audience watches a theatrical performance as a movie or a television show through which it acquires a different viewing practice in new conditions. By presenting a recording, Complicité challenges those practices and tries to involve the audience in the play. In that way, it tries to discuss the topics of the play in the context of current conditions.

Simon McBurney directed, and performed *The Encounter*, which UK-based Complicité debuted in 2015. He worked for more than ten years on the staging of the play, which was originally an adaptation of Petru Popescu’s novel *Amazon Beaming*. The novel tells the story of *National Geographic* photographer Loren McIntyre’s search in 1969 for the seminomadic community called Mayoruna, also known as the cat people, living in the remotest corners of the Amazons and thought to have been extinct at that time. This study uses *Amazon Beaming* as a source but is based on the text of *The Encounter* in particular. In addition to those sources, it uses the rehearsal notes to analyze the elements observed in the staging.

When McBurney was considering how to bring *Amazon Beaming* to the stage, he decided that he needed to convey the Amazon rain forest, one of the world’s most biodiverse regions, with a design that would appeal to the senses of the audience. For that reason, sound design has a very important role in the play. This design, in which the audience watches and listens to the entire play through earphones, enables the audience to approach the narrative with a sensory experience rather than creating an illusion for them. In the play, the Amazons and the Mayoruna tribe are not conveyed to the audience visually. The actor is accompanied by sound and light design. When telling the story of photographer Loren McIntyre, McBurney says the photography is flat, and a photograph is a memory from the past. McBurney underlines that he wants to invite the audience to the present. This study analyzes the performance, based on the approach of Complicité to the novel and to the Amazons.

Giriş

Philip Auslander, "Liveness: Performance In a Mediatized Culture" adlı kitabında sinema sanatının ortaya çıkışında tiyatronun pratiklerini kullandığından ve böylece kısa süre içerisinde tiyatronun kültürel pozisyonunu devraldığından söz eder.[1] İlk dönem sinema filmleri özellikle tiyatro pratiğinden izler barındırırken zaman içerisinde bu durum değişmiş, sinema kendine özgü anlatım biçimini geliştirmiştir. Televizyon yayınları ortaya çıktığında ise hem sinema hem tiyatro pratiğinden izler barındırır.

> *"Birleşik Devletler'de televizyon yayınları resmi olarak 1939 yılında National Broadcasting Company (NBC), The Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) ve Dumont'un farklı programlarla New York'da yayına geçmesi ile birlikte başlamıştır. 1940 yılına kadar 23 farklı televizyon istasyonu tüm ülkede aktif olarak yayın yapmaktaydı. (...) Televizyonun Birleşik Devletler'deki bu ilk fazında en merkezi endişe, televizyonun diğer eğlence ve iletişim formları; özellikle de radyo, film ve tiyatro ile olan ilişkisiydi. Televizyon sıklıkla, var olan formların bir hibridi olarak tanımlanıyordu."*[2]

Fakat sonra televizyonun var olan formların bir toplamı mı, yoksa özgün bir biçim mi olduğu tartışma konusu haline gelmiştir. Televizyon yayınlarının teknik açıdan sinemayla pek çok ortak noktası vardır. Her ikisi de kamera lensinden gelen görüntüyü işlemektedir. Fakat ilk dönemlerinde içerik olarak tiyatronun pratiklerini özellikle benimsemiş olan televizyon yayınları, "canlı yayın" özelliğini öne çıkarmıştır. Böylece her an ekranda görünen ve hemen kayboluveren görüntüler daha fazla dikkatle izlenmiş ve kaçırılmaması gereken özel etkinliklere dönüşmüşlerdir. Filmlerden farklı olarak televizyon yayınlarının özünde, bir etkinliği gerçekleştiği anda seyirciye ulaştırmak yatar.[3] İkinci Dünya Savaşı sebebiyle kesintiye uğrayan televizyon yayınları, savaş sonrası dönemde yeniden canlanmış ve artan bir ivmeyle devam etmiştir. Topluma evlerinden çıkmadan onları eğlendirme vaadi veren televizyon, dışarının güvensizliğine karşı yeni ve daha samimi bir izleme deneyimi sunmaktadır. Kuramcılar, televizyon yayınlarını tiyatro ve sinema etkinlikleriyle rekabet edebilecek denli güçlü yapan ana özellikleri, "anındalık" ve "samimiyet" olarak tanımlamıştır.[4] Televizyon yayınları savaş sonrası artan banliyöleşme bağlamında orta sınıf izleyici için önemli bir rol oynamıştır.

Televizyon yayınlarının yanı sıra, sahne üzerinde film, video gibi medyaların kullanımının artışıyla "canlılık" kavramı pek çok kuramcı tarafından ele alınmıştır. Sahne üzerinde filmin kullanılmaya başlaması 1910'lu yıllara dayanmaktadır. Steve Dixon, multimedya performansların gelişimini üç ayrı faz halinde değerlendirir: 1910'lu yıllar itibariyle fütürizmin sahneye yansımaları, 1960'larla birlikte farklı medyumların iç içe geçtiği performanslar ve 1990'lı yıllarda performansın bilgisayar teknolojileri ile buluştuğu denemeler.[5] Dixon ardından bu kullanımların ortaya attığı canlılık sorusu üzerinde durur:

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[1] Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance In a Meditized Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 12.
[2] A.g.e., 14.
[3] A.g.e., 12.
[4] A.g.e., 15.

> *"Canlılık kavramı, neredeyse bir yüzyıl önce film görüntülerinin canlı tiyatroya dahil olmasını takip eden süreçte, eleştirmenleri ve tiyatro izleyicisini ikiye bölen teorik bir problem olagelmiştir. Kavram, hala hem performans araştırmalarında, hem de daha geniş kültürel ve siber araştırmalarda boğuşulan bir bilmece olmaya devam etmektedir. Bu, önce bulutları karıştırıp bulanıklaştıran, ardından dijital performansa dair anlayışı netleştirip aydınlatan acı verici bir sorundur."*[6]

Dixon, canlılık problemini dijitalleşen sahnelemeleri anlamak adına önemli bir basamak olarak görür. Dixon, sahnelemelerde kullanılan görsellerin bilgisayarda üretilen görseller değil, "lens temelli kamera sisteminden" türeyen görüntüler olduğunu belirtir. Bu nedenle de bu problemi ele alabilmek adına, fotoğrafın temel bir başlangıç noktası olduğunu düşünmektedir. Dixon fotoğrafı ve canlılık problemini ele alırken Walter Benjamin ve Roland Barthes'in görüşlerini, ardından Philip Auslander ve Peggy Phelan'ın yaklaşımlarını karşılaştırmalı olarak incelemektedir. En iyi reprodüksiyonun bile zamanda ve mekanda, olayın geçtiği andaki mevcudiyetten yoksun olduğunu söyleyen Benjamin ve fotoğrafı varlığın kanıtı olarak yorumlayan Barthes'in yaklaşımları bu anlamda iki ayrı noktada durmaktadır. Benjamin orjinalin "aurasının" mekanik reprodüksiyonlarda kaybolduğunu öne sürer. Öte yandan, teknoloji ile yeniden üretilebilir oluşunun, sanat eserini ritüelin üzerindeki bir parazit olmaktan kurtardığını düşünmektedir. Bu durumda sanat eseri ritüel tarafından değil, daha farklı bir pratik; politika tarafından desteklenmeye başlar.[7] Benjamin'in bu yaklaşımı farklı yankılar bulur. Bir yandan Phelan performansın eşsiz aurasına değer vermektedir. Performansın ancak canlı bedenlerin mevcudiyeti ile, "o anda" gerçekleşmekte ve kaybolmakta olduğunu ifade eder.[8] Ona göre performans, yeniden üretilebilir olmayana değer yükleme girişimidir ve performansın en güçlü yanı, kitlesel yeniden üretimden uzak olmasıdır. Phelan performansın kaydedilemeyeceğini ve belgelenemeyeceğini söyler. Aksi takdirde yeniden üretim döngüsüne dahil olacak ve bir kez dahil olduktan sonra performanstan başka bir şeye dönüşecektir.[9] Öte yandan Auslander ise artık "canlı" ya da medyatize performanslar arasında bir fark kalmadığını öne sürer. Benjamin, mekanik yeniden üretimin sanat eserini "kabuğundan çıkardığını" ve onun aurasını tahrip ettiğini söylemektedir. Auslander da buradan yola çıkarak artık kabuğundan çıkmış sanat eseri ve reprodüksiyon arasında herhangi bir fark kalmadığını, performansın da bir metnin yeniden üretimi olduğunu ifade eder.[10]

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[5] Steve Dixon, *Digital Performance: A History of New Media In Theater, Dance, Performance Art and Installation* (Massacushetts: MIT Press, 2007), 87.

[6] A.g.e., 115.

[7] Walter Benjamin, *Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,* çev. J.A. Underwood (New York: Penguin Books, 2008), 18.

[8] Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 148.

[9] A.g.e., 146.

[10] Dixon, *Digital Performance: A History of New Media In Theater, Dance, Performance Art and Installation,* 117.

Canlılık kavramı izleyiciler açısından ise farklı bir bağlamda önem taşır. Canlı olduğu özellikle belirtilen televizyon yayınları daha fazla ilgi odağı haline gelmiş, hatta bazı yayınlar önceden kaydedilmiş olsa da yayın akışında izleyici için “o an gerçekleşiyormuş” hissiyatı yaratmayı başarmıştır. Seyirci o ana özel gerçekleşen yayınları, kaydedilmiş ve tekrar tekrar izlenebilir filmlere oranla daha büyük bir heyecanla takip etmiştir. Bununla birlikte özellikle 60’lı yıllardan itibaren performans sanatı, toplu üretim mantığıyla seyircilerin evlerine ulaşan ve toplumun giderek evlerine çekilmelerine sebep olan televizyon yayınlarına karşı, “canlı” performansları bir mücadele aracı olarak görmüştür. Bu dönemde özellikle performansın canlılık hissini daha da arttıracak seyirci etkileşimleri önem kazanmıştır. Dönemin politik ve kültürel değişim atmosferinin yoğun etkisini taşıyan, aynı zamanda ritüelistik özelliklerin arttırıldığı bu performanslar, tiyatronun metne bağlı yapısını kıran devrimci özellikleriyle ön plana çıkmaktaydı. Örneğin The Performance Group’un *Dionysus in 69* (1969) adlı oyunu, Euripides’in *Bakkhalar* metninden yola çıkmıştır, fakat bu estetik biçimi sosyal bir etkinliğe çeviren, seyircinin katılımıyla gerçekleşecek bir ritüeli hedeflemektedir. Seyirci böylelikle televizyon ya da sinemanın sunamadığı bir etkileşim alanına kavuşur: Oyuncularla birlikte sahnede bulunmak ve oyuna etki edebilmek.

Öte yandan aynı dönemde Roberts Blossom, Wolf Vostell, Nam June Paik gibi pek çok sanatçı interdisipliner arayışlarla medyanın performansla iç içe geçtiği çalışmalar yapmıştır. Nam June Paik, televizyon ekranlarına, video ve film parçalarına eserlerinde büyük bir yer vermekteydi ve “toplu tüketim odaklı ve teknoloji takıntılı bir toplumun şeytanlarını kovalamak için sanat ve teknolojiyi sentezleyen bir tekno-şaman” olarak görülüyordu.[11] Bunun yanı sıra ana akım tiyatro biçimleri de sahnelemelerini araçsallaştırmaktaydı. Sinemanın tüm teknik detaylarına, sahnelerin parça parça çekiliyor olmasına, oyuncuların performansları üzerine dublaj yapılması gibi dışsal müdahalelere karşın seyirci için gerçekçi bir atmosfer yakalamış olması, tiyatroda da benzer bir etkiyi yakalamak isteyen gerçekçi tiyatro biçimleri için ilham olmuştu. 90’lı yıllardan itibaren iletişim araçları yaygınlaşmaya, teknolojik donanım daha ulaşılabilir olmaya ve böylece tiyatro da daha fazla araçsallaşmaya -medyatize hale gelmeye- başlamıştır. Günümüzde ise teknolojide hızına yetişmenin mümkün olmadığı yeni gelişmeler yaşanırken, bir yılı aşkın bir süre boyunca tüm dünyayı etkisi altına alan pandeminin yarattığı güncel koşullar sonucunda tiyatro, seyirci ve oyuncuları sosyal bir ortamda karşı karşıya getirme olanaklarından yoksun kalmıştır. Bu durumda çoğu tiyatro hızla koşullara uyum sağlama zorunluluğunu hissetmiştir. Kimi çalışmalar ise tiyatronun bir araya getirici özelliğini farklı biçimlerle yeniden oluşturmaya çalışmıştır. Buna örnek olarak Hollanda temelli Nineties Production’ın *Nineties Lab* adlı çalışması verilebilir. *Nineties Lab,* pandemi döneminde dijital bir “şimdi ve burada” deneyimini araştırmak adına kurulmuştur. “Zamanda paylaşılan fakat mekanda olmayan kolektif bir deneyime sahip olabilir miyiz? Ya o mekan ‘sanal bir sahne’ ise?"[12] sorusuyla yola çıkan ekip, bir tiyatro binasında yer alabilecek mimari yapıları sanal bir ortama taşıyarak seyircinin de kamera ve mikrofonuyla aktif katılım halinde olabileceği bir yapı kurmuştur. Fakat bu noktada farklı endişeler devreye girmektedir. Bu durumda canlılık tartışmasından daha farklı bir tartışma söz konusu haline gelir. Eleni Timplalexi, pandemi döneminde tiyatroların büyük oranda online üretime geçmesinin etkileri ve yan etkilerini ele aldığı yazısında sanatın internet ortamındaki içeriklerden biri haline gelmesi üzerine yazar:

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[11] A.g.e., 94.

> *"(...) tiyatro performansı çevrimiçi olarak, ister kaydedilmiş ister "canlı" olarak gösterildiğinde, bir web sitesinde, bir web kanalında veya platformda 'sanat'tan daha ziyade bir 'içerik' olarak hizmet ederek web'in hipermetinsel multimedya benliklerindeki başka bir öge haline gelir. Hipermedyanın semiyotik zenginliği, kısa sürede sanatsal performansı metin, animasyon ve reklam afişleri gibi potansiyel unsurlarından biri olarak soğurduğu, ontolojik olarak düz ve içerik odaklı bir yapı ile sonuçlanır."*[13]

Bu koşullarda tiyatronun geleceği, ortaya çıkan yeni formların tiyatroyla ilişkisi gibi konular daha fazla tartışılır hale gelirken, pek çok kuramcı tarafından dijitalleşme ve canlılık kavramları da tekrar masaya yatırılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın ele alacağı *The Encounter* adlı prodüksiyon da pek çok tiyatro topluluğunun yaptığı gibi Complicite Theater'ın oyunu internet ortamına açmasıyla seyirciyle buluşmuştur. Bu durumda koşullar insanları evleriyle ya da belirli ortamlarla sınırlarken, bir anlamıyla da internet aracılığıyla sınırları aşan bir etkileşim ortamı mümkün olmuştur.

Bu çalışma, teknolojik imkanlara sahip bir performans olan *The Encounter*'ı ele alırken pek çok kuramcı tarafından masaya yatırılan canlılık mefhumunun günümüz şartlarında ne ifade ettiğini de irdelemeye çalışacaktır. Pandemi döneminde izleme olanağı bulunan oyunların büyük çoğunluğunu seyircili oyunların önceden çekilmiş kayıtları oluştururken, bir kısmını sahneden seyircisiz yapılan canlı yayınlar, bir kısmını ise video konferans platformları üzerinden yapılan buluşmalar oluşturmaktadır. Kimi oyunlar sinemasal bir teknikle çekilmiş kayıtlara, kimileri ise dördüncü duvarın ötesinden, tek bir noktadan çekilmiş kayıtlara sahiptir. Sinemasal tekniklerin kullanıldığı kayıtlar seyirci için tiyatroyu televizyon ekranından daha rahat izlenebilir bir hale getirmiştir. Pandemi şartlarında kaydedilmiş medya kaçınılmaz bir biçimde tiyatro pratiğinde önemini arttırmıştır. Bu yeni deneyimle seyirci, evinde oturmaktayken oyuncuyu daha yakından ve farklı açılardan görebilme olanağına kavuşmaktadır. Öte yandan bu yeni melez formun tiyatronun mu yoksa sinemanın mı pratiklerine daha yakın olduğu bir soru işareti yaratmaktadır. Kayıtlardan izlenen oyunda, sahnede canlı bir bedenin mevcudiyeti, görsel bir imgeye dönüşmektedir. Bu durumda bir film ya da televizyon izler gibi bir tiyatro sahnelemesi izleyen seyirci de yeni koşullarda farklı bir izleme alışkanlığı edinmektedir. *The Encounter* sahnelemesinde Complicite Theater bu izleme pratiklerini sorgulamaya çalışan bir kayıt sunarak oyunun hali hazırda ele aldığı soruları güncel koşullar bağlamında da değerlendirmeye çalışmaktadır.

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[12] Nineties Producitons, erişim 02 Kasım, 2021. https://www.ninetiesproductions.nl/en/ninetieslab/

[13] Eleni Timplalexi, "Theatre and Performance Go Massively Online During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Implications and Side Effects," *Homo Virtualis* 3, no. 2 (2020): 45.

1. "The Encounter" ve Teknoloji

İngiltere temelli Complicite Theater tarafından 2015 yılında ilk kez sahnelenen *The Encounter,* Simon McBurney tarafından yönetilmiş ve performe edilmiştir. Asıl olarak Petru Popescu'nun *Amazon Beaming* adlı eserinden uyarlama olan bu çalışmanın sahnelemesi üzerine on yılı aşkın bir süre çalışan McBurney, aynı zamanda çalışmaları kapsamında 2013 yılında Brezilya'ya bir seyahat yapmıştır. *Amazon Beaming'*de National Geographic fotoğrafçısı Loren McIntyre'ın hikayesi anlatılmaktadır. Roman 1969 yılında Loren McIntyre'ın, Amazonlar'ın en ücra köşelerinde yaşayan, o yıllarda nesillerinin tükendiği düşünülen, kedi insanlar olarak da bilinen yarı göçebe topluluk Mayoruna'ları aramak üzere yola çıkmasıyla başlar. Brezilya ve Peru'nun sınırında Javari Vadisi olarak bilinen bölgede esrarengiz kabile ile ilk iletişimi fotoğraflama arzusuyla McIntyre, yakıtı bitmekte olan helikopterden inerek kamp kurmaya karar verir ve ekibine 3-4 gün içerisinde gelip onu alabileceklerini söyler. Fakat bu gerçekleşmez. Mayoruna kabilesinden olduğunu düşündüğü birkaç kişi ile yaşadığı ilk kontağın heyecanıyla bulunduğu yeri işaretlemeyi unutan McIntyre, peşine takıldığı kabile üyeleriyle iletişim kurmak adına zorlu geçen ve ölümle burun buruna geleceği büyük bir maceraya atılmıştır. Yaşadıkları, McIntyre'ın hayata, kültüre, insanın iletişim yollarına dair bakışını derinden etkilemiştir. 1987 yılında Amazonlar'a yaptığı bir yolculuk sırasında McIntyre ile tanışan Petru Popescu bu hikayeyi yazmak ister ve böylece uzun mektuplar ve ses kayıtları aracılığıyla sürüp giden detaylı bir çalışma döneminin sonunda Popescu, 1991 yılında *Amazon Beaming* adını verdiği eserini tamamlar ve kitap basılır. Simon McBurney ise yıllar sonra bir arkadaşının tavsiyesiyle karşılaştığı bu kitabı sahneye koymaya karar verir. Nasıl bir yol izleyeceğini düşünürken dünyanın en büyük biyoçeşitliliğe sahip bölgelerinden olan Amazon yağmur ormanlarını, seyircinin duyularına hitap edecek bir tasarımla aktarması gerektiğine karar verir. Bu süreçte pek çok kişi ile görüşmeler ve röportajlar gerçekleştiren McBurney, Yawanawa kabilesinden Amazon kabilelerinin haklarını savunan aktivist ve sanatçı Nixiwaka Yawanawa ile de görüşür ve çalışmasında Amazonlardaki kabilelerin petrol şirketlerine karşı verdiği mücadeleyi dikkate alır. Amazon kabileleri haklarını savunan aktivistlerle, iklim değişikliği uzmanlarıyla, okyanusbilimcilerle ve sinir bilimcilerle yaptığı konuşmalar aynı zamanda parçalar halinde oyunda da yer almaktadır. McBurney fotoğraftan insan-doğa ilişkisine, zaman algısından ortak anlayışa pek çok tema geliştirip, bir yandan da hikayenin akışını parçalara bölerek ekibiyle yaratıcı bir çalışma içerisine girer.[14] Uzun çalışmaların sonucunda yeni bir metin üretilir ve bu metne "oyuncu" karakteri de dahil edilir. "Oyuncu" karakteri olarak Simon McBurney kendi hayatından kesitleri, prova sürecindeki tecrübelerini ve en önemlisi kızı Noma McBurney ile diyaloglarını da oyunun bir parçası haline getirir. McBurney yaptığı araştırmalar ve röportajlar doğrultusunda anlatıda insana, kültüre, mülk edinmeye, fotoğrafa, sese ve insan bilincine dair farklı katmanlar oluşturur.

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[14] Making the Encounter, Workshop notes 3.4.14, erişim 06 Ekim, 2021, http://www.complicite.org/encounterresource/

Tüm bu çalışmaları sahneye aktarmak için doğru yolu araştıran ekip, teknolojik donanımla denemeler yapmaya başlar. Oyunda mikrofonlar oyuncunun en büyük eşlikçisidir. Complicite ses tasarımcıları Gareth Fry ve Pete Malkin'in çalışmaları sonucunda ses tasarımı oyunun en önemli parçalarından biri haline gelir. Metnin girişinde dekor anlatılırken görüntü, yankıyı önleyici ses geçirmez materyalle kaplı duvar, bir masa, birkaç mikrofon, ortada binaural mikrofon,[15] masanın yanında çoklu plastik su şişelerinden oluşan "sıkıcı" bir görüntü olarak betimlenir. Oyuncu gündelik bir konuşma ile seyircileri karşılar. Kızından, hayattan, selfielerden, çocuklara anlatılan hikayelerden söz eden oyuncu, bu hikayelerin yakınlık hissini önemsediğini söyledikten sonra seyircilerden koltuklarının yanında duran kulaklıkları takmalarını ister. Bu noktadan sonra seyirci tüm oyunu kulaklıklarla izleyecektir. Simon McBurney oyunun başında tüm teknolojik ekipmanı detaylı bir biçimde seyirciye tanıtarak seyirciyi neredeyse Brechtyen bir eğilimle yetkili kılmak istediğini, neyin nasıl çalıştığını anladıktan sonra seyircinin asıl hikayeye daha kolay odaklanacağını düşündüğünü belirtir.[16] Oyunda teknoloji, hikayenin geçtiği Amazonlar ile tam bir tezat oluşturacak kadar yoğun bir yer kaplamaktadır. Simon McBurney de her yanı plastik kaplı bu sahnenin her anlamıyla yapay olduğunun altını çizmek istediğini söyler.[17]

Bu performansın kayıt üzerinden, evlerinde oturan seyirciler tarafından izlenmesi ise bambaşka bir teknolojik çalışmayı ve yeni bir tartışmayı beraberinde getirmektedir. Bu yazının son bölümü Simon McBurney'nin kaydedilmiş performansı ve genel anlamda kayıt altındaki medya üzerine tartışmalara yoğunlaşırken diğer iki bölüm oyun özelinde bir motif olarak fotoğrafın ve işlevsel olarak ses teknolojilerinin yerini ele alacaktır.

2. Fotoğraf Teknolojisi ve Loren McIntyre

Biçimsel olarak oyunun yapısında karşımıza çıkmayan fotoğraf, oyun boyunca bir motif olarak hikaye akışında önemli bir yer tutmaktadır. National Geographic fotoğrafçısı Loren McIntyre'ın hikayesini dinlerken kültür ve doğa ikiliği içerisinde teknolojinin oynadığı karmaşık rolü de takip etme şansımız olur. *Amazon Beaming,* Loren McIntyre'ın kabileyi fotoğraflama arzusuyla çıktığı bu yolculukta kültürü sorgulayan bir noktaya geldiğini anlatmaktadır. Bu keşfedilmemiş kabileyi fotoğraflamak her ne kadar bir fotoğrafçı için büyük bir heyecan ve başarı olarak değerlendirilse de genellikle bu karşılaşma keşfedilmemiş kabileler için olumsuz sonuçlanmaktadır. Petrol şirketleri tarafından tehdit altında yaşayan, çoğu zaman bu tehdit sebebiyle yer değiştirmek zorunda kalan, insan avına maruz kalan kabileler "modern insan" ile karşılaşmak konusunda Batılı anlatılardan daha farklı deneyimlere sahiptirler. Simon McBurney global kabile hakları hareketi Survival'dan Rebecca Spooner ile yaptığı konuşmalarda bu konu üzerine yoğunlaşmıştır. Mayoruna kabilesinin kontağa zorlandığı ve yaşadıkları bölgede etkinliğe geçmek isteyen şirketlerce baskıya maruz kaldığından söz eden Spooner, aynı zamanda bu kontağın kabile insanlarında hastalıklara ve salgınlara sebep olabildiğini de ekler.[18] Bu keşfedilmemiş ve Batılı yaşam biçiminden oldukça farklı dünyayı tanıma arzusunun bu nedenle yalnızca merakla değil fakat Batılı sömürgeci düşünceyle de ilişkisi bulunmaktadır. Öte yandan Spooner toplulukların kar amacı gütmeyen iletişimden mutlu olduklarını, aracılara karşı bir düşmanlık beslemediklerini de belirtir.[19] Keşfedilmemiş kabilelerin fotoğrafları, kabilelere dair bu yaşamsal bilgileri barındırmaksızın "egzotik" bir dünyadan sessiz kesitler sunmaktadır. Batılı kültür, kameranın lensinden baktığı vahşi doğayı fotoğraf karesine yerleştirmekte, onu alımlanabilir, ulaşılabilir bir medyaya dönüştürmektedir. Susan Sontag'ın fotoğrafı "bedenlere, zamana ve uzama sembolik olarak sahip olma"[20] olarak niteleyişi bu noktada Amazonlar'daki yaşamın fotoğraflanması konusunda önemli bir noktaya işaret eder. Kabilelerin fotoğrafları, Batı toplumuna uzaklardaki dünyanın bilgilerine sahip olma imkanı vermektedir.

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[15] İnsan beyni, sesi sağ ve sol kulak olmak üzere iki kanal aracılığıyla algılamaktadır. Binaural mikrofon, insanın genellikle bir insan kafası şeklinde ve ortalama bir insanın kafası boyutlarındadır. "Dummy head recording" olarak bilinen bu kayıt biçiminde mikrofon birden fazla sesi algılayabilme kapasitesi sayesinde ortamdaki sesleri çoklu bir biçimde kaydeder. Aynı zamanda mankenin kafasında bulunan kulak kepçesi ve kulak kanallarının yapısı, bu alana yerleştirilen mikrofonların sesi bu yapılardan geçerek kaydetmesine olanak tanır ve bu yolla insanın işitme deneyimine daha yakın bir kayıt oluşturulur.

[16] Simon McBurney, "This Is a Journey Into Sound: Simon McBurney on 'The Encounter,'" röportajı yapan Isaac Butler, American Theatre, 19 Nisan, 2017, erişim 06 Ekim, 2021. https://www.americantheatre.org/2017/04/19/this-is-a-journey-into-sound-simon-mcburney-on-the-encounter/

[17] A.g.e.

Oyunda aynı zamanda gündelik hayatımızın giderek ayrılmaz bir parçası haline gelen fotoğraf çekme eğilimi üzerinde durulur. Oyunun başlangıcında oyuncu, seyirciyle gündelik bir konuşma içindeyken kızından ve kızının onun akşamları çalışmak zorunda olduğuna inanmadığından söz eder. McBurney kızına orada olduğunu ispatlamak için seyircilerin fotoğrafını çekeceğini söyler:

> "*OYUNCU. Kızım 5 yaşında. Gece çalıştığıma inanmıyor, o yüzden burada olduğumu kanıtlamak için iPhone'umla sizin bir fotoğrafınızı çekeceğim. Burada bütün hayatım boyu çekildiğim fotoğraflardan daha fazla sayıda çocuklarıma ait fotoğraflar var. Ve şunlar sadece geçen hafta çekilenler. Ve yalnızca bir sayfada babamın bütün çocukluğuna ait fotoğraflardan daha fazlası var. Çocuklarımın bu fotoğraflarına baktığımda büyük bir sorumluluk hissediyorum. Çünkü onlara baktıklarında geride kalan hayatlarının tümüne bakıyor gibi hissediyorlar. Ama bu onların yaşamı değil, bu sadece bir hikaye. Ve bunları gerçekle karıştıracaklarından endişe duyuyorum -tıpkı bizim de hikayeleri gerçeklerle karıştırdığımız gibi."*[21]

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[18] Rebecca Spooner, "Making The Encounter," erişim 06 Ekim, 2021, http://www.complicite.org/encounterresource/map/rebecca-spooner.html

[19] A.g.e.,

[20] Dixon, *Digital Performance: A History of New Media In Theater, Dance, Performance Art and Installation,* 118.

[21] Complicite Theater/ Simon McBurney, *The Encounter* (London: Nick Hern Books, 2016), 37.

McBurney'nin o gece çektiği fotoğraf, orada olduklarını ispatlayan, anı katılaştırıp saklayan bir kesit gibidir. İnsanın fotoğrafla kurduğu ilişki, teknolojinin gelişmesiyle evrilmiştir ve evrilmeye devam etmektedir. Susan Sontag, *On Photography* adlı eserinde fotoğraf biriktirmenin dünyayı biriktirmek olduğunu ve fotoğrafın dünyayı bir çerçeveye sıkıştırarak, daha ulaşılabilir kıldığını söyler.[22] Oyunda da buna benzer bir biçimde McIntyre Amazonlar'daki bilinmez dünyayı fotoğraf çerçevesine sıkıştırmak istemektedir. Böylece bu dünyaya ait bilgiler kolayca ulaşılabilir hale gelmektedir. Hayatı boyunca gerçekliği kamera lensinin içerisinde arama tutkusunda olan McIntyre, nihayet bununla yaşamını kazanabilmeye başladığında dünyanın farklı noktalarına pek çok yolculuk gerçekleştirir. Amerika ve sanayileşmiş toplumların Amazonlar'ı yeni keşfedilmiş harika bir oyuncak gibi görmesi sebebiyle, bu uzak diyarlardan gelen fotoğraflara büyük bir talep oluşur.[23] Fakat bir sabah fotoğraf makinesinin kabile tarafından alınmış olduğunu fark ettiğinde, McIntyre orada var oluşuna dair büyük bir boşluğa düşmüştür.

Roland Barthes'in de Sontag'ın görüşlerine benzer bir yaklaşımı olmakla birlikte, Barthes *Camera Lucida* adlı eserinde bu süreci daha öznel ve bireysel bir fenomenolojik süzgeçten geçirerek fotoğrafın özüne dair kişisel bir sorgulamaya girer.[24] Barthes, fotoğrafın belgesel özelliğine vurgu yapar ve her fotoğrafın varlığın bir kanıtı olduğunu, fotoğrafın kesin olarak neyin olmuş olduğunu söylediğini, varlığı onayladığını söyler. Ona göre fotoğraf ne bir sanat biçimi, ne de bir iletişim biçimidir; yalnızca bir temsildir, gerçek ve "olmuş olan"ın temsili.[25] *The Encounter'*da da bir kabilenin varlığını Batılı kültüre kanıtlama girişiminde olan bir fotoğrafçı görürüz. Fakat fotoğraf makinesi yanında olmadan McIntyre, orada bulunma amacını; kedi insanların varlığını belgelemeyi gerçekleştiremeyecektir. Gerçekten de fotoğraf makineleri yıllar içerisinde belgeleme işleviyle ön plana çıkmıştır. Sontag fotoğrafı bir imge olmanın yanı sıra aynı zamanda hafif, üretmesi ucuz, taşıması, biriktirmesi, saklaması kolay bir nesne olarak tarif eder.[26] Fotoğraf makineleri giderek kolayca ulaşılabilir bir hale geldiğinde, bu portatif makineler aile hayatını belgelemeye, çıkılan gezileri hediyelik eşya gibi nesneleştirebilmeye, uzak, "egzotik" dünyalardan bilgi getirmeye başlamıştır. Sontag, turistlerden örnek vererek çoğu turistin, karşılaştığı dikkate değer her şeyle aralarına bir kamera yerleştirme zorunluluğu hissettiğini söyler.[27] Artık fotoğraf çekmeye değecek yerlere gidilmekte, fotoğraf çekmenin kendisi etkinliğin önemli bir parçası haline gelmektedir.

> "*Etkinlik bittiğinde, fotoğraf hala var olacak, etkinliğe bir ölümsüzlük (ve önem) atfedecektir –ki başka türlü tadı çıkmaz. Dışarıda gerçek insanlar kendilerini ya da diğer gerçek insanları öldürmekte iken fotoğrafçı, kamerasının arkasında durur ve başka bir dünyanın küçük parçalarını yaratır: bize daha uzun süre var olma teklifinde bulunan görüntü dünyasını.*"[28]

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[22] Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Rosetta Books, 2005), 18.

[23] Petru Popoescu, *Amazon Beaming* (London: Abacus Books, 1993), 93.

[24] Dixon, *Digital Performance: A History of New Media In Theater, Dance, Performance Art and Installation,* 118.

[25] A.g.e., 120.

[26] Sontag, *On Photography*, 1.

[27] A.g.e., 6.

[28] A.g.e., 8.

Bu anlamıyla fotoğraf, "anı ölümsüzleştirme" teklifinde bulunur. Günther Anders de turistlerin fotoğraf çekme alışkanlığından söz ederken, bu konuya başka bir boyuttan bakar;

> "*Bu turistlerin istisnasız hepsi sahiden de bu rahatsızlığa [eşi olmayan yapılar karşısındaki afallama] ilaç olacak şeyi yanlarında taşıyorlar. Kullandıklarında, onları anında rahatlatacağı garantili bir tür iğne diyelim. Daha doğrusu güzelliği ve sınıflandırılamazlığıyla fazlaca kafalarını karıştıracak bir benzersiz yapıyı anında 'motif'e çevirebilmelerine yardımcı olacak bir alet.'*'[29]

Anders, modern insanın seri üretim çağında gerçekliği ancak kopyalarla üretebildiğini söylemektedir. Batılı kültür için bir bilinmez olan Amazonlar, fotoğraflar aracılığıyla motife dönüşmektedir. Anders'e göre deneyimlerimizin çoğu şablonlaşmıştır ve artık gerçeklik, kaydedilmek suretiyle sahip olunan nesnede görülür. Sontag da benzer bir biçimde fotoğrafın insanları nesneleştirdiğini ve sembolik olarak sahip olunabilir hale getirdiğini söyler.[30] Ardından Sontag, savaşın ve uçak kazaları gibi olayların kameraya alınmasından söz eder. Kaybı, yoksunluğu, acıyı ve korkuyu deneyimlemekten kaçınan, ölümü doğal ve kaçınılmaz değil de korkunç bir felaket olarak niteleyen modern toplum, bu korkunç acıları içeren fotoğraflara büyük bir merakla bakar.[31] Bu acıları yaşamaksızın onlara dair etkileyici bilgiler edinir. Sontag'ın bu yorumu tragedyanın yaratmak istediği acıma ve korku duygularını akla getirir. Seyirci bir taraftan izlediği/baktığı karaktere acımakta, bu durumun vahimliğinden kaynaklı duygulanım yaşamakta, bir taraftan da bu acıları yaşayanın kendisi olmamasının verdiği iç rahatlığına sahip olmaktadır. Fotoğraf da bu kathartik etkiyi potansiyel olarak barındırmaktadır. Üstelik bakılan oyuncular değil, hayatın anlık kesitleridir. Bakan kişi için fotoğrafı bu kadar etkileyici kılan da çerçeveye giren kişinin "gerçek" olmasıdır. Fotoğraf, bakan kişiye bu sıkıntıları deneyimlemeksizin, hayata dair bir "gerçeğin" bilgisini açar. Bu perspektiften oyunu incelediğimizde, Loren McIntyre, Amazonlar'da karşılaştığı bu esrarengiz ve türünün tükendiği sanılan kabileyi fotoğraflayarak bu kabilenin varlığını dünyaya kanıtlamış olacaktır. McIntyre'ın fotoğrafı, toplumsal hayatın içerisinden ona bakan kişi için uzaklardaki bir yaşamı çok yakın kılacak, kişiye dünyanın öteki ucuna dair bir bilgi verecektir. Sontag, fotoğrafın uzakta ve egzotik olanı çok yakın, samimi bir hale, tanıdık olanı ise küçük ve soyut bir hale getirdiğini söyler.[32] McIntyre'ın fotoğrafları da bu işlevi yerine getirmektedir. Simon McBurney de fotoğraftaki kolonyal yaklaşım üzerine fikir yürütürken, oyunla bağlantıları hakkında yorum yapar:

> *"'[Loren] Bu insanlardan bir şey alıyordu. Fotoğraflar çekiyordu.' diyor McBurney. 'Bu kolonyal bir yaklaşımın eylemi, ve bazı insanlar şova şöyle tepkiler veriyor: Bu, beyaz adamın ormana gittiği bir başka hikaye –ki öyle. Ama tüm izleyici bu yolculuğa çıkarıldı çünkü tüm izleyici kulaklıklarını takıyordu.'"*[33]

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[29] Günther Anders, *İnsanın Eskimişliği,* çev.Herdem Belen, Hüseyin Ertürk (İstanbul: İthaki Yayınları, 2018), 221.

[30] Sontag, *On Photography,* 10.

[31] Sontag, *On Photography*, 131.

[32] A.g.e., 131.

[33] Marcos Najera, "How The One-man Play 'The Encounter' Uses Sound to Tell Its Story," 11 Nisan, 2017, erişim 06 Ekim 2021. *https://www.scpr.org/programs/the-frame/2017/04/11/56120/how-the-one-man-play-the-encounter-uses-sound-to-t/*

Böylece ses aracılığıyla yolculuğun içine çekilen seyirciler de bu eyleme dahil edilir. Fotoğraf önemli bir motif olmakla birlikte oyunda kullanılmaz. Fotoğraf, görüntülenen kişileri sessiz birer imgeye dönüştürür. Fotoğrafçı Diane Arbus'un görüşlerini yorumlayan Sontag, fotoğraf makinesini, fotoğrafçıya tüm ahlaki sınırları, sosyal yasakları aşmasını ve fotoğrafı çekilene karşı tüm sorumluluklarından muaf olmasını sağlayan bir pasaport olarak tanımlar:

> "*Fotoğrafçı bir süper-turist, antropolog uzantısı olarak yerlileri ziyaret ederek onların egzotik varlıkları ve ilginç eşyalarından haberlerle geri gelir. Fotoğrafçı can sıkıntısıyla savaşmak için her zaman yeni deneyimleri sömürgeleştirmeye ya da tanıdık olana farklı bir bakış ile bakmaya çalışır."*[34]

Oyunda ise seyirci görsel bir veri, Amazonlara ya da Mayoruna kabilesine dair fotoğrafın sunduğu bir bilgiyle karşılaşmaz. Bu durumda bu "egzotik" yaşam, bir imgeye dönüşmeksizin sesler ve sözler aracılığıyla ifade edilir. McBurney, bu sömürgeleştirmeden kaçınmak, fotoğrafı çekilenlerin hayatlarını ziyaret etmenin ötesinde bir ilişki kurmak ve en önemlisi Amazonlardaki mücadeleye destek verebilmek ihtiyacını duymuştur. Fotoğrafın düz ve yavan olduğunu söyleyen Barthes gibi McBurney de fotoğrafın düz olduğunu, geçmişte sonsuza kadar yok olmuş bir an olduğunu söyler ve kendisinin seyirciyi şimdiye davet etmek istediğinin altını çizer. Bu nedenle de oyunda fotoğraf yalnızca bir motif olarak kalırken, oyunun anlatım aracı olarak sesin insanı saran, çevreleyen doğasına başvurulmuştur.[35]

3. Oyunda Ses Teknolojileri

The Encounter ses tasarımıyla hayli dikkat çekmiş bir oyundur ve Complicite Theater'ın ses tasarımcıları Gareth Fry ve Pete Malkin bu yapımla ses tasarımı dalında Tony ödülü, Drama Desk ödülü gibi prestijli ödüller kazanmıştır. Gareth Fry 1998 yılından beri birlikte çalıştığı Complicite Theater'ın bu prodüksiyonunun üzerinde 5 yıl boyunca çalıştığını söylemiştir.[36]

Simon McBurney, performansı sırasında farklı özelliklere sahip mikrofonlar kullanmaktadır. Bunlardan sayılabilecek en önemlileri; sahnenin ortasında bulunan insan kafası biçimdeki, insanın kulak yapısını taklit eden binaural mikrofon, bir diğeri masada duran ses değiştirebilme özelliğine sahip mikrofon ve masada onun yanında yer alan sesi daha yoğun ve kalın olacak şekilde dönüştüren mikrofondur. McBurney seyircileri karşılarken de üzerinde portatif bir mikrofon vardır. Dolayısıyla ses, oyuncunun seyirciyi karşıladığı andan itibaren araçsallaşmıştır. McBurney, sesi kalınlaştıran mikrofon ile Loren McIntyre'ın sesini taklit etmektedir. Seyirciye, mikrofon aracılığıyla sesi kalınlaştıkça Amerikan aksanı kullanarak kendisinden başka biri gibi konuşmak konusunda daha rahat hissettiğini söyler. Sahnenin ortasındaki mikrofon binaural ses teknolojisi kullanması sebebiyle oldukça oyunsu olanaklar sunmaktadır. Binaural teknikler, dinleyen kişinin vücudu ve çevresindeki nesneler ile akustik bir etkileşim kurar. Böylece McBurney insan kafası şeklindeki mikrofonun kulağına fısıldadığında kişi bunu kulağında hissedecektir. Mikrofonun çevresinde yürüdüğünde, kişi oyuncunun sesini çevresinde hareket halinde duyacaktır. Bu dijital manipülasyon sayesinde ses sinyalleri dışarıdan gelen işaretleri filtreleyerek sesin kafanın dışında bir noktadan geldiği izlenimini yaratmaktadır. Arttırılmış gerçeklik olarak tanımlanan bu etkinin yaratılabilmesi için ses teknolojilerinin kalitesi önem arz eder. Bunun sebebi insan beyninin yanlış işaretlere karşı duyarlı olmasıdır. İkna edici olmayan en ufak bir sinyal, beynin algıladığı bu yeni gerçekliği kıracaktır. Seyirci hareket ettiğinde dahi bu hareketi algılayarak buna göre çalışan bu teknolojik sistem, seyirci için oyunsu bir deneyim kurgular. Oyunun kaydı hazırlanırken, bu deneyimin evlerinde izlemekte olan seyirciler tarafından da aynı biçimde algılanabilmesi adına ses içeriği üzerinde tekrar çalışılmıştır. Bu noktada Erika Fisher-Lichte'nin "ses kişiye sadece bir mekan duygusu (bu bağlamda denge merkezimizin kulakta olduğunu hatırlayalım) iletmez; ses kişinin bedenine zorla girer ve sık sık fizyolojik ve duygusal tepkiler doğurur."[37] tespiti, oyunda kullanılan ses teknolojilerini anlamak adına önemli bir noktada durur. Binaural kulaklıkta ses yalnızca kişinin bedenine zorla girmekle kalmaz, beynini farklı bir gerçekliğe ikna etmek adına manipüle eder. Bu durumda kişinin fizyolojik ve duygusal tepkileri de daha yoğun olmaktadır. McBurney, binaural kulaklığı tanıtırken gerçekliği arttırmak adına çelişen görselliği durdurmaları için seyircilerden gözlerini kapatmalarını ister. Bu durumda mikrofonun manipülasyonu daha da güçlenmektedir. Öyle ki McBurney, mankenin kulağının yanında nefes alıp vermeye başladığında seyircinin kulağında sıcaklık hissedeceğini söyler. Bu nedenle kulaklıklar seyircinin atmosfere dahil olmasında önemli bir işleve sahiptir. Bu oldukça karmaşık işleyişe sahip ses sistemi, oldukça hızlı bir biçimde seyirci tarafından kabul edilmektedir. Auslander, sahne tasarımcısı Wendall K. Harrington'dan alıntılayarak günümüzün tiyatro seyircisinin televizyon ile büyüdüğünü ve sinematik bir bakış açısına sahip olduklarını aktarır.[38] Bu nedenle seyirci sinema pratiklerini tiyatroda yabancı bir unsur olarak görmez. *The Encounter* örneğinde de seyircinin oyunu izlerken ses teknolojisini yabancı bir unsur olarak görmemesinin sebebi artık seyircinin ses sitemleri, VR teknolojileri, arttırılmış gerçeklik simülasyonları ve pek çok teknolojik medyayı hayat pratiği içerisine yerleştirmiş olmasıdır.

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[34] Sontag, *On Photography,* 33.

[35] Simon McBurney, "Interview with the Tony nominee Simon McBurney," röportajı yapan Tom Millward, New York Theatre Guide, 01 Kasım, 2016, erişim 06 Ekim, 2021. https://www.newyorktheatreguide.com/news-features/interviews/interview-with-tony-nominee-simon-mcburney

[36] Gareth Fry, "Sound designer Gareth Fry Writes About the Development of the Show's Sound," erişim 06 Ekim, 2021, http://www.complicite.org/encounterresource/map/sound-designer-gareth-fry.html

Ses tasarımcısı Gareth Fry Amazonlar'a yolculuk ederek burada karşılaştığı farklı sesleri binaural mikrofonla kaydetmiştir. Fry tasarımında bu kaydedilmiş sesleri kullanmanın yanı sıra, oyuncu tarafından o an üretilen ritimlerin kaydını oluşturarak bunları bir paterne dönüştürmekte ve kullanmaktadır. Bu kaydedilmiş sesler oyuncunun sahnedeki eşlikçileri, partnerleri haline gelmektedir. Bunun yanı sıra oyunda kaydedilmiş medya olarak röportajlar, ev ziyaretleri ve açıklamalar da kullanılmaktadır. Bu ses kayıtları oyuncunun kullandığı hoparlör ile binaural mikrofona ulaştırılmakta ve bu şekilde yine oyuncunun tercihlerine göre seyircinin kulağına ulaşmakta ve durdurulmaktadır. Burcu Yasemin Şeyben, *Tiyatro ve Multimedya* adlı eserinde kayıtlı sesin tiyatroda kullanılmaya başlamasında yaşanan problemlerin, seyircinin kulaklarının bu yeni deneyime alışana kadar devam ettiğini söyler:

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[37] Erika Fisher-Lichte, *Performatif Estetik,* çev.Tufan Acil (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2016), 206.

[38] Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*, 25.

> "*Brown'a göre, gramafon gibi elektrikli kayıt ve yayın araçlarının tiyatroda yaygın bir biçimde kullanılmaya başlanmasıyla birlikte seyirciler, tiyatro izlemeye geldiklerinde üç farklı 'ses dünyası'yla karşılaşmaya ve bunları 'kabul etmeye' itildi (31). Bunlardan ilki, 'oyuncuların sesleri, sahnedeki hareketleri ve seyirci öksürükleri' gibi hem oyuncuların hem de seyircilerin karşılaştıkları insan sesleriydi. İkincisi, canlı olan (akustik veya mekanik olarak üretilen) dış seslerdi. Bunların içine de 'seyircilerin konvansiyonel olarak kabul ettikleri' ve mekanik yollarla üretilen zil sesi, gök gürültüsü veya telefon sesi gibi sesler dahildi. Son olarak da yeni teknolojilerle birlikte kullanılan, 'gerçek ve canlı olmayan' ama 'gerçekçi olan' kayıtlı sesler vardı.*"[39]

Şeyben, sinema endüstrisinin gelişmesinin tiyatroda kayıtlı ses kullanımının artmasında etkili olduğunu da belirtir. Dışarıdan gelen yağmur sesi, çalan kapı ya da telefon sesi, pencereden gelen insanların uğultusu gibi pek çok kayıtlı ses tiyatrolarda kullanılmakta ve seyirci tarafından benimsenmektedir. Fakat Şeyben bu benimsemenin bir anda olmadığını da belirtir. Tiyatroda seyircinin karşılaştığı bu üç farklı ses tipinde kayıtlı sesin diğerlerinden ayrılmakta olduğunu, kayıtta bir problem varsa gelen cızırtı sesinden, kimi zaman kaydı başlatırken seyircinin "on" tuşuna basıldığını bile duyabiliyor olmasından ya da teknik masada yaşanan en küçük hatadan dolayı kayıtlı sesin seyirci tarafından yadırganmasına sebep olduğunu belirtir. Fakat zaman içerisinde bu durum seyircinin izleme alışkanlıklarında yer etmeye başlamıştır.

> "*Ama yaşanan tüm sorunlara rağmen bir süre sonra seyirciler, tiyatroda örneğin dekor ve aksesuarların bir kısmının fiziksel ve diğerlerinin de iki boyutlu (projeksiyonda) olarak yer aldığı bir tiyatro sahnesine alıştığı gibi, seslerin de bazılarının 'orada ve o an', bazılarının da 'kayıtlı' olduğu bir ses dünyasını 'gerçekmiş gibi kabul etmeye' başladı (Brown: 31).*"[40]

Oyunda Şeyben'in belirttiği gibi hem kayıtlı hem de o an üretilmekte olan sesler kullanılmaktadır. Fakat tasarımın bu iki sesi de aynı verici ile seyirciye ulaştırması, seyirci için bu seslerin hangisinin kayıt hangisinin o an üretilen ses olduğunu ayırt edilemez kılmaktadır. Öyle ki, gözleri kapalı seyirciye binaural kulaklıktan verilen sivri sinek sesi seyirciyi gerçekliğe yakın bir biçimde rahatsız edebiliyorken, McBurney ortalıkta bir sinek olmadığını, bunun kayıttan gelen bir ses ve hatta gerçek bir sinek değil de yalnızca kağıda üfleyen birisinin sesi olduğunu söyler. Kişi bu anı gözleri açık izlediğinde beyni ona bu sesin yalnızca bir kayıt olduğunu hızla hatırlatacaktır. Seyirci yalnızca birkaç dakikalığına gözlerini kapatıp bu mikrofonu test eder fakat oyunun geri kalanını gözleri açık bir biçimde, hangi sesin nereden geldiğini görerek izlemektedir. Dolayısıyla oyunun amacı seyirciyi başka bir gerçekliğe ikna etmek ya da sihirli bir etki bırakmak değil, yalnızca hikayeye duyusal olarak yaklaşmalarını sağlamaktır. Ses, mikrofon ve kulaklık dolayımıyla seyirciye ulaşırken aynı zamanda seyirci, kulaklık aracılığıyla çevresinden algılayacağı diğer insanların gürültülerinden; öksürük, koltuk gıcırtısı, sahnedeki oyuncunun sesinin yankılanması gibi seslerden de soyutlanmış olur. Bu yapı, seyircinin odağı dağılmadan oyunun içine çekilmesini sağlamaktadır.

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[39] Burcu Yasemin Şeyben, *Tiyatro ve Multimedya* (İstanbul: Habitus Yayıncılık, 2016), 183.

[40] A.g.e., 184.

Hikayede McIntyre Mayoruna kabilesinin lideri ile iletişim kurabildiğini fark etmektedir. Bunu da dil yoluyla değil fakat sözsüz bir iletişimle, karşıdakinin cümlelerinin kendi aklında "parladığı" bir yolla yapar. Dilin iletişim adına hiçbir yetkisinin olmadığı, Batılı toplum kurallarının geçersiz olduğu bu coğrafyada McIntyre iletişim cihazları ve fotoğraf makinesi olmaksızın iletişim kurabilmektedir. Oyunda bu iletişim biçimi McBurney'nin sinirbilimci Steven Rose ve psikiyatr Iain McGilchrist ile yaptığı görüşmeler ışığında ele alınır. Fakat oyuncu bu iletişim biçimini kanıtlamaktan çok, toplum yaşantısında bildiğimizin ötesinde bir gerçeklik de olabileceğini gösterme amacındadır.

> "*IAIN MCGILCHRIST: Dünyadaki her şey, ancak bildiğimiz diğer her şeye kıyasla bilinebilir. Bundan kurtulmanın yolu yok. Bugünlerde karşı karşıya olduğumuz mit, mit yaratmamızın ötesinde, dilimizin ötesinde, metaforun ötesinde, göreceli olmaktan çok mutlak olan, soyut, nesnel bir gerçeklik olduğudur.'*'[41]

McIntyre'ın kurduğu iletişim biçimini aktarmak adına oyunda ses teknolojilerinin kullanımı önem taşımaktadır. İletişim kurduğu kişinin sesini kendi kafasının içerisinde duyumsayan McIntyre'ın deneyimine benzer bir biçimde, ses teknolojileri seyircinin sesi en yakında, farklı bir ses olmaksızın kafasının içerisinde duymasını amaçlar.

Farklı özelliklere sahip mikrofonlar ve oyunun bel kemiğini oluşturan binaural mikrofon, oyunda bir araç olmanın ötesinde anlatının önemli bir ögesi olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Öyle ki, oyunun başında tanımlanan sıkıcı görüntü, ses teknolojisinin manipülasyonuyla yeni bir mekan yaratmakta önemli bir rol üstlenmektedir. Çoğu zaman sesin yarattığı duyusal tepkiler, ışığın yardımıyla desteklenmektedir. Salondaki seyirci, kalabalık içerisinde kendisini izole ederek bireysel kulaklığından dinlemesine karşın, evde kulaklık ile izleyen seyirciye göre farklı bir deneyim yaşamaktadır. Salonda başkalarının tepkilerini gözlemleyebilen kişi aynı zamanda gözlemlenebiliyor olduğunu da bilmektedir. Öte yandan evinde kulaklığı ile izleyen bir seyirci, bu sosyal atmosferin içinde bulunmamaktadır. Fakat evdeki seyirci -her ne kadar kullanılan kulaklığın kalitesi bu durumu etkilese de- sesin araçsallaşması sebebiyle salonda izleyen seyircinin işitsel deneyimini evde deneyimleyebilme imkanına sahiptir.

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[41] Complicite Theater/ Simon McBurney, *The Encounter,* 68.

4. Kayıt, Zaman, Canlılık

The Encounter Mayıs 2020'de bir haftalığına internet üzerinden erişime açılmıştır. Oyunun Londra'da Barbican Centre'daki gösteriminin kaydedilmesi ve kaydedilen gösterimin internet üzerinden yayına açılması için "The Space" adlı organizasyon ile çalışılmıştır. İzlemeye açık olduğu bu bir haftalık sürede 67.000'den fazla kez izlenen oyunun turne programı devam etmekte olduğu için, oyunun sergileneceği kimi tiyatroların yöneticileri internette gösterilmiş olan bir oyunu kimsenin gelip izlemeyeceği endişesini yaşamıştır. "The Space" ekibi ise bu durumun tam tersine işleyebileceğini, insanların online olarak izleyip sevdikleri bu oyunu canlı olarak da izlemek isteyeceklerini ifade etmiştir.[42] Bu da Phillip Auslander'ın bu konudaki görüşlerini akla getirmektedir:

> "*Kaydedilme ve medyatize olma yoluyla performans, birikebilir bir değere dönüşür. Canlı performans yeniden üretim ekonomisi içerisinde toplu üretim kültürel objelerin tanıtımını yapmak için -örneğin popüler müzik konserlerinin birincil işlevi kayıtların satışını desteklemektir- ya da canlı tiyatro prodüksiyonlarının televizyonda sahnelenmesinde tekrar üretim için işlenmemiş bir materyali medyatize olmaya açması için var olurlar.*"[43]

Bu durumda Auslander'ın sözleri farklı bir açıdan doğrulanmaktadır. Oyunun kaydını internet ortamına açarken tiyatro yönetiminin göz önünde bulundurduğu artılar ve eksiler olması muhtemeldir. Fakat bu örnekte Auslander'ın tezinde olduğu gibi internet yayını Complicite Theater'a artı değer kazandırmıştır. Topluluk bu canlı yayın sayesinde dünya genelinde tanınırlığını arttırmış, farklı ülkelerden binlerce yorum ve mesaj almıştır. Ayrıca Youtube platformu üzerinden topluluğun kanalına ulaşımda büyük bir artış yaşanmıştır. Bununla birlikte topluluğun gelecekteki canlı gösterimlerine rağbetin de artmakta olduğu bilinmektedir. İnternet yayını, canlı performansın kültürel değerini arttırmış ve tiyatro topluluğunun tanıtımını yapmıştır.

Oyunun bir gece canlı olarak yayınlanması ve kaydının ise bir hafta süre ile izlenebilmesi de tıpkı televizyonlarda olduğu gibi akıp giden, kaçırılmaması gereken bir etkinlik sunmaktadır. Günümüz seyircisinin değişen izleme alışkanlıkları üzerine düşündüğümüzde, pandemi öncesinde de televizyon ve bilgisayar ekranının baskın formlar olduğu, izleyicilerin ana akım televizyon yayınlarıyla rekabet eden dijital platformları da oldukça fazla tercih ettiği bilinmektedir. Bu dijital platformlar sayesinde seyirci, hem kendi konforlu alanında hem de istediği zaman istediği içeriği izleyerek, sahneleri atlayarak ya da geri sararak kendisinin kontrolünde olan yeni bir izleme alışkanlığı geliştirmiştir. Auslander'ın sözünü ettiği televizyona özgü konfor bir kat daha artmakta, izleyici hem evinin rahatında kalabilmekte, hem de istediği zaman, istediği saatte ve yüzlerce içerik arasından kendi tercih ettiği içeriğe ulaşabilmektedir. Öte yandan bu dijital platformlardaki içerikler, sundukları avantajlara rağmen televizyonun yayın akışının yarattığı "kaçırılmaması gereken" birer etkinlik olma özelliğinden yoksundurlar. Nitekim içerik hep orada durmakta, seyirci istediği zaman açıp izleyebilmektedir. Televizyon başındaki saatlerin giderek arttığı pandemi döneminde tiyatroların canlı yayınları, yeniden kaçırılmaması gereken, kısa süre yayında kalan etkinliklerin verdiği etkiyi yaratmıştır. Auslander, televizyonun ayrıcalığının kurduğu yakınlık, dolaysızlık ve aciliyette yattığını söylemektedir:

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[42] "The Encounter- A Case Study in Live Streaming Theater," erişim 06 Ekim, 2021, https://www.thespace.org/resource/encounter-case-study-live-streaming-theatre

[43] Auslander, *Liveness: Performance In A Mediatized Culture,* 26.

> "*Televizyonun samimiyeti onun dolaysızlığının bir işlevi olarak görülür -izleyicinin etkinliğe yakınlığı bunu sağlar- ve dışarının etkinliğinin izleyicinin evine aktarılmasıyla kurulur. Lohr'un ifade ettiği üzere (1940: 3) 'televizyon izleyicisi kendisini sahnede hisseder.' Görsele yakın olan televizyon seyircisinin pozisyonu, boks fanlarının ringin yanındaki koltuğu ya da salondaki en iyi yeri satın alan tiyatro izleyicisinin konumuyla karşılaştırılır. (...) Televizyonun, paradoksal bir biçimde evi hem mükemmel mahremiyete hem de global erişime sahip bir tiyatroya dönüştürmesi düşünülmüştür.*"[44]

Pandemi döneminde ise televizyonun bu etkinliği ve samimiyeti giderek artmıştır. İzleyicinin evinin güvenli alanından çıkmak zorunda kalmaksızın tiyatro gibi kültürel bir etkinliğe dahil olabilmesi, pek çok sanatçıda tiyatronun geleceğine dair endişe yaratmıştır. Bu endişe kimi kuramcılarca yersiz bulunurken, kimileri ise tiyatronun "ölme" tehlikesinden söz etmiştir. Online gösterimlerin canlı kaydı televizyonun hissettirdiği canlılık hissine yakın bir noktaya erişebilmektedir. Öte yandan bu yayınlar canlı perfomansların sunduğu atmosferi duyumsama, ortamın sesini, kokusunu algılama, diğer insanlar tarafından görülebilme, sosyal bir etkinlikte bulunma taraflarından yoksundur. Fakat bu durum, tiyatroda insanların kanlı canlı bulunmasını yücelten ve hiçbir yayının bu etkiye ulaşamayacağını iddia eden yaklaşımları haklı çıkarmaz. Nitekim Auslander pek çok bakımdan "canlı" olanın otantikliğini sorgular ve canlı olan ile medyatize olan ya da kayıtlı olan arasında artık bir fark kalmadığını iddia eder.[45] Bu çalışma özelinde canlı performans ve kayıtlı performans arasındaki farkları bulmak ya da bu iki formu karşılaştırmak yersizdir. Fakat bu iki formun sosyal anlamda farklı olduğu açıktır. Tiyatronun yüzyıllardır toplulukları bir araya getiren yapısı bu izleme biçimde dışlanmaktadır. Bu form seyirciye koltuklarından kalkmadan bir tiyatro gösterimi izleme avantajını sunarken, bir yandan da tiyatro izlemeyi sosyal bir etkinlik olmaktan çıkarmaktadır. Öte yandan tiyatronun bir araya getirici özelliğini online gösterimlere dahil etmeye çalışan tiyatrolar da olmuştur. Bilgisayarların kamera ve mikrofonu yardımıyla, görüntülü iletişim sağlayan Zoom gibi platformlar, seyirci etkileşimini hedefleyen tiyatrolar için elverişli hale gelmiştir. *The Encounter* özelinde ise etkileşim adına daha farklı bir deneme söz konusudur. Complicite Theater, kaydın canlı yayınına evdeki izleyiciler için bir giriş bölümü eklemiştir. Bu ek sahnede Simon McBurney ve kızı Noma McBurney izleyicileri selamlamaktadır. Her ne kadar seyirciyle karşılıklı bir etkileşim amaçlanmasa da, özellikle pandeminin etkisini gösterdiği dönemde sosyal ilişkilerde, eğitim ve çalışma hayatında birincil bir önem kazanan görüntülü konuşmanın dinamikleri bu konuşmaya yansımıştır ve bu sayede de seyirci için samimi bir atmosfer yakalanmıştır. Bunun bir sebebi de görüntülü konuşmalarda kişilerin ev yaşamının ve dolayısıyla mahrem yaşantısının bir parçasının görünür hale gelmesidir. Bu karşılama sahnesi de tıpkı bir görüntülü aramada olduğu gibi ev ortamından gerçekleştiğini düşündürür. Bu mizahi dile sahip, aynı zamanda da bir baba ve kızın ilişkisini gördüğümüz konuşma, yalnızca televizyon başındaki seyirci için tasarlanmıştır ve oyunun canlı yayın günü ve takip eden sınırlı günlerdeki bant yayınlarında yayına eklenmiştir. Oyunun kaydı bu sınırlı süre haricinde izlenemediği için bu ön oyun ancak hafızada bir kayıt olarak kalmakta olup detaylı bir tartışmaya elverişli değildir. Fakat bu ek sahne kurduğu mizahi dil ve teknolojik altyapı ile, oyuna zaman, mekan ve teknolojiyi sorgulayan bir katman katmaktadır. Bu konuşmanın ardından McBurney, seyirciyi Barbican Centre'a davet eder. Kamera, odadaki bilgisayarın ekranından Barbican Centre'a yavaş ve akışkan bir geçiş yapar. Bu noktadan itibaren ekranları başındaki izleyici oyun öncesinde seyircilerin uğultusunu, koltuklarına yerleşme seslerini duymaktadır. Simon McBurney bu görüntüye dahilmişçesine en arka koltuktan televizyon seyircisine oyunun başlamak üzere olduğunu söyler. Bu da Barbican Centre'ın hareketli arka planı önünde konuşan, farklı bir zamana ait McBurney'dir ve saniyeler sonra Simon McBurney sahnede görünür. Complicite Theater bu denemeler ve efektlerle seyirciye kaydedilmiş medya ile oyunsu bir iletişim kurma imkanı sunmaktadır. Aynı zamanda girişteki bu ekstra sahnenin tasarımında, ekranları başındaki seyircinin fiziksel olarak bu gösterimde olmamasından kaynaklı dezavantajı farklı bir deneyimle destekleme ihtiyacı sezilmekte ve bu yolla oyunun kaydının verebileceği canlılık hissini arttırmanın amaçlandığı görülmektedir.

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[44] A.g.e., 16.

[45] Dixon, *Digital Performance: A History of New Media In Theater, Dance, Performance Art and Installation,* 117.

Oyun kayıt altında izlenirken de seyirciye kulaklıkla izlemeleri tavsiye edilmiştir. Sahnede de araçsallaşmış sesin kullanılması sayesinde oyuncunun ve sesin "canlılığı" aynı oranda evdeki seyirciyi de etkileme potansiyeline sahiptir. Oyun kaydedilmiş medyanın zaman ve mekan ile ilişkisini sorgulamaktadır. Oyuncu sahnede mikrofonları tanıtırken binaural kulaklığı tanıtmadan önce seyircilerden gözlerini kapamalarını ister. Kayıttan McBurney'nin sesi ve sivrisineğin sesi gelmektedir. Burada McBurney'nin kaydettiği sesi ve performans anındaki sesi etkileşim halinde gösterilir:

> "*KAYIT. Sivrisineğin sesini yapan hoparlör. Ona bakacak olursanız ses daha az ikna edici gelir, çünkü gözleriniz size sadece bir kayıt dinlediğinizi söyleyecektir. Aslında bu da bir sivrisineğin sesi değil, birisi bir parça kağıt ve tarağı üflüyor. (Sinek sesi devam eder.)*
> *CANLI. Ve şimdi muhtemelen bu anın da bir kayıt olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz. Bu altı ay önce olmuş bir şey, biz gösteri üzerinde çalışırken. Pardon sinek sesini kapatabilir misiniz?*
> *KAYIT. Ne?*
> *CANLI. Kapatabilir misiniz şunu? Çok sinir bozucu.*
> *KAYIT. Kapatmamı mı istiyorsun?*
> *CANLI. Evet sinir bozucu.*
> *KAYIT. Tamam*

> *CANLI. Teşekkürler. Bu benim ses kaydım, aslında yok.*
> *KAYIT. Ne demek yokum?*
> *CANLI. Gerçek değilsin.*
> *KAYIT. Tabii ki gerçeğim."*[46]

Kendi kayıtlı sesiyle iletişimine şahit olduğumuz McBurney'nin hikaye anlatımı belli aralıklarla kayıt alırken odasına gelen küçük kızının sesiyle bölünmektedir. Bu sesleri kaydetmek üzere çalıştığı prova dönemlerinden kayıtlardır bunlar. Uykusunun kaçtığını söyleyen Noma McBurney'nin uykuya dalışına kadar geçen sürede oyuncu tüm hikayesini seyirciye anlatmaktadır. Simon McBurney, sahnedeki oyuncu olarak kızının kayıtlı sesiyle konuşmaktadır. Böylece oyun, performansın gerçekleştiği akşam ve oyunun hala prova aşamasında olduğu çalışma akşamıyla farklı zamanlar arası bir iletişim kurulduğunu düşündürür. Performans kayıtlı medyanın canlılığını sorgularken bunu mizahi bir üslupla yapmaktadır. Öyle ki yukarıda alıntılanan bu küçük atışma, Phillip Auslander'ın canlı ve kayıt altında olanın neden rekabet halinde görüldüğünü sorgulamasını hatırlatır. Yapılan karşılaştırmalarda Peggy Phelan gibi kuramcılar, kayıtlı medya ve canlı performans arasında en büyük farkın mevcudiyet olduğunu savunur ve şimdi, burada, birlikte olma halini ayrıcalıklı bir konuma yerleştirir. Phelan'a göre performans gerçekliği canlı bedenler ile aktarır ve bu performanstan geriye bir şey kalmaz, izleyici olan biten her şeyi o anda almaya çalışır.[47] Günümüzde kayıtlı ortamları ve kayıtlı medyayı dışlayan bir prodüksiyonla karşılaşmak oldukça zordur. Auslander canlı ve medyatize performans arasındaki farkın giderek çökmekte olduğunu, canlı performansların giderek medyatize olanlara benzediğini söyler.[48] Öte yandan Burcu Yasemin Şeyben "Tiyatro ve Multimedya" adlı eserinde bu yaklaşımları ele alırken peşin yargılardan kaçınır:

> "*Canlı performansların ve kayıtlı ortamların birbirlerini etkiledikleri, bu doğrultuda ikisinin de birbirini dönüştürdüğü bir gerçek. Ancak, Auslander'in öne sürdüğü gibi kayıtlı ortamların ontolojik olarak canlı performansları kapsayarak erittikleri ve en nihayetinde canlı performansların kayıtlı ortamlarla ontolojik olarak aynılaştığını söylemek de çok indirgemeci bir yaklaşım. (...) Çünkü Dixon'un belirttiği gibi Auslander'in bu iddiası, etten ve kemikten bedenlerle, datalardan oluşan bedenleri, aynı 'girdabın' içinde eritir."*[49]

The Encounter oyuncunun etten ve kemikten oluşan mevcudiyeti ile zamanda ve mekanda alan kaplamayan geçmişi aynı girdabın içerisinde eritmekte ve bu durumu seyircide sorgulama alanı açacak bir biçimde kurgulamaktadır.

Sonuç

The Encounter Covid-19 pandemisinin yarattığı koşullar içerisinde, tiyatroların seyirciyle fiziksel bir ortamda buluşamadığı bir zamanda, internet üzerinden kısa süreliğine izleyicisi ile buluşmuştur. National Geographic fotoğrafçısı Loren McIntyre'ın Amazonlar'daki yolculuğunu ses teknolojilerinin yardımıyla duyulara hitap eden bir biçimde seyircisine aktaran oyun, -prova notları ve sahnelemede gözlenebilen bir biçimde- içeriksel ve biçimsel bir araştırma içerisindedir. Bu durum özellikle ses özelinde kullanılan kayıt ve bu kayıtlı medya ile oyuncunun ilişkisinde görünür kılınır. Amazonlarda başlayan hikayenin önce kağıda, ardından sahneye ve son olarak televizyon ekranına yolculuğunda, Amazonlar Batılı kültürün romantize ettiği uzaklardaki egzotik bir diyar olarak temsil edilmez. Oyun, Batılı dünyanın Amazonlar'da yarattığı ve yine Batı dünyasında görünmez kılınan problemleri sorgulamaya açmaktadır. Böylece Mayoruna kabilesi, sessiz bir imgeye dönüşmez. Susan Sontag'ın sözünü ettiği gibi fotoğrafçının fotoğrafını çektiğine müdahil olmaksızın ziyaret etmesi yerine McIntyre'ın ardından Popescu ve McBurney'nin Amazonlar ve buradaki topluluklarla ilişkiye geçmesi, burada yaşanan sorunlara dair bilinç yaratma çabasında olmaları ve bunun sanatsal karşılıklarını araştırmaları ile hikaye "canlılık" kazanmaktadır. Fotoğraf, ses ve kayıt üçgeninde *The Encounter* yapımı, bu ögeleri yalnızca bir teknoloji ürünü olarak kullanmaz, onları insana, zamana ve kültüre dair sorgulama alanı açan bir bağlamda değerlendirir. Bu gösterim olağanüstü koşulların insanları kısıtlı alanlara hapsettiği bir dönemde, her şeye rağmen bu sınırları aşma arayışıyla tiyatronun nasıl farklı biçimler alabildiği ve gelecekte bu biçimlerin nasıl evrileceği üzerine de düşünme alanı yaratmaktadır. Covid-19 pandemisinin getirdiği koşullar değiştiğinde kaydedilmiş tiyatro eserlerinin seyirci tarafından aynı şekilde talep edilmeye devam edip etmeyeceği ya da kaydın yalnızca dökümantasyon ağırlıklı mı, yoksa evlerindeki izleyicilere ulaşmaya yönelik mi tercih edileceğini ise zaman gösterecektir.

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[46] A.g.e., 42.
[47] Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*, 148.
[48] Auslander, *Liveness: Performance In A Mediatized Culture,* 32.
[49] Şeyben, *Tiyatro ve Multimedya*, 104.

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AMAÇ-KAPSAM

Tiyatro Eleştirmenliği ve Dramaturji Bölümü Dergisi – Journal of Theatre Criticism and Dramaturgy, araştırmacı, yazar, akademisyen ve yüksek öğrenim öğrencilerinin üstün nitelikli orijinal bilimsel çalışmalarını yayınlamayı ve bu alandaki bilgi birikimine katkı sunmayı amaçlar. Yılda iki kez Haziran ve Aralık aylarında yayımlanan, hakemli, açık erişimli, bilimsel bir dergidir.

Derginin konu kapsamında tiyatro tarihi ve eleştirisi, tiyatro teorileri, dramaturji, oyun yazarlığı, yaratıcı yazım, Osmanlı-Türk tiyatrosu, uluslararası ve ulusal tiyatro sahnesindeki çağdaş gelişmeler yer alır. İngilizce, Almanca ve Türkçe dillerinde orijinal araştırma makaleleri ve derleme yazıları dergide yayınlanır.

EDİTORYAL POLİTİKALAR VE HAKEM SÜRECİ

Yayın Politikası

Dergiye yayınlanmak üzere gönderilen makalelerin içeriği derginin amaç ve kapsamı ile uyumlu olmalıdır. Dergi, orijinal araştırma niteliğindeki yazıları yayınlamaya öncelik vermektedir.

Genel İlkeler

Daha önce yayınlanmamış ya da yayınlanmak üzere başka bir dergide halen değerlendirmede olmayan ve her bir yazar tarafından onaylanan makaleler değerlendirilmek üzere kabul edilir. Ön değerlendirmeyi geçen yazılar iThenticate intihal tarama programından geçirilir. İntihal incelemesinden sonra, uygun makaleler Editör (Baş Editör) tarafından orijinaliteleri, metodolojileri, makalede ele alınan konunun önemi ve derginin kapsamına uygunluğu açısından değerlendirilir.

Bilimsel toplantılarda sunulan özet bildiriler, makalede belirtilmesi koşulu ile kaynak olarak kabul edilir. Editör, gönderilen makale biçimsel esaslara uygun ise, gelen yazıyı yurtiçinden ve /veya yurtdışından en az iki hakemin değerlendirmesine sunar, hakemler gerek gördüğü takdirde yazıda istenen değişiklikler yazarlar tarafından yapıldıktan sonra yayınlanmasına onay verir.

Makale yayınlanmak üzere Dergiye gönderildikten sonra yazarlardan hiçbirinin ismi, tüm yazarların yazılı izni olmadan yazar listesinden silinemez ve yeni bir isim yazar olarak eklenemez ve yazar sırası değiştirilemez.

Yayına kabul edilmeyen makale, resim ve fotoğraflar yazarlara geri gönderilmez.

Yazarların Sorumluluğu

Makalelerin bilimsel ve etik kurallara uygunluğu yazarların sorumluluğundadır. Yazar makalenin orijinal olduğu, daha önce başka bir yerde yayınlanmadığı ve başka bir yerde, başka bir dilde yayınlanmak üzere değerlendirmede olmadığı konusunda teminat sağlamalıdır. Uygulamadaki telif kanunları ve anlaşmaları gözetilmelidir. Telife bağlı materyaller (örneğin tablolar, şekiller veya büyük alıntılar) gerekli izin ve teşekkürle kullanılmalıdır. Başka yazarların, katkıda bulunanların çalışmaları ya da yararlanılan kaynaklar uygun biçimde kullanılmalı ve referanslarda belirtilmelidir.

Gönderilen makalede tüm yazarların akademik ve bilimsel olarak doğrudan katkısı olmalıdır, bu bağlamda “yazar” yayınlanan bir araştırmanın kavramsallaştırılmasına ve dizaynına, verilerin elde edilmesine, analizine ya da yorumlanmasına belirgin katkı yapan, yazının yazılması ya da bunun içerik açısından eleştirel biçimde gözden geçirilmesinde görev yapan birisi olarak görülür. Yazar olabilmenin diğer koşulları ise, makaledeki çalışmayı planlamak veya icra etmek ve / veya revize etmektir. Fon sağlanması, veri toplanması ya da araştırma grubunun genel süpervizyonu tek başına yazarlık hakkı kazandırmaz. Yazar olarak gösterilen tüm bireyler sayılan tüm ölçütleri karşılamalıdır ve yukarıdaki ölçütleri karşılayan her birey yazar olarak gösterilebilir. Yazarların isim sıralaması ortak verilen bir karar olmalıdır. Tüm yazarlar yazar sıralamasını Telif Hakkı Anlaşması Formunda imzalı olarak belirtmek zorundadırlar.

Yazarlık için yeterli ölçütleri karşılamayan ancak çalışmaya katkısı olan tüm bireyler “teşekkür / bilgiler” kısmında sıralanmalıdır. Bunlara örnek olarak ise sadece teknik destek sağlayan, yazıma yardımcı olan ya da sadece genel bir destek sağlayan, finansal ve materyal desteği sunan kişiler verilebilir.

Bütün yazarlar, araştırmanın sonuçlarını ya da bilimsel değerlendirmeyi etkileyebilme potansiyeli olan finansal ilişkiler, çıkar çatışması ve çıkar rekabetini beyan etmelidirler. Bir yazar kendi yayınlanmış yazısında belirgin bir hata ya da yanlışlık tespit ederse, bu yanlışlıklara ilişkin düzeltme ya da geri çekme için editör ile hemen temasa geçme ve işbirliği yapma sorumluluğunu taşır.

Hakem Süreci

Daha önce yayınlanmamış ya da yayınlanmak üzere başka bir dergide halen değerlendirmede olmayan ve her bir yazar tarafından onaylanan makaleler değerlendirilmek üzere kabul edilir. Gönderilen ve ön kontrolü geçen makaleler iThenticate yazılımı kullanılarak plagiarizm için taranır. Plagiarizm kontrolünden sonra, uygun olan makaleler baş editör tarafından orijinallik, metodoloji, işlenen konunun önemi ve dergi kapsamı ile uyumluluğu açısından değerlendirilir. Editör, makaleleri, yazarların etnik kökeninden, cinsiyetinden, cinsel yöneliminden, uyruğundan, dini inancından ve siyasi felsefesinden bağımsız olarak değerlendirir. Yayına gönderilen makalelerin adil bir şekilde çift taraflı kör hakem değerlendirmesinden geçmelerini sağlar.

Seçilen makaleler en az iki ulusal/uluslararası hakeme değerlendirmeye gönderilir; yayın kararı, hakemlerin talepleri doğrultusunda yazarların gerçekleştirdiği düzenlemelerin ve hakem sürecinin sonrasında baş editör tarafından verilir.

Hakemlerin değerlendirmeleri objektif olmalıdır. Hakem süreci sırasında hakemlerin aşağıdaki hususları dikkate alarak değerlendirmelerini yapmaları beklenir.

- Makale yeni ve önemli bir bilgi içeriyor mu?
- Öz, makalenin içeriğini net ve düzgün bir şekilde tanımlıyor mu?
- Yöntem bütünlüklü ve anlaşılır şekilde tanımlanmış mı?
- Yapılan yorum ve varılan sonuçlar bulgularla kanıtlanıyor mu?
- Alandaki diğer çalışmalara yeterli referans verilmiş mi?
- Dil kalitesi yeterli mi?

Hakemler, gönderilen makalelere ilişkin tüm bilginin, makale yayınlanana kadar gizli kalmasını sağlamalı ve yazar tarafında herhangi bir telif hakkı ihlali ve intihal fark ederlerse editöre raporlamalıdırlar. Hakem, makale konusu hakkında kendini vasıflı hissetmiyor ya da zamanında geri dönüş sağlaması mümkün görünmüyorsa, editöre bu durumu bildirmeli ve hakem sürecine kendisini dahil etmemesini istemelidir.

Değerlendirme sürecinde editör hakemlere gözden geçirme için gönderilen makalelerin, yazarların özel mülkü olduğunu ve bunun imtiyazlı bir iletişim olduğunu açıkça belirtir. Hakemler ve yayın kurulu üyeleri başka kişilerle makaleleri tartışamazlar. Hakemlerin kimliğinin gizli kalmasına özen gösterilmelidir.

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DİL

Derginin yayın dili Türkçe, İngilizce ve Almanca'dır.

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Örnekler:

İR: İlk referans, **SR**: Sonraki referans, **K**: Kaynakça

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İR Kerem Karaboğa, *Oyunculuk Sanatında Yöntem ve Paradoks* (İstanbul: Habitus Kitap, 2012), 73.
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Online başvurulmuş kitaplar için URL ya da veritabanının adı verilir. Eğer sayfa numarası yoksa, bölüm ya da kısım başlığı referans verilebilir.

Telif Dergi Makalesi

İR Nilgün Firidinoğlu, "Faruk Nafiz Çamlıbel'in "Kahraman Destanı" ve Yazınsal Metnin Üretim Sürecinde İdeolojik Zorunluluğun Rolü", *Tiyatro Eleştirmenliği ve Dramaturji Bölüm Dergisi* 17 (2010), 87.
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