

## TÉZIS / SUMMARY

### MY EVERYDAY MADNESS

or

#### *Pathological Dramatic Characters on the Contemporary Stages*

#### DLA Synopsis

In his book entitled *Oedipus and the Fabrication of the Father: The Oedipus Tyrannus in Modern Criticism and Philosophy*, Pietro Pucci discusses the question of identity in the Oedipus plays. He is not the only one among the numerous dedicated and masterfully reasoning classical philologists who, digging up the deep roots of antique plays, find newer and newer truths for the people of the 21st century. Although not all his arguments and musings can be unquestionably accepted, still, getting to know his work – that is unavailable in Hungarian – for this doctoral dissertation he became, among other exceptional literary scholars, an important point of reference.

Parallel to introducing Pucci's findings concerning the genealogy of the Oedipus name, I investigate my own family tree, besides uncovering the roots of my own directorial identity. I truly believe that for the development of my own identity theatre has been the most important stop, without which the forces that form my character, rooted in the trauma I sustained in my childhood, would still whirl within me. Without theatre I could hardly claim that today I know and understand what happened to me and that I am able to make good use of this knowledge in my directorial and pedagogical work.

The basis of the above stated parallel is mostly Pietro Pucci's claim that biological fathers can never give an answer to the question of "*Who I am?*". Furthermore, Thalia Phillis Howe's argument that Oedipal feelings are close to the neurosis of contemporary people, since he committed his deeds not on a religious-ethical basis, but under the inner pressure, also greatly influenced my work.

The parallel I sketch in my dissertation also aims at revealing this thousand-year-old heritage of never-ceasing doubt in the seemingly bleak and shallow everyday life of our contemporary world. With my genealogical research, the unabashed analysis of my own fate and my self-revelation I also merely try to conjure this “ancient quality” of thought and merciless introspection.

In my dissertation I often quote Erika Fischer-Lichte’s book, *The History of Drama*, in which the author delineates the history of European drama as a kind of identity narrative. However, while Fischer-Lichte only concerns herself with plays that “from a European perspective are listed in the canon of world theatre” I, as a conclusion of my seemingly insignificant theatrical moments and directorial choices, centre my arguments around such plays that have not yet stood the test of times, and might never become part of the Western dramatic- and theatrical “canon”.

In my doctoral dissertation I investigate “average plays that are made in mass production”, as well as everyday occurrences that are in the centre of my directorial attitude, my curiosity and my interest.

My main topic is: *Pathological Dramatic Characters on the Contemporary Stages*, under which title I analyse such contemporary plays that are rarely or never performed and are virtually unknown in Hungary, but which all centre on characters the personal traits of whom reveal the neurosis of their everyday lives. These are such figures who can hardly find a handhold in our everyday life to be able to lead a balanced, or if you wish “normal” existence among the constraints of accepted social norms, while their character and essence, as an exclamation mark, calls our attention to the abnormality of the world surrounding us. I work with such plays thus that, according to my observations, truly, discerningly, and with an all-revealing clear sight discuss our troubled and demented world.

According to my thesis the further study of plays belonging to the classical canon of drama is necessary and indispensable, but I truly believe that this does not bring us comfortably closer to those social and personal problems that fill our everyday life.

As a conclusion of my analyses I claim that transcendence has disappeared from the world of the psychopathological characters in European dramatic and

theatrical literature, although it was transcendence that made the characters that are still well-known to us immortal and exceptional. The puritan madness of our everyday life, however, is still present in the everyday characters of contemporary plays, irrespective of language or social background.

Finally, my dissertation has another dimension that was added to it by chance. I have been working on this thesis, partly due to my other chores, over quite a long period, between 2007 and 2012. In my opinion this time brought severe losses to our theatre culture. Among other things, the ensemble I was a member of between 1998 and 2009 fell apart. This is not directly a topic of my dissertation, but it somehow manifests itself between the lines. The decade spent at the Kaposvár Csiky Gergely Theatre was a determining period of my life, what is gone and is no more. This loss points beyond my personal existence, since the destruction continues, our losses grow every day – it is enough to think about the total paralysation of the independent theatrical sector.

I believe that theatre is an institution where free thinking is a must. I believe that good theatre can only be made with constant renewal. It is my firm belief that good theatre carries an universal value. I am convinced that every Hungarian theatre is an integral part of not only Hungarian, but also European culture. The success of a theatre is the success of Hungarian culture, its insignificance and corruption the shame of the whole culture.

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