

## Summary

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### **Poeticizing of the PPR ordinariness in the student theatres of the Coast: Co To, Bim-Bom, The Circus of Afanasjeff Family**

**Key words:** hand theatre Co To, Bim-Bom, The Circus of Afanasjeff Family, student theatres of the Coast, student theatre movement, student culture of the PPR, postwar generation

The thesis *Poeticizing of the PPR ordinariness in the student theatres of the Coast*, places the history of pioneer theatres of the Polish Tricity in historical, political and social contexts that condition the creation and development of the student culture movement in the Polish People's Republic. The statement used in the title "poeticizing of the PRL ordinariness" by Maria Janion, according to the author, becomes one of the names for cultural activity of students belonging to postwar generation. Tracing the histories of all three student theatres from Gdańsk, created in the 50's, allows to recreate the moment of birth and model of functioning student culture in the times of political thaw. Operating the term "generation" as an analytical category in researches about the PPR, confronting monographic inclusion of theaters activity with the current knowledge of the PPR, and research reflection on these times as a closed era from the perspective of a person non-aligned directly in the system of the socialist state, allow to balance the proportion in the assessment of significance of theatrical expression by students in 50' and 60's.

The first chapter describes the phenomenon of student culture, determined by generation of this culture, the enthusiasm of the young intellectuals that gets back childhood and children's carefree after the fall of Stalinism. At the same time, the author tries to distance herself from mythological narration about pioneer thaw theatres, distorting and simplifying the story of birth of student movement. From the very beginning, the purpose of the work is to reconstruct the Gdańsk student environment based on direct conversations with creators, fans and spectators of the discussed theaters. The memories are supplemented by source materials, newspaper clippings, leaflets, theatre programs that were collected by the creators and actors of the theatres. The originality of poetics created by students of the Academy of Fine

Arts in Gdańsk and the Gdańsk University of Technology, the uniqueness of the means of expression liberating theatres from allegorizing artistic and cabaret messages, becomes an example of poeticizing the ordinariness, annulling it, at least during the performance. The first two chapters include observations of Agnieszka Osiecka who was befriended with the Gdańsk theatres. Her observations complete the contextualization of student activity. Her intimate diary from 1952 to 1955, allow to get insight into experience, feelings, opinions written down immediately, without subsequent filtering by more adult, conscious participant and co-creator the then cultural life. Hanna Świda-Ziemia in her book *Missed flight. A generation of post-war intellectuals in the light of letters and memoirs from 1945-1948* [Urwany lot. Pokolenie inteligenckiej młodzieży powojennej w świetle listów i pamiętników z lat 1945-1948] based the main statements on the analogical source materials in sociological researches on the postwar generation. These statements are substantial reference in the characteristic of the peer group of student theatre life animators.

The attempt of multi-faceted inclusion of time and way of the existence of theatrical ephemera is to unify the image of young intellectuals' cultural life in the PPR. In the story of Co To, Bim-Bom and The Circus of Afanasjeff Family we can include two aspects: one of the euphoric inspiration of thaw transformations in culture and the other one of life full of fears and limits behind the Iron Curtain. It happens thanks to looking in every monographic chapter at involvement of student theater in the organization structures of Polish Students' Association, participating in political culture of the country and, at the same time, implementing original, autonomous statements, determining the repertoire of performances and analyzing reception of them. The postulate of validation the terms "puchatkizm" and "teatrzyk", allowing clear identification of specificity, essential characteristics of amateur student theatres, involving them in the movement contesting the existing reality, serves to emphasize the "socomantics" generation's collection of values, proclaiming the law of an ordinary man to lyricism, simple emotions, dreams. The humanistic qualities of performances, building around the student theatres a community of spectators hungry not only for news, artistic surprises but also some kind of closeness of expressed emotions and behaviours, determine a universal significance of the student theatres and its substantial role in the process of thaw transformation. Each of

the Gdańsk theatres has its own chronological frames, however their beginning and ending is determined by two dates that have a symbolic meaning in the history of the PPR. The year 1956 symbolizes enthusiasm of the youth that announces spring in the culture, success of first performances and first reviews of student theatres, catching attention of audience and press. The year 1968 became a symbolic end of social hopes caused by relative liberation of the system. Anti-intelligent and anti-Semitic witch-hunt destroyed the generation world view, its axiological dimension and political belief that socialism can be built with “a human face”.

The beginnings of student theatres, describing social transformations in the 50's a bidirectional, success of grass-roots, private enterprises in the country of the op-down planning, convince of a need to create own form of expression and to create an enclave out of the political supervision of the Polish Students' Association. About an incredible strength of social influence of the theatres (that were niche, environmental), decided referencing to former aesthetics, making from the theatres some kind of generation trend and social forum, where people could state their beliefs and express their attitudes.

One of the purposes of the thesis is widen a research reflection about the hand theatre Co To which did not have its own narration, auto characteristics that would guarantee the ban a visible place in the history of student theatres in the PPR. The example of Co To clearly describes also poetics of the Coast theatres, limiting or completely deleting role of a text, for exposing the plastic metaphor, pantomime, grotesque. The element of the typical student satire, blossoming in conditions of the national censorship was giving away the means of expression borrowed from former traditions of plebeian theatre, the pantomime language or a fresh, modern scenery styles like using film grammar. Although the theatres from the 50's can be defined as scenes of one political season, were gathering in one circle talented, creative, pushing and ambitious people. The student theater became a second university for significant part of the intelligent young people that in their adult and professional life belonged to the elite of Polish culture creators. The structure of the work mark the way of the history and performances of the student theatres starting with the generation category, social and historical conditions of the student culture, the PPR's language image of the world, and mythological narration of the generation. Further through the formative experience of the October

transformations, the role of local academic center (“szkoła sopocka”), and spontaneity of community action to monographic presentations of Co To, Bim-Bom and The Circus of Afanasjeff Family. The symbolic ending of the “season of colourful clouds” become, so called, March events in 1968. Since that time the student theatres phenomenon lives on nostalgia and memories narration.