



Theatre expedition*

The *Theatre Expedition*, having a rich tradition as method and as adventure and connected with the names of Artaud, Barba, Brecht, Brook, Grotowski and others, is more than just playing guest. The *Theatre Expedition* is, in the words of Eugenio BARBA, “bartering”: the theatre absorbs pictures, atmospheres, materials, (hi)stories and people of the destination and then at the end, in a festive presentation, gives them back changed, unfamiliar and enriched to the location.

The *Theatre Expedition* is a conglomeration of preparation, journey, research, the forging of new relationships, production, presentation, festivity (gathering, □ Discotheater) and remembrance: with respect to educational values it is a chance, which is not to be underestimated, to gain the basic skills of interaction and of problem solving and at the same time a chance for inter-cultural learning with lead-ins to political education in specific areas.

Every location, whether rural or urban, at home or abroad, central or peripheral to the “civilisation”, is suitable for an expedition. In the best case however the choice of destination takes into account the themes and the *nature of the performance* (Włodzimierz STANIEWSKI) from the ongoing production. The character of the production sets then the agenda of the research: the geographical, social and cultural landscape of the destination and the “landscape of the text” (Scotch MAIER) blend into one another.

The theatre takes leave from its culturally allotted space and inserts itself into real surroundings. In search of unused theatre-spaces, of the “catacombs” in the sense of George TABORI, the group rehearses in various places in the city, in the village or out in the environs. Every space, every encounter, every everyday scene can come to be regarded as theatre in the sense of the “third theatre” (Eugenio BARBA) and will potentially provide an occasion for ethnographic research, for learning and for playing. The borders between recreation and rehearsal, between theatre and everyday life become permeable: the rehearsal becomes permanent. Things found – stage props, costumes, text-, visual- and sound-documents – come to be integrated into the production. Later presentations preserve in play and picture the *genius loci*, the spirit of the place which was visited.

The *Theatre Expedition* is – like all art (John DEWEY) – always a surprising adventure and an abduction: into an unknown “third place” (SCHLESISCHE 27), at a crazy, “non-linear” pace, sometimes at standstill, sometimes racing by. Surprises demand fast, agile responses. Actions are taken and problem solving occurs to a great extent in ways beyond the scope of that which could be planned for beforehand. All the more must care be taken in the planning and with the logistics. The own production, the theatre group, its members and their everyday nature come to be seen in an

* Theatre expedition in the methodological sense described here for the Youth theatre was developed by DISKOTEATER METROPOLIS in cooperation with its Polish partners from 1997 onwards.

unfamiliar light, the group and the actors discover one another as unfamiliar territory. As in contemporary theory of inter-cultural learning, though in this case in practical ways, so here too the much too rigid terms “own” and “foreign” break down.

The intense coexistence for about four to nine days, the being in transition between diversion and concentration, between pure fun and exhausting work which is often of an “ecstatic” character, all this makes the *Theatre Expedition* into a mile-stone, often into a turning point and always into a reference point in the history of the group and of the individual actors. The actors develop, in the successful case, their cohesion and their agile, open and dialogic identity during the “*expedition into the other*” (Gerhard Hess discussing DISKOTEATER METROPOLIS).

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