

Diversity in universality

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Abstract: Globalization is a necessity of the time we are going through, because only by joining a whole can we stand out as individuals and preserve the foundation of our being. Let's not interpret globalization in the form of a process of cancellation, but rather of supporting identity, because language, faith and nation are imprescriptible - they exist and that's all. Obviously, we distinguish a cyclicity of regeneration, a need for new ways of approaching the expression of life, but what matters is the understanding of the phenomena and the integration of mentalities and actions in a single market, creating diversity in universality. From the aforementioned equation, we do not remove the training process, because, regardless of the in-depth field, the form of education draws the rules of society and promotes development directions. Thus, we realize that man, from any meridian, is the promoter of a time and completes his work by relating to it.

Keywords: marionettes, living body, electronic body, actor, public

„Learn how to see. He understands that everything connects to everything.”¹ is the vision launched by Leonardo da Vinci since the Renaissance period, more precisely about 550 years ago. If perception traces our trajectory and each element depends on the other, forming a universal harmony, then the invoked „all” awakens the consciousness of a need to integrate individuality, implicitly cultural identity, in a broad context, the broadest possible.

The perspectives of the present debate will be concretized around a single term – globalization, including here the element of novelty - cultural hybridization, an essential factor in the evolution of today's society. In addition to comments aimed at the generic notion, we will promote some ideas that support the necessity of the phenomenon and we will launch hypotheses regarding the role and importance of preserving individuality in the context of a whole, arguing with opinions for and against. At the same time, we will focus our attention on the theatrical phenomenon, an art that contributes to the definition of national identity, and we will extend the discussion to the theater school, perceived as a laboratory for the formation of the artistic future.

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1. Does globalization favor or not the preservation of cultural identity?

The phenomenon of globalization is not a novelty from a conceptual point of view, but the current form „digital globalization” comes as a new method necessary for the evolution of ideology itself. The idea brought into discussion makes the transition to one of the topics of interest - the cultural evolution, implicitly the theatrical one, in the era of globalization and the importance of the phenomenon in the current context.

Where does the concern for uniformity come from and what would be the goal? Going through the unfolding of events, we discover that the birth of globalization coincides with the emergence of capitalism, so somewhere lost in time. The advanced goal was to upset the spaces consolidated by art, culture, tradition, religion and to subtly impose a universal language dominated by the fundamental features of the expansionist economic powers. In other words, financial capital (the engine of globalization) determines the markets, and these in turn put pressure on national cultures in the direction of adapting to certain established values. Regardless of personal opinions, we must admit that globalization imposes commercial criteria, but art and culture, artistic cultural products, are non-commercial. Taking into account this aspect, we realize that the phenomenon under debate takes place and expands strictly on a commercial level and not through education. We somehow enter into a polemic because civilization and culture are products of society. To clarify things, we establish the place that each one holds: the economic aspect belongs to the commercial side, and art and culture, which define our identity, draw their essence from the sacredness of the human being. The priority is the essence, and the commercial can only be a surrogate that serves the needs of the one who created it. In other words, the mentioned notions function in a subordination relationship or interact and support each other.

If we think that the „development recipes” launched by the dominant countries influence or sometimes even replace local perspectives, we should direct the discussion towards modernity and tradition or modernity or tradition. No matter how we judge, the integration of the old into the present becomes a unique solution.

Let us focus our attention on free movement and, implicitly, on the dissemination and exchange of information, which favors the mixing of national markets in order to consolidate a single free market. The idea does not send us towards uniformity, towards the cancellation of the particularities that individualize spaces, mentalities or characteristic ways of manifestation. There can be no question of canceling or blurring the particular, but we want diversity in universality. An adaptation of the particular and its integration in a context that includes several ways of being in one. The idea is great, from a theoretical point of view, but when the factual element comes into play, things get complicated. The main and only pawn, around

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which everything gravitates, is man, the entity that has the ability and quality to shape, transform, exclude or promote visions.

It would be interesting to discover how art and culture manages to preserve its national identity and characteristics, while remaining relevant on the market, or how art can transfigure the present reality by preserving the universality of the particular, but also integrating the particular into the universal. Starting from the foundation, from the way of defining civilizations, referring to religions, ideologies, moral values, ethnicity, generation and region, we distinguish a series of distinct features, which cannot be blurred. Not during a generation nor during eternity, because tradition has the value of sacredness, as Peter Brook argued, the manifestations are „anti-former, anti-traditional, anti-pretension”², having the value of originality and representing an indisputable landmark. By referring to archetypes, mythology and social tradition, the director emphasizes precisely the cultural identity that defines and establishes rules. So, different mentalities correspond to different social types, because man cannot be separated from the uniqueness of his own being, nor from belonging to the time of his existence. He becomes the sole creator, and his work bears the imprint of his own originality. „Creativity thus becomes the central piece in personality development, the very meaning of human existence and self-realization. No matter how much vanity, ambition, competition weigh in a person's motivation, man creates, in the last instance, because he cannot do otherwise. Creation is the very law of man's spiritual life; the act of creation is autotelic, like play; his reason for being is in himself”³. When we discover the rightness of the ideas promoted by Vasile Pavelcu, we realize that the phenomenon of globalization will turn into a total failure if it aims to assimilate collective identities, because the creative element, which defines the meaning life of each individual, it cannot be subjected, constrained or cancelled.

Judging things in the sense of a remodeling in a specific direction, we arrive at the idea of reorganization, which implies, by itself, the need for training or reformation and transformation, the shaping of people. Obviously, we are not referring to a physical one, but to a conceptual level, to perception, to psychological changes, to mentality and vision. A difficult and almost impossible wish to fulfill. As an argument, we invoke the impossibility of canceling the individual and the personal space of manifestation. If the creators of the new world will take into account the primordial human needs, reasonings will certainly appear that will support the usefulness of an association of diversities, not with a view to fusion, but to orientation towards communication and exchange of experiences. In fact, man is the same on any meridian, only the way of expressing life is unique, it has authentic meaning.

² Peter Brook, *Spațiul gol*, traducere de Marian Popescu, Editura Unitex, București, 1997, p. 84

³Vasile Pavelcu, *Metamorfozele lumii interioare*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1979, p. 79

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Identity is preserved through continuity, and man will never be able to be separated from the origins of his being. The statement can be interpreted as an optimistic projection, but going back the steps we notice that there are elements that have passed the test of time becoming undeniable landmarks. The conclusion will be simple or simplistic. Lines exist only in mathematics, but let's not forget that they are also formed from points. Diversity in universality constitutes both the ideal and the real. The world changes its ideals, values and priorities, but it can never deny its past. No matter what the human achievements are, the individual makes the correlation with the past, because he is a source of inspiration, confirmation and reporting in his own research or journey. We are a lucky generation. We just reach out and, on the shelves of a library, we find answers. Moreover, by pressing a key an entire universe comes to serve our intellectual or practical needs. So, we realize that globalism cannot be fought through nationalism, because it would mean a self-isolation of man, and this is really not possible anymore. Dynamics and diversity, competitiveness, require adaptation to a world in motion and change. We can be in diversity, because this is precisely what individualizes us and proves to us that cultural identity cannot disappear, but becomes a permanently present factor in time and space.

2. Theater – basic component of culture

Let's take a look at digital globalization and hybridization. The industrial revolution favors technological discoveries, and the virtual environment, regardless of which gadget is accessed, comes as a plus in knowledge. A simple click connects us to an infinity of information. So, modern technology comes to the support and benefit of the one who originated it, but if the creator will be overtaken by the creation, and the roles will change, then the identity of the human being will be at a critical moment (the statement at the end we take hypothetically).

We extrapolate the discussion to the theatrical domain, because the art of the performance imposes itself as a force in supporting and shaping the national identity. We have just passed a time that confirmed to us that, in moments of crisis, man has the creativity to reinvent himself. Everyone, in their own privacy, gave meaning to solitude or made their presence felt through the artistic act distributed through electronic devices to virtual channels. Even the theater went out of the classical norms by changing its optics in the approach to the performance. In the crisis situation, the solutions offered by technology opened our access to theatrical productions from any part of the world, something that until yesterday could be considered a phenomenon ahead of our time. Online performances have promoted a kind of universal digital stage, on which styles and visions have interfered. Willingly or unwillingly, we mixed, resulting in a form of identity in the universality of the virtual environment, a mix that facilitated the emergence of a true factory of culture. I do not consider that it was a premeditated phenomenon, but rather a cultural revolution born from the

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constraint of the space of expression and from man's desire not to cancel his own individuality.

Referring to what has been stated, we subscribe to Kafka's statement - actors are the ambassadors of the unknown, meaning to be in any space. Why? Precisely because it represents a good of society. He no longer belongs to himself, but his entire life is put at the service of the city that created him. In the context of globalization, of affiliation to the international standard, the artist is required to be flexible in thinking and action in order to adapt to any challenge or artistic environment, because the global actor is a creative entity with openness to the rules of international industries and only by adapting his thinking and feeling, without altering its inner creative resources, will always be able to live truly in imaginary circumstances. Moreover, the reports on his art take on a different connotation. The dynamics and diversity of the market, competitiveness, join two antagonistic grounds: the artist - cultural product and the artist - commercial product. It depends on the meaning given to these terms and how we relate the artistic act to the present. If art remains with a sense of high revelation, then we go to the depth of the field itself, canceling any other alteration or desire to smear. If we go to the commercial area, we accept consumerism and the combination of the useful with the pleasant, without the pretense of existence on a revealing road. The big economies, the financial forces of the world, discuss in terms of earnings, while vocation and talent cannot be quantified or perceived as a business, in fact the financial side does not receive or validate the celebrity. In this case, each artist has his priorities, but the living nature of performance art, which transforms the abstract and the theoretical into the concrete and practical, transposing an idea into a tangible reality in the form of a message addressed to society, brings together the artist, the theater and society in a balance existential! Society establishes rules, defines the manner of thinking or action and draws the direction of orientation of all fields of activity.

We also want to highlight certain comments on the perspective of the consumer public, because the technological evolution, with all that it implies, modifies and diversifies its behavior. The focus no longer being on the classical forms, the viewer experiences the cultural phenomenon through all existing modalities. The internationalization of productions, but also that of themes and subjects, favors the most profound cultural revolution that globalization has produced. Increasing the access of all social categories to all the resources and goods that civilization can make available, becomes added value. However, let's not abandon ourselves in full admiration for the mentioned transformations, because every new element also comes with an oversaturation, with cheap technology, low quality goods, art going to the point of derision or exceeding its border. So, we have the obligation to associate artistic responsibility with social responsibility, because it depends on us what and how we promote today as a value.

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3. Theatrical pedagogy - fundamental element of defining the artistic act

„You don't need to limit yourself to being what you are. You can act or you can live differently. The range of your potential responses to change is richer than you think.”⁴ The statement is an invitation to become aware of the fact that we have a world outside of us, but a universe within ourselves. By nature, the artist investigates and overcomes the limits imposed by his own self, and the effervescence of creation cannot be quantified in time, but is an endless and repetitive one, equivalent to the work of Sisyphus, in the conception of Albert Camus⁵. Each role represents a path of knowledge, discoveries and trials followed by the desire to penetrate the most intimate depths of one's being. Let us not imagine the establishment of a unilateral trajectory dominated by self-knowledge, but the encounter with otherness becomes essential, the theatrical phenomenon promoting the idea - not you in the given situation, but the character in a context, as the great pedagogue Ion Cojar argues in his work *A poetics of the actor's art*.

Inevitably, we also refer to the term training, equivalent to pedagogy, an educational process that must be adapted to the conditions of the current society. We can say that each theater school has its own vision and approach to the educational process, but in essence they share the same didactic-pedagogical paradigm, because the mentalities that govern today's society form the foundation of knowledge here and now.

Following a chronology of logical succession, we arrive at the main goal of education - capitalizing on the potential of each individual aspirant, without prioritizing the approach in the strict direction of employment, but rather towards defining the role of social utility. By developing the idea, we reach knowledge, first of ourselves and then of the world we are part of, because the symbiosis between education and art forms the driving forces of a society.

Researching further the Romanian artistic educational system, we notice that it is based on a humanistic philosophy integrated, in turn, in a broad concept called Bologna. So, we are affiliated or have become an integral part of a globalist formula, which deeply capitalizes on the tradition, „Specialists in education claim that priority must be given to a series of skills that do not particularly belong to the commercial world, belonging rather to the humanistic sphere (...) which deals with the problems that differentiate human beings from the rest of the world : language, thought, freedom, artistic creation, society, etc. And precisely because they deal with these essential differences, they should be important to every college student. In the humanities, man himself becomes the subject of study and contemplates the most

⁴ Victor Ernest Mașek, *Arta viitorului*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1979, p. 39

⁵ Albert Camus, *Fața și reversul; Nunta; Mitul lui Sisif; Omul revoltat; Vara*, traducere Irina Mavrodin, Mihaela Simion, Modest Morariu, Editura RAO, București, 2006

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typical aspects of his own existence”⁶. The related exposition recognizes both the importance of tradition in a general context and its intrinsic value. The genesis is the support of the humanistic educational philosophy, after which we expand and establish connections with numerous fields. In the theater we bring together, in an absolute interdependence, literature - dramatic support, plastic art - set design, music, sports, lighting and sound modeling engineering, theater history, philosophy, aesthetics, vital elements of the knowledge process, all related first to local values , and then to the universal ones.

Focusing our speech on the crisis situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we are faced with an element of novelty - the only solution for conducting university courses is the online regime. Questions and frustrations followed, and obviously THE CHALLENGE. The teachers and students were brought into the situation to reinvent themselves, to find a way of communication adapted to the moment. We do not initiate an antagonistic rhetoric based on hard or easy, but promote the power of openness of each individual towards creativity. The reality imposed the forcing of the creative imagination to establish a plausible way of fruition of the education hidden behind the monitor. And from here, an ample debate can follow through which we demonstrate, once again, if it were necessary, the immense inner strength possessed by the human being and its unparalleled power of adaptation.

Everything starts from communication, the indisputable necessity of relationships. In this case, the inter-academic one, which opens perspectives in the training of the actor, considered an instrument of social change and a potential vector of opinion. We appeal to a pertinent rhetoric and ask ourselves: What type of mentality should be developed in students and what type of values should be promoted by teachers? The answer is found in the quote: „We should not be satisfied with criteria that act as surrogates for cultural value; rather, we should seek to design the institutions around which to create cultural values.”⁷ The university is part of the gallery of institutions with great responsibility in the direction of training future generations. The axiological trajectory needs to be governed by adaptation, because the challenges of history are part of existence, one to which we relate and which we admit as the only standard of actuality.

The unaltered affiliation to the present time outlines the visions of the pedagogical process, one related to the industry of the profile market, which forces us to investigate both the educational content and the mode of delivery; with reference to didactic and pedagogical methods and to the structure and organization of the curriculum. Thus, the orientation of the academic programs, the elective criteria and

⁶ Maria G. Ambilburu, Martha Ruiz-Corbella, „Philosophy of Education and Education in Competences in the Context of the European Higher Education Area” in *Philosophy of Education*, Nr 4 (37), 2011, p. 13

⁷ ENCATC Annual Conference, http://www.encatc.org/media/940-ac_2015_report.pdf

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the educational objectives of the vocational schools should identify and bring to fruition the talent by transforming the native abilities into specific professional competences. The working methods, in the training of the professional actor, have only one path, logic: thought – emotion – body – voice, prioritizing two stages: the first - awareness of the limitations and work to remove these blockages, and the second - ensuring the stable framework directed towards exploration, the expression and expansion of the creative self, because „the act of study is deeply personal. The individual discovers on his own the meaning of the knowledge on the basis of which he personally appropriates the content of the teaching.”⁸ Theater is a collective work, but, for the most part, also an individual one. Why? Simple - characters are unique identities. Their singularity is validated by the actor, the creator who interprets events accompanied by authentic emotions in a distinct manner. A computer monitor somehow separates the living and no longer facilitates the meeting and exchange of energies, as the classical form used to, but it offered a new perspective on other means of expression. Experiments open a path to research laboratories and, why not, to the shaping of a new theatrical current. The combination of classical theater with the discoveries of the present, with the possibilities offered by the technological era, shows us a form of evolution of man and his creation. A desire to overcome the present and an aspiration towards new and new forms of expression of the same thought. The purpose of art and theater must not be forgotten and the manifestation within the limits imposed by the aesthetics of beauty must not be removed. It is not the epic form that dominates, but the person in action, permanently subordinated to the scenic truth that contains the phrase „Nihil humani a me alienum puto” (Nothing that is human is alien to me).

Conclusions

The crossed century defines civilizations through the cultural concept represented by religions, ideologies or moral values and we can invoke visions promoted by the School of Annals, the ethological research developed by Edward Hall or James Watson or David Morley, concluding that the anthropological perspectives no longer refer only to the evolution of humanity in historical terms, but also in those related to social categories, moving „from text to context and from semiotic analysis to a social one”⁹

⁸ Maria G. Ambilburu, Martha Ruiz-Corbella, *op.cit.*, p. 13

⁹ David Morley, *Television, Audiences and Cultural Studies*, Routledge, New York, 1992 apud Sonia Livingstone, *The changing nature of audiences: from the mass audience to the interactive media user*, LSE, London, 2003 p.12.

<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/archive/00000417>,

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Sociologists and psychologists argue that it is not enough to survive, but we must coexist in a world full of pretense and unpredictable. Alvin Toffler¹⁰ attributed great importance to art forms, considering that man, using his great power of imagination, will resist the trauma of change. Maybe the term is exaggerated, but let's not perceive it as something that alienates, but as a challenge in order to adapt to the new, one that is necessary and indispensable to the evolution itself. Art, through the diversity of forms and means of expression, is a vector of change and draws the direction of society, and the educational system is nothing but a laboratory for encouraging the expression of the originality of individuality and directing them towards universality.

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¹⁰ Alvin Toffler, apud Victor Ernest Mașek, op. cit. pag. 31