

Dramaturgy of Performance and Postdramatic Theatre

Dramaturgy, as the discipline traditionally responsible, first and foremost, for the conversion of the dramatic pre-text into the theatrical script, has been subject to radical conceptual and practical transformations over the last decades due to the partial transition from text-based poetics to the aesthetics and rhetoric of Performance and its offshoots in the various patterns of postdramatic theatre. The paper will focus on that phenomenon based on my work in the last decade (supported by ISF grants for an extensive research on current dramaturgical theories and an international dramaturgy workshop that I organized at the Tel Aviv University in May 2008), that has largely been dedicated to exploring the shifts effected in the field of Applied Dramaturgy (my concept denoting the interrelations between textual, contextual and circumstantial factors in dramaturgical practice) by the emergence of psycho-physical, non text-based, interdisciplinary performative patterns. These patterns challenge habitual notions of dramaturgy by subverting the mimetic, representational levels of narrative, characterization and fictional "world" in favour of the hegemony of the kinesthetic, present, imagistic, fragmentary, synchronic and corporeal performativity that emanates from the ideological tenets and biographic experiences of the members of a non-hierarchical histrionic group, obliterating the separation between the players' fictional enclave and the audience's "real" territory and turning the spectators into spetcactors. My major epistemological resource will be a series of in-depth discussions conducted throughout the last decade, in the context of the abovementioned ISF research, now being converted into a publication, with twenty-five leading German dramaturges. This field research has been based on the assumption that having its origins in Germany – the country of extreme performative experimentation -- the field of "classical" dramaturgy in this country has undergone the most radical transmutations in comparison with other countries. The questions with which I intend to deal will touch, among other issues, on the following subjects: The transposition of the dramaturge's function from a "third eye" and objective witness to an involved subjective agent, which means in fact – the transition from *dramaturgy of the text to the dramaturge as text*, to his/her bodily, spiritual and ritually-connoted integration in the Performance, including his/her task as in-corporator of the performing group's collective memory; the influence of the "New Dramaturgies" emanating from the practices of Performances and postdramatic theatre, on devising projects, inter-medial works, spatial and temporal conceptions, ethnic identity enunciation, audience participation approaches, etc. in mainstream public theatres in Germany.

About the Author

Gad Kaynar, Chair of the Department for Theatre Arts, Tel Aviv University, and Head of Dramaturgy, Dramatic Writing and Directing Program. Professor of Israeli, German and Scandinavian theatre and drama, as well as of dramaturgy and performance analysis; Guest Professor at The Hebrew University in Jerusalem and The Institut für Theaterwissenschaft in Munich. Author of numerous articles in international academic journals and books on Israeli, German and Scandinavian Theatre, Dramaturgy, Reception Theory, Theatre in Education, etc. His most recent book is an extensive historiographic study on *The Cameri Theatre of Tel-Aviv* (2008). His books *The Reality Convention in Hebrew Theatre* and *Recent German Dramaturgy* are due to appear in 2011. Kaynar is editor and co-editor of many anthologies, including on the *Sturm und Drang*, Michel de Ghelderode and George Tabori. Through grants from the "Israel Science Foundation", he conducted a basic research on Applied Dramaturgy leading up to a special issue of *Theater Research International* on dramaturgy, edited by him and Prof. Freddie Rokem (*Theater Research International*, October 2006), and to organizing an International Research Workshop on: *Dramaturgy as Applied Knowledge: From Theory to Practice and Back* (Tel Aviv University, 2008). Editor of the quarterly *Teatron*. Former dramaturg (1982–2005) of "Habima", *Israel's National Theatre*, *The Cameri Theatre of Tel Aviv*, and *The Jerusalem Khan Theatre*. Drama translator from German, Swedish and Norwegian for which and for his Ibsen research he has been appointed "Knight First Class of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit" by King Harald V of Norway. Kaynar is also a stage, film and TV actor, director, poet, Chairman of the Israeli Society for Theatre Research and the Israeli Writers' Union, the artistic director of *Isra-Drama Tel Aviv 2009* (the showcase of new Israeli drama) and Secretary General of the Israeli I.T.I. Center.