

Staging *Woyzeck*. Thoughts on Readings of *Woyzeck* for the 'Age of Participation'

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Abstract: Hungarian theatre history of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, from the standpoint of reception and creativity, tradition and innovation have two classics of unquestionable significance: Chekhov's *The Seagull* and Büchner's *Woyzeck*. Living in a theatre culture that takes pleasure in the politics of involvement, it is not surprising that, in the 2017/2018 theatre season, three young directors simultaneously undertook the presentation of the best-known fragment in European drama history. In terms of influence, though, it is interesting how these 'Z-generation' productions reflect upon two legends of the drama's performance in our nation: Stúdió K's direction in 1978 and that of Krétakör (Chalk Circle) in 2001. The current study examines how directors Attila Vidnyánszky, Jr (Stalker Group), Mátyás Péter Szabó (Közért Company), and Máté Hegymegi approach Büchner's unfinished piece. Can one locate in them a point of integration that structures the dissemination of theatrical symbols (both verbal and nonverbal) into a 'transparent order'?

"Theatre is an extremely unique phenomenon. [...] It endures and comments upon changing societal relations," writes Andreas Kotte in one of his theatre history works.¹ This process—the play of reception and creativity, tradition and innovation—is laid bare by contemporary directions of the classics. From this standpoint, in Hungarian theatre history of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, there are two dramas of unquestionable significance: Chekhov's *The Seagull* and Büchner's *Woyzeck*. If we acknowledge the spread of interactive performance formats as one of the main characteristics of contemporary Hungarian theatre,² then it is worth focusing on the 1836 text. After all, this classic of German Romanticism is the first example of the so-called *open drama form* (Volker Klotz). In this manner, it represents *sui generis* "the end of the Scheherazade paradigm of storytelling".³ The plot "disintegrates into a kaleidoscope of aspects," and it is not the structure, but only "the visual element [...]" that completes the narrative arch on a textural

¹ Andreas KOTTE, *Theatergeschichte. Eine Einführung* (Köln–Weimar–Wien: Böhlau, 2013), 395/397.

² Cf. Gabriella KISS, *Let's participate! Szélszegyzetek a dráma- és színházpedagógiai múltjához és jelenéhez*, Károli Books (Budapest: KRE–L'Harmattan, 2024).

³ This state is characterised by the self-analysis of the prosumer, in which the reconstruction of a closed narrative interests neither the creator nor the audience, and it is not motivated by the desire for closure. The meaning

and significance of their stories, created and evaporating in collective solitude, is not in the finished product but in the processing of the production, located in the optimisation of the visual dramaturgy in the Self. Cf. Nina TECKLENBURG, *Performing Stories: Erzählen im Theater und Performance* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2014), 24–36; Johannes, KUPP, "Theaterpädagogik im »Zeitalter der Partizipation«?", in *Partizipation: teilhaben/teilnehmen*, eds. Christoph SCHEURLE, Melanie HINZ and Norma KÖHLER, 25–36 (München: koaped, 2017).

level".⁴ As a result, it provides just as much opportunity for the reconstruction of the central plot thread (built upon motivations and consequences of infidelity) as the deconstruction of the story. That is, it is a directorial decision how to manifest the profoundly metaphorical language of the drama's text, as a theoretical montage of events or in the form of an organic work of art.

Living in a theatre culture that takes pleasure in the politics of involvement, it is not surprising that, in the 2017/2018 theatre season, three young directors simultaneously undertook the presentation of the best-known fragment in European drama history.⁵ In terms of influence, though, it is interesting how these 'Z-generation' productions reflect upon two legends of the drama's performance in our nation: Stúdió K's direction in 1978 and that of Krétakör (Chalk Circle) in 2001. These are two works that, in their own time, could have immediately received the Péter Halász Prize for being:

"uncomfortable, unpleasant, challenging, controversial [...] striving to broaden the potential themes and performance language of contemporary theatre; shifting the conventional rubric of performance; from time to time self-critically rethinking creative methods; making structural demands and societal expectations that influence both creations and institutions subjects for examination—all in order to shake up our thoughts, to question the conventions and boundaries that we take for granted,

⁴ Cf. Volker KLOTZ, *Geschlossene und offene Form im Drama* (München: Carl Hanser, 1960), 106–116.

⁵ Cf. SÁNDOR L. István, "Színházteremtő fiatalok színháza: Székely, Zsámbéki, Schilling *Sirálya*," *Ellenfény* 9, no. 2 (2004): 4–10; SÁNDOR L. István, "Az igazi bűnökkel szemben: Büchner és a Woyzeck Magyarországon," *Ellenfény* 23, no. 6 (2018): 2–6.

and to show what today's theatre can possibly be!"⁶

In Tamás Fodor's direction for Stúdió K, we may seek the murder's motivation not in the drama's metaphysical-philosophical dimension but in its sociological reading, best indicated by its spatial concept, which breaks with the traditional voyeur format. The site-specific production plays out among us in the strictest sense, half a metre away. In scenes that transpire in the public space, the roles of tavern-goers or those loitering in front of the Barker's soapbox are given to us. We dance together with the stage figures; in the intermission, we can fill up on lard-smear bread and Quarry-brand (Kőbányai) beer with them. As a result of the viewer's position, which is freely chosen, it is, in principle, up to us which scene we observe and how we react to the two or three explicitly aggressive (sexual) acts, which unveil the motif of murder and intimacy.⁷ Literally and symbolically, the story is performed in the amoral institution of the Barker's soapbox; and yet, although they become aware of this, the viewers (who may soon recognise themselves not only in the figures of the drunken lads and loose lasses, but as one among them) cannot interfere in the events for two reasons. First, it is because, at the start of the show, the Barker performs the tragic love-triangle story with puppets dressed in clothes identical to the stage figures, as a result of which the scenes become not only a theatrical illustration of events we already know, but also the causally linked sequence of a closed, consistent plot. Second, the production begins outside with the Barker's

⁶ Péter Halász Prize, accessed: 06.06.2022, https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=hal%C3%A1sz%20p%C3%A9terd%C3%ADj&epa=SEARCH_BOX

⁷ Cf. SÁNDOR L. István, *Szabadságzigetek* (Budapest: Selinunte, 2023).

words: "Step right up! It will be great. The show will soon begin." We step from quasi-reality *into* the performance space (the 'puppet show'). Consequently, the theatrical representation—though not in the accustomed manner, frontally and far from us, but right up next to us and among us—is ultimately inescapable.

W – Worker's Circus by Árpád Schilling was quite the opposite. Through the actors' bodies—blended with language, text, and images—it expressed not only the fragmentary nature of Büchner's text and the variability of its stories but Woyzeck's vision as well.⁸ In Chalk Circle's physical theatre performance, the body is a (main) character, and not only because the actors' work constitutes the show in the spirit of the new circus and movement theatre aesthetic. On the basis of scenes, the action (mostly visualised as acrobatic acts) was developed through the

⁸ "[...] *sui generis*: raw, its fragmentation is its make-up, not its detriment," and later: "Büchner's *Woyzeck* is one of the first works in the dramatic arts that is essentially fragmented and not in a biographical or historical sense. Its rare form lends it variability, so one need not view it as rigid or final. It always offers new opportunities for consensus creation. The web of connections and the direction need not be granted in terms of the actual production. It can be divided up and directed differently on each new occasion." BALASSA Péter, "»Mint egy nyitott borotva...«: Georg Büchner *Woyzeck*-töredékéről és a szegények atropológiájáról," in BALASSA Péter, *A másik színház*, 79–122 (Budapest: Magvető, 1989), 101/105

⁹ "Árpád Schilling: So, we determined not to invite guest artists for this production, only Krétakör actors, so we could return once more to the working method we had almost completely forgotten since *Little One*. István L. Sándor: The point of this method is that the actors improvise the play's scenes, and various games or actions develop from the situations. What is the advantage of this approach?

company's improvisations; exercises in concentration, status, and balance.⁹ It is also because the production was able to make the energy field palpable, which is necessary if one is to comprehend the gestures, body positions, and stage pictures devoted to presenting and interpreting the given micro-situation or psychological condition. Everything that we see and hear indicate a given figure's state or the dramaturgical function of the situation or theme, stereotypically, metaphorically, or as an archetype. However, the theatrical reflex of identification imbues this with atmospheric power. For example, we identify the weights tied to Woyzeck's feet as he runs in circles – first as an open Bible, then as two crumbling bricks crashing into each other. The sexual poses become acrobatic spectacles; the exposed secondary sexual traits and genitalia become kilos of meat. The shapes of the actors' bodies acquire the significance of

ÁS: It is important to emphasise that we are talking about *Woyzeck*, or the process as it applies to *Woyzeck*. This time, we went much further than with the previous shows, *Baal* or *Little One*. With those, we only approached the theme with improvisation. Now we were on a very determined formal search, and, using our results, we wished to discover ever newer paths. [...] Through the chain of linked scenes, one can get to know the improvisational technique: the play's scenes were interpreted as various actions or physical deeds. For example, Marie and Woyzeck's relationship is indicated by their game with the tub and the water in it. The Captain and Woyzeck's relationship is shown by how the latter bathes and feeds the former. These 'games' often look like physical attractions – for example, the fire-breathing scene or when the Doctor and Woyzeck converse, jumping and flipping on the spring mattress of a soldier's bed." SÁNDOR L. István, "Határhelyzetek: Beszélgetés a *W – munkáscirkusz* alkotóival," *Ellenfény* 6, no. 6 (2001): 22–27, 21.

figures, their physical flesh and muscle, and their energy of presence. Consequently, not only the manifest forms, themes, thoughts and ideas come to the centre of the audience's attention, but also the embodiment, which is commensurate with abstraction.

Overall, both legendary shows counted on viewers who went to the theatre "[...] to see what they were not allowed to see."¹⁰ Just as 99.6%, *HOOMELAAND, KŐ-KŐ-KŐ*, the 2019 series of actions by the students who occupied the University of Theatre and Film Arts, as well as *Game Changer*, *Closer*, and *Living the Dream with Grandma*—it is true of them, too, that they expose the authoritarian might of the type of dramaturgy that fears offending the boundaries entrusted to 'the' theatre. Instead of endeavouring to "standardise and normalise the feelings evoked by the work, interrupting processes that endanger house operations,"¹¹ they strive to be unpredictable and unfinished. This, in turn, prompts the spectators to reconsider their habitual mode of reception, the basis of which is theatrical representation's "transparent ideal" (Aristotle).

¹⁰ Jérôme BEL's *bon mot* quoted by BEREZ Zsuzsa, "Táncképesség: Az ArtMan Egyesület munkájáról," *Színház* 50, no. 4 (2017): 10–13, 13.

¹¹ Nikolaus MÜLLER-SCHÖLL, "Polizeiliche und politische Dramaturgie," in *Postdramaturgien*, eds. Sandra UMATHUM and Jan DECK, 209–230 (Berlin: Neofelis Verlag, 2020), 220.

¹² It is no accident that for Irit Rogoff, the classic of "critical theory," the paradigmatic example is the gesture of turning away, or the moment when (in the museum or theatre) "the observer becomes independent of previously predictable participation and, what is more, the accepted possibilities for action, practicing criticism on the institutionalised practice brought to life by following the etiquette of appreciating artwork". Cf. Irit ROGOFF, "Looking Away: Participation in Visual Culture," in *After Criticism: New Responses to Art and Performance*, ed. Gavin BUTT, 117–

Do these three latest directions offer the opportunity of *involvement*, which is the same as criticism of the dispositive?¹² Do they initiate a dialogue with each other regarding viewing strategies—be they passive-oppressive, passive-conservative, post-passive and active witnessing, or immersive?¹³ In the crossfire of audience viewpoints, at odds with themselves and each other, do they expose the viewpoint of the first person plural (white, cis-, healthy, and educated), which Carrie Sandahl called the "tyranny of the neutral?"¹⁴ We receive answers to these questions if we examine how the directions Attila Vidnyánszky, Jr (Stalker Group), Mátyás Péter Szabó (Közért Company), and Máté Hegyemegi approach Büchner's unfinished piece. Can one locate in them an integration point that structures the dissemination of theatrical symbols (both verbal and nonverbal) into a 'transparent order'?¹⁵

In the themed sixth edition of the journal *Ellenfény* from 2018 entitled *Woyzeck Then and Now*, Zoltán Kondorosi stated as fact, "the new productions deal with the base material more freely."¹⁶ Our thesis is that all

134 (Malden: John Wiley & Sons, 2008). Cf. Ádám CZIRÁK, „Partizipation,” in *Metzler Lexikon Theatertheorie*, eds. Erika FISCHER-LICHTE, Doris KOLESCH and Matthias WARSTAT, 242–248 (Stuttgart–Weimar: Springer, 2014).

¹³ Sarah, WHATLEY, "Dance and Disability: The Dancer, the Viewer, and the Presumption of Difference," *Research in Dance Educations* 6, no. 1 (2007): 5–25, 18.

¹⁴ Cf. Benjamin WIHSTUTZ, "Disability Performance History: Methoden historisch vergleichender Performance Studies am Beispiel eines Projekts über Leistung und Behinderung," in *Neue Methoden der Theaterwissenschaft*, eds. Benjamin WIHSTUTZ and Benjamin HOESCH, 109–132 (Bielefeld: transcript, 2020).

¹⁵ KLOTZ, *Geschlossene und offene Form*, 109.

¹⁶ KONDOROSI Zoltán, "Kiszolgáltatottak és megnyomorítottak," *Ellenfény* 23, no. 6 (2018): 28–33, 31.

three productions play a dual-natured game: Stalker Group at the National Theatre (being “post-Meiningen”), Közért Company at MU Theatre “New Theatrical,” and Hegymegi at Szkéné physical theatre. For one thing, we truly feel (mainly thanks to the formal language employed) that “they often stage unique variations.”¹⁷ Moreover, mostly through visual means, a distinct frame of reference for the *Woyzeck* narrative is quite emphatically presented. By multiplying, concealing, and replaying certain connective points at varying speeds and rhythms, these directors unsettle the viewers who wish to know the story’s beginning, middle, and end. Consequently, all three productions approach the fragmentation of Büchner’s work from its ‘unfinished’ state. Yet, it is not fragmentation itself, but the fragments that comprise the shows’ dramaturgical starting points,¹⁸ becoming points of orientation in three very different productions of *Woyzeck*, which nonetheless all exist in collective loneliness.

Attila Vidnyánszky, Jr.’s production, still on the National Theatre’s repertoire in 2024, is “based on a true panel story.”¹⁹ The title character (portrayed by Márk Nagy as a multicultural performance of Stanislavsky’s concept of Public Solitude) not only embodies solitude in the strictest sense of the word but

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ This is confirmed by two creators’ refusal to use the “compiled version” by Gábor Thurzó and Zoltán Halasi, assembled from outlines and main drafts, working instead with the facsimile translation by Csaba Kiss or their own literal translation of the original text.

¹⁹ This is a play on words referring to panels in a series of (possibly religious) paintings and the so-called panel houses, which are cheaply constructed mass housing units that proliferated throughout Eastern Europe under the Communist regime.

²⁰ “The path into the world of *Woyzeck* is through the brawling youths, who address the viewers and try to score. They give the audience so much sensory stimulation; it is

also construed it as a virtue. The dual-framed piece makes the young man both the nucleus and counterpoint of this two-hour *trip*. He never curses, speaking the lines (which, only in his case, derive from Büchner) in Hungarian with no foreign words, while the rest of the cast (the Stalker Group at that time) improvise in Serbian, Croatian, Romanian, and ‘Hunglish.’ Leaning on the wall and clutching his child, he watches as the others’ maimed bodies literally overflow the intimate space, while the atmosphere is established by the clip-like, dynamic choreography made up of acrobatic elements, intensified gesture and speech, and action sped up with stroboscope and UV light.²⁰ The figure’s reflexivity is demonstrated in one of the show’s key scenes. The man, preparing buttered bread for his hungover wife (who protractedly repeats, “I work in a tobacco shop, but now I’m on maternity leave.”) presents to the Doctor, who relishes aberration, a model of his South-American home. While he precisely describes the place where he and the people closest to him live, the coked-up community of the panel house illustrates what is said, as elements in a *Google Maps* program come to life, entering and exiting through the openings in the walls of the Attila Kaszás Hall.²¹ Later, they mount the stage through the walls or the

difficult to get bored, even if these scenes become repetitive after a point and are not necessarily logically motivated. Yet, this activity is strictly asymmetrical. Viewers are just objects of interaction, never true participants. They may mount the stage, if given permission, but then they can only move based on actors’ instructions, thus remaining in children’s roles. They pelt *Woyzeck* with peas (only cautiously, of course) when instructed to do so. Thus, they play us like an elementary school class.” NAGY Klára, “Rocksztárok: A Sztalker Csoport portréja,” *Színház* 52, no. 4 (2019): 18–21, 9.

²¹ This studio space in the National Theatre building is named after a famous deceased actor.

refrigerator, traversing what constitutes, for themselves and Marie, the real world, be it soap operas, prime-time shows, home renovation programs, porn, or nature films. As figures like Dumbledore and Gandalf, but most of all Señor 'Ciao-Ciao' Drum Major, they create a pseudo life sphere where only a few, relatively slow, and therefore intimate moments lend it a sense of reality. By virtue of these sequences, they are the moments from *Woyzeck* and Marie's coexistence when the viewers' gaze, accustomed to the multimedia chaos, simply rests on the two actors observing each other and performing everyday acts, such as spreading butter on bread and then on each other. Thus, the infidelity is experienced close up, as is the murder, which is staged as an embrace.²²

This montage technique, defining Büchner's fragments as episodes repeated over and over, undoubtedly brings the nerves of viewers used to 'classical' theatre spectacle and sound to the breaking point. What is more, the rhythm is very akin to the speed with which surfers on Instagram register and change images. This most likely accounts for the show's large number of young fans. With these tableaux, which are unbelievably energetic and utterly theatrical (or 'South American' insofar as it conjures a state of soap opera addiction), it differs from Mátyás Péter Szabó's and Máté Hegymegi's directions, albeit not in the same way.

In the case of Mátyás Péter Szabó at MU Theatre, spectators are surrounded by a snow-white lawn. The production, which takes place among black boxes that can be

moved and played with, is an "intellectual game [staging] the illogical visionary world of a soul tormented by madness."²³ The static play of the abstract spatial design provides a layered snapshot of the drama's fragments. For example, the Drum Major, stepping on boxes, enchants Marie, who gazes up from the ground, but is later elevated from her inferiority with shoes (instead of earrings) and spatial elements carried to her feet. The constant noise of packing boxes (the shoving, pulling, and sliding of spatial elements, as well as the slamming of lids open and closed) provides an aural tapestry, intensifying the production's consistently spooky sound. The symbolism defines *Woyzeck* and Andres, dressed alike in white, as mutual alter egos in contrast with the Captain and Doctor, wearing black costumes; in addition to Marie, who wears purple and climaxes to the accompaniment of a confetti cannon. The caring Fool, who cradles the small child, has no place in this world. The Doctor, as a mental hygienist, becomes an increasing burden. The parable of the essentially metaphoric nature of language and the unfathomability of reality is not spoken by the Grandma but by Andres, played by 'Palkó,' whose name refers both to the actor (Pál Kárpáti) and the smallest, poorest hero of folk tales. That is, this Nietzschean anti-fairy tale that illustrates *Woyzeck's* alienation (practically a pre-figuration of Christ) becomes, in this case, the origin of a very topical twenty-first-century identity narrative. The key to this is how Közért Company worked with Péter Kárpáti's improvisation method during rehearsals.²⁴ The characters'

²² Cf. "The perception in a Big Cit and the turned impatient seek acceleration and find it in the theatre." Hans-Thies LEHMANN, *Post-dramatisches Theater* (Frankfurt a. Main: Verlag der Autoren, 1999), 102.

²³ BALASSA, "»Mint egy nyitott borotva...«," 82.

²⁴ "In traditional improvisation, the scene's dramaturgy is predetermined. Let's say a couple lies in bed at night, but the woman

cannot sleep because she wants to break up, and she wakes the man. Such a traditional breakup scene generally goes quickly. If the actors are inspired and pay attention to each other, it can even be moving. Yet, it could only be more moving if the man actually realises, she wishes to leave him in the course of the story. Then, his breath truly stops, he becomes defenceless, and every reaction is spontaneous, surprising even to himself. He

behavioural analysis, nourished by the given actor's life experience, not only influenced the text but also 'locked' Woyzeck's identity performance emphatically in the first person singular personality. In addition, the singularity of the story is emphasised by the epilogue. In a canon, the actors read out murders that actually happened in their lifetimes, to which the following could apply without exception:

"A young man in his late 20s, already estranged from his family, is, however, incapable of fulfilling the expected male role in his own family. He is compelled to do work where there is no chance of promotion and no chance to resign, experiencing daily humiliations from his superiors. In exchange for survival, the young man is utterly at the mercy of the system."²⁵

Similar to Mátyás Péter Szabó, Máté Hegymegi also constructs his production by concentrating on the title character's identity narrative. The wisest and most placid (practically omnipotent) figure in this world—standing grey in a sea of black, woven of dimly and intermittently lit images—is the Barker/Fool. Woyzeck is the only character who hears what he says. He prompts Franz Woyzeck where to hide the knife, and, in the final stage picture, he changes places with the man, whose age only he knows. His position, reporting on this world without God or free will (testifying to the knowledge of Büchner, who was versed in Nietzsche) is occupied by the

knows it is not real, just improvisation, but due to the unexpected traumatic twist, he lacks the intellectual power to go on shaping the events artistically. Thus, he loses perspective and simply lives the situation. This is one basis of our technique – that none of the cards are on the table, there is no clear situation, and all the actors know only as much as they would wish to know if all this happened to them in real life." KÁRPÁTI Péter, "Létezés-improvó: A valóságsszimulációs improvizáció," in

tree situated in the centre of the stage picture and rising from a circular-shaped pit with its roots of braided ropes. This stark set element not only lends the Biblical motifs of Woyzeck's vision a logical unity, but it also arranges the show's vectorial movements into concentric circles. Although the Szkéné's circular stage is incapable of rotating, the actors' movement of scenery creates a kinetic rotating stage, thanks to which everyone without exception is locked in their personal spheres, revolving around a "devastated Paradise."²⁶ The homes of the Captain, the Doctor, Marie, and the two soldiers (Woyzeck and Andres) are represented by one piece of furniture each (twin chairs from a hospital waiting room, a lampshade attached to an IV stand, a window frame, and a tub, respectively) while the often slow-motion circular movement constantly pulls the ground out from underneath them. What is also palpable in the Hegymegi direction is the killing in the prologue, staged as a sexual act beside the tree trunk and repeated three times with increasing carnality and vehemence, signalling that this is Woyzeck's only possible decision: murder. Also, this murderous embrace, which liberates this (abstract) world from sin and mankind from its (actual) mortal coils, will last until the body of the man (bearing the burden of a backpack full of rubble) and the woman (nursing a rope baby while unable to pray under a window frame held by the Drum Major) occupy their bloody resting place in the cavity under the tree's roots.

Dogmaszínház: Egyfelvonásosok, ed. HERCZOG Noémi, 7–20 (Budapest: SzFE, 2019), 9.

²⁵ SZABÓ Mátyás Péter, *Woyzeck*, accessed 03.08.2023, <https://www.theater.hu/hu/szinhazak/szinhazi-bazis--230/eloadasok/woyzeck--10132.html>

²⁶ TÖRÖK Ákos, "Emberpanoptikum: A *Woyzeck* Hegymegi Máté rendezésében – Szkéné Színház," *Színház* 51, no. 11 (2018): 21–24, 22.

In this case, too, staging the title character's alienation comprises the production's point of integration. Just as Márk Nagy's *Woyzeck's* "billboard-loneliness"²⁷ places the focus on him in contrast to the multimedia chaos, and Zoltán Szabó is singled out by his character's lily-white self (which, like a protective shield, resists cloning), Erik Major's acting becomes the focal point, as it ceaselessly differs from the acting technique that surrounds him. He has nothing to do with the self-centred psychological realism of the Captain (who delivers his monologues as a reclining patient undergoing therapy) or the female Doctor (who is often reminiscent of the cold, confining Refrigerator Mother archetype). The older actors' psychological role interpretation acquires weight because both the raw, energetic gestures and Erik Major's abstract series of movements (for example, during the shaving, when he slowly climbs into every possible part of the chair provided) place palpable quotation marks in the manifestation of physical acts. Yet, this showcased artificiality endows it with the enclosed air of a puppet show, typifying the Ringmaster's scenes and the Drum Major's testosterone-filled vitality. Their aggressive roughness provides an exquisite counterpoint both to the obedient meekness in the young man's expression and the choreography built upon contact dance. *Woyzeck*, while lying on the Fool, exercises his prize-worthy aberration; or, when leaning and draped on Andres' body in the tub or above the pit, *Woyzeck* strives to move as much and however the empirical situation and gravity allow.

It is symptomatic how these directions spotlight or neglect the dual-layered reading of Büchner's text: as a drama or an allegory of mankind. For example, at MU Theatre, the

lines of *Woyzeck* referring to Christ's age reduced to legendary numbers ("Hence, today I am 30 years, 7 months, and 12 days old.") remain untouched. At Szkéné, the spoken information ("I am 25 years, 7 months, and 12 days old.") corresponds to that of Daniel Schmolling, the military barber executed in Leipzig on 27 August 1824. In Vidnyánszky Jr.'s direction, Márk Nagy gives his own date of birth as *Woyzeck's*. That is, the directions of the Z Generation preserve their *Woyzecks* from the variety of life that surrounds them, thus endowing them with a central function.²⁸ The first is removed from the unbridled orgy of 'true-story' applied scene improvisation, conceived during rehearsals at the National Theatre. The second is isolated from the MU Theatre's boxes, which are presumed to be real and (according to the rewritten fairy tale) "are used only one day of the year when the time comes for them to be decorated with flowers, passed from hand to hand amidst great celebration, only to be thrown away and stomped in the mud the next day." The third is delivered from the petrified world of Franz *Woyzeck*, who runs around the uprooted Tree of Eden in Szkéné Theatre but is also running from himself.

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²⁷ This is a reference to the poem *Négysoros* [Four-line] by János Pilinszky: "Sleeping nails in the ice cold sand. / Nights soaked in billboard-loneliness. / You left the lights on in the corridor. / Today will my blood be shed." Translated by Anna Klein.

²⁸ It is exciting to view this meek alienation as three variations of the "personal despair" typical of the trend called "Neo-Identity". Cf. HERCZOG Noémi, "Újszemélyesség: A kortárs magyar színház új irányai," *Színház* 48, no. 4 (2015): 7–13.

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