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PURE FORM IN THE THEATRE.

The City University of New York, Ph.D., 1974
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STANISŁAW IGNACY WITKIEWICZ:
THE THEORY OF PURE FORM IN THE THEATRE

by

JAMES WALTER PARKER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in Theatre in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of
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Abstract

STANISŁAW IGNACY WITKIEWICZ:
THE THEORY OF PURE FORM IN THE THEATRE

by

James Walter Parker

Advisor: Professor Daniel C. Gerould

This paper is a study of the relationship of Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz's theory of Pure Form in the theatre to the structure of his plays. In the first part of the paper the nature of the theory of Pure Form in the theatre is analyzed and explained and principles of dramatic structure in the ideal Pure Form play are formulated. In the second part the manner in which the theory of Pure Form in the theatre shapes the structure of selections from the three types of plays written by Witkiewicz is established. Finally, Witkiewicz's theory of theatre is shown in practice to share common structural characteristics with modern tragicomedy, surrealism and expressionism.

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To Robin and Sarah

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INTRODUCTION

Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, the Polish playwright, painter, philosopher and critic, was the author of a highly original theory for a new theatre. He called his theory Pure Form in the theatre. The theory is presented chiefly in two works: Nowe Formy w malarstwie i wynikające stąd nieporozumienia ("New Forms in Painting and the Resulting Misconceptions"), which set forth Witkacy's principles concerning Art in general and which sketched out his whole theory of painting, and Wstęp do teorii Czystej Formy w teatrze ("The Introduction to the Theory of Pure Form in the Theatre"), which was first published in the journal Skamander in 1920. Wstęp do teorii Czystej Formy w teatrze outlines Witkiewicz's poetics for the theatre. It is his most complete statement about theatrical Pure Form, especially with reference to the analogy that he makes between theatre and painting. It was reissued along with other critical materials, some of which are polemics with his critics, others further elaboration and clarification of his ideas concerning form, in a book titled Teatr: Wstęp do teorii czystej formy w teatrze. O twórczości reżysera i aktorów. Dokumenty do historii walki o Czystą Formę w teatrze. Dodatek: O naszym futuryzmie ("Theatre: The Introduction to the Theory of Pure Form

in the Theatre. Concerning the creative work of the Director and the Actors. Documents about the battle over Pure Form in the Theatre. Appendix: Concerning Our Futurism").

In this paper an analytical study of Witkiewicz's theories will be made in order to arrive at a definition and a statement of the poetics of Pure Form. These structuring principles will then be applied as critical measurements to selections of each of the three types of plays Witkacy wrote to determine the relationship of the theory to the final shape the plays took. This study will present for the first time in English a comprehensive analysis of the theory of Pure Form as it was proposed by Witkacy in the above mentioned theoretical works. This analysis should be of interest in the general area of dramatic structure; it will provide material that can be of value in further work in English on the structure of Witkacy's plays. Until recently there has been very little material available to a person who could neither read nor speak Polish upon which to base a knowledgeable opinion concerning the dramatic works of Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz.

The paper is divided into two parts. Part I is an analysis of the theory of the playwright and establishes a poetic of Pure Form. Primarily, the sources for this section are Teatr: Wstęp do teorii czystej formy and Nowe Formy w malarstwie. Part I has two chapters, the first being a definition of Pure Form and the second

a discussion of the poetics. The second chapter includes a discussion of the first four Aristotelian elements of drama as they appear in Pure Form, as well as the structuring devices of Pure Form and the experience of it in the theatre. In brief, Part I will attempt to answer these questions: 1) What is Pure Form? 2) How is it achieved? 3) What are the elements of its construction? 4) What is its general structure? The conclusion of the chapter is used in Part II to attempt to show the degree to which, if any, Witkacy's theory shapes his plays.

Part II investigates the shape of the dramas, their uniqueness of form as determined by Pure Form theory. Witkacy's plays fall into three groups: 1) Pure Form plays, that is, plays that are more Pure Form than realistic, which he indicated by an asterisk (*); 2) non-Pure Form plays, that is, plays that are more realistic than Pure Form, which he indicated by a cross (+); and 3) plays that Witkacy did not describe or designate with either classification. Three chapters of this part of the dissertation correspond to these designations. The conclusion of Part II is a discussion of Pure Form with regard to three other modern styles, i. e. expressionism, modern tragicomedy, and surrealism.

Until the present, Witkacian materials available to the scholar in translation were limited. All of the plays themselves have not been published in English translation. Much of the writing in English

has been with the view of popularizing Witkiewicz's work in the West. Now, especially since much attention is being given to Polish theatre in general and Witkacy in particular, it is important to provide access to the theoretical speculation which brought Witkacy's plays into being.

PART I

THE POETICS OF PURE FORM

CHAPTER I

A DEFINITION OF PURE FORM

This chapter is a discussion of Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz's esthetic justification of "teoria czystej form w teatrze (the theory of Pure Form in the theatre)." Art is defined as Witkacy understood and used the term with reference to his theory of theatre. Following an explanation of the Witkacian ontological assumptions with reference to his theory is a definition of Pure Form.

Art

As Witkacy's notions of theatre art are based upon his particular concept of art in general, an understanding of his assumptions about the nature of art is essential. In the essay, "Odczyt o czystej formie w teatrze, zawierający część polemiki z Fallkiem, Rostworowskim, i Prof. Szyjkowskim (A Lecture on Pure Form in the Theatre, Including a Part of the Polemic with Fallek, Rostworowski, and Professor Szykowski)," which was written in 1921 and later included as a section of Witkacy's collection of theoretical and polemical essays, Teatr: Wstęp teorii czystej formy w teatrze ("The Theatre: An Introduction

to the Theory of Pure Form in the Theatre"),¹ Stanisław Ignacy

Witkiewicz defined what he considered a work of art to be:

Art is the expression of that which I call faute de mieux the metaphysical feeling, or (Please note!) the expression of a directly given oneness of the individuality of the artist in formal constructions of whatever elements (complicated or simple) and this in the constructions, producing effects directly, and not through rational coming to understand them.²

A work of art, Witkacy argued, possesses a structure in and of itself. Such a work results directly from the given unity of an artist's individuality. It is dependent upon nothing else beyond itself to make this unity apparent and effective. That is, it does not depend on an external standard to determine its own degree of realness. In the act of creation, ideally, the artist creates a formal structure which acts directly upon the viewer or listener, intensi-

¹Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Teatr: Wstęp do teorii czystej formy w teatrze. O twórczości reżysera i aktorów. Dokumenty do historii walki o Czystą Formę w teatrze. Dodatek: O naszym futuryzmie ("Theatre: An Introduction to the Theory of Pure Form in the Theatre. Concerning the Creativity of the Director and the Actors. Documents of the History of the War about Pure Form in the Theatre. Appendix: Concerning Our Futurism") (Cracow: Krakowska Spółka Wydawnicza, 1923). All subsequent references to this work in this paper will be indicated by T:W followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

²"Sztuka jest wyrazem tego, co nazywam faute de mieux metafizycznym uczuciem, czyli (proszę uważać!) wyrazem bezpośrednio danej jedności osobowości w konstrukcjach formalnych jakichkolwiek elementów (złożonych, lub prostych) i to w konstrukcjach, działających bezpośrednio, a nie przez rozumowe ich poznanie" (T:W 108).

ifying in him the awareness of his--the viewer's--own individuality through sensation and imagination (T:W 109). Witkiewicz applied this theory of art in general to his theories about the theatre; for him, a play should be a constructed unity of elements, not a unity achieved solely by means of an imitation of observable real-life actions and scenes.

Witkiewicz argued that, "Once we acknowledge that the essence of each work of Art is its form, it is possible to arrive at a philosophical basis for the theory of art and to busy oneself with its purely formal side."³

The Purpose of Art

Since man's metaphysical yearnings can find no outlet in the religion and philosophy of modern times, Art has become autonomous, dependent upon neither religious inspiration and precepts nor upon philosophical principles for existence. Rather, it has started to obey its own internal laws. Through the medium of his art the artist tries to provide a substitute for the spiritual void of the modern experience, both for himself and for others. The experience of the work of art gives a "dreszcz metafizyczny (a

³"Z chwilą kiedy uzna się, że istotą każdego dzieła Sztuki jest jego Forma, można przejść do porządku dziennego nad filozoficzną podstawą Teorii Sztuki i zająć się stroną jej czysto formalną" (T:W 108).

metaphysical shudder),⁴ Konstanty Puzyna called it, which is achieved through the unity in multiplicity of the individual work of art, that is, through its form.

The Essence of Art is Form

Witkacy held that there were two possible responses to Art:

1) A response is possible which is based on the opinion of the masses who like to see themselves or recognizable sections of real life reflected in the work of art (T:W 115); and 2) There is a response to art which reflects the "...primitive, formal instinct of a person, flowing from the deepest principles of existence,"⁵ for form which expresses another of the profoundest principles of existence, the sense of unity in diversity. Witkacy believed that this second response was vital (T:W 115-116). The former depends primarily upon the emotional elements, sensations and imaginings from life (T:W 109), while the latter aroused "...dozing metaphysical feelings and the ability to directly perceive formal constructions."⁶

⁴Konstanty Puzyna, "Witkacy (Witkacy)," Dialog, VI (August, 1961), 120.

⁵"...pierwotny instynkt formalny człowieka płynący z najgłębszej zasady istnienia..." (T:W 116).

⁶"...drżenie uczucie metafizyczne i zdolność bezpośredniego pojmowania konstrukcji formalnych..." (T:W 110).

The essence of Art is its form (T:W 108). Witkacy tried to prove that this led to what he termed "artistic perversity."⁷ Perversity in this sense is anything that distorts or deforms existing laws in order to follow inherent, internal laws to the detriment of traditionally expected balance, traditionally pleasing ideas of beauty, or traditional laws and precepts common to a group or a large number of a group or the way many of such a group perform some activity. Form is the unifier, the coagulator, the magnet that pulls the bits together into a shape. It does this in order to make metaphysics 'real,' to make metaphysics 'content' in an age that espouses rationalism and naturalism, the observable and the touchable; Witkacy insisted that artistic effects, among which is the aesthetic experience of the Mystery of Existence, spring from the form of a work only and from the contemplation of that form.⁸

⁷"...perwersja artystyczna" (T:W). Witkiewicz likened artistic perversity to unequal masses in the composition of a painting, or perverse directional tensions and stresses in painting, or to disharmonious colors. This is not a deliberate program of nonsense or absurdity, Witkacy thought. Instead, corresponding to directional tensions in painting, he wished to utilize what he called dynamic tensions on the stage. At the same time, this should not be seen as a general end in itself in the theory of Pure Form for the theatre; rather, it was only a means to achieve the higher goal of freedom of form in the theatre (T:W 28).

⁸Stephania Zaborska has shown that Witkacy was the enemy of any new theory for the theatre which was not concerned in its plan about the overriding primacy of form as the vehicle for showing experience on the stage; she points out that Witkacy held that

Although it is possible for 'life content' in a given work to be connected in some way with the metaphysical experience, the artistic effect "... can be the result of the contemplation of the form itself."⁹ Applying this idea of form to the theatre, Witkacy wanted to abandon the notion that theatrical form is bound to probable and possible life actions. The totality of a play is not simply the sum of all its discernible parts, but includes a quality which can neither be 'seen' nor 'touched' but can be sensed directly: this is form and the components of form grasped in a new totality. Witkacy concluded that by deforming the subject itself it was possible to discover oneself "... in the sphere of pure beauty, perceiving the unfathomable Strangeness of Existence."¹⁰ Therefore Witkacy sought to change the focus of theatrical form from "... a vision of

following life patterns was imitating rather than creating form. Stephania Zaborska, "Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy)," Adam Ordegi, Straty Kultury Polskiej, 1939-1945 ("Polish Cultural Losses, 1939-1945"), I (Glasgow, Scotland: Książnica Polska, 1945), 388.

⁹"Może... być wynikiem kontemplacji samej formy," Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, "Wstęp teoretyczny (Theoretical Introduction)," Tumor Mózgowicz ("Tumor Brainiowicz"), Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Dramaty ("The Plays"). I, rev. ed., Konstanty Puzyna, ed. (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1972), 231.

¹⁰"... w sferze czystego piękna, pojmując niezgłębiałą dziwność Istnienia" (T:W 20).

the external world"¹¹ to the feelings aroused when in the presence of pure art. "The future of the theatre does not lie in various kinds of interpretations of already-created works, but in a completely new genre of works...."¹² The nature of these new works which Witkacy envisioned was defined by means of an analogy with painting. What is required is that we accept as inevitable a particular movement of a character, a particular phrase having a realistic or only a formal meaning, a particular change of lighting or decor, a particular musical accompaniment, just as we accept as inevitable a particular part of a composition on a canvas or a

11 "...wizji zewnętrznego świata," Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, "O artystycznym teatrze (Concerning the Artistic Theatre)," Nowe Formy w malarstwie i inne pisma estetyczne ("New Forms in Painting and other Esthetic Writings"), Jan Leszczyński, ed. (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1959), p. 350. All subsequent references to this essay will be indicated by OAT-NF followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

12 "Przyszłość teatru nie leży w różnych rodzajach interpretacji dzieł już stworzonych, tylko w ich zupełnie nowym rodzaju..." (T:W 8). This translation is from Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, "An Analogy with Painting," translated by Daniel and Eleanor Gerould, in Bernard F. Dukore and Daniel C. Gerould, Avant-Garde Drama: Major Plays and Documents, Post World War I (New York: Bantam Books, 1969), p. 493. All subsequent references to this translation will be indicated by AP-GDK followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

sequence of chords in a musical work.¹³ Witkacy repeatedly confessed to the difficulty of proving that form in a work of art was its most important aspect (T:W 195). He argued that actions taken from 'life' had to be used for formal purposes in a drama; he contended that within the form of the play life actions, by use of juxtaposition, contrast, and new associations with the other elements in a drama, might take on for that particular play a meaning unique to that work and justifiable in that play in the way that they are used. In other words, they might be used to increase compositional possibilities. He insisted that this was not done "...by manifesto, but only to the degree of real artistic needs"¹⁴ in a

¹³"Chodzi tylko o to, abyśmy musieli w sposób konieczny przyjmować dany ruch jakiejś postaci, dane zdanie o sensie realnym, lub też również tylko formalnym, daną zmianę oświetlenia lub dekoracji, dany akompaniament muzyczny, tak jak przyjmujemy za konieczną daną część kompozycji, lub dane następstwo akordów w utworze muzycznym" (T:W 27). The translation used is from "On a New Type of Play," Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, The Madman and the Nun and Other Plays, translated and edited by Daniel C. Gerould and C. S. Durer (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1968), p. 293. All subsequent references to this translation will be indicated by NTP-GDR followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

¹⁴"...oczywiście nie programowo, tylko w miarę istotnie artystycznych potrzeb" (T:W 195). For Witkacy the problem was further complicated by the fact that there did not exist objective criteria for criticism. He wrote in an essay on the state of criticism in Poland between the wars: "Objective criticism in relation to Art can't exist, because we don't possess any fixed criteria

given play. Witkacy held that the average playgoer and critic equated form with life contents (T:W 91). The critics and the public seemed satisfied if a play followed a storyline which had some resemblance to 'life,' something one might find in a newspaper article, for example (T:W 66). In a play of this type the emphasis is on the narrative--the story, Witkacy called it; he insisted that this was not the essential aspect of the theatre experience, but only one of a number of ingredients of the totality of a play (T:W 66).¹⁵ Over emphasis on imitation caused the theatre to lose the ability to arouse the metaphysical experience.

Witkacy tried to prove that form is a constructed and not an imitated unity. However, he admitted that this unity takes its particular shape in part from the forms of the content of which it

for the appreciation of artistic creations. The illusion that such criteria exists is the illusion of people brought up on naturalism (Krytyki obiektywnej w stosunku do Sztuki być nie może, ponieważ nie posiadamy żadnych stałych kryteriów dla ocenienia artystycznych wytworów. To, że takie kryteria istnieją jest złudzeniem ludzi, wychowanych na naturalizmie)" (T:W 205).

¹⁵Witkacy thought it peculiar that reasonable persons were not irritated after a performance when they discovered that they had been frightened by a sheet and faces daubed with phosphorus (T:W 66). The cause and effect of 'And so he said...' Witkacy rejected out of hand. Adam Tarn claims that Witkacy held that by attempting to "'picture life as it really is'" the naturalistic theatre "slipped into slavish imitation," thereby denying meaning and authenticity to a work of art as an entity in itself; Adam Tarn, "Witkiewicz, Artaud and the Theatre of Cruelty," Comparative Drama, III (Fall, 1969), 166.

is constructed (T:W 253). A non-imitative reality ought to be established. This non-imitative reality ought to be a constructed unity, arbitrary, answering only to its own sometimes perverse artistic demands (T:W 261).

Herein lies the great paradox in Witkacy's theory. He repeatedly tried to prove 1) that form is consciously constructed, and not the result of imitation of external reality, that is reality outside the frame of the work, and 2) that form, and here specifically Pure Form in the theatre, expresses itself directly and immediately through what he called the unity of the individuality of the creator, that is, it expresses itself through the total psyche of the individual artist without conscious control. Witkacy never resolves this dualism in his theory about theatre, as Konstanty Puzyna has pointed out.¹⁶ Puzyna shows that Witkacy wanted to retain this dualism, that he wanted to make a work of art comparable to nothing else in existence¹⁷ and thereby impervious to criticism, since, as Puzyna argues, Witkacy sees art as the only way an individual can assert his individuality in the face of the greatness of the "out-there," that is, all that is in creation that is not the individual, the "I."¹⁸

¹⁶Konstanty Puzyna, "Pojęcie Czystej Formy (The Idea of Pure Form)," Twórczość, XXVII, No. 4 (April, 1971), 67-73.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 69.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 72.

Therefore, Pure Form is both a contradictory system of relationships of elements--the form--of the work¹⁹ and a part of Witkacy's ontological system, a matter of evoking metaphysical feelings.²⁰

It is both subjective and objective at the same time. Konstanty Puzyna ends his essay with a definition of Pure Form: "Pure Form is simply that 'something' in a work of art that removes the contradiction for the moment."²¹ With Witkacy a work of art is a duality, Puzyna concludes, an aesthetic object and the direct expression of the individual.

The desire to understand and experience art in the manner that Witkacy theorized about it springs from an insatiable craving for form, resulting directly from

...a period of decline, not only of religion, but of all metaphysics in general, a fact which likewise finds expression in the phenomenon we called 'insatiable craving for form' in art: we are in a period of the decay of metaphysical feelings themselves, which are becoming superfluous and useless in the further social evolution of humanity. Only the theatre has

¹⁹Ibid., p. 60.

²⁰Ibid., p. 71.

²¹"Czysta Forma to po prostu to 'coś' w dziele sztuki, co ową sprzeczność na moment usuwa," Ibid., p. 74. In his criticism of Witkacy's theory and plays Konstanty Puzyna has held that the theory is very different from the plays, in fact, that the two go in opposite directions; Konstanty Puzyna, "Na Przełęczach Bezsensu (Along the Cliffs of the Absurd)," Pamiętnik Teatralny, XVIII (March, 1969).

not yet entered the period of 'insatiable craving for form... (AP-GDK 488-489).²²

Art and music had been brought to seeking new forms (T:W 32).

The theatre could not do otherwise.²³

Witkiewicz's Stance as a Critic

Artur Hutnikiewicz points out that there are two essentials necessary for the creation of Pure Form in the Theatre:

In order to create a theatre of this kind, it is first necessary to fulfill two essential conditions: 1) it is requisite to break entirely with traditional conventions, with contemporary ideas of what is stageable, and with dramatic psychology.²⁴

²²"...okresie upadku nie tylko religji, ale wogóle wszelkiej metafizyki, co ujawnia się również w zjawisku, które nazwaliśmy 'nienasyceciem formą' w sztuce, jesteśmy w okresie zaniku samych uczuć metafizycznych, starających się w dalszym społecznym rozwoju ludzkości, czemś zbytecznym, nieużytecznym. Teatr jeden... nie przechodzi narazie przez okres 'nienasycecia formą'..." (T:W 3).

²³Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Nowe formy w malarstwie i wynikające stąd nieporozumienia ("New Forms in Painting and the Resulting Misunderstandings"), Nowe Formy w malarstwie i inne pisma estetyczne ("New Forms in Painting and Other Esthetic Writings"), Jan Leszczyński, ed. (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1959), p. 161. All subsequent references to this work will be indicated by NFM followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

²⁴"Żeby stworzyć teatr tego rodzaju, trzeba uprzednio spełnienia dwu, koniecznych warunków: 1) trzeba chęć taki teatr stworzyć, odczuwać potrzebę takiego teatru, 2) należy całkowicie zerwać z wszystkimi tradycyjnymi konwenansami teatralnymi, ze współczesnym pojęciem sceniczności akcji, i psychologii dramatycznej," Artur Hutnikiewicz, Od czystej formy do literatury

That Witkiewicz made a total or a partial break with traditional dramaturgical practices in his theory does not in any way make him unique. Nor does the fact that there is discrepancy between the theory and the practice of Pure Form lessen the interest in and the importance of his plays. During the time that Witkacy was writing his theory and the years immediately before and after there were many -isms being created--futurism, dada, surrealism, expressionism, and epic theatre are some of them. In 1922, Bertolt Brecht published Baal and Drums in the Night: in 1924 he came to Berlin to begin his association with Erwin Piscator and the evolution of the epic theatre. In 1927 Antonin Artaud founded the Theatre Alfred Jarry and in 1938 his manifesto for the theatre of cruelty, Le Théâtre et son Double was published. Like Witkacy, these men wrote about the theatre they hoped to establish and they, at least, share his disgust with the realistic theatre. But Witkacy has many other features in common with Artaud and Brecht, especially his stance as a critic, which would suggest that Witkacy was part of a broader revolution in the theatre than perhaps he would have liked to have thought. Like all young theorist-avant-

faktu: Główne teorie i programy literackie XX stulecia ("From Pure Form to the Literature of Fact: Major Theories and Manifestoes of the 20th Century") (Toruń, Poland: Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1965), p. 154.

gardists these men viewed themselves as iconoclasts by nature, set apart by what they see are their special gifts. Each saw himself as having a new version of truth, a vision which he must guard zealously. So he sets himself apart, attracts attention to himself by raising his voice or by joining a party; he becomes polemical by always taking the extreme position on any issue (for example, Witkacy writes in one place that all life-like elements must be swept from Pure Form theatre). A critic of this type often adopts a position of revolt though they may not mean to destroy the thing they revolt against; none of these men wanted to destroy the theatre, though they were thought to be doing so by some of their contemporaries. All three attack escapism theatre. Furthermore, the theatrical iconoclast is a pugilist who fights for his place in the dramatic world by repeating himself over and over to be sure he is understood. Often he repeats instead of explaining. And when the critics don't understand or like his work, it is because they do not or can not understand. Or so he consoles himself. Or he may retreat into dogma or into the irrational, where he cannot be questioned or held responsible. The means of attracting attention varied among these three men: Brecht attacked the morality of post-World War I German bourgeois and punctured their complacency, provoking anger. Artaud attacked the literary and artistic masterpieces of European--especially French--middle-

class and intellectuals. If art is the expression of the highest culture that produced World War I, then art like culture is bankrupt and worthless. Therefore, no more masterpieces. When attention was paid it was often bemused or furious. Witkacy attacked on several fronts: the absence of metaphysical revitalization, received literary and theatrical forms, and the social disaster he saw for the individual in the future. All three men provoked scandal, presenting too early what society did not want or what it came to value only years later. All three exaggerated and often oversimplified, polemicizing with critics whom--as yet--they did not know.

But young theorists often preach better than they practice: Brecht for example, developed a model for "a learning theatre," the Lehrstuecke plays, of which the Lindberghiug and Badener Lehrstück are examples; but, when he wrote the Little Organum for the Theatre in 1948 he had moved away from the didacticism and the extreme position of his youth.²⁵ He had compromised. Witkacy claimed interest in his theory until the year before his death. But it has been argued that 1926 was the high water mark for Pure Form, as after that year he lost interest in theatre;

²⁵John Willett, The Theatre of Bertold Brecht, A Study from Eight Aspects (Norfolk, Connecticut: James Laughlin, 1959), p. 183.

that of twenty-two major dramas published in 1962 only one written after that date is often cited as proof. Because he was an innovator, ahead of his time, Witkacy insisted on strict recipes to bring his concept into realization. His attitude is polemical. He states the ideal model and immediately there is tension established between the theory and the plays. Evocation of a theatre by repetition of esthetic tenets does not call it into being. Witkacy may not have been able to break with traditional theatrical practices, but his theory does show changes in basic attitude and emphasis with respect to concepts of plot, character, thought and language. Creating a duality of aesthetics and metaphysics, Witkacy wrote theory that attempted to disconnect itself from all extra-artistic reality.

Insatiability and Form

Czesław Miłosz has observed that "the term 'insatiability' as Witkacy used it stands for the impossibility of satisfying metaphysical cravings."²⁶ While on the one hand the craving for the metaphysical experience cannot be denied, on the other there is no real possibility of satisfying it: therefore, according to Witkiewicz, the only recourse open to the artist is Pure Form and the insatiable craving for form which is the closest thing in the

²⁶Czesław Miłosz, The History of Polish Literature (London: Collier-Macmillan Co., 1969), p. 416.

modern world to metaphysical sensations. Witkacy defined three manifestations of the insatiable craving for form with reference to painting; by extending his analogy, these may be applied as criteria of his theatrical theory as well:

...a) those who are satiated through the complication of the composition and directional tensions, b) [those who are satiated] through the heightened disharmony of colors, and c) [those who are satiated] through the complicating and the accenting of the conception of form.²⁷

If in the first instance "dynamic tensions" is substituted for "directional tension," and in the second if "deformation" is substituted for "disharmony of colors," and in the third if "autonomy of form" is substituted for "complicating and accenting the conception of form," the summation would be something closely approximating the over-all model that Witkacy intended for the theatre of Pure Form.

The awareness of formal beauty and the desire to understand it are inherent in the insatiable craving for form. A sense of the beautiful Witkacy called an intense delight in the integration of the "Multiplicity in oneness,"²⁸ the moment of the feeling of the

²⁷"...a) tych, którzy nasycają się przez komplikację kompozycji i napięć kierunkowych, b) przez potęgowanie dysharmonji kolorów, c) przez komplikowanie i akcentowanie samego ujęcia formy" (T:W 197).

²⁸"...wielkości w jedności"(T:W 14).

strangeness of existence (T:W 14). Elsewhere he wrote that it was possible to define beauty as follows: "Beauty, which it is possible to define as a subjectively directly acting construction of some sort of elements, unconditioned in its construction by any real-life or logical laws."²⁹ The formal construction which is dual in nature acts first in a direct and subjective manner on the viewer; however, when the viewer's reasoning faculties are brought to bear on the experience, they must not be limited to 'life' logic and causality to force a logical, rational understanding of a work (T:W 58). The proper response to such a construction requires an analysis based upon the logic demonstrated within the confines of the work itself. In other words, the formal construction acts directly and subjectively upon the participant and it is perceived first as a sensation or a feeling which then may be understood with the rational faculties of the viewer if he restricts his rational perception of the material to the framework of the logic set up by the work itself (T:W 58). In this way the viewer is acted upon by a concrete thing--the play--but he is powerless before it as it acts upon him directly and immediately.

²⁹"Piękna, które można zdefiniować jako subiektywnie bezpośrednio działającą konstrukcję jakichkolwiek elementów, nieuwarunkowaną w swej konstrukcyjności żadnymi życiowymi i logicznymi prawami" (T:W 200).

The formally beautiful is stifled, Witkacy argued again and again, by realistic productivity (as opposed to creativity) and the realistic ideology (T:W 101). Nevertheless, even though he argued that at the time he was writing there were no objective criteria for judging it, Witkacy held that the values of the given elements within the play rest upon their formal necessity (T:W 101).

We must discriminate between life Beauty and Formal Beauty. Forgive me for this requirement, but without this it would be better to say nothing and to go on listening to the empty prattle of our critics and estheticians. Real life beauty will be connected with sensual pleasure, experienced along with their utilitarian value due to beautiful objects. Purely on the fact that aesthetic beauty or formal beauty will be based upon a given object in space or any sequence in Time (sounds, words, actions, images) will constitute a totality (in itself) for itself, by being independent of any sort of life values... it is possible to create totalities in which the negative value of the single elements will disappear in the face of the constructed unity in which they are grasped. This unity, dependent upon nothing, a construction in and of itself, I call Formal Beauty or Pure Form.³⁰

³⁰"Musimy odróżnić Piękno życiowe od Piękna Formalnego. Przepraszam za to wymaganie, ale bez tego lepiej nie mówić nic i słuchać dalej częściej gadaniny naszych krytyków i estetyków. Piękno życiowe połączone będzie z przyjemnością zmysłową, doznawaną od przedmiotów pięknych, z ich wartością użytkową. Piękno czysto estetyczne, czyli formalne, polegać będzie na tym, że dany przedmiot w Przestrzeni, czy też jakiegokolwiek następstwo w czasie (dźwięków, słów, działań, obrazów) będzie stanowić całość (samo) dla siebie, w niezależnieniu, od jakichkolwiek wartości życiowych... stworzyć można całości, w których ujemna wartość pojedynczych elementów zaniknie, wobec konstrukcyjnej

The Nature of Pure Form in the Theatre

As a writer Witkacy held three assumptions a priori: 1) an author must hold to some philosophical position; 2) this philosophical position will express itself unconsciously in his works as an expression of his individuality; and 3) the author must be interested in Form. For the teaching and the uplifting of the people Witkacy suggested the church and the schools; the theatre has another job to do (T:W 111). The theatre is the place for presentation of purely metaphysical sensations (T:W 111).

The first principles of Pure Form in the theatre are as follows:

1) "...the unity of individuality expresses itself directly in formal constructions."³¹

2) Purely external qualities such as colors and sounds can be localized in external real space (T:W 194-195) but it is more difficult to localize in external real space emotional and physical sensations. Witkacy called these life-like feelings. And, though they are usually thought to follow seemingly logical or causal

jedności, w której są ujęte. Tą jednością niezależną od niczego, konstrukcję samą dla siebie, nazywam Pięknem Formalnym, czyli Czystą Formą" (T:W 129-130).

³¹"...jedność osobowości wyraża się bezpośrednio w konstrukcjach formalnych" (T:W 194).

patterns, they are not required to do so when used in a Pure Form play (T:W 194-195).

3) Witkacy maintained that the feelings were the key to the sensations of artistic creativity and religious and philosophical meditations. For example, a religious person or a philosopher is aware of his immediate existence through his feelings and sequential thoughts. These can be directly expressed in Pure Form in a pattern that does not require causal explanation (T:W 195). The distinguishing condition is important:

From the moment, however, when these concepts constitute constructions in and of themselves with a preponderance of the pure element of constructionality, not conditioned only by logic and life, when the semantic element is connected with the expressive element (sound, image), we will receive Pure Form, operating directly, quite the same as the constructions of colors or sounds in painting and music and then we will experience a 'metaphysical feeling' from it.³²

4) Witkacy maintained that the newness of his theory lay in the treatment of significative elements, words and sounds, as artistic elements; heretofore they have been used to create life-

³²"Z chwilą jednak, kiedy pojęcia te będą stanowiły konstrukcje same dla siebie, o przewadze czystego elementu konstrukcyjności, nie uwarunkowanego tylko logiką i życiem, kiedy element znaczeniowy połączony będzie z elementem wrażeniowym (dźwiękiem, obrazem), otrzymamy Czystą Formę, działającą bezpośrednio, podobnie jak konstrukcje barw, lub dźwięków w malarstwie i muzyce i wtedy doznamy od niej 'uczucia metafizycznego'" (T:W 196).

like patterns and he wanted to use them to create formal constructions (T:W 200). This is achieved in two ways: a) fantastic psychology is substituted for imitation of real life (T:W 122) and b) the probability of life logic is rejected (T:W 99). Fantastic psychology allows the distortion of actions (activities) or persons, the consequences of which might well be unacceptable from the point of view of life logic (T:W 122).³³ The criterion of probability is unnecessary for the formerly constructed play (T:W 104).

5) What Witkacy called a formal structure is not accidental in any sense; nor is it in any way deliberate nonsense and absurdity brought into being by manifesto. Such a structure cannot be accidental since it is a direct expression of the oneness or the unity of the individuality, "...at first without the control of the consciousness, in the form of a certain compulsive idea, only after which follows its concretizing and correction by the intel-

³³Witkacy pointed out that the ill-defined idea of life-logic offers no more justifiable criteria for judging truth and meaning in theatre plays than does formal logic. Indeed, in the balance, the latter is superior as it relies on the distinction of ideas and not on feelings alone. Hence, the truth might be determinable, he held; mere copying of the observable life is not truth. It is only one man's vision of actuality. He argued that the rejection of so-called life-logic allows compositional independence from life truths. The introduction of the fantastical produces a distancing effect which allows cognitive perception of what has been intuitively received (T:W 122).

lect."³⁴ In the same manner that color and mass juxtaposed in the composition of a painting give "directional tension," the major theatrical elements of Pure Form construction (speech and action) in tension create "dynamic tensions," the theatrical equivalent to directional tensions in painting (T:W 103). Such a structure is not necessarily a homogenous one, nor does it ultimately depend upon life-like logicity for understanding or criticism.³⁵ Empha-

³⁴"...początkowo bez kontroli świadomości, w formie pewnej idei przymusowej, poczem dopiero następuje jej ukonkretyzowanie i korektura intelektu..." (T:W 229). In this kind of construction actions of the characters as well as their speeches may be arranged in a series beginning with the most thoroughly defined and completely understandable language or activities and progress to the most completely unintelligible from the life point of view (T:W 200). As with actions and words, so with thematic materials: it is not a question of how well a topic, a theme, or a subject is executed in comparison to observable reality but only a matter of how a given theme is fitted into the formal necessity of a play at a particular point. Having no dependence on any other scenic concern, such as the life-like, in essence it achieves a value which is as it were in another, non-life dimension (T:W 102-103). For example, an actor's speech which in the past may have had such important purposes as communication of idea and progression of situation, logically or at least in some degree recognizably so, is able in this new theory to have value in a formal sense only. In fact, at one point Witkacy stated that the true value of any given speech rests upon its formal necessity (T:W 101).

³⁵For example, with reference to character, "Individual Existences... must have their beginning, variable duration, and their ending. If the beginning and the ending are not necessary with respect to what's going on on stage, and we can even assume for formal aims individuals without a beginning or an end, it is inconceivable how much mutability of character there will be in the course of a whole play (Istnienia Poszczególne... muszą mieć

sizing the construction of a totality (T:W 253) and not the life-likeness of the ingredients which make up the sense of totality of a created work, it is possible to conclude that "...the essence of a work of art here meaning a stage play is its constructed not imitated unity."³⁶ However, the artist cannot escape the fact that he is a part of life, that he is living, functioning individual; for that reason his work will be obliged to include life-like ingredients (T:W 109). A difference between theory and practice is therefore inevitable: Witkacy held that it was for this reason that Pure Form to a certain degree is dependent on the conception of the visible world in painting and the emotional manifestation of a particular individual in music, and by inference, that theatre is dependent upon human emotions and actions. Pure Form theatre requires a new awareness and acceptance of the possible uses of life patterns on the stage (T:W 16). The unavoidable result of the working of the psychical matter of the particular artist at the

swój początek, zmienne trwanie i koniec. Jeśli początek i koniec nie są konieczne ze względu na stawanie się na scenie i możemy nawet założyć dla celów formalnych indywidua bez początku i bez końca, o tyle brak zmienności będzie w ciągu całej sztuki nie do pomyślenia" (T:W 149). Ideally, if it could be realized, this theory makes a variety of character mutations possible, varieties which in real life would be either impossible, unacceptable, or unbelievable.

³⁶"...istota dzieła sztuki jest jego konstrukcyjna jedność..." (T:W 260).

moment of creation is the inclusion of elements from life in a work of art (T:W 194).

Aims and Objectives of Pure Form

The task of the theatre is...the introduction of the spectator into an exceptional state which is perhaps not attainable as easily in the everyday sphere in its purest form, a state of emotional perception of the Mystery of Existence. This is the aim of all of Art.³⁷

The intention of the theory and the theatre of Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz was to restore to the theatre some of the same metaphysical feelings which were experienced by ancient man (T:W 4). This could be done, Witkacy thought, by depicting a completely different world from the one which traditionally was shown on the stage (T:W 27), a world in which the happenings arise from fantastic psychology and action in a manner quite unlike the manner in which they come about in real life.

In the theatre we want to be in an entirely new world in which the fantastic psychology of characters who are completely implausible in real life, produces events which by their bizarre interrelationships create a performance in time not limited by any

³⁷"Zadaniem teatru jest...to właśnie wprowadzenie widza w stan wyjątkowy, który nie może być osiągnięty tak łatwo w przeżywaniu dnia codziennego w czystej swojej formie, stan uczuciowego pojmowania Tajemnicy Istnienia. Jest to wogóle celem całej Sztuki" (T:W 7).

logic except the logic of the form itself of that particular performance.³⁸

If such conditions could be imposed, Witkacy maintained,

On leaving the theatre, the spectator ought to have the feeling that he was just awakened from some strange dream, in which even the most ordinary things had a strange, unfathomable charm, characteristic of dream reveries, and unlike anything else in the world (NTP-GDR 293-296).³⁹

³⁸"My chemy w teatrze być w zupełnie innym świecie w którymby wypadki wynikające z fantastycznej psychologii osób zupełnie życiowo niekonsekwentnych nie tylko w czynach pozytywnych, ale i w pomyłkach swoich, osób zupełnie może do życiowych postaci nie podobnych, dawały w dziwaczności swych powiązań stawanie się w czasie jako takie, nie uwarunkowane żadną logiką, oprócz logiki samej formy tego stawania się" (T:W 27).

³⁹"Wychodząc z teatru, człowiek powinien mieć wrażenie, że obudził się z jakiegoś dziwnego snu, w którym najpospolitsze nawet rzeczy miały dziwny, niezgłębiony urok, charakterystyczny dla marzeń sennych, nie dających się z niczem porównać" (T:W 30). Janusz Degler points out that the first step in bringing into being such a theatre is the negation of the naturalistic stage conventions; this can even be seen as another goal of Witkacyan Pure Form; Janusz Degler, "Witkacy: Ideas and Theories," Theatre in Poland, XII (March, 1970) 16. Witkacy's assessment of the reasons for the failure of the theatre of his days were the following: 1) directors were guilty of accentuating one aspect of the theatrical production to the detriment of others, as for example, the stage business as opposed to the spoken word or scenic elements of a production; 2) others surround their audience with such enriched images and sounds that the spectator has no idea what is being done to him; 3) either Number 1 or 2 leads to such chaos of conflicting elements, often because the author has not unified them by a certain idea of form; he has wrongly assumed that a realistic play only needs a certain intensification of elements to pass as being 'realistically' presented and understood by the audience (T:W 8). Degler claims that Witkacy's plan to revitalize the theatre by blowing up the realistic and naturalistic forms from within is an interesting one. He wrote: "But--and this is quite

The theatre which hopes to revitalize man's "metaphysical instinct and responsiveness," as Adam Tarn has expressed it,⁴⁰ dismisses out of hand most plays as fraudulent, imperfect imitation, tricks of illusion used to take in an unsuspecting public, lies to the public to avoid the real truth that exact imitation is simply not possible even if desirable (T:W 68). The program to reinstate metaphysics in the theatre had as a by-product an attack on popular forms. Witkacy considered any play in which the life contents outweighed to a disadvantage the formal ones to be more realistic in shape than Pure Form (T:W 109). This can be judged only subjectively, Witkacy thought, since in his opinion there are no objective critical criteria in existence and because life content can not be eliminated completely from a play as it creates the "...base, the motor, and the artistic material of creation."⁴¹

symptomatic--Witkacy does not postulate new settings, does not mention the need to alter the architecture of the stage, nor does he demand a diminishment of the role of the text. Instead, he states openly that the 'spoken word is in the theatre a thing of major importance and other elements have to be adapted to it.' Witkacy's defiant attitude toward the innovatory tendencies of the contemporary theatre reveals a specific design of his--to bring onto the traditional boxstage a 'trojan horse'--the new drama with a technique of acting specially adapted--as if his intention was to blow up the naturalistic theatre from 'within' (Degler, "Ideas and Theories," p. 13).

⁴⁰Tarn, "Witkiewicz and Artaud," p. 165.

⁴¹"...podkład, motor i materiał artystycznej twórczości" (OAT 349).

Witkacy defined the metaphysical sensation as "...the directly given sensation of the unity of the individuality."⁴² Elsewhere he called the metaphysical feeling "...the experience of the Mystery of Existence as unity in multiplicity."⁴³ The Mystery of Existence is apprehended emotionally by the individual in real life or the spectator at a performance of a Pure Form play (T:W 7), and it is directly or immediately understood. Metaphysical feelings can be aroused by either strong tensions of life-like feelings, philosophical meditation, scenes in nature, dreams, or overpowering, out-of-the-ordinary occurrences, or by Pure Form manifested in a formal structure (T:W 109). The precise manner in which metaphysical feelings establish themselves in the psyche of a given individual and then create the individual form is not clear.⁴⁴

⁴²"...bezpośrednio dane poczucie jedności osobowości" (T:W 194).

⁴³"Przeżywanie Tajemnicy Istnienia jako jedności w wielości..." (T:W 3). The Mystery of Existence was defined by Adam Tarn as those ruminations and meditations about which there are "...no discernible answers other than wonderment" (Tarn, "Witkiewicz and Artaud," p. 163).

⁴⁴Jan Kłossowicz has argued, too, that Witkacy's attempts to accomplish what other theories of the theatre left to the subconscious mind are unique; he wrote: "He does not want to create a surrealist theatre or a theatre of fairy tales, but a rational theatre, governed by laws other than those of life--governed by internal laws of composition justified by the requirement of the form (Chce stworzyć nie teatr nadrealizy czy basniowy, ale

In actual practice Witkacy's plays do more than offer a vital metaphysical or aesthetic experience. One thematic idea reoccurs again and again; it has to do with the individual and his place in the modern world.⁴⁵ As such some of the plays are didactic in nature and strongly shaped by social concerns as well as aesthetic ones. According to Czesław Miłosz, Witkacy was convinced that all that could be said about the nature of the world is that it is composed

teatr racjonalny, tylko rządzący prawami innymi niż życiowe--
prawami wewnętrznej kompozycji uzasadnionej wymaganiami
formy);" Jan Kłossowicz, "Teoria i dramaturgia Witkacego (The
Theatre and Dramaturgy of Witkacy)," Dialog, IV (December,
1959), 84.

⁴⁵Martin Esslin points out that the theme of twentieth century literature may well be "...filling up the vacuum left by the decline and collapse of the firm framework of religious faith... in the aftermath of the scientific and the industrial revolutions that was the outcome of the nineteenth century;" Martin Esslin, "Foreword," Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Tropical Madness, Four Plays, trans. by Daniel C. Gerould and Eleanor Gerould (New York: Winter House, Ltd., 1972), p. 1. But, it has been observed, metaphysical malaise and boredom which express themselves in revolution in Witkacy's plays offer no eventual satisfaction, since even slaughter can be satiated and is thereby unlike metaphysical craving for form and form itself which cannot be satiated; Małgorzata Szpakowska, "Witkiewiczza teoria kultury (The Witkiewiczian Theory of Culture)," Dialog, XIII (October, 1968), 109. "In the shadow of the apocalypse his catastrophism had not only a technological character but a social one as well: mechanization and automatonization and the swamping of the individual in the masses were features of his view of the future" (Szpakowska, "Teoria kultury," p. 116). The 'happy machine' would be the end of social revolution and evolution, Witkacy wrote in Insatiability, one of his novels (Szpakowska, "Teoria kultury," p. 110).

of "Particular Existences,"⁴⁶ each Existence feeling itself astonished at the fact of its own existence. Finding no answers in religion and systems of philosophy being bankrupt in modern times, each Particular Existence--each individual--is turned back upon itself and questions its own existence in the face of the utter strangeness of existence.⁴⁷ The individual is thrown back upon art as the only avenue to the metaphysical awareness which will reaffirm his particularity in the face of the strangeness of existence. Witkacy's social views also had profound effect on the structure of his plays, according to Adam Tarn.⁴⁸ Witkacy believed that mechanization and automation would swamp the individual in the future, but he believed that Pure Form theatre might offer a means for the renaissance of individuality for a brief period before the idea of the individual collapsed into stupefying social sameness in the modern world.⁴⁹ Used as content, this

⁴⁶Miłosz, History of Polish Literature, p. 415.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Tarn, "Witkiewicz and Artaud," p. 160.

⁴⁹Janusz Degler has called the search for means to arouse metaphysical sensations the leading idea of Pure Form: "The leading idea of Witkacy's theoretical system is the very same idea which determines the fate of the characters in his dramas and novels. Almost all of his characters are busy looking for the kind of situations and ways whereby they would experience metaphysical

makes of the plays non-realistic thesis plays that also attempt with Pure Form theory to provide unique aesthetic pleasure.

The Definition of Pure Form

The Pure Form model may be defined as follows:

1) Ideally, in so far as it is possible and in keeping with the formal idea that unifies a play, Pure Form is created independently of life-like justifications, thereby avoiding the logic of causality generally associated with the traditional and well-made

sensations and gain an understanding of the strangeness of existence. In the world where traditional values disintegrate, in the world which is headed for disaster--and such is precisely the Witkacian world--this pursuit of metaphysical sensations offers the only chance of preserving the meaning of one's own life, and the confirming of one's individuality" (Degler, "Ideas and Theories," p. 16). It has already been shown that the urge for the metaphysical experience cannot be denied, while at the same time all those means of achieving it which were available to the man of the past are closed off in the modern world, except art. Some of Witkacy's characters make a theatre of Pure Form of their own lives; the quality of this personal life-theatre demonstrates the strangeness of existence. However, if we can interpret the fate of Witkacy's heroes as in any way indicative of his beliefs, then we may conclude that such efforts to discover metaphysical touchstones by making one's life a Pure Form event are doomed to failure. For, as Andrzej Wirth has pointed out, whereas Witkacy was "...more sympathetic to the individual values than to the promises of egalitarianism, although ironic about both he witnessed their struggle as a tragicomedy of irresistible decay. Western mechanization produced, according to Witkacy, a society of automatons, which would ultimately escape the control of those who invented them;" Andrzej Wirth, "Brecht and Witkiewicz: Two Concepts of Revolution in the Drama of the Twenties," Comparative Drama, III (Fall, 1969), 207.

play aesthetic. It obeys the logic within the work itself (T:W 27).

2) Pure Form tries to establish a balance between life-like elements and formal elements within a given work (T:W 138).

When life-like elements outweigh the formal elements in a play the play is less Pure Form and more realistic.

3) Pure Form is a combination of words, movements and actions joined by one formal idea (T:W 171-172).

4) Pure Form attempts to differentiate between the concept of form as the receptacle of content and form as the composition of a play.⁵⁰

5) The theory of Pure Form in the theatre calls upon no authority beyond the logic of the play to verify the truth or the experience of the play.

Of course we are referring here to new works of pure art, whose substance is not the reproduction of the visible world or real feelings, but a purely formal unity which ties the given elements into an indissoluble whole (AP-GDK 489). (The emphasis is mine.)⁵¹

⁵⁰Using the idea of tension in painting, Witkacy substituted for the idea of "vectoral tensions" on canvas "dynamic tensions" in time and space on the stage; Konstanty Puzyna, "The Prism of the Absurd," Polish Perspectives, XVI (June, 1963), 39. As mass could be juxtaposed to mass in a painting to achieve tension between elements, so event (singularly or in a sequenced group) could be juxtaposed to event to achieve desirable tensions in the theatre.

⁵¹"Naturalnie, mówimy tu o nowych dziełach prawdziwej Czystej Sztuki, t. j. tej, której treścią nie jest odtwarzanie

In spite of the allegations of the realists, theatre is theoretically (and was in fact in certain of its rare manifestations) pure art and ought not to be forcibly wrecked either for the sake of the social questions or for the sake of the roles as such.⁵²

6) Pure Form results in part from the possibility of free deformation of the real or the fantastic worlds with a view to creating a new wholeness; this new unity is required to have meaning only within its internal, scenic construction. It is not necessary for it to be patterned on requirements of a consistent psychology with action based on real life assumptions causally linked and explained, which is the basic criterion for plays that are heightened reproductions of real life (T:W 25-26). "Each construction is a certain multiplicity of elements grasped as a unity, as a totality."⁵³ The burden of establishing the unity of a multiplicity of elements is carried by four things: a) images,

widzialnego świata lub uczuć życiowych, tylko jedność czysto formalna, wiążąca dane elementy w nierozzerwalną całość" (T:W 4).

⁵²"Wbrew twierdzeniom realistów, teatr jest teoretycznie (i bywał faktycznie w pewnych swych, rzadkich przejawach) sztuką czystą i nie trzeba go gwałtem ani dla kwestii społecznych, ani dla kwestii ról jako takich, zaprzepaszcząć;" Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, "Czysta Forma w teatrze Wyspiańskiego (Pure Form in the Theatre of Wyspiański)," Studio, 1937, No. 10/12, pp. 2-7. I did not work from the published article but from a typed copy of it.

⁵³Każda konstrukcja jest pewną wielością elementów ujętych w jedność, w całość" (T:W 108).

b) thoughts (expressed by words), c) sound and d) action (T:W 60).

These four dimensions are common to all theatre; in the Pure Form theatre they are arranged as elements of the composition itself rather than ingredients in the recounting of a possible or probable life happening. Witkacy believed that these elements could be used as the pure elements sound and color are used in music and painting.

7) It is possible to perceive the form of Pure Form directly or immediately (T:W 131). This experience puts the spectator in touch with the metaphysical experiences which Witkacy called the awareness of the Mystery of Existence. These experiences are aroused sensuously and intellectually. Pure Form is the beauty of a work of art.⁵⁴

⁵⁴Alina Grabowska, "O dramaturgii Stanisława Ignacego Witkiewicza (Concerning the Dramaturgy of Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz)," *Dialog*, II (September, 1957), p. 126.

Lech Sokół has shown that, in his opinion, the definitions of pure form of which there are actually so many in Witkacy's writings are not in any single instance definitive but that, taken as a whole, they are a means of concretizing the idea of Pure Form; Lech Sokół, "Dramaturgia St. I. Witkiewicz wobec Teorii Czystej Formy (The Dramaturgy of St. I. Witkiewicz according to the Theory of Pure Form)," unpublished Master's thesis, University of Warsaw, 1964, p. 7. Mr. Sokół summarizes the major aspects of Pure Form as follows: 1) Pure Form is in the sphere of a special conception of man's psyche; 2) The psyche serves as the medium for unifying the great number of elements in a given work of art, forming a formal whole that is the direct expression of the uniqueness of the artist and this, in turn, awakens the philosophical astonishment of metaphysical sensation in the viewer; and 3) Pure

Witkacy described the ideal of Pure Form as follows:

We can imagine such a play as having complete freedom in respect to absolutely everything from the point of view of real life, and yet being extraordinarily close knit and highly wrought in the way the action is tied together. The task would be to fill several hours on the stage with a performance possessing its own internal formal logic, independent of anything in 'real life' (NTP-GDR 295).⁵⁵

Witkacy gave one example of a model Pure Form play:

Three characters dressed in red come on stage and bow to no one in particular. One of them recites a poem (it should create the feeling of urgent necessity at this very moment). A kindly old man enters leading a cat on a string. So far everything has taken place against a background of a black screen. The screen draws apart, and an Italian landscape becomes visible. Organ music is heard. The old man talks with the other characters, and what they say should be in keeping with what has gone before. A glass falls off the table. All of them fall on their knees and weep. The old man changes from a kindly man into a ferocious 'butcher' and murders a little girl who has just crawled in from the left. At this very moment a handsome young man runs in and thanks the old man for murdering the girl,

Form has as its program the prolongation of metaphysics in an age when metaphysics are not needed from a utilitarian point of view (Sokoł, "Dramaturgia," pp. 7-9).

Daniel Gerould has defined Pure Form as "...an attempt to liberate drama from realistic psychology and storytelling and put it on the same basis as modern art and music...." (Daniel C. Gerould, "Witkacy," Tropical Madness, Four Plays, p. 247).

⁵⁵"Sztukę taką można sobie wyobrazić w zupełnej dowolności absolutnie wszystkiego z punktu widzenia życia, przy niezmiernej ścisłości wykończeniu w powiązaniach akcji. Zadanie sprowadzałoby się do wypełnienia kilku godzin stawaniem się na scenie, posiadającym swoją wewnętrzną formalną logikę od niczego 'życiowego' niezależną" (T:W 29).

at which point the characters in red sing and dance. Then the young man weeps over the body of the little girl and says very amusing things, whereupon the old man becomes once again kindly and good-natured and laughs to himself in a corner, uttering sublime and limpid phrases. The choice of costumes is completely open: period or fantastic--there may be music during some parts of the performance. In other words an insane asylum? Or rather a madman's brain on the stage? Perhaps so, but we maintain that, if the play is seriously written and appropriately produced, this method can create works of previously unsuspected beauty; whether it be drama, tragedy, or farce, or the grotesque, all in a uniform style and unlike anything which previously existed (NTP-GDR 295).⁵⁶

⁵⁶"A więc: wchodzą trzy osoby czerwono ubrane i kłaniają się niewiadomo komu. Jedna z nich deklamuje jakiś poemat (powinien on robić wrażenie czegoś koniecznego w tej właśnie chwili). Wchodzi łagodny staruszek z kotem na sznurku. Dotąd wszystko było na tle czarnej zasłony. Zasłona się rozsuwa i widać włoski pejzaż. Słychać muzykę organów. Staruszek mówi coś z postaciami, coś, co musi dawać odpowiedni do wszystkiego poprzedniego nastrój. Ze stolika spada szklanka. Wszyscy rzucają się na kolana i płaczą. Staruszek zmienia się z łagodnego człowieka w rozjuszonego 'pochronia' i morduje małą dziewczynkę, która tylko co wpełzła z lewej strony. Na to wbiega piękny młodzieniec i dziękuje staruszkowi za to morderstwo, przyczem postacie czerwone śpiewają i tańczą. Poczem młodzieniec płacze nad trupem dziewczynki i mówi rzeczy niezmiernie wesołe, na co staruszek znów zmienia się w łagodnego i dobrego i śmieje się w kącie, wypowiadając zdania wzniosłe i przejrzyste. Ubrania mogą być zupełnie dowolne: stylowe lub fantastyczne -podczas niektórych części może być muzyka. Więc poprostu szpital warjatów? Raczej mózg warjata na scenie? Możliwe, że nawet tak, ale twierdzimy, że tą metodą można, pisząc sztukę na serjo i wystawiając ją odpowiednio, stworzyć rzeczy niebywałej dotąd piękności; może być to dramat, tragedia, farsa, lub groteska, wszystko w tym samym stylu, nie przypominającym niczego, co dotąd było" (T:W 29-30). See Appendix I: The Experience of Pure Form in the Theatre.

Witkacy admitted, however, that Pure Form was a limited idea and that it was unlikely that any work would ever be absolutely Pure Form in nature (T:W 109). As no play could be totally free of life-like content, the theory of Pure Form is an effort to substitute one concept for portraying reality for another. As an ideal, Pure Form theory is a means of reflecting reality in a different way from the well-made and other traditional dramaturgy, while at the same time it tries to provide rich aesthetic experiences which Witkacy called the metaphysical awareness of the Mystery of Existence.

CHAPTER II

THE POETICS OF PURE FORM

The definition of Pure Form that was presented at the end of Chapter I is by its nature extremely abstract, having little in it that can be used concretely in analyzing a specific play. In part, this is due to the nature of the theory itself. In the first place, Witkacy the critic is writing criticism that protects himself by withdrawing into metaphysics and suggesting that the authenticity of such experiences cannot be judged as there are not objective criteria for doing so. He argues that the experience is direct, immediate, automatic--though he does not use that word--but, at the same time, consciously created. In the second place, the theory has a form all of its own: it is extremely repetitive; it is fragmentary; like the experience of theatre that it tries to outline, it finally ends up by appealing to the mysterious and the mystical for proof. In fact, it appears to have to be accepted on faith. It is amorphous and vague; that is, its very formlessness is its form. It is built by the associative technique, being essentially an analogy with painting, music and poetry. Hence the theory is often not concretely explained in theatrical terms, but rather is most often defined in general aesthetic terms or with reference

to another art form, especially painting. It leaves Witkacy very open to the kind of psychological criticism that Alain van Crugten writes in S. I. Witkiewicz: Aux Sources d'un Théâtre Nouveau.¹ Van Crugten, arguing that the theory--though highly original--has nothing to do with the plays,² contends that the contradiction between theory and practice rests in the contradiction within the person of Witkacy the man, that Witkacy was emotionally disturbed, actually unbalanced,³ and that--by Witkacy's own formula of the directly expressed oneness of the individual in his work--when the plays were written they all too well expressed the psychological confusion and contradictions of the playwright. Van Crugten, instead of discussing the plays with reference to the theory, looks for expressions of Witkacy's own life and personality in the plays and restricts himself to writing about the themes to be found in them.

Furthermore, the theory is contradictorily stated in a number of instances; for example, on one occasion we read that all life elements must be taken from a formal work for it to qualify as a formal work; and again, we read that life is the very basis

¹Alain van Crugten, S. I. Witkiewicz: Aux Sources d'un Théâtre Nouveau (Lausanne: Éditions L'Age d'Hommes "Slavica" Collection, 1971).

²Ibid., p. 94.

³Ibid., p. 154.

of the theatre. There is no attempt to justify these contradictions; hence, viewing the theory as form itself, each restatement of a theme--that is, from several points of view: playwright, actor, audience--is one abstraction of a larger abstraction which finally results in something rather like a cubist painting, giving many viewpoints of the same model. Unlike a painting, neither the theory nor the plays can be viewed all at once in their many facets. All of the fragments together make the theory; it is constructed, just as Witkacy said a play must be, by piling up again and again a few salient features, by setting up models in other areas and likening theatre to them. All this is due in part to Witkacy's viewing the creative act itself as a metaphysical experience--beyond which there is no appeal. But, as Konstanty Puzyna pointed out, there are two sides to Pure Form, the aesthetic, which can be discussed, and the personal expression of the individual himself in a formal construction,⁴ about which, Witkacy claimed, there were no objective criteria for discussion. In order to establish a poetic of Pure Form, in this chapter I will discuss Witkacy's theory first with reference to plot, character, thought and language,

⁴Konstanty Puzyna, "Pojęcie Czystej Formy (The Idea of Pure Form)," Twórczość, XXVII, No. 4 (April, 1971), 73.

traditional distinctions which are common to all plays and in which there does seem to be some changes of emphasis in Witkacy's theory. In the succeeding chapters this poetic will be used to discover how Pure Form theory actually shaped the plays of Witkiewicz. Music and spectacle, the other two elements of drama described by Aristotle in The Poetics will be discussed only briefly, as I am not so much concerned about actual production of Pure Form plays as I am about the degree to which the dramatic theory accounts for the plays appearing in the form that they now have.⁵ In this chapter special elements of Pure Form construction as Witkacy defined them are identified and, finally, the structure of Pure Form is identified and explained.

Plot

Proposing the substitution of fantastic psychology and action for the basis of plot, instead of the traditional imitation of reality (T:W 122), Witkacy argued that life-like and non-life-like logic may exist side by side in the structure of a Pure Form play.

The reference here is to the fantastic psychology of the acting persons, as a consequence of which their actions might from the life point of view be quite free. This does not exclude their purely

⁵ See Appendix II.

artistic necessity in a given formal construction.⁶

A unifying, formal idea in a play structured by Pure Form principles can require both types of action in order to be complete. Whereas Aristotle called tragedy an imitation of life and the actions of men,⁷ Witkacy argued that, if a play were defined as imitation only or as an "...individual presentation of life within certain limits,"⁸ then all of his plays must be considered as mere "artistic deceit."⁹ But if play-making were also considered the creation of formal constructions, then his plays stand as sincere efforts to liberate the modern theatre from worn-out conventions and "...to open up new horizons of form on the stage through the introduction of psychological fantasy."¹⁰ Aristotle explained plot as the

⁶"Mowa tu jest o fantastyczności psychologicznej osób działających, wskutek czego działania ich mogą być z punktu widzenia życia zupełnie dowolne, co nie wyklucza czysto artystycznej ich konieczności w danej konstrukcji formalnej" (T:W 122-123).

⁷Aristotle, The Poetics, S. H. Butcher, trans., Carl Benson and Taylor Littleton, eds., The Idea of Tragedy (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1966), p. 2.

⁸"...indywidualne przetwarzanie życia w pewnych granicach..." (T:W 122).

⁹"...artystycznym fałszem" (T:W 122).

¹⁰"...otwarcie nowych horyzontów Formy na scenie, przez wprowadzenie psychologicznej fantastyczności" (T:W 122).

arrangement of incident,¹¹ and limited the playwright to "... what is possible according to the law of probability or necessity."¹²

In the Witkacian poetic, the ideal plot is the construction of a pattern composed of motifs, very much as in music and painting (T:W 158);¹³ these motifs may or may not be connected causally in the Pure Form plot, not restricted to observing and imitating the causal and the probable.¹⁴ This is of course the ideal model of Pure Form plot. In actual practice it will be seen that Witkacian plots for the most part are built on sequences of plausible and causally related material with formal additions to the plot which tend to deform them, but which do not make them entirely unlife-like. By contrast, Aristotle wrote

...the structural union of the parts is such that if any one of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be disjointed and disturbed. For a thing whose presence or absence makes no visible difference is not an organic part of the whole.¹⁵

¹¹Aristotle, The Poetics, p. 2.

¹²Ibid., p. 4.

¹³Witold Wirpsza, "Kurka Wodna, czyli marionetki (The Water Hen, or The Marionettes)," Dialog, IX (February, 1964), 103.

¹⁴See Appendix III.

¹⁵Aristotle, The Poetics, p. 4.

Theoretically, Witkacy would be concerned that the absence or the presence of a part might disturb the structuring of a formal idea or the formal unity as a whole. Professors Gerould and Durer have shown that the whole pattern of plot may be radically changed in the Pure Form theatre by the arbitrary introduction of seemingly unrelated elements:

...whereas in traditional dramaturgy the probabilities become more restricted as the play progresses, once certain premises have been established, in the plays of St. I. Witkiewicz ...the longer the action goes on, the more the improbable and even the impossible becomes probable and possible.... The denouement of a normal play is the outcome of what has gone before and what the audience has been led to expect; in some of the plays of St. I. Wietkiewicz the denouement is not the consequence of what preceded it, but a refutation of it.¹⁶

¹⁶Daniel C. Gerould and C. S. Durer, "An Introduction to The Madman and the Nun," Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, The Madman and the Nun and Other Plays, translated and edited by Daniel C. Gerould and C. S. Durer (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1968), p. 6. All subsequent references to this work will be indicated by MAN followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material. The last act of Witkacian drama is often exactly opposite that of a conventional ending from the point of view of predictability. In a conventional drama probability becomes more and more restricted as the play progresses. This is not always the case in a Witkacian play. Sometimes, the longer the action progresses the more premises are introduced (which is itself a reversal of the traditional dramatic pattern); and, instead of the denouement being a result of what has gone before and what might logically be anticipated, even expected, the conclusion in the realm of Pure Form is often a refutation of all that has gone before.

Instead of always solving the issues posed by the action, the Witkacian plot sometimes can merely stop with the introduction of a totally new set of problems. In contrast to traditional dramaturgy Pure Form plots do not have to have completed actions, Witkacy theorized; and they do not have to have a beginning, middle and end (T:W 149).

Character

Aristotle defined character as one "...of the two natural causes from which action springs,"¹⁷ the other being thought. "Character determines men's qualities but it is by their actions that they are happy or the reverse."¹⁸ "Character is that which reveals moral purpose, showing what kind of things a man chooses or avoids."¹⁹ These are Aristotle's definitions. They are interpreted to mean that character, which can initiate in certain circumstances a choice of some type, will result in an action or a sequence of actions, at the conclusion of which sequence the hero will either be happy or sad. It has already been stated that Aristotle held that only the probable and necessary should be a part of

¹⁷Aristotle, The Poetics, p. 2.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 3.

a tragedy. It follows that the initial choice and the ensuing action must be necessary and probable, according to Aristotle's system, for tragedy is an imitation of an action. These prerequisites are not essential in Pure Form theory. Ideal character in Pure Form theatre need not be a truthful imitation of real life, hence the action of a play would not need to be the outcome of a seemingly probable, causally related course of events set in motion by a character's initial choice. Nor is it necessary in Pure Form theatre for character to be expressed by action:

The characters in a play in Pure Form ought to be treated not as an imitation of some kind of possible realistic individuals in life, nor as symbols and embodiments of some kind of ideas, but only as interlocked motifs within their compositional cluster in time, analogous to themes in music.²⁰

Character should not exist in and for itself, but rather it should be only one element of a larger, constructed non-imitative whole. In this sense character ought to be regarded as Witkacy theoretically regarded the actor who would portray the character:

The actor in his own right should not exist; he should be the same kind of element within a whole

²⁰"Osoby w sztuce w Czystej Formie powinny być traktowane nie jako imitacje jakichś możliwych realnych indywiduów w życiu, ani nie jako symbole i wcielenia jakichś idei, tylko jako motywy spletanego z nich pęku kompozycyjnego w czasie, analogicznie do tematów muzycznych" (T:W 158).

as the color red in a given painting or the note C-sharp in a given musical composition.²¹

Contrary to convention, in Pure Form character would be no longer a matter of all-consuming interest.²²

Pure Form character is not required to be consistently psychologically expressed. What Witkacy called "the mutability of a given psyche"²³ allows character to develop in whatever way the special requirements of a given play demand, in the same way compositional demands of a given piece of music dictate the chord

²¹"Aktor jako taki nie powinien istnieć; powinien być takim samym elementem całości, jak kolor czerwony w danym obrazie, jak ton cis w danym utworze muzycznym" (T:W 26).

²²Again this seems to be the extreme position, the ideal model and not what Witkacy actually practiced. The richness and psychological depth and interest of such characters as Gyubal Wahazar, Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat, Maciej Korbowa and Patri-cianello, to name but a few, suggest that Witkacy was unable or did not care to fully extend the implications of his theory about character to his plays. Other critics have argued that character in Witkacian drama repeats from play to play, not unlike the palette of a painter. This appears to be an exaggeration. There surely is much repetition of character type, class and function, as has been pointed out by Masłowski, Puzyna, and Błoński; but the classifications that these critics point out as repetitious indicate that repetition of characters is social criticism and is not the repeated use of what Witkacy called "motifs" as in music or painting, thereby indicating a break between the theory and practice. To illustrate this idea I prepared an analysis of all the character types in all the plays that are analyzed in Chapters III through V, using the criteria of several Polish critics. See Appendix IV.

²³"...zmiennosc danej psychiki" (T:W 27).

progressions that are its structural elements. Character may develop or progress within the play freely with infinite possibilities rather than become more and more restricted by a lessening of alternatives by the logic of the play as the play progresses, a feature of traditional dramaturgy. The concern in the ideal Pure Form theatre is not about the uniqueness of a personality as illustrated by character as such, but about "...the formal relationship of their actions and speeches."²⁴

Psychological truth and character logic consistent with life truths in theory need not be the chief motivating forces for Witkacy's characters. Witkacy wrote

We are further able to imagine, according to the maxims of fantastic psychology, the most far-reaching variations of this very subject of character, which will contrast with the lines and the actions. This last liberty with psychology will give on a large scale unheard-of formal possibilities.²⁵

²⁴"...o stosunki formalne ich działań i wypowiedzeń..." (T:W 180).

²⁵"Możemy dalej pomyśleć, według zasady fantastyczności psychologii, najbardziej daleko idące warjacje tego samego tematu osobowego, co odbije się w wypowiedzeniach i działaniach. Ta ostatnia swoboda w operowaniu psychologią daje niesłychanie rozległe możliwości formalne" (T:W 158).

Thought

Witkacy argued that certain modern popular genres were no longer viable and did not belong in the theatre of Pure Form. "Who cares what happens at Wspolna Street number 38, apartment 10, or in an enchanted castle, or in former times? (NTP-GDR 293)," Witkacy asked.²⁶ He held that there was no longer value to be found in the psychological truths of a theatre form belonging to the past, because life histories based on the so-called life-like causality were at a dead end. "Life" should be only a pretext (T:W 17) for a succession of pure action based on fantastic psychology and action (T:W 27) that may or may not be consistent with observable life action. Conceivably, thought in a Pure Form drama might have nothing to do with "...the faculty of saying what is possible and pertinent in given circumstances."²⁷ This is not to say that a Pure Form play would of necessity be nonsensical, "...only that from now on the drama will not be tied down to pre-existing patterns based solely on life-meaning or on fantastic assumptions

²⁶"Co kogo obchodzi, co się dzieje na ulicy Wspólnej nr 38 m. 10, albo w zaczarowanym zamku, czy w dawnych czasach?" (T:W 27).

²⁷Aristotle, The Poetics, p. 2.

(NTP-GDR 292-93).²⁸ Witkacy defined life-like and life meaning as that which embraces "...the external world, feeling emotion, the combinations of ideas that express it, action from the life point of view, and so forth."²⁹

Witkacy observed that the task of eliminating the nomenclature of life was monumental, for it became necessary to write volumes on the simplest things (T:W 159) in an effort to distinguish between imitation of a life action and imitation in a compositional sequence or progression (T:W 158). Witkacy believed that the theatre of his day was restricted by being held to life logic and imitation; his plan extended the range of subjects possible (T:W 84), he theorized, thereby enlarging dramatic compositional potentialities (T:W 84). In order to extend the thought of Pure Form beyond the traditional limitation of the "...possible and pertinent in given circumstances," Witkacy insisted, form had to be considered as "...the essential thing in each work of art."³⁰ For Witkacy, form was not a received notion regarding the arrange-

28" ...tylko aby raz przestać się krępować dotąd istniejącym szablonem, opartym jedynie na życiowym sensie lub fantastycznych założeniach" (T:W 26).

29" ...świat zewnętrzny, uczucia, kombinacje pojęć, które je wyrażają, działania z punktu widzenia życia i.t.d." (T:W 37).

30" ...czemś istotnem w każdym dziele Sztuki" (T:W 84).

ment of an imitative pattern. Therefore, thought, which "...proves something to be or not to be,"³¹ would be free in the ideal Pure Form model to prove the non-life-like to be possible and pertinent in given circumstance. In theory, the theatre of Pure Form radically shifts its emphasis from the total absorption in the affairs of a hero as a representative of life-logic to the proper response that a constructed, non-imitated form should evoke in an audience. Theoretically, it is the metaphysical experience and not the possible and pertinent in given situations which dominates the thought element of Pure Form theory. However, the application of this notion is not clear, for in practice the plays are strongly shaped by the thematic content.

What is essential is only that the meaning of the play should not necessarily be limited by its realistic or fantastic content, as far as the totality of the work is concerned, but simply that the realistic element should exist for the sake of a synthesis of all the elements of the theatre: sound, movement on the stage, dialogue, in sum the performance through time, as an uninterrupted whole--so transformed, when viewed realistically, that the performance seems utter nonsense. The idea is to make it possible to deform either life or the world of fantasy with complete freedom so as to create a whole whose meaning would be defined only by its purely scenic internal construction and not by the demands of consistent psychology and action according to assumptions from real life. Such assumptions can only be

³¹Aristotle, The Poetics, p. 3.

applied to plays which are heightened reproductions of life (NTP-GDR 292).³²

Ultimately, however, Witkacy had to admit that "Reality, life feelings, and thoughts can't be at any time anywhere eliminated by manifesto."³³ They can be given a new role, but not negated. Used in a new way, they are transformed by Pure Form thought into an aesthetic experience which produces an awareness of the Mystery of Existence (OAT-NF 349).

³²"Chodzi tylko o to, aby sens sztuki nie był koniecznie zawarty w sensie samej życiowej lub fantastycznej treści dla całości dzieła, tylko aby sens życiowy mógł być dla celów czysto formalnych t. zn. dla syntezy wszystkich czynników teatru: dźwięków, dekoracji, ruchów na scenie, wypowiedzanych zdań, w ogólnem stawaniu się w czasie, jako nierozzerwalnej całości, zmieniany nawet z zupełny, z punktu widzenia życiowego bezsensu stawania się. Chodzi o możliwości zupełnie swobodnego deformowania życia lub świata fantazji dla celu stworzenia całości, której sens byłby określony tylko wewnętrzną, czysto sceniczną konstrukcją, a nie wymaganiem konsekwentnej psychologii i akcji według jakichś życiowych założeń, które to kryteria mogą odnosić się do sztuk, będących spotęgowaną reprodukcją życia" (T:W 25-26).

³³"Reczywistość, uczucia życiowe i myśli nie mogą być nigdzie i nigdy programowo wyeliminowane," Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, "O artystycznym teatrze (Concerning the Artistic Theatre)," Nowe Formy w Malarstwie i inne pisma estetyczne ("New Forms in Painting and Other Aesthetic Writings"), Jan Leszczyński, ed. (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1959), p. 349. All subsequent references to this work will be indicated by OAT-NF followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

Language

In his essay "O artystycznej grze aktora (Concerning the Artistic Playing of the Actor)," Witkiewicz proposed a re-evaluation of the use of "the word" with respect to all other dramatic elements, arguing that there should be a balance between "the word" and other theatrical components.³⁴ Witkacy called attention to the fact that words (and ideas made from them and arranged in a certain sequence) are already extremely complicated complexes of elements and possess their own compositional requisites and possibilities (T:W 98). He saw that these complexes could be used in patterns that would emphasize the word as one of the formal qualities of a drama, in addition to its communicative aspect. Each word, a complex of accumulated ideas and meanings acquired in the passage of time, helps to build a sentence which is another conglomerate of complexities which in relationship to other sentences by the same character and those spoken by the rest of the cast begins to build a web that, when seen against or alongside the web of complexities

³⁴Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, "O artystycznej grze aktora (Concerning the Artistic Playing of the Actor)," Przegląd Wierczorny, June 4, 1927. I did not work from the published article but from a typed copy of the article. All subsequent references to this work will be indicated by OAGA.

being built at the same time by the decor, the costumes, the actor's pantomime and movements, can be judged on a non-imitative basis and can perhaps aid the spectator in this way to arrive at a new insight rather in the same fashion that poetry creates its own formal world by formalizing a reality in and of itself that is created through a tension of words and their meanings. The newness of this idea rests in pointing it out and insisting that it could be used in the construction of a play.

When necessary for formal purposes, Witkacy suggested abandoning the practice of requiring language to reflect the class, education and situation in life of a character (T:W 99). Instead he proposes the use of dissonance between language and character:

From the formal point of view we must take a different look at the language of persons introduced onto the stage. If we reject the criterion of probability, . . . we can show that characters' speeches which do not agree with the characteristic dress or appurtenances of that class will be of formal value, that is, they will be important not only as such in themselves, but as more or less a part of the probable life history, only in reference to the entire play, as a certain compositional quality in independence from life.³⁵

³⁵"Z punktu widzenia formalnego inaczej musimy spojrzeć i na język osób występujących na scenie. Jeśli odrzucimy kryterjum prawdopodobieństwa, . . . możemy założyć, że właśnie wypowiedzenia osób niezgodne z ich charakterystyką ubraniową, lub przynależnością klasową, będą miały wartość formalną t. zn. że będą ważne nie same przez się, ani jako części mniej lub więcej

For Witkacy, it was necessary to 'look at' (rather than only listen to) a word as a separate element which builds sentences, both of which ought to be able to be used in model play construction in much the same way that shades of color are used to make a painting (T:W 97-98). Words, even new or coined words, are useful as elements of dynamic tension in given places in a play (T:W 100), for the dictionary does not define the limits of a given language, Witkacy thought. If in the language of a play we refuse to concern ourselves only with the absolute value of simple elements and become engaged with their relationships with references to the formal entirety of the construction, then a given word may have meaning only in a given artistic construction and its necessity in that construction may have nothing to do whatever with its life-quality or whether it is ever used successfully or unsuccessfully in an everyday sense common to all (T:W 101). The value of a single speech ought to rest entirely on its formal necessity (T:W 101). Again, it is not clear if this is to be taken literally or if it is to be considered as the guiding principle for Pure Form language; it would seem that Witkacy himself did not accomplish it. As in the case of the hero who murdered his aunt because

prawdopodobnej historii życiowej, tylko w odniesieniu do całości sztuki, jako pewnej jedności kompozycyjnej w niezależności od życia" (T:W 99).

his cat had a migraine (T:W 104), ideally, Pure Form language needs make no logical, causal sense from a common-sense point of view, but it does establish its own meaning within the special world of a given play.³⁶ The degree to which in practice Witkacian dialogue rests entirely on formal necessity is doubtful, however. Sounds, noises, expletives, songs and verse interrupt

³⁶Jan Błoński has pointed out that dialogue in a Witkacian drama exists on two planes: 1) on the level of the role, that is, fulfilling the demands of the role as it unfolds in the immediate, life-meaning plane of the drama, and 2) on the plane of commentary, which may not be immediately evident but is integrated into the play's construction in such a way that it can and will make the playwright's intended point; Jan Błoński, "Teatr Witkiewicza: Forma Formy (The Theatre of Witkiewicz: The Form of Form), " Dialog, XII (December, 1967), 71. It may be difficult to accept much of the material of a given play, both the experience mimed and the words spoken, because of the dual nature of the dialogue. Błoński points out that from the first it is difficult for the unskilled and the uninitiated to believe in the reality of the experience or the authenticity of the words of a Walpurg, a Korbowa, or a Fizdejko (Błoński, "Form of Form," p. 70). Furthermore, the critic Czesław Miłosz explains that the problem lies in the fact that Witkacy wanted to load up the denotative meaning of language to a maximum, even to the point of verbosity. This was not because he was "drunk on the music of style," as Miłosz terms it, but because he simply wished to express the sense of fullness of language, even when it sometimes loses importance for the reader at a later date; Czesław Miłosz, "Granice, St. I. Witkiewicz z perspektywy wojennych przemian (The Limits of Art: Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz from the Perspective of the War's Transformation)"; Tadeusz Kortarbiński and Jerzy Płomieński, eds., Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz: Człowiek i Twórca ("Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz: Man and Creator") (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1957), p. 70. Still, Miłosz argues, the language which Witkacy uses is absolutely void of subterfuge (Miłosz, "Granice," p. 69).

and distance the speech of some of the plays; exaggeration of expression distorts the language of others. But with few exceptions the language of Witkacy's plays is conceptual; it follows grammatical rules, causally developing the thought of the particular play. The dialogue does not, however, always communicate. Characters speak at each other, frequently, in what are almost monologues. Character seems compelled to attempt communication, to have a metaphysical need to express itself, but the result is the verbalization of an internal monologue, a conversation with the self. A sequence of such monologues, as in Szewcy ("The Shoemakers"), for example, introduce many ideas which seem disparate, nonsequential and jarring. In this way Witkacy language does seem to establish a reality that is not dependent on its likeness to life, but answers to the special requirements of the play. By using language "formally," Witkacy hoped to build an image that is evoked by the piling-up of not fully received complexes of meanings; Witkacy thought that such an image may become strong enough to be regarded as a separate artistic element (T:W 175). Witkacy claimed that an idea, as such, could be a pure element in constructing a formal work (T:W 48). Witkacy wrote that ideas could be brought forth in performance at such a rate of frequency that before one single idea is fully analyzed the second appears. Then the second is analyzed against

the background of the partially perceived preceding idea; and before the second is fully understood, the third idea appears. As the process continues, there is never enough time to fully analyze each meaning cluster as it appears (T:W 52). The result is that meaning accumulates in the not-fully-comprehended meaning clusters as they build up in sequence, thereby providing unique meanings by syntax, sound and location in sequence. Like a word, an idea functions on three levels of value: 1) it functions as sound in rhythm much the same way that music does; 2) it functions on visual images which are constituted of new combinations of already existing qualities; and 3) it functions on meaning of ideas themselves. Dramatic language, like poetry, is complex in this fashion (T:W 43-44).

Witkacy also argued that what he called contrary ideas--juxtaposition of words of dissimilar meanings or phrases within a sentence or a speech by a character--are powerful elements in Pure Form language (T:W 45). The effectiveness of these elements could be intensified if desired, Witkacy believed.

It would be possible to regard certain ideas as one would reoccurring themes or motifs in music; in this case, the whole meaning would not be clear until the play was complete. This does not mean that a given play from beginning to end would of necessity be deprived of its meaning (T:W 57). Additional

meanings and ideas can be made by the playwright. But, Witkacy cautioned, there are certain formulated grammatical principles that are so substantial that it is impossible to build a sentence as a whole without observance of these rules (T:W 172).³⁷

Structure

Postulating that the new aspect of his theory was the use of meanings of ideas and actions as purely artistic elements in quite the same manner that a musician uses sound and a painter pigment (T:W 53), Witkacy argued that every artistic construction must contain two larger, more encompassing types of elements: life elements and formal elements (T:W 107). Though the plot may remain the thread upon which are strung "...the inessential, but no less indispensable, elements"³⁸ from real life, ideally, the formal content (that which Witkacy claimed was created in the

³⁷It is for this reason that the theatre and other arts, notably music and painting which employ simple elements of sound and pigment, are different. A painting can, for example, be complicated purely by abstracting the forms in it which may not suggest and indeed may not cause any association in the mind of the viewer with the subject in real life; in the theatre this is not possible because any really pure creation in time is possible only in the realm of sounds (T:W 26). And, a theatre without the actions of people and their words, highly complex significative complexes which are uncontrollable once uttered, is practically inconceivable.

³⁸Witkiewicz, "Wstęp teoretyczny," Dramaty, I, Puzyna, ed., 232.

construction in place of the traditionally imitated reality) of the work itself is of greatest importance.³⁹ While the ingredients of theatre are always the same, Witkacy maintained, the sense of newness rests in the order of their employment (T:W 192). "It is only a matter of opposing realism by the use of elements of the real world for formal purposes...."⁴⁰ This is the a priori law of Pure Form: there is nothing new in the theatre, any sense of newness rests only in the combination of the elements (T:W 151).

Witkacy tried to prove that all elements of a composition are autonomous and important in their own right within the structure. While each element is part of the total combination of all of the elements in a work, at the same time it has its own uniqueness and autonomy within the structure. Witkacy used as an example a hypothetical painting, part of the subject of which was an old woman wearing a red apron. He wrote of a particular spot of vermilion in the apron that it was a matter of "...the compositional value of that spot,"⁴¹ a spot of vermilion "... thirty centimeters to the left from the right lower half of the

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰"Chodzi tylko o przeciwstawienie się realizmowi, przez użycie elementów świata rzeczywistego dla celów formalnych..." (T:W 192).

⁴¹"...o wartość kompozycyjną tej plamy..." (T:W 160).

painting,⁴² and not at all a matter of the old woman and her apron as such. The subject--the old woman and her apron--might well be an old man with a red cap. In analysis of the structure of the work it would remain a question of the value of the spot of vermillion. The tension between that spot and the other elements of the painting is more important than the degree of realness of the painting. By using elements in a stage play in such a way a playwright would produce a structure similar to that of a Picasso painting in which the block-shaped calf of the leg becomes only an element among many in the total structure (T:W 9). Such a structure is the result of a "new" harmony made of sometimes disparate, incongruous or deformed elements put together in different relationships one to the other than ever before attempted (OAT-NF 350). It was on the basis of this rationale that Witkacy tried to argue that ideas and actions could be used as pure elements in the play structure. This is a justification for putting characters from different historical periods as well as live and dead persons on the stage at the same time. The result is an abstraction of reality, not a denial of it.

The necessity of the given parts of a Pure Form structure is to be accepted in the same manner that we accept the progres-

⁴²"...30 cm. na lewo od prawego dolnego rogu obrazu..." (T:W 159).

sion of chords in a piece of music (T:W 27). It is more difficult to achieve this in Pure Form theatre, however, because the elements of theatre are actions and words, both complex elements, capable of multiple meanings, while other arts, notably painting and music are composed of simple, pure elements creating one final complexity of meaning (OAT-NF 346). Furthermore, a painting may be seen all at once, and then its parts discerned. Theatre, like music, is experienced sequentially; but, being composed of complex elements, its structure is not easily discerned or altered.

Specific Structural Techniques

Although Witkacy noted in fact that theatre like poetry is "composite art" encompassing elements which are not intrinsic to it, therefore making it "...much more difficult to imagine Pure Form on the stage, essentially independent, in its final result, of the content of human action (NTP-GDR 292),"⁴³ still chief among the model structural techniques Witkacy insisted upon was the striking of life-like logic from dramatic construction as a criterion for judging it. He believed life-like logic was

⁴³"...na scenie daleko trudniej jest pomyśleć sobie Czystą Formą, niezależną w istocie swej, t. zn. jako obiektywny wynik, od treści działania ludzkiego" (T:W 24-25).

not essential, but that it should be used toward formal goals when employed. At the same time that he insisted that a play in Pure Form should be characterized "...by absolute freedom in the handling of reality,"⁴⁴ Witkacy held that this deformation of reality should be adequately justified.⁴⁵

⁴⁴"...może odznaczać się absolutną dowolnością realną" (T:W 26).

⁴⁵Witkacy wrote: "The kind of play under discussion may well be characterized by absolute freedom in the handling of reality, but what is essential is that this freedom, like 'non-sensicality' in painting, should be adequately justified and should become valid for the new dimension of thought and feeling into which such a play transports the spectator (NTP-GDR 293) (Sztuka taka, o jakiej mówimy, może odznaczać się absolutną dowolnością realną, chodzi tylko o to, aby dowolność ta, podobnie jak 'bezsensowność' obrazów, była dostatecznie usprawiedliwiona i opłacana w innym wymiarze psychicznym, w który sztuka taka powinna widza przenosić) (T:W 26)." The pattern which results has been pointed out by Janusz Degler, who wrote: "Liberation of a work of drama from the confines of realistic style has to begin with the elimination of intrigue and of action based on cause-effect sequences. It may be replaced by a mosaic-type pattern of loosely connected events only controlled by their 'internal formal logic.' The destruction of plot ought to lead to the extinction of those meanings and problems which arise from the groundwork of events and this, in turn, will rid the theatre of didactic, and political and social function" (Degler, "Ideas and Theories," p. 13). Therefore, "...having destroyed the logical concatenation of events, Witkiewicz is free to work by suggestion and juxtaposition," Professors Gerould and Dukore observe (Dukore and Gerould, Avant-Garde Drama, p. 5). Instead of relying on realistic and naturalistic techniques, transference replaces causality in some plays, such as Kurka Wodna ("The Water Hen") (Dukore and Gerould, Avant-Garde Drama, p. 50). The plot may be advanced by "macabre metaphors" (Miłósz, History, p. 418) and "...events...which have no other reason

Our aim is not premeditated nonsense, but rather the expansion of compositional possibilities by not holding in art to life-like consistency, but rather to fantastic psychology and action, which, according to us, will give complete liberty of formal composition.⁴⁶

Freedom from causality in the structure of Witkiewicz's plays permits them to build on what has been called the principle of instability and flux, Professor Daniel C. Gerould has noted.⁴⁷ It has been observed that the catastrophe of such a drama is external, brought on by the injection of an external force, a force which may or may not have been prepared for in exposition prior to its manifestation on the stage, and which stops rather than resolves an action sequence that the characters themselves may be powerless to resolve.⁴⁸

than that they seemed right to the author in that sequence" (Esslin, "Introduction," Tropical Madness, p. 3).

⁴⁶"Celem naszym nie jest programowy bezsens, raczej tylko rozszerzenie kompozycyjnych możliwości przez nietrzymanie się w sztuce konsekwencji życiowej, czyli fantastyczność psychologii i działania, dającą według nas, zupełną swobodę komponowania formalnego" (T:W 36).

⁴⁷Daniel C. Gerould, "Witkacy in the West: Some Reflections before the Event," unpublished manuscript; later appeared in Twórczość (7/8, 1970) as "Witkacy na Zachodzie."

⁴⁸Jan Błóński, "Znaczenie i zniekształcenie w 'czystej formie' S. I. Witkiewicza (Meaning and Deformation in the 'Pure Form' of S. I. Witkiewicz)," Miesięcznik Literacki, II (August, 1967), 29. The plays generally follow a pattern of games played

Zbigniew Folejewski has pointed out that polyrhythmic construction is an important structural technique used by Witkacy. The diminished importance of life consistency and causality as well as the application of the principles of instability and flux to dramatic material make this possible. Folejewski describes the device as follows:

...a complicated, seemingly chaotic but actually very precise orchestration of various levels of dialogue and monologue, of the external actions, and the internal state of mind and the moods of the dramatis personae who constantly oscillate

by two or more initiated partners, Jan Błoński has noted (Błoński, "The Form of Form," p. 73). Such games can be played on and on indefinitely unless arbitrary limits are set. As long as the rules are obeyed and no new force is introduced to overpower or overbalance the scales in favor of one party or the other, the game could last forever, theoretically. The action of a Pure Form play may follow this same pattern. Błoński wrote: "In fact the plays of Witkiewicz, which are after all (sometimes even from the point of view of the characters) productions, comedy within comedy, ... could be played ad libitum: even killed, the heroes get up and repeat again the 'artificial world' in which they remain by pronouncement of the writer's sentence. The catastrophe comes from the outside, because it is only possible that it comes from the outside (I rzeczywiście sztuki Witkiewicza, które są przecież (czasem nawet z punktu widzenia postaci) inscenizacjami, komediami w komedii... mogłyby być grane ad libitum: nawet pozabijani, bohaterowie wstają i powtarzają raz jeszcze 'sztuczny świat,' na który zostali wyrokiem pisarza skazani. Katastrofa przychodzi z zewnątrz, bo tylko z zewnątrz przyjść może)" (Błoński, "Meaning and Deformation," p. 29). The heroes are frequently unable to resolve the plight in which they find themselves. The catastrophe is external and brings an end to the action and the game.

between the real and the illusory, between sense and nonsense, both in their deeds and words.⁴⁹

Ideally, it is a structure constituted of the formal levels of meanings of dialogue, moods, actions, and intermingling of real and illusory. Words and ideas, operating in like manner to the spot of vermilion in the painting, can become independent, active agents in Pure Form drama (T:W 61). The signification of simple and complex actions follows a process similar to that of words and ideas (T:W 176).

The difference between painting on the one hand and poetry and the theatre on the other is this: objects in painting are not artistic elements, but the semantic elements of words and actions can create an artistically functioning construction (Pure Form), connected in an absolute unity with sensory elements (sounds and images). The idea of Pure Form may apply only to directly functioning constructions and not to those whose structuring can be perceived purely rationally.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Zbigniew Folejewski, "The Theatre of Ruthless Metaphor: Polish Theatre Between Marxism and Existentialism," Comparative Literature, III (Fall, 1969), 177.

⁵⁰"Różnica między malarstwem a poezją i teatrem jest ta, że przedmioty w malarstwie nie są elementami artystycznymi, a pierwiastki znaczeniowe słów i działań mogą tworzyć artystycznie działające konstrukcje (Czystą Formę), związane w absolutne jedności z elementami zmysłowymi (dźwiękami i obrazami). Pojęcie czystej formy stosować się może tylko do bezpośrednio działających konstrukcji, a nie tych, których konstrukcyjność może być poznana czysto rozumowo" (T:W 215-16).

Pure Form action can be a fabrication of actions from life that appear in combination to be unrealistic, ridiculous or absurd. Witkacy uses as an example a person eating an apple. If first the person takes up a knife, cuts the apple and puts a quarter of it into his mouth, Witkacy argues, we would generally all agree that the action means that the man is hungry and seeing an apple he is determined to satisfy his hunger. Now suppose that this same person who has eaten this apple then dies of delight at the sensation, patting his belly all the while. This has a second desirable level of meaning in Pure Form. It is possible to perform this second kind of apple-eating as realistically as the first, Witkacy maintained, but to stylize it to the degree that we will accept it as a part of the requirements of a Pure Form play (T:W 177). Action of this type can seem to be happening quite separately and independently of the words or the thought, even of the character performing it. Such dissonance of action could have a meaning other than the meaning implicit in the actual eating of the apple. How this meaning was to be made precise in communication Witkacy never makes clear; his only justification is:

A series of such actions with significance, suitably played out, would be able to establish a construction, the action of which would

liberate in us the sensation of Beauty without any kind of life interest.⁵¹

Actions liberated of life interest and background should be able to create a beauty composed of complexes of the same nature as those of which words are composed and behave in the same way as words in their signification of ideas (T:W 178). The action may take on this special independence within the frame of the play, for example, if it is contrasted sharply to the accompanying words and the actor executing it. The word, the idea, the actor, the action--each should be considered as one of many elements orchestrated to construct a formal wholeness.

Witkacy suggested that traditional functions of certain aspects of traditional play structure could be altered in a manner that would create in Pure Form a new sense of reality. Heretofore regarded as only a part of plot construction, exposition, for example, can serve a new role in Pure Form theatre. In the Witkacian esthetic it was theatrically possible that exposition might never be completed, that the play might end or be stopped without the audience knowing all the necessary information to perceive the meaning of

⁵¹"Szereg takich działań z sensem, odpowiednio odegranych może stanowić konstrukcję, której działaniem będzie wyzwianie w nas uczucia Piękna, bez jakiegokolwiek życiowego zainteresowania" (T:W 178).

what they had seen.⁵² According to Witkacy, exposition for example ought to have as much stage time as other features of a drama, if it served formal purposes. It could, perhaps, last for the entirety of the play. He wrote, "...certain things may remain unexplained to the very end, on which may depend their true formal value, just like the value of undecipherable words in poems."⁵³ By inference, other features of traditional dramaturgy can be used in a like manner within the Pure Form structure.

Deformation of the external world, violation of logic and logical absurdity are important features in the overall structuring of Pure Form theatre works; and like actions, words, and ideas, they are used as a component in the polyrhythmic structuring of

⁵²Witkiewicz viewed this as a new compositional imperative; he wrote: "As former compositions of music ended generally on a longer chord of the characteristic notes in the tonic and on it resolved, this one tone being maintained through the greater part of the piece, so it was with old plays, and by far realistic plays, which had to have the highest point of dynamic tension at the conclusion. The model: exposition, complication, resolution can possibly...be abandoned (Jak dawne kompozycje muzyczne konczyly sie zwykle dluzszem skakaniem z nuty charakterystycznej na tonike i na niej sie rozwiazywaly, przy czym jedna tonacja utrzymywana byla w wiekszych czesciach rzeczy, tak samo dawne sztuki, a dalej sztuki realistyczne, musiały mieć najwyższy punkt napięcia dynamicznego w zakończeniu. Szablon: ekspozycja, zawikłanie, rozwiązanie, może...być porzucony)" (T:W 164).

⁵³"... pewne rzeczy do końca samego mogą pozostać niewyjaśnione, na czym polegać ich istotna formalna wartość, podobnie jak wartość słów niekreślonych w poematach" (T:W 165).

all these elements.⁵⁴ It is possible to bring Pure Form into the theatre by deforming psychology and behavior.⁵⁵ This would allow the theatre art to be arbitrary in depiction of detail with regards to the life-like. This must be orchestrated "...with the utmost logic and precision"⁵⁶ as it cannot happen accidentally. Deformation permits new possibilities in plot and character relationships (T:W 27). Whereas the old plot types revolved explicitly about the logic of character actions and were histories of this, Witkacy thought Pure Form theory permits changing all this for formal

⁵⁴There are two words which Witkiewicz used which can be translated as "deformation" in English: deformacja, which can also be translated malformation, and zniekształcenie, which may also be translated disfigurement or malformation (Wielki Słownik Polsko-Angielski, ["The Great Polish-English Dictionary"]). The word might also be understood in English to mean misshapen (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language).

⁵⁵Puzyna, "Prism of the Absurd," p. 39. Also see Appendix I, Notes for Chapter II.

⁵⁶Ibid. Witkiewicz wrote: "The idea is to make it possible to deform either life or the world of fantasy with complete freedom so as to create a whole whose meaning would be defined only by its purely scenic internal construction, and not by the demands of consistent psychology and action according to the assumptions from real life. Such assumptions can only be applied as criteria to plays which are heightened reproductions of life (NTP-GDR 292) (Chodzi tylko o możliwość zupełnie swobodnego deformowania życia lub świata fantazji dla celu stworzenia całości, której sens byłby określony tylko wewnętrzną czysto sceniczną konstrukcją, a nie wymaganiami konsekwentnej psychologii i akcji według jakichś życiowych założeń, które to kryteria mogą odnosić się do sztuk, będących spotęgowaną reprodukcją życia)" (T:W 25-26).

purposes as required.⁵⁷ Witkacy wrote:

In the theatre we want to be in an entirely new world in which the fantastic psychology of the characters who are completely implausible in real life, not only in their positive actions but also in their errors, and who are perhaps completely unlike people in real life, produces events which by their bizarre inter-relationships create a performance in time not limited by any logic except the logic of the form itself of that performance (NTP-GDR 292).⁵⁸

Witkacy doubted that complete deformation, which he referred to on one occasion as "complete deobjectification,"⁵⁹ would ever

⁵⁷The psychological dimension as such is not lost in this theatre, Martin Esslin has noted, although the step from the norm and the real is essential in evaluating the fantasticalness of an action or the psychology of a given hero. Esslin commented: "The banishment of realistic psychological motivation on the other hand, does not mean that psychological dimension itself is gone. On the contrary: an author who no longer has to worry about the motivation of his characters as objectively existing autonomous human beings outside himself will inevitably be projecting the subconscious contents of his own psyche. Witkiewicz's theories, which have much in common with the surrealists, result in a theatre of dream images which give a very deep insight into the author's mind as well as establishing through the archtypes which spring from his depths, a level of communication with his audience which lies far deeper than that which results in realistic drama" (Martin Esslin, "Introduction," Tropical Madness: Four Plays, p. 3).

⁵⁸"My chcemy w teatrze być w zupełnie innym świecie, w którymby wypadki wynikające z fantastycznej psychologii osób zupełnie życiowo niekonsekwentnych nie tylko w czynach pozytywnych, ale i w pomyłkach swoich, osób zupełnie może do życiowych postaci nie podobnych, dawały w dziwaczności swych powiązań stawanie się w czasie jako takie, nie uwarunkowane żadną logiką, oprócz logiki samej formy tego stawania się" (T:W 27).

⁵⁹"...odprzedmiotowanie" (T:W 13).

be possible: life meaning and likeness ought to be renounced only to the degree that there are actual artistic needs for doing so (T:W 195). But the necessity for deformation in modern times is real. With the aim creating new compositional forms and achieving new richness of directional and dynamic tensions, it is necessary to deform the objects of the external world, as well as psychology and behavior (T:W 86). Furthermore, Pure Form deformation results in psychic impressions similar to those achieved by theatre in the past (T:W 20); for deformation of the external world aids or makes possible in some cases the creations of an environment of thinking and acting and feeling in which the bizarre, the abnormal, the strange, the heinous, the despicable, as well as the strangely ordinary, can take place in a new relationship the one with the other and create a special beauty and reality not possible before (T:W 86). Deformation is something more than just the transformation of real objects;⁶⁰ it is one means of opening channels that satisfy the hunger for mystery and metaphysical sensations both in the heroes of the plays and in the audience. Witkiewicz never states the degree of deformation required in a given play, however. Instead, he leaves us to assume that what he called the unity of the individuality of the playwright will express

⁶⁰~~K~~ossowicz, "Teoria i dramaturgia," p. 87.

itself directly through the psyche of the playwright as he is creating the play and as it is being staged; therefore, it appears, we need not be worried about the proper degree of deformation needed to acquire Pure Form as it will occur immediately and automatically. This is very abstract and unclear. Evidently a play which in performance can arouse such a state as the awareness of the Mystery of Existence has to have the proper degree of deformation of all elements used, especially language, character psychology, behavior and action.

Zdzisław Jastrzębski has pointed out that structural features occur in Witkiewicz's plays which demonstrate principles of the grotesque⁶¹ used as constructional elements and as one of the forms of deformation of the external world.⁶²

⁶¹The theory of the grotesque attempts to alienate the world, destroy the familiar relationships between tangible things, blend heterogeneous elements, and disturb chronological order; see Wolfgang Kayser, The Grottesque in Art and Literature, trans. by Ulrich Weisstein (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1963), pp. 169-70.

⁶²Zdzisław Jastrzębski, "O pojęciu groteski i niektórych jej aspektach w dramacie polskim doby obecnej (Concerning the Idea of the Grotesque and some of Its Aspects in Polish Drama at the Present Time)," Dialog, XI (November, 1966), 96.

Summary

1) The theory of Pure Form assumes that a play is not restricted to life imitation, although life actions are the basis of all theatre. The principle of fantastic psychology and action allows a play freedom from the aesthetic of probability and necessity. The plot can be a patterning of motifs. The resolution of a Pure Form play need not be the expected, logical conclusion of events happening in the time sequence of the play prior to the catastrophe. A drama in Pure Form may conclude with the introduction of issues different from those that are the subject of the drama until that point.

2) Each work of art must contain two types of structural elements: life elements and formal elements (T:W 107). All the elements of the structure of a Pure Form play may be used as pure elements of composition as the pure elements of music and painting are used. While meaning and psychology remain essential in Pure Form theory (T:W 59), by employing deformative devices Witkacy wanted to make the elements included in a work independent of any meaning they might have outside the frame of the work. If this could be done, he thought that the elements could be used in imitative patterns that could be invented.

3) The action of a Pure Form play is not necessarily the outcome of a seemingly causally related course of events initiated by a choice of a given character. Ideally, a Pure Form play would resolve like the notes of a piece of music.

4) It is assumed in Pure Form theory that form itself is the thing created in a given work (T:W 84). This should permit an enlargement of compositional possibilities.

5) Language need not reflect the probability of life station, habits or career. Words, sentences, ideas and thoughts may be used as pure elements. Dialogue may express the compulsive urge to communicate rather than actually communicate.

6) The structure of Pure Form has been called polyrhythmic.⁶³ The Pure Form play is structured on the principle of instability and flux.⁶⁴ Pure Form plays sometimes follow the pattern of games played by initiated participants, games which they cannot terminate.⁶⁵

7) Elements of plot may be altered to suit the demands of a given play.

⁶³Folejewski, "Theatre of Ruthless Metaphor," p. 117.

⁶⁴Gerould, "Witkacy in the West," p. 14.

⁶⁵Broński, "The Form of Form," p. 73.

8) The concept of fantastic psychology permits deformation of life-like elements in the play. Deformation occurs in three areas, language, character and action. The requirements of deformation are: a) language which has the possibility of new or other than usual meanings; b) characters that have the possibility of psychical mutability (T:W 27) and fantastic psychology; and c) actions that are free of conventionally causal justification. An important aspect of deformation is application of the concept of the grotesque. Principles of the grotesque build discrepancies between what is shown in the play in given circumstances and what might be expected. The effect is an alienation of the viewer from the play's content.

9) The ideally realized Pure Form play will make the audience aware of what Witkiewicz called the Mystery of Existence.

10) There are no new theatrical elements; any sense of newness in Pure Form rests on the combination or arrangement of the elements in the structure.

A difficult problem in assembling the elements of a Pure Form construction would be to put them together in such a way that the audience would unquestioningly accept and understand the inevitability of the choices made by the artist in structuring a formal idea. In a model Pure Form play, ideally, while "...we are watching the play unfold, we ought not to be able to think of

any other possible internal relationships,"⁶⁶ and we ought to accept the action as a purely formal progression of events that arouse the sensation of Witkacy's *Mystery of Existence*. According to Witkacy's theory this is essentially an aesthetic experience. But Jan Kłossowicz has suggested that the prime effect of the experience of the dramas of Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz in performance is the creation of the deepest metaphysical horror.⁶⁷ This metaphysical horror is not purely an aesthetic pleasure; while Witkacy roughly equated the metaphysical feeling with the experience of aesthetic enjoyment of a given work to the fullest (T:W 110), in part the horror is aroused by the way reality is depicted. The structuring principles I have outlined would not allow this depiction to be realistic imitation, but it is imitation of reality of a kind. Pure Form then, is not divorced from actuality. The principles of its dramatic structure are a new set of rules to describe reality. Its purpose seems more than the aesthetic one. In practice, Pure Form reflects Witkiewicz's overwhelming interest in the individual as a concept and his apparent conviction

⁶⁶"...powinniśmy patrzeć na przebieg sztuki, nie móc pomyśleć sobie innych związków..." (T:W 31).

⁶⁷Kłossowicz, "Teoria i dramaturgia," p. 93. Also see Appendix I, *The Experience of Pure Form*.

that the individual was doomed by the future. Pure Form tries to capture the distorted and fragmented image of the reality of the twentieth century and to depict the individual's place in it.

PART II

AN ANALYSIS OF THE MANNER IN WHICH
PURE FORM STRUCTURES THE SHAPE OF
THE THREE TYPES OF PLAYS WRITTEN BY
STANISŁAW IGNACY WITKIEWICZ

CHAPTER III

PURE FORM IN THE PLAYS WITKIEWICZ INDICATED AS PURE FORM PLAYS

In this chapter the manner in which the theory of Pure Form in the theatre structures the group of plays which Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz marked with an asterisk (*), the sign Witkacy used to signify that he considered a play to be more Pure Form in its final shape than realistic, will be discussed. These plays are Pragmatyści ("The Pragmatists"), Nowe Wyzwolenie ("The New Deliverance"), Gyubal Wahazar, czyli Na Przełęczach bezsensu ("Gyubal Wahazar, or Along the Cliffs of the Absurd"), Metafizyka dwugłowego cielecia ("Metaphysics of a Two-Headed Calf"), and Kurka Wodna ("The Water Hen").¹ The criteria used to determine the degree of Pure Formness of these plays are those postulated in the preceding chapter.

¹Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, The Madman and the Nun and Other Plays, translated and edited by Daniel C. Gerould and C. S. Durer (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1968), pp. 299-300. All subsequent references to this work will be indicated by MAN followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material. Also see "Nota do drugiego wydania (Notes to the Second Edition)," Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Dramaty, II (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1972), pp. 721-764.

Each play will be analyzed in the chronological order in which it was written as given in "Appendix II: Major Works of Witwicz," Gerould and Durer (MAN 299-300).

Pragmatyści

Plasfodor Mimecki (Plasfodor Mimecker),² the hero of Pragmatyści ("The Pragmatists"),³ is exhausted by his effort to struggle against absurdity (TP-DG 26). He is bored by the banality of his existence: "The infernal banality of existence. It's

²Translation of character names is by Daniel and Eleanor Gerould, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Tropical Madness: Four Plays, translated by Daniel and Eleanor Gerould (New York: Winter House, Ltd., 1972).

³The translation being used in this paper is that made by Daniel and Eleanor Gerould, Witkiewicz, Tropical Madness, pp. 5-36. All subsequent references to this translation of Pragmatyści ("The Pragmatists") will be indicated by TP-DG followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

The Polish text used in this paper is that of the revised edition of the plays edited by Konstanty Puzyna, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Dramaty ("The Plays"), I, revised ed., Konstanty Puzyna ed. (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1972), 199-227. All subsequent references to the Polish text will be indicated by P-SIW followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

Pragmatyści ("The Pragmatists") was written in 1919 (MAN 299) and as such is Witkiewicz's second full-length play. It was published in 1920 (MAN 299) and was first performed by the Elsynor group in Warsaw on October 21, 1921 (Dramaty, II, revised ed., 729). It was performed later in Zakopane with an amateur cast in 1925 and has had a number of productions since that time (Dramaty, II, revised ed., 730-32).

four o'clock in the afternoon. Then there'll be supper, then an orgy, then a seance, then the nightly bad dreams, then the usual dose of pills to give us strength to go on. Oh, it's unbearable."⁴ Plasfodor is in despair. Nothing in his life satisfies or satiates him anymore (TP-DG 12). He claims that there is no place for him anywhere (TP-DG 12) and that mystery and strangeness have gone out of his world (TP-DG 15). As the act of living is devoid of mystery, Plasfodor tries to recreate it by "...imaginary artistic creativity" (TP-DG 12).⁵ He and his mistress have withdrawn from life; they live in a room that is black with yellow oriental motifs on the walls. The furniture is black and red, as is the rug which has a rectilinear design (TP-DG 7-8). There is one window to the right through which orange sunlight is falling as the play begins (TP-DG 7). And there are two doors, one up center which is used as a general exit to other parts of the apartment and to the outside world for Acts I through Act III, Scene 1, and another to the left which remains closed until the end of the play (TP-DG 9). Mimecker's mistress, Mamalia (Mammalia), is deaf but

⁴"Ta piekielna banalność istnienia. Jest godzina czwarta po południu. Potem będzie kolacja, potem orgia, potem seans, potem nocne koszmary, potem zwykła porcja środków wzmacniających. Och! to nie do wytrzymania" (P-SIW 206).

⁵"...zastąpić urojonej twórczości" (P-SIW 204).

not dumb. Their life is shared by Kobieton (Masculette), the maid, "a sexless person tending more however to the female side" (TP-DG 7),⁶ with whom Plasfodor tries periodically to satiate his boredom, and by Graf Franz von Telek (Count Franz von Telek), brother of Mammalia, who is having an affair with his sister and who also satiates his passion from time to time with Masculette.

As the play begins, Plasfodor is agonizing over the fact that he is only the instrument through which the stream of existence flows and that he cannot stop the flow of his own existence for a second to fully experience it. Mammalia tries to console him. As she cannot speak, she writes her message to him: "Transform yourself and me into one inexpressible word, which no living creature can utter" (TP-DG 9).⁷ Her message is that there is another life after death. At this point von Telek appears. He is the director of the Department of Poisons of the Ministry of Trade (TP-DG 11), loves life and living and is in the best of health. He offers an alternative means to mystery; he maintains that "To live is to create the unknown" (TP-DG 11).⁸ But Plasfodor is

⁶"...osoba bezpłciowa zaakcentowana jednak więcej w stronę kobiecości" (P-SIW 200).

⁷"Przemień siebie i mnie w jedno niewyraźne słowo, którego nie wymówi żaden twór żyjący" (P-SIW 202).

⁸"Życie znaczy tworzyć nieznanie" (P-SIW 204).

bored with life, with the physical here and now. Pushing Mammalia from him, he shouts: "Only death, hers and mine, will be my sole work" (TP-DG 15).⁹ In this department of experience von Telek can offer assistance; he returns to the hotel to bring Mumia Chińska (Chinese Mummy), the mummy of Princess Tsui with whom Plasfodor had a never-completely-explained affair five years before (TP-DG 17). When she arrives she whispers the word that will transform both Mammalia and Plasfodor into the word that no living creature will utter. Plasfodor falls into a dead faint.

Act II takes place later the same night. Three candles are burning on a red table near the still unconscious Plasfodor. Mammalia is confronted by the Mummy who explains her past connection with Plasfodor, how she was taken by him from her ancestors' home when she was young, how she tried to give him something other than the "small and the practical"¹⁰--something mysterious--which was all that Mammalia had to offer him. Mammalia, in agony, shoots the Mummy, once from across the room and then with the revolver almost against the Mummy's breast. The Mummy is totally unaffected by being shot and she tells Mammalia that such

⁹"Śmierć jedna i jej, i moja, będzie jednym moim dziełem" (P-SIW 207).

¹⁰"...małe i użyteczne" (P-SIW 211).

actions are no way to overcome "...the essential strangeness of existence" (TP-DG 20).¹¹ When Franz returns the Mummy orders him to wake Plasfodor. As if Plasfodor might be hypnotized, von Telek turns Plasfodor's hand three times in a circle and then tosses it upon his chest (TP-DG 21). Plasfodor springs up, strikes von Telek in the face (TP-DG 22) and immediately returns to talking about the impossible business of living. Von Telek and the Mummy return to the hotel and Plasfodor and Mammalia are left alone. "Isn't conversation the most significant way of experiencing life?" (TP-DG 26),¹² Plasfodor asks the mute Mammalia. And he falls to talking. He cannot yet decide on death (TP-DG 26), as he only lives in the abstraction of conversation (TP-DG 26). His monologue is interrupted by the Mummy's song. He closes the window, pulls down the black shade, and then resumes his interminable one-sided conversation as the curtain falls.

Act III, Scene 1, is set the following morning. Von Telek offers Plasfodor the opportunity to escape boredom by action. He offers him a job as the director of a club-like cabaret; whereas

¹¹"...zwycięża się istotną dziwność bytu" (P-SIW 212).

¹²"Czyż najistotniejszą formą przeżywania życia nie jest rozmowa (P-SIW 217-18).

Plasfodor has been living for "imaginary artistic creativity" (TP-DG 12),¹³ von Telek offers Plasfodor the opportunity to actualize in the illusion of theatre his imaginary and artificial abstractions of reality (TP-DG 29). Von Telek is, in fact, trying to seduce Plasfodor to live, even artificially. Plasfodor will have none of this. He lives in another world, separated, he thinks, from the world of von Telek by the personal interpretation of language (TP-DG 29). Mammalia sneaks up on von Telek, tips him out of his chair and tries to strangle him. When Masculette rescues him, for her pains he murders her by smashing her head in with a tack hammer. Plasfodor, having had enough of von Telek's "familiarities" (TP-DG 31),¹⁴ throws him out and locks the door. The death of Masculette does not appear to affect Plasfodor in the least. He claims he has invented a new way to live; he tells Mammalia, "We're going to push our inner anxiety to a climax--by lying completely motionless" (TP-DG 31).¹⁵ The first scene ends as they lie down on the sofa to test his theory.

¹³"...zastąpić urojonej twórczości" (P-SIW 204).

¹⁴"...poufałości" (P-SIW 222).

¹⁵"Będziemy kulminować niepokój wewnętrzny--leżąc zupełnie bez ruchu...." (P-SIW 222).

The second scene of the third act opens with the corpse of Masculette sitting on the sofa. It is the evening of the same day and again three candles are burning. Mammalia enters. She is terrified of the corpse, the open central door and the blackness beyond the door. The Mummy enters and embraces Mammalia, who collapses in fear. The Mummy carries her to the sofa and orders the corpse of Masculette to get out (TP DG 32). The corpse does this; it falls on the floor and crawls on its elbows out the open door. Von Telek and Plasfodor enter as the corpse is exiting; they step unhesitatingly over the exiting corpse without a break in their conversation. Von Telek is still trying to convince Plasfodor that there are more important things than what lies beyond the grave. By now Plasfodor is not sure that life is worth "...even the candle on the birthday cake" (TP-DG 33).¹⁶ Presently Plasfodor goes to the Mummy, "...who takes him by the hand and slowly, with terrible bulging movements, leads Mammalia by the right hand, Plasfodor by the left, toward the dark gulf of the open door" (TP-DG 35).¹⁷ They disappear into the darkness beyond the door. After a moment the Mummy's

16" ...niewarta powozowej świecy" (P-SIW 224).

17" ...bierze go za rękę i powolnymi ruchami, wybrzusząc się straszliwie, powadzi po prawej ręce Mamalię, po lewej Plasfodora w kierunku ciemnej czeluści otwartych drzwi" (P-SIW 225).

song is heard, then a terrible scream by Mammalia--the first sound that she has uttered in the entire play--and then some "... unintelligible cries and gibberings from Plasfodor" (TP-DG 35).¹⁸ Then, for the first time in the play, the door to the left is opened and Dwaj zandarmi (Two Gendarmes) enter. They are dressed realistically, in tricornered hats and black uniforms (TP-DG 35), but there is no explanation of the relationship of that particular door to the outside world. The Gendarmes demand von Telek's papers, for they have been searching for him. Von Telek denies his identity. He now claims to be Lambdon Tyger whose "... baggage came to life a moment ago and went out that door" (TP DG 36).¹⁹ The First Gendarme goes to investigate what is beyond the central door. He comes back with the startling information that there is no exit from the space beyond the door. Terrified, the two Gendarmes flee. Von Telek--or, now, Lambdon Tyger--sets off to start a new life. He leaves through the central door beyond which, it has now been determined, there is no exit. The play ends. There is no effort to explain these mysterious events.

¹⁸"...jakieś niezrozumiałe wołania i bełkotania Plasfodora ... " (P-SIW 226).

¹⁹"...bagaż przed chwilą ożył i wyszedł tymi drzwiami" (P-SIW 226).

It is not clear at all what can or ought to be believed, other than what happens on the stage before the viewer: the dead Masculette rises and leaves, a mummy of a dead person leads Mammalia and Plasfodor into the space beyond the central door from which, it is discovered late in the play, there is no exit to the outer world. This mystery remains unsolved at the final curtain. There are no visible proofs of actions prior to this time. There are no bodies to be shown; Masculette's corpse crawled offstage by its own power. The Mummy is vanished beyond the door. And the man who viewed all this says that he is not the man he said he was. The three who disappear through the door are not there in the room beyond the door, although there is no exit in that room. This is what Witkiewicz called a contrary idea. It is logically absurd. This logical absurdity is the sum of the action of the play.

The Pragmatists is constructed of a combination of probable and improbable actions. Much of the play's structure depends on traditional devices. A plausible interpretation according to the notions of realistic and well-made play dramaturgy can be given to many of the events which follow each other in a linked fashion, either because of what happens in the time of the play or because of what occurred before the play begins. The surprising reversals are not a new structural device, but are a

traditional means of manipulating dramatic material to build tension and sustain interest. Plasfodor's postponement of his decision whether to live or to die, which amounts to a late point of attack, is not uncommon. His vacillation between life and death is the pattern of what plot there is: 1) at the end of Act I he is tempted to die; 2) at the end of Act II he is tempted to live; 3) at the end of Act III, Scene 1, he is still deciding for life and expels the villain von Telek and acts decisively thereby for the first time in the play; 4) at the end of Act III, Scene 2, he chooses to die and disappears with Mammalia and the Mummy beyond the central door. This action occurs in one set, the black room with yellow oriental motifs on the walls, and within the course of one twenty-four-hour period. Even the shooting of the Mummy in Act II could be interpreted in a plausible manner. At the time of the shooting the true identities of von Telek and Mammalia are not known to the audience. Plasfodor discovers in Act II that at one time von Telek had planned to travel all over the world with Mammalia himself and the Mummy in some kind of cabaret theatre (TP-DG 24). As surprising as the shooting of the Mummy is, Plasfodor's discovery suggests that it could be no more than a theatrical trick, or a kind of parlor magic, a faked action to avoid boredom. It is not clear until the last scene of the play that this is not true, or perhaps, not the only truth.

Act III, Scene 2, substitutes another logic for that of the first two acts and a half of the play, by making clear the true nature of the Mummy and von Telek. At the end of Act III, Scene 1, the play might have been concluded. The triangle of Plasfodor-Mascullette-Mammalia is resolved when von Telek kills Mascullette with the tack hammer; the triangle of von Telek-Mammalia-Plasfodor might be interpreted as being resolved when Mammalia rejects her brother a second time by trying to strangle him and when Plasfodor bodily expels von Telek from the stage and locks the door. He is reunited with his mistress in a new way of life, he says (TP-DG 31). It should also be pointed out that the Mummy is not on the stage at this time to disturb this new balance. However, in the second scene the Mummy has returned. Mascullette, who is dead, is commanded to get out of the room. The corpse falls on the floor and crawls out. Then the Mummy leads Plasfodor and Mammalia to their deaths. The discovery that there is no exit beyond that central door is the proof of the true nature of the Mummy. It is disturbing and puzzling, since for two acts and a half characters have gone into the space beyond the door to go to other rooms in the apartment, to go into the street and to go to the hotel across the street. Every event has pointed to the fact that the 'real' world was beyond the central door. But the Gendarmes, representatives of the real world--if that is what

they are meant to represent--enter by another door, one that has never been used until the time of their entrance. According to the logic of this last scene, none of those actions of entering and exiting should have been possible when they were done. In retrospect it is clear that the Mummy was a creature from beyond the grave on her entrance in Act I; the precise nature of von Telek's being is not clear either, since he used the center door at will. The world the play depicts is achieved by a blend of planes of being.

A conglomerate of life and fantastic action, The Pragmatists is a progression of events which intensifies until it bursts the bonds of probability and ends in confusion. It is as if the playwright refused to resolve the action of the play on one plane only, that is, the restored order that might be possible at the end of Act III, Scene 1; instead, as if unsatisfied with the simplicity of that reality, and by extending the action of the play, the complexity of reality is suggested. Witkacy avoids a conclusion that is simple and suggests that the nature of reality is complex and mysterious. To accomplish this he uses fantastic psychology, deformation of the real world, and figures that represent both living beings and a creature from beyond the grave. In combination, some of the actions seem to have little connective relationship one with the other in a causal manner. For example, Mammalia shoots the Mummy but the Mummy is not affected in

any way by being shot; von Telek smashes Masculette's head, yet she revives and crawls out the door; at the end of the play the Mummy, Plasfodor and Mammalia enter a place from which there is no exit and yet they disappear from that place. These acts are never explained. By juxtaposition to the ordinary, life-like actions (such as drinking chocolate) these unexplained actions seem even stranger and more disturbing. When one of these actions occurs, no one on the stage at the time that they occur behaves as if the action was in any way out of the ordinary. Such events are isolated in time when they occur because they do not seem to be connected to the rest of the stage business at the moment and because they fail to develop consistently toward a climactic moment. Some of the events that do appear to follow the aesthetic of plausibility do reach a high point in Act III, Scene 1; but the new logic of the last scene of the play seems to set those earlier conclusions aside. Whereas the traditional dramatic form tends to try to supply answers to all possible and probable questions arising concerning the choice of the pattern that action takes and its resolution, this play raises questions which it either does not, cannot, or has no intention of attempting to answer. It merely leaves the viewer with the discomfoting fact that the hero has disappeared quite simply into thin air, that the villain has changed his character at

the final moment, that corpses have walked, and that a progression of this sort can end unresolved.

In the second scene of Act III, the alogical extension of the first two acts and a half, the thematic idea of the play is completed. Plasfodor believes that existence is best experienced in abstraction, in the mind and imagination; von Telek believes that existence is best experienced in doing, in the physical here and now. Von Telek creates the unknown by living, by existence: his denial of his identity at the end of the play creates a sense of the unknown, for example. Plasfodor creates a mystery by disappearing beyond the door; he wants to find out if death does exist beyond death, if there is a hereafter, he is trying to prove an abstraction. His disappearance proves to be a mysterious event. There is an unresolved tension between these two points of view. Both actions end in mystery. Both ways of action demonstrate the rejection of theory and the adoption of expediency to prove or to disprove the meaning of action.

Witkacy tried in his theory to show that the events in a play could be viewed in the same manner one viewed the elements in a painting or heard the progression of chords in a musical composition. Plasfodor remarks to Masculette in the second act, "Your despising her Mammalia is another indispensable chord

in this symphony" (TP-DG 25).²⁰ If this is meant to be a clue to the proper interpretation and viewing of the play, the events, the emotions and the language should be accepted as repeating, developing themes and motifs, all of which are resolved in the alogical last scene. Mammalia's silent agonizing concern for Plasfodor that results in her following him into the unknown might be viewed as a statement about the nature of love. Masculette's concern for von Telek and his lack of real love for her which culminates in her death might be viewed as another kind of motif about love. But, in performance, it is not clear how the deformative aspects of the character of the Mummy, for example, or the reversal of natural order demonstrated by the behavior of the corpse of Masculette, would force the audience to disassociate the life-like meaning of actions from any possible intended formal meaning. Perhaps the repetition of triangles and the repeated use of the number three is intended to aid in such an understanding of the play. The life-like elements of plot are based on triangles of persons; there are three: Plasfodor-Mammalia-Masculette, von Telek-Mammalia-Plasfodor, and Plasfodor-The Mummy-von Telek. There are three female figures. The set has three openings in it: two doors

²⁰"Twoja pogarda jest jeszcze jednym niezbędnym akordem w tej symfonii" (P-SIW 217).

and a window. There are three acts in the play; specific reference is made to a three-legged table being stage center when the play begins (TP-DG 7); three candles are burned twice in the play. Three characters exit into the unknown beyond the door; three 'real' people supposedly die. Plasfodor's hand is moved in a circle three times and then tossed onto his chest when von Telek wakes him up (TP-DG 21). The action of the play is set at three specific times of day: afternoon, night and morning.

It cannot be proven that Witkacy meant anything specific by this repetition. It would seem, however, that the number of repetitions would not be accidental. If not accidental, then perhaps Plasfodor's comment would lead the audience to make an association with some musical form. The sonata form is the most obvious one: there are theme or exposition, development and recapitulation, corresponding roughly to Acts I, II, and Scene 1 of Act III. Perhaps Act III, Scene 2 is the coda to the whole 'sonata.' It follows its own logic, extending further the analogy with music, bringing to a formal close the events of the play, both the real and unreal.

The language of this play, like its plot, is static. It revolves around and around a set of themes, chiefly, boredom, life and death. Though there is obvious communication, such as demands, orders, directions, and the like, much of it is not intended to

develop meaning or communication. It is endless talk. Mammalia, who cannot speak at all, "talks" with her mime, providing, as does the dialogue of the other characters, variations on themes. These variations intentionally avoid resolution as long as possible.

There are certain pronouncements which only in retrospect give up any real meaning and are likely all but unintelligible jibberish to the viewer when first spoken on the stage. Von Telek says, "The memory of a certain event that hasn't happened yet is locked away in my room there" (TP-DG 15).²¹ This is an example of what Witkacy called a contrary idea, an idea that is logically absurd but which prods the consciousness, pressing the viewer into the situation while at the same time it does not release him to become totally emotionally involved; he is constantly trying to rationally clarify ideas which may not be able to be accepted in any way other than what Witkacy called directly or immediately. But in the moment of the performance which does not allow for contemplation at leisure but rather requires instantaneous reflection as there are so many fantastic and life-like elements pressing in, demanding signification or reduction to the role of what Witkacy called the confused background, it is

²¹"Tam jest zamknięte, w moim pokoju, wspomnienie pewnego wypadku, który nigdy jeszcze nie zaszedł" (P-SIW 207).

impossible to fully analyze these language events. They remain a part of the received material from the performance, like grist in a mill, grinding to the conclusion where they may press the viewer to an awareness which he has not had before or confirm him in one that he may not experience easily in real life.

The Pragmatists does not achieve the freedom from causality, a meaning defined only by its internal construction, which Witkacy theorized in his Pure Form model. It does, however, have a freedom in its form and depiction of reality that is denied in traditional dramaturgy.

Nowe Wyzwolenie

The reality depicted by Nowe Wyzwolenie ("The New Deliverance")²² is a deformed and disjunctive one. From the

²²The translation being used in this paper is that made by Daniel Gerould and Jadwiga Kosicka, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, "The New Deliverance," translated by Daniel Gerould and Jadwiga Kosicka, The Polish Review, XVIII (Nos. 1-2, 1973), 94-111. All subsequent references to this translation of Nowe Wyzwolenie ("The New Deliverance") will be indicated by TND-GD followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

The Polish text used in this paper is that of the revised edition of the plays edited by Konstanty Puzyna, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Dramaty ("The Plays"), I, revised ed. (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1972), 347-370. All subsequent references to the Polish text will be indicated by NW-SIW followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

Nowe Wyzwolenie ("The New Deliverance") was written in 1920 (MAN 299), published in 1922 (MAN 299), and was first

earliest moment in the play, historical and contemporary figures are juxtaposed to each other. The historical figure, Król Ryszard III (King Richard III)²³ behaves in a normal manner, but his reason for appearing in the modern world of the play is never explained. At the opening of the play he is on stage with Tatiana (Tatiana) who is knitting and Zabawnisia (Amusetta) who is waiting for Florestan Wężymord (Florestan Snakesnout) to arrive. Tatiana has arranged a meeting between Florestan and Amusetta. "Today I am going to show you some new one" (TND-GK 98), Tatiana tells Amusetta.²⁴ The chatter of the two women is contrasted to the agony of the King who is forced by Dwóch morderców (Two Murderers) to stand with his hunchback against the pillar. This first scene is expository in nature. It prepares for Floreston's entrance, demonstrates the worldly wisdom of Tatiana and her dominant role in the initial situation. Tatiana advises Amusetta about handling men and she directs the efforts and attentions of

performed on March 21, 1925, in Zakopane, Poland, with Witkacy serving both as director and scenographer (Dramaty, I, revised ed., 734). The play has had a number of productions since that time (Dramaty, I, revised ed., 734-35).

²³Translation of character names is by Daniel Gerould and Jadwiga Kosicka, "The New Deliverance," The Polish Review.

²⁴"Pokażę ci dziś nowego człowieka" (NW SIW 351).

the two Murderers. The assignation is to take place at a tea party. At the sound "...of three blows struck on a huge gong"²⁵ the King says: "A new round of visits is about to begin."²⁶ The first scene ends; Florestan enters and the next scene begins.

Scene Two is a logical extension and development of Scene One without any break in the action. Florestan is presented to the King and to Amusetta and he begins his courtship. King Richard continually interrupts the scene by commenting on Florestan's remarks and by engaging in the conversation between Tatiana, Amusetta and Florestan. To this degree he functions as a chorus; in the scene, a conflict between Florestan and Richard is established. The conflict begins with insult; Florestan says, "Where have I seen that hunchback monkey before?" (TND-GK 99).²⁷ The scene ends with both men bragging about their strength, Richard III declaring what he would do if he could get free of the constraining Murderers and Florestan protesting what he would do if it were necessary ever to act in violence. The two males--one contemporary and one a figure from the past--appear to be

²⁵"...słychać trzykrotne uderzenie w ogromny gong" (NW-SIW 352).

²⁶"Zaczyna się nowa porcja odwiedzin" (NW-SIW 353).

²⁷"Skąd znam tę garbatą małpę?" (NW-SIW 353).

competing for the attention of the two women. Florestan flexes his muscles in his right arm to show Amusetta how strong he is (TND-GK 102). The gong is sounded again, marking the end of Scene Two and the beginning of Scene Three.

Gospodyni (The Housekeeper) enters, bringing with her the tea things and some cakes (TND-GK 102). At tea time Richard is released from his position at the wall. He comes to the table; his Murderers lie down on the floor and become snoring corpses. Released from his torture, Richard can participate directly in the action and discussion. But, instead of completing his threats of violence in Scene Two, he shakes hands with and apologizes to Florestan, commenting that his nerves get on edge standing against the wall (TND-GK 103). Nevertheless, the two men again begin to compete, both for Amusetta's attention and in philosophical debate. Florestan claims that there is no mystery for men of action such as himself (TND-GK 103), that the snoring corpses are some kind of trick, something to frighten children. Florestan puts his faith in the intellect; he brags: "It is only by using our minds that we defend ourselves against certain primitive reflexes which at any moment can gain the upper hand. Not over us--of course--only over our nerve tissue" (TND-GK 104).²⁸ Amusetta

²⁸"Bronimy się tylko myślą przeciw pewnym odruchom

begins to incline toward the King, who does not think. Richard does what is expedient, he acts. The contemporary man has two things which people in other times did not have, thought and organization, Florestan says (TND-GK 105). This does not appeal to Amusetta; it is not beautiful, she says. She accuses Florestan of not being an artist (TND-GK 105). He claims that he can be everything, however; and to this the King retorts that he, Florestan, is a common pragmatist, believing whatever will serve his purposes for the moment. Florestan returns the insult, dismissing King Richard's brain as too primitive to follow the intricacies of contemporary ways of thinking (TND-GK 105). Yet another threat of violence from the King is restrained by Tatiana. She says: "Don't bother, Richard, I'll take care of him myself. It'll all work out by itself. That silly little goose (points to Amusetta) is the litmus paper by means of which we'll get to know his works--what do you call them--the fruits by which. . . ." ²⁹

The King taunts Florestan with having no "fruits" and Amusetta

pierwotnym, które w pewnej chwili zwyciężają. Nie nas--o, bynajmniej--nasze tkanki nerwowe tylko" (NW-SIW 360).

²⁹"Daj spokój, Ryszardzie. Ja sama dam sobie z nim radę. Samo się wszystko wyklaruje. Ta dzierlatka (wskazuje na Zabawnię) to jest odczynnik, po którym poznamy dzieła jego--czy jak tam --owoce, po których. . . ." (NW-SIW 362).

joins him. The gong sounds again. But this time no one is expected (TND-GK 106). The principal action of the first three scenes is not completed: Florestan has met Amusetta and has been attracted by her; his attentions were interrupted and apparently thwarted by King Richard. The plan that Tatiana hints at in her aside to Richard is neither a success nor a failure, because it is never implemented, since from this point to the end of the play Amusetta becomes a bystander, commenting on but not participating in the action of the play. The tea party is interrupted by an as yet unknown force.

Scene Four begins with the entrance of Joanna Wężymordowa (Joanna Snakesnout), Florestan's mother. She has not seen her son for ten years (TND-GK 106). Though she is known to all the characters except Amusetta, there is no logical reason why she should appear when she does. While the scene is related thematically to the earlier parts of the play, especially with reference to the discovery of the nature of Florestan's character, there is little direct causal relationship between the first three scenes of the play and this scene. The action of the first three scenes is interrupted and another substituted for it. This disjunctive progression of events strips Florestan of his pretenses and leaves him ready for the second unexpected force which appears nearer the end of the play. Joanna's entrance begins a series of rapid

and devastating reversals and revelations which end in Joanna's death: 1) Florestan reverses his attitude about the situation on stage. He says, "This is a den of evil spirits. Over there they're torturing some crazy old man who keeps insulting everyone in the grossest terms" (TND-GK).³⁰ He asks his mother to save him, because Richard, Tatiana and Amusetta are desecrating his "most sacred ideals."³¹ 2) Joanna turns to Florestan in a furious outburst, denouncing him as a vampire and a bloodsucker (TND-GK 107). 3) Then the King denounces both Florestan and Joanna, revealing that he and Joanna had an affair. Florestan is not his son, however, Richard claims (TND-GK 107). 4) Infuriated by this disclosure, Tatiana determines to have her revenge. She has been using Florestan to gain revenge for Florestan's unfaithfulness to her: she gave him other women, knowing that he would deceive them the way he deceived her (TND-GK 108). She has had control of his body; now she claims that she has control of his soul. He is her "plaything"³² --and that's all he will ever be. Joanna, overcome by this revelation, begs Florestan to

³⁰"To jest jakaś jaskinia złych duchów. Tu męczą jakiegoś oszalałego starca, który wymyśla wszystkim od ostatnich" (NW-SIW 363).

³¹"...najświętsze ideały" (NW-SIW 364).

³²"...igraszka" (NW-SIW 365).

deny it; instead, he confirms Tatiana's power over him. He denies that he has a mother, or that he ever had one (TND-GK 108).

Joanna falls lifeless to the floor with a scream. Tatiana, now triumphant, requires Florestan to put his head beneath her foot. The degradation of Florestan now appears to be complete. The family drama is over, the mother is dead and the mistress is in control. Tatiana seems in the position of control she had at the very beginning of the play. Richard III backs up against the pillar to the left and his Murderers come close to him. The play could end at this point.

Instead of coming immediately to a conclusion, the action is interrupted a second time by the unexpected sound of three blows on the gong. Unannounced, Ktoś nieznajomy (Unknown Someone) enters with Sześciu drabów (Six Thugs) who are armed with various instruments of torture. The gong sounds again and the Housekeeper returns. "Well, now there'll really be something amusing" (TND-GK 109),³³ she says. Tatiana tries to intervene and is told to stay out of other people's affairs. When King Richard III tries to strike Florestan, whose screams of agony infuriate Richard because they show that Florestan cannot even suffer adequately (TND-GK 111), the Unknown Someone sends

³³"No, teraz to będzie naprawdę zabawa" (NW-SIW 367).

Richard from the room. The King leaves without a word. And the six thugs commence torturing Florestan. The play ends. There is no explanation as to the nature of these characters, where they come from or why they enter the play. They interrupt the action a second time and cause the play to end in mystery. Florestan's thought and organization, his mind (TND-GK 104), is powerless to free him from his torturers.

With each sounding of the gong another character is added to the original group of three. Only the Housekeeper leaves the stage and returns, however both of her entrances are announced by the gong. All of the characters of the play are on stage for the final reversal, although Joanna is dead. Richard is the only one of the characters from the original group of three who leaves the stage and he is directed to do so by the Unknown Someone. Except for the brief time at the tea table, his activity is totally restrained and directed by either Tatiana, the Murderers or the Unknown Someone.

The New Deliverance is a pattern of many double images, often the simultaneous depiction of opposites. The play simultaneously depicts the historical and the contemporary in character, setting and costume. King Richard III is juxtaposed to the contemporary figures Florestan Snakesnout, Tatiana, Amusetta and Joanna Snakesnout. The setting is a huge hall with gothic

pillars decorated with "...a dark olive-green sofa, ...a small yellow table, ... and two wicker chairs like those used in cheap Italian restaurants."³⁴ Richard is costumed in cap, crown, breast-plate and fur-trimmed doublet, long boots and a large two-handed sword; Florestan Snakesnout is dressed fashionably in a black jacket and white flannels. Instead of a crown he wears a straw hat. Florestan and Richard III represent two similar types of one individual, historical and contemporary men of action and expediency. Tatiana and Amusetta represent two varieties of women who are successful in dominating men, one near the end of her career, the other just beginning. The action of the play is interrupted twice by the unanticipated entrances of unexpected persons, i.e. the entrance of Joanna is not expected by any of the characters and the entrance of the six thugs and the Unknown Someone is not only unexpected, it is unexplained. There are two incomplete plot actions in the play: 1) The plot of the tea-party rendez-vous between Amusetta and Florestan is incomplete; it is interrupted by the appearance of Joanna Snakesnout in Scene Four. In this scene the play becomes a family drama and ends in the death of Joanna. 2) The victimization and degradation of

³⁴"...Kanapa ciemno-oliwkowo-zielona, ...nieduży, żółty stół, ...dwa krzesła plecione, takie, jakich używają w tanich włoskich restauracjach" (NW-SIW 349).

Florestan which is begun in Scene Four when he is compelled to kneel before Tatiana and put his head under her foot is repeated but not completed in the ongoing torture of Florestan at the end of Scene Four. The torture of King Richard III--forcing him to stand with his hunchback against the wall--is repeated in the torture of Florestan by the six thugs. In summary, the reality depicted in The New Deliverance encompasses both the known and the unknown, the explainable and the unexplainable. Some of the action is causally and logically interconnected so that it appears to be possible and probable. Other actions break the aesthetic of well-made and realistic plausibility. From a traditional point of view, the world of The New Deliverance ought to adhere either to that of Florestan or Richard III. Instead the image depicted is a broken one, showing incomplete actions and a blend of realities. The form is constructed, to use Witkacy's word, by stringing together several plots which do not logically belong together.

This arrangement of events arouses and intensifies the awareness of the strangeness of life but does not release the tension at the final curtain either on the stage or in the viewer. His attention arrested and his emotions aroused by this image of terror, the viewer is left not at all sure of what has been going on. He never finds out. Furthermore, the hero Florestan,

caught in his own pain, has no idea if his misery will last forever or if it will end as abruptly as it began. Neither he nor the viewer "knows"--and the play just stops. Whereas in traditional dramatic form one might expect some reason to be given for the conclusion of an action, whatever its nature, in this play it is incomplete: a group gathered for tea; tea being over they are invaded by forces unknown and never explained. There is no reason given for the hero's suffering and whatever meaning is made of it must be imposed upon the action by the viewer who is never released from the play's tensions by either a happy or an unhappy resolution in terms of conclusions patterned on traditional conventions. The unexplained torture of the hero goes on, inflicted by persons whose exact nature and purpose for being on the stage are never clarified.

Action does not spring from initiatory character choice, as in traditional forms, beyond the initial plan for the tea party assignation. Character choice does not resolve the action. Nor does the action follow causally from the given attributes of character evident at the commencement of the play. Florestan has nothing to do with the resolution of any complication other than the death of his mother, who dies when she learns that he and Tatiana are lovers. But her death is not needed causally, nor was her presence on the stage, which complicates much and explains very little. Her death does not resolve the play. That is

left up to the Unknown Someone. Even Florestan's opposite, Richard III, in spite of enormous threats of action--promises to explode the world of the play into smithereens and the like--does nothing except threaten as the play progresses. He is restrained from action, from putting into action his character motifs which are a collection of cliches about the nature of heroic action, first by the Murderers, then by Tatiana, and finally by the Unknown Someone. Having lost control of the action, Florestan and Richard III have no control of their fates. Florestan, powerless, continues to suffer at the will of unknown powers at the end of the play; Richard III, helpless and impotent before powers he cannot control or fathom, removes himself when ordered to by the Unknown Someone from the world of the play.

Whereas the plot of a traditionally structured play normally has the source of the resolution within itself, either in one of the functioning agents in the action or in the foreshadowing, or perhaps even in a related, prior situation and set of figures or a concurrently developing one, in this Pure Form plot the action is not able to resolve itself but is stopped by an unknown and unexplained force from outside the framework of the plot. Instead of a plausible resolution, the play ends with the juxtaposition of images, a tableau which includes a dead mother killed by her son's confession, his mistress and her pupil, a smiling cook

and the unknown figures, whose source, identity and reason for coming into the play are never clarified. Any meaning this has is associative in nature. Witkacy has used action here as he would use washes of colors on canvas; several actions have been shown, none really completed, and the viewer is left with no more than suggested meanings. But the vision arrested before us for a time is one of an alienated reality, a reality of separated forces in tension which for no explainable reason are left that way. The viewer is stirred up, caught up in the mystery, and left there with Florestan's screams; left with a horrifyingly luminous and illuminating glimpse of truth, the thought that there may be no resolution to any event, that actuality is the lie in the eye of the beholder.

Metafizyka dwugłowego cielęcia

The duality of reality in Metafizyka dwugłowego cielęcia.
Tropikalno-australijska sztuka w trzech aktach ("Metaphysics
of a Two-Headed Calf: A Tropical-Australian Play in Three Acts")³⁵

³⁵The translation being used in this paper is that made by Daniel and Eleanor Gerould, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Tropical Madness: Four Plays (New York: Winter House, Ltd., 1972), pp. 172-235. All subsequent references to this translation to Metafizyka dwugłowego cielęcia ("Metaphysics of a Two-Headed Calf") will be indicated by MTHC-DG followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

The Polish text used is the revised edition of the plays edited by Konstanty Puzyna, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Dramaty,

is implied in the title of the play. It is a play about the real and the surrogate, the substitute and the often misleading real. The young hero, Karmazyniello (Patricianello),³⁶ exists in a psychologically dual state: fixed in adolescence like a bug on a pin, at the same time he seeks initiation which will both set him free and determine for him the nature of his identity. He wants to be both free and to be constrained. He wants both innocence and experience. His own duality of being--the child-man and the hairy male--is paralleled in other dualities in the play: there are two sons (Patricianello and Ludwig, embodying sweetness, vulnerability and potentiality at the beginning of the play in the former and perversity and insatiability in the latter); there are several pairs of either actual or imagined fathers to Patricianello (Sir Robert Clay and Professor Edward Mikulini-Pechbauer, Ludwig and the King of the Papuans, and Mikulini and the King); there are two pairs of patron and protege at the end of the play, composed of either real-father and

I, revised ed., Puzyna, ed. (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1972), 538-597. All subsequent references to the Polish text will be indicated by MDC-SIW followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

Metafizyka dwugłowego cielecia ("Metaphysics of a Two-Headed Calf") was written in 1921 (MAN 300), was first published in 1926 (MAN 300) and was first performed in Poznań, Poland, in 1928 (Dramaty, II, revised ed., 742).

³⁶Translation of character names is by Daniel and Eleanor Gerould, Witkiewicz, Tropical Madness.

real-son or surrogate-father and surrogate-son, their relationships never fully clarified (Patricianello and Mikulini, and Murphy the man-about-town recte Postać [Hooded Figure] and Sir Robert); there are two mother figures (Lady Leocadia Clay, Patricianello's real mother, and Mirabella Parvis, the dream-mother who looks like the real mother when the real mother was much younger and who may also represent the Earth mother or eternal female of some kind); and there are two brothers (Patricianello and Ludwig). The action of the play follows the same pattern of duality. The action is a dream and not a dream. Principles of the grotesque, which separate the ingredients of a work of art from real life, make the validity of some statements ambiguous from the beginning of the play. For example, Patricianello says:

What rotten luck to have such a moldy old mother.
I had a dream today. I saw my other mother, the
real one. She was young and white and beautiful.
She had pale pink hair. She held me on her lap
and kept kissing me (MTHC-DG 177).³⁷

"I saw my other mother, the real one"--such statements separate the events of the play from patterns of actuality and deform the events of the work by breaking the meanings away from actual

³⁷"Co za fatalny pech w moim życiu, że muszę mieć starą zmurszałą matkę. Dziś miałem sen. Widziałem moją drugą matkę, tę prawdziwą. Była młoda, biała, piękna. Miała jasnoróżowe włosy. Całowała się ze mną trzymając mnie na kolanach" (MDC-SIW 541).

life parallels. The plot of this play progresses through the reality of that dream of Patricianello's when he does claim his pink-haired, pale, beautiful, other mother to the actual reality when his real mother, Lady Leocadia Clay, claims him again at the final curtain. The dual relationships become totally confused at the end of the play and in their confusion blend into one distorted depiction of what is real: a real, but dead, father Mikulini kills his real-son Parvis; the live, and never dead, Governor Clay kills the surrogate mother Mirabella when she offers to go off with his surrogate son-companion, Murphy, who earlier in the text is known as the Hooded Figure. Then the resurrected, surrogate father Mikulini and the resurrected, actual mother Lady Clay carry off their son Patricianello to bring him up as they think he should be. At this point the very orderly confusion of the plot is complete in its ambiguity; and the two levels, the real and the surrogate, merge in a dream-like representation of reality, a reality made possible by the free movement in time and space. Whereas in traditional drama the impulse is to clarify action and thematic material, in this play the pattern of the action--containment of the hero, freedom of the hero, and recapture of the hero--moves toward confusion, mystery and the unexplained, as the events of the play progress from Patricianello's adolescence

and unsureness through his assumed self-knowledge and surety to uncertainty at the conclusion.

The organizing, thematic ideas of the play deal with motifs of initiation, identity, and failure of the hero to maintain his independence. The initiation, the ascription of mythic, perhaps metaphysical, importance to a specific event, boomerangs; the hero, momentarily given a sense of freedom, is later retrapped. The initial motivation for Patricianello, the hero, is to follow the classic Freudian Oedipal pattern: conflict, and ritual slaying of the father, and eventual wish fulfillment by sleeping with the mother. Patricianello is further confused in that he also wants to be dominated by a male figure. If only he could be the bug at the end of the Governor's pin, he laments. The Governor is his real father. Patricianello is indeed dominated by the surrogate father figure Parvis for a time. To achieve the mother-mistress of his dream Patricianello must find a means to destroy the real, live mother. And the action of his effort to achieve this is like the dream of an adolescent which ends with the dominant parents returning to claim him after he has been wasted by the dream. Patricianello tests an idea of self-actualization: can he indeed pull himself "...out of the swamp by his own hair?" (MTHC-DG

196).³⁸ Patricianello says, early in Act II:

I'll bring myself up. That's where my greatness
will lie. Do-it-yourself education without having
to correct one's parents' mistakes or those of
any other teachers fate accidently assigns us.
I'll bring myself up.³⁹

The tension exists between experience (initiation) and innocence (freedom thwarted and experience negated). The very life-like elements included in the play deform and distort it: the mother and the father maim their offspring, killing one and forcing the other into a mold that suits them; the Oedipal triangle of mother-son-father is maintained, reestablished, rather than resolved; the psychic and mythic crimes of father, son and mother--if not overlooked--are unreleased and off they ride to Sydney, Australia; sex does not satiate, fulfill or create, but leads to sterile philosophizing on nothingness. There is not any sense of release at the end of the play. Ghosts return to claim the living, bodily. When the mother and father return we must accept that the dead can arise and claim their own and dispose of anything that stands in the way of their wishes. The impulse toward individual freedom through acceptance into manhood of the brotherhood of free indivi-

³⁸"... się sam za włosy z bagna wyciągnąć" (MDC-SIW 560).

³⁹"Ja się wychowam sam. W tym będzie moja wielkość. Autoedukacja bez poprawiania błędów rodziców i jakichś przygodnych nauczycieli. Sam się wychowam" (MDC-SIW 560).

duals implodes and the freed individual is sucked back into the maw of the family. The dream is complete: the son is destroyed by the father; the mother is triumphant; the child is reduced to nothing and defeated in a conflict which should free him. This is accomplished by an unrealistic reversal achieved through the deformation of natural order.

The plot of the play is cyclic in nature. Patricianello ends the play as he begins it, in the control of his real mother and her lover, Mikulini. Even though the events of the plot clearly show the success of the hero in the psychological conflict between Patricianello and his parents; this action is set aside by the re-introduction of a force which had previously been successfully removed from the play. The series of reversals that begins with the return of the supposedly dead Governor Clay effectively removes all possible resistance to the family; the agents of Patricianello's freedom are all dead at the end of the play.

The use of the language that is spoken by the Papuan savages in the play is an example of incomprehensible words being used to enhance the effectiveness of a Pure Form play. It is not clear whether the language that the savages speak is authentic Papuan; but it actually functions in the play as invented or nonsense words, both of which Witkacy maintained were useful theatrical elements. Patricianello introduces what appears to be the Papuan language

and ideas into the plot when he says to his mother:

Today he told me the king that if father doesn't come back to Port Moresby, then, as chief of the Aparura clan, he will marry you and carry you off into the heart of the island. You'll be queen and worship the Golden Frog Kapa-Kapa (MTHC-DG 178).⁴⁰

Who is Kapa-Kapa? An idol? The word sounds exotic and possibly even humorous. In any event, an idea is established in the play, the exact nature of which is not understood. Then Mikulini enters and announces that the fishing boat is back from Tupa-Tupa. It doesn't matter where Tupa-Tupa is. It is exotic because it is not here-and-now; it is someplace else; it is possibly a dangerous place to be; and it means nothing in the language of the audience, for the likelihood is small that there would be anyone who could speak Papuan in any given audience, if in fact this is Papuan being spoken. Then Mikulini makes reference to Kala-Azar, another unfamiliar quality, which he does not explain. He says, "On the subject of Kala-Azar, that witch doctor across the way has far more accurate knowledge than I do" (MTHC-DG 179).⁴¹ The

⁴⁰"Dziś oświadczyłam mi, że jeżeli ojciec mój nie wróci do Port-Moresby, to on, naczelnik klanu Aparura, weźmie cię za żonę i uwiezie w głąb wyspy. Będiesz królową i czcić będziesz wielką, złocistą żabę Kapa-Kapa" (MDC-SIW 542).

⁴¹"Co do Kala-Azaru, ten czarodziej z przeciwka posiada wiedzę daleko dokładniejszą niż moja" (MDC-SIW 543). Kala-Azar is a Hindu word for the black sickness or the black disease

King enters and he says: "Amaga gwanok, pelek Kapa-Kapa: Worship the Golden Frong, you slaves of your own vileness" (MTHC-DG 182).⁴² If the language is not known, it can only be assumed that the last half of this speech is an accurate translation of the first half; the sounds are meaningless, arbitrary, exotic, and fit as well as any other the helf-naked, savage king, who begins to swill gin. Although the speech does not advance the plot and does little to specify character, it adds to the number of incomprehensible words already used and alongside the European language and concerns there begins to be built a whole set of ideas which the audience cannot test because it hasn't any notion what is being talked about. The audience must simply wait; it must allow these words and ideas to accumulate to some later point in time when an explanation may be possible. On another occasion the king orders in Papuan: "Kapam amala--Kapa-Kapa

(American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language), but few persons are likely to know this and the word would likely appear as much gibberish as the other incomprehensible words used.

⁴²Amaga Gwanok, pelek Kapa-Kapa: uczcijcie złóci^ę żabę, niewolnicy własnej podłó^ęści" (MDC-SIW 546).

It should be noted that the King, the chief of the Aparura clan, is the only 'savage' to utter a sound throughout the entire play. However, the silence of the Six Papuans is a major part of the 'confused background' against which the action of Act I transpires.

melem" (MTHC-DG 193),⁴³ at which point the Six Papuans fling themselves on the corpse of the Governor and rush out with it.

In Act II the mother lies dying. She is being transformed by her illness, the brain eaten away. It is the fever from Act I, we are to assume. The Golden Frong is entering her brain from the back of her neck (MTHC-DG 200) in the shape of an elephant trunk. At this point there enters a Hooded Figure who declares that he is Kala-Azar. Is he the fever from Act I? He is greeted by the king as an envoy of the Golden Frog. There is no way to determine if this is correct, if indeed this Hooded Figure is the personification of the fever. The Mother shortly dies, meowing a few times like a cat, her last thought eaten away by the Golden Frog. The initiation ceremony follows. During a wild, erotic dance by Mirabella, Parvis sets the Hooded Figure on Mikulini, saying "Kala-Azar! Get him! Zoop!" (MTHC-DG 210).⁴⁴ The Hooded Figure strangles Mikulini, the man who allowed the Governor to die because the serum given to him was worthless, the man who killed his mistress Lady Clay for white female lymph glands. There is poetic justice in this action, but it is not clear that is what it means to imply. There is no reason not to believe

⁴³"Kapam amala--Kapa-Kapa melem" (MDC-SIW 556).

⁴⁴"Kala-Azar! Bierz go!!! Pyf!!!" (MDC-SIW 572).

that the Hooded Figure is who he says he is. He too speaks a strange language. In the mad dance with Mirabella he cried out

Uma hija humba gaga
Manga haja gamba haha!⁴⁵

It has meaning in the same way that the king's speeches have meaning.

The Figure cum Kala-Azar follows the group to the edge of the desert, where he reveals himself by casting off his hood; he is an incredibly beautiful young man about town, identical to Patricianello. The Governor says that he is Murphy, "the most attractive boy in all Sydney, and of all the clubmen in the colony the most bored" (MTHC-DG 234).⁴⁶ But the Hooded Figure cum Kala-Azar tells Mirabella, "I'm not Murphy at all. The Governor's a lunatic, everyone knows that. I am Kala-Azar" (MTHC-DG 234).⁴⁷ A word that was first used in Act I without any meaning whatever has developed throughout the play gathering signification where it may. At the end of the play its meaning is still as confused as possible, effecting a disorientation of

⁴⁵"Uma hija humba gaga/Manga haja gamba haha!" (MDC-SIW 572).

⁴⁶"Najładniejszy chłopiec w całym Sydney i najbardziej znudzony ze wszystkich kolonialnych clubmanów" (MDC-SIW 595).

⁴⁷"Ja wcale nie jestem Moorphy. Gubernator jest znany wariat. Ja jestem Kala-Azur" (MDC-SIW 596).

perspective which is part of the experience of the play as a whole. "I am Kala-Azar" or "You are Murphy" depends on the moment. Ambiguous language is used in conjunction with language that is almost pedantically precise in explaining the plot. Language develops a duality of its own: the unexplained and the overly explained, both existing simultaneously and both responsible in part for the deformation and progression of the motifs of this play.

Effective use is made of dissonance between language and situation in this play.

1) The mother is dying and is telling how someday her spirit will meet Patricianello's. Mikulini enters and says:

What? More of those damned moods of yours?
Get up you protoplasm! (With sudden tenderness)
Just think, my boy, Mama's dying. And nothing
can be done about it. My serum's worthless
absolutely (MTHC-DG 198).⁴⁸

2) The following is an example of disjunctive language, the speech of each character partially but not exactly relating to the one before it:

Patricianello--That's true. I've got to keep hold
on myself, until I meet her, that accursed

⁴⁸"Co? Znowu te przeklete nastroje? Wstać, nędzna protoplazmo! (z nagłą czułością) Wyobraź sobie, syneczku, mama umiera. Trudno. Moje serum jest nic niewarte" (MDC-SIW 561).

demonic woman, Mirabella. Oh, no matter how hackneyed the term, there's no other way of putting it.

Mother--I'm suffocating. Change my bandage, Edward.

Patricianello--Mama! How are you feeling? Oh God, God? Death is a terrifying thing.

Mikulini--(Changing the bandage) But it's not your death, you nitwit. Only one's own death can be terrifying. Do shut up and stop bothering me.

Patricianello--(Lighting a cigarette) Maybe you're right, Father dear. My death is still a long way off. No point in worrying unnecessarily about it now.

Mother--(In a strangled voice) I've brought you up to be a dreadful egotist (MTHC-DG 198).⁴⁹

3) At the end of the play Patricianello is driven off in the car by his parents. The Hooded Figure is supposedly demasked and is about to leave with Mirabella. The Governor, who has exited only a moment before, reappears and stalks them. He shoots twice. Mirabella is hit and falls dead to the ground. The Figure turns to face the Governor and says:

⁴⁹Karmazyniello--...Prawda. Muszę się trzymać, zanim nie poznam jej, tego przeklętego demona, Mirabelli. Och! jakże zużyte jest to słowo, nie ma nic takiego, czym by je zastąpić można.

Matka--Duszę się. Zmień mi opatrunek, Edwardzie....

Karmazyniello--Mamo! Jak się czujesz? O, Boże, Boże! jednak śmierć to jest straszna rzecz!!

Mikulini--(zmieniając opatrunek) Nie o twoją śmierć tu idzie, bałwanie. Tylko własna śmierć może być straszna. Milcz i nie przeszkadzaj mi.

Karmazyniello--(zapalając papierosa) Może masz rację, ojczulku. Moja śmierć jest daleka na razie. Nie martwmy się niepotrzebnie.

Matka--(zduszonym głosem) Na straszного egoistę wychowałam cię, Karmazyniello" (MDC-SIW 562).

You've shattered my right arm, Excellency!⁵⁰

Then to this the Governor replies:

I wanted to try out this revolver. It's really beautifully broken in. I beg your pardon. It's just a scratch, they'll bandage you up in town. And apart from that, I don't like to see young girls hanging about in suspicious places (MTHC-DG 235).⁵¹

The Governor calls for his car. It is not clear that he is a lunatic, although the Hooded Figure has called him one only moments before. It is not clear that he is dead or alive. There remains only the juxtaposition of language and situation, against the background of the three dead bodies, the desert, and a signpost with a figure eight.

This play makes special uses of certain motifs, notably those of family (and its connections, relationships, influences, and substitutes) and death. The action of the play ranges from childhood to freedom through death and initiation, to the reality of manhood, and returns to childhood, in a sense, via the dominance of the past expressed through the action of the parents.

⁵⁰"Strzaskał mi pan prawe ramię, ekscelencjo!" (MDC-SIW 596).

⁵¹"Chciałem wypróbować rewolwer. Doskonale ostrzelany egzemplarz. Proszę mi wybaczyć. Nic to, opatrzą pana w mieście. A poza tym nie lubię, jak młode dziewczęta błąkają się w podejrzanych miejscach" (MDC-SIW 596).

The death of Sir Robert Clay, suspected and later confirmed (and still later, denied), begins the transformation of the character of Patricianello. Relationships between characters which are unusual in their bizarre qualities and in the enormity of their outrageous features seem to be accepted by the participants as usual behavior. The death of the mother and the real-false father Mikulini allows the hero unaccustomed freedom which he cannot control. The reversal of the death patterns--impossible in real life--allows the play to return in a sense to its beginning. A play in three acts, the action is broken in three parts--the desire for freedom, freedom and the reversal of freedom. If the thematic material could be regarded as musical motifs, the play would seem to be structured like a musical composition which states a theme, develops it and then restates the theme in the third section. A similar over-all pattern was demonstrated in The Pragmatists. Such a view of the play does not negate the causal and psychological explanation of the material of the first two acts of the play. It would, however, help to clarify the logic of the third.

Gyubal Wahazar

Gyubal Wahazar, czyli Na przełęczach bezsensu, Nieeuklid-
esowy dramat w czterech aktach ("Gyubal Wahazar, or Along the

Cliffs of the Absurd, a Non-Euclidean Drama in Four Acts")⁵² is a play in which the action, events, characters and language are depicted from the earliest moment of the play with such enormity and exaggeration that they do not seem to be a part of any recognizable reality other than the fact that the characters supposedly represent live persons and that they speak a comprehensible language using a grammar and syntax that communicates to the viewer. It is a reality that--sustained by the pitch of a dialogue, characterizations, and events--moves from the concepts of reality promulgated by physicists to concepts of being experienced by a seer. At the end of Act II Ojciec Unguenty (Father

⁵²The translation being used in this paper is that made by Daniel and Eleanor Gerould, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Tropical Madness: Four Plays, translated by Daniel and Eleanor Gerould (New York: Winter House, Ltd., 1972), pp. 99-171. All subsequent references to this translation of Gyubal Wahazar, czyli Na przełęczach bezsensu ("Gyubal Wahazar, or Along the Cliffs of the Absurd") will be indicated by GW-DG followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

The Polish text used in this paper is that of the revised edition of the plays edited by Konstancy Puzyna, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Dramaty ("The Plays"), I, revised ed. (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1972), 599-667. All subsequent references to the Polish text will be indicated by GW-SIW followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

Gyubal Wahazar, czyli Na przełęczach bezsensu ("Gyubal Wahazar, or Along the Cliffs of the Absurd") was written in 1921 (MAN 300), was first published in 1962 (MAN 300) and was first performed in Poznań, Poland, in 1966 (Dramaty, I, revised ed., p. 742).

Unguenty)⁵³ sums up the reality of the first two acts by contrasting his and Gyubal Wahazar's world-views:

For physicists, the world is finite and non-Euclidean, for me it's infinite and amorphous. Real space has no structure--that is the Absolute Truth, which includes Physical Truth as a metaphysical convenience, good for a certain method of grasping phenomena (GW-DG 142).⁵⁴

Near the end of the last act of the play Father Unguenty defines the new reality that has been achieved in the course of the action:

Oh, how happy I am, how infernally happy I am! Youthfulness of spirit expands within me, creating non-Euclidean tensions of multidimensional, amorphous space. Come, Morbidetto, now we are going to devise a new program which will be the synthesis of Wahazar's insanity and the supreme import of my Absolute Truth (GW-DG 168).⁵⁵

A reality which is non-Euclidean in its concept of space is sufficiently disconcerting as a concept, for it destroys both commonly

⁵³Translation of character names is by Daniel and Eleanor Gerould, Witkiewicz, Tropical Madness.

⁵⁴"Dla fizyków świat jest skończony i nieeuklidesowy, dla mnie jest nieskończony i amorficzny. Rzeczywista przestrzeń nie ma struktury--oto jest Absolutna Prawda, która obejmuje Prawdę Fizyczną, jako wygodę matematyczną, dobrą dla pewnego sposobu ujęcia zjawisk" (GW-SIW 639).

⁵⁵"O, jakże jestem szczęśliwy, jak piekielnie jestem szczęśliwy. Rozpręża się we mnie młodość ducha w nieeuklidesowych napięciach wielowymiarowej, amorficznej przestrzeni. Chodź, Morbidetto: obmyślimy teraz nowy program, będący syntezą obłędu Wahazara z najwyższym sensem mojej Absolutnej Prawdy" (GW-SIW 664).

perceived space and time (in the sense that it destroys the individual --in this case Wahazar--the resistor of time passing, making him infinitely mutational). To move from that to the multidimensional is extremely disorienting.

The reality which Wahazar institutes when he assumes power some time before the play begins is the non-Euclidean concept of relative absolutes. How and when he accomplished this is not known and it is not important to the events of the play or to their interpretation; the fact is, he has extraordinary power when the play begins, apparently ultimate absolute power. He succeeded in destroying the Euclidean concept of space, a system defining space in terms of point, line and plane. The era of the six-dimensional continuum has been introduced, something even Einstein did not conceive of. What was relatively simple has now been made complex, what was comprehensible and probable has now been made theoretical, what was measurable has now been made conceptual. If indeed parallel lines meet somewhere in space, meet, separate and meet again, then all absolutes bend too and the displacement at the level of ordinary conceptualization of reality is enormous. It is quite possible for nothing to be what it is. The opening of the play presents and sustains the idea of disorientation from ordinarily traditionally perceived reality and it is sustained throughout the play. "In a state with a six-

dimensional continuum all criteria are too trite" (GW-DG 104).⁵⁶

In a state where everything is specifically or theoretically relative, the formulation of criteria for judgment is pointless and absolutes useless. The only absolute to be acknowledged is that there are no absolutes. For the people caught in the Wahazarian world there is only lyrical reality: they experience life as "a piece of fantastic science fiction" (GW-DG 106).⁵⁷ Fiction is the existence and the essence of their lives. The center of this relativistic world is Wahazar, the super-human titan who suffers for all and is all. He is the mathematical point against which all other points in the play take their being. Given the absolute relativity of his being in the early scenes, when the reality of relativity is shifted yet one step further into infinite amorphousness by Father Unguenty, the absurd ceases to be philosophical and becomes reality. The experience of reality is the experience of abstractions, especially mathematical ones in the first scene of the play. Second Lady describes Wahazar's new kind of power: "He's there! Our

⁵⁶"W państwie sześciowymiarowego kontinuum wszelkie kryteria są rzeczą w istocie zbyt banalną" (GW-SIW 604).

⁵⁷"...kawałek fantastycznej powieści" (GW-SIW 606). The First Old Woman says, "Yes, when you live the way we do, there's absolutely no need to read melodramatic novels. Life itself is... (Tak, żyjąc tak jak my, można nie czytać zupełnie wagonowych romansów. Życie samo jest...)" (GW-SIW 606).

ruler! The only master of all the elements and boundless fields of universal gravitation" (GW-DG 104).⁵⁸ The cast seems very familiar with Einstein's theories; the Second Old Woman says that they're teaching differential calculus in high school now. Differential calculus is "the mathematics of the variation of a function with respect to changes in independent variables; or, it is the study of slopes of curves, accelerations, maxima, and minima by means of derivations and differentials."⁵⁹ In other words, from a world of points, lines and planes, reasonable and provable in real space the reality for the characters is shifted to the uncontrollable curve in time and space. But life experienced on a higher level of comprehension and abstraction is not unlike madness. "Long live Gauss! Long live general coordinates! Now we all know what tensors are!" (GW-DG 104).⁶⁰ It is difficult indeed to determine whether the Second Lady is mad or whether she is in fact experiencing the reality of the world of the

⁵⁸"Tam jest ON! Nasz Władca! Jedyne pan wszystkich żywiołów i bezkresnych pól ogólnej grawitacji!" (GW-SIW 604).

⁵⁹American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language.

⁶⁰"Niech żyje Gauss! Niech żyją ogólne współrzędne! Wszyscy wiemy już, co to są tensory!" (GW-SIW 604). Karl F. Gauss, 1777-1855, was a German mathematician, physicist and astronomer; he discovered the non-Euclidean theory of geometry. Gauss is a unit of measurement, measuring magnetic flux density (Encyclopedia Americana, 1971 ed.).

play.⁶¹ Traditional barriers and demarkations all meld together, become fluid in the opening scene of this play and the viewer is swept away in an onrush of relativity. The literary man, Fletrycy Dymont (F'laytrix Dimmont), puts it rather succinctly: "I'm enduring it all because I see everything as a piece of fantastic fiction" (GW-DG 106).⁶² Reality in Gyubal Wahazar is experienced as fiction, life is the form of that fiction, and that form is in no way fixed in order to be perceived. It is then, in actuality, the reality of Pure Form; life becomes in the play a kind of fantastic art lived by the characters over which they have no control. This reality is altered in the last sections of the play, however, when

⁶¹She prostrates herself before the door to the inner sanctum of Wahazar and cries out "I'd like to go on waiting till I drop dead. I think I'm flying at infinite speed into an abyss of absolute certainty. Every second is infinity (GW-DG 105) (Chciałabym się zaczekać na śmierć! Myślę, że lecę z nieskończoną szybkością w otchłań absolutnej pewności. Każda sekunda jest nieskończonością)" (GW-SIW 605). Later she avows that "Hell is one gigantic waiting room (GW-DG 105) (Pieńó jest jedną wielką poczekalnią)" (GW-SIW 605). She has "overwaited (GW-DG 107) (Przeczekała się)" (GW-SIW 607), however; and she is taken to a yellow house, the nature of which we are not told. Her companions-in-waiting insist that she has gone mad from waiting; but, when reality is a "tremendous joke (GW-DG 106) (pyszny kawał)" (GW-SIW 606), and when there are no criteria because criteria are trite, one cannot tell what is insanity and what is not because realities change so rapidly that chaos is the only norm. Perhaps, in such a reality as that, rational thinking is insane behavior.

⁶²"Ja trzymam się przez to, że patrzę na wszystko jak na kawałek fantastycznej powieści" (GW-SIW 606).

the surety of the physicist's mathematical reality in its various and varied mutations becomes only one part of the multidimensional reality of Unguenty's sectarian religiosity, the faith best described as "that which is about to happen" (GW-DG 158).⁶³ Infinite possibility of fact (mathematical proofs) becomes only one part of an infinity of infinite possibilities. Scientific abstraction becomes actuality in the theories of Dr. Rypmann.

Tomorrow will see no difference between us. We'll be flooded from inside by the infernal revelation of the transformations according to my formulas, the famous Tables of Rypmann. Do you understand: Each will be this, that, women, men--one big mish-mash of transformational possibilities, adjustments and adaptations. This isn't nonsense! This is marvelous truth! (GW-DG 161).⁶⁴

This logical absurdity is psychologically improbable; the improbability of such language and ideas distends the world of the play and the viewer perceives it as something akin to madness. In Gyubal Wahazar the fictional perception of reality is not a conceptualization only, but it is an actualization in the play.

⁶³"...co się za chwilę stanie" (GW-SIW 655).

⁶⁴"Jutro nie ma między nami różnic, Zaleje nas od wewnątrz piekielne objawienie transformacji według moich wzorów, słynnych tablic Rypmanna! Ludzie! Czy wy rozumiecie? Każdy będzie tym, tamtym, kobiety, mężczyźni--jedna Kasza transformacyjnych możliwości, dopasowań i przystosowań. To nie są bzdury! To jest cudowna prawda" (GW-SIW 658).

The events of the play happen because of the whims of the dictator Wahazar. Though psychologically motivated, as they spring from the character of Wahazar, as they occur, many of these events appear to be happening as if by chance. For example, in the openings of Acts I, II, and III, the major event of the opening scene of the act is the idea of waiting and the act of waiting: Act I, the cast await Wahazar with petitions; Act II, the women wait to find out what their fate will be, mechanical mothers or masculettes; and Act III, the cast waits in prison. When the something which is awaited in each act occurs, it is not planned but springs from the whim of the Dictator Wahazar. In Act I he shoots Flaytrix and accepts Swintusia Macabrescu (Piggykins Macabrescu) as a Lady-in-Waiting. In Act II he orders a variety of persons shot and tortured; he also orders the arrest of the entire cast at the end of the act; in this act Father Unguenty arrives totally unexpected. In Act III Baron Oskar von den Binden Gnumben is shot for carrying out his orders, the insurrectionists are forgiven and Gyubal Wahazar's plot to trick his followers is revealed. Surprise follows surprise, each sustaining the sense of disassociative reality set by the opening of Act I. The reality in which the characters live is one of uncertainty, unsureness, dependence on chance and whim.

The organizing thematic idea of the play concerns the notion that creativity is achieved by destruction. The assumption is tested in the play. Wahazar says:

...you can create new people only by destroying, and not by putting beautiful thoughts into everybody's head, the way that Mr. Flaytrix does. Let him have his fun, but I'm going to destroy for the sake of the most beautiful treasures, for the sake of those wonderful flowers that will bloom in your children's souls when they awake in the desert of the spirit and howl for one drop of something immutable, great, and yet so small that you can find it in every earthworm, in every blade of grass, in every crystal hidden in the rock (GW-DG 111).⁶⁵

To create, Wahazar must destroy; to create, Father Unguenty must partially destroy Wahazar. Wahazar becomes the first martyr to his own six-dimensional continuum. Unguenty first assumes Wahazar's power and then takes some of Wahazar's glands into his own body, uniting the two characters, the vital force of Wahazar and his own amorphous faith-philosophy. This is the most extreme type of character transformation and mutability in Witkiewicz's plays. Character transformation at the

⁶⁵"...nowych ludzi można tylko stworzyć niszcząc, a nie kładąc wszystkim do głowy piękne myśli, jak to robi pan Fletrycy. Niech się sobie bawi, a ja będę niszczył, w imię najpiękniejszych skarbów, w imię tych cudownych kwiatków, które zakwitną w duszach waszych dzieci, kiedy się ockną na pustyni ducha i wyć będą o jedną kroplę tego czegoś, tego niezmiennego, wielkiego, a tak małego, że znaleźć to można w każdym robaczku, w każdej trawce, w każdym kryształku ukrytym w skale" (GW-SIW 610-11).

end of this play points to a dual individual. Such an individual can be constructed only by having first destroyed another individual.

The constructed form of Gyubal Wahazar is flux. The play begins some time after Wahazar comes to power. He was once known as Maciej de Korbowa (GW-SIW 614) (Dick de Korbowa, GW-DG 116) and Maciej Gyubal Wahazar (GW-SIW 628) (Dick Gyubal Wahazar, GW-DG 130); he is now known as "His Onlyness" (GW-DG 110)⁶⁶ and "Your Psychic Non-Euclideaness" (GW-DG 111).⁶⁷ The reality of the play is immediately set on a non-life plane and it stays there throughout its course. Another take-over is chronicled in the course of the play by the final usurpation of Wahazar's glands by Unguenty; yet another one is implied for the future through the manipulation by the children Piggykins and Przyjemniaczek (Sweetheart). In fact, the metabiochemist Dr. Rypmann foresees a whole world of supermen as a distinct possibility, if there is a 'he' who is capable of overthrowing Wahazar. Rypmann says that he would be able to make every human being into a Wahazar (GW-DG 151). Dr. Rypmann's "mishmash of transformational possibilities" sets aside traditional ontology, 'human' and 'individual' are terms no longer applicable to the

⁶⁶"Wasza Jedyności" (GW-SIW 609).

⁶⁷"Wasza Psychiczna Nieceuklidesowości" (GW-SIW 611).

characters in the play. Wahazar and Unguenty, with Rypmann's help, have defined a new reality.

The language of Father Unguenty is rich in contrary ideas and statements, rhapsodies on themes and deliberate efforts to thwart communication. His poetry is particularly illustrative of this. Unguenty sums up his efforts of poetic extempore when he states that "Truth must be shrouded in a cloak of falsehood in order to be more alluring" (GW-DG 164).⁶⁸ The paradox of this truth is that Unguenty is usurping Wahazar's power, his people and his throne, even his glands. The truth is that things will remain the same, but the people assembled must not know that yet. The truth is hidden in a cloak of mumbo-jumbo which serves to provide spectacle for the masses while offering Unguenty an opportunity to stage his coup. The logical sense of the lines is disconnected, and at first reading Unguenty's poetry, in fact, sense seems entirely lacking. It is a specific instance of the extension of the idea of fictional reality or lyrical reality becoming fact in the play's reality. In fact, the language of this poem at this point in the play may not have any logical meaning at all; nonetheless, it does seem appropriate in its ceremonial

⁶⁸"Prawda musi owinać się w płaszcz fałszu, aby być powabniejszą" (GW-SIW 661).

quality, serving the function of the role in offering Unguenty a place to hide, and serving as commentary by providing an ironic statement on the scene and the other people in it. The following is an example:

Now I--now he: behold,
 In the soul a bell begins to toll.
 In my soul small bells are ringing.
 Come here, sisters and small sons clinging.
 I am one.
 We are two.
 Eden now.
 Down soft as dew.
 Edens too and eiderdowns,
 Poppies, pansies, and golden crowns
 Change their flowers into flue
 And motion's died in the depths below
 Butt him in the gut--do!
 Butt him in the gut--do!⁶⁹

Wahazar's speech, inconsistent in temper and purpose, is illustrative of Pure Form language in several ways. Whereas he uses words to overpower, literally to trample his opponents, at other times his language is confused and uncertain. He also uses non-sequential, disjunctive language, which by juxtaposition of ideas, helps to sustain the reality of the play in its exaggerated sense of unreality. An example is the following passage:

⁶⁹"Oto ja--oto on. / W duszy bije jakiś dzwon. / W duszy dzwonią mi dzwoneczki. / Chodźcie, siostry i syneczki. / Jestem jeden, / Jest nas dwóch. / To jest Eden, / Miękki Puch. / Edredony i Edeny, / Maki, bratki i werbeny / Zamieniają kwiaty w puch / I w otchłaniach zamary ruch. / W brzuch go buch! / W brzuch go buch" (GW-SIW 660).

Wahazar--...Papers ready?

Lydia--Thank His Onlyness for not making you wait.
Sometimes it takes months.

Wahazar--That's right. It's not my fault if I don't have time. You're all forcing me to do it. Mothers are the only ones I don't force, because I want the new generation to be as strong as I am. Understand?

Scarosa and Lubrica--Yes, Your Onlyness! What's in the letters? Take pity on us, sir!

Wahazar--(Stuffing the letters in his pocket) Dr. Rypmann, have all the old ladies been shot, as I ordered?

Rypmann--Yes, Sir, Your Onlyness. All the officers of the 145th Infantry Regiment staged a revolt. They're all in prison.

Wahazar--Bon! Hang them all but leave me one small one, that little lieutenant from the Seventh Company. I'll use him to restock the pond. Bring him to the torture chamber at ten tonight.

Rypmann--At your orders, Your Onlyness.

Wahazar--Dr. Rypmann, today there's to be chocolate pudding for dinner. Piggykins loves chocolate.

Lydia, Piggykins' party dress is to be ready at seven.

Lydia--Yes, Your Onlyness.

Wahazar--Dr. Rypmann, get the gelatine ready for the pudding. Tomorrow morning I have to make a banner for the anniversary of the United Army Tailors' Association (GW-DG 126-127).⁷⁰

⁷⁰Wahazar--...Dokumenty są?

Lidia--Podziękujcie Jego Jedyności, że nie potrzebowaliśmy czekać. Czasami trwa to miesiące.

Wahazar--Tak. I nie moja w tym wina, że nie mam czasu. To wy wszyscy mnie do tego zmuszacie. Jednych tylko matek nie zmuszam, bo chcę, żeby nowe pokolenie było tak silne jak ja. Rozumiecie?

Donny Scabrosa i Lubrica--Tak. Wasza Jedyność! Co jest w listach? Zlituj się, panie!

Wahazar--(chowa listy do kieszeni od szynela) Panie Rypmann czy rozstrzelano wszystkie baby, tak jak kazałem?

Rypmann--Tak jest, Wasza Jedyność. Zbuntowali się wszyscy oficerowie 145 pułku piechoty. Wszyscy uwięzieni.

Wahazar--Bon! Powiesić wszystkich, a jednego, tego

Papers, waiting, motherhood, the new generation, pity, the execution of the old women, army revolt, hangings, torture, restocking the pond, chocolate pudding, party dress, gelatine and a banner for the United Army Tailors' Association--all these are a part of the tyrant's day. But, the seemingly illogical manner in which they are put together does not allow the hearer either time to evaluate fully what is being said or the opportunity to come to any conclusions as the dialogue develops. All must be held in abeyance and must be allowed to accumulate toward some unknown conclusion that--hopefully--will have meaning.

Gyubal Wahazar does create a "...whole whose meaning would be defined only by its purely scenic internal construction...." The action, character, plot, language, themes, all are highly improbable, having meaning only in connection with the other elements within the play.

małego porucznika z siódmej kompanii, zostawić na zarybek dla mnie: o dziesiątej w nocy przyprowadzić go do sali totur.

Rypmann--Rozkaz, Wasza Jedyność.

Wahazar--Panie Rypmann, dziś ma być krem czekoladowy na obiad. Świntusia lubi czekoladę. Lidia, do siódmej suknia galowa dla Świntusi ma być gotowa.

Lidia--Tak jest, Wasza Jedyność.

Wahazar--Panie Rypmann, proszę przygotować żelatynę. Jutro rano o dziesiątej muszę wykonać transparent na jubileusz stowarzyszenia zjednoczonych krawców wojskowych" (GW-SIW 625-26).

Kurka Wodna

The Polish title of Kurka Wodna, Tragedia sferyczna w trzech aktach ("The Water Hen, A Spherical Tragedy in Three Acts")⁷¹ is itself an example of the alienation principle of the grotesque, an example of the deformation of reality setting at odds the world of the play and the actual world. Kurka Wodna is an anagram for "kurwa," the Polish word for whore (MAN 36). This is lost in translation. Kurka wodna or kokoszka wodna (gallinula chloropus) is also the name of a common European water fowl, the water-hen or moor-hen, a drab bird with a

⁷¹The translation being used in this paper is that made by Daniel C. Gerould and C. S. Durer, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, The Madman and the Nun and Other Plays, translated and edited by Daniel C. Gerould and C. S. Durer (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1968), pp. 41-79. All subsequent references to this translation of Kurka Wodna ("The Water Hen") will be indicated by TWH-GDR followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

The Polish text used in this paper is that of the revised edition of the plays edited by Konstanty Puzyna, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Dramaty ("The Plays"), II, revised ed. (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1972), 7-64. All subsequent references to this Polish text will be indicated by KW-SIW followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

Kurka Wodna ("The Water Hen") was written in 1921 (MAN 300), first published in 1962 (MAN 300) and was first performed in 1922 in Cracow (Dramaty, II, revised ed., 744). It has had several performances since that time, being performed for the first time in Warsaw in 1964 (Dramaty, II, revised, ed., 744-45).

brownish back and dark-gray belly.⁷² Deformation, fantastic psychology and action, is the determining feature of each scene of this play right up to the last one in which the old men, unable to withstand the revolutionary forces raging outside the walls of the room they occupy, turn away from the game of life and take up a game that offers them a chance at winning, a hand of auction bridge. There does not seem to be anything else to do in a world of The Water Hen where reality refuses to hold fast and continues to undercut the accomplishments of any given moment of the ordinary and the everyday: the hero Edgar Wałpor (Edgar Valpor)⁷³ must start every day from scratch (MAN 35); nothing seems to accumulate and any sense of life consistency is fleeting; character is a series of created moments that may or may not show a connection between one action and another; levels of being shift, reconnect, disappear, change shape and meaning--all as if in the context of a dream.

Whereas tragedy in a classical sense aroused and purged pity and fear and later forms attempted to teach, to define and

⁷²Jaroslav Spirhanzl-Duriš and Jan Solovjev, Mały Atlas Ptaków ("The Small Atlas of Birds") (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Rolnicze i Leśne, 1971), p. 68.

⁷³Translation of character names is by Daniel C. Gerould and C. S. Durer, Witkiewicz, Madman and the Nun.

depict reality or to make manifest some 'truth' or give insight into certain issues, Pure Form has as its purpose the arousal of and the intensification of a sense of the strangeness of existence, the unity that exists in diversity, that will in performance eventually lead the spectator to an awareness of what Witkacy called the Mystery of Existence. The form of Pure Form does not provide a release from these aroused, intensified sensations. Instead the spectator may be left with the feeling "...that there are questions without answers" (MAN 33) and in a state of "wonderment and stupefaction" (MAN 33). The Water Hen does this. The events of this play initiate an endless maze of questions, questions which have no logical or rational explanations. Instead of meaning, the spectator is shown a conglomerate of activities which appear to move in a circle; the circle begins with the initial shooting of the Kurka Wodna (Water Hen) in Act I and continues until it returns to that point again in Act III, in which she is shot again. Like a pointless conversation, the play turns about on itself again and again; and, then, impelled by new matter (in this case, as with The Pragmatists and The New Deliverance, from outside the play) it moves in another direction, never to return to the original subject. Awe is the sensation of the experience of the play in performance; awe, wonderment, and stupefaction. These sensations are not released in the sense of being purged. Alice

Nevermore's comment to her adopted son Tadzio suggests a proper reaction to such a series of events: "No one knows why things are the way they are and not some other way. You can ask questions endlessly and never find answers" (TWH-GDR 58).⁷⁴ The characters who appear to survive in this world are those who don't ask or cease asking questions and accept their peculiar existence, not bothered about the strangeness of it at all. The questioning hero is destroyed.

The impulse in The Water Hen is toward creation in many forms. All that is created, either relationships between people or ideas or physical things, are ephemeral and easily broken. The events of the play create the specific form of a dream, a "collective dream" (MAN 38), Professors Gerould and Durer have called it. In this dream in which reality must begin itself all over each morning, the impulse to create something which is lasting would be the prime psychological motivation for conscious action. Wojciech Wałpor (Albert Valpor), Edgar's father, wants to make an artist of his son, for example. Art gives the illusion of having a lasting quality. Art is a created reality. And in its arbitrariness art defies time and its encroachments.

⁷⁴"Można się pytać tak dalej, bez końca, i nigdy nie znaleźć odpowiedzi" (KW-SIW 31).

Art can have a past, present, and future. Art can provide a sense of permanence. But all that is created in the action of the play falls apart in the wild, cancerous creativity of revolution in the last act. The impulse to create ends in the social cancer of revolution: creation uncontrolled and gone mad. The created family, business, despair, ecstasy, boredom, failure--all collapse. Revolution engulfs the play and it ends.

The action of the play follows the pattern of Tadzio's dreams and awakenings. His dream begins when he first appears; when the Water Hen is shot in Act I, he crawls from behind a mound in the center of the stage. Tadzio is confused by the gun shots; he thinks that Edgar has been shooting crows (TWH-GDR 49). Tadzio confesses that he has such strange dreams (TWH-GDR 49). A few minutes after Edgar shoots the Water Hen, while he and Tadzio are conversing, the scene changes behind them and a barracks-like building takes the place of the original landscape of the opening scene of Act I. Tadzio tries to explain that he was nearby when the Water Hen was shot; he cannot precisely remember where he had been, but the barracks-like building he seems to recall from a dream (TWH-GDR 51). However something is missing, like a piece of a puzzle; his recollection is incomplete. He dreams or wakes up from dreams repeatedly thereafter. Edgar adopts him and agrees to marry Alice of Nevermore, the

widow of his best friend. In a sense, the play is shaped like a child's dream of "Where did I come from? I was born when Mama (the Water Hen) died. Daddy killed her. I hate and compete with Mama's lover and then I compete with Daddy for his mistress (the Water Hen had been Edgar's mistress before the play began). And then, not getting my way, I run away to a revolution in which there are no rules"--such is the broad outline of Tadzio's action in the play.

The Water Hen returns in the second act and entices Edgar to have himself tortured because he is not suffering enough. Edgar's cries awaken Tadzio and he announces that he has awakened from a dream. He recalls the Water Hen is the woman who did not want to be his mother. His final awakening occurs in Act III where his recollection is complete: the shooting of the Water Hen is repeated just as it was enacted in Act I. At this point he runs away from home, ostensibly to join the revolution. In the revolution, possibly Tadzio can be whatever he is able to create of himself.

By discovering the weaknesses and the vulnerability of his elders, Tadzio precipitates chaos while at the same time forcing the play backwards to its beginning in that he forces Edgar to shoot the Water Hen a second time. Edgar kills the Water Hen the second time with the same rifle that he used in Act I, while

dressed in the same eighteenth-century costume he wore when he shot her the first time. She dies in front of the same lantern hanging from the same crimson-colored pole used in Act I. Tazio's being begins with a murder and he leaves his family after a second murder; he is not the instrument of murder either time but the effects are first evident in him. While there is a certain neatness about this pattern and with Edgar's suicide justice does seem to be served, order is not restored at the end of the play. Instead the play ends, as does The Pragmatists, with a whole new set of rules and tensions in effect. The principles of construction of the a-reality of this play, as it has been called (MAN 37), are instability and flux. Life logic, though used, is not consistently used throughout the play; and the disjunctive logic of dreams is sometimes substituted for that of life-like cause and effect. The resultant destruction of the concatenation of events creates a fluid and unstable state: character disintegrates and becomes mutational, the events in sequence appear hallucinatory, and ideas as they are expressed in values and absolutes become imprecise, transitory and relative.

Patterns of contrasts and tensions repeated through the play cause suggestions buried in the play to take on the guise of reality. One such pattern, which is repeated both in the settings and in the text, treats the tension between openness and confinement in the

play. The play begins in a landscape that appears to depict infinite space. On the horizon the earth, sea and sky merge. In the foreground there are five juniper bushes, some shaped like cypress. There are two on the left and three on the right. Bunches of yellow flowers are scattered about. There is a three-foot mound in the center of the stage and on it a five-foot, crimson-colored pole from which hangs a large octagonal lantern with green glass. There is a red sunset and there are fantastic cloud formations (TWH-GDR 45). In this open expanse the two characters on stage seem to be secluded in infinite space. The sky, the sea, the suggestion of vast, unrestricted vistas in the landscape, implies freedom for the human element it contains. These two characters are Edgar Valpor, dressed in an eighteenth-century costume "...in the style of the three bound men in the illustrated edition of Robinson Crusoe" (TWH-GDR 45),⁷⁵ and the Water Hen, dressed in a chemise with a black petticoat showing from beneath the short skirt. Edgar shoots the Water Hen and Tadzio crawls from behind the mound. As the Water Hen dies, the scene changes to show a barracks-like courtyard (TWH-GDR 49). The barracks have yellow walls (TWH-GDR 50) and there is a dim light shining

⁷⁵"...trzej związani ludzie w ilustrowanym wydaniu 'Robinsona'" (KW-SIW 7).

in the center windows and at the gates below them (TWH-GDR 49). From the impression of infinite space, the world of the play has now been restricted to a more enclosed space by a building that is called a prison (TWH-GDR 50) and a barracks (TWH-GDR 51). The very connotative images of the words "barracks" and "prison" suggest confinement and restraint. Tazio and Edgar talk about infinity but admit that they feel they are in a prison (TWH-GDR 50). The Lamplighter enters and lights the octagonal lantern which casts eight concentric beams of green light on the ground (TWH-GDR 50). The number of beams, not their shape on the ground, suggests the symbol for infinity. It may not mean that. But such an interpretation repeats the Edgar-Tazio conversation about infinity and the notion of infinite space suggested in the landscape vista of the opening of the act. But this symbol of infinity, the eight beams of green light, is confined by the barracks-prison and its images of restraint.

Each of the three acts of this play begins either at sunset or in darkness, hence artificial light is needed. This use of light repeats the notion of tension between openness and confinement. In the daylight, sight is constrained only by objects and the limits of the horizon. In the dark, vision is restricted to the circle of light cast by some artificial means. Act I begins at sunset, develops through dusk to darkness, slowly (TWH-GDR 46). Later

there is moonlight (TWH-GDR 47). The immediate foreground, however, is colored by the green light from the lantern. Act II begins as dusk is falling and is lighted after the act begins by an electric chandelier. It is already dark when Act III begins and the scene is lighted by artificial means. In each act the action takes place at the end of the day, either in darkness, or moving toward darkness which constrains human activity.

Act I concludes after Edgar agrees to marry Alice. Once free of the Water Hen, like a dog used to a chain, Edgar says that he doesn't know how to run nor does he have the courage to run away (TWH-GDR 50). He wants to begin another life (TWH-GDR 51) but begins it by entering agreements that will confine him.

The Act II setting completes the confinement motif developed by the physical setting itself. The action of the play has been brought indoors. The locale is a salon in the Nevermore palace in which there are no windows. There are two doors which open into other areas of the palace but not to the outside. The action is now contained in architecturally, precisely organized space, in sharp contrast to the sense of freedom that was depicted early in Act I. Everything in this salon is in a strawberry hue which is suffused with warm blue light (TWH-GDR 58). There is a cherry red curtain behind four rosy-orange columns at the back of a wide niche in the center of the stage. Tadzio is playing with

some kind of mechanical thing (TWH-GDR 58), trying to puzzle out the true relationship that he has with Edgar, Alice and Ryszard de Korbowa-Korbowski recte Maciej Wiktoś (Richard de Korbowa-Korbowski recte Tom Hoozy), who has returned. Korbowski says that Alice has turned the palace into a "colossal torturitorium" (TWH-GDR 61).⁷⁶ When the Water Hen returns--apparently, now dead, she moves freely in time and space--the peace within this torturitorium is disturbed. Her presence represents freedom of movement, many possibilities of interpersonal relationships that are not restricted to the mundane and the familiar, to the family, in fact. To expand his psychic possibilities, which have been severely restricted by a business venture that is only just beginning to start, Edgar is willing to confine himself to the torture machine. Tied into the green and yellow machine Edgar is stretched until he passes out from pain. But the torture is not successful. The family claims him again. The Water Hen is sent away, Korbowski is ordered out, and the family unit remains intact as the curtain falls on the second act. Confined in the family, Edgar has the last line of the act: "Like condemned prisoners we'll drag on and on until death" (TWH-GDR 69).⁷⁷

⁷⁶"...potworne dręczarium" (KW-SIW 36).

⁷⁷"Będziemy jak skazańcy wlec się dalej, aż do śmierci" (KW-SIW 49).

The third act takes place in the same salon in Nevermore palace. It is already night and the chandelier is lighted. The time is ten years later. To the furniture has been added a small green couch. There are no other changes. Tazio, now twenty, is being made into a mathematician by his father Edgar. His home is like a prison and he has been sentenced for life (TWH-GDR 70). He has begun to look outside the confines of his family for a suitable model of behavior to emulate. He has settled on Korbowski, a man who can act. Tazio feels himself confined in the abstractions of mathematics. The Water Hen returns and seduces Tazio (TWH-GDR 71), and he wants to go away with her. Edgar refuses and demands that he continue his studies; he must complete the program outlined for him. Edgar is still being pressured by Albert Valpor to become an artist. He continues to refuse. When Tazio refuses to give up the Water Hen, Edgar runs off to change his costume. He begins the act dressed in a gray suit; he changes to the eighteenth-century costume. In the eighteenth-century costume Edgar is role playing, freed from the constraints of his own century and the costume of his own time. The costume represents the freedom to be and to act that Edgar sees in the past and which he feels is lacking in his own time. The suit is but one representation of it. The change brought on by the change of costume is reflected in his language. In the

costume he is bold and vigorous, a man of action, when he orders Jan to hold the Water Hen still in front of the green lantern so that he can shoot her (TWH-GDR 75). On the other hand, in Act II Edgar regarded himself as a manikin, hated reality, and could not act decisively.

Korbowski returns, now a well-known criminal. The stresses on the constricting family ties in this act are enormous: not only has the Water Hen returned; but Korbowski, no longer just a kept man, but a world famous criminal, brings the news that the world outside is being torn apart by revolution. At this point the cherry-colored curtain at the back of the stage is pulled apart to reveal the landscape from Act I, complete with the crimson pole and the octagonal lantern which the Lamplighter lights (TWH-GDR 75). The image is one of enormous, unrestricted space viewed through the confinement and restriction of the strawberry-hued salon. The restrictions of the salon are completely broken: Edgar shoots the Water Hen the second time; Tazio runs away; and Alice, confessing to the murder of the Water Hen to the three detectives who have followed Korbowski to the Nevermore palace, is carried away with Korbowski. In the street Korbowski incites the revolutionary mob to beat up the detectives and he and Alice go off with the crowd (TWH-GDR 78). Edgar having killed the Water Hen frees himself from the burden of his own life with a

pistol shot. And the four old men, Alfred Valpor and the three representatives of the Theosophical Jam Company, which had confined Edgar in the dreariness of the everyday world, sit down to a game of bridge, accepting for the period of the game the self-imposed restraints of the rules of that game. Meanwhile the freedom of chaos in the revolution rages about the palace.

In the first act the play moves from the depiction of a sense of unrestrained freedom in the enormous open vistas by the sea, confined only by the horizon, to the sense of confinement in a prison-like background which confines the action in a precise background. This confinement is repeated in the artificial family that is put together at the end of the first act. Act II depicts total confinement in space and institutions, that is, business and the family. Act III shows a blending of the earlier physical spaces and the restricted space of the salon about half-way through the act (TWH-GDR 75). And the disintegration of the constraints of family and institutions are broken by forces which the family cannot dominate or control and which are reflected in the revolution raging outside. The confines of life are all broken down at the end of the play. Edgar tied to life is freed by death. The Water Hen is dead a second time. Tadzio, who wanted to be free from his family and mathematics, is willing to take on the constrictions of marriage with the Water Hen. He disappears in the chaos of the revolutionary

mob. The play resolves in uncertainty as the exploding shells flood the stage with a red glare.

Color is used in a way that it reinforces the tensions between the images of openness and confinement. There seems to be an intended contrast with reds and greens in the course of the play. It is unified in the image of the green-glassed lantern hanging from the crimson pole, an image that occurs in both the first and the third acts. In the first part of Act I the earth colors would predominate, but the special colors singled out by the playwright are important. There are fantastic clouds at a red sunset. The green glass of the lantern is enclosed in a silver frame. Silver reappears again in Act II in Alice's silver-gray gown; Alice is accused of operating a colossal torturitorium in this act. Gray is the color of the suits the three Valpors wear in Act III, when they are the most concerned with the restrictions of business and study. The color silver is repeated in Act I in the moonlight. In the second part of Act I the yellow barracks appear. The flowers in the field, described as of the poppy variety (TWH-GDR 45), are yellow. Blue is reserved for the pompom on Valpor's hat, the coats of the footmen, the ribbon in the Water Hen's hair and for Tazio's suit. When Alice enters, her gown is described as being the color of the sea, an ambiguous distinction, as the sea may be

either green or blue. The act ends with a meal eaten in the moonlight and the green light from the lantern.

In Act II the fantastic reds of the sunset have become the strawberry hues of the Nevermore salon which are suffused with blue and from which there is no view of the outside world. The colors yellow and green are associated with the torture machine on which Edgar is stretched. Old Valpor wears a whistle hung on a yellow string. Tadzio wears a carmine suit, and the other men are in frock coats. Afrosia, the nanny for Tadzio, enters the scene twice. She is dressed entirely in green. Her responsibility is to put Tadzio to bed and to restrain him from returning to the salon. The Water Hen when she returns is dressed as in Act I, but with a cape that is not described. In Act III this cape is black. The footmen still wear blue.

In act III the men are dressed in gray, Alice wears an azure gown, and the Water Hen is in orange and black. A piece of green furniture has been added to the strawberry-colored setting and this color is repeated again when the set opens into the landscape background of Act I. The play ends with the red glare of exploding shells.

The color red is associated with the fantastic sunset (Act I), the color of the entire setting for the Nevermore salon, and the explosions that are destroying the world surrounding the Nevermore

palace when the play ends. The color represents a wild natural beauty in Act I, confinement and intense restraint in Act II and destruction in Act III. Green is associated with death and confinement, as is yellow. The green lantern casting the eight concentric beams of green light is lighted after the Water Hen dies in Act I and immediately before she dies in Act III. Afrosia enters the second act twice, once to put Tadzio to bed, again to retrieve him. She is dressed entirely in green. The yellow barracks might be said to represent confinement and restraint; the torture machine is striped both yellow and green. It is not clear that Witkacy intended a specific interpretation of his use of color; at the least such an interpretation could reinforce the images of openness and restraint. Regarded as one important element of construction among others, the way the colors are used creates a sense of form and formal beauty.

The surprise reversal in The Water Hen is similar to the one in The New Deliverance, in that it is totally unprepared for and uncontrollable by the characters. Part of the reversal has already occurred, when the news is brought that there is a revolution raging outside, a revolution that has not been mentioned before. The props of the fragile estate life at Nevermore palace have disappeared. Edgar, giving the appearance that he has power and ability to act by choosing to kill and actually killing the Water Hen

a second time, is cheated of his action by forces he is powerless to stop. He kills the Water Hen to keep Tadzio from leaving home, but the revolution provides Tadzio a place to run to. The rules of society are suspended in revolution. Survival is based on chance, opportunism and quick wits. Tadzio "...may be destined to play a great role" (TWH-GDR 77)⁷⁸ in the chaos of revolution. Korbowski and Alice manage to use the revolution to their advantage and escape their captors (TWH-GDR 78). Perhaps in such a situation the wise man awaiting possible death should retire into a game of chance, a game of cards. But it is an artificially arranged game of chance, obeying certain principles of predictability and probability. It does have certain rules. By agreeing to follow certain rules, the four can pass the time at cards; by being willing to follow certain rules, these four old men may survive to see better days.

Conclusion

The requirements that control the form of the five plays discussed in this chapter are derived in part from within the plays themselves and are not uniformly imposed by notions of aesthetics based on 'truth to life.' Plot, character, thought and language all

⁷⁸"...może odegrać wielką rolę" (KW-SIW 61).

follow in some degree in each instance the idea of fantastic elements (historical figures existing simultaneously with contemporary ones, reappearing characters who could not in actuality return, for example), the life-like and the improbable create an aesthetic that makes possible a freer form that is perhaps a more accurate depiction of actuality than are more traditional ones, especially since these plays can depict a multi-faceted reality simultaneously. However, none of the five plays achieve the freedom of the ideal Pure Form model (see page 40 above). These plays are controlled by the major theme or interest in the particular play; that is Florestan and Gyubal are destroyed to make a comment on the fate of the concept of the individual, Patricianello and Edgar are manipulated to comment on the family. Witkacy has used his concepts about form to strengthen his statement. Pure Form devices heighten his vision of reality, give greater freedom in handling diverse, often disparate material. As such, it allows Witkacy to be inclusive in the selection and use of materials for the plays rather than exclusive in order to preserve psychological probability.

The plots of the plays develop in a disjunctive fashion, destroying the concatenation of events by alienating the world, destroying familiar relationships between things, blending heterogeneous elements and disturbing chronological order. In this way events in some of the plays seem to be patterns of motifs which

move toward resolution by suggestion and juxtaposition. The reason for the juxtaposition of some elements is never made clear; for example, the meaning of the contrast of openness in Act I of Kurka Wodna ("The Water Hen") and confinement implied by the barracks-like building at the end of the same act rests on suggestion and the degree to which the notion of contrast between openness-restraint underlines and enhances the other aspects of the play.

In all instances the plots of the plays demonstrate a principle which has been referred to as the principle of instability and flux:

- 1) this is evidenced in all five plays by the fact that character was shown to be mutational and that the permutations need not be necessarily cognitively understood by the spectator;
- 2) events were found to be arranged in a sequence which, either as they unfolded (because of the nature of the events as they happened) or in hindsight, appeared to be following the pattern of a dream, obeying its own requisites and not logical requirements; the sequence appeared arbitrary in nature;
- 3) values and absolutes which are accepted in actuality become unstable and fluid. At the same time that the action appeared chaotic and out of control, it is carefully orchestrated chaos obeying the requirements of the planned, formal idea of the playwright. In Chapter II this was called polyrhythmic structure; it has as its purpose suspending the viewer's time of decision-making about events as they happen so that the viewer will be

pressed to new awarenesses that he would not have thought possible before. The resolutions of the action of the plots of these plays are not the logical conclusions of what happened prior to the catastrophe. Instead, all five plays are resolved by external forces being interjected into their framework. In two cases Nowe Wyzwolenie ("The New Deliverance") and Kurka Wodna ("The Water Hen") this force seemingly had nothing to do with what had transpired to its interjection into the plot. In Pragmatyści ("The Pragmatists"), Metafizyka dwugłowego cielęcia ("Metaphysics of a Two-Headed Calf") and Gyubal Wahazar the instrument for resolving the plot was present for some time in the action of the play but did not move to resolve that action for a long period of time.

While by no means all the characters in these plays show character mutability, the major characters are all transformed in some way in the course of the play and this transformation cannot always be explained in life-like terms. In no instance was there an original initiatory choice which precipitated an action which was the result of or controlled by a character's will or choice. The choice closest to that description is Edgar's shooting of the Water Hen; but, even here, there is no causal reason for Tadzio to appear simultaneously. In the cases of Plasfodor and Gyubal, by the time they make their major decision (Plasfodor to die and Gyubal to follow Unguenty) the effect of the decision is to precipitate the

catastrophe and not to initiate an extensive action. Florestan and Patricianello never really make a major decision: Florestan is caught and tortured; Patricianello wanted to be free and was so for a time but then the laws of nature over which he has no control are revoked to recapture him. Though both of these figures may be interpreted in part as passive, will-less characters that would satisfy the aesthetic of naturalism, the forces that overpower them are not handled according to that view of reality. The parents return to life, reversing natural order, in Metafizyka dwugłowego cielęcia ("Metaphysics of a Two-Headed Calf"); there is no rational explanation for the appearance of the Unknown Someone in Nowe Wyzwolenie ("The New Deliverance").

It cannot be argued that interest in the character as such does not exist, however; Gyubal and Patricianello and Edgar, to name but three of the heroes of these plays, are too bold and too unique as individual fictional creations to be anything but masterly psychological portraits, achieved by new principles of dramaturgy. The new psychological portrait is made by releasing the character from the restrictive traditional dramaturgy and depicting him from several points of view. While a character may be depicted in part realistically, fantastic action and psychology permit what would usually be considered contradictory action and thoughts, disjunctive shifts of mood and behavior, and arbitrary explanations for

character changes and errors. Language is particularly useful in building this portrait, as it is repetitive, often evocative and expanded metaphors which develop and redevelop the central themes of the play from a number of points. It is self-revealing, exaggerated verbal "trips," almost like soliloquies, breaking up the progression of the action much as arias interrupt in opera.

One repeating thematic idea structures to a large degree the final form of all five plays, that is the notion of the individual as an impossibility in a future time:

1) In Nowe Wyzwolenie ("The New Deliverance") the future is represented by an Unknown Someone accompanied by six thugs who interrupt the action for no explained reason. The present-day individualist, Florestan, is defeated by the past represented by the historical figure King Richard III, his mother and his mistress. His known future is one of extreme pain inflicted by the Unknown Someone and the six thugs.

2) In Pragmatyści ("The Pragmatists") Plasfodor is led by a representative of the past (The Mummy) into the future, the unknown beyond the door, and all that we know of the experience is the gibberish from Plasfodor and the scream from Mammalia. The individual is destroyed.

3) In Kurka Wodna ("The Water Hen") the older generation, first Valpor and then Edgar, attempts to dominate the future by

determining the present which in time will become that future. This fails in that Edgar commits suicide, having killed the Water Hen and lost control of Tadzio.

4) In Metafizyka dwugłowego cielęcia ("Metaphysics of a Two-Headed Calf") the parental generation dominates the individual (Patricianello), dragging it back to the cocoon of the family where it will be conditioned into what the parents want it to be.

5) In Gyubal Wahazar the past as it is represented by Unquenty cooperating with science which is always present in the shape of Dr. Rypmann dominates the future by destroying the heroic individual Gyubal. The individual is sacrificed to universal mechanized mishmash; and, without the possibility of dignified resistance, he becomes the source for transformational possibilities for the future. There is no natural or logical progression from one stage into another; when the future happens, its arrival is cataclysmic. The past and the present are simply wiped out like chalk from a slate. The future is unknown, frightening, uncertain, menacing, and there is no place in it for the individual as traditionally conceived.

Though there are specific examples of some Pure Form language devices, this element of dramatic structure changed the least from the traditional play form to Pure Form. For the most part language still follows that which is based on grammatical rules and comprehensible word order. Although there are instances of

dissonance and sharp contrast of ideas through juxtaposition, the concatenation of the language structure within the significative unit, namely the sentence, remains undisturbed. The enormity of some language achieved through exaggeration, the expletives, the use of logical absurdities, and other devices tend to create a reality supportive of the sense dislocation of reality itself by the use of sounds, images, and meanings which are accumulative and which build toward a conclusion which, though not fully cognitively understood, presses its truth upon the viewer. The meaning of the plays is not immediately evident in the language of the plays, however; instead the language seems to build tensions, rather than resolve them.

CHAPTER IV

PURE FORM IN THE PLAYS WITKIEWICZ

DESCRIBED AS NON-PURE FORM PLAYS

Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz wrote a group of plays which he marked with a cross (+), the sign he used to signify that he considered a play to be more realistic in its final shape than Pure Form.¹ In this chapter I will discuss three of these plays. They are W małym dworku ("In a Little Country House"), Jan Maciej Karol Wścieklica ("Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat"), and Wariat i zakonnica, czyli Nie ma złego co by na jeszcze gorsze nie wyszło ("The Madman and the Nun, or There is Nothing Bad Which Could Not Turn into Something Worse").

¹Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, The Madman and the Nun and Other Plays, translated and edited by Daniel C. Gerould and C. S. Durer (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1968), pp. 299-300. All subsequent references to this work will be indicated by MAN followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material. Also see "Nota do drugiego wydania (Notes to the Second Edition)," Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Dramaty ("The Plays"), II, rev. ed., Konstanty Puzyna, ed. (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1972), 721-764.

W małym dworku

Jan Kott observed in the "Foreword" to The Madman and the Nun and Other Plays that the uses and instances of death in the plays of Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz are a further destruction of the naturalistic theatre beginning at the place where August Strindberg left off in The Ghost Sonata. Professor Kott points out that in the long history of the dead arising to haunt the living on the stage, Strindberg's characters, the Consul and the Milkmaid, were the first ghosts who behaved in a completely normal fashion. He noted, however, that these apparitions are seen only by one or two persons: Hummel, as well as the Student, sees the Milkmaid; only the Student sees the Consul and reports on his actions to Hummel. "It is only in the plays with corpses of Artaud and Witkiewicz," Professor Kott concludes, "that the dead characters come back on the stage in an ordinary manner.... This theatricalization of corpses is very important in the history of contemporary avant garde theatre; the centuries-old conventions of portraying the return of the dead in European theatre was completely broken (MAN xiii)." W małym dworku ("In a Little Country House") is such a play.²

²The translation of quotations is mine. The Polish text of the play used in this paper is that of the revised edition of the plays edited by Konstanty Puzyna, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Dramaty ("The Plays"), I, rev. ed., Konstanty Puzyna, ed. (Warsaw:

The plot of In a Little Country House rests on the deformation of life logic and action by means of a reversal of natural order. The plot of the play is what Witkacy called a contradictory idea, a logical absurdity. At the same time the plot is developed logically, causally, and plausibly--but only if one ignores the fact that the heroine is dead. She is a ghost. Whereas in Mister Price, czyli Bzik tropikalny ("Mr. Price, or The Tropical Madness"), another of Witkacy's more realistic plays, the death and resurrection which seem to occur are fully explained away and are logically acceptable and necessary to resolve the plot, the fact of the death of the heroine is the basis of the reality of In a Little Country House. Anastasia Nibek is dead. Nine days after her death she appears at her daughters' seance. Mistress, wife and mother, the realistic retelling of the events leading to her death and the settling of her earthly affairs continues until the surprise ending when she is responsible for poisoning her children. Then she leaves the 'world' forever.

Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1972), 427-476. All subsequent references to the Polish text will be indicated by WMD-SIW followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

W małym dworku, Sztuka w trzech aktach ("In a Little Country House, A Play in Three Acts") was written in 1921 (MAN 300), published in 1948 (MAN 300), and first performed in July 8, 1923, in Toruń, Poland (Dramaty, II, 737).

The ghost-heroine behaves in the play in a perfectly normal fashion. In every way she behaves like a normal women--except that she is quite dead. She is so natural in her appearance that the cousin, Jęzory Pasiukowski, thinks that she is hypnotized (WMD-SIW 433). When she is drowsy, she sleeps (WMD-SIW 434). She orders about her cook (WMD-SIW 434). She has morning coffee with her husband and ex-lover; she takes vodka. She engages in endless, involved debates over the events surrounding her death. Unlike the ghosts in The Ghost Sonata she is seen by all the characters and has conversation with all of them. She is in no way a 'spook,' added to the elements of plot to frighten in a superficial way. In her appearance and behavior in the play she resembles the historical figures in The Cuttlefish and The New Deliverance who are depicted simultaneously with contemporary characters.

By reversing natural order and bringing Anastasia back from the grave, Witkacy is able to construct a play that can be seen as the anti-climax of a melodramatic resolution of a *ménage à trois* plot played out at some prior time; in this sense the play is the denouement of a play which has already taken place. The victim, Anastasia, is allowed by a reversal that occurs in the first act--she is brought to life--to revenge herself and snatch her children away from their father. The whole of the action is taken up with correcting the misconceptions that the male members of the

cast have regarding the nature of Anastasia's love life and her death. All the details left unanswered at the time of her death are cleared up in the course of the play. After her resurrection Anastasia discovers that she did not die of cancer of the liver as she thought she did; she finds that she was shot by her husband while she slept. Anastasia learns that she had unknowingly been Jezory's mistress during times when she was unconscious from drugs taken to kill the pain of what she says was a cancer of the liver. Her husband had shot her because she was the mistress of his estate manager Kozdroń. To the degree that the play seems to be a logical extension of a life drama already played out, In a Little Country House can be considered as a parody of already existing literary conventions and can be regarded as a distortion of form itself: the victim of a previous affair becomes the victimizer in a time extension of a previous tragedy. What happens in In a Little Country House cannot logically happen, but it does occur in the deformed reality of the play.

In such a play as this one Queen Gertrude's "...yet all that is I see"³ no longer bears the ring of truth in defining the limits of the physical and non-physical worlds. Witkiewicz has removed the bonds of death and, in so doing, has achieved a reality that

³Hamlet, III, iv, 133.

encompasses in this play both this world and the next. Anastasia's daughters, Sophia and Amelia, as do all of the other characters except Kozdron, respond in a perfectly normal manner toward their mother. In fact, the girls have not reacted properly to her death; Anastasia has been dead only nine days and they wear no sign of mourning. They do not regret her passing and they treat her return lightly. They seem to make no distinction between the states of being of life and death; so, when they die in the last scene, it is as if they simply run off to play with their mother as they do at the end of Act II.

The improbability of a dead heroine is the only unusual structuring device in In a Little Country House. The play realistically depicts the revenge of Anastasia Nibek. The means for doing so are conventional. The characters are believable in their life-likeness and they are motivated psychologically. Although elements of the plot are preposterous, for example, the husband and lover reading the heroine's diary together, the events of the plot are not extraordinary beyond the given fact that the heroine is a ghost. The events of plot are clearly connected and causally related to prior events. Exposition is clear to the point of being overly precise. Suspense is sustained from act to act by means of a high point in the action near the resolution of each act: Act I ends with the startling news that Anastasia has passed through closed doors

(WMD-SIW 440), the only abnormal and ghost-like activity she engages in; Act II concludes with Anastasia urging the girls to drink a certain potion from her medicine chest (WMD-SIW 460-61); and the last act ends with the death of the girls from poison and the suicide of Nibek (WMD-SIW 470-71, 475). The major reversal at the end of the play--the death of the children--is carefully foreshadowed by the instructions of the mother to the girls to drink the fluid in a certain flask in her medicine chest and by a poem written and read by Jezory (WMD-SIW 458). The surprising deaths of the children is a reversal favorable for Anastasia and unfavorable for her husband. It was for this she returned from the dead. This type of information withheld until the climax of the play is a feature of well-made play dramaturgy. It should be pointed out that the settings, too, are typical of realism and the well-made play. Two are realistic interiors and the third is an exterior of the country house and the garden around it.

There is no real satisfaction in the resolution of this play, however, in spite of the fact that Anastasia gets her revenge. While order is in one sense restored in the fact that justice has been done, the manner in which this justice was achieved is disturbing. The certainty of the boundaries of life and death are missing. The blend of realities which is a mixture of the past and present, made possible by the deformation of death, points up the tyranny of the

assumption that the past is the cause of the present. The effect is puzzling and frightening.

Jan Maciej Karol Wścieklica

In Jan Maciej Karol Wścieklica ("Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat")⁴

the plot is constructed of elements that depict the will to power of an individual and his ultimate destruction in the effort to achieve his goal. At the same time these same elements are used to demonstrate the implosion and collapse of this same individual of potential greatness until he becomes a shadow of himself and the power and the goal he sought. He becomes a caricatured mask of his original potential. This play, which Witkacy marked with a cross (+) to signify that he considered it more realistic than Pure Form (MAN 300), depicts the career of a hero who, as he becomes great in the external world, loses both his spiritual and his physical freedoms.

⁴Translation of quotations is mine. The Polish text of this play used in this paper is that of the revised edition of the plays edited by Konstanty Puzyna, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Dramaty ("The Plays"), II, rev. ed., Konstanty Puzyna, ed. (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1972), 210-57. All subsequent references to this work will be indicated by JMKW-SIW followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

Jan Maciej Karol Wścieklica ("Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat") was written in 1922 (MAN 300), published in 1962 (MAN 300), and first produced in Warsaw on February 25, 1925 (Dramaty, II, rev. ed., 748). There have been a number of productions of the play since that time, two in Warsaw (Dramaty, rev. ed., 748, 749).

Thematically, the organizing ideas of the play are concerned with the notion of what might have been possible at another time in history for the titanic character of Jan Maciej Karol Wścieklica (Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat).⁵ One thousand years ago this man might have made himself king in Poland. In modern times, however, although his strength is enormous, he does not have the stamina to achieve his goal alone and he is sucked dry by hangers-on and time. A shell of power assumes the presidency at the conclusion of the action, not the man who might have united all parties and factions and led Poland again to greatness among the nations. So long as the desires of ambition are unsatiated, so long as Jan-the-former-swineherd sets no limits to the summit of his ambition, and so long as there is an unbearable tension between the actuality of his self and the vision of his hoped-for grandeur, Jan cannot be destroyed. He even dreams of being a kind of pope, uniting again the temporal and the spiritual in a resurrected modern-day Holy Roman Empire. But, when he sets the limit of his top-most possible achievement, from that moment he is satiated and he begins to deflate to what he really is: a broken man on whom his dreams rested too heavily.

⁵The translation of the hero's name is by Daniel Gerould and C. S. Durer (MAN 300). The translation of other names in the play is mine.

The pattern of ambition pushed to seeming failure in apparent success is paralleled by a loss of self-identity as well as a loss of multiple public identities. The pattern is illustrated in several ways: 1) by the names Jan Maciej Karol is called, 2) by the type of clothing he wears, and 3) by the symbol of something lost.

Jan Maciej Karol Wścieklica, translated "Hellcat" by Professors Gerould and Durer (MAN 300), is a man of many, many identities, each with a different form of address. He is known to the villagers, who want him to be their mayor, by a variety of names, chiefly, Mr. John; but on one occasion they like him to God Himself. His wife calls him "Jasiu" and "Janny" which are the equivalent to Johnny in English. She also calls him "piggy."⁶ He is Karol to his mistress Wanda and later in the play she begins to call him both Karol and Johnny. He is Karol to himself and Brother Karol at times. He is also Karol to his friends from the capital, except one, who calls him "Charlie." Jan becomes lost in a plethora of names and roles. He is peasant, mayor, officer, knight, duelist, legislator, president. He fantasizes about being king and pope. He begins the play with four names, Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat; he ends the play as Mr. President, a deflated hulk.

⁶"...świnie" (JMKW-SIW 227). The word "wścieklica" also means shrew, termagant or vixen in Polish (The Great Polish-English Dictionary).

When he is simple Jan, he is the most sure of who he is. As he is transformed by dreams and success, he loses more and more control over his identity. He is elected President on the basis of an identity created and manipulated by a political faction from the capital.

The rise from peasant to president is paralleled by the fall from the summit of egoism and ambition to self-destruction through success. Jan Maciej Karol's loss of self and hence his loss of ambition is portrayed in the way he is to be costumed according to Witkacy's stage directions. Thinking that he has returned for good to his village from the capital to sit under his linden tree and get drunk, Jan begins the play dressed in a peasant overcoat and long, high boots. He sports enormous moustaches. He is the ideal peasant. He begins Act II dressed in a white suit and low cut shoes, a fashionable costume of the leisured class in summer. The color is indicative of his beginning a new life with Wanda, his tutor-schoolteacher-mistress who is likewise costumed in white. After these virginal beginnings, he dons the habit of the Brothers of Sympathy and at the end of the act goes off temporarily to the monastery where he plans to write his Opus Magnum. At the beginning of Act III he returns from the cloister on the eve of his election to the Presidency, still dressed in the habit of the brotherhood and sporting his moustaches as well as a beard five centi-

meters long. He takes off the habit of the brotherhood. Over the sackcloth britches and shirt that he was wearing under the habit he puts a frock coat with all his decorations from the old days. His costume is completed with a top hat. He has to literally be helped off the stage. He has become a stuffed doll, without the means of self-locomotion. He is supported by others as if he were a puppet, his legs dangling behind him as he is dragged through the door to be shown to the crowd outside his home. The madly free, volatile, ambitious lover and leader of Act I has become a toy in the hands of a syndicate. The manipulator has become the manipulated.

Jan reaches for and attains success in the world. But, the closer he comes to his goal the more aware he is that he has lost something that he is unable to name until the end of the play. He has the sensation that he has lost something irreplaceable but unnameable at the beginning of the action. By the end of the play it is very specific what has been lost: he has been lost, he has lost all. In Act I Jan Maciej Karol wants no titles, or so he says. He just wants to be himself (JMKW-SIW 215). He ends the play as Mr. President. He begins the play wanting to preserve the value of what he had been when he and Rosalia were first married. He wants to "...throw out once and for all onto the dust heap all these faked municipal escapades, to be again the same peasant I

was when I married Rosie...."⁷ But something has gone wrong in his head, he says. By the end of the play the loss is irrevocable. Something has physically, and perhaps spiritually, broken in him, something that can never be repaired (JMKW-SIW 256). He has lost his true self in assuming a role. He is satiated and destroyed by the fruition of his ambition. He appears in whatever guise he wants other people to see him in at a given moment: he wants to be treated as a lover, he is; he wants to be treated as Brother Karol, he is; he wants to be a physically and psychically exhausted martyr, worn out by the enormous burdens of an office he has not yet assumed, and he is. And he can be anything. But the strength behind the masks collapses and as the last curtain falls the mask that Jan is wearing is that one he will die wearing. He will not have the strength to change it. He has never rightly judged his own strengths and weaknesses and through the entire play has a false opinion of himself. For example, he thinks that he is powerful in argument and dialectics, when his strength in argument has always only been to shout down opposition. He also wrongly thinks that his strength is internal: "I am powerful only in myself

⁷"...wyrzucić raz z pamięci na śmietnik całą te komediankę, eskapadę miejską być znowu tym samym chłopcem, którym byłem, kiedy żeniłem się z Rozią..." (JMKW-SIW 215).

through my internal skeleton, which no one will break because no one will ever find out what it is."⁸ But Wanda disagrees and her assessment is accurate:

Not so! You are strong like an animal, a completely common bestial strength like a hog, bull or rooster for the hen, of course. And beyond that all your strength depends upon this, that you are renouncing something. You renounced dignities and out of that you made a new strength, this superbstial strength. I cannot call it spiritual.⁹

Just before his strength begins to ebb, Jan renounces Wanda and sex and goes off to a monastery. But this ultimate renunciation produces the opposite results to what was intended. He returns from the monastery with his brain furiously depleted by unaccustomed thinking. Furthermore, his internal skeleton is ruined: ambition has destroyed his "psychological marrow."¹⁰ He is in a state of psychic and physical decomposition as the play ends. The something that he loses is his strong peasant body and soul.

⁸"Ja jestem silny sam ze siebie, przez sam mój szkielet wewnętrzny, którego nikt nie złamie, bo nikt się nie dowie nigdy, czym on jest" (JMKW-SIW 235).

⁹"Nieprawda, ty jesteś silny jak zwierzę. Zupełnie zwyczajnie, bydlęco silny, jak wieprz, byk czy kogut, oczywiście dla kury. A poza tym cała twoja siła polega na tym, że się czegoś wyrzekasz. Wyrzekłeś się dostojności i z tego zrobiłeś nową siłę, tę nadbydlęcą. Bo nie mogą nazwać jej duchowa" (JMKW-SIW 235).

¹⁰"...rdzeń psychologiczny" (JMKW-SIW 257).

In Chapter II it was shown that Witkacy maintained that character did not have to initiate action by conscious choice. No one single initiatory decision or choice resulting in a positive action is made and followed through to a logical conclusion; however, it is not clear that the postponement of choice in this play is of a Pure Form nature. Instead, the hero's refusal to choose is itself a choice that does pattern the plot and leads eventually to his decision in Act III to be president, a decision that limits him and thereby destroys him. Throughout the first two acts and into the third the characters surrounding Jan try to get him to make a decision; he continues to delay. Finally in Act III Jan acts in anger and decides that he will be something specific, that is, the president of the republic. This decision results in his deflation and disassembly of himself rather than building to the traditionally-expected climatic high point in the action. In the traditional system, such as Freytag's pyramidal outline of dramatic action,¹¹ the initiatory action occurs early in the play and instigates the rising action. The remainder of such a play is the working out of the results of such an action. As such this postponement of choice is not Pure Form extension of compositional possibilities; instead, it is one of the devices of postwell-made

¹¹Gustav Freytag, Technique of the Drama: An Exposition of Dramatic Composition, Elias J. MacEwan, trans. (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1968), pp. 114 ff.

play dramaturgy. It is characteristic of many realistic plays, for example, Chekhov's The Cherry Orchard. Nor do Jan's actions which appear to be opposite to what is expected in given circumstances create a kind of Pure Form dissonance in action. Instead they are a psychologically realistic element in the hero's pattern of refusing to choose until he is forced to commit himself.

The use of an external force to precipitate the resolution is different in this play from those instances of the use of this device in the Pure Form plays. In some of the Pure Form plays external forces impinge on the action by invading and taking over the world of the play in a fashion that wrests the action of the play from the control of the characters involved in the action to that point. There are three external forces operating in this play: a) three spokesmen from the village who want Jan to become their mayor; b) a pair of conspirators from the capital who promise him the presidency; and c) Brother General Alabaster of the Brotherhood of the Sympathetics who refuses Jan the right to wear the habit of that order while at the same time serving as the President of Poland. The first two do not stop the action, rather they serve to complicate and advance it. The village spokesmen, the first representatives of outside forces that promise Jan power, are not successful. They do focus his ambition, however: If I can be mayor, then why not president, Jan reasons. The second group of intruders, Klawecyn Gorgozan

Bykoblazjon and Anabyzys Demur, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Foreign Affairs respectively, is not visibly successful either. Nevertheless, they prod Jan's ambition: if the presidency, then why not the papacy. Jan retires to a monastery. The use of these elements in the plot is not unusual; these outside forces incite action, rather than stop it, and as such should not be considered Pure Form in nature. An important external force which appears in the action of Act III is Brother Alabaster who, by denying Jan the spiritual role that would combine authority and power, commences the action that will settle the fate of the hero and end the play. This is the same pattern to be found in some of the Pure Form plays: an external force limits the hero and precipitates the catastrophe. The power of the Brother is felt, while he is never shown. This type of manipulation of the action is similar to the "They" in *The Shoemakers*, in which the invading force is not shown either. Nonetheless, this telegram, which forces Jan to choose, triggers the unrealistic disintegration of the character.

From the moment he chooses, Jan begins to deflate, his ego and ambition satiated. This deflation is similar to the fantastic psychology of Pure Form theory. Jan weakens rapidly and visibly after he is shaven and as he is being dressed to be presented to the people (JMKW-SIW 253f). He thinks that he may be sick; he becomes confused. He can no longer discriminate. He

admits that he has been transformed from a man of will and action into a puppet unable to control his bodily functions, even to the extent of not being able to bear his own weight. "But something has broken in me irrevocably. My ambition is too gentlemen, I satiated it by the presidency, but in my depths I am like a wet noodle. Something burst in my head, which no one can correct. Even though physically something...not that..."¹² And for a moment he runs out of speech as well as strength. Although the deflation of Jan is improbably swift and the alteration of his character is not justified by normal psychological concepts, demonstrating the psychological improbability that Witkacy called a mutational psyche (T:W 27), this device does not make of the play a Pure Form play, rather it heightens the distorted reality that is being depicted.

Jan lives in the world of his illusions about himself and his potential. He believes that he is capable of more than he can successfully accomplish. He does not know the limits of his ability of endurance. He deceives himself and he is misled by those around him. He is comic in his overblown and grandiose ideas,

¹²"Ale coś złamało się we mnie niepowrotnie. Ambicja moja jest za mała, panowie. Nasyciłem ją prezydenturą. Ale w głębi mojej istoty jestem jak flak. Coś pękło mi w głowie, czego nikt nie naprawi. Chociaż nawet fizycznie coś...nie tego..." (JMKW-SIW 256-57).

in the discrepancy between what he is and what he thinks he is, in his emphasis on the physical. But he is not a shallow figure; the mask Jan wears at the end of the action is not an artificial one, imposed on him by the playwright for his own purposes. He has earned it. His goals are serious ones: to unite the classes and to bring political unity to Poland and ultimately leadership to the world. Jan is defeated. In the manner in which the character of Jan Maciej Karol is developed and manipulated in the plot, Witkacy used two of the patterns that Karl S. Guthke states are structural patterns in modern tragicomedy. These patterns are: 1) "an essentially comic person (though capable of the tragic by virtue of his human worth and depth) finds himself in the world of tragedy and is overcome by it;"¹³ and 2) "the disproportion between the character and his surroundings, ... described as 'deception.'"¹⁴

Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat is a parody of Stanisław Wyspiański's Wesele ("The Wedding"). Outside the house in which Jan is being dressed for the presidency there is an immense crowd gathered, as immense, it is assumed, as the crowd that gathered outside the farmhouse during the last act of The Wedding by

¹³Karl S. Guthke, Modern Tragicomedy: An Investigation into the Nature of the Genre (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 78.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 80.

Wyspiański. In The Wedding the throng had been called up to follow the gentry in a united class struggle that would free Poland. The crowd that awaits Jan's presentation in the morning hours also expects a leader who will unite the factions of his country and restore her to her rightful place among the nations. The assembly in The Wedding was also betrayed, its sincerity thwarted; it melts away with the mists while the cast is led by the straw man and his fiddle in a distorted dance of death. The assemblage gathered outside Jan's house is not entirely disappointed, however; their hero, Jan--whom they do not know has been bought out--is dragged out to meet them. They are presented with a puppet with no stuffings, not even straw, to support himself. The mulch, the straw man in The Wedding and in Witkacy's own Szewcy ("The Shoemakers") becomes the president in this play. The only thing that could have stood between the people and the exploiters of the people was the first-class peasant, Jan the Hellcat; but when he is shown to his people, frock coat bedecked with medals hiding his monastic rags, his great strength has been gelded. The supposed super-peasant titan is corrupted; the marriage of the classes and the future of the country are dashed. The well-wishers hold up the image of the leader, the mask of the man. But the sense of loss is even more profound than at the end of The Wedding. At the conclusion of the Wyspiański play mankind is shown to be flawed and by its

nature may not pull itself out of the mire. It is shown that, while the people desire leadership, those who should be able to lead are unprepared to when the moment of opportunity comes. In Wyspian-ski's play no one knowingly exploits Poland or Poland's dreams. Instead, the characters fail these dreams. In Witkacy's play the dreams crush the man; they are too heavy for even the titan Jan Maciej to bear. He is not man enough for Poland's dreams, while the men around him use him to their advantage, intent on profiting personally while the nation's dreams fall away. The dream lives on in The Wedding; but in Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat it dies without even knowing it.

In conclusion, Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat depicts a grotesque and distorted reality, but it is nonetheless reality that it does seek to portray. This reality is not invented but is imitated. Pure Form has relatively very little to do with its structure. Although Witkacy gave specific instructions concerning the performance of Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat, including unrealistic acting, fantastic settings, and exaggeration of the external appearance of types of characters, this style of presentation would tend to strengthen the particular representation of reality that is Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat, rather than build a formal, invented unity of elements in the Pure Form way.

Wariat i zakonnica

Wariat i zakonnica, czyli Nie ma złęgo, co by na jeszcze gorsze nie wyszło ("The Madman and the Nun, or There is Nothing Bad Which Could Not Turn into Something Worse")¹⁵ is structured by formal and life-like elements. Form in Pure Form theatre is created in a particular work and is not a pattern found in real life. Witkiewicz held that life and formal elements could exist in the same work and that they could compliment each other, actually building a Pure Form play, if the life elements served the formal

¹⁵The translation of this play being used in this paper is that made by Daniel Gerould and C. S. Durer, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, The Madman and the Nun and Other Plays, translated and edited by Daniel C. Gerould and C. S. Durer (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1968), pp. 9-31. All subsequent references to this translation of this play will be indicated by TMATN-GDR followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

The Polish text of this play used in this paper is that of the revised edition of the plays edited by Konstanty Puzyna, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Dramaty ("The Plays"), II, rev. ed., Konstanty Puzyna, ed. (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1972), 259-89. All subsequent references to this Polish text will be indicated by WIZ-SIW followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

Wariat i zakonnica, czyli Nie ma złęgo, co by na jeszcze gorsze nie wyszło ("The Madman and the Nun, or There is Nothing Bad Which Could Not Turn into Something Worse") was written in 1923 (MAN 300), first published in 1925 (MAN 300) and was first performed in Toruń, Poland, in 1924 (Dramaty, rev. ed., 752). It has had a number of productions since then, including productions in Zakopane in 1925 and in Warsaw in 1926 and 1959 (Dramaty, rev. ed., 752, 753) and in San Francisco in 1967 (MAN 300).

purpose of the idea of the play. The first two acts and the short first scene of the third act of The Madman and the Nun are patterns of action common to conventional portrayals of reality, especially the plausability and causality of events found in realistic drama, with the exception of the murder of Dr. Jan Burdygiel (Dr. Jan Bidello)¹⁶ with a pencil and the Freudian doctor Dr. Efraim Grün's acceptance and justification of the murder. With these exceptions, until the moment of the reversal, the play follows what can be explained as a life pattern; it includes only that which is probable and possible. That part of the play before the reversal depicts a real-life tragedy of a poet driven by society to destroy himself; it has a serious subject--the individual's drive to be free--and an unhappy catastrophe. The action of Act I through Act III, Scene 1, is an expression of initiatory character choice, resulting from one life choice made by the hero before the play begins. He chose to write himself to death; but, his brain being exhausted, the creative urge drove him to greater and greater creative heights. As a result he is put into an asylum. There the play begins.

The events of the play are few: the hero, Mieczysław Walpurg (Alexander Walpurg), a poet confined in an insane asylum,

¹⁶Translation of character names is by Daniel C. Gerould and C. S. Durer, Witkiewicz, Madman and the Nun.

supposedly suffering from dementia praecox, claims that he is being slowly poisoned to death by his doctor. Another doctor, a Freudian, persuades the physician in charge to let him take over Walpurg's case. He assigns a nun, Sister Anna, to stay with the patient overnight and to discover his complex. The poet awakens, discovers the nun in his cell, persuades her to release him from his strait jacket, and seduces her. They spend the night together. The next morning Sister Anna ties him up again. It is a convenient arrangement, one that could go on indefinitely. The doctor is pleased with Walpurg's progress the next morning and releases him from his strait jacket, giving him a pencil so that he can begin to write again. But in a fit of rage and jealousy, the poet stabs the physician-in-charge, Dr. Bidello, in the temple with the pencil and kills him. The Freudian is elated: to him this shows that the patient has killed his own complexes with one blow and is on the way to recovery. When this physician, Dr. Grün, becomes overtly affectionate toward his patient, the patient turns on him and for that he is again strait-jacketed. However, Anna comes to him again and they spend their second night together. They are caught the next morning and Walpurg the poet, frantic that he will never gain his freedom, hangs himself from the bars of the windows to his cell. Here the play could have ended. However, it does not. The dead poet and physician return to the stage and invite Sister

Anna to go off to town with them. She does. The hospital attendants and staff, locked in the cell together, begin to doubt their sanity and fall to fighting amongst themselves. The curtain drops on a scene of mass mayhem.

The realistic probable plot might have been resolved with the hero overthrown, the heroine desolate, and the doctors triumphant, and the world that encompasses the play intact. It does not. The plot ends in an illogical reversal and ironic refutation of the events of the first two acts and a half. It ends in mystery rather than explanation and assurance. Strangeness and uncertainty are the sensations at the conclusion. But, until the return of Walpurg and Bidello, the play follows a strict causal pattern. Upon their return fantastic action and psychology are used to resolve the plot, a Pure From principle that does not require adherence to the probable and possible in action, thought, or character.

This reversal of the progression of the action of this play has been called a coup de théâtre (MAN 6) by Professors Gerould and Durer. They have pointed out that

The denouement of a normal play is the outcome of what has gone before and what the audience has been led to expect; in The Madman and the Nun the denouement is an insurrection against the whole established order-and insurrection against the laws of time, space, and motion, as well as against society and its rules. . . the denouement is not a consequence of what has preceded it, but a refutation of it (MAN 6).

The use of this device at this point in The Madman and the Nun, a play which Witkacy marked with a cross to indicate that it was more realistic than Pure Form, is an effort to use Pure Form notions in a realistic play in order to expand the compositional possibilities of the realistic form based on imitation of life.¹⁷

The addition of the fantastic reversal to the realistically conceived plot shows that the way out of the cause-effect dilemma is to transcend realistic play causality by free dream-like action, literally exploding conventional theatre by turning its own logic against itself. This is the form of The Madman and the Nun. An impulse to break free of controls is the thematic idea of the play. It is freedom that the hero seeks. He is allowed it through deformation and a reversal of natural order that wrenches the play from

¹⁷Viewed from the first level of plot, this play is rather a sordid story of how a mad poet seduced an innocent nun and how he paid for his crime. It could also be seen as a tale about how an innocent man is destroyed by his society. There is a possible explanation for all of the events leading up to the reversal: Bidello's death comes because Walpurg is indeed deranged and has a grudge against the doctor; Dr. Grün is too optimistic and lets matters get out of hand by releasing Walpurg from the confinement of his strait jacket too soon; Walpurg is indeed a psychopath, as he kills Bidello and would kill Grün if pushed and he doesn't kill Anna because she does what he wants her to do; the lovers are caught, Anna would ordinarily be punished, Dr. Walldorff could fire Grün for mismanagement, and Walpurg's suicide would be interpreted as proof positive of his derangement. That would be the plot of the play, if the form of the play were only an imitation of life possibilities.

the realistic mode into a dreamlike freedom in a sphere governed by laws of instability, flux and chaos. Disorder, not order, is established by the action of this play; this parodies the movement toward order in traditional drama.

The resolution of the play, as surprising as it is, is prepared for carefully. According to the logic of the reversal, the resolution is imperative and is not imposed upon the life-like contents and conventional structure that precedes it. At the conclusion personal aberrations in madness and uncontrollable behavior in the individual rage unchecked in the society at large. Society is shown to be machine-like, with no one at the controls but madmen. Those who control the asylum are cogs in a large wheel that drives the creative person, the poet, mad. Dr. Ernest Walldorff, the head of the asylum, locks the cell door on the staff, who in turn had been responsible for turning the key on Walpurg. The madness in the cell reflects the madness of the world outside it. The poet-individualist wants to be free, wants to be sane, and wants to be in control of himself and his world; but he is crushed by religion (represented by Sister Barbara) and science (represented by the doctors), both of which are abstractions that create their own sense of reality, a reality like the nightmares Walpurg dreams. When the individual is most constricted, when Walpurg faces indefinite confinement, the machine and the laws governing behavior

seem to collapse. Walpurg and Bidello return from the dead. The controllers lose their control. Chaos ensues and on this sea of chaos Anna and Walpurg can swim to freedom. The action of the play is like the completion of a dream: the individual is free again and the victimizers are their own victims. A complete transfer has taken place, the mad being sane and the sane mad. The surprising and ironic reversal makes of the play a tragedy with a comic ending.

The events and the ideas of the realistic parts of The Madman and the Nun are a preparation for a reversal which defies all the traditional theatre laws as well as the laws of nature. The sharp break in the concatenation of events throws into vivid juxtaposition at that moment, and in retrospect, the freedom of the poet and the containment of the jailors. As mass can be juxtaposed to mass in painting to achieve a tension between elements, so event is juxtaposed to event to achieve tension in the theatre.¹⁸ The tension that is set up between the act of reversal and the events prior to it in this play is very strong. The poet was confined and he died from it; the poet is free and he goes into town: both states of being carry certain images and they both exist at the same time, since

¹⁸Konstanty Puzyna, "The Prism of the Absurd," Polish Perspectives, XVI (June, 1963), 39.

we see two bodies, one dead and one alive. In performance these images are arrested in bold relief as the curtain falls. This resolution does not attempt to satisfy curiosity about "what happens next." It stops on sensations of strangeness, mystery and satisfaction in the fact that Walpurg has his justice.

Conclusion

In a Little Country House, Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat, and The Madman and the Nun are three of the four plays Witkacy designated as more realistic than Pure Form. That is, these are plays in which the realistic depiction of life action is more important in the structuring than are motifs in a formal pattern. However, two of these plays are shaped to some degree by the notions of fantastic psychology and the idea of deformation of reality. The combinations of life-like actions (depicted in a conventional manner) and elements used for formal purposes create forms different in part from traditional structural patterns. The domestic triangle of In a Little Country House is transformed into a comedy with corpses and an unhappy ending because the heroine is dead during the action of the play. The Madman and the Nun becomes more than a tragedy of a poet destroyed by an oppressive society because of the extension to the traditionally conceived action which is made possible by the nature of the reversal of the play. Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat

demonstrates on one level of understanding the rise in fortune of the hero from peasant to president; the same events depict a fantastic internal disintegration in the hero. He becomes a deflated man, similar to Edgar Allan Poe's *Valdemar*.¹⁹ The plot of The Madman and the Nun is plausible until the reversal; at that point the events prior to the reversal are set aside by the return of the hero from the dead.

Thematically, these non-Pure Form plays are studies of individuals attempting self-actualization. The individual is successful in In a Little Country House and The Madman and the Nun because the reality of these two plays is distorted by fantastic action to assure the eventual success of the protagonists. Walpurg is freed only because the natural order of the universe is reversed. Anastasia Nibek is able to set her house to rights ten days following her murder or death--whichever it was--only because the boundaries traditionally marking the limits of the two planes of being are perverted for the time of the play. Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat is not totally successful, however; as an individual, he succeeds in his goal to be president, but is destroyed internally. He loses control of both his person and his destiny.

¹⁹Edgar Allan Poe, "The Facts of the Case of M. Valdemar," Phillip Van Doren Stern, The Portable Edgar Allan Poe (New York: Viking Press, 1945), p. 268.

Jackson Barry, whose theory of pure form has no direct relation with Witkacy's, defined pure form as "...a structure...derived from rules indigenous to the art itself and not from any imitation of life."²⁰ None of the plays discussed in this chapter avoid imitation of life. Although two of the plays depict life unrealistically through deforming the nature of traditional concepts of death, both of these plays achieve any degree of unreality they have by juxtaposition in unusual circumstances of actions that are observable in actuality. The deformations that do occur create parodies of conventional theatrical forms and traditions. The reversal of The Madman and the Nun parodies the tragic form. Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat is a parody of the Polish national literary tradition. In addition to its other attributes, in practice, Pure Form is a rejection of specific literary traditions by means of parody in these particular plays.

²⁰Jackson Barry, Dramatic Structure. The Shaping of Experience (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1970), p. 91.

CHAPTER V

PURE FORM IN THE PLAYS WITKIEWICZ DESCRIBED AS NEITHER PURE FORM NOR REALISTIC

This chapter is an analysis of the degree to which, if any, the theory of Pure Form in the theatre shaped the structure of the group of his plays which Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz did not signify in any way, neither with a cross (+) nor an asterisk (*), not indicating whether they should be regarded as more Pure Form or realistic in form.¹ In addition to the juvenile plays, there are eleven of these plays extant. Three of this group will be discussed in this chapter. They are Maciej Korbowa i Bellatrix, Tragedia w pięciu aktach z prologiem ("Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix, A Tragedy in Five Acts with a Prologue") (MAN 299), Matka, Niesmaczna sztuka w dwóch aktach z epilogiem ("The Mother, An Unsavory Play in Two Acts with an Epilogue") (MAN 301), and Szewcy, Naukowa sztuka z "śpiewkami" w trzech aktach

¹Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz, The Madman and the Nun and Other Plays, translated and edited by Daniel C. Gerould and C.S. Durer (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1968), pp. 299-301. All subsequent references to this work will be indicated by MAN followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

("The Shoemakers, A Theoretical Play with 'Songs' in Three Acts") (MAN 301). I chose these plays both because there is no indication of their intended type and because they span Witkacy's entire mature creative period of dramatic writing.

Maciej Korbowa i Bellatrix

Maciej Korbowa i Bellatrix, Tragedia w pięciu aktach z prologiem ("Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix, A Tragedy in Five Acts with a Prologue")² is incomplete, since the text is lacking the Prologue and the cast of characters. There are very strong life elements, as Witkacy called them, as well as a strong sense of cause-and-effect linking of events in Acts I through V; but, it is not clear how much the material in the Prologue was intended to

²Translations of Polish quotations from the play are mine. The Polish text of this play being used in this paper is that of the revised edition edited by Konstanty Puzyna, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Maciej Korbowa i Bellatrix, Tragedia w pięciu aktach z prologiem (Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix, A Tragedy in Five Acts with a Prologue"), Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Dramaty ("The Plays"), II, rev. ed., Konstanty Puzyna, ed. (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawczy, 1972), 121-97. All subsequent references to this Polish text will be indicated by MKIB-SIW followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

Maciej Korbowa i Bellatrix ("Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix") was written in 1918 (MAN 299) and published in 1962 (MAN 299). The play has never been produced and the prologue has been lost, along with the list and description of the characters (Dramaty, rev. ed., 729).

color the body of the play and any interpretation of it. The precise nature of Korbowa's being, for example, might have been further clarified in the lost material. Hibiscus once refers to Maciej Korbowa as a ghost: "Besides, you are a ghost, Maciej."³ Whether Witkacy intended some form of deformation throughout the plot of the play, as in the case of In a Little Country House, by the use of an extraphysical personage is not clear. But, since this is the only time that this specific word is used with references to Maciej Korbowa, the character and the deformative elements are not regarded as being the same as those in In a Little Country House. There are also a number of references to Maciej Korbowa as a Vampire figure that might, on the basis of the now lost character descriptions or Prologue, have indicated that Korbowa was to have been regarded as such.⁴ I have interpreted these references figuratively rather than literally.

³"Zaiste jesteś widmen, Macieju" (MKIB-SIW 176).

⁴Two of these references are: 1) "I feel strange joy and power. I have the feeling that I am walking below a ghastly mountain in the moonlight, out there. Giant black wings are attached to my arms and my face is evil. How strangely split in two parts I am at this moment (Czuję dziką radość i potęgę. Mam wrażenie, że idę pod straszną górę w księżycowym świetle, o tam. ... Olbrzymie czarne skrzydła wiszą u mych ramion, a twarz moja jest zła. Tak dziwnie rozdwarzam się w tej chwili)" (MKIB-SIW 161); 2) "...I like to drink a little fresh blood from a fresh wound from time to time (... lubię czasem popić sobie trochę krwi ze świeżej rany)" (MKIB-SIW 169).

Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix is a play about a small group of people who attempt to make an art of life, to deny the existence of existence (MKIB-SIW 124). They are social misfits who, despairing of life, have withdrawn into a closed society of their own. In this group indiscriminate sex, drugs, alcohol, occultism and magic, highly personal philosophies and satanic murders are acceptable in an effort to create a life beyond life (MKIB-SIW 132). The group is world weary, tired of existence and the mundane business of living, seemingly purposeless. Its members talk and talk about creativity but none of them actually create any more. They talk to relieve their boredom, to deceive themselves, rarely to communicate. In the group are a painter, a violinist, a composer, a former actress, a magician, several aristocrats and a military man. They are led by Maciej Korbowa who appears to be the most bored, the most world-weary, the most disaffected of them all. His true nature is not known until the reversal at the end of the play, although there are many hints about his true relationship to the rest of the cast. Into this closed world the Duchess Cayambe wishes to be initiated.

There are parallel plots in this play. The initiation of Cayambe into the closed group incites the action of the main plot which is a ménage à trois (Korbowa, Bellatrix and Cayambe), resolved by the ritual murder of Cayambe. The second plot details the

events of a revolution in which Maciej Korbowa is involved; the extent of his involvement is not known until the reversal at the latest possible moment in the action. The revolution invades the closed world of the little society led by Maciej Korbowa and destroys all of the cast save Maciej and the ten year old Dzinia.

Although Maciej Korbowa claims that he--as the manipulator of the rest of the cast--uses people like themes or pigment to make a combination that is invented and not lifelike (MKIB-SIW 133), the play has a strictly causal narrative line and has few Pure Form structuring devices. The conventions used to structure this play are those of realism and the well-made play. There are examples of all the features of the well-made play, as they are outlined by Stephen S. Stanton in his "Introduction" to Camille and Other Plays,⁵ to be found as structuring techniques in Maciej Korbowa and Bella-trix.

1) The plot of the play is based on a secret that is not revealed to some of the characters until the reversal at the end of the play: Maciej Korbowa is also Comrade Magiel and has some never fully explained connection with the Syndicatsists who are at war with the central government. This is a favorable reversal

⁵Stephen S. Stanton, Camille and Other Plays (New York: Hill and Wang, Inc., 1957), pp. xii-xiii.

for Maciej Korbowa and he escapes with his life, as well as the life of the ten year old child.

2) There is a pattern of intensified and manipulated suspense particularly in the second plot. There is no mention of a revolution in Act I. In Act II there are several brief conversations about it. In Act IV the dialogue is increasingly interrupted by rifle fire and artillery. The group is almost taken by surprise by a band of Centralists at the Cafe Villa Real. The Centralists do enter and kill Teosoforyk the magician who has refused to leave the corpse of Cayambe who was ritually killed by Korbowa and Bellatrix. In Act V the entrance of the Sailors of Death and the ensuing holocaust is carefully prepared for by a) gun fire offstage growing increasingly nearer, b) constant talk about death, and c) reports on the progress of the fighting, the unrest of the populace, the activity of the police, and a servant who reports frequently on the progress of the fighting in the street outside the house.

3) There is a "series of ups and downs in the hero's fortune"⁶ caused both by Maciej's competition with Bellatrix and others in the cast for Cayambe's attentions and by his occasional uncertainty about the events of the revolution, at which times he almost

⁶Stanton, Camille, p. xii.

gives away his secret. None of the cast is as strong as Korbowa, however, except Bellatrix who loves him, and so the conflict appears to be one-sided in Korbowa's favor. Hibiscus the composer may suspect Korbowa's second identity, but he is not able to effectively block any action and only overtly fights back at the last scene when he shoots at Korbowa and kills his friend Węborek.

4) Witkacy uses both peripeteia and the obligatory scene to resolve the action of the play. The peripeteia has to do with the realization on Korbowa's part of his failure to separate life and art, that his group with all its talk is really rather ridiculous (MKIB-SIW 191). He admits that that part of his life which was spent trying to negate life has been a failure: life dominates the action of the group at the end; in preparing for death that seems certain, they are involved with the act of living.

The obligatory scene occurs at the end of the play when Korbowa shouts out to the invading Sailors of Death that the rest of the cast have been holding him against his will. The whole society is stupefied for a moment and then the slaughter begins, which Korbowa watches with fascination.

5) There is a central misunderstanding in the play, what Stanton calls quiproquo, although the full nature of it is not in this case known to the audience, as it usually is in a well-made play. This technique of a well-made play has to do with two

characters interpreting a situation, a word, an idea or an action in different ways, while they both think that they mean the same thing. In Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix one of the major themes is death, the nature of death and the uses of death, i. e., death proves the existence of life. Cayambe, who has dreamed as a young girl of dying at the hands of some strong spirit (MKIB-SIW 148-149), is willing to die, experimentally, for Korbowa (MKIB-SIW 150-151). She does not understand that Korbowa is feigning, playing at absolutes. She believes him. He demands her death (MKIB-SIW 176). She is prepared to die and is injected with cyanide by Bellatrix (MKIB-SIW 177). Korbowa reveals in the last act that he thinks it idiotic for any one to die experimentally (MKIB-SIW 188). He feels nothing at Cayambe's death; he experiences nothing at the death of his friends at the reversal.

6) The denouement exposes Korbowa's true identity: he is a villain. It does not, however, explain all of the details of Korbowa's connection with the revolutionaries. Nonetheless, the reversal is carefully prepared for. Each act ends in its own reversal, building the suspense toward the final climactic one. Each act has its own central misunderstanding. The third act especially has several reversals of fortune for the hero.

There are two devices used to structure the events of this play which may be viewed as Pure Form in nature. They are the

ghost-knight in Act I and the character mutational qualities of Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix.

In Act I there is an effort at fantastic action when a ghost of a knight is called on stage by the magician Teosoforyk (MKIB-SIW 128). Apparently the group has been talking about death and the occult. When the ghost enters, no one pays any attention to this unusual event except Cayambe, the uninitiated, and Lykon von Brassberg, a lieutenant, who rises to drunken attention the entire time the ghost is on stage. Korbowa embraces the ghost on the mouth and when Cayambe is disgusted by this the ghost attempts to strike her. Instead it is struck on the arm and its arm drops off at the elbow. There is nothing inside the armor. The ghost leaves. This is not explained and it is not clear whether the episode should be viewed as an extraordinary supernatural occurrence. Teosoforyk is a magician, and it is possible that the appearance of this figure should be viewed as an effect in a parlor game.

Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix embody the notion of fantastic psychology in that they demonstrate what Witkacy called character mutational qualities. The sexual perversions which are rampant in the plot can be explained from a life view point. However, the change from male to female in voice, mannerisms, and apparently psyche cannot be. Therefore, this attribute of the character of Maciej and Bellatrix must be viewed as an attempt to use character

to deform the play's reality and alienate its world from the viewer. Korbowa and Bellatrix both pass with ease between the states of being of maleness and femaleness.

Korbowa transforms himself into a woman almost as soon as the play begins: "His voice becomes more and more like that of a woman.... His muscles loosen. All the strength goes over to Bellatrix's side.... Now Bellatrix kisses Korbowa who alters his body into a soft, inert mass."⁷ When the knight--the ghost--enters, he kisses him on the mouth in a female manner (MKIB-SIW 128). At one point Korbowa requests Bellatrix to be a woman, to be more female (MKIB-SIW 152). After Cayambe betrays him with Dexterowicz and is telling him what happened, Korbowa changes into a woman and begins to relate the habits of the women in the islands east of Australia (MKIB-SIW 166). When Cayambe is being killed and as she is dying he changes into a woman, falls upon the floor before her expiring form and demands to know what is happening to her step by step in her agony. When she is dead, he returns to the male role again, having experienced nothing, he says, while observing Cayambe's death (MKIB-SIW 177-178).

⁷"Głosem coraz bardziej kobiecym.... Mięśnie jego jakby się rozluźniają. Cała siła przechodzi na stronę Bellatrix.... Teraz Bellatrix całuje Korbowę, który zmienia się na mięką, bezwładną masę ciała" (MKIB-SIW 124, 125).

except for the ghost, Korbowa never assumes the female role for another man.

While Korbowa can change into a woman, Bellatrix can alter her character to become a man, assuming the voice and mannerisms of the male sex. Hibiscus refers to her once as both 'him' and 'her' in the same speech (MKIB-SIW 126). She seduces Cayambe in the male role and sustains this transformation for three days, during which time Cayambe falls deeply in love with her. Bellatrix changes back to herself very quickly when she feels that Korbowa needs her (MKIB-SIW 139). Later she does some sort of 'fast change' with her sex identity in order to fascinate Korbowa: "(Executing the suitable movement) Behold I appear a boy--behold a girl--behold a boy--behold a girl."⁸ Korbowa is enraptured by this. At one point she claims to have been her own fiancée, that is, her masculine side was fiancée to her feminine side (MKIB-SIW 158).

The gender of these two characters is fluid and unstable, varying at will. While it does illustrate Witkacy's notion of mutational psyche, it is also very like August Strindberg's character description for A Dream Play: "The characters are split, double

⁸"(wykonuję odpowiednie ruchy) Oto stanę się chłopcem--oto dziewczynką--oto dziewczynką--oto chłopcem" (MKIB-SIW 174).

and multiply; they evaporate, crystalize, scatter and converge."⁹ In performance this fantastic psychology of the hero and heroine would become an attribute of a distorted and exaggerated reality depicting in an extreme fashion the maleness and femaleness that exists in every individual.

Death and the idea of death are major thematic ideas which seem to operate as motifs within the text, although there is no attempt to use these ideas and events in any other way than to enhance the realistic plot of this play. Death occurs on three planes within the play: 1) actual deaths, 2) talk about death, and 3) the dead-to-life attitude of most of the characters.

1) There are numerous deaths in the play: Satanescu falls off the roof and impales himself on the fence below; Korbowa kills Dexterowicz in a duel offstage; Bellatrix kills Cayambe; the Centralists shoot Teosoforyk; Hibiscus shoots Węborek, and the Sailors of Death kill the remainder of the cast with the exception of Korbowa, Dzinia and Baar-Luk, whose disappearance before the last act is never accounted for. These instances of death are used to enhance the realistically developed plot and occur as climactic points in the action of the play or in the separate acts of the play.

⁹ August Strindberg, "Author's Note to A Dream Play," John Gassner and Ralph G. Allen, Theatre and Drama in the Making (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1964), p. 781.

2) The talk about death is almost constant. In the first act it centers around abstractions concerning death and questions about the nature of non-being. The cast dabbles in the occult or some form of magic and Teosoforyk calls up a ghost. Most of this talk is idle chatter of people bored with their existence as they are living it.

As the play progresses, however, discussion ceases to be abstract:

1) Korbowa demands Cayambe's death to find out what happens during the process of death, and 2) in Act V the discussion centers on the preparation for death which is imminent and very real.

3) The small group collected about Maciej Korbowa has denied life by supposedly surmounting it (MKIB-SIW 125); and, in their museum where they attempt to make an art of living, they are in a sense the living dead, dead in their lack of creativity. Only Cayambe is alive in the sense that she is still seeking and questioning and not merely masking her life-weariness. The group kills her. While at the same time the dead (the ghost Knight) is called back among the living and while savage, indiscriminate death rages in the streets, Korbowa maintains that among themselves death is as meaningless as in a war (MKIB-SIW 141). This is proven false in actual practice, because it is only Cayambe who is willing to risk death on faith. Cayambe dreams of being in love with death, has dreamed this since her childhood when she dreamed that she died at the hands of a great spirit (MKIB-SIW 148-149).

Even though Korbowa changes his mind and comes to the conclusion that to die experimentally, as Cayambe does, is idiotic, they all hold the opinion that death confirms life (MKIB-SIW 166). The constant dwelling upon the idea of death and how it will come, its disguises and its masks, ends in the wholesale slaughter of the entire cast which Korbowa watches with a "...savage smile, clenching his fists with rapture."¹⁰ What begins as idle and not so idle chatter about death, something to keep away boredom and fear, ends in the terror of fact.

Witkacy tried to show in his theory that by deforming the external world, it could be viewed in an other than conventional manner in a play. Perhaps, then, the meaning of this play lies in implied truths achieved by suggestive means rather than explicit statements. These truths are suggested through the juxtaposition of character, action and idea. Witkacy could not fill up the space of the stage with abstract shapes as in painting (MAN 293), so he filled it up with abstractions of character and idea. Fantastic psychology gives him more freedom for a progression of events (MAN 293) that, though based on life action, moves thematically from chaos in the individual and the small group around Korbowa

¹⁰"...patrzy na to z dzikim uśmiejchem, ściskając pięści z zachwytu" (MKIB-SIW 196).

to total chaos in the larger society and the reversal of expected personal relationships. Deformed psychology and action give some freedom from the life point of view; however, the actions of the play remain very carefully and closely plotted according to conventional practice. In part, the effectiveness of the play rests on the sharp and often surprising reversals that deal with betrayal: Bellatrix in her male role betrays Korbowa with Cayambe, Korbowa betrays both of them and finally everyone in the ultimate betrayal when he becomes Comrade Magiel. In summary, character is made mutational in this play in an effort to break the concatenation of events generally associated with real life, to deform reality and make it appear different, to alienate and to separate it from the real world of the viewer and to create a sense of the mysterious. This is not fully realized in the play.

Matka

Matka, Niesmaczna sztuka w dwóch aktach z epilogiem ("The Mother, An Unsavory Play in Two Acts with an Epilogue")¹¹ has

¹¹The translation of this play being used in this paper is that made by Daniel Gerould and C. S. Durer, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, The Madman and the Nun and Other Plays, trans. and ed. by Daniel C. Gerould and C. S. Durer (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1968), pp. 117-62. All subsequent references to this translation of Matka ("The Mother") will be indicated by TM-GDR followed by the page number in parentheses

a curious structure. The first two acts are constructed essentially of what Witkacy called life-like elements that have life correlatives and causal explanations. The Epilogue, or what might more properly be called the third act, has a fantastic logic of its own, a logic that is essentially arbitrary because what is happening cannot happen in actuality and because some of the events in it are seemingly removed from life explanation, although a psychological interpretation can be given to parts of the action in the Epilogue.

In this third act Epilogue the action is reversed and events that led logically to the conclusion at the end of Act II are set aside by others that are never explained and which have no real life counterparts. It is as if the concatenation of events was literally broken into two parts physically: the first two acts have their logic and the third has its own. This logic is a terribly complex one of juxta-

following the quoted material.

The Polish text of this play used in this paper is that of the revised edition of the plays edited by Konstanty Puzyna, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Dramaty ("The Plays"), II, rev. ed., Konstanty Puzyna, ed. (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1972), 389-449. All subsequent references to the Polish text will be indicated by M-SIW followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

Matka ("The Mother") was written in 1924 (MAN 300), published in 1962 (MAN 301) and was first performed in the Modrzejska Theatre in Cracow in 1964 (Dramaty, rev. ed., p. 756). There have been several other productions of the play since that time, including a Warsaw production in 1970 (Dramaty, rev. ed., pp. 756-57).

position and contrast of life-like impossibilities. This third act shows the mother Janina Węgorzewska (Janina Eely)¹² at the age of twenty-three pregnant with her son Leon Węgorzewski (Leon Eely) who is simultaneously thirty years old and who is there on stage facing her. Also present are Leon's father who died when Leon was three and the cast from Acts I and II, including an aunt, Jozefa baronówna Obrock (Josephine, Baroness Oates). At the same time the corpse of the mother is lying on a bier at the side of the stage. Into this enclosed space which is like the inside of a box painted black comes a machine for sucking mothers dry: "It's a machine for sucking dry what's left of mothers' corpses that haven't been completely sucked dry by their only sons" (TM-GDR 160).¹³ The twenty-three year old Mother destroys the corpse-mother who is a dummy made of straw. Then the Mother and the rest of the company--with the exception of Leon's father-in-law Apolinary Plejtus (Apollinaire Stonybroke), Leon's wife's two lovers whom he shot, Joachim Cielęciewicz (Joachim Calf-skin) and Leon--leave via a door which no one knew was there and which only the Mother is able to find. The door opens onto a

¹²Translation of character names is by Daniel C. Gerould and C. S. Durer, Witkiewicz, Madman and the Nun.

¹³"...maszyna do wysysania do reszty trupów nie doszanych przez jedynaków matek" (M-SIW 446-47).

beautiful mountain landscape in the spring. At this point, six workers who came in on the machine fall on Leon and strangle him. They literally obliterate him; for, when the foray is over, nothing whatever remains of his body. Then the six workers get back onto the contraption that sucks mothers dry and disappear into the darkness above the stage.

The reversal of the play, which the Epilogue comprises, is surprising, but it is not accidental, nor is it unprepared for, though the hints that are given are not necessarily of the type found in realistic or well-made plays. One example is the use of external stimulants by the characters in the play, massive doses of both alcohol and cocaine. While the events of the first two acts resolve in the conventional pattern by removing options for alternative action as the play progresses and by developing according to causally related events (i.e., the Mother dies from a heart attack because she learns that her son is a liar and a pimp), the characters of the play perceive the reality of the play through consciousnesses that are obeying the reality of the drug and alcohol that they are consuming in enormous quantities. They are experiencing a heightened sense of reality, a false reality. In other words, while the logical aspects of the plot are winding themselves up to a conclusion, the entire span of the first two acts depicts the gradual releasing of the mental and emotional capacities of the characters under the

influence of external stimulants. Disassociation and distortion brought on by these external means are at the highest point at the second act curtain when the Mother dies of a heart attack or an overdose of cocaine, as Leon claims (TM-GDR 152). The action of the Epilogue could be the events conceived by a brain distended by drugs. It is not clear. In any event, the modified perception of reality at the end of Act II is transferred to a place that allows an impossible life duality depicting 1) a man of thirty and his unborn self, 2) a mother of twenty-three and her own corpse, 3) and a dead father, a materialized Voice from Acts I and II--all simultaneously shown on the stage. No single element is unreal, but, in combination, the reality these events comprise is like that of assorted incongruous elements in an abstract painting. They exist, simultaneously, but they don't seem to belong together. If there is any unity in this combination of elements, it must be the tensional one Witkacy spoke of in painting, such as the tension of unequal masses and disharmony of color. Here are several motifs of the idea of a family held together for a time by this tension, ideas having to do with father, mother, son, wife, in-laws, lovers, and relatives. Then they are resolved by the introduction of the machine, a literal deus ex machina; the tension is broken and the play ends.

There is a double reversal in this play. The first one is the return of the dead mother, her restoration to the time before Leon's

birth. The second one is the entrance of the machine and the subsequent destruction of Leon. The machine represents an external force such as was discussed with reference to some of the other plays. But, though it is labelled--"It's a machine for sucking dry what's left of mothers' corpses that haven't been completely sucked dry by their only sons"--its nature is still unknown and never understood completely. When Leon is destroyed, the play stops, resolving on a note of strangeness and mystery. The individual is dead.¹⁴ The corpse of the Mother is strewn about the stage. There is nothing left. The progression of character and event leads not to satisfaction in justice done but to confusion, chaos, uncertainty and terror.

The impossible dual nature of the Epilogue is paralleled by a duality of actions in the first two acts. Janina the mother married beneath herself. She and Alfred Eely the father fell out of love. Leon marries beneath himself; he and Sophia fall out of love (TM-

¹⁴The fate of the individualist is similar to that in the Pure Form plays: Florestan is held in pain by unknown forces when The New Deliverance is concluded; Walpurg commits suicide and by a startling reversal of natural laws is allowed to walk out of his predicament; Plasfodor and Mammalia disappear completely at the conclusion of The Pragmatists--not unlike Leon, but for very different reasons; Patricianello is captured by his resurrected parents in the reversal in Metaphysics of a Two-Headed Calf; and Gyubal Wahazar disappears as a part of the living Unguenty.

GDR 129). Alfred the father was a criminal and was hanged for it. He was also a carpenter. Leon marries the daughter of a carpenter and he becomes a criminal. The Mother tortured Alfred and drove him to crime to satisfy her desire for luxury. She does the same thing to Leon. Furthermore the Mother does everything she can to drive Leon from her, thereby binding him even tighter to her emotionally. At the end of Act I a highly inebriated Leon declares his unnatural love for his mother. She repulses him here. Yet, in Act II, after he has resorted to crime as did his father before him in order to support his mother she invites Leon to embrace her as he used to (TM-DG 146). Her death in a sense brings on his death.

It must be noted that again it is death and the uses of death that deform the actions of the play so that they can be resolved according to logic other than real life causality. This is similar to the pattern pointed out in The Madman and the Nun, In a Little Country House and Gyubal Wahazar. The uses of death in this play allows it to "...move freely in time" (TM-GDR 157).¹⁵ The image in the Epilogue is of a resurrected woman existing simultaneously in an alive and a dead state, a resurrected father, an unborn son, and a born son. When Leon is killed by the men from the machine, his death is a further distortion and reversal of natural order: it

¹⁵"...przemieszczacie sie w czasie" (M-SIW 442).

is he, the child that should have survived. He does survive, though, as an unborn child in his mother's womb. One is left with a series of unresolved images, or motifs, this being one of them.

Death is employed for disassociative purposes again in this play.

The ghosts in Ghosts are figurative, but Witkiewicz makes Leon's father a real ghost whose voice from the other world is heard throughout Acts I and II, laughing at the Mother and mocking the bourgeois concerns of this world from a vantage point outside time and space. Hanged as a criminal, the Father's opening 'Ha, ha, ha,' at the very beginning of the play puts into perspective the littleness of the tasteless parlor, and he congratulates Leon in rising above its normal, sentimental delusion at the end of Act II (MAN 114).

The Father makes his presence felt seven times in the first two acts; he then appears in the flesh as he would have thirty years before, when the Mother was carrying Leon. The Voice, as he is called, is heard twice at the opening of Act I where it has the effect of figuratively injecting the past into the present situation and calling attention to the exaggerated poverty, gentility, and pretences of the Mother. In the second act The Voice is heard three times near the middle of the act. It makes a mockery of the self-pity and self-righteousness of the Mother. Like Sophia and Leon, the Father has been driven to crime to support the Mother. It is not clear, however, that Leon is to revenge the Voice in any way. The Voice is used as an external force to make Leon tell the truth about his

job (TM-GDR 145). This truth destroys the Mother. The Voice is heard again at the end of the second act, congratulating Leon on not being sentimental about his mother's death, for which Leon is responsible. The Voice--the ghost of Alfred Eely--helps to deform this "cold soup tragedy" (TM-GDR 136)¹⁶ and force it onto another plane of perception. The Voice prompts action and at the same time makes us think in other than ordinary terms about the events of the play. In the first two acts, The Voice parodies the father in Strindberg's Ghosts and the old King in Shakespeare's Hamlet.

The overall structure of the play may demonstrate what Witkacy meant by new compositional possibilities. That is, the larger structure--the first two acts plus the Epilogue--comprises a unit in itself. It is a unit that is made up of two plays: Acts I and II are a cohesive unit, being a realistic depiction of the death of the Mother and her ultimate dominance over her son. Together the two parts make a pattern in which the heroine, though defeated by her life circumstances and killed by them, is allowed to transcend her fate which is brought on by the events of her life, to free herself from some of the entanglements of her past, and to set off from the indeterminate locale of the last act into the bright sunshine of mountain landscape. She is able to do this only because

¹⁶"...tragedii zimnej zupy" (M-SIW 413).

the natural order is set aside. It is not clear if this is meant to show that the Mother is making a new start. Perhaps we are to view the events of the conclusion in other than a realistic way: the Mother goes from the enclosed black box-like space into bright sunshine; her son is destroyed by unexplained forces. Both actions are possible, from a life point of view. That is, it is physically possible to go from an enclosed space into the light, to be destroyed by unexplained forces; but, in juxtaposition, they appear to be distorted and unnatural. And the play ends on this note of unresolved tension. Time, space, action, the accumulated effect and possible meaning of the first two acts of this play are not denied; but they are altered. And this is left unexplained. As a result the convention of attempting to make all things clear in the traditional theatre is altered in this play. Mystery is the desired and the achieved effect.

There are two language devices of particular interest in the play: 1) there are snatches of song used for the purposes of dissonance, and 2) the mother's speech is marked to be pronounced in a certain fashion which may have no relationship to any life-like manner of speaking.

Snatches of song are used three times early in Act I, twice by the Mother and once by the Voice. The Mother's first song fits the moment and the mood of the opening of the play and hence

seems appropriate. Her second song does not.

The most beautiful mask hangs over my head,
A Spiritual devil lures me to bed,
Although I've had lover, one, two, three-
My bones still crack with lechery.¹⁷

The song and its contents are in direct contrast to what she has been saying, what follows and what seems called for at the moment. The Father has a similarly dissonant line, "Eely to a criminal has almost sacred fame, / And juvenile delinquents day-dream only by that name" (TM-GDR 123).¹⁸ Such lines, while serving the purpose of developing character, also help build and sustain a mood of strangeness by interrupting the flow of the play and alienating the expected response to the character and the situation.

A second interesting language device is the indication Witkacy gave in the first act of this play regarding how the Mother was to speak her lines. She was to speak her lines in either one of two ways:

She speaks in two different ways: down-to-earth
and direct--and more refined and mannered.

¹⁷"Nade mną zwisa przepiękna maska, / Diabeł bez ciała
ciągnie mnie w grzech, / Wszystko od żądy utajonej trzaska. /
Miałam kochaków, miałam aż trzech" (M-SIW 394).

¹⁸"I pamięć Węgorzewskiego jest święta pośród zbrodniarzy, /
I każdy małego przestępcę o Węgorzewskim tylko marzy" (M-
SIW 396).

(1) indicates the first, (2) indicates the second (TM-GDR 119).¹⁹

Witkacy does not maintain this notation for long in the script, however, and either abandoned it as impractical or assumed that the actress would be able to determine the proper delivery for the lines later in the play by careful study of those marked in the first three pages of dialogue. Or, perhaps, after that time the character requires that the actress speak only naturally, given the proper understanding of the role and the adequate attempt to recreate the part. It is not clear. It remains, however, an attempt to break the material of the play loose from real life laws and establish an arbitrary reality within the play within the first few pages of dialogue. As such it is Pure Form in nature.

Szewcy

It has been argued that Szewcy, Naukowa sztuka z "śpiewkami" w trzech aktach ("The Shoemakers, A Theoretical Play with 'Songs' in Three Acts")²⁰ is a radical departure from Witkacy's earlier

¹⁹"Ma dwa sposoby mówienia: pospolitawy i istotny - i więcej dystygowany i powierzchowny. Pierwszy (1), drugi (2)" (M-SIW 390).

²⁰The translation of this play being used in this paper is that of Daniel Gerould and C. C. Durer, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz. The Madman and the Nun and Other Plays, trans. and ed. by Daniel C. Gerould and C. S. Durer (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1968), pp. 223-288. All subsequent references

dramas, that Witkacy had "abandoned Pure Form and the distance that went with it" (MAN 215), and by suggestion, that Pure Form theory may not have played any part in the shaping of the experience of The Shoemakers. While it is true that

The Shoemakers has a different relation to life than The Water Hen does; it reflects the political and social reality of its time and the views of its author more directly--sometimes in undigested form (MAN 215),

the effect of the play is largely grounded on devices used to such good effect in plays like The Water Hen, Metaphysics of a Two-Headed Calf, and Gyubal Wahazar. The life and formal elements of this play are structured to achieve a blend of the two which satisfies some of the Pure Form requirements.

to this translation of Szewcy ("The Shoemakers") will be indicated by TS-GDR followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

The Polish text of this play used in this paper is that of the revised edition of the plays edited by Konstanty Puzyna, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Dramaty ("The Plays"), II, rev. ed., Konstanty Puzyna, ed. (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1972), 509-92. All subsequent references to the Polish text will be indicated by S-SIW followed by the page number in parentheses following the quoted material.

Szewcy ("The Shoemakers") was finished in 1934 (MAN 301), published in 1948 (MAN 301) and was first produced in Poland in 1957 (Dramaty, II, 759). It has had a number of productions since that time, including the Wrocław, Poland, Studencki Teatr "Kalambur" production in 1965 (Dramaty, II, 759). It also had a major production in 1971 at the Stary Teatr, Cracow which was also performed in Warsaw that year (Program, VII Warszawskie Spotkania Teatralne, Warsaw, Poland, November 23-December 2, 1971).

The life-like elements involve conflicts of interests and spheres of influence between the proletarian, aristocratic and capitalist-bourgeois classes in society; these conflicts are eventually resolved in the play by the take-over of a "They," a total assumption of absolute, arbitrary and unexplained power. At issue here is the fact that the life element composed of the conflicts between classes is resolved by an agent outside the interests and the realm of influence of these classes within the form of the play. The conflict stops with the take-over of the play world by "They." "They" represent a new class inimical to the others, a class which appears to be a dead-end in social revolution.

The conflict between classes is the life thread, the cause and effect sequencing of the plot of this play; but this life element is arranged in a repeating pattern, using thematic material that is called in the play the law of discontinuity. The pattern is one of repetition of similar life actions. The form of the play derives from the repetition of reversals of life actions--the revolutionary overthrow of established regimes--until there is a final reversal that implies that there is not an apparent life action that can break the stasis achieved. Sajetan Tempe explains the law of discontinuity; he says, "Why is it everything in history has to blow up and can't move smoothly into the future along well-greased tracks of reason: the law of

discontinuity."²¹ This idea organizes the material of the play. It is manifested in 1) the patterning of the plot which uses the life elements of class conflict; 2) the uses of fantastic reality; and 3) the use of violence and violent language in the play.

What Sajetan calls the law of discontinuity expresses the principle behind chaos: the chaotic will eventually lead to stasis. This principle is illustrated through the use of a series of revolutionary upheavals which end, finally, in the stability imposed by a force from outside the world of the play. Prokurator Robert Scurvy (Prosecuting Attorney Robert Scurvy)²² says:

...the abyss of chaos! What a wonderful and unattainable thing chaos is! We'll never find out what it really is, even though the world is chaos, when you come right down to it. Chaos! Chaos! But some kind of petty statistical order can always be imposed on our wretched compartmentalized society where we live like socialized cattle (TS-GDR 267-8).²³

²¹"Że też wszystko w historii pękać musi, a nie na smarach rozumu gładko się w przyszłość przesuwają: prawo nieciągłości..." (S-SIW 565).

²²Translation of character names is by Daniel C. Gerould and C. S. Durer, Witkiewicz, Madman and the Nun.

²³"...otchłań chaosu! Cóż za cudną i niedoścignioną rzeczą jest chaos! Nie poznamy go nigdy jako takim, mimo że świat jest chaosem, naprawdę w istocie swej jest. Chaos! Chaos! A na naszych nędznych odcinkach uspołecznionych bydła zawsze się jakiś porządek statystyczny zrobi" (S-SIW 566).

But it is out of and because of the chaos in the world that the stasis or order at the end of the play is achieved. Given the chaotic elements of existence, it is not at all surprising that the outcome of the play is the cessation of chaos, making it impossible for a new revolution to occur. Both the socialist Sajetan and the bourgeois Scurvy agree on the value of chaos in the world as they perceive it: chaos is creative, or it offers creative possibilities, even negative ones. To remove the possibilities of personal dexterity in survival by eliminating chaos is to freeze an individual into a set pattern, limiting his options, and thereby assuring his ultimate destruction. Sajetan laments:

How can we go on living without any more utopias to build our hopes on? It's horrible, all we've got to look forward to is emptiness and never-ending drudgery, and we can't even delude ourselves any more about the value of work. You know what I think--it's really frightening: it was better to be a stinking shoemaker with your own little private utopias and think idealistic thoughts about how to put them into practice in all that stink, than to be like us now, all in silks at the height of our flunky power... (TS-GDR 269).²⁴

²⁴"Czyż już ten przeklęty brak idei będzie trwać do końca intnienia? To straszne, ta pustka i ta masa nieprzebrana pracy realnej przed nami, pracy nie przeświełonej żadnym, nawet najmniejszym, pojęciowym złudzeniem! Wicie, co wam powiem? --to jest wprost straszliwe: lepiej było szewcem śmierdzącym być i idejki mieć, i sobie słodko w tym smrodku o ich spełnieniu myśleć, niż teraz w tych jedwabiach u szczytu lokajskiej władzy ..." (S-SIW 568).

Discontinuity allows for change, for advantage, for getting lucky, for distraction, for surprise--and survival by all of these means. Chaos, the seemingly inexplicable operating of chance, is infinitely interesting to the Witkacian hero for without it he is damned to repeating himself and to eventual death, either physical or spiritual. When chaos ceases to be possible, stasis results in stagnation of the individual.

Chaos is none the less frightening (TS-GDR 255) and the circle seems hopelessly endless. Character as a dramatic element in this play is helpless to break the chain or to survive it. As will be seen below and as has been shown in other plays that I have discussed, an external force of some kind must come into the world of the play and interrupt the action in order for the repetition of reversals to be stopped. Devour, destroy, create, devour, destroy, create: this idea progresses through this play from revolution to revolution to revolution, more and more each time until at last the very humanity of man is--if not destroyed--becoming unrecognizable from a human point of view. The external force imposed in this play brings the human to the lowest level: as long as Scurvy and Sajetan stood off each other and took their animal measure of each other, there was a hope of sorts. When the Hiper-Robociarz (Hyperworkoid) enters, hope dies; it is the ultimate death in Witkacy's work, for as long as the very

baseness of man seems to dominate, it is possible to exchange one vileness for another. But the Hyperworkoid is a dead end from which there is no return. He is the drone par excellence, the bourgeois-capitalist Scurvy having aided in his castration. Hyperworkoid did not happen accidentally; he was prepared by both the fascist and socialist regimes in the play. But he has no desires left, save to work. He cannot be bought; in the old world all the characters had a price. One could survive, at a price. The world of the shoemaker, the world of individual self-determination, is wrested from the individual as a common denominator for determining experience by a new kind of super-force which will establish a reality that is totally relative (TS-GDR 288).

Professors Gerould and Durer have pointed out an important structuring technique in this play; they state that in this play Witkacy "...pushes to extremes his technique of alternating philosophical discussion and violent action" (MAN 126). The pattern of the resolution of the first two acts is precisely this: discussion and debate interrupted by extreme violence and the establishment of a new order. Violent ideas, expressed in violent language, and senselessly violent actions are contrasted with violent sexual desires of the extremest sort.²⁵ An alternating pattern of such

²⁵The Duchess' following speech is an example: "My dream

ingredients of violence is the pattern of the whole play. The revolution that ends Act I puts Scurvy in charge and the arrests which ensue are explained by Scurvy as being "...one of those abridged symbolic scenes" because "...we don't have time for a long process of development in a natural way" (TS-GDR 243).²⁶ Such an absence of a long process of development in a natural way is precisely the manner in which the law of discontinuity operates; event, discussion, new event, with often no continuity or transition

is coming true! I've discovered the proper medium for my second incarnation on this earth. (To the Shoemakers.) I'd like to ennoble your hatred and change your envy, jealousy, frenzy and insatiability into wild creative energy for the superconstruction--that's the word for it--of a new social life, whose seeds must be embedded in your souls which certainly have nothing in common with your sweating, stinking, overworked bodies. I'd like to drink the agony your work causes you through a straw, the way a gnat sucks a hippopotamus' blood--to the extent that that's possible--and transmute your pain into my pet schemes for the future; they're such beauties, delicate butterflies that'll one day turn into oxen. Institutions don't make the man, the man makes the institutions (TS-GDR 240)

(Spełnia się sen! Znalazłam media dla mego drugiego wcielenia na tej ziemi. [do szewców] Chciałabym uwznioślić waszą nienawiść, zamienić zawiść, zazdrość, wściekłość i nienasycenie życiem na dziką twórczą energię dla hiperkonstrukcji--tak się to nazywa-- nowego życia społecznego, którego zarodki tkwią na pewno w waszych duszach, nie mających na pewno również nic wspólnego z waszymi spoconymi, zaśmierdziałymi, spracowanymi ciałami. Chciałabym mękę waszej pracy pić przez rurkę, jak komar krew hipopotama-- o ile to możliwe w ogóle--i przemieniać na moje idejki, takie piękne, takie motylki, które kiedyś wołami się staną. Nie instytucje tworzą człowieka, ale człowiek instytucje)" (S-SIW 530).

²⁶"Skrócona scenka reprezentacyjna--my nie mamy czasu na długie procesy, że tak powiem, naturalne" (S-SIW 534).

between. The result is that the events stand in sharp contrast, though in sequence it is not always clear how the play progressed from one to the other. Ideas are used as actions in that they are bandied about for a long time and then suddenly they become reality but without the majority of the actors involved in bringing it about. In fact, in this play, at one point the actors are literally infected with an idea, work--over which they have not the slightest control--and this infection causes the second reversal in the plot. In this play, as in others, the action of importance in resolving the plot takes place some place else and the results are introduced onto the stage. The pattern stops when the conflicts are exploded by the new force in Act III, there being a new dominant class introduced.

This play resolves like a game which has a new set of rules and values injected into it. The characters are unable to end the game. One of them, Sajetan, cannot even die--he goes on and on dying: he is struck with the Golden Axe (TS-GDR 275), later shot in the ear (TS-GDR 277) and shot again (TS-GDR 279) two pages later, and he is still alive at the final curtain where there is no resolution of his agony. The curtain is just dropped. Due to the previous action in the play, that is, one revolution after another, one might assume there would be yet another revolution sometime in the future--under these circumstances there is nothing to do

but to drop the curtain. No definitive action within the play is possible. The characters are powerless to evoke a resolution of any kind.

Deformation of reality is used to enhance and support the thematic idea of discontinuity in several ways:

1) Theatrical form is parodied by calling attention to itself, thereby breaking the illusion of distance between the audience and the play material. For example, one stage direction calls for: "Silence. Boredom. The curtain falls slowly, rises and falls once more. Still worse boredom" (TS-GDR 244).²⁷ In the midst of the action of Act III the stage direction itself materializes over the heads of the actors; "Boredom" is inscribed on a board that is lowered from the flies (TS-GDR 281). Then another placard is lowered that is inscribed with "Boredom getting worse and worse" (TS-GDR 282). This means of drawing attention to the fact that boredom exists may also be an example of what Witkacy referred to as externalization of feelings.

2) The very concept of humaneness and humanity is distorted and misshapen through exaggeration. Reduced to contemplating his executioner, Czeladnik II (Apprentice II) says: "Poor

²⁷"Milczenie. Nuda. Powoli zapada kurtyna, podnosi się i znowu spada. Nuda coraz gorsza" (S-SIW 536).

humanity, can you understand that your best sons have sunk so low that now looking at one's executioner is the only cultural distraction left and one of the noblest?" (TS-GDR 246).²⁸ For Scurvy there is no such thing any longer as humanity. For him, it has become deformed beyond recognition: "There's no such thing as humanity--there's only worms in the cheese, which is a heap of worms itself" (TS-GDR 250).²⁹

Księżna Irina Wsiewołodowna Zbereżnicka-Podberezka (Duchess Irina Nikitovna Provokskaya-Debochkova) extends the metaphor: "Sajetan, baby, the world is an absurd gang of monsters fighting among themselves. If they weren't all devouring one another, some kind of bacilli would cover the earth in three days with a layer forty miles deep" (TS-GDR 270).³⁰ To the Duchess existence is hateful and depends on a balance established between fighting microbes (TS-GDR 260). Pure Form is not necessarily achieved by this kind of exaggeration, however; certainly, in

²⁸"Czy rozumiesz, ludzkości, ten niesamowity upadek najlepszych synów twych, że patrzenie na kata staje się jedyną kulturalną rozrywką, i to z tych szlachetnych?" (S-SIW 539).

²⁹"Ludzkości nie ma--są tylko robaki w serze, który jest też kupą robaków" (S-SIW 544).

³⁰"Świat, mój Sajetańciu, jest stekiem bezsensu walczących potworów. Gdyby się wszystko nie pożerało, bakcyle jakieś tam pokryłyby w trzy dni ziemię na sześćdziesiąt kilometrów grubą warstwą" (S-SIW 569).

part, the effect is that of a heightened sense of reality, demonstrating a world-weariness on the part of the characters and perhaps on the part of the playwright.

3) Boredom from idleness leads the shoemakers to state the ethic of work which is ultimately deformed in the physical actualization of the Hyperworkoid:

Prison or no prison--work is irresistible. Work is the greatest miracle, it's the metaphysical unity of the plurality of worlds--it's the absolute! We'll work ourselves to death, to eternal life beyond the grave--if we're lucky! Who knows what's really at the bottom of work like ours (TS-GDR 262).³¹

At the heart of work like theirs is the absolute of the worker--the Hyperworkoid. The basis of work like theirs is the boot as absolute. But it is not an individual boot, it is a mechanized boot. Individuals, like their work, are no longer needed in the completed work ethic represented by the Hyperworkoid; a cog in a process is needed and it must be machine perfect.

4) Personal action is deformed in that it is seen as pointless and leading to frustration and boredom. Scurvy says:

But in order to accomplish anything, you have to be somewhat stupid and have a one track mind.

³¹"Więzienie, nie więzienie--pracy nikt się nie oprze. Praca to cud najwyższy, to metafizyczna jedność wielości światów--to absolut! Zapracujęm się na śmierć, aż do żywota wiecznego--może! Kto to wie, co w takiej pracy, jak nasza, na dnie jest!" (S-SIW 559).

A really clever character won't do anything; he'll contemplate his own navel and that's all. I don't want to rob you of your spiritual goods, I can see the innermost lining of life and of human souls, too.³²

In the setting of the reality of the play Scurvy's philosophy is an accurate one: it is of little matter whether he becomes top dog or not, whether Sajetan bled for the masses or not--the end result is the same in both cases. Both parties as well as the aristocratic Irina succumb to the "They" that no one understands and no one ever shown on the stage controls. Action, personal or corporate action, is eventually pointless in such a world.

5) Even death is deformed through distortion, exaggeration and fantasy. Scurvy howls himself to death, lusting after Irina. Sajetan is axed with the Golden Axe, that makes myths for the future working classes, and he should die; yet he turns to the audience and speaks (TS-GDR 277) on and on. He survives eleven pages of dialogue during which time he is shot twice by the Hyper-workoid. Sajetan's dying is prolonged even until the final curtain at which time he is still 'alive;' this is a visual demonstration of deformation of reality, character transformation and character

³²"Aby zaś działać, trzeba być trochę głupim, takim ciasnym, wicie. Prawdziwie mądry facet działać nie będzie: zapatrzy się we własny pępek i tyła. I tego wama, tych waszych dóbr duchowych, odbierać nie chcę. Ja widzę najtajniejsze podszewki życia i ludzkich dusz" (S-SIW 545).

fate. There are no heroes; all the myths are dead. Death is in a sense killed.³³ Life becomes a living death, for the comrades understand too well that "They" can rule very well by just keeping "them" at "...the very edge of despair" (TS-GDR 288).³⁴

³³An actual death is not depicted in the play until Act III. The workers' revolution having been completed, Sajetan loses his usefulness to the ongoing revolutionary movement. The Two Apprentices claim that he is now holding them back with his old-fashioned ideas about the individual, that he is too bourgeois for the revolution of the future. They decide to kill him with the Golden Axe, to sacrifice him to the revolution before he has time to disgrace himself. Thereby, the Two Apprentices know that they will create a new myth for the masses, a stronger one, one that will serve the revolution and one that will help destroy the prevailing myth of the Polish past. Sajetan is struck down by the Golden Axe. But he won't die. He is 'killed' three times; that is, logically, he should die three times: a) with the Golden Axe of myth and legend Sajetan was killed to create a new myth for the evolving revolution; b) he was killed a second time by the Hyperworkoid who shoots him in the ear with a huge pistol (TS-GDR 277); c) and he is killed a third and we assume a final time when the Hyperworkoid shoots him again (TS-GDR 279). Still the old man does not 'die.' As with the myth of the national leader Gnebon Puczymorda (Pugnasty Jawbloatski), Sajetan must be bestialized and brutalized out of existence. Sajetan is degraded along with the representative of the revolution from the right, Scurvy, who is in the third act howling himself to death from frustrated sexual desire. The national myth represented by Pugnasty Jawbloatski, past leader of the Vigilant Youth, is also debunked. Entirely new myths that have nothing to do with either Scurvy, Sajetan, Pugnasty or anything that they thought they stood for have now conquered and soon their presence will be known on the stage. The individual, the concept that essentially both Scurvy and Sajetan served, is obsolete by that time.

³⁴"...na samym punkcie rozpaczy" (S-SIW 591).

6) Through the use of exaggerated and distorted language and ideas, the sex act is deformed so that it seems improbable human activity. For example Irina would prefer to be the female praying mantis in the sex act (TS-GDR 233), totally dominating her male partner:

If that joke is any indication, you must be abominable when you're making love. At least shut up-- I like it when it is performed as a silent ceremony of male degradation in absolute quiet--then I can hear eternity (TS-GDR 261).³⁵

Sex is animal-like, insect-like, mechanical and noncreative. Sex becomes pointless, and the Hyperworkoid does not need it. He is a sexless machine who will never interfere with the work goals, whatever they are, by his now useless itches and urges.

7) All through the play work is deformed, either by frantic erotic overparticipation or abstinence. Not the boot as absolute but the boot as the end product of a pointless occupation of unregenerative, relentlessly working pseudo-automatons like the Hyperworkoid changes the level of work from an expression of the individual's very essence and being expressed through his craft to a product that is counted, tagged, crated, passed on to be consumed.

³⁵"Ohydny musisz być w erotyzmie, sądząc po tym dowcipku. Przynajmniej milcz--lubię, gdy to się odbywa jako milcząca, ponura ceremonia upodlenia samca w absolutnej ciszy--wtedy wsłuchuję się w wieczność" (S-SIW 558).

The individual's work becomes lunatic (TS-GDR 261) or sterile.

8) And, finally, the settings are deformed by distortion of reality. Act I set is a combination of circles and triangles, semi-circles and vistas enclosed within the rectangle of the proscenium arch. The combination of indoor and outdoor space, confined space and unrestricted vistas, a tree and a triangular patch of sky create a sense of distortion of the real. Reality is further distorted when the set literally disintegrates as a visible sign of the first revolution: "The wall with the small window tumbles down; the rotten stump collapses" (TS-GDR 243)³⁶ and the light alters radically. The unreality of that is heightened in Act II where the "...the hall of compulsory unemployment is divided into two parts by what are known as 'balusters:' on the left there's nothing--on the right a magnificently equipped shoemaker's workshop" (TS-GDR 245).³⁷ And in the middle of this there is a lectern on a podium for Scurvy. In this sharply contrasted 'world' the shoemakers are confined behind the bars, of course,

³⁶"Zawała się ściana z okienkiem; wywała się zgniły pień..." (S-SIW 534).

³⁷"Sala przymusowej bezrobotności, przedzielona tzw. 'balaskami' na dwie części: na lewo nie ma nic, na prawo--wspaniale urządzone warsztat szewski" (S-SIW 537).

where they wander about "...aimlessly, like hungry hyenas" (TS-GDR 245).³⁸ This is treated as a sacred place by Scurvy, this prison, and the shoemakers may not sully it with dirty words (TS-GDR 249). But it too is torn up when the shoemakers stage their takeover by infection through work. The Act III setting is the same as Act I but there is no small window as before and there is no curtain. What was the semicircular shape of the cobbler's shop is now somewhat "planet-shaped" (TS-GDR 265).³⁹ On the tree from Act I there are now red and green signal lights. And on the floor is a magnificent carpet. In this setting the now ruling shoemakers loll in splendid dressing gowns and pajamas.

In summary, the play is strongly organized thematically and causally; Pure Form devices in structuring heighten the effects of the play, but do not make it unreal, for even the extended act of Sajetan's dying can be explained physically. The chaos that the discontinuous action creates is nightmarish, but none the less real, from a life viewpoint.

Language is used to heighten the sense of distorted reality in this play in several ways. These elements are a) combinations of action and language, b) noises, and c) language dissonance.

³⁸"...jak głódne hieny" (S-SIW 537).

³⁹"...planetarne" (S-SIW 563).

The Shoemakers often depicts long political and philosophical debates and the results of actions initiated elsewhere (i. e., the takeover of the Vigilant Youth, the fall of Jawbloatski, the arrival and assumption of authority by "They"). The enormity of the language of The Shoemakers, its very extravagance, in a sense deforms this play about ideas. The idea of an action, which frequently is not simultaneously acted out, is often expressed in language so vivid, so extravagant, so out-sized, that the actual expressing of the idea is as functional as the action would be itself. That is, the language used to convey the idea operates satisfactorily as a substitute for action. The proper action of the play is boredom and the results of boredom. The language used to show the varying manifestations of the malady is anything but boring: it is riveting to the intellect and to the emotions. Ideas and desire to express them create a whirlwind of verbiage that literally takes away the speaker's breath and his ability to talk. Such an orgy of expression seems chaotic and uncontrolled.

Noises are used to accent and interrupt speeches and actions, thereby paralleling in language the chaos that results in the play.⁴⁰

⁴⁰There are a number of kinds of noises used and all the major characters engage in his or her particular brand. Sajetan in the early part of the play uses "Hey!" and "Hey! Hey!" frequently; he uses it once in the third act, just before he is struck with the Golden Axe. In the third act Sajetan is trying to be rational,

Dissonance, as a technique to deform or distort, is especially effective in this play, forcing a discrepancy between the speaker and what he says, and the speaker and the situation. Sajetan, and the two apprentices, for example, are shoemakers; but they are extremely skillful debaters and very well-informed social philosophers. Throughout the play they verbally battle the bourgeois-intelligentsia in the person of Scurvy and the aristocratic-decadent in the character of the Duchess Irina. The Duchess for her part continues to bring sex into politics, repeatedly creating chaos in the shoemakers' workshop. Oaths are also effective examples of language dissonance in The Shoemakers. They are extremely rich and varied inventions of fabricated words and literary ref-

to put into effect his social program; after being hit with the axe he still makes 'sense' but he babbles on and on. In a certain sense, everything that he is saying ought to be regarded as nonsense or noise, as he ought to be dead. It is interesting to note that he ceases to use the noise-word once he assumes the directorial function. The same is true of Scurvy, whose noise-word is "Hee, hee!" which he uses in Act I before he comes to power and only twice thereafter (TS-GDR 247, 255); in Act II he howls like a dog--a noise--but he does not use his noise-word. The same pattern is true of the Duchess' noise-word "Tch-tch;" in her case, she uses it only while in power, that is, while operating as a directive agent in the action in Act I. The nonsense or noise-words of the Apprentices follow no pattern. They include "Ho-ho" (TS-GDR 265), "Heh-heh" (TS-GDR 232), "Hee-hee" (TS-GDR 246, 265), and "Hahahumhuhhuh" (TS-GDR 239). Boredom moves the apprentices to speak in unison on one occasion (TS-GDR 267).

erences.⁴¹ The extremity of the language is shocking and underlines the chaotic reality of the play.

Professors Gerould and Durer wrote that the revolutions of the play "...are all attempts to substitute action for words" (MAN 216). Words are futile, but poured out in great gushes that alternate with episodes of extremely violent action. Words solve nothing, and neither does violence. The intermediate actions are as it were pointless, for the world of the play is doomed to stasis under "They." "Sexual and political tensions mount within a closed circle of characters constantly together approximating a cage until the pressure becomes unbearable," Gerould and Durer wrote (MAN 216). But words do not assuage these tensions, they only increase them. Attempted verbal solutions lead to swift and

⁴¹"You'd better read Boy's Little Words if you want to improve your vocabulary, you gozzony, you bahooley, you dejuiced soak-socket, you gutreamed pukeslurper, you lousy bum... (TS-GDR 242) (Poczytalbys lepiej 'Słówka' Boya, aby choć trochę kultury narodowej nabrać, ty chliporzygu odwantroniony, ty wszawy bum...)" (S-SIW 533). Tadeusz Żelenski (Boy is a pen name) was a Polish critic and translator. His book Little Words ("Słówka," 1913) is a collection of satirical verse and songs that he wrote for the literary cabaret in Cracow, the "Green Balloon," Miłosz, History of Polish Literature, p. 361. Miłosz writes of Żelenski's contribution: "Yet what appeared to be mere frivolity became an important landmark for the history of Polish poetry, precisely because of its unpretentiousness and its colloquial language; it was a real relief after the high-strung and naudin poems of the modernists. Boy's epigrammatic terseness was such that many of his expressions entered the everyday idiom," Miłosz, History of Polish Literature, p. 361.

extreme violence, which in itself is not satisfying because it does not accumulate in the sense that it does not build toward a resolution satisfactory to the majority of the cast or to the audience. Some of Witkacy's plays resolve on a note of unexplained mystery and strangeness. But in this play, having refused to give simple, or trite, answers to extremely complex political problems, and having refused to allow his heroes to behave heroically and overthrow "They," Witkacy resolves the play in frustration. This is perhaps a more reasonable, a more 'realistic' ending than another would be. The force that does bring down the individualists in the play--Irina, Sajetan and Scurvy--is to a certain degree external, enormously powerful, and no one character in the play is able to dominate or cope with it. The limitations of Sajetan, Irina and Scurvy as people figure importantly in the resolution of the action of each of the first two acts, but the arrival of the external force--"They"--precludes any further concern about personal action or limitations: "They" have arrived and "They" have taken over. By the time that action is announced it is already too late for the cast to respond defensively. The creative possibilities that exist at the conclusion of The Water Hen, for example, are non-existent at the end of this play.

If the play is considered as a performance, through the combination of work, sex and philosophical discussion in the early

sections of the play, specific characters in this play ought to be able to establish themselves through an initiatory action of a traditional type. To a degree both *Scurvy* and *Sajetan* do this. However, the general character progression is from freedom and sense of self to a confinement and restriction of possibilities to act and to a restriction of function. Instead of allowing increasingly numerous possibilities for action, such as the chaos in *The Water Hen* allows, in this play Witkacy uses fantastic psychology to transform all of the characters into one function at the end of the play, a function best exemplified by the Hyperworkoid. Irina, for example, begins the play as a director function⁴² and ends the act as an actor function, able to manipulate other characters after that point only by the perverseness of her sexual exploits. *Sajetan* begins the play as an actor function, controlled by Irina and *Scurvy*; he becomes a director function for a time and then is reduced to being an actor function again in Act III. *Scurvy* follows a similar pattern. The representatives of the "They" government never appear in the play in the role of directors; they are always carrying out orders as flunkies for a power someplace off stage. At the end of the play all of the cast, without

⁴²Błóński, "Meaning and Deformation," p. 27. Also see Appendix IV.

exception, are controlled by a supreme power that is never shown. This is not a formal pattern, but a continuation of the thematic material of several of the other plays, material which deals with the fate of the individual and the future of a society that supports the notion of individualism. In this play, two of the supreme individualists are dead or dying at the final curtain, that is, Sajetan and Scurvy, and the third is carried off to be a diversion for the new rulers. The Hyperworkoid must be the image of the future that Witkacy sees beyond the ending of The Shoemakers.

Mouthpieces for philosophical and social positions, the characters of the play are not used as themes in music or color in painting; the thematic material of the play develops to plausible, causal conclusions. Some of the connecting events are omitted, such as the rise to power of each force that brings revolutionary change; each power transfer offstage is announced and not fully demonstrated. But this is not enough to make the play a demonstration of Pure Form ideas. Witkacy retains the traditional practices of peaking emotions and action at the end of the act and this pattern is repeated in all three acts. The last half of the last act contains a variety of powerful and effective symbols and images; they are The Beating Heart, the Woolsack, the Peasants, the Old Socialism (Sajetan), the New Socialism (the Apprentices), the Bourgeois Intellectual (Scurvy), the Aristocratic Decadent (Irina),

the Mulch with its literary associations, the "They." It is not clear how these elements are to be viewed, other than realistically as forces that in the world of the play are eventually dominated by the "They." For neither Sajetan's unrealistically sustained death nor the introduction of the Mulch is enough to remove the events of that act to another plane of being, as the death of the Mother does in The Mother. The exaggeration and distortion are a part of a realistic depiction, not a new reality in this play.

Summary

Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix, The Mother, and The Shoemakers are three of the extant non-designated plays of Witkiewicz. They span the creative period of the playwright, Maciej Korbowa being the first full length play Witkacy wrote and The Shoemakers being the last surviving play he wrote. Maciej Korbowa illustrates some aspects of an emerging theory of form which would result in the theory of Pure Form in the theatre. The Shoemakers shows that Witkacy was still interested in his theory as late as 1934, that Pure Form notions of deformation, especially distortion and exaggeration, enhance the structure of the play.

Though strongly life oriented and patterned on conventional dramatic models using causally related events to shape dramatic material, all three of these plays are structured in part on prin-

ciples of Pure Form theory. Life elements outweigh the Pure Form ones making them more realistic than Pure Form according to Witkacy's definition, but all three plays show some use of fantastic psychology and reality, and to that degree they are formal constructions.

All three plays depend upon a reversal to complete the structure and resolve the plot. This reversal is more Pure Form in The Mother than in the other two plays. In The Mother the third act reversal is made possible only because of the disturbance of natural order and the resurrection of the Mother. This allows the last act to be resolved according to laws other than those governing real-life psychological patterns. In this way the play is like Metaphysics of a Two-Headed Calf and The Madman and the Nun. The reversal of Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix is a reprieve ending which, though ironic, has been prepared for by the playwright and which allows two of the cast to survive the events of the play. The identity that Korbowa has at the last curtain is a new one to the audience, but it is one that he has apparently had throughout the play. To this degree the form is that of a well-made play; one of the conventions of the well-made play is to withhold a secret that, when it is revealed at the climax of the action, produces a reversal favorable to the hero. This is like the reversal in The Pragmatists; there the reversal is also favorable to the Scoundrel,

which Korbowa is shown to be. The reversal pattern in The Shoemakers is traditional, being repeated at the end of each act with the final reversal being the climax of the play.

The structure of two of these plays is shaped in part by the intrusion of an unknown force into the world of the play. This force does not causally resolve but stops the action of these plays. This is seen in both The Shoemakers and The Mother. The plot of The Shoemakers is invaded by "They" and the pattern of repeating revolutions is stopped. A stasis is achieved that will disallow further change at a future time. Over these events the cast has no power. In The Mother, the Mother's death should have concluded a plot based on psychological causality. But the death of the Mother, for reasons never explained, removes the action of the play to a new place into which comes a mechanical device bearing six workers who destroy the hero. There are no logical explanations given for this action. Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix is not resolved with the intrusion of an unknown force. The events of a revolution end that play and when they break upon the stage at the end of the last act, they have been well prepared for in advance. The only surprise is the discovery of Korbowa's true identity.

These plays build a dream-like reality of chaotic and discontinuous action composed of distorted and exaggerated real-life elements. For example, in The Shoemakers the violence of ideas

and language, as well as action, creates an effect that is nightmarishly chaotic. The omission of connecting events contributes to this sensation; events seem to occur without the normally expected connecting sequences, giving the sensation of the consciousness of a brain experiencing a high fever. For this reason, they seem isolated in time and space, arbitrary, distorted, making of themselves isolated units that can be viewed separately from the rest of the plot, in the way one would possibly view an abstract painting composed of elements that depict a fragmented reality. Events and ideas take on attributes that they would not have if concatenation had not been suspended temporarily.

Fantastic character psychology is evident in The Shoemakers in the reduction of all characters in the plot to a position of no control over their personal fates. They become individuals who are manipulated by another force. The distortion of human qualities in the character of the Hyperworkoid is another example of fantastic psychology. This notion is best illustrated in these three plays by the characters of Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix who are able to reverse sex identity at will throughout most of that play. This is true in spite of the fact that Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix in its entirety is the most realistic of the three plays.

Exposition is incomplete in all three plays: the identity of "They" is never made clear; Maciej Korbowa's true relationship to the revolutionaries is not explained; the dead Mother and Father return to life in the Epilogue of The Mother and there is no explanation of this happening.

While there are some examples of non-communicative language that is used to establish and develop mood and tone, to express the inner thoughts and states of being of characters, to develop situation and character metaphorically, and to underline the static nature of the plots, for the most part language in these plays changed little from usual dramaturgical practices. Language dissonance was pointed out in all three plays. Also there is an effort to use ideas as arbitrary, autonomous events in the structure: in Maciej Korbowa the idea of death seems to generate actual death; in The Shoemakers there is an effort to make extravagantly stated ideas assume the function of independent action. In performance, it is likely that these ideas would be experienced as elements of a heightened sense of reality, rather than a new reality. Only one of the plays discussed in this chapter demonstrates a juxtaposition of action, character and idea in formal terms. This occurs in the Epilogue of The Mother, where there is an extraordinarily complex arrangement of time and events that taken as a whole bears no relationship to anything in actuality, a complexity

of elements that is invented and not imitated. But each single element in this complex arrangement is ordinary in its life-likeness: a dead Mother, a pregnant Mother of twenty-three, a father, a son, an unborn son. It is in the manner of combination that such simple life-like elements create Pure Form and extend compositional possibilities, and not the fact that they are life-like or formal to begin with.

CHAPTER VI

PURE FORM AND OTHER MODERN INNOVATIONS

Pure Form in the theatre is but one of the many innovative methods in the twentieth century theatre and it has common characteristics with some of the others. In this chapter Pure Form is discussed with regard to three of them: the styles of expressionism and surrealism and the modern tragicomic mode.

Expressionism

If one rejects a restricted, doctrinaire, nationalist definition of expressionism, accepting instead a larger international idea of the style, it can be shown that Witkacy shares with the writers of the expressionist movement their spirit of revolt and distortion and the sense of boldness of innovation that Walter Sokel calls the unifying features of expressionism.¹ Sokel observed that

¹Walter H. Sokel, ed., An Anthology of German Expressionist Drama: A Prelude to the Absurd (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1963), p. ix.

Expressionism was not a program guiding individual authors as they wrote their works. It was a term applied by critics, editors, anthologists, and historians of literature in dealing with a group of authors. The term was used after the fact. Most of the authors usually called Expressionist felt that they expressed themselves in new ways, and they groped for new terms to define their feelings. However, they rarely applied the term Expressionist to themselves.²

Witkacy shares with the Expressionists their search for new ways to express ideas and new means to define feelings. This distinguishes neither Witkacy nor the Expressionists, for all the theatrical revolts of the century have this attribute in common. However, Witkacy would have been at home with the expressionist rejection of the well-made play, the principles of plausability, and the objective recording of real life, all features of the Expressionist revolt.³ Witkacy can also be accommodated to some of the salient features of expressionism as George E. Wellwarth outlines them:

Intense subjectivism--the externalization of the writer's inner feelings--and an atmosphere of violence directed largely against the family as the basis of society...a powerful lyricism that takes precedence over plot and character, and

²Ibid., pp. ix-x.

³Ibid., p. ix.

a lack of psychological delineation resulting
in type characters and symbolic abstractions.⁴

Witkacy's theoretical notion of the unity of the individual psyche expressing itself in the construction of a formal work must be seen as something similar to the expressionists' externalization of inner feelings. Walter Hassencklever in Humanity, for example, has a murdered man, who rises from his grave, carry his head about in a sack; Witkacy uses death and dead persons to make his plots disjunctive and alogical. The walls in Johannes Sorge's The Beggar open to include the whole cosmos into the play; the walls of a barracks-like building move in to enclose the limitless open space at the opening of The Water Hen. Witkacy claims to have employed this type of fantastic action and improbable psychology to increase the possibilities of form, while the expressionists employed devices of this type to develop themes. The attack on the family as the basic social unit, evidenced in the forerunner of expressionism, Frank Wedekind's Spring's Awakening and in Johannes Sorge's The Beggar and Walter Hassencklever's The Son, is a subject in a number of Witkacy's plays, notably Metaphysics of a Two-Headed Calf, The New Deliverance, The Water Hen,

⁴George E. Wellwarth, "Expressionism," John Gassner and Edward Quinn, eds., The Reader's Encyclopedia of World Drama (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1969), p. 257.

and The Mother. But the younger generation, rebel though they may in Witkiewicz's plays, does not succeed, with the exception of Tazio in The Water Hen, in breaking the family bond on them. Florestan succeeds in killing his Mother but is tortured by an authoritarian unknown force; Patricianello is bodily carried off by his parents who have returned from death to reclaim him. Though the family as a concept is of relatively little importance in Gyubal Wahazar--a mish-mash of transformational possibilities having been substituted in its place--Gyubal is destroyed by a father-surrogate, his former teacher Father Unguenty. And the play The Mother, in addition to other parodies, might be seen as a parody of the expressionist conflict between father and son. The expressionists, like Witkacy, theorized and attempted new ideas about plot: "association of ideas supplants construction of plot based on logical connection of cause and effect,"⁵ resulting in a pattern "...of the human mind in dream and reverie."⁶ An example is Oscar Kokaschka's Job. The structure of The Madman and the Nun, The New Deliverance and The Mother, as well as the hyper-reality of Gyubal Wahazar, are dream-like structures, in the sense that they are disjunctive, disharmonious, sometimes

⁵Sokel, Anthology of German Expressionist Drama, p. xiv.

⁶Ibid.

alogical in pattern, having meanings that are associative rather than totally conceptual. But Witkacy's characters are psychologically fascinating and multifaceted, rich in detail and depth. Herein lies one of the paradoxes of Witkacian theory: while he maintained in theory that character ought to be treated like a theme in music or a pigment in painting, and though similar types do reappear from play to play, in practice Witkacy's heroes are uniquely individualized psychologically. At the same time they are manipulated for the playwright's purposes in such plays as Gyubal Wahazar, Metaphysics of a Two-Headed Calf and The New Deliverance.

Nor was Witkacy's revolt in the direction of social reform, as was that of expressionism.⁷ And he was not a young revolutionary engaged in ethical, social and political revolt.⁸ While the thematic material of some of the dramas revolves about the concept of the individual in the twentieth century and his place in the present and the future, Witkacy did not offer a revolutionary program with which to implement his ideas. He concentrated instead on personal awareness of individuality and the role in which

⁷Wellwarth, The Reader's Encyclopedia of World Drama, p. 257.

⁸Sokel, Anthology of German Expressionist Drama, p. 257.

Pure Form as an aesthetic tool could be employed to keep this concept alive in a time that, according to him, threatened its very existence. His revolution was essentially an artistic and meta-physical one.

Instead of imposing his concept of reality upon external reality⁹ he deformed surface reality, creating multiple realities simultaneously which, when experienced in sequence, often come to no conclusion in a causal sense, but rather supply the viewer with many strange sensations and an often inconclusive argument. The accumulative press of such a pattern, he believed, could cause an awareness of the strangeness of existence itself. Whereas it has been suggested that expressionist drama being "...theme centered rather than plot--or conflict--centered,"¹⁰ results in a sense of "formlessness,"¹¹ Witkiewiczian theory results in anything but formlessness. The motivating force in Pure Form theory is the impulse to formulate the means to achieve possibilities of new forms; to achieve, in short, a unique form in each work, as each work--ideally--obeys its own formal logic, not being dependent upon outside criteria for

⁹Gassner and Quinn, Encyclopedia, p. 257.

¹⁰Sokel, Anthology of German Expressionist Drama, p. xv.

¹¹Ibid.

validation nor upon the authority of the author's personal subjectivity for justification, the validity of which it is difficult to support. Witkacy's effects are sometimes achieved by the use of a principle of structuring similar to this expressionist one:

...association of ideas supplants construction of plot based on logical connection of cause and effect. The old structural principle of causal interrelation between character, incident and action gives way to a new structural pattern, closer to music than to drama--the presentation and variation of a theme.¹²

While Witkacy would heartily agree with Yvan Goll that the poet must "...learn that there exists worlds different from the world of the five senses,"¹³ Witkacy would not accept Goll's idea that it is the purpose of art to educate and improve man¹⁴ nor would he accept Ludwig Rubiner's notion that the playwright seeks to arouse "...the individual's awareness of his responsibility to the community."¹⁵ Pure Form was a means to metaphysical experience, not political and social reform.¹⁶ Whereas subjectivism as an

¹²Ibid., p. xiv.

¹³Yvan Goll, "Two Superdramas," Walter H. Sokel, ed., An Anthology of German Expressionist Drama, p. 9.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁵Ludwig Rubiner, "Man in the Center," Walter H. Sokel, ed., An Anthology of German Expressionist Drama: A Prelude to the Absurd (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1963), p. 3.

¹⁶Gassner and Quinn, Encyclopedia, p. 257.

expression of individuality is the highest goal of expressionism, Witkacian Pure Form drama is not restricted to a symbol of Witkacy's view of external reality. Witkacy wanted to show a carefully orchestrated conglomerate of disparate elements that would express new structural possibilities because the ingredients included in the construction are used in the manner in which they are and in no other way. The truth of a Pure Form play, he tried to prove, rests in the truth of the form in which it is couched. The primary goal of Pure Form was to expand dramatic compositional possibilities.

Surrealism

Although Witkacy's concept of Pure Form was certainly in part an effort to avoid "falsification of experience by forms,"¹⁷ one of the goals of surrealism, in spite of the many shared characteristics with the French school of surrealism, his plays do not fulfill all the requirements of the style as André Breton formulated it in his manifesto written in 1924:

Surréalisme, n.m. Automatismes psychiques pur par lequel on se propose d'exprimer, soit verbalement, soit par écrit, soit de toute autre manière, le fonctionnement réel de la pensée. Dictée de la pensée, en l'absence de tout contrôle par la raison,

¹⁷Arnold Hauser, The Social History of Art, IV (New York: Vintage Books, 1951), 231.

en dehors de toute préoccupation esthétique
ou morale.¹⁸

Witkacy certainly did not relinquish control to pure psychic automatism nor was there any effort to totally subjectify the creative act, as for example in Roger Vitrac's The Mysteries of Love where he attempts a new spontaneity of dialogue by automatic writing, or in Robert Desnos's Place de l'Etoile, an effort to use the dream to model the events and the form of his plays. In fact, the seemingly free chaotic activity of a Witkacian play--that might be mistaken for psychic automatism--is very carefully orchestrated by the playwright. It is not allowed to happen accidentally. Witkacy's plays do share with the French school the use of what Martin Esslin has called the associative technique; that is, the construction of the details of a play tends to show the absence of any need for clearly structured connections between levels of reality, awareness and meaning, as well as some lack of chronological plotting common in realistic theatre.¹⁹ This is similar to the technique Joseph Frank called the "reflexive technique:" "This

¹⁸André Breton, Manifeste du surréalisme. Nouvelle Edition Augmentée d'une Préface et de la Lettre aux Voyantes (Paris: "Les Documentaires" Éditions Kra, 1929), p. 46.

¹⁹Martin Esslin, Reflections: Essays on Modern Theatre (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1971), p. 183. This is not true of Witkacian plotting in all cases but the impulse is toward this end.

pattern asks the reader to suspend the process of individual reference temporarily until the entire pattern of internal references can be apprehended as a unity.²⁰ Anna Balakain refers to this process as a "delay in comprehension" that triggers in the reader "...a power of discovery rather than immediate transmission of thought or image. Antonin Artaud's Jet of Blood, Jean Cocteau's The Wedding on the Eiffel Tower and André Breton and Phillipe Soupault's If You Please are examples of the piling up of images and meanings which result in new and unexpected insights."²¹ Witkacy's plays for the most part do satisfy all the requirements for "des contes à écrire pour les grandes personnes,"²² a new genre that Breton outlined in his 1924 Manifesto. These "fairy tales for adults" are characterized by fear, attraction of the unusual, chance, and a taste for the extravagant in action, thought and word, all of which attributes a Witkacian play has. His plays share with Surrealism the sense of the enigmatic, the mysterious and the outrageous as well as the monstrous and the inexplicable.

²⁰Joseph Frank, "Spatial Form in Modern Literature," The Sewanee Review, LIII, 2 (Spring, 1945), 225-26.

²¹Anna Balakain, Surrealism: The Road to the Absolute, revised ed. (New York: Dutton, 1970), p. 27.

²²Breton, Manifeste, p. 31.

The plays of Witkiewicz are a part of the larger and more inclusive international tradition of the surrealist mode rather than the restricting confines of the French school. Witkacy's plays share with "...the more encompassing international genre both the means of expressiveness of certain language characteristics, elements of structuring, as well as the matter of social awareness."²³ Paul Ilie's differentiation between the subjective and the objective effects of the surrealist mode are useful guides to determining the nature of the surrealistic experience.²⁴

Ilie argues that the most infallible yardstick for ascertaining whether a work is surrealistic is the subjective effect that the work has on the observer; that is, the observer must have '...the feeling that he is in the presence of a strange and disturbing world (Ilie, 5).' It then follows that the esthetic experience of surrealism involves sensations of uncanniness, incongruity and absurdity. Ilie has shown that the more objective differentiating criteria relate specifically to the technique of the genre, the chief technique being that of 'irrationality involving a new type of illogic based on free association (Ilie, 5).' Forms of meaning based on traditional logical progression of words or images are displaced by 'unrestricted juxtaposition' of words, images or ideas, whatever may make a meaning. The resulting relationships are

²³James W. Parker, "Witkiewicz's Gyubal Wahazar and Ribemont-Dessaignes' L'Empereur de Chine: Fairy Tales for Adults," The Polish Review, XVIII 1-2 (Winter-Spring, 1973), 31.

²⁴Paul Ilie, The Surrealist Mode in Spanish Literature (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1968), p. 5.

haphazard ones producing a reality that is not any longer constricted by usually accepted 'laws' of logic or language. In other words, a deformation such as Witkiewicz saw occurs.²⁵

The result is a created reality rather than an imitated reality.

Ilie wrote that this new vision of reality was:

...filled with unusual encounters, dissimilar planes of reality and psychological associations of many kinds. Whether the results are due to purely psychic automatism, or the deliberate and rational attempt to create an incongruous or grotesque world, the consequences are the same. That is, surrealism projects the form of distortion and the emotions of alienation.²⁶

The "deliberate and rational attempt to create an incongruous world" is the pattern of the structure of the plays discussed in this paper and it distinguishes Witkacy's brand of surrealism from the French school. Witkacy's plays show worlds "...which appear to operate according to their own laws quite outside the commonly held notions of scientific, political and philosophical laws based on the logical, the rational and the expected, our normal perception of the reality of life."²⁷ This new world is not the dream world that other surrealists claimed to probe. While Witkacy's fictional world may appear to operate like a highly disoriented

²⁵Parker, "Fairy Tales for Adults," p. 31.

²⁶Ilie, Surrealist Mode, p. 5.

²⁷Parker, "Fairy Tales for Adults," pp. 31-2.

and distorted dream, it is a dream-like state that seems structured and controlled. Regardless of the degree of apparent separation from plausibility and causality, always the progression of events in a Witkacian drama "...gives a degree of verisimilitude to the events which occur...."²⁸ Witkacy's brand of surrealism has in common with the larger, more encompassing international movement the following structuring techniques: 1) distortion of the laws of the physical universe, 2) violation, inversion or reversal of the normal laws of human life, and 3) defuncting of objects and events.²⁹ In addition, Witkacy's plot structure is often that of the surrealist mode; specifically, he introduces "...characters, events, and motifs at will as the play progresses in order to create surprise and to develop the plot. Surprise is a recurring element in the construction of any work of the surrealist mode. It allows for heterogeneity of disparate elements, rapid shifts of scene, time and emphasis, and a dislocation of meaning in logic."³⁰ These are features of all of the plays I have discussed in this paper. Witkacy's plays,

²⁸Ibid., p. 32.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., p. 42.

...the meaning of which is defined by the demands of the illusion of the individual play and not by demands of a consistent psychology or series of actions defined by assumptions drawn from observation of real life, attract by their combinations of chance, the unusual encounters, ...as well as disturbing psychological disassociations which are frequently psychically and metaphysically painful.³¹

This pain is often not resolved at the end of the last act; instead, as has been shown to be the pattern in a number of the Witkacian plays discussed, more often the viewer is held in the created form of these plays by these images as the curtain falls. The viewer is not released from the material of the play because of incomplete exposition or an unsatisfactory resolution.

Tragicomedy

The way distortion and surprise are used in Witkacy's dramatic form makes it very like modern tragicomedy, because in a Witkacy play at any moment without any advance warning or preparation "...the abyss can open suddenly"³² on both mystery and unassuageable terror.

³¹Parker, "Fairy Tales for Adults," p. 50.

³²Friedrich Dürrenmatt, "Problems of the Theatre," Gerhard Neilhaus, trans., Robert W. Corrigan and James L. Rosenberg, eds., The Context and Craft of Drama (San Francisco, California: The Chandler Publishing Co., 1964), p. 267.

The mercurial form of tragicomedy has been variously defined. Marvin T. Herrick finds tragicomedy to be "the backbone of the modern drama."³³ He argues that it traditionally allowed playwrights a freer form through a compromise between "classical tradition and the modern way of life."³⁴ It is for him a "middle ground between tragedy and comedy,"³⁵ a new form. Karl S. Guthke, on the other hand, finds tragicomedy to be a "fusion"³⁶ of the tragic and the comic, and he argues that "...the reciprocity of the interaction of the tragic and the comic"³⁷ are essential. Guthke finds that the tragicomic causes us "...to laugh with one eye and weep with the other, ...making the tragic more tragic and the comic more comic."³⁸ Ruby Cohn has called it the "mixed mood."³⁹ John Gassner equates the serious play and tragicomedy, defining the form as an "intermediate type," as a "mood or a

³³Marvin T. Herrick, Tragicomedy: Its Origin and Development in Italy, France and England (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1962), p. 321.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Karl S. Guthke, Modern Tragicomedy: An Investigation into the Nature of the Genre (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 59.

³⁷Ibid., p. 58.

³⁸Ibid., p. 59.

³⁹Ruby Cohn, Currents in Contemporary Drama (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1969), pp. 155-207.

treatment of experience."⁴⁰ Wolfgang Kayser equates the grotesque and tragicomic, stating that "...the history of the grotesque in the field of drama is largely one with that of tragicomedy."⁴¹

The old definitions of tragicomedy, as for example the generic definition dependent upon social status of the characters, do not seem acceptable when discussing Witkiewicz's plays. At the same time, some of the attributes of traditional tragicomedy are evident in a Witkacy play: the sense of loss of identity, the world of danger, the questing of seemingly lost souls in a world that skirts the brink of death. This is a tragicomedy plot pattern dating from the Renaissance, and exemplified by Fletcher's The Faithful Shepherdess. Some of Witkacy's plays retain the reversal of Renaissance tragicomedy, this reversal sometimes taking the form of a reprieve ending, as in Maciej Korbowa and Bella-trix and Madman and the Nun where the reversal is a self-parody. The chaotic world restored to order is viewed ironically in modern tragicomedy. J. L. Styan has shown that irony is the controlling agent of tragicomedy, which he refers to as "the dark

⁴⁰John Gassner, Producing the Play, revised ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1953), pp. 46-47.

⁴¹Wolfgang Kayser, The Grotesque in Art and Literature, trans. by Ulrich Weisstein (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1957), p. 54.

comedy;"⁴² the reversals of The Mother and The New Deliverance, sections of dialogue in Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix and The Shoemakers, character deformation of Anastasia Nibek in In a Little Country House, and the resolution of the theme of revolution and chaos in The Shoemakers are but a few examples of this literary device shaping the structure of Witkacy's plays. Styan states that the irony of tragicomedy is built by a confrontation of opposites (age and youth in The Water Hen and Metaphysics of a Two-Headed Calf, action and inaction in The Pragmatists), through the use of juxtaposition and contrast patterns (the juxtaposition of images at the conclusion of The Mother or The Shoemakers, the contrasts in openness and space in the setting of The Water Hen), and by an oblique approach to the playwright's ultimate goal (the never stated but obviously important destruction of the younger generation, as well as the individualists in many of the plays), all of which devices one or more of Witkacy's plays employ.

There is another pattern besides the reversal ending for modern tragicomedy which some of Witkacy's plays follow. This pattern has removed the restorative ending of Renaissance tragi-

⁴²J. L. Styan, The Dark Comedy: The Development of Modern Comic Tragedy (New York: Random House, 1962), pp. 260-68.

comedy. Friedrich Dürrenmatt's The Visit, Samuel Beckett's All That Fall, and especially Waiting for Godot, and Eugène Ionesco's Exit the King are examples. Whereas tragedy tends to reinforce the communal norm by purging it of potentially dangerous individuality and whereas comedy suggests that there is a time to come by regenerating the nonconformist, some modern tragicomedy, particularly that structured on a cyclic action, holds for the modern consciousness the terrifying possibility that time may be arrested in the moment under scrutiny in the play. It suggests that there ultimately may be no form in literature that can rescue the hero from the circumstances of the drama. Metaphysics of a Two-Headed Calf as well as New Deliverance are examples of this idea. Thus, if the single formula for a tragic plot is change from happiness to misery on the part of a man neither eminently virtuous nor depraved, and if the single formula for the comic plot is change from chaos to happiness (or, as Elder Olson phrases it, coming to that place where we see that we had no reason to be concerned, the establishment of *katastasis*),⁴³ some tragicomic plays illustrate the absence of substantive change in the situation under scrutiny. What is missing is the restoration of either tragic or

⁴³Elder Olson, The Theory of Comedy (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1968), p. 47.

comic order.⁴⁴ This is one of the patterns of tragicomedy defined by Eric Bentley, that of comedy with an unhappy ending.⁴⁵ This has also been called an "indeterminate" ending.⁴⁶ The New Deliverance is an example.

Writing of the tragicomic structure, Guthke states:

...the writer of tragicomedy objectifies and concretizes his own comic vision by articulating his subject matter according to certain structural patterns which then generates a corresponding receptive vision in the audience. These structural patterns are precisely the ones which constitute the shape...of the plays.⁴⁷

Guthke lists seven structural features of tragicomedy:

1) "...a character fit for tragedy [in] a world that distinctly belongs to the realm of comedy."⁴⁸ In such a world the potentially tragic person's aspirations appear comic.

2) "...the converse incongruence is equally thinkable: an essentially comic person (though capable of the tragic by virtue of his human worth and depth) finds himself in the world of tragedy

⁴⁴Guthke, Modern Tragicomedy, p. 133.

⁴⁵Eric Bentley, The Life of the Drama (New York: Athenaeum, 1967), p. 319.

⁴⁶Gassner and Quinn, Encyclopedia, p. 861.

⁴⁷Guthke, Modern Tragicomedy, p. 78.

⁴⁸Ibid.

and is overcome by it."⁴⁹

3) "Another easily identifiable pattern combines two parallel plots of equal weight, one tragic and one comic, which are linked by a common theme and comparable motifs."⁵⁰

4) "...a comic person bringing about tragic disaster for others."⁵¹

5) "A much more subtle device, which...exploits the disproportion between the character and his surroundings, can be described as 'deception.'⁵² This technique depends on the main figure living in an illusory, personal world while the audience and the rest of the cast know that what he is living is not true. "...we laugh at him with one eye weeping,"⁵³ Guthke wrote.

6) Another pattern is that of the irony of the course of events.

This does not depend so much on the interaction of the protagonist and his surroundings ...for though this device undeniably places more emphasis on the 'events,' on the particular nature and manner of the sequence of

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 79.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 81.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., p. 82.

events, that is obviously, always a course of events which affects one or more of the leading characters, in fact, victimizes them.⁵⁴

Events in this technique are contrived ironically, but the characters behave heroically,⁵⁵ in a manner suitable for tragedy. There is no escape from this world for the hero.

7) And, finally, Guthke lists discrepancy within a character,⁵⁶ particularly discrepancy between intention and fulfillment. None of these characteristics would fit all of the plays discussed; but, some of the plays fit some of the patterns. Although Witkacy's goal was to achieve a unique form for each work, each work ideally demonstrating the formal logic of its own, it would seem that some of the plays were organized on principles which were not exclusively Pure Form ones, and the Pure Form--as a sincere search for new possibilities of form--shares some of the structuring techniques outlined above, especially techniques number 5), 6), and 7). I would also argue that Witkacy's repeated use of revolutionary action paralleling stage action is an example of number 3) above, though the pattern that Guthke had in mind is more like that in The Water Hen, for example, which does have parallel actions, if not

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 83.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 83-6.

parallel plots. In Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix there is a revolution which parallels in the larger society the disintegration of society that is demonstrated in detail in the smaller, enclosed circle of friends on stage. These two worlds interact periodically throughout the plot and are merged at the end of the play.

Styan has shown that the tragicomic play is organized by the drive or thrust of the material; this driving force, and not a form or formula, he said, holds a tragicomedy together.⁵⁷ This could be true of both The Shoemakers and Gyubal Wahazar; for The Shoemakers this is true because of the drive of the thematic material and for Gyubal Wahazar because of the enormous force of the exceedingly rich and varied main character. Ruby Cohn commented:

The modern blend of tragicomedy, . . . attempts a union of opposites that often leaves us more aware of the opposites than of the union.⁵⁸

Some of Witkacy's plays are constructed of disparate and often seemingly chaotic units; and the harmony that is made is a tension between opposites, achieved by the use of certain principles of the grotesque.⁵⁹ These opposites are as diverse as such life elements

⁵⁷Styan, Dark Comedy, p. 2.

⁵⁸Cohn, Currents, p. 197.

⁵⁹The elements of this harmony are often strange and ominous. There is what Kaysar calls "suddenness and surprise." It

as the individual and the mass, innocence and experience, the explicable and the utterly unknowable, the living and the dead, youth and age, freedom and containment, and creativity and destruction. The tension between these opposites in some of these plays resolves on a note of ominous uncertainty, as for example in The Mother and The Water Hen. Uncertainty is a mood that is characteristic of the tragicomic experience.

Summary

The theory of Pure Form in the theatre has been shown to be an effective organizing principle in some of Witkiewicz's plays. There is no real discrepancy between the theory and the plays but there may be between the degree of its realization in different plays, as he himself indicated. Witkacy reaffirmed his ideas about his theory very late in his career, which shows a continued interest in its clarification. "O artystycznym teatrze (Concerning the Artistic Theatre)" is an example. Pure Form was viewed as an ideal, an organizing principle, not an actuality

represents "...a situation that is filled with ominous tension." We sense that our world is no longer "reliable." The result is fear, "fear of life," brought on by: "the fusion of realms which we know to be separated, the abolition of the laws of statics, the loss of identity, the distortion of 'natural' size and shape, the suspension of the category of objects, the destruction of personality, and the fragmentation of the historical order" (Kayser, The Grottesque, pp. 184-85).

which Witkacy thought that he could accomplish on his own.

Pure Form shares characteristic principles with expressionism and surrealism, as well as features of the tragicomic mode, both in tone and in structure. Diminishing the importance of the causally related plot and heightening in some of his plays the tragicomic reversal, within the freer, more flexible mode of tragicomedy, Witkacy would often work with the associative techniques of surrealism and expressionism to create the awareness of mystery which he said was the goal of his theory. The apparent flexibility of tragicomic shaping of experience would seem to accommodate Witkacy's notion of a new form for each play. I have shown that his accomplishment of this was a matter of degree, that no where does he achieve the ideal Pure Form model except in his theoretical example (page 40 above).

Nonetheless, the idea is theoretically intriguing. Theoretically, it is possible to recognize the very construction of a work of art itself as its essence and by deforming external reality to arrive at new structural possibilities that could revitalize the theatre. As Witkacy himself said, it only remains to release the slumbering beast of form and see what it can do.

APPENDEXES

APPENDIX I

THE EXPERIENCE OF PURE FORM IN THE THEATRE

The experience of Pure Form in the theatre comes to the participant directly without any symbolic function of the individual elements which make up the form (T:W 204). "Art is something of a type of subjective narcotic, of which the working, and for the creating and for the receiving of an impression, is the heightening of the feelings of the unity and the oneness of the personality, through directly creating and comprehending the formal structures, or abstract Beauty."¹ Although "the purest form"² is always soiled by life elements, the experience of an aesthetic pleasure will bring a brief moment of metaphysical sensation (T:W 61).

¹"Sztuka jest czemś w rodzaju subiektywnego narkotyku, którego działaniem jest, i dla tworzących i dla przyjmujących wrażenia, pewne spotęgowanie poczucia jedności i jedyności ich osobowości, poprzez bezpośrednie tworzenie i pojmwowanie konstrukcji formalnych, czyli oderwanego Piękną" (T:W 206).

²"...najczystsza forma" (T:W 59).

Bungo, the young hero of 622 upadki Bunga, czyli Demoniczna kobieta ("622 Downfalls of Bungo, or The Demonic Woman"),³ speaks at some length about his experiences with Pure Form. He expresses the same contempt that Witkacy does for feelings from life, particularly the private feelings which a performer brings to a work. He is a fancier of music and he contends that songs which show the person and a person's impoverished feelings are for him, Bungo, "...an outright profanation of proper music."⁴ Bungo explains his experiences in the aesthetic realm with depth and vigor. Some of them must be similar to what Witkacy intended Pure Form to arouse. I shall quote at some length from the novel by way of reference, as the novel is not available in America and nowhere in English to date.

Bungo and his Mistress are discussing the proper content for music, the form it should take and how it is finally "expressed." Bungo says:

No, madam,...earlier I didn't truly understand the violin either; however, when I heard Thibaud play a Mozart concert, I grasped all at once. But there

³Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, 622 upadki Bunga, czyli Demoniczna kobieta ("The 622 Downfalls of Bungo, or The Demonic Woman"), Anna Micińska, ed. (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1972).

⁴"...wprost profanacją prawdziwej muzyki," (Witkiewicz, 622 upadki, 168).

are qualitative differences.... Here, between the song and the music there is something qualitatively different, something disproportional. I am an opponent of all sentiment in art, in spite of the fact that I have only just drawn things saturated with life-content, but that was a moment of life-like downfall that I wanted to verify artistically. The song cannot be abstract; it is the shout of the body itself, and, therefore, speaks only by feelings, unable to give us a completely different dimension, which I call metaphysical, in the experience itself Take as an example the Sixth Symphony of Beethoven. Am I obliged in the first part to have an image of cows leaping head to tail over green pastures or later to hear thunderclaps? No. There is the music only, and I am able to interpret that as I choose. But its content from life, the content of the sounds in themselves is another thing and all interpretations of that kind for me are a crime against art. It's the same thing with painting. Looking at a picture of Gaugin I can see immediately a group of thickly built, cigar-colored women, like some Frenchman said, or grasp the eternal truth of Existence expressed by the composition of the lines and by the harmony of the colors....⁵

⁵"Nie, panie... Wprawdzie dawniej nie rozumiałem także skrzypiec, to jednak, kiedy usłyszałem Thibaud, jak grał koncert Mozarta, pojąłem wszystko od razu. Ale to są różnice ilościowe Tu, między śpiewem a muzyką, jest to coś jakościowo różnego, coś niewspółmiernego. Jestem przeciwnikiem wszelkiego sentymentu w sztuce, mimo że sam rysowałem niedawno rzeczy przepojone treścią życiową, ale to były chwile życiowego upadku, który chciałem artystycznie usprawiedliwić. Śpiew nie może być abstrakcyjnym, to jest krzyk samego ciała i dlatego mówi tylko uczuciach, nie mogąc dać nam zupełnie inne o wymiaru, który nazwałbym metafizycznym, w przeżywaniu siebie. ... Weźmy na przykład VI symfonię Beethovena. Czy jestem obowiązany w pierwszej części mieć koniecznie wizję krów skaczących z ogonami do góry po zielonej łące lub dalej słyszeć grzmoty? Nie. Muzyka pozostała tylko i tę mogę interpretować, jak mi się żywnie podoba. Ale jej treść pozazyciowa, treść samych dźwięków w sobie jest jedna i wszelkie tego rodzaju interpretacje są dla mnie zbrodnią przeciw sztuce. To

Several features of the experience of Pure Form are outlined here: life content tends to interfere with the experience of form itself; the expression of Pure Form in music happens all at once to the listener; sentiment distorts the experience; and the composition of lines and harmony of colors--the construction of the work of art--and not the subject of the painting or the piece of music is the important element to be experienced. By analogy I assume that these criteria would apply to the experience of the ideally realized Pure Form play.

The urgency of this discussion between Bungo and his mistress is but a reflection of Bungo's overriding faith in art as a means to circumvent the shortcomings of life. He would agree with Oscar Wilde's statement that it is "...through art and through art only that we can shield ourselves from the sordid perils of actual existence."⁶ This type of art, deformed or void of its life-likeness and content, answering to its own demands of form, feeds

samo jest z malarstwem. Patrząc na obrazy Gauguina, mogę raz widzieć grubo zbudowane kobiety koloru cygara bawiące się na suknie bilardowym, jak powiedział jakiś Francuz, albo pojmować wieczne prawa Bytu wyrażone kompozycją linii i harmonią kolorów..." (Witkiewicz, 622 upadki, 168-9).

⁶Oscar Wilde, "The Critic as Artist," Richard Aldington, ed., The Portable Oscar Wilde (New York: The Viking Press, 1948). p. 102.

the metaphysical cravings of the artist and his audience in a time when art is the only source of such nourishment, Witkacy thought. Art and Pure Form art can rescue the creative and vital mind from the perils of the encroaching gray sameness of the mechanization of life. But this can happen only when the proper artistic "feelings" are used in making art; a truth to art, as it were, and not a truth to life, is demanded. Bungo makes the precise distinction; he says:

The characteristic feature of authentic artistic feeling is for me merely this: it introduces me into a completely new world of vision that I called earlier the direct communication with the transcendental oneness of Existence.... Art has for me nothing in common with life; just as the reverse, the life of the artist with his creation.⁷

And finally, Bungo gives an example of the rapture of the experience of art which must surely be in the realm of the Pure Form experience: it is direct; it is void of life feelings and as such able to introduce him into a completely new world of vision, as he reports it; it is transcendent, having nothing in common with life, though it occurs in rather ordinary life situations, it

⁷"Tylko że dla mnie charakterystyczną cechą prawdziwie artystycznego wrażenia jest to, że wprowadza mnie ono w zupełnie odmienny świat zjawisk, który dawniej nazywałem bezpośrednim obcowaniem z transcendentną jednością Bytu.... Sztuka dla mnie nic z życiem wspólnego nie ma; tak jak odwrotnie, życie artysty z jego twórczością" (Witkiewicz, 622 upadki, 171).

would seem; in short, it circumvents the shortcomings of life and gives a glimpse of aesthetics as it could be experienced. Bungo is listening to a piano recital:

After a moment he completely stopped knowing where he was, and what he, or his life, or anything was. He lost all feeling of real space and existence. It seemed to him that there wasn't anything except the sounds which filled everything, but that environment in which the succession of phenomena that defied being grasped in any form occurred was also something that defied being defined and analyzed in any fashion. The combination of sounds produced in him the sensation of a totally separate world which defied being reduced to simpler elements, and this sensation was for him the characteristic trait of pure art free of all decidedly emotional coloration. He received this kind of sensation solely from music and pure painting.⁸

The experience of Pure Form theatre, a theatre in which all the elements ideally are used in different relationships one to the

⁸"Po chwili zupełnie przestał uświadamiać, gdzie jest, czym jest on sam, jego życie i wszystko. Stracił poczucie rzeczywistej przestrzeni i egzystencji. Zdawało mu się, że nie ma nic oprócz dźwięków, które wypełniały wszystko, ale to środowisko, w którym zachodziło następstwo nie dających się ująć w żadną formę zjawisk, było też czymś nie dającym się w żaden sposób określić i zanalizować. Kombinacje dźwięków wywoływały u niego wrażenie zupełnie odrębnego, nie dającego się sprowadzić do żadnych prostych czynników, świata, i to wrażenie było dla niego charakterystyczną cechą czystej, wolnej od wszelkich zdecydowanie uczuciowych zabarwień, sztuki. Tego rodzaju wrażenia doznawał jedynie od muzyki i od czystego malarstwa" (Witkiewicz, 622 upadki, p. 202). The translation of this passage from the novel is by Professor Daniel C. Gerould; Daniel C. Gerould, "Witkacy's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," The Polish Review, XVIII (Nos. 1-2, 1973), 146.

other than they are used in the traditional theatre, would be dependent in part upon the interplay of the elements as free agents working through time and space. The Pure Form experience is direct; to the degree necessary it is free of life feelings and introduces the participant into a new world of vision. The experience should be transcendent, having nothing in common with the ordinary. It circumvents life's shortcomings and gives an intimation of how life might be experienced on the peaks of the metaphysical. It arouses the awareness of the Mystery of Existence which Witkacy likened to the ghastly drama played out between the notes of the sonata which Bungo heard, between the very elements of which the work is composed. That which manifests itself as such under these conditions remains unanalyzed and unrecognized in any parallel life form. But it is overwhelming in its presence. Through the arousal of the awareness of what Witkacy called the Mystery of Existence this form does not release the spectator by arousal but intensifies in him the aesthetic experience and the sense of the unity that exists in diversity.

APPENDIX II

A SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

Introduction

Witkacy was explicit in his instructions regarding the manner in which he wanted his plays to be performed; but, before explaining his ideas about the specific artists who create Pure Form on the stage, Witkacy's general assumptions with respect to the playwright's, the director's and the actor's responsibilities should be stated. Generally, Witkacy was convinced that everything done on the stage--including the physical setting and the use in any part of it; the actors and their speech and movements, their total being and presence on the stage; the ideas and the action of a drama--everything, should be treated formally in the same way that a painter treats color and a musician treats notes, as durations and tensions in time and space. In other words, each element broken into its smallest component should be regarded as a spot in a total composition just as the spot of vermillion in the old woman's apron.

Ideally in a Pure Form performance nothing happens accidentally while at the same time nothing is restricted to life-like

imitation. Witkacy wrote of the ideas, actions, images and significations which in tension make the actual complex theatre moment:

Artists playing in such a play, properly created by a director who is a creator on a plane with the author, do not imitate for either better or worse imagined people; they only create their roles in the general totality happening on the stage, composed of formally connected actions, speeches and images, which can be related, according to the compositional requirements, in the most fantastic manner, from the point of view of life and sense.¹

The playwright is not considered more important in the theatrical process than the other artists who help to create the performance.

Witkacy wrote: "The author is not all, according to me, the chief person. The director and the actors are the performers of his ideas."² The actor and the director with the playwright's material, working together in a new harmony, ideally create a formal web that is the Pure Form play. The result of any moment in the totality of such a play results from five things: "1) the intention of the author; 2) the type of his conception; 3) his means, or talent;

¹"Artyści grający w sztuce takiej, odpowiednio przez reżysera-twórcę na równie z autorem stworzonej, nie udają gorzej, lub lepiej, jakichś przypuszczalnych ludzi, tylko tworzą swoje role w ogólnej całości stawania się na scenie, składającego się z formalnie złączonych działań, wypowiedzeń i obrazów, mogących być powiązanymi, zależnie od kompozycyjnych wymagań, w jaknajbardziej, z punktu widzenia życia i sensu fantastyczny sposób" (T:W 117).

²"Autor wcale nie jest według mnie główną osobą, a reżyser i aktorzy odtwórcami jego pomysłu" (T:W 117).

4) the manner of the presentation; and 5) the formal or life-like 'attitude' of the spectators."³ The first of these items refers to creative processes that occur before the performance; their value should become apparent as the play is performed.

The particular moment in a play could be either more or less Pure Form or life-like depending on the nature of the materials included; although much depends on the director, Witkacy doubted if completely realistically realized "bits" could be adequately adapted to a formal structure. He wrote

What I have said... about flowers and painting applies to a given moment of a stage play with reference to its totality. The degree of stylization in the direction of Pure Form of a given bit of a given play, depends on the formal tone of the entirety, the handling and the carrying over into practice of which depends on the director. But the ideally realistically represented 'bit' on the stage, just like the ideally realistically presented flower, can never be a part of a formal play, because on principle it will be imitative of reality, even if it is life nonsense--it is able to be a part of a realistically absurd play of which the absurdity will not be justifiable in formal dimensions.⁴

³"...1) intencji autora; 2) od rodzaju jego koncepcji; 3) jego środków, czyli talentu; 4) od sposobu wystawienia; 5) od formalnego względnie życiowego, 'nastawienia' widzów" (T:W 156).

⁴"To, co powiedziałem... o kwiecie i o obrazie stosuje się do danego momentu sztuki scenicznej w stosunku do jej całości. Stopień stylizacji w kierunku Czystej Formy danego kawałka danej sztuki zależy od formalnego tonu całości, którego uchwycenie i przeprowadzenie w praktyce należy do reżysera. Ale idealnie realistycznie odtworzony 'kawałek' na scenie, podobnie jak idealnie realistycznie

What is imitative of reality obeys the laws of reality and not the laws of formal relationships: reality and realistic bits must be deformed in order to become a part of a Pure Form structure. An effective means of eliminating unwanted life comparisons that an audience might make is to avoid stressing emotions, which have their root in life imitations and which might be interpreted to follow usual and expected, seemingly logical, causal patterns taken from life. The text's effectiveness is not dependent upon or judged by the emotions.⁵

Witkacy stipulated five conditions which he hoped all future actors and directors would meet if they attempted to present any of his plays:

Still if anyone does decide to stage any of my plays, I would like to ask the directors and the actors for:
 a) as unemotional, straightforward articulate delivery of the lines as possible; b) as mad a pace of performance as possible, consistent with the adherence to the preceding condition; c) as strict an observance as possible of my 'directorial' indications as to the position of the characters, as well as to the settings, according to my descriptions of them; d) no attempt to make anything

odtworzony kwiat, nie może nigdy stanowić części sztuki formalnej, ponieważ z założenia będzie imitował jakąś rzeczywistość, choćby życiowo bezsensowną--będzie mógł być częścią sztuki realistycznie bezsensownej, której bezsens nie będzie usprawiedliwiony w wymiarach formalnych" (T:W 155).

⁵Janusz Degler, "Witkacy: Ideas and Theories," Theatre in Poland, III (March, 1970), 15.

stranger than it is in the text through setting-atmosphere-hit-them-in-the-guts gimmicks and an abnormal method of delivering lines; e) minimal cuts.⁶

There are a number of conclusions to be drawn from this list of conditions: 1) the unemotional delivery forces the audience to be attentive to the play's intention and should deny to them the traditional comfort of emotional involvement with the characters in the play; 2) the 'mad pace' of the performance tends to deform the material performed, further separating the spectator from any real-life correlative; 3) the interrelationships between setting and character are purposely planned, as the directorial indications show; to alter them radically would destroy the planned effects.

Witkacy

... considered the placing of actors on the stage... a matter of utmost importance--like the Japanese theatre 'the arrangement of the figures should not be accidental as in real life; it should be done with regard to the decor so as to produce, possibly at

⁶"Gdyby jednak jaki dyrektor zdecydował się na wystawienie którejś z moich sztuk, prosiłbym pp. reżyserów, i artystów: a) o możliwie nieuczuciowe, retoryczne wypowiedzianie zdań; b) przy zachowaniu poprzedniego warunku, o możliwie najszaleńsze tempo gry; c) o możliwie ścisłe zachowanie moich 'reżyserskich' wskazówek co do położenia osób, jakoteż o dekoracje według opisu; d) nie staranie się o zrobienie czegoś dziwniejszego niż jest w tekście, przez kombinacje dekoracyjno-nastrojowo-bebechowe i nienormalny sposób wypowiedziania; 3) o minimalne skreślenia" (T:W 202).

all times, the impression of a definite pictorial composition.⁷

At the same time, Witkacy was cautious

...to avoid letting his theory lead to an over emphasis on the visual elements of the theatre performance: 'for in the theatre the predominance of decor, costumes, and even movements over spoken words is bad--it leads to tableau vivants and pantomimes.'⁸

Witkacy insisted that the special feature of Pure Form theatre was that no one single element should dominate the other elements in performance, unless, perhaps, it was the spoken word.

Although Witkacy wanted all elements of a performance to receive full and equal attention and appreciation, there are limitations to this notion:

The viewer, who has to take on the purely fictionalized feelings represented by the acting of the people on the stage, as such, is not able to simultaneously experience the sensation arising from the construction: color, sounds, movements, and the meanings of ideas and actions, for the reason that two distinct impressions are not able to be simultaneously, totally fully realized at any given moment of our existence: only one of them will persist as such--the others will make up the confused background coloring the realization of the content of a given moment.⁹

⁷Degler, "Ideas and Theories," p. 15.

⁸Ibid.

⁹"Widz, który ma przejmować się czysto fizycznie uczuciami

Performance Requirements

As in traditional theatre, the playwright, the director and the actor are the principal artists in the Pure Form theatre.

The Playwright

Witkiewicz did not consider the playwright the most important in achieving Pure Form on the stage. He is one of a three-member team, an equal of the stage director and the actor. His uniqueness rests in his original concept of the form. At one time Witkacy conceived of the playwright as a kind of libretist (T:W 117).

The Director

It is to the director that Witkacy gave the responsibility for assuring the primacy of the formal aspects of the play. He wrote:

It is possible to produce each thing in Pure Form realistically, but not all realistic works may make a purely formal entity.... Conferment of the formal tone depends on the director, of course. Understanding purely formal content and creating

wyobrażonych przez grających na scenie ludzi, jako takimi, nie może jednocześnie, doznać wrażeń od konstrukcji: barw, dźwięków, ruchów i znaczeń pojęć i działań, z powodu tego, że dwa odrębne wrażenia nie mogą być jednocześnie w całej pełni uświadomione w danej chwili naszego trwania: jedno tylko z nich będzie trwało jako takie--inne stanowiąc będąc na zmięszane, wpływające na zabarwienie, uświadamianej jako takiej treści danego momentu," Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, "O artystycznej grze aktorów (Concerning the Artistic Playing of the Actors)," Przegląd Wieczorny, June 4, 1927, No. 127, p. 2.

a uniformly constructed wholeness is extremely difficult.¹⁰

The director then will make the ultimate decision about what is to be formally interpreted and what is to be done in other styles. Witkacy wrote that the real creators of a work for the stage are the actors and the director (T:W 139). "The author gives the libretto-- the play comes into being on the stage (T:W 139),"¹¹ he commented.

In my opinion, the director ought completely to forget about life and its consequences and keep in mind only the weaving of the action and the speeches, which would--on the basis of the scanty instructions from the author--make a construction according to his own consciousness....¹²

The Actor

The actor also has certain responsibilities for the building of the formal aspects of a play. The preliminary condition is that

¹⁰"Każdą rzecz w czystej formie można wystawić realistycznie, ale niekażdego utworu realistycznego można zrobić formalną, czysto całość.... Nadanie formalnego tonu zależy oczywiście od reżysera. Zrozumienie czysto formalnej treści utworu i stworzenie jednolitej konstrukcyjnej całości jest rzeczą niesłychanie trudną" (T:W 73).

¹¹"Autor daje libretto--stwarza się sztuka dopiero na scenie" (T:W 139).

¹²"Reżyser powinien według mnie zupełnie zapomnieć o życiu i jego konsekwencjach i mieć na myśli jedynie splot działań i wypowiedzeń, któryby, na podstawie nikłych wskazówek autora, sformował w konstrukcję, według swego własnego poczucia" (T:W 165).

he should thoroughly familiarize himself with the formal ideas of the whole work.¹³

This will help him to understand that in all his actions and utterances on stage he represents one element only of a construction that is coming into being and that he is not obliged to convey the truth to life but only the truth to form.¹⁴

The understanding that the actor is only one of many elements and that he is not obliged to be concerned with the truth to life is the basis for what Witkacy termed significant acting.¹⁵ In this acting style the actor's first duty is to the truth to form and not the truth to real life patterns. The conditions placed upon the actor by the Pure Form theory are these:

- 1) The manner of presenting the text should not depend upon emotions.
- 2) The actor should forget his sense of person, he should forget that he has a body.
- 3) The actor should have a) perfect elocution, b) speak without emotional stress, and c) confine himself solely to bringing out either the sound or the content value of his speeches.

¹³ Degler, "Ideas and Theories," p. 15.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

4) The actor should not try to express feeling in gesture, mime, and movement.

5) The actor should remember that he is an element of the formal construction (the play) and should consider himself as a splash of color in a painting and that his movements and speech on the stage have to meet the demands of such formal construct.¹⁶

But, Witkacy cautioned the actor to eliminate only certain feelings and emotions from his playing. He wrote in "Concerning the Artistic Playing of Actors:"

I say 'certain,' because the complete elimination of feelings from the stage, poetry and music, like a deliberate rejection of the observed world in sculpture and painting, leads to cold, formal abstraction, devoid of directional and dynamic tensions, to the impoverishment of Pure Form and not to its refinement.¹⁷

The exact degree of elimination of emotions and feelings from acting was never made specific by Witkiewicz. Witkacy once wrote:

The actor as such ought not to exist; he ought to be in himself, an element of a unity, like the

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷"Mówię 'pewne,' bo wyeliminowanie całkowite uczuć ze sceny, poezji i muzyki, podobnie jak programowe odrzucenie świata widzialnego w rzeźbie i malarstwie, prowadzi do zimnej abstrakcji formalnej, pozbawionej napięć kierunkowych i dynamicznych do zubożenia Czystej Formy, a nie do jej większej czystości," Witkiewicz, "Concerning the Artistic Playing of Actors," pp. 1-2.

color read in a given painting or the tone C-sharp in a given piece of music.¹⁸

But in no sense does Witkacy anticipate the elimination of so valuable an artist of Pure Form as is the actor; his creative instincts are needed. Witkacy wanted the actor to see himself--his own total psyche and presence--formally.

In my opinion, the psychology of the hero together with his words, ought to be only an auxiliary device for the actor, not having to mimic it, only to create the role according to his creative instinct. The actor coming onto the stage must be like a painter who has reflected so on all the details and has them so well at hand that the execution of the painting is for him only the mechanical smearing of certain planes.¹⁹

This creative instinct of the actor results in significant acting (T:W 55). Significant acting is not the sequencing of a hero's life feeling but rather an understanding of the entirety of a play to the extent that the actor can use the words, ideas, thoughts, actions, and images which are the property of his character like

¹⁸"Aktor jako taki nie powinien istnieć; powinien być takim samym elementem całości, jak kolor czerwony w danym obrazie, jak ton cis w danym utworze muzycznym" (T:W 26).

¹⁹"Według nas, psychologia bohatera, wraz z jego słowami, powinna być tylko środkiem pomocniczym dla aktora, mającego nie udać go, tylko stworzyć rolę, według własnej twórczej intuicji. Aktor wychodzący na scenę musi być podobny do malarza, który tak obmyślił wszystkie szczegóły i ma tak pewną rękę, że wykonanie obrazu niego tylko mechanicznem zasmarowaniem pewnych płaszczyzn" (T:W 72).

an artillery barrage of formally charged elements. The process is similar to signification of language. As Witkacy explained it

The actor, in order in his actions and his speeches to be an element of a unity of this kind, such as we propose (and even an element of the presentations of given masters of stage literature), does not need to 'create' his role in the realistic sense, that is, to enter into the spirit of the hero's life feelings, and to show on stage his supposed gestures and tone of voice in different important meanings. He may indeed create the role, that is, in our sense of the word: by better understanding of the entirety of the play in connection with all the speeches of the acting persons and their movements and reducing in the process the decorative thing, that is, a better understanding of the formal idea of the work (as distinguished from life moods), of his character separately from all 'life' probability, so as to build his role that quite independently from his own nature, from the experience of his own internal and nervous states, that he would with the exactness of mathematical probability do what comes quite from this purely formal idea: to deliver a given sentence in just this accent of certain words, once putting stress on logical matters, another time on the sound, or suggesting to the viewer the picture against a real background, of the variable image of a given situation.²⁰

²⁰"Aktor, aby być w swoich działaniach i wypowiedzeniach elementem całości w tym gatunku, jaki proponujemy (a nawet elementem przedstawień dawnych mistrzów literatury scenicznej), nie potrzebuje 'stwarzać' roli w realistycznym znaczeniu t. zn. wczuwać się w uczucia życiowe bohatera i udawać na scenie jego przypuszczalne gesty i ton mowy w różnych ważnych chwilach. On powinien naprawdę rolę stworzyć, t. j. naszym znaczeniu zrozumiałwszy całość sztuki w związku ze wszystkimi wypowiedzeniami osób działających i ich ruchami i zmieniającą się w ciągu rzeczy dekoracją, t. zn. zrozumiałwszy ideę formalną utworu

Witkiewicz had seen an Oriental acting troupe (T:W 132) and was impressed with their techniques. In this type of performing the focus is on the person or persons acting and all others, though in full view of the audience, remain quietly inactive until again called upon to assume active roles in the drama. Witkacy wrote of this experience:

Besides this is brought to perfection in the Japanese theatre (I saw only the Hanako troupe) in which, in the critical moments, all remain still for a short time, presenting a composition identical to the character of those which can be seen in the early Japanese woodcuts.²¹

This pause Witkacy speaks of focuses attention on the actor and the action about to be performed. Witkacy thought that such a style might serve Pure Form theatre well (T:W 182). This style of performance and the rationale for it attacks the very basis of realistic

(w odróżnieniu od nastroju życiowego), jego charakter w oderwaniu od wszelkiego życiowego prawdopodobieństwa, tak swoją rolę postawić, aby właśnie niezależnie od swego usposobienia, swoich przeżyć wewnętrznych i stanu nerwów, był w możności z matematyczną dokładnością zrobić to, co wypada z tej właśnie czysto formalnej idei: wypowiedzieć dane zdanie z tym właśnie akcentem pewnych słów, raz stawiając nacisk na ich treść logiczną, innym razem na dźwiękową, lub sugestjonować widzowi obraz, na tle realnego, zmiennego obrazu danej sytuacji" (T:W 71).

²¹"To zresztą doprowadzone jest do doskonałości w teatrze japońskim, (widziałem tylko trupę Hanako) w którym w momentach zasadniczych nieruchomieją wszyscy na krótką chwilę, przedstawiając kompozycję identyczną co do charakteru z temi, które się widuje na dawnych japońskich drzeworytach" (T:W 182).

acting which stresses the interplay between characters as a means to produce the fictional reality of the stage. Instead, Witkacy promoted the individual expression of individual understanding of pure beauty and form. The actor's true business is to break out of the cocoon of life-like situations and by understanding the formal values of a given play to deform, not imitate, reality.

...the actor ought not to deliver his lines as an expression of states of being...just the opposite: internally cold as ice, he should create Pure Form, in part in his speech by the conditional relationship of a given sentence to the whole of the Pure Form, independently of all life-like action.²²

This was what Witkacy called the "formal creativity of the actor" (T:W 169)²³ which, in proper balance and tension with all other agents in the performance, creates the total form that is uniquely different from the experience of life-patterned emotions.

Spectacle and Music

The last two elements of drama described by Aristotle, spectacle and music, are generally outside the scope of this

²²"...aktor powinien wypowiadać zdania nie jako wyraz stanów...tylko przeciwnie: zimny wewnątrz jak lód, powinien stwarzać częściową Czystą Formę w wypowiedzeniu, uwarunkowanym stosunkiem danego zdania do całości Czystej Formy, w uniezależnieniu od wszelkich życiowych związków" (T:W 169).

²³"...formalną twórczością aktora" (T:W 169).

paper. It is, however, possible to observe that Witkacy stressed that all elements of a production, which would include spectacle and music, should bear out the formal unifying idea of the author. Though he was very specific in his list of requests to his future producers by asking them to honor his textual requirements such as specifications for settings and the actors' relationships to them, for the most part the specifics of how this was to be achieved was left to those who were actually professionally engaged with such subjects.

APPENDIX III

PLOT PATTERNS IN PURE FORM THEATRE

Critics have noted that in Witkiewicz's plots there are repeating patterns in his use of life-like content; the repetitions have to do with the life-actions of his heroes. Małgorzata Szpakowska has shown that Witkacy's plots most often parallel the falls of artists and aristocrats.¹ There are two instances when the life-content of the plot details the downfall of lower-class persons risen to a prominent place. They are Szewcy ("The Shoemakers") and Jan Maciej Karol Wścieklica ("Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat").

The pattern of Witkacy's plots in general take several different forms. They are:

1) The conflict between the artist-adventurer-aristocrat and the gray unified mass.²

¹ Małgorzata Szpakowska, "Witkiewiczowska teoria kultury (Witkiewicz's Theory of Culture)," Dialog, XIII (October, 1968), 119.

² Ibid., p. 123.

2) The conflict between the individualist and society resulting from the relatively slight value that the individual has in society in modern times.³

3) The conflict between the individual and his time.⁴

4) The conflict between culture and life, resulting from the individualists in the various plays creating a relatively limited personal culture composed of religion, philosophy and art that expresses their sense of their own uniqueness in time during a period of history when life is valued mainly in other than humanistic terms.⁵

5) Jan Błoński has argued that there are two action patterns in the Witkacian plot structure: a) there is the action of the obviously recognizable life happenings that are the events of a given play and which--ideally--ought to be considered only in a formal way in the play's structure; and b) there is the deeper action of the

³Lech Sokół, "Dramaturgia St. I. Witkiewicz wobec teorii Czystej Formy (The Dramaturgy of St. I. Witkiewicz according to the Theory of Pure Form)" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Warsaw, 1964), p. 5.

⁴Marcin Król, "Witkiewicza kłopoty a przyszłość (Witkiewicz's Difficulties and his Future)," Dialog, XIV (September, 1969), 119.

⁵Krzysztof Pomian, "Konfrontacje: Witkiewicz zredukowany do Absurdu (Confrontation: Witkiewicz Reduced to the Absurd)," Dialog, XV (March, 1970), 113.

pursuit of the sensation of strangeness of existence.⁶ Błóński noted, however, that this is not an action that is an imitation of life, but that it is rather an action that demasks life.⁷ As such, Błóński argued, the action follows a plot which may not grow out of the necessary and probable of Aristotle.

⁶Jan Błóński, "Teatr Witkiewicza: Forma Formy (The Theatre of Witkiewicz: The Form of Form)," Dialog, XII (December, 1967), 69-83.

⁷Jan Błóński, "Jak rozumieć sztuki Witkiewicza (How to Understand the Plays of Witkiewicz)," Przekrój (October 29, 1967), p. 7.

APPENDIX IV

CRITICAL COMMENTARY ABOUT CHARACTER IN PLAYS BY WITKIEWICZ

A number of critics have observed that Witkacy's characters reappear from play to play either as a type or as a function in the action. Konstanty Puzyna was the first to make this observation.¹

Michał Masłowski has found that there are seventeen different, repeating types of characters in the plays of Witkiewicz.² He describes them as follows:

1) The Titan. The Titan is the last of the great individuals in a century that is annihilating the individual. He is usually shown against a background of increasing mechanization of life. The Titan differs from the other characters in his extraordinary life energy and his excellent intellect. Examples of this type are the characters Maciej Korbowa, Gyubal Wahazar, Tumor Brainiowicz, and the Great Master in Janulka, córka Fizdejki ("Janulka, The Daughter of Fizdejko").

¹Konstanty Puzyna, "Witkacy (Witkacy)," Dialog, VI (August, 1961), 122.

²Michał Masłowski, "Bohaterowie dramatów Witkiewicza (The Heroes of the Plays of Witkiewicz)," Dialog, XV (December, 1967), 84ff.

2) The Hetera. The Hetera or the courtesan is a woman worthy of the Titan, insatiable in her appetites, super-demonic and always aristocratic. Rozhulantyna Bzylówna in Tumor Mózgowicz ("Tumor Brainiowicz") is an example.

3) The Artist. The Artist is usually a poet, at times a painter; he is always a philosopher. For him art is a life narcotic; that is, art makes life bearable. For him, art is the purpose of all action. Everything that exists interests him only as it will be able to be material for some work or the other. All artist types have a catastrophic worldview; Masłowski attributes this to Witkacy's personal philosophy. Examples are Paul Rockoffer in Małwa ("The Cuttlefish"), Pembrok in Niepodległość trójkątów ("The Independence of Triangles"), and Walpurg in Wariat i zakonnica ("The Madman and the Nun"). All in the group have purity of intention while at the same time they do not believe that life or the future depends on them or their work. Nevertheless, from time to time they attempt to create a new reality. Examples are Rockoffer in The Cuttlefish and Maciej Korbowa in Maciej Korbowa i Bellatrix ("Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix").

4) The Cuttlefish. The Cuttlefish is a woman who has been deformed by a variety of arduous love affairs. She dreams of manipulating men like so many sheep. She strives to bring tragedy to the artist in the conventional world. A Cuttlefish is

capable of very little real or sincere feeling or emotion. Masłowski gives as examples The Water Hen in Kurka Wodna ("The Water Hen") and Ella in The Cuttlefish.

5) The Scoundrel. The Scoundrel is one of the most important types. He is often the counterpart of the Titan, often the alter ego of the artist. Masłowski states that the artist and his alter ego are like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. He gives as examples von Telek in Pragmatyści ("The Pragmatists"), Golders in Mr. Price, czyli Bzik tropikalny ("Mr. Price, or The Tropical Madness"), Leon in Matka ("The Mother"). Leon is an example of the artist-scoundrel in the same person. Masłowski observes that they are all pragmatists, all of low origin, and most are young.

6) The Vulgar Demon or the common demon. All women from twelve to forty unless specifically placed by Witkacy in another group are considered as a part of this classification, Masłowski states. The women of this type have no ambition, do not aspire to greatness as does the Hetera. Usually, after the reversal, the Common Demon is satisfied to go off with the bubek. Bubek may be translated as whipper-snapper or dandy (The Great Polish English Dictionary). Jan Kłossowicz defines the bubek as having certain Hamlet-like characteristics,

Hamlet's supposed hesitation, reluctance to act and indecision.³

7) The Bubek or young whipper-snapper. According to Masłowski, The Bubek is the least sympathetic character to the author. Mostly aristocrats, mostly non-metaphysically disposed, they represent golden youth on a small scale. They love life, profit from it, are without fantasy or satisfaction, and are indestructable. They always appear at the wrong time, the least appropriate moment, and they are a symbol of their culture--mechanized beastliness. The "They" in Oni ("They") are examples, as are the Old Men in The Cuttlefish and the Old Men in The Water Hen, according to Masłowski.

8) The Girl. This type of young woman is from twelve to seventeen years of age, perversely naive, beginning to discover the world and herself, and inclines toward the Scoundrel rather than the Titan. She is part of the in-between generation, deciding between decadence and revolution. Her special function is erotic stimulation, according to Masłowski. Examples are seventeen-year-old Nina in Nadodnisię i koczkodany, czyli Zielona pigułka ("Dainty Shapes and Hairy Apes, or The Green Pill") and Amelia in W małym dworku ("In a Little Country House").

³Jan Kłossowicz, "Teoria i dramaturgia Witkacego (Theory and Dramaturgy of Witkacy)," Dialog, V (January, 1960), 89.

9) The Ephebe. The Ephebe, or youth from eighteen to twenty years of age in ancient Greece, is classified by Masłowski as a seventeen- or eighteen-year-old youth in the plays of Witkiewicz. He is frightfully intelligent, highly erotic and psychic, and knows absolutely nothing about life. He is everlastingly awakening from a dream. He, like the Girl, stands in indecision between decadence and revolution. He is generally hopelessly inept as a man, Masłowski states. Examples are Tarquinius Flirtius-Umbilicus in Dainty Shapes and Hairy Apes and Tadzio in the The Water Hen.

10) The Scholar. The Scholar is an indicator of the changing function of science in the world. He is no longer only a pedant but well on his way to being a potentate, for science has given him power over all the rest. He is like an Oz, a stringpuller who is sometimes strangely controlled by the strings he pulls. For him there is no mystery of existence, for all is known or knowable. Dr. Rypmann in Gyubal Wahazar, czyli Na Przełęczach bezsensu ("Gyubal Wahazar, or Along the Cliffs of the Absurd"), Grant in Dainty Shapes and Hairy Apes, and Grün in The Madman and the Nun are examples. Masłowski gives Tumor Brainiowicz in Tumor Brainiowicz as an example of a combination of the Titan and the Scholar.

11) The Middle-Aged Man. The Middle-Aged Man exists in the plays to offer either erotic conflict or pose as a dangerous threat to the hero; Hibiscus or Tefrafon in Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix are examples.

12) The Old Man is called a "black ornament"⁴ by Masłowski. He is usually a businessman and often a Semite. He may be a simple bubek grown old. Masłowski gives as examples: Old Valpor in The Water Hen, who has no real power, and Ungenty in Gyubal Wahazar, who comes to great power. Both are real threats to the heroes of their respective plays. Both are alike in that they are rascals and greedy.

13) The Matron. The Matron is a very important demon in Witkacian dramaturgy, Masłowski points out. She is always extraordinary in her great eroticism or her prudery. Julia in Belzebuba Sonata ("The Beelzebub Sonata") is an example of the former type and Sister Barbara in The Madman and the Nun is an example of the latter.

14) The Servant. The Servant takes several guises in Witkacy's plays. They are the landlady, the housekeeper, maids, lackeys, kitchen boys and the like, all serving as theatrical ornament and background, Masłowski states.

⁴"...czarny ornament," Masłowski, "The Heroes," p. 90.

15) Titans of the Past. A Titan from the Past is a figure from history or myth who, when placed on stage with contemporary persons, allows the playwright to build what Witkacy termed formal dramatic situations as opposed to life-patterned ones, according to Masłowski. Two examples are Richard III in Nowe Wyzwolenie ("The New Deliverance") and Pope Julius in The Cuttlefish.

16) Monsters. These figures, whom Masłowski labels as monsters, are another means of using character to break real-life, logical and causal requirements in an effort to produce a Pure Form situation and to arouse the desired Pure Form effect. The Mummy in The Pragmatists and The Spectre in In a Little Country House, as well as the 'masculettes' in The Pragmatists and in Gyubal Wahazar, are examples.

17) The Savage. The Savages in Witkacy's plays are shown to be superior to the whites in many instances because they have remained un-Westernized and true to themselves, Masłowski points out. Examples are the Malays in Mr. Price or The Tropical Madness and the Eastern Women in The Independence of Triangles, as well as the Papuans in Metafizyka dwugłowego cielecia ("Metaphysics of a Two-Headed Calf").

Another category should be provided in such an analysis to account for such characters as Crowds in Jan Maciej Karol

Wścieklica ("Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat") and groups of soldiers and various military personnel which are not made specific individuals. This category would be designated as Other.⁵

Konstanty Puzyna suggests that there are four characteristic classes of characters which repeat from play to play. These classes are, according to Puzyna: 1) bourgeois, 2) capitalist, 3) proletarian, and 4) artistic decadent.⁶

Jan Błóński also concerned himself with Konstanty Puzyna's notion of repeating types of characters in Witkacy's plays.⁷ But later he preferred to refer to the repetition of character functions instead of types in the structure of a play.⁸ It is the repeating function, type and class of character that Witkacy uses as one of the elements of the Pure Form construction. Character as a manifestation of a unique person determining plot action by conscious choice in the Aristotelian sense is usually lacking. It is

⁵See Appendix IV B for an analysis of all of the characters in all of the plays discussed in Chapters III through V, according to Masłowski's categories.

⁶Puzyna, "Witkacy," p. 115f.

⁷Jan Błóński, "Powrót Witkacego (The Return of Witkacy)," Dialog, VII (September, 1963), 71-84.

⁸Błóński, "Znaczenie i zniekształcenie w 'czystej formie' St. I. Witkiewicza (Meaning and Deformation in the 'Pure Form' of St. I. Witkiewicz)," Miesięcznik Literacki, II (August, 1967), 27.

the function of the character that Witkacy uses in structuring his plays. Błóński argues that the Witkacian hero is similar to the hero of romantic drama in that he is "an uncommon person"⁹ who creates his own uncommon, unusual world.¹⁰ In this uncommon, unusual world there are two levels of experience which correspond precisely to the two functions of character in that world: director and actor.¹¹ There are only a few directors as a rule in each play; from time to time they dispose of each other. The actor functions cannot initiate action; some of them do rise to power because of a change in circumstances of the play. They are acted upon by the director function rather than acting as free agents themselves. The director function is exercised by a character who is a tyrant in the world of the play; this character manipulates the play world and the actor functions in it. The characters playing the actor function do not know the rules, in a manner of speaking; and they try to make the right responses to those in power in the play world, almost as if by chance, Błóński observed.¹²

⁹"...człowiek niezwykły," Jan Błóński, "U źródeł teatru Witkiewicza (At the Source of the Theatre of Witkiewicz)," Dialog, XV (May, 1970), 84.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Błóński, "Meaning and Deformation," p. 30.

¹²Jan Błóński, "Teatru Witkiewicza: Forma Formy (The

Jan Błoński has also pointed out that character is used on two levels in the plays, the level of action of the plot of the play itself and the level of commentary.¹³ As the characters in a Witkacian drama are not generally allowed to live out the consequences of an initial action-inciting choice, Witkacy literally uses them for his purposes to create a level of commentary on the events of the action of the play. Characters are often ridiculed by events that turn back on them and which they are unable to thwart. At the same time they are aware of what is happening to them. Witkacy manipulates character and event to make his statement of his own philosophical position and not to justify any real life probabilities.

Jan Kłossowicz categorized specific types of heroes.¹⁴ He divides them into two major groups; these are: 1) the Titan who appears in many guises but is essentially always the same figure, a character with extraordinary vigor, sense of individuality and selfhood, and a brilliant intellect; and 2) the bubek (see Masłowski

Theatre of Witkiewicz: The Form of Form), "Dialog, XII (December, 1967), 71. See Appendix IV B for an analysis of the actor-director functions in the plays discussed in Chapters III through V, according to Błoński's categories.

¹³Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁴Kłossowicz, "Theory and Dramaturgy," p. 89f.

Type 7 above). Kossowicz would lump most of the artist heroes into this division. He does not regard this descriptive term as being derogatory, as Masłowski does.

Witkacy's attention to the figure of the artist has been noted by several critics. Andrzej Wirth has argued that Witkacy's main interest is in the figure of the artist, since Witkacy believed in the "...absolute supremacy of art over other human activity."¹⁵ Witkacy saw the artist as a tragicomic figure engaged in a last-ditch effort to find his place, to survive "...in the face of the ominous leveling processes of the revolution," Wirth states,¹⁶ the artist is portrayed by Witkacy, according to Wirth, as engaged in choosing a "third way."¹⁷ In the struggle to remain true to their vision of self, they are forced to choose between two historical alternatives, death or revolution: Walpurg chose instead the asylum, Balandash and Plasmonik chose prison, Wirth observed. The death of the artist, according to Wirth, either real or symbolic, is the harbinger of the death of the individual at large and perhaps even of the concept of individuality. His death

¹⁵Andrzej Wirth, "Brecht and Witkiewicz: Two Concepts of Revolution of the Drama of the Twenties," Comparative Drama, III (Fall, 1969), 201.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

is caused by social mechanization, an irreversible process and the ultimate horror of the century.¹⁸ Czesław Miłosz has observed that Witkiewicz concentrated on "madmen and maniacs" because he was fearful of civilization in what Miłosz calls the "soulless 'bliss' in a mechanized society," and these madmen and maniacs in their frenzy and folly were deserving of the author's attention.¹⁹ Jan Błóński, quoting Witkiewicz's own description, refers to this type of hero as "has-beens" or "former people."²⁰ This type of hero would have no place in the unthinking crowd of the future. Witkacy regarded them as persons who in other times would have been adventurers, aspiring metaphysical souls without form or direction, persons who would have endured their metaphysical uneasiness in a purely life-like and ordinary way.

Stefan Szuman has pointed out that the specific problems for the Witkacian heroes are two: boredom and insatiability. This is true for all, regardless of type, Szuman maintains; they have, he writes, lost a direct relationship with life, a sense of a grip on

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 203.

¹⁹ Czesław Miłosz, History of Polish Literature (London: Collier-Macmillan Company, 1968), p. 418.

²⁰ "...byłych ludzi," Błóński, "At the Source of the Theatre," p. 81.

life, and the ability to be gratified by life.²¹ Szuman argues that the reason that the characters are bored is that they already know everything, so to speak, even what they have not directly experienced and even what they do not consciously know. They are somehow aware that what will happen to them will be more or less of the same. The artist heroes, Szuman argues, are insatiable and literally bored to death.²² Kłossowicz came to a similar conclusion.²³ He argues that the Witkacian hero is faced either with insatiability for life or insatiability for art. And, as Jan Błóński concluded, this leads the hero to wish to abolish the difference between life and art.²⁴ If the difference could be abolished, Błóński points out, then the hero could unite the two actions and thereby perhaps be able to transcend this world or be transported into a special world characterized by what Błóński called the

²¹Stefan Szuman, "Niektóre aspekty i zagadnienia dramatu St. I. Witkiewicza Szewcy (Some Aspects and Problems of the Drama by St. I. Witkiewicz, The Shoemakers)," Tadeusz Kotarbiński and Jerzy E. Płomiński, eds., Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz: Człowiek i Twórca ("Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz: Man and Creator") (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1957), p. 27.

²²Ibid., p. 28.

²³Kłossowicz, "Theory and Dramaturgy," p. 101.

²⁴Błóński, "The Form of Form," p. 80.

governing triad: art, religion, and philosophy.²⁵ In short, the hero desires the sensation of the Mystery of Existence brought on by the metaphysical experience. Unfortunately the hero often fails in this attempt, Błóński states, and is therefore thrust back upon himself, desirous of living and being, authentically. This desire to live earnestly is a desire to live beyond life, as it were, Błóński has shown.²⁶ But even though the characters cannot resolve the duality of their being, Błóński argues, and are unable to create the ideally fulfilling life for themselves or to sustain the metaphysical sensation long enough to be satiated, they are relentlessly motivated to try again and again, unceasingly. But always for them the strangeness of life deceives them and masks the authentic Mystery of Existence.²⁷

The fate of the heroes follows one of three patterns: 1) powerless, the hero continues to suffer, either aware or unaware of the reasons for the suffering or the fact that he suffers; 2) defeated, the hero commits suicide or is otherwise removed from the plot; and 3) helpless, the hero chooses an alternative

²⁵ Błóński, "At the Source of the Theatre," p. 81.

²⁶ Błóński, "Meaning and Deformation," p. 27.

²⁷ Błóński, "At the Source of the Theatre," p. 85.

to death or pointless action and goes into prison or an asylum for a brief respite.

APPENDIX IV B

CHARACTER ANALYSIS CHARTS

The following character analysis charts show that all seventeen of the Masłowski categories of character types are present in the plays discussed in this paper. There are more instances of the Artist type than there of Titan and Bubek types, while there are many more instances of the Scoundrel and Servant types than there are of all other types. There are about as many instances of the Common Demon type as there are Artists and Titans combined.

From the charts it can be shown that about 20 percent of the characters fulfill director functions, while the other 80 percent are in the actor function.

It is not clear, however, from an analysis of this sort that character is repeated as type in the Witkacian aesthetic in any way that differs from the traditional use of types of characters. It would have to be shown in the plays themselves that repeating types are without color and depth, reduced to formal motifs in an invented design and without psychological definition. This does not seem to be so, given the richness and psychological variety

of characters in the eleven plays discussed in this paper. The variety within type is sufficient proof that Witkacy's characters do not repeat as color from a painter's palette. The difference in function, role, concept, thematic purpose and psychological depth, for example, of the Titan type (i. e. , Gyubal Wahazar, Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat, Maciej Korbowa, and Sajetan Tempe) suggest that Witkacy did not limit himself to repeating inflexible figures for the purpose of peopling his philosophical notions.

Summary

	<u>The Pragmatists</u>	<u>The New De- liverance</u>	<u>Gyubal Wahazar</u>	<u>Metaphysics of a Two-Headed Calf</u>	<u>The Water Hen</u>	<u>In a Little Country House</u>
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Character Function:¹

1. Actor	5	9	19	11	10	9
2. Director	1	2	2	3	3	1
3. Changes Function	1	1	3	1	1	0

Character Class:²

1. Bourgeois	0	2	11	1	2	7
2. Capitalist	1	0	0	4	5	1
3. Proletarian	1	4	7	5	5	2
4. Artistic Decadent	4	3	1	4	2	1

¹ Jan Błóński, "Znaczenie i zniekształcenie w 'czystej formie' St. I. Witkiewicza (Meaning and Deformation in the 'Pure Form' of St. I. Witkiewicz)," Miesięcznik Literacki, II (August, 1967).

² Konstanty Puzyna, "Witkacy," Dialog, VI (August, 1961).

Summary

<u>Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat</u>	<u>The Madman and the Nun</u>	<u>Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix</u>	<u>The Mother</u>	<u>The Shoemakers</u>	Totals
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Character Function:

1. Actor	10	3	17	12	15	118
2. Director	3	4	1	3	5	28
3. Changes Function	1	4	4	0	2	5

Character Class:

1. Bourgeois	7	5	1	7	5	48
2. Capitalist	3	0	0	3	3	20
3. Proletarian	3	1	3	2	8	41
4. Artistic Decadent	1	1	15	3	1	36

Summary

	<u>The Pragmatists</u>	<u>The New De- liverance</u>	<u>Gyubal Wahazar</u>	<u>Metaphysics of a Two-Headed Calf</u>	<u>The Water Hen</u>	<u>In a Little Country House</u>
<hr/>						
<u>Character Type:</u> ³						
1. Titan	1	0	2	0	1	0
2. Hetera	1	0	0	0	1	0
3. Artist	1	1	0	2	1	0
4. Cuttlefish	0	1	0	0	1	0
5. Scoundrel	1	0	2	3	2	2
6. Vulgar Demon	1	1	3	2	1	2
7. Bubek	0	0	1	1	0	1
8. Young Girl	0	0	1	0	0	2
9. Ephebe	0	0	1	1	1	0
10. Scholar	0	1	1	1	1	0
11. Middle-Aged Man	0	0	1	1	0	1
12. Old Man	0	0	2	0	4	0
13. Matron	0	1	0	0	0	0
14. Servant	1	3	6	5	3	2
15. Titan of the Past	0	1	0	0	0	0
16. Monsters	2	0	0	0	0	1
17. Savage	0	0	0	2	0	0
18. Other	0	1	1	0	2	0

³Michał Masłowski, "Bohaterowie dramatów Witkiewicza ("The Heroes of the Plays of Witkiewicz)," Dialog, XV (December, 1967).

Summary

<u>Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat</u>	<u>The Madman and the Nun</u>	<u>Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix</u>	<u>The Mother</u>	<u>The Shoemakers</u>	Totals
-------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---	-------------------	-----------------------	--------

Character Type:

1. Titan	1	0	1	0	0	7
2. Hetera	1	0	1	0	0	4
3. Artist	0	1	5	1	1	13
4. Cuttlefish	1	0	0	0	0	3
5. Scoundrel	3	2	2	2	4	23
6. Vulgar Demon	1	1	4	3	1	19
7. Bubek	1	0	1	2	0	7
8. Young Girl	0	0	1	0	0	4
9. Ephebe	0	0	0	0	2	5
10. Scholar	1	3	2	0	0	10
11. Middle-Aged Man	1	0	4	1	0	9
12. Old Man	0	1	1	2	0	10
13. Matron	1	1	0	2	0	5
14. Servant	2	1	2	1	3	29
15. Titan of the Past	0	0	0	0	1	2
16. Monsters	0	2	0	0	1	4
17. Savage	0	0	0	0	0	2
18. Other	2	2	5	3	5	21

Pragmatyści ("The Pragmatists")

<u>Character Name</u>	Plasfodor	Mammalia	von Telek	Masculette	Two Gendarmes	Chinese Mummy
<u>Character Function:</u>						
1. Actor	x	x		x	x	x
2. Director			x			
3. Changes Function						x
<u>Character Class:</u>						
1. Bourgeois						
2. Capitalist			x			
3. Proletarian					x	
4. Artistic Decadent	x	x		x		x
<u>Character Type:</u>						
1. Titan	x					
2. Hetera		x				
3. Artist	x					
4. Cuttlefish						
5. Scoundrel			x			
6. Vulgar Demon						
7. Bubek						
8. Young Girl						
9. Ephebe						
10. Scholar						
11. Middle-Aged Man						
12. Old Man						
13. Matron						
14. Servant					x	
15. Titan of the Past						
16. Monsters				x		x
17. Savage						
18. Other						

Nowe Wyzwolenie ("The New Deliverance")

<u>Character Name</u>	Florestan	Richard III	Two Murderers	Tatiana	Amusetta	Joanna
<u>Character Function:</u>						
1. Actor	x	x	x		x	x
2. Director				x		
3. Changes Function				x		
<u>Character Class:</u>						
1. Bourgeois	x				x	x
2. Capitalist						
3. Proletarian			x			
4. Artistic Decadent	x	x		x		
<u>Character Type:</u>						
1. Titan						
2. Hetera						
3. Artist	x					
4. Cuttlefish					x	
5. Scoundrel						
6. Vulgar Demon				x		
7. Bubek						
8. Young Girl						
9. Ephebe						
10. Scholar	x					
11. Middle-aged Man						
12. Old Man						
13. Matron						x
14. Servant			x			
15. Titan of the Past		x				
16. Monster						
17. Savage						
18. Other						

Nowe Wyzwolenie ("The New Deliverance")

<u>Character Name</u>	Housekeeper	Unknown Someone	Six Thugs
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Character Function:

1.	Actor	x		x
2.	Director		x	
3.	Changes Function			

Character Class:

1.	Bourgeois			
2.	Capitalist			
3.	Proletarian	x		
4.	Artistic Decadent			

Character Type:

1.	Titan			
2.	Hetera			
3.	Artist			
4.	Cuttlefish			
5.	Scoundrel			
6.	Vulgar Demon			
7.	Bubek			
8.	Young Girl			
9.	Ephebe			
10.	Scholar			
11.	Middle-aged Man			
12.	Old Man			
13.	Matron			
14.	Servant	x		x
15.	Titan of the Past			
16.	Monster			
17.	Savage			
18.	Other		x	

Metafizyka dwugłowego cielęcia
 ("Metaphysics of a Two-Headed Calf")

<u>Character</u>	Patricianello	Sir Robert Clay	Lady Clay	Mikulini	Ludwig Parvis	Mirabella
<u>Character Function:</u>						
1. Actor	x		x			x
2. Director		x		x	x	
3. Changes Function	x					
<u>Character Class:</u>						
1. Bourgeois				x		
2. Capitalist		x	x			
3. Proletarian						
4. Artistic Decadent	x				x	x
<u>Character Type:</u>						
1. Titan						
2. Hetera						
3. Artist	x				x	
4. Cuttlefish						
5. Scoundrel				x	x	
6. Vulgar Demon			x			x
7. Bubek						
8. Young Girl						
9. Ephebe	x					
10. Scholar				x		
11. Middle-aged Man		x				
12. Old Man						
13. Matron						
14. Servant						
15. Titan of the Past						
16. Monsters						
17. Savage						
18. Other						

Metafizykę dwugłowego cielęcia
 ("Metaphysics of a Two-Headed Calf")

<u>Character</u>	Jack Rivers	Hooded Figure	Old Hag	King of Papuan	Six Papuans	Four Sailors
<u>Character Function:</u>						
1. Actor	x	x	x	x	x	x
2. Director						
3. Changes Function						
<u>Character Class:</u>						
1. Bourgeois						
2. Capitalist	x	x				
3. Proletarian			x		x	x
4. Artistic Decadent				x		
<u>Character Type:</u>						
1. Titan						
2. Hetera						
3. Artist						
4. Cuttlefish						
5. Scoundrel	x					
6. Vulgar Demon						
7. Bubek		x				
8. Young Girl						
9. Ephebe						
10. Scholar						
11. Middle-aged Man						
12. Old Man						
13. Matron						
14. Servant			x		x	x
15. Titan of the Past						
16. Monsters						
17. Savage				x	x	
18. Other						

Metafizyka dwugłowego cielęcia
 ("Metaphysics of a Two-Headed Calf")

	<u>Characters</u>	Six Porters	Two Workers
<hr/>			
<u>Character Function:</u>			
1. Actor		x	x
2. Director			
3. Changes Function			
 <u>Character Class:</u>			
1. Bourgeois			
2. Capitalist			
3. Proletarian		x	x
4. Artistic Decadent			
 <u>Character Type:</u>			
1. Titan			
2. Hetera			
3. Artist			
4. Cuttlefish			
5. Scoundrel			
6. Vulgar Demon			
7. Bubek			
8. Young Girl			
9. Ephebe			
10. Scholar			
11. Middle-aged Man			
12. Old Man			
13. Matron			
14. Servant		x	x
15. Titan of the Past			
16. Monsters			
17. Savage			
18. Other			

Gyubal Wahazar, czyli Na Przełęczach bezsensu
 ("Gyubal Wahazar, or Along the Cliffs of the Absurd")

<u>Character</u>	Gyubal Wahazar	Piggykins	Donna Scabrosa	Sweetheart	Donna Lubrica	Clodgrain
<u>Character Function:</u>						
1. Actor		x	x	x	x	x
2. Director	x					
3. Changes Function	x					
<u>Character Class:</u>						
1. Bourgeois		x	x	x	x	
2. Capitalist						
3. Proletarian	x ?					x
4. Artistic Decadent						
<u>Character Type:</u>						
1. Titan	x					
2. Hetera						
3. Artist						
4. Cuttlefish						
5. Scoundrel						
6. Vulgar Demon			x		x	
7. Bubek						
8. Young Girl		x				
9. Ephebe				x		
10. Scholar						
11. Middle-aged Man						x
12. Old Man						
13. Matron						
14. Servant						
15. Titan of the Past						
16. Monster						
17. Savage						
18. Other						

Gyubal Wahazar, Czyli No przełęczach bezsensu
 ("Gyubal Wahazar, or Along the Cliffs of the Absurd")

<u>Character</u>	Rypmann	Lydia Bocarina	Applosia	Flaytrix	Father Unguenty	Father Pugenty
<u>Character Function:</u>						
1. Actor		x	x	x	x	x
2. Director						
3. Changes Function	x				x	
<u>Character Class:</u>						
1. Bourgeois		x		x	x?	x?
2. Capitalist						
3. Proletarian	x?		x			
4. Artistic Decadent						
<u>Character Type:</u>						
1. Titan					x	
2. Hetera						
3. Artist						
4. Cuttlefish						
5. Scoundrel					x	
6. Vulgar Demon		x				
7. Bubek				x		
8. Young Girl						
9. Ephebe						
10. Scholar	x					
11. Middle-aged Man						
12. Old Man	x					x
13. Matron						
14. Servant			x			
15. Titan of the Past						
16. Monster						
17. Savage						
18. Other						

Gyubal Wahazar, Czyli Na przełęczach bezsensu
 ("Gyubal Wahazar, or Along the Cliffs of the Absurd")

<u>Character</u>	Four Per- pendicularists	Two Barefoot Pneumatics	Three Hangmen	Morbidetto, the Fourth Hangman	Six Bodyguards
<u>Character Function:</u>					
1. Actor	x	x	x	x	x
2. Director					
3. Changes Function					
<u>Character Class:</u>					
1. Bourgeois	x ?	x		x	
2. Capitalist					
3. Proletarian			x		x
4. Artistic Decadent					
<u>Character Type:</u>					
1. Titan					
2. Hetera					
3. Artist					
4. Cuttlefish					
5. Scoundrel				x	
6. Vulgar Demon					
7. Bubek					
8. Young Girl					
9. Ephebe					
10. Scholar					
11. Middle-aged Man					
12. Old Man	x				
13. Matron					
14. Servant		x	x		x
15. Titan of the Past					
16. Monster					
17. Savage					
18. Other					

Gyubal Wahazar, Czyli Na przełęczach bezsensu
 ("Gyubal Wahazar, or Along the Cliffs of the Absurd")

Character	Binden- Gnumben	Crowd of People
-----------	--------------------	--------------------

Character Function:

- | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|
| 1. Actor | x | x |
| 2. Director | | |
| 3. Changes Function | | |

Character Class:

- | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|
| 1. Bourgeois | | x |
| 2. Capitalist | | x |
| 3. Proletarian | | x |
| 4. Artistic Decadent | x | |

Character Type:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| 1. Titan | | |
| 2. Hetera | | |
| 3. Artist | | |
| 4. Cuttlefish | | |
| 5. Scoundrel | | |
| 6. Vulgar Demon | | |
| 7. Bubek | | |
| 8. Young Girl | | |
| 9. Ephebe | | |
| 10. Scholar | | |
| 11. Middle-aged Man | | |
| 12. Old Man | | |
| 13. Matron | | |
| 14. Servant | x | |
| 15. Titan of the Past | | |
| 16. Monster | | |
| 17. Savage | | |
| 18. Other | | x |

Kurka Wodna ("The Water Hen")

<u>Character</u>	Albert Valpor	Edgar Valpor	Tadzio	Alice Nevermore	The Water Hen	Richard de Kor- bowa Korbowski
<u>Character Function:</u>						
1. Actor	x	x	x		x	x
2. Director				x		
3. Changes Function			x			x
<u>Character Class:</u>						
1. Bourgeois					x	x
2. Capitalist	x	x	x	x		
3. Proletarian						
4. Artistic Decadent		x		x		
<u>Character Type:</u>						
1. Titan		x?				
2. Hetera						
3. Artist		x?				
4. Cuttlefish					x	
5. Scoundrel			x			x
6. Vulgar Demon				x		
7. Bubek						
8. Young Girl						
9. Ephebe			x			
10. Scholar			x			
11. Middle-aged Man						
12. Old Man	x					
13. Matron						
14. Servant						
15. Titan of the Past						
16. Monster						
17. Savage						
18. Other						

Kurka Wodna ("The Water Hen")

<u>Character</u>	Typowicz	Specter	Evader	Footmen	Detectives
<u>Character Function:</u>					
1. Actor	x	x	x	x	x
2. Director					
3. Changes Function					
<u>Character Class:</u>					
1. Bourgeois					
2. Capitalist	x	x	x		
3. Proletarian				x	x?
4. Artistic Decadent					
<u>Character Type:</u>					
1. Titan					
2. Hetera					
3. Artist					
4. Cuttlefish					
5. Scoundrel					
6. Vulgar Demon					
7. Bubek					
8. Young Girl					
9. Ephebe					
10. Scholar					
11. Middle-aged Man					
12. Old Man	x	x	x		
13. Matron					
14. Servant				x	
15. Titan of the Past					
16. Monster					
17. Savage					
18. Other					x

Kurka Wodna ("The Water Hen")

<u>Character</u>	Afrosia	Lamplighter
<hr/>		
<u>Character Function:</u>		
1. Actor	x	x
2. Director		
3. Changes Function		
<u>Character Class:</u>		
1. Bourgeois		
2. Capitalist		
3. Proletarian	x	x?
4. Artistic Decadent		
<u>Character Type:</u>		
1. Titan		
2. Hetera		
3. Artist		
4. Cuttlefish		
5. Scoundrel		
6. Vulgar Demon		
7. Bubek		
8. Young Girl		
9. Ephebe		
10. Scholar		
11. Middle-aged Man		
12. Old Man		
13. Matron		
14. Servant	x	
15. Titan of the Past		
16. Monster		
17. Savage		
18. Other		x

W małym dworku ("In a Little Country House")

<u>Character</u>	Dyapanazy Nibek	Sophia	Amelia	Anita	Anastasia Nibek	Kozdrón
<u>Character Function:</u>						
1. Actor	x	x	x	x		x
2. Director					x	
3. Changes Function						
<u>Character Class:</u>						
1. Bourgeois	x	x	x	x	x	x
2. Capitalist	x					
3. Proletarian						
4. Artistic Decadent						
<u>Character Type:</u>						
1. Titan						
2. Hetera						
3. Artist						
4. Cuttlefish						
5. Scoundrel						x
6. Vulgar Demon				x	x	
7. Bubek						
8. Young Girl		x	x			
9. Ephebe						
10. Scholar						
11. Middle-aged Man	x					
12. Old Man						
13. Matron						
14. Servant						
15. Titan of the Past						
16. Monsters						
17. Savage						
18. Other						

W małym dworku ("In a Little Country House")

<u>Character</u>	Maszejko	Ursula	The Cousin	Marceli
<u>Character Function:</u>				
1. Actor	x	x	x	x
2. Director				
3. Changes Function				
<u>Character Class:</u>				
1. Bourgeois	x			
2. Capitalist				
3. Proletarian		x		x
4. Artistic Decadent			x	
<u>Character Type:</u>				
1. Titan				
2. Hetera				
3. Artist				
4. Cuttlefish				
5. Scoundrel	x			
6. Vulgar Demon				
7. Bubek			x	
8. Young Girl				
9. Ephebe				
10. Scholar				
11. Middle-aged Man				
12. Old Man				
13. Matron				
14. Servant		x		x
15. Titan of the Past				
16. Monsters				
17. Savage				
18. Other				

Jan Maciej Karol Wscieklica
 ("Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat")

<u>Character</u>	Jan Maciej	Rozalia	Wanda	Demur	Gorgozan	Maskauer
<u>Character Function:</u>						
1. Actor		x	x			x
2. Director	x			x	x	
3. Changes Function	x					
<u>Character Class:</u>						
1. Bourgeois		x	x			
2. Capitalist				x	x	x
3. Proletarian	x					
4. Artistic Decadent						
<u>Character Type:</u>						
1. Titan	x					
2. Hetera		x				
3. Artist						
4. Cuttlefish						
5. Scoundrel				x	x	
6. Vulgar Demon			x			
7. Bubek						
8. Young Girl						
9. Ephebe						
10. Scholar						
11. Middle-aged Man						x
12. Old Man						
13. Matron						
14. Servant						
15. Titan of the Past						
16. Monsters						
17. Savage						
18. Other						

Jan Maciej Karol Wścieklica
 ("Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat")

<u>Character</u>	Kierdelion	Twardzisz	Valentina	Czczobut	Sophia
<u>Character Function:</u>					
1. Actor	x	x	x	x	x
2. Director					
3. Changes Function					
<u>Character Class:</u>					
1. Bourgeois		x	x	x	
2. Capitalist					
3. Proletarian	x				x
4. Artistic Decadent					
<u>Character Type:</u>					
1. Titan					
2. Hetera					
3. Artist				x?	
4. Cuttlefish			x		
5. Scoundrel		x			
6. Vulgar Demon					
7. Bubek				x?	
8. Young Girl					
9. Ephebe					
10. Scholar					
11. Middle-aged Man					
12. Old Man					
13. Matron					
14. Servant	x				x
15. Titan of the Past					
16. Monsters					
17. Savage					
18. Other					

Jan Maciej Karol Wścieklica
 ("Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat")

<u>Character</u>		
	Children	Fifteen Aldermen

Character Function:

- | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|
| 1. Actor | x | x |
| 2. Director | | |
| 3. Changes Function | | |

Character Class:

- | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|
| 1. Bourgeois | x | x |
| 2. Capitalist | x | |
| 3. Proletarian | x | |
| 4. Artistic Decadent | | |

Character Type:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| 1. Titan | | |
| 2. Hetera | | |
| 3. Artist | | |
| 4. Cuttlefish | | |
| 5. Scoundrel | | |
| 6. Vulgar Demon | | |
| 7. Bubek | | |
| 8. Young Girl | | |
| 9. Ephebe | | |
| 10. Scholar | | |
| 11. Middle-aged Man | | |
| 12. Old Man | | |
| 13. Matron | | |
| 14. Servant | | |
| 15. Titan of the Past | | |
| 16. Monsters | | |
| 17. Savage | | |
| 18. Other | x | x |

Wariat i zakonnica ("The Madman and the Nun")

<u>Character</u>	Walpurg	Sister Anna	Sister Barbara	Dr. Bidello	Dr. Grün
<u>Character Function:</u>					
1. Actor	x	x			
2. Director			x	x	x
3. Changes Function			x	x	x
<u>Character Class:</u>					
1. Bourgeois		x	x	x	x
2. Capitalist					
3. Proletarian					
4. Artistic Decadent	x				
<u>Character Type:</u>					
1. Titan					
2. Hetera					
3. Artist	x				
4. Cuttlefish					
5. Scoundrel				x	x
6. Vulgar Demon		x			
7. Bubek					
8. Young Girl					
9. Ephebe					
10. Scholar				x	x
11. Middle-aged Man					
12. Old Man					
13. Matron			x		
14. Servant					
15. Titan of the Past					
16. Monsters					
17. Savage					
18. Other					

Wariat i zakonnica ("The Madman and the Nun")

<u>Character</u>		
Professor Walldorff		
Two Attendants		

Character Function:

- | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|
| 1. Actor | | x |
| 2. Director | x | |
| 3. Changes Function | | |

Character Class:

- | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|
| 1. Bourgeois | x | |
| 2. Capitalist | | |
| 3. Proletarian | | x |
| 4. Artistic Decadent | | |

Character Type:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| 1. Titan | | |
| 2. Hetera | | |
| 3. Artist | | |
| 4. Cuttlefish | | |
| 5. Scoundrel | | |
| 6. Vulgar Demon | | |
| 7. Bubek | | |
| 8. Young Girl | | |
| 9. Ephebe | | |
| 10. Scholar | x | |
| 11. Middle-aged Man | | |
| 12. Old Man | x | |
| 13. Matron | | |
| 14. Servant | | x |
| 15. Titan of the Past | | |
| 16. Monsters | | |
| 17. Savage | | |
| 18. Other | | |

Maciej Korbowa i Bellatrix ("Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix")

	<u>Character</u> Maciej Korbowa	Bellatrix	Hibiscus	Cayambe	Satanescu	Caroline Montecalfi
<u>Character Function:</u>						
1. Actor		x	x	x	x	x
2. Director	x					
3. Changes Function						
<u>Character Class:</u>						
1. Bourgeois						
2. Capitalist						
3. Proletarian						
4. Artist Decadent	x	x	x	x	x	x
<u>Character Type:</u>						
1. Titan	x					
2. Hetera		x				
3. Artist	x		x		x	x
4. Cuttlefish						
5. Scoundrel	x					
6. Vulgar Demon		x		x		x
7. Bubek						
8. Young Girl						
9. Ephebe						
10. Scholar						
11. Middle-aged Man			x		x	
12. Old Man						
13. Matron						
14. Servant						
15. Titan of the Past						
16. Monsters						
17. Savage						
18. Other						

Maciej Korbowa i Bellatrix ("Maciej Korbowa Bellatrix")

<u>Character</u>	Vessanyi	Dzinia	Baar- Zuk Kahn	Teozoforyk	Węborek	Tetrafon Pneumakon
<u>Character Function:</u>						
1. Actor	x	x	x	x	x	x
2. Director						
3. Changes Function						
<u>Character Class:</u>						
1. Bourgeois						
2. Capitalist						
3. Proletarian						
4. Artist Decadent	x	x	x	x	x	x
<u>Character Type:</u>						
1. Titan						
2. Hetera						
3. Artist						
4. Cuttlefish						
5. Scoundrel						
6. Vulgar Demon						
7. Bubek						
8. Young Girl		x				
9. Ephebe						
10. Scholar				x?		x
11. Middle-aged Man	x			x	x?	x
12. Old Man			x			
13. Matron						
14. Servant					x?	
15. Titan of the Past						
16. Monsters						
17. Savage						
18. Other						

Maciej Korbowa i Bellatrix ("Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix")

<u>Character</u>	Dexterowicz	Prince Lykon	Sylfa	Lackey	Dr. Merdal
<u>Character Function:</u>					
1. Actor	x	x	x	x	x?
2. Director					x
3. Changes Function					
<u>Character Class:</u>					
1. Bourgeois					
2. Capitalist					x
3. Proletarian				x	
4. Artist Decadent	x	x	x		
<u>Character Type:</u>					
1. Titan					
2. Hetera					
3. Artist	x				
4. Cuttlefish					
5. Scoundrel					
6. Vulgar Demon			x		
7. Bubek		x			
8. Young Girl					
9. Ephebe					
10. Scholar					
11. Middle-aged Man	x				x
12. Old Man					
13. Matron					
14. Servant				x	
15. Titan of the Past					
16. Monsters					
17. Savage					
18. Other		x			x

Maciej Korbowa i Bellatrix ("Maciej Korbowa and Bellatrix")

<u>Character</u>	Band of Centralists	Sailors of Death
------------------	------------------------	---------------------

Character Function:

- | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|
| 1. Actor | x | x |
| 2. Director | | |
| 3. Changes Function | | |

Character Class:

- | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|
| 1. Bourgeois | | |
| 2. Capitalist | x | |
| 3. Proletarian | | x |
| 4. Artist Decadent | | |

Character Type:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| 1. Titan | | |
| 2. Hetera | | |
| 3. Artist | | |
| 4. Cuttlefish | | |
| 5. Scoundrel | | |
| 6. Vulgar Demon | | |
| 7. Bubek | | |
| 8. Young Girl | | |
| 9. Ephebe | | |
| 10. Scholar | | |
| 11. Middle-aged Man | | |
| 12. Old Man | | |
| 13. Matron | | |
| 14. Servant | | |
| 15. Titan of the Past | | |
| 16. Monsters | | |
| 17. Savage | | |
| 18. Other | x | x |

Matka ("The Mother")

<u>Character</u>	Mother	Leon	Sophia	Baroness Oates	Calfskin	Stonybroke
<u>Character Function:</u>						
1. Actor		x	x	x	x	x
2. Director	x					
3. Changes Function	x	x				
<u>Character Class:</u>						
1. Bourgeois	x	x	x	x		x
2. Capitalist					x	
3. Proletarian						
4. Artistic Decadent		x				
<u>Character Type:</u>						
1. Titan						
2. Hetera						
3. Artist		x				
4. Cuttlefish						
5. Scoundrel		x				
6. Vulgar Demon			x			
7. Bubek						
8. Young Girl						
9. Ephebe						
10. Scholar						
11. Middle-aged Man						
12. Old Man					x	x
13. Matron	x			x		
14. Servant						
15. Titan of the Past						
16. Monsters						
17. Savage						
18. Other						

Matka ("The Mother")

<u>Character</u>	Mordello- Benz	Lucina Beer	Unknown Young Woman	Unknown Young Man	Voice	de la Trefouille
<u>Character Function:</u>						
1. Actor	x	x		x		x
2. Director			x		x	
3. Changes Function						
<u>Character Class:</u>						
1. Bourgeois		x ?	x ?	x ?	x	
2. Capitalist	x					
3. Proletarian						
4. Artistic Decadent	x	x				x
<u>Character Type:</u>						
1. Titan						
2. Hetera						
3. Artist						
4. Cuttlefish						
5. Scoundrel				x		
6. Vulgar Demon		x	x			
7. Bubek						x
8. Young Girl						
9. Ephebe						
10. Scholar						
11. Middle-aged Man	x ?					
12. Old Man						
13. Matron						
14. Servant						
15. Titan of the Past						
16. Monsters						
17. Savage						
18. Other	x				x	

Matka ("The Mother")

	<u>Character</u>	Modesta- Bladdery	Workers	Dorathy
<hr/>				
<u>Character Function:</u>				
1. Actor		x		x
2. Director			x	
3. Changes Function				
<u>Character Class:</u>				
1. Bourgeois				x
2. Capitalist				
3. Proletarian			x	
4. Artistic Decadent		x		
<u>Character Type:</u>				
1. Titan				
2. Hetera				
3. Artist				
4. Cuttlefish				
5. Scoundrel				
6. Vulgar Demon				
7. Bubek		x		
8. Young Girl				
9. Ephebe				
10. Scholar				
11. Middle-aged Man				
12. Old Man				
13. Matron				
14. Servant				x
15. Titan of the Past				
16. Monsters				
17. Savage				
18. Other			x	

Szewcy ("The Shoemakers")

<u>Character</u>	Sajetan Tempe	First Appren- tice (Joe)	Second Appren- tice (Andrew)	Irina	Scurvy	Fidgeons
<u>Character Function:</u>						
1. Actor	x	x	x	x	x	x
2. Director	x	x	x	x	x	
3. Changes Function	x	x	x	x	x	
<u>Character Class:</u>						
1. Bourgeois					x	x
2. Capitalist				x	x	
3. Proletarian	x	x	x			
4. Artistic Decadent				x		
<u>Character Type:</u>						
1. Titan	x					
2. Hetera						
3. Artist						
4. Cuttlefish						
5. Scoundrel		x	x		x	
6. Vulgar Demon				x		
7. Bubek		x	x			
8. Young Girl						
9. Ephebe						
10. Scholar						
11. Middle-aged Man						
12. Old Man						
13. Matron						
14. Servant						x
15. Titan of the Past						
16. Monsters						
17. Savage						
18. Other						

Szewcy ("The Shoemakers")

<u>Character</u>	Hyperworkoid	Comrade Abramowski	Comrade X	Joseph Tempe	Peasants	Woman Guard
<u>Character Function:</u>						
1. Actor	x	x	x	x	x	x
2. Director						
3. Changes Function						
<u>Character Class:</u>						
1. Bourgeois				x	x	x
2. Capitalist				x		
3. Proletarian	x	x	x	x		
4. Artistic Decadent						
<u>Character Type:</u>						
1. Titan						
2. Hetera						
3. Artist						
4. Cuttlefish						
5. Scoundrel				x		
6. Vulgar Demon						
7. Bubek				x		
8. Young Girl						
9. Ephebe						
10. Scholar						
11. Middle-aged Man						
12. Old Man						
13. Matron						
14. Servant	x	x	x			
15. Titan of the Past						
16. Monsters	x					
17. Savage						
18. Other					x	x

Szewcy ("The Shoemakers")

<u>Character</u>	The Mulch	The Guard	The Vigilant Youth
<hr/>			
<u>Character Function:</u>			
1. Actor	x	x	x
2. Director	x		
3. Changes Function	x		
<u>Character Class:</u>			
1. Bourgeois		x	x
2. Capitalist			x
3. Proletarian			x
4. Artistic Decadent	x?		
<u>Character Type:</u>			
1. Titan			
2. Hetera			
3. Artist			
4. Cuttlefish			
5. Scoundrel			
6. Vulgar Demon			
7. Bubek			
8. Young Girl			
9. Ephebe			x
10. Scholar			
11. Middle-aged Man			
12. Old Man			
13. Matron			
14. Servant			
15. Titan of the Past	x?		
16. Monsters			
17. Savage			
18. Other	x	x	x

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