

POSUDEK VEDOUCÍHO DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE

THE REFLECTION OF TUTOR OF THESIS

Clara Siersch

„Theatre for Growing – Growing Theatre“

Masks and the Art of Being Nobody

To meet Clara has been for me a pedagogical and a personal enjoyment and a challenge in similar qualities at the same time of how to understand, how to be supportive as a teacher (according to her background and experience) and to search for the ways how to help her, such a strong personality, to develop and to let grow Clara in her specific authorship.

Introduction of Clara's thesis are absolutely clear and rich enough following and explaining the process of her thinking based on the personal experience from her theatrical and therapeutic studies and practice: living in Mexico and meeting the phenomenon of a mask, experience and studies in Gestalt Therapy, studying at KATaP and being an authorial performer. She feels herself in an everyday life as a mediator not as a therapist or/and an actress, not someone who cures or giving advises. „In this limited work I will use them („emptiness, nothingness or neutrality“) as a picture of a free and open state, where not the individual peculiarity is emphasized, but an universal human base, as a starting point for theatrical and personal exploration and the development of character.“ (p. 8)

In the introduction (1.1. „From personal experiences to the universe of masks“) the author is explaining the reason why she has used the main theme of masks connected to her professional- stage and private life and practice, she is searching for the „zero point, the centre between the distant poles, the source of all creation- according to the German philosopher Salomo Friedländer...“ (p. 9- 10) My only question is, why in this particular and important part of the introduction or further away, in the following text, is a reader not given

a chance to overlook the base of Friedländer's theory in an alive dialogue with Clara's experience, opinion and a clear expression and the concrete context with them. Unfortunately, this is happening in the whole thesis- the gap between the practice and the theory. Fortunately Clara's thesis is built up so that we can read and imagine the parabolic „red line“ of the topic of masks and her story based on a deep practical experience, honestly followed through the final authorial presentation with masks (she produced by herself). I was invited to consult it - with personal and pedagogical pleasure and curiosity.

The part where we can read and understand the concrete connection of Gestalt Therapy, the neutral mask and Clara's own performative and authorial professional experience, is the descriptions of parallels with authorial acting and interacting with the inner partner experienced at KATaP. It is a very authentic, aware, real and candid part of sharing her general approach through a verbal reflective expression in an axis of time she is allowing herself and to a reader.

I appreciate very much the choice of Clara to ask herself as she has done so: „1- What does the mask hide and what does it reveal?; 2- What are the benefits of the neutral mask for the development as an actor/actress and as a person?“ (p. 17). Following part of the thesis is a deep reflection of approaches she went through physically: natural, sensitive, personal and logical- led by her inner experience. The most interesting is the chapter 2.2. „Neutrality and nothingness“ (p. 24). The author is occupied with to describe awareness of being visible or invisible- on different levels of explorations, sharing feelings with a reader directly.

Following part of the thesis is a heart of it. There we can finally follow the chain: Embodiment of a mask, identification with it, alienations... We are getting into touch with the ideas of Jacques Lecoq and prof. Ctibor Turba, with their educational approaches in an interconnection with psychosomatic disciplines taught at KATaP- Authorial Acting and (Inter)acting with the Inner Partner that Clara has experienced and is able to be aware of in her verbal reflection in the line of time. In chapters 4. 2. „Voice and breath“ (p. 43 – 44) and 4.3. „Movement and embodiment“ she is describing „how the body becomes an other receptive organ, sensitive to inner and outer space, impulses, qualities...“ (p. 44).

The question of necessity for to conclude the chain of Clara's ideas in a practical and a theoretical field was her personal experience- she did it all more than successfully. In the chapter 4. 5. „Personal experience with performances: My Authorial Project- Bremen Calling” (p. 53) she is describing the work in a process, what is very valuable for me personally, and for readers of her thesis in future as well- especially for students.

In 5. „Conclusion” (p. 57- 59) Clara is coming back to comment all approaches she has mentioned in her thesis and closing „a lasso” for to let us know what she has found out practically.

I fully recommend Clara's work for the defence.

In Prague, 24. 06. 2018

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