

Supervisor's notes on Aleksandra Bulatovic's bachelor's thesis ,Searching for Home'

Aleksandra Bulatovic, whom we all know as Sasha, presents her bachelor's thesis ,Searching for Home: How language and body language may affect the dialogical acting experience'. I won't comment much on the structure or the content of her work, as I believe she and the opponent will do it. I would like to take the opportunity to comment on the process of its making because it was exciting to observe it and I believe it is the strongest asset of Sasha's work.

Sasha's very starting point was actually conceptual. It was first an idea formulated vaguely at the DAMU Cafe, although inspired by a personal experience of speaking two languages as mother tongues and the trouble it may bring, from social contexts to communication. At first I was afraid she would explore theoretical and general works, either from phenomenology or linguistics, on how language affects body language, and that she would try to connect it to the topic. That the trajectory would be „from the outside in“. But with the first texts I received I was pleasantly surprised it was mostly notes on Sasha's experience, moreover, an attempt to grasp, notice and name her experience. Perhaps she would need more time to compare her experience with some other material and perhaps that is why the secondary literature is so scarce and why there aren't many references to support her thoughts and arguments. For I think it would be useful for Sasha's orientation to notice that much has been written on what she was experiencing during practising DA, especially, if her interest lies in acting as she confesses in the Introduction.

Sasha shares her experience with Dialogical Acting and complements it with quotations and information on the discipline. It is an exciting read for those who have experience with DA but might also be engaging for those who don't because her notes and comments don't lack some tension. An interesting moment for me was when she mentioned her made-up ,rules' and provided it with the paraphrased recommendations how to do DA by the founder of the discipline. Those who have experience with DA might appreciate the irony. Sasha mentions the vulnerability of being exposed and how she was exploring it while practising DA and it was evidently an important topic for her because she came back to it several times.

That this bachelor's thesis is much more than just a collection of personal notes and few quotations became evident when I had chance to observe Sasha's doubts and moments

of self-reflection during the evaluation of her questionnaires. First of all, quite frankly, I felt a bit left out when I learned, sometime in the summer, that Sasha conducted some research in the form of questionnaires in order to support or feed her curiosity in the topic / how language may affect the DA experience. I think it was a great idea to include experiences of her colleagues and not only because it was the first attempt of such kind in the English program on the level of a subject. But what was interesting was observing Sasha looking back at the process and being engaged in ethical questions (how the questions were formulated and (mis)leading, which is described on page 32 in the Appendix in the footnotes) as she noticed that this research perhaps needed a bit more care.

Sasha writes in one of the footnotes explaining what Authorial Presentation is that it is, much like everything else at DACP (KATaP), a process. I do see her bachelor thesis as a process, or a result of a process in time. If I am not mistaken, this is the first bachelor thesis in the history of Authorial Acting Program. I think it is truly valuable that Sasha was able to look at what she has done and written with distance. As she was realising that there are certain issues and questions, responsibilities (towards her colleagues, herself and the reader, if she continues to pursue acting career, one might find a parallel – a responsibility to her acting colleagues, herself and the audience) that need to be addressed, she was discovering something much more interesting and precious – an ability to reflect on her work and admit something was off. She did not try to cover it up to present some ‘results’. She made an honest confession, allowed herself to be vulnerable, and included her error into the process. Because - is it still an error now? Or has it become something else? Anyway, I believe it is a bold thing to do and the strongest element of her thesis, which started as a conceptual idea and finished as something more personal. I am happy to recommend her bachelor’s thesis for the defence.

Michaela Raisová, PhD.

In Prague, September 16th, 2021