

One of the paradoxical effects of Russia's 2022 full-scale assault on Ukraine was the unexpected and unprecedented interest of Polish and Western European scholars and institutions in Ukrainian theatre (hitherto rarely the subject of theatrical, performative and cultural studies). This sudden curiosity, however, has been almost exclusively concerned with Ukrainian strategies of depicting the currently ongoing full-scale war and the experience of reworking war trauma (as Harbuziuk 2022, 2023a, Chuzhynova 2023, Bal, 2023, 2024 write), despite the fact that signals of Russian aggression were already evident in Ukrainian theatre much earlier, since 2014. Unfortunately, researchers have dealt much less frequently with the issues of bilateral relations between Poland and Ukraine presented in theatre, including the problems of mutual co-existence, rapprochement and mutual cognition of the two societies.

Therefore, in order to meet this lively interest of Polish and Western European scholars and institutions in Ukrainian theatre, we would like to propose in the present project an alternative model of inquiring into Polish-Ukrainian relations, in which we treat theatre as a tool of co-existence, rapprochement and mutual learning between the two societies: Polish and Ukrainian, in the context not only of the ongoing war, but also of the contemporary global reality of migration and the challenges of cultural mobility.

Therefore, we intend to map and analyse such examples of Polish-Ukrainian theatrical cooperation, which, since 2014 - i.e. since the Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity, which signalled Ukraine's turn towards Western Europe, as well as triggered deeper cooperation with Ukraine for Polish artists - have diagnosed and opened perspectives for mutual understanding and learning processes, exchange of cultural experiences and integration of both societies. We intend to treat these examples, in line with recent assumptions of the philosophy of science (Latour 1999, 2014), as living laboratories of cognition (Bal and Chaberski, 2021), in which culturally diverse subjects meet and interact with each other in order to develop new models of cooperation. The defining characteristic of **theatre as a laboratory of cognition** understood in this way is the co-presence of creators and spectators in a given space - which engages their bodies, senses and affects - (Santos 2018, Taylor 2020) and allows us, in a non-discursive way, to diagnose and negotiate each other's viewpoints and the local contingencies of our cognitive processes. Theatre as a laboratory of cognition can also contribute to the creation of a so-called 'epistemology of the heart' (Santos 2018, Taylor 2020:XI), that is, an alternative knowledge based on the performative, physical and affective experience of collective action and thinking (of researchers and artists from both countries), called 'com-passionate thinking' (Bal, 2021, com-passionate thinking). Knowledge produced in this way, can provide a competing model for other traditional discursive humanistic cognitive processes, based on the superiority of the researcher over the object of study.

Given the above rationale for undertaking the research and its methodological assumptions, we set ourselves three main objectives in this project:

1. To map and trace the paths of joint Polish-Ukrainian theatre initiatives implemented from 2014 to the present day on the territory of Poland and Ukraine - i.e. specific performances, theatre festivals, performing arts workshops, educational programmes and student exchanges of art schools with the participation of artists from both countries - in order to identify the mechanisms facilitating and hindering the development of this cooperation, as postulated by cultural mobility (Greenblatt, 2010).
2. To explore the results of this collaboration in order to identify specific methodologies, strategies and pedagogies for joint stage work in terms of their usefulness in the process of breaking down cultural stereotypes, learning to see oneself through the eyes of the Other and building the subjectivity of representatives of both cultures.
3. To identify perspectives for further mutual cooperation between theatre makers of both countries, which would include but also go beyond the current state of knowledge, related to the state of emergency of the ongoing war, and would be oriented towards future long-term processes of experience exchange, pedagogy and working methodology.

According to our assumptions, examples of such co-sensitive thinking and acting in theatre can become tools for a real overcoming of still existing prejudices, social inequalities or historical backgrounds in Polish and Ukrainian imagination, which stand in the way of integration of Polish and Ukrainian society. They can also make an important contribution to the development of research on migration in theatre, research on multilingualism, multiethnicity and multiculturalism in art, complicating existing theories on the creation of imagined homogeneous cultural communities.