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Existing Within and Beyond Time

Capri—the Island of Fugitives
by Krystian Lupa

There is a categorical difference between theater and digital media, as Hans-Thies Lehmann explains, marked by “the shared time–space of mortality”¹ that belongs only to theater. Thus, digital media is always outside the experience of time, i.e. of death, while in theater the “sender and receiver age together.”² This “intimation of mortality” appears to be an aspect of theater that is being intensely challenged

¹ Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (New York: Routledge, 2006), 167.

² Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, 167.

by digital media. Christopher Balme discusses the issue, while evoking the most influential theories (Auslander, Phelan, Fischer-Lichte), in order to signify theater as a hypermedium that “can contain and represent most other media.”³ He later concludes that there is a “necessity to look at theater and performance in the context of intermedial relationships where not rivalry but mutual enrichment are at stake.”⁴ Digital media are, as part of this approach, coming to be naturalized in theater. Nonetheless, some scholars and spectators are fond of theater in its strict, essentialist form of direct interaction between living bodies. As Balme has observed, digital media interrupt what Erika Fischer-Lichte calls the feedback loop between actors and spectator, however such kinds of disconnections can develop the spectator’s experience while reinforcing “the aura of the live” as being desirable.⁵

The uncanniness of experience produced by mediated bodies, which could explain the longing for (if not be the apotheosis of) living, not mediated, bodies, derives from the refiguration of living bodies into an image, a digital *double*. Matthew Causey, like Christopher Balme, implies that “the ontology of the performance (liveness), which exists before and after mediatization, has been altered within the space of technology.”⁶ Developing his argument into a psychoanalytical reflection on subjectivity, Causey argues that “the material body and its subjectivity are extended, challenged and reconfigured through technology,”⁷ to eventually build a thesis based on the idea of the virtual *double*:

My position is that the inclusion of the televisual screen in performance and the practice of performance in the screened world of virtual environments constitutes the staging of the privileged object of the split subject, that which assists in the subject’s division, capturing the gaze, enacting the subject’s annihilation, its nothingness, while presenting the unrepresentable approach of the real through the televisual screens.⁸

In this context, Causey concludes by saying that “the uncanny experience of the double is death made material, unavoidable, present and screened.”⁹ So here we are in a paradoxical situation where the time–space of mortality, shared by simultaneously aging real bodies of actors and spectators, is doubled by the virtual in

³ Christopher Balme, “Surrogate Stages: Theatre, Performance and the Challenge of New Media,” *Performance Research* 13, no. 2 (2009): 88, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13528160802639342>.

⁴ Balme, “Surrogate Stages,” 90.

⁵ Balme, 85.

⁶ Matthew Causey, *Theatre and Performance in Digital Culture: From Simulation to Embeddedness* (London: Routledge, 2006), 16, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203028223>.

⁷ Causey, *Theatre and Performance in Digital Culture*, 16.

⁸ Causey, 17.

⁹ Causey, 18.

order to materialize (a consciousness of) death, to make visible what is repressed: the inevitability of death (not being/absence).¹⁰ If so, the return from digitally produced mediated bodies to living bodies in the same performance can indeed be perceived and felt as coming from an *unnatural* to a *natural* state, from death to life, so far as we recognize death as uncanny and unnatural.¹¹

Digital media in theater can, in the framework of a feedback loop, be recognized as something unnatural *per se*. Apart from such recognition, and following Balme's affirmative constatation about the inclusion of digital media in theater, we would try to identify how digital media can (seemingly) estrange theatrical experience. Against this background, the reading strategies of unnatural narratology should be applied since they affirmatively interpret any oddity found in the narrative. Unnatural narratives are identified as being in opposition to natural ones, which are based on a "mimetic bias" in which "the projected storyworld (i.e., the temporal and spatial coordinates), the characters in it, and the narrative act that produces the narrative closely correlate with real-world scripts or schemata."¹² Being in opposition, unnatural narratives "may radically deconstruct the anthropomorphic narrator, the traditional human character, and the minds associated with them, or they may move beyond real-world notions of time and space, thus taking us to the most remote territories of conceptual possibilities."¹³ In their manifesto, theoreticians of this new approach to the reading strategy of unnatural narratives identify the main aspects of analysis: unnatural storyworlds, unnatural minds, and unnatural acts of narration.¹⁴ Dramaturgical narrative (dramaturgy), being theater's "act of narration," clashes with the "unnatural" intruders of digital media, however this meeting could be read affirmatively as an enrichment and extension of dramaturgy. In relation to unnaturalness in narrative, Jan Alber holds that "the story is no longer the sacrosanct chronological sequence of events that can then be represented in different ways at the level of the narrative discourse."¹⁵ As such, in theater "story" becomes a "game,"¹⁶ employing various media by which the spectator is trapped in the cross-media and temporal loop that sometimes is rejected as an

¹⁰ Causey, 18: "The unconscious thinks it is immortal. The ego does not believe in the possibility of its death."

¹¹ In the logic of life as *being*, death as *not being* is indeed unnatural for those who are.

¹² Jan Alber, Stefan Iversen, Henrik S. Nielsen, and Brian Richardson, "Unnatural Narratives, Unnatural Narratology: Beyond Mimetic Models," *Narrative* 18, no. 2 (2010): 114. It has to be mentioned that aspects of this unnatural narratology's manifesto were revised recently, see Jan Alber and Brian Richardson, eds., *Unnatural Narratology: Extensions, Revisions, and Challenges* (Columbus: Ohio State University, 2020).

¹³ Alber et al., "Unnatural Narratives, Unnatural Narratology," 114.

¹⁴ Alber et al., 116.

¹⁵ Jan Alber, *Unnatural Narrative: Impossible Worlds in Fiction and Drama* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016), 149.

¹⁶ Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, 26, 64, where Lehmann discusses "game" in the context of the theater of the absurd being, it would seem, one of the first manifestations of unnatural narrative in drama.

impenetrable oddity, but which sometimes is embraced as an experience “engaging in a process of frame enrichment to conceptualize an impossible scenario.”¹⁷

An attempt to present the unrepresentable, the impenetrable experience of not being, contained in “impossible scenarios,” appears to be an issue which is of particular importance in the theater of Krystian Lupa,¹⁸ with its special emphasis on the issue of time, or—more precisely—of its temporality. The specificity of Lupa’s theater creates a temporal space of *existing within*, when rhythm, pause, and articulation, made through the medium of the human body, bring their own time into being. By introducing digital media to his theater, Lupa changes the perception of time in his productions, and this in turn is followed by an essential modification of the meanings. The following sections will try to analyze how the usage of digital media on stage in the theater of Lupa transforms the temporal zone of *existing within* into the uncanny experience of *existing beyond*. This process, in Lupa’s performance, occurs in regard to time and according to the interweaving rule to such an extent that a kind of palimpsestic temporality (*within/beyond*) is produced. The procedure seems to be connected with the director’s tendency to stage novels, i.e. to use prose narrative, albeit in its deconstructed form, in which the epic construction of time makes a significant contribution to creating a stage world.

Staging a novel in the theatrical time frame by Krystian Lupa—general remarks

In his theater, Krystian Lupa focuses mainly on the novel, deeming this form of literature a productive source for theater. The subversive nature of this artistic procedure arises from a common belief that narrative fiction is “diametrically opposite or even hostile to theater,”¹⁹ and in and of itself it becomes the first “unnatural” gesture of the artist. Nonetheless, Piotr Gruszczyński considers this practice of Lupa’s to be particularly revealing.²⁰ The stage adaptations of Hermann Broch’s *The Sleepwalkers*,²¹ Mikhail Bulgakov’s *Master and Margarita*,²² or Franz Kafka’s *The*

¹⁷ Alber et al., “Unnatural Narratives, Unnatural Narratology,” 118. Alber notes that this “way of responding to the interpretive challenges of unnatural narratives is to create new cognitive parameters by reshuffling and/or recombining existing frames and script.”

¹⁸ Piotr Gruszczyński, *Ojcobójcy: Młodzi zdolniejsi w teatrze polskim* (Warszawa: W.A.B., 2003), 40.

¹⁹ Gruszczyński, *Ojcobójcy*, 35, trans. MB.

²⁰ Gruszczyński, 32–33, trans. MB.

²¹ *The Sleepwalkers* (Esch, *an Anarchy*) was based on Hermann Broch’s *The Sleepwalkers: August Esch*, adapted, directed, and with stage design by Krystian Lupa, The Old National Theater in Cracow, 1995; *The Sleepwalkers* (*Huguenau, a Factuality*) was based on Hermann Broch’s *The Sleepwalkers: Wilhelm Huguenau*, adapted, directed, and stage design by Krystian Lupa, The Old National Theater in Cracow, 1998.

²² *Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov, adapted, directed, and with stage design by Krystian Lupa, The Old National Theater in Cracow, 2002.

*Trial*²³ are just a few examples in Lupa's theater which involve a relationship with prose narratives. Furthermore, the director has developed a strategy of staging novels by playing with associations followed by deconstructing the text, which can be seen as a second phase of unnaturalizing the stage text. He himself admitted this fact when describing his work on the staging of *Master and Margarita*:

I deleted the existing clues, punchlines, I left some matters and situations. . . . We look at relationships, we conjure up new associations. . . . We awaken today's sensitivity, anxieties, and perspectives and with them we try to affect the novel's situations, be inspired by them. It arouses wild emotions.²⁴

This strategy, as described above in an interview from 2001, was consequently confirmed by the director in an interview he gave in 2019, when he discussed his work on Kafka's *The Trial*,²⁵ a point which was clearly noted by reviewers:

Lupa is brilliant at the moment he brutally enters into the novel, cuts its first shell and nestles inside, enveloping his own self—memory, sensitivity, and personal themes—with the scenes from the beginning and the end of the book.²⁶

Such staging initially requires a profound process whereby the director/reader immerses him/herself in the novel in order to create a personal relationship with the book, and, secondly, extended rehearsal time with the actors so as to generate the most appropriate methods and techniques to express this relationship on stage, supported by the actors' emotional and intellectual contribution.²⁷

The way Lupa stages novels, and the particular method of this work, is the primary strategy of his theater, one that always results in a monumental piece lasting many hours and being a variation on the themes of the literary sources. The several-hour-long performances by Lupa seem to reflect the construction of time in the prose narrative, albeit in its deconstructed, fragmented form. The variational nature of Lupa's performances is revealed in the reduction of any coherent dramaturgy achieved via the introduction, as an alternative, of a collage of scenic images.

²³ *The Trial* by Franz Kafka, adapted, directed, and with stage design by Krystian Lupa, a coproduction of The New Theater in Warsaw, Studio Theatre-Gallery in Warsaw, Powszechny Theater in Warsaw, TR in Warsaw, and Le Quai—Centre Dramatique National in Angers, 2017.

²⁴ Gruszczyński, *Ojcobójcy*, 77, trans. MB.

²⁵ Interviewed by Piotr Gruszczyński on October 14, 2019 during a public meeting with Krystian Lupa at the New Theater in Warsaw, which the author of this essay attended.

²⁶ Łukasz Drewniak, "K/184: Krótki tekst o Lupie," *Teatralny.pl* (website), March 19, 2018, <http://teatralny.pl/opinie/k184-krotki-tekst-o-lupie,2310.html>, trans. MB.

²⁷ The way Krystian Lupa works with actors has recently been questioned since it seems to involve some unethical conduct. See Monika Kwaśniewska, "Między wolnością a manipulacją: Sytuacja aktorów i aktorek w *Factory 2*," *Didaskalia*, nr 150 (2019); Stanisław Godlewski, "Studnia bez dna," *Dialog Online*, October 16, 2020, <http://www.dialog-pismo.pl/przedstawienia/studnia-bez-dna>.

Not only is the prose narrative of the novel to be staged blurred, but also the stage narrative of events is vague, very much like in the unnatural narratives described above. In such a staging, the employment of media—such as video projection or virtual space—pretends to be compatible with a noncoherent form of performance.

This kind of dramaturgical framework inevitably leads to a discussion of theatrical time that Anne Ubersfeld describes as the relationship between two temporalities: the time of a performance to be completed and the time of the presented action. However, this relationship depends not so much on the duration of the action or performance, but mainly “on the mode of representation.”²⁸ In Lupa’s theater, this mode of representation corresponds to the new temporality he creates on stage. Ubersfeld is right in saying that it is extremely difficult “to grasp the dimensions of time” generated in performance: “The extreme difficulty involved in analyzing theatrical time is related to the fact that these perceptions of time can be combined, so that temporality becomes more of a philosophical notion than a semiological one.”²⁹

I will now turn to the relationship between the temporality generated by the medium of the human body and the temporality produced by digital media to explore the director’s method of creatively using the “unnatural” means of prose narrative and digital media in theater performance.

Creating temporality through the human body and digital media in the theater of Krystian Lupa—a case study

Krystian Lupa’s staging of *Capri—the Island of Fugitives*³⁰ shows the director’s way of creating a specific temporality, inevitably interweaved with meditations on space. Lupa created a monumental six-hour performance which is a loose adaptation of two semi-fictionalized prose books by Curzio Malaparte: *Kaputt* and *The Skin*. Both books by Malaparte can be seen as essays on human cruelty, however *Kaputt* appears to be a journalistic, quite distanced, presentation of facts regarding the Second World War,³¹ while *The Skin* seems to draw on the authentic experiences of the author in post-war Naples. This analysis will focus on Lupa’s stage adaptation of *Kaputt*, since this work by Malaparte inspired most of the scenes in the production. Furthermore, *The Skin*, in Lupa’s performance, provides a distinct, more personal context for the experience of cruelty and as such it deserves a separate analysis.



²⁸ Anne Ubersfeld, *Reading Theatre*, trans. Frank Collins (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 126.

²⁹ Ubersfeld, *Reading Theatre*, 127.

³⁰ *Capri—the Island of Fugitives* was based on Curzio Malaparte’s *Kaputt* and *The Skin*, adapted, directed, and with stage design by Krystian Lupa, Powszechny Theater in Warsaw, 2019.

³¹ For more on the mixture of factual information and confabulation in Malaparte’s *Kaputt* see Marcin Czardybon, “Jeżeli nie wierzycie, to popatrzcie tu, na mój talerz: Prawda konfabulacji w prozie reportażowej Curzia Malapartego,” *Tekstualia* 47, nr 4 (2016).

The production is embedded in the central concept of the *genius loci* of the Italian island of Capri, involving the works of Malaparte only as narratives supporting the crucial idea that is being discussed on stage. In his explanation of such a delineated strategy, the director notes:

I soaked in Capri. A performance born of the phenomenon of a place is a stranger creation than a performance born of the phenomenon of a person. Until now, when I was working on a book or text, I treated it as a meeting with a person. Finding a person somehow fertilized the performance. This was the case in *The Trial*, for example . . . This time I started with the place, even if it was supposed to be Casa Malaparte . . . It was, in a way, a preventive defense against Malaparte's excessive expansiveness as a narrator. Not *Kaputt*, not *The Skin*, but Malaparte as one of the inhabitants and media of this place's emanation . . .³²

Thus, Lupa created a stage piece that exposes yet, at the same time, blurs the cross-media loop to express an artistic idea. By reconstructing the formal structure of this artistic procedure, we can recognize the overarching medium of the place, the island of Capri, with its symbol of Casa Malaparte, the house of the Italian writer. Capri is, here, portrayed as a mythical asylum for many great minds seeking inspiration or escape from the world. The director mentions Byron, Gorki, Rilke, and Lenin and juxtaposes them with the figure of the Roman emperor Tiberius, who was the first famous fugitive on Capri. Going further, Lupa considers the houses built for all these famous fugitives on the island to be the architectural containers of their fears, plans, and dreams. Consequently, the architecture of Casa Malaparte becomes a vantage point for the themes on stage and therefore its main medium. The modernist, severe shape of Casa Malaparte, with its upside-down pyramidal stairs leading to the roof patio, situated on a high cliff, was a design by Curzio Malaparte himself, who described it as *casa come me*, a “home like me.” This identification of a person with a place relates to Lupa's conceptualization of the performance through the site. The director employed this flow of site-specific mediation when the island-house-person functions like a loop that inspires a free play of associations and establishes the dramaturgical axis of the performance.

At this point, the spatial dimension of the performance should be considered as the main factor in creating temporality. The real space—the island of Capri with Casa Malaparte—exists in this performance both as a metonymy and as a metaphor. Being figures of contiguity (metonymy), Capri and Casa Malaparte work in association with the person of Curzio Malaparte, who spent part of his life there and whose literary works are the textual basis for Lupa's staging. Being

³² Krystian Lupa, “Utracony raj w nas pracuje,” interview by Kamila Paprocka, *Teatralny.pl* (website), November 8, 2019, <http://teatralny.pl/rozmowy/utracony-raj-w-nas-pracuje,2875.html>, trans. MB.

a figure of resemblance (metaphor), they create an imaginative space of an asylum for artists. Metonymy and metaphor are the main spatial figures in theater³³ that are closely associated with the creation of temporality. Time in this production is in fact a category that governs space, even though the space is an overarching, metonymical and metaphorical, concept of the performance. Taking the specific space as a vantage point for his production, Lupa constructs scenes which are temporal (metonymical or metaphorical) instantiations of this space. To create the scenes, the director involves both the medium of the human body and digital media in the form of video projection to produce a kind of temporal (and spatial) palimpsest. The palimpsestic form of this performance, created by overlapping images of different times and spaces that human bodies and digital media produce, reveals layers of meanings built on each other. The specificity of this palimpsest is defined using a see-through layer—i.e. the classical theater stage, populated with human bodies, remains visible behind a large transparent screen on which video is projected. The real and the virtual in the spatiotemporal dimension are present and, by this very fact, the specific temporality of Lupa's staging is generated.

The original dramaturgical narrative designed by Lupa in the performance can be identified in the background provided by unnatural narratology. As was mentioned above, there are three main aspects of analysis in unnatural narratology: unnatural storyworlds, unnatural minds, and unnatural acts of narration.³⁴ Within these three facets, time plays a crucial role as a component that can be easily subjected to the artistic procedures of un-naturalization. Among many unnatural deviations of temporality, Brian Richardson describes³⁵ one that seems to be the “unnatural” way by which Lupa creates his temporality. In a “differential” temporality “one chronology is superimposed on another, larger one”³⁶ and it is this strategy for creating time that I would call “palimpsestic,”³⁷ since two (or more) chronologies exist simultaneously and this is constructed via the use of digital media (screens).

Temporality in Lupa's theater is shaped by a durational aesthetic, a phenomenon of postdramatic theater that distorts the classical notion of theatrical time and should be considered as another aspect of unnaturalness in theater narrative. Here we can recognize the construction matrix of prose narrative in Lupa's work, albeit only as deconstructive form of the well-known type of narrative. Therefore, the specific, unnatural, use of prose narrative can be read as a strategy of

³³ Ubersfeld, *Reading Theatre*, 100.

³⁴ Alber et al., “Unnatural Narratives, Unnatural Narratology,” 116.

³⁵ Brian Richardson, “Beyond Story and Discourse: Narrative Time in Postmodern and Nonmimetic Fiction,” in *Narrative Dynamics: Essays on Time, Plot, Closure, and Frame*, ed. Brian Richardson (Columbus: Ohio State University, 2002), 47–63.

³⁶ Richardson, “Beyond Story and Discourse,” 50.

³⁷ The term “palimpsest” is used in the article in its metaphorical meaning as “something reused or altered but still bearing visible traces of its earlier form,” *Oxford Languages* (website), accessed February 27, 2021, <https://languages.oup.com/>.

generification—“by identifying it [the unnatural element] as belonging to a particular literary genre, that is, a suitable discourse context within which the anomaly can be embedded.”³⁸ This palimpsestic deconstruction of prose narrative, though preserving a genre trace of it, reminds one of the novelistic flow of time described by Christopher Balme in regard to the cycle of stage adaptations of Marcel Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time* by the Dutch Ro theater (Balme’s comment regards *Proust 4*):

The plethora of projections, real bodies and faces overlapping with virtual simulacra, conveys an experience similar to reading the novels, which convey the otherworldly feeling that its events are floating in time, *in* and yet somehow *outside* of it.³⁹

Going further to find the appropriate descriptors of Lupa’s theater’s temporality, manifesting in *Capri*, we should recall Robert Wilson’s “theater of slowness” as identified by Hans-Thies Lehmann:

Theatre becomes similar to a kinetic sculpture, turning into a time sculpture. This is true in the first instance for the human bodies, which *turn into kinetic sculptures* through slow motion. But it is also for the theatrical tableau as a whole, which owing to its “*non-natural*” rhythm creates the impression of having a time of its own—midway *between the achronia of a machine and the traceable and palpable lifetime of human actors*, who attain here the gracefulness of marionette theatre.⁴⁰

The prolonged corporeal *existing within* is juxtaposed in Lupa’s production of *Capri* with the artificial *existing beyond* when the digital media of video projection are involved, “between the achronia of a machine,” seen and felt as death (*not being*) in Causey’s understanding, and “the traceable and palpable lifetime of human actors,” seen and felt as a return to life (*being*). In both cases, perception is focused mostly on “‘*image-time*,’ i.e. the disposition of perception peculiar to the viewing of images.”⁴¹ The dynamics of this production is based on the constantly interwoven time of events and time of images “to transform the temporal events into *images for contemplation*.”⁴² *Capri* is indeed a theater of images, created both by the living bodies of the actors on stage and by their mediated bodies in the video projections. On stage, Lupa directs the actors’ bodies in such a way that they become “kinetic sculptures”—he places them within the almost motionless scenes of long dialogues with a carefully designed background generated by video

³⁸ Alber, *Unnatural Narrative*, 50.

³⁹ Balme, “Surrogate Stages,” 87, emphasis added.

⁴⁰ Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, 156, emphasis added.

⁴¹ Lehmann, 157.

⁴² Lehmann, 157.

projection on the stage walls. Therefore, he produces stage images that the theatergoer can slowly contemplate by following the directions of actors' gestures, facial expressions, and voices. The virtual scenography can be smoothly and quickly changed, transporting spectators to different imaginary spaces and times. These stage images are interwoven with video projections displayed on the transparent screen, a screen that shows imagery from documentaries (the ruins of modern Aleppo and post-World War II Warsaw), feature films (*Contempt* by Jean-Luc Godard), or of scenes with the same actors prerecorded in different places (on Capri and other places surrounded by nature). By juxtaposing stage images and video images, Lupa generates his own aesthetic of duration which shifts the audience's perception to one of contemplation. These collocations of different times, places and contexts can be seen as a kind of chronomontage, sometimes developed by what Tamar Yacobi recognizes as juxtaposition through time perspectives.⁴³

In such a contemplative mode of perception, created by real bodies and screens, immersed in "unnatural" durational aesthetics, Lupa is almost able to present the unrepresentable. Screens enable the subject to apprehend its double by exposing the machinery of violence that is deeply repressed in human minds. Being *within* and *beyond* itself, the subject realizes its own nothingness (i.e. mortality), as Causey rightly observes,⁴⁴ but in Lupa's performance the subject also recognizes itself as a source of violence followed by death. Therefore, the overarching strategy when reading Lupa's staging should be to foreground the thematic,⁴⁵ where the explored theme concerns human violence resulting in cruelty and chaos. The unnatural dramaturgy, containing a plethora of temporal, spatial, and contextual images, produced by the live and the virtual, appears to be the perpetual foregrounding of the issue in focus, just as chaotic, unnatural and "out of joint" as human cruelty is.

Casa Malaparte

In the performance, Casa Malaparte is initially visualized as an image of a peaceful sea view as could be seen from the windows of the Casa. While this image is produced on the stage wall by video projection, the stage itself is arranged as

⁴³ Tamar Yacobi underlines a slight difference between collocation (chronomontage) and perspectival juxtaposition: "The difference lies in the realism and role of the fictional speaker's perspective. In collocation, the incongruity centers in the structure of the represented situation. For whatever the continuity that the fiction imposes on historical discontinuities, there is nothing fantastic about the participants' knowledge and understanding, both realistically suited to their place in history. . . . Once the perspectival replaces the collocational logic, however, the juxtaposition of times shifts to the arena of some supernaturally endowed mind." Tamar Yacobi, "Time Denatured into Meaning: New Worlds and Renewed Themes in the Poetry of Dan Pagis," *Style* 22, no. 1: *Narrative Theory and Criticism* (1988): 110.

⁴⁴ Causey, *Theatre and Performance in Digital Culture*, 22.

⁴⁵ "Foregrounding the thematic" is one of the reading strategies proposed by unnatural narratology. See Alber et al., "Unnatural Narratives, Unnatural Narratology."



PHOTO BY NATALIA KABANOW

FIG. 1 Group scene, *Casa Malaparte*
 Krystian Lupa, *Capri—the Island of Fugitives*
 POWSZECHNY THEATER IN WARSAW

a terrace of the Casa with a few chairs and the actors sitting with their backs to the audience while holding a leisurely conversation. Intriguingly, we realize that those talking are the film directors Jean-Luc Godard and Fritz Lang, who are surrounded by many other characters that randomly enter the scene, adding some comments (**FIG. 1**).⁴⁶ A group of figures thus organized in one scene (named *Casa Malaparte*⁴⁷) should be seen as a performative translation of the director's

⁴⁶ See *Capri—wyspa uciekinierów: Program do spektaklu* (Warszawa: Teatr Powszechny, 2019), trans. MB: "Emperor Tiberius, Jesus Christ . . . / Jean-Luc Godard, Fritz Lang, Brigitte Bardot—*Le mépris*. Here is the place where Jean-Luc Godard, in his film *Contempt*, ordered the shooting of the scenes of his stubborn vision of *The Odyssey*, on the terrace of Casa Malaparte *Odysseus*, in the last shot of the film, was supposed to see his native Ithaca. However, since the death of the producer interrupted this journey, the journey of *Odysseus*, the journey of Fritz Lang, the journey of Jean-Luc Godard—*Odysseus* stays in this house with the film crew . . . / Here, in the confusion, in the synthesis of times, everyone meets . . ."

⁴⁷ The names of all the scenes analyzed in this essay are provided on the basis of the description by Lupa included in the catalogue: *Capri—wyspa uciekinierów*, trans. MB.

“unnatural” associative strategy, since Lupa conjures up the most famous visual cliché of Capri, as created by Jean-Luc Godard in his movie *Contempt* (1963). Furthermore, it has to be noted that the plot of Godard’s movie revolves around the creation of a movie version of *The Odyssey* by Fritz Lang, with the main action taking place in Casa Malaparte. Thus, again, Lupa introduces an intermedia loop, this time enriched by the medium of the featured film, which is not only being discussed by the actors on stage, but also, at certain moments, displayed on the large screen. The large-scale video projection with excerpts from Godard’s movie is shown on a transparent screen set in the position normally occupied by the stage curtain. The screen covers the whole stage window but also allows spectators to still see the scene behind, although hazily. This palimpsestic usage of media—where in the foreground we watch Godard’s movie and in the background we can still see the stage with the actors playing the roles of Godard (this movie’s director) and of Lang (this movie’s character)—appears to be the best reflection of Krystian Lupa’s idea of “playing with associations” followed by creating his own temporality: “Here, in the confusion, in the synthesis of times, everyone meets.”⁴⁸

This multi-pronged way of creating the stage world is applied to all scenes in the performance. Some of them are taken directly from Malaparte’s novels, others are just variations on issues raised by the Italian writer. The central question discussed by Lupa in this performance, as was already mentioned, is human cruelty derived from the moral failure of mankind. Via the medium of the figure of Malaparte, a diplomat, a war correspondent, and a writer, whose ambivalent moral attitude during World War II is still controversial, the director muses on the moral responsibility of a person who witnessed widespread cruelty and contempt. In his explanation of the connection between such established ideas and the formula of *genius loci*, the director states:

There is an indefinite war outside, it is not known whether this is the first, second, or third world war resulting from the madness of contemporary man, from the pride of the creators of political and social systems, the dreamers of a HUMAN PARADISE, PHILOSOPHIZING CRIMINALS AND FANTASISTS, power addicts . . . Cultural reformers, and so on . . .⁴⁹

By providing this introduction, Lupa directs the spectators’ attention to the figure of an artist explored from two perspectives. As I will demonstrate in the coming analysis of the three sections of the production, adapting fragments from *Kaputt*, the primary idea underpinning Lupa’s play is the paradoxical situation where war leaders consider themselves to be art lovers or philosophers and who coopt the

⁴⁸ *Capri*—wyspa uciekinierów, trans. MB.

⁴⁹ *Capri*—wyspa uciekinierów, trans. MB.

narrative of the artistic process to describe and justify their war crimes. First of all, the issue of war mongers, e.g. political leaders and military officers, is explored in relation to their appalling dedication to both cruelty against people and their subtle adoration of art. Additionally, the director seems to invert the perspective when asking what the role of an artist is at a time of moral catastrophe.⁵⁰ Is fleeing (to a utopian island) an answer to the moral madness of reality or should an artist feel obliged to actively respond to reality, however cruel and mad it appears? Around this question, the director builds intertwined scenes employing both actors' bodies and video projections. Of the twelve scenes in this 6-hour performance, some are worth mentioning in regard to their multimedia form and the influence they bring to bear on the understanding of the issue in question.

The Rats—a Triptych of Hans Frank

The tripartite section of the performance,⁵¹ acted by a group of thespians on stage, is a reference to *Kaputt* by Malaparte. The Italian writer meticulously described his meetings with Hans Frank in Cracow and Warsaw. In January and February 1942, Malaparte was a war correspondent in Poland (for *Corriera della Sera*) and the chapter of *Kaputt* entitled *The Rats*⁵² provides, in a distinctive baroque style, Dantesque visualizations of wartime cruelty by Germans juxtaposed with the sophisticated admiration of art exhibited by the German elite administrating Poland. The main figure and exemplification of the issue is Hans Frank. This German Governor-General of the occupied Polish territories is the one who creates the metaphor of rats to describe Jews living in and escaping from the ghetto in Malaparte's novel.⁵³

Lupa stages the conversations of Malaparte and Hans Frank, surrounded by German women and other officials, in the Belvedere salon and Wawel Castle's royal rooms, again created mainly by video projection on the stage walls. This virtual space is bolstered by some real furniture. However, it is the virtual background that generates the desired impression of Polish *royalty* appropriated by Frank, the self-styled "German King of Poland" (*Kaputt*, 248). Malaparte (Grzegorz Artman / Julian Świeżewski) deliberates with Frank (Michał Czachor) about the identity

⁵⁰ Boska Komedia 2019: *Capri—wyspa uciekinierów*, interview with Krystian Lupa, Youtube, December 19, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8bLpdF6GAJw>.

⁵¹ The scene is divided into three parts: *Aperitif*, *The Ghetto and the German Woman*, and *The Cricket Rules*.

⁵² The novel *Kaputt* by Curzio Malaparte is divided into six parts named for various animals: Part I is called *Horses*; Part II, *Rats*; Part III, *Dogs*; Part IV, *Birds*; Part V, *Reindeer*; Part VI, *Flies*. Each part is also divided into a different number of chapters. Interestingly, for Malaparte, animals and their fate were the best symbols and metaphors for wartime cruelty caused by humans.

⁵³ Curzio Malaparte, *Kaputt*, trans. Cesare Foligno (New York: The New York Review of Books, 2005), 286, 533. All quotations from Malaparte's novel *Kaputt* are provided on the basis of this translation.



PHOTO BY NATALIA KABANOW

FIG. 2 Group scene, *Casa Malaparte*
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of Polish culture and Polish Jews in an unhurried, pleasant conversation. This peaceful manner of talking about wartime cruelty, sometimes interrupted by small talk about Frank's passion for playing piano (FIG. 2), increases the sense of incongruity to the point of absurdity to such an extent that it becomes, indeed, "unnatural." This is a crucial example of Lupa's construction of durational aesthetics in directing actors who slowly, but inexorably, build an atmosphere of moral confusion that eventually erupts in the video projection displayed on the transparent screen. Using the same palimpsestic technique of combining screen and stage as described above, the director ends the scene with a previously recorded video in which we observe a visualization of a scene from Malaparte's novel: Frank and Malaparte with other guests, on a trip to the Jewish ghetto, witness how a Jewish child is trying to escape from the walls of the ghetto. Highly amused, they all behave and move like children at play, eventually killing the boy (*Kaputt*, 536–537). The video visualizing this scene upsets the audience by the very incongruence of the tragedy of the child's murder and the behavior of

the characters, who see it as nothing more than hunting rats. After the previous lengthy scene of leisurely discussions performed by the actors, this short video painfully and aptly underlines the moral failure of human beings. Even while the discussion is taking place, the director introduces a short video on the transparent screen displaying, alternately, the ruins of Warsaw in World War II and those of modern Aleppo in Syria to suggest that this theater of engineers of death is still very much in motion. The final video, of Hans Frank shooting the Jewish child as if he were nothing more than a rat, is merely the terrifying conclusion. Such a peculiar scene can be read via the strategy of satirization as ridiculing “psychological predispositions or states of affairs,”⁵⁴ in this case a hardly believable human state of mind that can symbiotically connect an admiration for art and cruelty against innocent people.

The above description of the scene from Lupa’s play suitably demonstrates the director’s strategy of creating temporality. Being *within* the performance of bodies on stage, bodies which slowly become kinetic sculptures, spectators are introduced into a mode of contemplation. These moments are intertwined with video projections on transparent screens that move the spectator to tackle deeper considerations, to feel and imagine what is invisible. It seems plausible that Lupa employs screens as an extension of the human corporeal subjects on stage, as their *double*, albeit not by a simple doubling of their bodies but by creating a chain of figurative associations that derives from what is happening on stage. In relation to Causey’s considerations, the real bodies of actors, playing the roles of Malaparte, Frank and other guests, their (i.e. the characters’) corporeal subjectivity is extended by a virtual doubling of their repressed thoughts—the desire to humiliate and kill. Paradoxically, it would seem, the virtual reveals a yearning for the annihilation of the humanity of another human being (via the metaphor of rats) and at the same time it exposes the annihilation of humanity in killers, the *actual* death of humankind. The real and the virtual in this scene are interwoven so as to expose a moral hypocrisy—roles played in society cannot dismiss propensities to abase and abuse other people.

In the interview mentioned above, Lupa describes his staging of Malaparte’s works as producing a kind of defense against the author’s narrative expansiveness. Yet, his own stage language, or rather—the stage rhythm—could sometimes be felt to be expansive. The paradox of the production of this kind of rhythm results from the fact that it is achieved by the palimpsestic combination of slow motion acting on stage and direct, unambiguous images from video projections, i.e. a slowly manifested *prosoption* of the ego and its repressed part (re)presented on the screens.

⁵⁴ Alber, *Unnatural Narrative*, 52.

Girls from Soroca

This scene from Lupa's production discusses the issue of wartime sexual violence against women, a question still appallingly present in the world, as evidenced by the Nobel Peace Prize being awarded, in 2018, to Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad "for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict."⁵⁵ All major international agencies, such as UNICEF, UNSC, and Amnesty International, have unanimously agreed to consider "war rapes" as a weapon of war and, as such, investigate them as war crimes.⁵⁶ Lupa raises the issue by pondering upon the horrible story of young Jewish women who were forced to provide sexual services to German soldiers during World War II. The director once more visualizes on stage a short extract from Malaparte's *Kaputt*, staging the visit of the Italian writer to a brothel located in Soroca (Moldavia) on the command of the German army's sanitary service. The organized and official nature of the brothel, and the very fact that the sexual services there were indeed institutional slavery, make the image described by Malaparte and staged by Lupa even more poignant and dreadful.

Malaparte, with deep sadness and dismay, describes his visit to the brothel, and Lupa interprets this gloomy mood on stage by juxtaposing a slow conversation between the girls and Malaparte with video projections. In the novel, the Italian writer depicts the Jewish girls as animals hiding in woods and fields from their German persecutors (*Kaputt*, 868). The captured girls were put to work in the brothel and, as one German officer explained to Malaparte, "when their turn was over, after a couple of weeks, they would be sent back to their homes and replaced by another team of girls" (*Kaputt*, 874–875). In fact, they were executed and buried in unmarked graves (*Kaputt*, 899–900).

Lupa follows the story of Malaparte quite directly, however, he focuses mostly on the conversation between Malaparte and the girls. This stage image shifts attention to the person of Malaparte himself and his ambiguous moral attitude during his travels on the Eastern Front. Thus, the more global perspective of engineers of war, raised in the *Triptych of Hans Frank* scene, is now confronted with the personal perspective of an observer of war. Lupa makes this confrontation in order to emphasize the issue of who is an actor in war and if there is anybody who is not. What is the difference between the passive observation of war crimes by Malaparte and active participation in war crimes by Hans Frank? Lupa raises this issue by showing Malaparte's real compassion for war victims (as the author

⁵⁵ "The Nobel Peace Prize for 2018 Announcement", the website of the Nobel Prize, October 5, 2018, <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2018/press-release/>.

⁵⁶ "Rape: Weapon of War," the website of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights UN, accessed January 28, 2020, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/newsevents/pages/rapeweaponwar.aspx>.



PHOTO BY NATALIA KĄBANOW

FIG. 3 Andrzej Kłak as Malaparte's double, Magdalena Koleśnik as Suzanna, and Julian Świeżewski as Malaparte Krystian Lupa, *Capri—the Island of Fugitives*

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himself describes in his book), something which however does not result in taking action to fight war crimes. Hence, passivity becomes the same war crime.

In the novel and on stage, Malaparte and the Soroca girls talk for a long time in a restrained manner while the girls try to show no emotion, covering up their despair with indifference, and Malaparte feels deeply confused in this awkward situation. The Italian visits the brothel just before closing time, finding himself alone with women whom he profoundly sympathizes with as war prisoners. This particular moment, when they have finished “work” and it is just before bed time, becomes a time of “normality.” It is a time when they all can escape their horrible reality, and one that allows them to be themselves and be treated with the respect Malaparte insists on (*Kaputt*, 973–974). Lupa seizes upon this moment and puts it on stage, introducing Malaparte (Julian Świeżewski) to the brothel, assisted by his nude double (Andrzej Kłak), who sits on a chair and listens to the conversation (**FIG. 3**). This procedure, which is an invention of the director, foreshadows

the following scenes, which explore the issue of the suppressed homosexuality of Malaparte (by adapting *The Skin*). Here, in the scene with the Soroca girls, it can be seen as a manifestation of Malaparte's own sexual misperception and, perhaps, it may allow the spectator to consider his visit to the brothel more from the perspective of his compassion than as simply a client's visit. In the presence of the corporeally doubled Malaparte, female characters⁵⁷ talk until the moment they emotionally erupt, which in the novel is depicted as an outburst of tears and crying (*Kaputt*, 887–888), and on stage by the terrifying scream of one of the actresses.

During the scene, the transparent screen is lowered a number of times and video projections are displayed on it while the stage behind is still visible. The video shows a looped sequence of documentary, black and white movie shots, showing a sexual orgy with German soldiers and naked women interwoven with images of the emaciated bodies of Auschwitz prisoners. This video becomes a startling, visual, silent comment on the scene being performed on stage. At the end of the scene, after the woman's scream, the director adds a short video showing a truck driving in a forest with the sound of rifle shots in the background to confirm the tragic fate of the Soroca girls.

This scene suggests the other strategy for its reading, yet still with the umbrella strategy of foregrounding the thematic of human moral bankruptcy resulting in cruelty. A more personal/individual perspective allows spectators to focus their meditation on a particular (and peculiar) aspect of war. Institutionalized, forced prostitution, organized by the Germans, appears to be, in an ethical context, an accumulating absurdity that, like treating Jews as rats, proves the dehumanization of mankind. To read this scene, to somehow familiarize oneself with the cruelty it exposes, the allegorical strategy⁵⁸ can be operative to convey a more complex idea. The fate of the Soroca girls becomes an allegory of all innocent and unnamed victims of wars, those who like a Jewish child should be most protected by humankind. In the visualization of the Soroca brothel, the problem of human sexuality transformed into corporeal product is uncovered. Such defined bodies of the Soroca girls, impersonated by the live bodies of actresses on stage, and juxtaposed with the looped video projection (presenting images of female bodies in a sexual orgy involving German officers, plus the emaciated bodies of Auschwitz prisoners), enhance the feeling of strangeness and at the same time develop the allegory into a more global notion of biopolitics and biopower.⁵⁹

The presence of Malaparte's corporeal, silent, nude double, quite odd and seemingly incompatible with the scene, should be taken as an emanation of the

⁵⁷ Karolina Adamczyk as Marica, Anna Ilczuk as Lublia, Magdalena Koleśnik as Susannah, and Julia Wszyńska as Zoe.

⁵⁸ Alber, *Unnatural Narrative*, 52.

⁵⁹ See: Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France 1975–1976*, trans. David Macey, eds. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana (New York: Picador, 2003), 243.

internal state of the character. This strategy of reading, via internal states, can conceptualize “an impossible scenario in which internal processes such as dreams, wishes, and fantasies become as real as external reality.”⁶⁰ The brothel Malaparte is visiting inevitably reminds him of his own suppressed sexuality, visualized by the director in the living nude double. Intriguingly, Lupa uses a living body of an actor here, not a mediated body, perhaps to emphasize the very liveness of this sexual identity of Malaparte’s, Freudian repression returning in a living body.

The collocation of stage and screen, and real and mediated bodies, in the above-described scenes, introduces a dialectic of *existing within* and *existing beyond* on two levels. During the slow dialogue between the actors on stage, spectators can immerse themselves deeply in this specific temporality or just view the slow motion acting that becomes almost a static image (a kinetic sculpture).⁶¹ This flow between immersion and distance allows the recipient to be alternately *within* and *beyond* while, however, remaining in “the shared time–space moment of mortality.” This intimate relationship, unique to theater, is then transformed by the usage of video projection. Lupa follows the narrative of Malaparte, which is constructed as the narrator’s reminiscences, both of real events and of mental states. In this context, video projections could be seen as the perfect technique to express memories and thoughts (internal states), especially those that are repressed. As such, they become appositions, summaries, or extensions to the scenes created on stage. Consequently, they deepen the stage problematics by extending the moment of distance initiated on stage, close to the Brechtian V-effect. Such prolonged *existing beyond* produces a mode of contemplation, when “temporal events [are transformed] into *images for contemplation*,”⁶² when the discourse is not more important but its form is, its “gestuality and rhythm.”⁶³ The idiosyncrasy of Lupa’s theater seems to be encompassed in the balance between *existing within* and *beyond*, being within time and out of it. On the level of stage technique, this strategy is developed by the reciprocal collocation of stage and video, the real and the virtual, all entangled in a temporal and intermedial loop.

Museum of Time

The final scene of the performance is an invention of the director’s—outside the novels of Malaparte—and it comes back to the main idea of *genius loci* followed by a musing on the role of an artist against the background of the moral failure of

⁶⁰ Alber et al., “Unnatural Narratives, Unnatural Narratology,” 118.

⁶¹ Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, 157.

⁶² Lehmann, 157.

⁶³ Lehmann, 25.



FIG. 4 Piotr Skiba and Ewa Skibińska in the Museum of Time

Krystian Lupa, *Capri—the Island of Fugitives*

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mankind. By its very nature it should be identified within the strategy of foregrounding the thematic. This is also a scene in which visuality dominates over verbality, and this predominance of visual signs is produced by a high-tech medium creating a virtual space on stage. Here, the transparent screen is lowered in the middle of the stage, dividing the stage space between a virtually created reality and the physical reality of the stage. The video projection generates a virtual space of a room in Casa Malaparte with a sea view where a group of actors slowly gather. During the scene, those actors, after a brief scene with a few words on the real stage, enter the virtual space through a door in the wall and, at the same moment, appear in the video (FIG. 4). This technical solution deepens and develops the idea brought to the stage by Lupa. By naming this scene *Museum of Time*, with the additional note that there are no characters or roles assigned in it, with all the actors involved, the director shapes the place of the encounter of different times and spaces, perceived from the historical and geographical point of view, but also from a metatheatrical perspective, i.e. when and where the actors appear as themselves and are seen as artists.

The virtual space generated by the video projection shows a room in Casa Malaparte that plays the role of an asylum, albeit stylized as a museum of ancient sculptures. Such an image is intended to portray Lupa's idea of artistic escapism as a survival strategy employed by artists in times of social crisis. Profound immersion in art as a defense mechanism against the moral catastrophes of society is an attitude that is subjected to criticism by Lupa. The sophisticated manner of the gentle and silent escape of the actors/artists from the real stage to the virtual space acts as an obvious sign of the moral failure of mankind, which should feel obliged to react to socio-political madness. This is also an obvious sign of escaping from real humanity (*being within*) to the virtual one (*being beyond*) that materializes an absence of humanity (see Causey). Thus, theatrical being *within* and *beyond* meets with conceptual being *within* a time of moral catastrophe and being *beyond* it. Capri and Casa Malaparte work in his production as utopian symbols of artistic escapism followed by, or rather derived from, moral ambivalence when a person avoids taking the risk of fighting the cruel breaking of ethical rules in order not to lose their privileged position in society. Malaparte himself was the best exemplification of such behavior, since he, as a war correspondent and a writer, kept up a close relationship with all the totalitarian engineers of World War II just to have access to the territories they conquered and occupied in order to be able to write his reports. Through this figure and the image of the island of Capri as a place for fugitives, the director ponders the moral obligations of an artist or journalist, and even of a human being in general. The palimpsestic technique of overlapping screen and stage (employed throughout the performance), prevails in the final scene in theatrical communication, thus becoming not only a convenient tool but the main medium for manifesting the artistic idea, so as to make the death of humanity more material: "The performer appears live and videated simultaneously, one image in the process of living, being-undo-death, one image held in abeyance, virtually present."⁶⁴ The abeyance of humanity is a common fact in social crises, occurring both on the stage of global politics and on the stage of personal/individual politics of (in)action. The unnaturalness of such an attitude is explored in Lupa's production both via its "unnatural" form and the meaningful collocations of the live and the virtual.

Conclusions

Krystian Lupa's free playing with associations in his production *Capri—the Island of Fugitives*, as an artistic strategy for employing literary inspiration to stage social and/or existential concerns, generates novel and more profound meanings

⁶⁴ Causey, *Theatre and Performance in Digital Culture*, 22.



FIG. 5 Group scene, *The Rats—Triptych of Hans Frank*

Krystian Lupa, *Capri—the Island of Fugitives*

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by using video projections in different configurations. The palimpsestic employment of different media, especially the overlapping transparent screen and the real stage (FIG. 5), creates a moment of musing (a mode of contemplation) outside of a specific time and space. In fact, it makes a temporal, spatial, and conceptual palimpsest that recaptures the process of the human cycle of violence that has been repeated in different times and spaces, despite the repeatedly recognized consequences of such violent situations. The clash between the slow, gentle conversations had by the actors on stage and video projections that visually disclose what is suppressed by words, leads spectators to a cathartic experience through sharp and unpleasant images. Nonetheless, the final scene restores the more meditative mood of the more universal concept investigated in the performance, again generated by digital media.

Piotr Gruszczyński rightly observes that “Lupa’s theatrical laboratory is capable of creating theatrical treatises and is able to create emotions that cease to be just

theatrical emotions. They become life energies.”⁶⁵ Consequently, the most recent production by Lupa, being a developed treatise on the moral failings of humankind, is a call for both artists and spectators alike to take a risk in resisting this moral decline. It is indeed the artist’s (Lupa himself) and his actors’/artists’ manifesto to become active factors in the social machinery, outside the safe laboratory space of art epitomized by Capri and Casa Malaparte. As an emblem of such a formulated concept, Lupa concludes his performance with an epilogue created by a number of video projections, among which one particular video seems to embody his supposed answer to the questions raised. This video shows a previously recorded scene with the actors standing nude in the white cave of Capri (Grotta Bianca),⁶⁶ where only the sound of the sea can be heard. The final, long camera shot shows the nude artists staring at the sea, and ends with a shot of the peaceful sea view as was seen at the beginning of the performance at Casa Malaparte. At first the scene appears to be quaint yet impenetrable. Perhaps, he is implying that a return to the purity of nature, with no social masks or costumes, could allow humans to reconstruct a state of moral soundness. By introducing a more comprehensive context, the white caves of Capri can be perceived as fictive places of asylum for fugitives (*The Sicilian* by Mario Puzo) or the mythical Roman “nooks of ventry” organized by Tiberius, well-known as an Emperor involved in sexual deviations (Suetonius, *Life of Tiberius*, 43–45).⁶⁷ These contexts develop possible readings of this scene, however the obvious strategy is that of allegory, very much associated with the famous painting of Henryk Siemiradzki (*Orgy in the Times of Tiberius on Capri*, 1881). The painting depicts a dance pageant, reminiscent of ancient bacchanalia, the participants of which stumble upon the bodies of victims thrown from coastal rocks on the orders of Tiberius. If Lupa’s scene is somehow a homage to the painting, it allegorically recollects the unnaturalness of a social situation where the happiness, impassivity, and indifference of one part of humankind is confronted with the tragedy, despair, and misery of the other. The Grotta Bianca in Lupa’s *Capri* again foregrounds the thematic of the performance.

This recapitulation of Lupa’s production does not exonerate spectators from the overwhelming feeling of having encountered death. Since “death is radically resistant to the order of representation,”⁶⁸ theater artists are forced to create its different masks. To represent death, i.e. an absence, they have to

⁶⁵ Gruszczyński, *Ojcobójcy*, 38.

⁶⁶ During the preparations and rehearsals for the performance, Krystian Lupa and his team of actors went on a trip to Capri.

⁶⁷ Suetonius, *Life of Tiberius*, 43–45.

⁶⁸ Simon Critchley, *Very Little . . . Almost Nothing: Death, Philosophy, Literature* (London: Routledge, 2004), 31: “Death is radically resistant to the order of representation. Representations of death are misrepresentations, or rather representations of an absence. The paradox at the heart of the representation of death is best conveyed by the figure of prosopopeia, the trope by which an absent or imaginary person is formed as speaking or acting, a form which indicates the failure of presence, a face which withdraws behind the form which presents it. The representation of death is always a mask—a memento mori—behind which nothing stands.”

find a visible (i.e. present) means of its expression. Yet, in the postdramatic form of theater, they employ a simultaneity of signs created by various media. Lupa, by overlapping stage and screens, the real subject and its virtual double extended by image associations, allows spectators to feel *within* and *beyond* time in order to see their own mortality. If Krystian Lupa “creates a theater entirely dedicated to presenting the unrepresentable,” which is “a consistent and tireless escape from obvious and banal meanings, from situations, consequences and ordinary realism . . . , an escape from language to what is unnamed, elusive and what defies recognition,”⁶⁹ his dynamic search for the most appropriate and effective ways to express what is unrepresentable inevitably led him to a multimedia form of expression. While retaining his intrinsic dedication to the human body as the best theatrical medium, Lupa attentively observes how the contemporary spectator absorbs a stage artwork, therefore, he employs the productive intersection of literature and digital media to enrich his form of theatrical expression.



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⁶⁹ Gruszczyński, *Ojcobójcy*, 40, trans. MB.

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Abstract

Existing Within and Beyond Time: “Capri—the Island of Fugitives” by Krystian Lupa

The proposed article ponders upon Krystian Lupa’s *Capri—the Island of Fugitives* (2019), an original production staged at the Powszechny Theater in Warsaw. It brings together two of Curzio Malaparte’s prose books: *Kaputt* (1944) and *The Skin* (1949). By focusing on the parts of the production that adapt *Kaputt*, the article scrutinizes scenes, produced via live performance and virtual projections, in order to describe and explain how theatrical expression is enriched by such a juxtapositions. This analysis uses the theoretical frameworks of unnatural narratology (Jan Alber et al.), postdramatic durational aesthetics (Hans-Thies Lehmann), and the idea of the virtual double (Matthew Causey). The primary argument relies on the specific temporality emerging from Lupa’s performance, that enables spectators to feel existence *within* and *beyond* time. Furthermore, the study investigates the overarching idea of the performance, recognized in the strategy of foregrounding the thematic, which oscillates within the problematics of human cruelty.

Keywords

Krystian Lupa, temporality, durational aesthetics, multimedia in theater

Abstrakt

Istnieć w czasie i poza czasem: „Capri – wyspa uciekinierów” Krystiana Lupy

Artykuł poddaje analizie spektakl Krystiana Lupy *Capri – wyspa uciekinierów* (2019) z Teatru Powszechnego w Warszawie, inspirowany dwiema książkami Curzio Malaparte, *Kaputt* (1944) i *Skóra* (1949). Skupiając się na częściach spektaklu, które nawiązują do *Kaputt*, artykuł szczegółowo bada sceny, w których obok aktorów wykorzystano projekcje wideo, by wykazać, w jaki sposób takie zestawienia wzbogacają ekspresję teatralną. Na potrzeby tej analizy zastosowane zostały strategie interpretacyjne nienaturalnej narratologii (Jan Alber i in.), koncepcja postdramatycznej estetyki duratywnej (Hans-Thies Lehmann) oraz idea wirtualnego sobowtóra (Matthew Causey). Podstawowy argument dotyczy specyficznej czasowości generowanej w spektaklu Lupy, czasowości, która pozwala widzom czuć się tak, jakby znajdowali się *w czasie i poza* nim. Ponadto, artykuł wskazuje i omawia te

elementy spektaklu, które w różnej formie i w różnych ujęciach wysuwają na pierwszy plan nadrzędną ideę spektaklu, oscylującą w obrębie problematyki ludzkiego okrucieństwa.

Słowa kluczowe

Krystian Lupa, czasowość, estetyka duratywna, multimedia w teatrze

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