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Theater und Bilderfahrung in den Augen der Zuschauer

Jackob, A.

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Experience of Images. Theater in the eyes of the spectator

By Alexander Jakob

What do we see in the theater? This question may be as old as theater itself. But only with the impression of new medial imageworlds and associated debates in image theory it has gained new brisance. The study by Alexander Jakob suggests a way of seeing images, a way, that is solely based on the spectators' *image experience*. With that the focus shifts from primarily epistemological questions (What is an image in the theater?) to a different 'substantial' set of problems: in what way can experiences with sometimes unsettling imageworlds in theater and other media be adequately articulated and at the same time described as an uncircumventable component of a critical way of seeing and acting? In the development of this theme well-known images from the long history of theater play an equally leading part (the *stone guest* as revenant) as various scenes of image criticism and different forms of aesthetic experience. Here forms of knowledge and of contact with images in the theater and in theory are gone through. The framework of the study consists of a historic-systematic field of experiences wherein questions of phenomenology, hermeneutics and archeology unfold a dynamic constellation. Fundamental references are new perspectives of image theory (Bildwissenschaft), visual culture, and picture theory. At the center of the study are the spectators (*theoroi*) and their willingness to see and think in theoretical images. The objective is not to theoretically suspend the particularity of images, but to acknowledge it as part of a constant inquiry.

In the first chapter possible connections between visual and image experiences of the spectator – as a historical and theoretical entity – and the theater will be examined by reference to various texts by Bruno Snell, Hans Belting, Horst Bredekamp and Helmar Schramm.

In the second chapter, gained concepts and positions will be tapered to iconological (Mitchell), phenomenological (Husserl, Waldenfels), hermeneutical (Gadamer) and archeological (Foucault) questions. The phenomenon of otherness reveals itself as a fundamental theme in these fields of experience.

The third chapter is about showing the stone guest (*Don Giovanni*) as part of a specific historical space of experience around 1789, that today still retains its relevance. (Koselleck, Gadamer, Gumbrecht).

In the fourth chapter, following the guidelines of the libretto and librettology (Gier), the aesthetic experience (Gadamer, Dewey) with the opera *Don Giovanni* will be examined as an event between work (*ergon*) and performance (*energeia*).

In the extensive analysis of the *Don Giovanni* opera in the fifth chapter it is, among others, about questions of intermediality between bodies, images and other media in the theater (Röttger), the production of presence (Gumbrecht), questions about the relation of image and gaze respectively look (Didi-Huberman) and the development of theoretical scenes on the basis of which *a way of seeing with images* can be practiced (Canetti's analysis of the Survivor on the cemetery). In doing so the stone guest will be thematized as *meta-image* (of the return of theatrical events) in theater. These deliberations lead in the last chapter to the designation of the mask as a special place for the experience of images for the *theoros* (spectator) in the visual space of the theater (*theatron*).