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## **θεωρία and θέατρον: From Logos to Paradox (Tragedy of Representation)**

### ***Abstract***

At the beginning last century such playwrights as N.P. Ochlopkov, E. Piscator, B. Brecht, M. Jons, T. Hatry and many others have undertaken the reform of the theater. According to their concept it was necessary to reconstruct modern theater to make the spectator not simply a spectator, but “as though a participant” of the theater’s performance. The main question of this paper is: why should they include the spectator in the performance as participant? The matter is that “the principle of spectator’s participation” in theater is *artificial attempt* of “” the initial unity of the human being and the world, which was lost with . . . *origin of theater* (art). On the other hand, we can see the same processes in modern physics: Anthropic cosmological principle (ACP) is an *artificial attempt* of “revitalizing” the initial unity of the Human being and the world (stage of mythos), which was lost with . . . *origin of the theory* (science).

Finally, it is showed that mentioned above attempt of playwrights and physicians – to include a spectator in theater’s performance - came to Paradox. The modern Man wishes to *reanimate representation*, which is proved to be impossible in principle. It is also a *tragedy of representation*.

### ***Statement of Problem***

In the 1920s–60s in Russia N.P. Ochlopkov, in Germany E. Piscator and B. Brecht, and in USA M. Johns and T. Hatry have undertaken the reform of the theater. According to their concept it was necessary to reconstruct modern theater to make the spectator not simply a spectator, but “as though a participant” of the theater’s performance. It was so unusual, that the novelty of this step had an effect on all “theatrical life.”

Due to this, there is a question: what was the goal of such break of the New Time’s theater’s design — to place the stage into the center of hall or, on the contrary, to place the spectator there and etc.? It is possible to assume that the old theatrical design is obsolete.

So, I can formulate the question concerning the designs of the theater in another way: Why modern playwrights required the including the spectator in the performance as participant? The contents of this question already can be considered *as a problem*.

Truly, the theater performance is always a representation of life, those processes, which occur in life. However such representation is representation not of life in general but of typical life. In other words, it gives us an opportunity to join not genuine life, but an ideal, abstract image of this life deprived of its riches. What occurs on a stage has direct attitude not to real life. It can be posed in several statements:

- (1) There is *one model form* of real genuine human life
- (2) named as a “theater” or “theatrical performance (representation)”.
- (3) Theatrical performance (representation) of human life (its modeling) has to do with real life as any model with its original. This model reflects only some essential to it parties.
- (4) *Footlight* in a theatres hall is not simply element of an interior or border distinguishing hall and stage. First of all, it is *border* between *the abstract world* and *the real world*.

In this connection we can formulate *a problem*: why in classical theater (of New Time) the participation of the spectator in performance was not admitted, but in the theater of Ochlopkov, Piscator and Hatry was? For its decision we should address to sources of theater's origin. It seems to me, that only there we can find the roots of modern "revolution in reason." There such "product" of European culture as "Representation" has been discovered from connection between human being and Cosmos.

### *Origin of Theater*

Let's address to language. τó θέατρον means, first of all, "a place for shows," and then already in our sense—"theater." Theater is, simply speaking, "a show." The word "τό θέατρον" is derived from the verb θεάομαι meaning "to behold," "to look," "to see," including "contemplate by mind." Here it is necessary to pay attention to semantic and linguistic closeness of this verb with "θεωρέω" which means "to look at a show," "to be on a show." A well known concept "the theory" — θεωρία, which in initial sense, means not demonstrative knowledge in modern sense (for example, "the theory of Maxwell" or "the theory of superstrings"), but "supervision over the show," "the show" appeared from it. So, "Theater" and "Theory" for ancient Greek in essence was the same — it was "a show." But this linguistic connotation can at best be only a sign, showing us the way. We need to sink deeper and look at the historical origins.

In November–December the peasants of Greece celebrated the holiday Village—τά Διονύσια (Dionysias) in honor of the God of Winemaking Dionysius. This holiday originally had a village origin. The members of a rural community sang to the God Dionysius their cult songs named "dithyrambs" and carried his cult images. Certainly, the holiday was devoted to harvest time and ending of the season of field's work.

In fact, this was the birth the Greek theater or almost so. *To look at the procession from outside required to leave it not only spatially — by arranging benches in an amphitheater—but, first of all, to leave it intellectually.* It means, that *live connection with God*, to which the participants in the procession sang dithyrambs and which whom they worshipped — *declined or lost at all.* It is the historical fact that the *first theatrical representations* replaced the religious procession and religious holiday. “The Tragedy” is the sacred satires’ song devoted to Dionysius. The theater was born as *representation* “of Divine Tragedy”. Such point of view on religion “from outside” has occurred in Greece approximately in 7–6 B.C.

From discussed above we see, that the representation *was only attached to life*: architecturally - on a slope of a hill, in language - on its melodious singing, in plastic - on a body of the man, on an outline of his movements. *You see singing and dance are the consequences of surplus of completeness of the world.*

The representation takes *henceforth this completeness in service.* Now singing, singing man, is not “a vessel of the world”, not a world itself is filled by its completeness and yields surplus of this completeness in outside of, but only *representation of this completeness.* The singing, as just the contents of the “vessel” and “from a vessel”, does not connect henceforth man to anything, does not unite. The singing became representation.

In language it is difficult to fix this moment, as the language resists. You see the statement will be inexact: “the singing became a show”, for *the singing is perceived by hearing*, instead of sight. Whether is it possible to say more precisely? No, it is *impossible! There is no such word in Russian.* Because “listening attentively” to the world and “hearing” have not bound itself with such dispassionateness as “sight”. Any feeling, except for “sight”, does not know such ability of alienation to the world, does not know such breaking with it.

It is possible to be a “*spectator*”, it is possible to be a “*listener*”. However, apparent something opens to the *spectator* in a certain special space – inside the “*spectacle*”. At the same time, for the “*hearer*” there is no such special space as a

“hearacle” (special audio space), where the sound is represented for “*hearer*”.

What is the reason?

The matter is that *singing* is initially implanted in completeness. Even when it is presented in a “*spectacle* – “hearacle”, that who is singing “locks” himself, his thinking and his mind, when he sings. A condition of the valid and real singing is the refusal from “selfness”, that is refusal of dispassionateness from the world. By this the “singing” affirms as a phenomenon of the world. Singing man turns to a uniform organ of Being, but not in a “pipe”, to analogy with which, to appearances, we are provoked by its similarity with “throat” and “larynx”, but precisely “a vessel of singing”.

The looking man grasps what he sees by “sight”. His sight, his “vision” is effective in this process.

On the contrary, singing closes the hearing of singing man. The song of singing man “is poured” like water from the spring. The completeness of life sheds itself by singing in the world. You see, the completeness lives where one sings not deliberately, not intentionally, where is true singing!

The same with “dance”. Dancing, the Human Being also turns to organ of Being. The dance, by all of its modern “representatives”, is not oriented to a show. The man “is forgotten” in “dance” as well as in “singing”. The nature of dance leaves by its roots into the times of world, when “dancing Men” and “world”, in which he danced, were essentially uniform. At that times “not the man danced in the world”, but the world was “in a condition of dance”. The man did not “performed dance”, as now he “makes coffee”, “builds the ship” or “develops the theory”, but “was in *condition of dance* with all the world together”. We see that ours *particularistic* Language hasn’t enough expressing power to describe that world and its completeness. The dance was not “a show” as a condition of this world. *That world danced by man!*

What differs the singing and dancing of the world’s completeness from “theatrical singing and dance”, from playing? There and then, where sings the Being itself - there is no need in representation, and, on the contrary, *the entrusting*

of “singing” and “dance” to the representatives, specially picked up for it (to the actors), creates for the first time “the representation of completeness of Being” with the help of singing and dance . “Singing” and “dance” now is *not the organs of Being* of the world, but the *human tools* intended for realization of his, especially human, purposes - achievement of anthropomorphic understood delight and pleasure. It is possible to hear so frequently from the literate man now: “I have listened to this opera with pleasure” or “we have truly enjoyed a solo dancing of N”.

Here, certainly, it is necessary to discuss especially, that the spectator voluntary comes to the theatre and agrees beforehand that the certain procedure of “Re-presentation” will be conducted upon him. The representation, in this case theatrical - performance, lets us to be *where it is impossible to be* and to be someone *unreal to be*.

The technical construction of theatre serves for such representation, adapts the man for it and creates convenience, as much as possible for awakening of hedonistic feelings in him. It has also historical explanations.

So, the period of appearance and growth of the Greek theatre occurred in Periclus’ epoch and times, which have followed after it. At this time “a show” becomes a dominant antique man’s attitude to the world<sup>1</sup>. Actually, before the times, when the world became “a show”, “an attitude” was not present either. The following explanation can be given. Periclus patronized to Anaxagoras, and the latter was one of those who gave the Mind its cosmic meaning, actually helping destruction of integrated world, in which the Mind still was in a coherent condition.

Truly, the world is guided, according to Anaxagoras, by Mind: “All [things], - says Anaxagoras, - contain a share of anything. The Mind is something unlimited and autocratic and is not mixed with any thing, - but unique - in itself »

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Heidegger gave a very truly comment on it: “The verb θεωρεῖν has appeared from connection of two rooted words θεα and οραω. Θεα (compare “the theater”) – is a show, appearance, image, in what is appeared the thing, the look under what it steps out”. Heidegger M. Science and Comprehension // Time and Being, - M. Republic, - 1993, P. 242.(In Russian).

(B12). Let's mark qualities of Anaxagoras' Mind: “*is not limited by something*”, in other words has no authority above; “*is autocratic*”, that is “determines the ways and methods of its reign itself”; “*is not mixed with any thing*”, that is the Mind already has left “coherent condition”, came from all things of the world to “one place”; “*is by itself*”, that is it stood apart from the world which turned “different” and “alien” afterwards. Such Anaxagoras' Mind rules the world: “And common rotation [of the world] is guided by the Mind, so [due to it] rotation in general begins » (B12).

The surprisingly exact characteristic of Anaxagoras' role in the Greek history and in general in all of his epoch - including theatrical - was given by prince Sergey Trubetskoy: “the Fate is only invisible reason, and Anaxagoras for the first time has learnt this reason as not material, reasonable. He gave the first impact to the ancient god - Fate, and after him Euripides in drama, Socrates in philosophy have continued the destruction once begun. Reason and spirit are put up on a place of previous secret destiny and operate the universe, move the sky”<sup>2</sup>.

Sergey Trubetskoy notices very precisely this fact - exile of the *coherence of the world*, in which the Mind, by Anaxagoras' words, is not yet autocratic. It is no wonder, that Anaxagoras becomes the unique philosopher-predecessor, concerning whom Aristotle showed condescension, actually, having borrowed the central idea from him – “supremacy of Mind – thinking” above the world (Met. A8, 989 a 30) or in “Physics” (Θ 5, 256 a 24).

The natural consequence of such isolation of Mind from the world also appears the possibility “to see the world from the side”, “outside”, “from different directions”, staying “around” the world, so that the world is in “focus”.

The epoch “of observation” is born. θεωρία and θήατρον, come to the world, “contemplator” - θεωρός and “spectator” - θεατής occur. Pericles establishes the annual financial support for the citizens - two obolus per year - *for visiting theatre*. Thus the Athens' citizens are made “spectators” who have settled

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<sup>2</sup> Trubetskoy Sergey, Prince, *Metaphysics in Ancient Greece*, - Moscow, 1890, P. 374. (In Russian).

down “around” the world. The gesture of Pericles could be “translated” to language of the modern Human Being, using already his lexicon, as “promotion” to the market of new, still the unknown to anybody *good* and “stimulation” of its consumption. In times of Pericles such new “good” was – “*Representation*”.

And so what do we see in theater?

(1) The spectator is spectator and only spectator separated even from “modeling of life on a stage” by a barrier.

(2) Representation has broken a whole skin of life in double — “representer” and “represented”. Genuine life is changed *by modeling it*.

Those are disappointing results of brief overview of the origin of theater. Let’s consider now, what amazing consequences grew from a general root— “theory-theater- show.”

### ***Rescue of Representation***

For a long time we assumed by default that the theater is mostly “aesthetic sphere” and science is “rational one.” Science and art have various ways of finding, appearing and demonstration of truth. However, I shall try to justify that modern theater and modern physics have not simply *common features*, but have *essential common features*. Physicists and playwrights formulated practically at the same time in 30–70<sup>th</sup> years last century the principles, which have rendered significant influence on all subsequent history of physical science and theatrical art. These principles concern representation as the forms of the attitude to the reality directly.

Principles in physics:

(1) “*Strong Anthropic Cosmological principle*” (Strong ACP) (B. Carter): “The universe (and, hence, fundamental constant it depends on) should admit the existence of the observers on some stage of evolution”.

(2) “*Participatory Principle*” (J. A. Wheeler): “The Observers are needed for the universe to come to being”.



(3) “*Principle of indetermination*” of W. Heisenberg and his “standard” interpretation: “Characteristics of physical system can be adequately described only in case it “is observable” by means of the appropriate instrument. Without observer the characteristic of physical system do not exist at all “in some sense.”

The epistemological basis of the named principles is that the science of New Time has given so inadequate description of all physical reality, completely excluded the observer from it, that any modern attempt to glance hardly deeper, at once, requires the account of his existence (Relativistic mechanics, quantum mechanics, quantum cosmology and so on.). Then, I will pay attention mainly on Anthropic argumentation, because the discussion about the whole complex of problems connected with a problem of “observer” in physics 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, obviously will require an output for frameworks of my report.

In dramatic art there are no obvious formulations of the principles but general their sense is substantially close to principles specified above:

(1) “*Principle of participation*” of N.P. Ochlopkov, E. Piscator and B. Brecht: “The Spectator spatially placed in theatrical performance appears “*as though its participant.*”

(2) “The Theatrical representation *should be organized so that the participation of the spectators could be admitted*” in it.

Epistemological basis of theatrical principles are in essence the same: the theater of New Time has made the spectator so passive, that it eventually absolutely eliminated his interest. The loss of interest to the theater of New Time is a consequence of realization of such demarcation. So the necessity of turning the spectator into active participant of the performance-show has been understood.

Epistemological sources of Anthropic cosmological principle (ACP), from my point of view, consist in the following:

- ACP does not only limit physics of the certain type, limiting an allowable set of the theories with the strictly certain parameters of the

initial conditions, *but imposes restrictions on the certain type of rationality.*

- Hence, not only the physical Universe should be the universe of the certain type, but also the human history (evolution of European rationality) should admit existence of such way, which has went to occurrence of such type of rationality, *within the framework of which ACP has a reason.*
- It means, that ACP contains implicitly “*Anthropic historical principle*” *imposing restrictions on a European history and European culture.*

*Conclusion:* ACP is an *artificial attempt* of “revitalizing” that initial unity of the Human being and world (stage of mythos), which was lost with . . . *origin of the theory* (science).

Now we shall see that epistemological sources of theatrical “principle of spectator’s participation” are the same:

- Theater of New Time has become obsolete just because it offered to exclude completely the spectator from performance, leaving him a passive role of the observer from outside. The theater of New Time asserted “separateness” of alive unity of the world, that corresponded to the dominated then (16–17 th) type of rationality in theatrical art.
- It is necessary to search, in opinion E. Grotovsky, P. Bruck and some other producers new form of theatrical statements, in which the lost alive unity of the person and world would be restored.

*Conclusion:* “the principle of spectator’s participation” in theater is *artificial attempt* of “revitalizing” the initial alive unity of the human being and world, which was lost with . . . *origin of theater* (art).

There is a reasonable question: why this attempt is artificial? Because neither “Anthropic principle” nor “Principle of spectator’s participation” essentially do not derive from the physical or theatrical theories dominated during last three - four centuries. Moreover, they contradict with fundamental requirement of rationality of New Time, a honor of their definition is connected with N.Copernicus, G. Galileo and some other founders of new science and in general new European rationality—*laws to which the natural processes submit are independent of the observer*. And even stricter: the presence of the observer should be eliminated in every possible way from received scientific knowledge.

This requirement remained in force up to beginning of 20th century.

For this reason, in relation to the dominated theories in physics and to the dominated approaches in theater above mentioned principles are “alien bodies,” breaking all the strongly elaborated notions about the world and Man’s place in it.

The problem doesn’t consist in *novelty* only, but in the *special novelty: both physics and theater does not suffice life*. It is thin feeling of both deepest physicists and deepest playwrights. The cardinal question, in my opinion, is following: by what means, modern physicians and producers try to reproduce unity of the Human Being and world?

From my point of view, they try to reach the new purpose — alive unity — by old means. The matter is the observer (Man and his representations) *remains as it was — an ontological criterion of value of the outstanding world*. The Man tries today to reduce the world broken by him some time ago *to the sum of parts*. However, “the sum of the human being and world” has not primordial additivenessless of alive unity of “Humanworld.” Our language is so “articulated,” that literally forces to put “the sum”—conjunction “and”— between words “human” and “world.” But in alive unity is not present “between”. It, unfortunately, also cannot understand, resorting to artificial rational receptions, like ACP or “the principle of spectator’s participation.”

Here are those disappointing consequences, which we have inherited from those who for the first time have looked at alive unity of the world “from outside

“by the discharged sight. So, the rescue of representation does not look yet encouraging.

### ***Paradox of “Representation with Participation of Spectator”***

To understand essence of “representation with participation” it is necessary to reflect above-mentioned questions:

(1) *What does modern theater make?* My answer is: it is artificial “as though” enters the spectator—the Man in theatrical representation as the participant.

(2) *What does the modern physics make?* My answer is: it is artificial “as though” introduce the observer—the Man in representation about the constructing of the universe as the participant.

Then we put other question: what was a condition for splitting of unity of human being with the world? The answer is simple: it was representation! Just then, when the Man “was discharged” from religious (mythological) action and has looked at it “from outside” then the “show” (Θεωρία and Θεατρον) was born. The alive connection with unity of the world was lost and is lost forever.

Try to put one more question: can that condition of destruction of unity to be a condition itself? The answer is too simple: it can not. Then we need to make one more conclusion: the destructive force of representation has exhausted itself, if now “the represented Man try to present *“representationnessless itself”* (when the Man can’t present itself). I shall explain the essence of the problem.

This paradoxical type of modern “representations with participation of spectator (observer) “can be formulated in the several statements:

Statement 1: The representation is such form of being of a reality, a main condition of realization of which is the breaking of a reality into “represented” (object) and “representing” (subject). In other words, a condition of realization of

representation is splitting unity of the world. However, modern physicians and the producers want those “representing” to include “represented”.

That is for them it is true:

Statement 2. The representation as the form of being does not forbid the presence of the object itself. But then: Representation as breaking of a reality into “represented”(object) and “representing” (subject), is representing itself as a represented reality (object), assumes, in turn, new breaking this reality into represented (object) and representing (subject). However, in this case also, it again can present itself in the way of “object,” i.e. to break this again received reality into represented (object) and representing (subject) and so up to infinity (ad infinitum).

Turns out, the representation is representation and, simultaneously, is not it. It breaks a reality, but as it contains itself as such reality also, so far as breaks itself also and up to infinity. Putting the spectator (participant) in process of representation, we thus eliminate “representation as such” and “representing as such.”

*Conclusion: the representation is not the form of being, allowing to display its alive unity adequately (in our case non-contradictory).*

In “representation with participation of the spectator” representation as the form of the relation to a reality finds the border. How is possible to explain in other way occurrence “of theatrical representation,” where the spectator, that is “who is representing” — Let’s take a mind(!). In an ideal case all spectators at theater of Jones and Hatry are the participants of representation — participate the performance! For *representation*, with spectator (representing) excluded it is *nonsense*, it cannot be by definition. The representation without representing is *contradictio in adjecto*, contradiction in the basis.

***Conclusion***

So we summarize told. The Man who has stood at sources of a European civilization has wished to present the life. By presenting he, thus, has mortified it. The real life for him can be as “representation about genuine and real life” only. “The Representation” is the real life for him. But if this “similarity” with genuine life begins to perish, what remains to the modern Man?

You are right! He needs “to inject” some new forces. The modern Man wishes to *reanimate the representation*. But as we just have proved it is basically impossible. This is also a *tragedy of representation*, from my point of view.