

ANALYSIS OF THE PARTICULARITIES OF THEATRE AND OF THE ARTISTIC MANAGEMENT COMPLEXITY

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Abstract: Theoretical studies, practical approaches, but especially the contemporary economical reality represents the obvious statement that the cultural life of an ethnicity represents one of the main problems of our day to day life and a factor in the human development. The analysis of theatrical activities from an inside point of view is one of the terms of success for the artistic management. This research presents in its first chapter some definitions and features of theatre, as a cultural sector of application concerning the principles of modern management. Adding to this, I have opened an old debate of the bearing between art and management as also conflicts or pseudo-conflicts concerning the two mentioned terms. In the third chapter it is attempted the particularization of complex elements of artistic management elements such as: the functional capacity of the company, the dynamic and positive use of human resources or the cultural and social dimension of theatre companies.

1. Definitions and features of theatre

In most of modern languages, the word theatre has double meaning: it names the place, the building as well as the theatrical activities or theatrical life that takes place in society. The etymology of the word “theatre” comes from the Greek *theatron* that may be translated into a series of ways: “to watch”, the spectator’s seats, the audience, or the construction.

The term *show* also has double meaning: it may suggest any type of manifestation of men in front of other men, finding in it a certain pleasure – the show of dance, of a handball or football game, or theatre.

Using the term “show” to depict a TV broadcast or a movie is never the less abusive, as these terms sell the consumer images, in the physic absence of the creator. In theatre, the “show” includes a *visual, imagery accomplishment*, as for the creators (the artists) a performance.

Theatre may even come to replace the whole dramatic production or to take the place of drama itself. We have no intention in dealing with this debate concerning the term of “theatre”, as we will further on take action in defining some aspects of the components of the theatrical activities.

In contrast with literature, theatre is a collective art. It implies not only the art of the actor, but that of the director, the set or costume director, the composer, the choreographer, lighting director, the make up artist; the issues of spread and commercial shouldn’t be neglected either as well as the educational issue or the copyright of the drama work.

The waking of the national consciousness, the preserving and valuing of the cultural identity of our nation also represent a mission of the today’s society theatre. Starting with the XIXth century, according institutional aspects in the cultural life, thus in the theatre activity also, were demanded. The example of the modern bourgeois theatre assumed the construction of the building and the shaping of the institution

around which the writers, the actors, the directors, the musicians, the cultural amateurs and the audience, that contributed to the rising of theatre, its well functioning, not only by paying the ticket price, but through donations also. Along with the bourgeois society of theatre, the national authority assures the theatre with means of subsistence, does the checking and names directors, applies censorship to the repertoire.

The institutionalization of national and local theatres with permanent character on one hand, and of boulevardier and commercial on the other hand, at the beginning of the XXth century corresponds no more to the needs of the creators which, in concordance with the general artistic movement of those times, were trying to promote theatre in a new and different type of way. As it is hard to propose new ways of expression inside the national theatre – which was forced to attend to the state's demanding, as it was the main sponsor –, the experiments have to take place in smaller studios, where the directors along with ad hoc formed theatre groups struggled to prove the real value of their productions. Starting with Maeterlinck and continuing with Artaud, Reinhardt, Brecht, Piscator and in today's time Bob Wilson, Peter Schumann, Robert Chulho, Peter Brook, Eugenio Barba, Grotowski, the experiment lives on in the most diverse spaces far from the official, formal theatre life. According to the individual projects, alternative theatres (Piscator, Brecht, today's *Bred and Puppet*, Augusto Boal) hold their projects in studios without dressing rooms or official boxes, in crowded places or in open spaces, in any place where people are willing to interact with the world of theatre.

The theatrical art, as part of culture rises the same issues that concern its function and aesthetical value:

The commercial theatre on Broadway identifies with American theatre. As it is market sensitive, it usually presents works of drama that are assumed to arouse the public's interest (certain genre or certain authors) or even hire movie stars to play the main lead. In this type of theatre play, the producer is the most important person in the show- he hires the ones responsible with the artistic tasks, is in charge with the material funds, their distribution as well as all-around business that concerns the show. His aspirations are more likely to be connected to marketing success, business then to the artistic success – this explains why a major part of the funds is used for promoting the project long before its premiere. Such theatres may only exist in metropolis, and work on the basis of projects, without a permanent artistic ensemble. The shows are held daily, as long as the public's interest persists, that is, as long as the show is financially motivated. The actors sign a punctual contract, for a single role on a determined period; so do the musicians, the technical staff etc. This type of organization defines the functionality of the Broadway theatre.

The "artistic" value of theatre is brought into discussion when it comes to artistic environment, the connoisseurs or the creator itself, through experimental, avant-garde theatre shows etc. In this respect, the producer may feel motivation in the acknowledgement of his colleagues, in the liberty of creation and personal satisfaction. The creator has a strong feeling of accomplishment through art, even if his work is a marketing failure. This way, the author of a theatre "blockbuster" may be qualified as shallow by his colleagues. No wonder that under these circumstances, some authors refuse to talk about marketing as they feel that this may affect their creative flow. They hold the hope that the audience will end up understand and love their works of art, their shows [3, p.45-55]. Nevertheless, despite the aesthetic value, the theatrical product remains a symbolic good, of a "creator" as Bourdieu remarks. [4, p.32]

Theatre seen as a *higher art*, with a strong symbolic character, assumes a *charismatic* and autocratic relation with the public [4, p.37-38], meaning that the theatrical product, comes to be respected in a community through writers, directors, actors. That is because the people in a community identify with them either because of they are in person or what they represent. Even so, it is indisputable that the audience is the one that raises the work on higher ground. Despite these characteristics of theatrical activities, people that work in the drama industry have always wanted their theatre to be “popular”.

First of all, the obvious interest in social issues of theatre managers (the high number of people that have access to the plays), an interest that flows from economical demands (financial growth through ticket sale), a manifestation of narcissism present at all creators, that wish for their works to know a higher glory and spreading, a wish that may resemble the nostalgia of theatre at its origins –ceremony, celebration, feast for the people. In this respect, the meaning of the word “popular” with reference to theatre is not obvious and not the same for us all. Although this word is present in the name of theatrical institutions, it may be more likely referred to the generalisation of higher education.

2. The art - management report

The conflictual situation that we may imagine between these two terms – art and management, born from their antinomy could be brought into discussion, having a series of interferences between the two as presented by Eve Cahaipello in her study called “*Artistes versus manager*”.

Today, this conflict is more theoretical in reality, as there are many indexes that contradict the separation into two columns presented in the table below. We could predict that, the typical context is that of the market transaction (the sale of an artistic work), order or wage relation. In any of these cases, the artist exchanges a work of art or creation for a price, closes a deal with a structure that permits reaching less or more important purposes. These moments are highly delicate because they meet two issues that are, generally vulnerable concerning the artists: *the claim of their autonomy the way they report to money*.

Money puts a constraint on the liberty of art in the artist’s life, and is also a subject of permanent conflict which plays a role in the market evaluation of the work of art or of the artist. Thus many artists refuse a financial quantification of their work.

Money cannot be a fair equivalent, it cannot buy anything. The spiritual values that actors create on scene, or in any other creating process, elude the *merchandise-money-merchandise* formula [2, p.59]; the talent and its diffuse effects have more of a divine origin and uncountable.

Money can never be a good measurement for a theatre play: they reduce it to an impersonal number which will erase the signature and the diverse and exhaustless characteristics, number on which we can apply all algebraic operations, and as we all know, taste cannot be part of an equation! In cultural industries the amount of incomes can express the degree of popular success, but this measure of value is also disputable and problematic as the artist knows that his audience judges him based on financial criteria.

Artists refuse managers exigencies, as we easily imagine how managers in turn critique the artists:

- Often artists do not have the sense of reality and they don't know what their interests are. Also if they would have a better care for money, they would have less to worry about everyday life.
- Their expectations are high: they imagine that a red carpet will unveil in front of them just because they are "artists"; they would rather live supported by society, while the common condition is that of "work for a living". They think only for themselves, demanding comfort and money. They wish to do only what they want, without obeying generally accepted constraints.
- They despise others as well as simple pleasures and consumers. They despise managers, as they make a useful but dull job.

Image 1

Conflict issues between management and art

MANAGEMENT	ART
<u>Rationalism</u> Rationality Calculus Standardisation Prediction, regularity, routine Order Measure, quantification	Sensibility Imagination, intuition Singularity, uniqueness Creativity, innovation Rupture taste, pleasure
<u>Capitalism</u> Profit Money	Pure art Outside the price
<u>Utilitarianism</u> Interest Utility	Sacred Gratuitousness
<u>Heteronomy</u> Control People organized work Work divided by spare time	<u>Autonomy</u> Liberty Calling Time is continuous; the work takes nourishment in the life of the author
<u>Meritocracy</u> Ability gained through hard work at school	<u>Aristocracy</u> Genius, native ability
<u>Mass</u> Consuming	Beotians (roughage), Vulgar

Nevertheless, besides those imaginary affirmations, intentionally exaggerated, there are some points of convergence meant to be in favour of close relationship and cooperation between management and art. This binding will serve the economic and even scientific progress of humanity, equally raising sources for social and moral progress: The dynamics are the same as those of scientific progress: each discovery goes a little further towards *Truth or Art*. [2, p.182] A reconciliation of the two becomes a matter of history.

The reconciliation refers especially to finding a common ground for a criteria accepted by both parts involved in the working process. Of course it is difficult to quantify something that is not seen in a plausible financial-countable. How to repay the

talent and who can quantify the talent “quantity” produced in a play? The modern management has found effective solutions to include the artistic performance in a wider system of profit consummation. This financial evaluation of the profit makes it possible for the art to be quantifiable in a mathematical manner, depending on the ranking of each actor.

Both scientists and artists declare that they spend most of their time working, but this is not perceived as an effective effort. That is because of the passion for their job and the satisfaction that comes along with it. The personal and professional life blends and, as a result, the actors and directors become friends and come to spend their free time together. But, at the same time, they take advantage of this private relationship to help each other in the work field.

The physical exercises along with the vocal technique and the accurate diction occupy a great deal of time when it comes to the homework of any respected actor.

If we consider the actors’ art treaty of K.S.Stanislavski: ”Actor’s work with himself”, we find a vast analysis of the *extra-work that an actor has to perform* [6, p. 38], in his free time. He argues that an actor extends his work in all other fields of his life by continuous observation and analysis of the events around him. His inspiration can also come from the surrounding reality, exterior to the space of scenic creation. An actor’s habits to analyse and mentally project his next part come as result of the years of study in college.

3. The complexity of management in theatre

In most western countries, the concept of management in theatre is related to project management in organizations. It is very common today that these concepts are widely interlinked. They both comprise of predetermined goals and objectives, which are followed by implementing different activities, such as leading, directing, organising, planning, controlling and researching and manipulating various resources (human resources, material and financial resources). Given limited resources and a specific environment (maybe either economic, social, cultural, political), to manage implies to achieve the planned benefits, which need to be specific, achievable and relevant.

In the realm of economics, the ultimate goal will be achieved at the equilibrium point between the production and the social demand. Marketing, more than any other business function, deals with customers. Marketing is the delivery of customer satisfaction at a profit, using myriad concepts which contribute towards a successful business, such as the product concept, the production and the selling concept. Nevertheless, I could say the marketing will explore more the demand-supply model of theatrical products, while the management is more interested in an effort to accomplish the model’s equilibrium in more dynamic environment, where it is compulsory to adhere to the complexity and to the general objective of the organization. (At a later stage, you can see that the organization is not only interested in the mechanisms of production, but also in the exchanges of productions)

The marketing and management have as well important parts where they overlap, especially in theatrical companies which are strongly focused on profit maximising, by using either their own production, or by exchanges of production. Even if the companies’ projects are impressively designed, these companies cannot commit only to maximising profit, as the width and complexity of the socio- economic environment and the human resources mobilization are constantly growing. An interesting example to explore in Romania is the seasonal entertainment at the seaside, where the artistic

quality of the plays is low, determining a reduction in peoples' interest in this type of cultural events. On the contrary, in the more competitive context where the management is becoming more rational, we are taking part in a more persistent integration of the modern management and marketing in these companies. The ultimate goal is to uphold the functional and efficiency standards.

The implementation and standards of the administration, management and marketing are all different, but are all part of the common culture of modern companies and organisations. Therefore, the market logistics links the company with the marketing concept, while the organization logistics handles the theatrical companies' projects and their project management, leading the company towards a winning long-lasting strategy.

With regard to the management complexity, in the paper "Organisational Turbulence and Flexibility", professor George Moldoveanu and Cosmin Dobrin have presented a specific dialectics. They stress that the managerial performance of a company is strongly related to the functional capacity of the company (FC), which is an intern element, affected by several variables:

$$C_F = f(F_{C,D}, F_p, F_{CO}, F_{FC}, F_p) \quad [4]$$

Where: F_{RD} - research and development function

F_p - promoting function

F_{CO} – commercial function

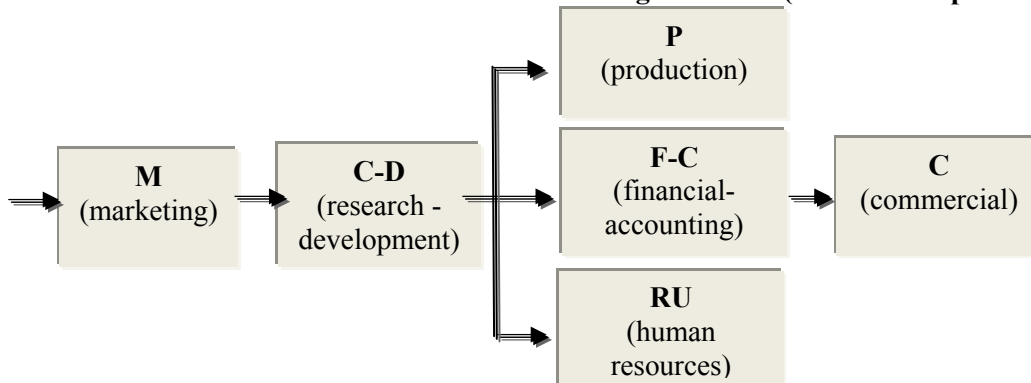
F_{FC} – accounting and finance function

F_p – personnel function

Achieving the objectives of the companies depends mostly on the how the functions converge and how they perform together. The six functions follow a chronological path, but they do not follow successively, they coexist.

Image 2

The successiveness of functions in modern organisations (C.Russu adaptation)



Accomplishing the functions of the organization can be implemented through a series of duties, which are systems of activities in a permanent dynamic environment that depend on the internal and external conditions of the market. [[5, p.35]

Yet, PhD Gheorghe Cârstea remarks that even if these functions are to achieve specific objectives, actually these objectives are strongly interconnected, hence the activities of one function lead as well to the achievement of other functions. Moreover,

this successiveness of the functions applies also in the case of a malfunction: any upstream malfunction will have effects on the downstream functions.

The intensity of these functions (of the components) *will be different from the developing stage of the organization (launching, development, maturity and decline)*. [1, p.48]

A very important component of the internal environment of the company is the organisational culture and behaviour. It is a framework that challenges to action and discussion on the: *new ideas, knowledge, rules, standards, values, manifestations of the way in which work and people are seen and treated in an organization*. [1, p.50]

In the most significant commercial sectors of the arts market (as private industries: publishers or cinema/ television), the main function of organizations and companies cannot simply be economic and financial. "The product" of this market is based upon the capacity to have an "exchange of symbol". This results in the idea that the economy of the cultural market produces **values**, elements and ways of thinking, mentalities and sensibilities. A substantial part of the artistic and cultural companies are non-governmental organisations, whose main objectives are educational, social and cultural and they start up mainly because they want to create a "social link", to produce a social society. The profit maximising idea (not necessarily the financial equilibrium one) impacts only a small part of the cultural organization. It adds up to less than *the cultural dimension*, as a specific social product, and inevitable to their use. The cultural management needs therefore to undertake this *task as an integrating part of its objective*.

In addition, the dimension of the cultural production cannot be reduced by the public outside the company (maybe either clients, users or subsidiary outsiders). The internal public (volunteers are paid members that have executive or management positions in the company) faces the same problem. Actually, this problem is widely spread in the contemporary socio- economic environment, mainly because of the general context of fragile identity and strength. The contemporary organisations are creators of social roles and development and they face increased demand from their internal public (that receive a double reward: a professional and a social reward).

In most of the companies, *the positive and dynamic human resources management* and *the social and cultural dimensions* are very sensitive and this characteristic is even more intensified in cultural organizations. The cultural manager encounters very often artists, occasional or permanent self-employed people and needs to take into account the massive internal *demand of identity valuation*. This demand would increase depending on the doubtful situation the persons are living in at the time or if they haven't found already their goal in the cultural society. Additionally, the determination and motivation of the people in the cultural sector (whether volunteers or paid employees) impacts on this identity valuation demand, which appears not to have an impact in any other industry (if their feeling are justified or not remains to be discussed). Most frequently, the people in the cultural organization imagine their life like this: it is an actual state that needs to be taken into consideration and managed.

The project of any theoretical company must take into consideration the double cultural dimension discusses, with an internal and external component, without restricting the social utility (of the outsiders) or without magnifying the fragility of the internal cohesion (loss of internal motivation and other malfunctions).

Another aspect that is part of the complexity of the management in theatre relates to the multiplication of dependencies and environment that the cultural institution faces.

What I actually mean is that theatrical organisations (theatre companies) are experiencing a double dynamic of the economy, facing: volunteers, temporary or permanent employed people, direct individual clients, corporative clients, sponsors, people that subsidize. The organizational logistics links with the market and creates a multiplication of partners: each individual one has a unique link to the organisation and therefore a very specific status.

To show this diversity of environments the organisation operates in, we can take for instance an organisation of theatrical production and distribution. We can define as environment of the company each actor or group of actors that influence the company, without actually being part of the company. The theatrical company will negotiate with:

- **The suppliers**, which can be individual or institutional ones (renting the halls, buying materials, scenic or office equipment, transport)

- **The services suppliers**, which impact directly the production and the organization (dramatic author, scene-painter, music composer, advertising agencies, accounting firms or law firms, banks). The organisational logistics and the market logic interfere very frequently (choosing the services suppliers implies a quality criteria and also certain specialized submarkets, which usually do not comply with the general criteria of the market)

- **The buyers**, which can be individuals or public institutions (normal public or formative courses, organisations of cultural broadcasting etc.). Similarly, the two logics interfere (the notoriety of theatrical organization and the consumers confidence are not the only criteria)

- **The people that subsidize** (local groups, societies, associations, minister of culture). Each negotiation leads frequently to a contract that implies as well specific tasks. In this case, usually, the organisational logistics replaces the implicit market logic.

Nevertheless, it needs to be taken into account other compulsory factors, such as social insurances or direct and indirect taxes. In the mean time, it is important that different events, more or less specialised or formal or informal, are attended. These events contribute towards the general public opinion (critics, professional people very famous in theatres, meetings, seminars, work-shops).

The theatrical management will consequently take into consideration the essential function of coordination that is definitely going to have a positive impact in a more and more fragmented environment. For example, the decentralization process began in Romania during the last years, and altogether with the strengthening power of the *Local Authorities* in the economic and cultural environment, it impacted very much the multiplication of the organizations and the demand for culture, and the company needs to be aware of these changes in order to balance the begets of production, broadcasting and nevertheless raise the value of social utility. There is a high risk that the theatrical management will lose its objectives and the coherence of the project, if it tries to satisfy and respond to each organisation individually.

In another words, the theatrical management will need to find a compromise between the necessity of diversifying external partners and the necessity to keep the coherence and visibility of its own project. If we are to think about the diversity of internal partners of the company, we can see an increase in the type of complexity that is needed to a good theatrical management (a lot of companies that have had an associative statute still have an administration council with very specific values, nice and famous artists, but incapable to manage such a complex problem).

However, this is not the all effect. This multiplication of partners has also an effect on the human and financial resources and they need to be managed. It is to be remarked that this dynamics implies the multiplication of know-how administration in the culture. The massive range of elements which must be thoroughly evaluated demonstrate that the theatrical management, as well as the necessary resources have become more of a challenge lately and demand planning a strategy, the factors of production and distribution, whether they are strictly artistic or creative.

A last element to be taken into account is the great fluctuation of environments and partners in the independent theatrical company:

- Workforce focused on planned projects
- Changes in the administrative division
- Re-launch of new creative projects towards people that subsidize
- Frequent changes of objectives of the people that subsidize
- Different financial obligations that depend on each new artistic project.

In conclusion, the company will often inform each of the different environments (the necessity of information systems affects the actions of each partner). The company must implement a *system to verify and validate the efficacy* so that it does not remain behind the structural or tactical changes of the environments it works in. Moreover, the theatrical company looks at managing a good *communication system within the company*, which will permit, limit or predict any *internal disruptions*, which could affect its performance.

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