

Recent nightmares of Warlikowski

Koniec by Krzysztof Warlikowski is a journey around the director's dreams, anxieties and complexes. It is slow, wearing and suffocating. It is not a coherent treatise like in a case of *(A)pollonia* but a personal and intense rummaging in his own entrails. *Koniec* is a journey through the last, deathbed nightmare and the nightmare in which we interrogate, judge and execute ourselves. When Warlikowski talks about death and ultimate matters he takes his time. Visions and monologues roll like a rattletrap, old-fashioned carriages. Ghosts keep forcing their way in through the swinging door and cracks in the walls one after another. A barrier in the background opens and shuts turning the stage into an enormous rehearsal hall and then splitting it onto small cells, offices and cubbyholes. Warlikowski has never before played with his actors' corporality to this extent. He didn't use to turn them into hybrids, half-people-half-puppets or digitally multiplied reflections. This time he steals their voices, swaps their bodies (for instance he shows a talking puppet instead of Stuhr), doubles them using film camera, breaks them, sews them up and cuts them. He uses them for an advanced engineering as if he was trying to check where a living person ends – how much can you add, take away, transplant and still keep one's identity. Perhaps a body is no longer needed? Perhaps memory is enough. But it can be also manipulated in a dream. It fails, too. *Koniec* is a few plays in one. There is a stretched, psychedelic first part presenting Joseph K. and Tony facing their demons while tormenting themselves with guilt. They join the game by themselves; they allow themselves to be "accused". In a shorter, brighter and almost comical finale with Elisabeth Costello appears external authority. An office? A court? It is a system demanding documents, requests and statements. The quiet demiurge of both parts is Marek Kalita, withdrawn, nameless and indifferent. He turns into a guard then a master of ceremony then a gatekeeper. He leads in, begins conversations and checks identification papers. Is it the Mystery Man from *Lost Highway* or a clown or a guardian or a devil looking for a lawyer? The actors surprisingly trustfully assume roles of dreamy, indefinite apparitions. In one scene Maciej Stuhr stiffens his body out of fear or desire just to seem disposed of material flesh in another. Nobody is able to anticipate next action of Maja Ostaszewska. Stanisława Celińska, who returns to Warlikowski's theatre, agrees to expose intensely her ageing body. Ewa Dałkowska contributes some recalcitrant, comical energy. This following *(A)pollonia* production is first of all auto-interrogation of Krzysztof Warlikowski, a trial of himself, his guilt, anxieties and obligations. Is it interesting? Is looking inside artists' heads interesting? How can we judge somebody else's dreams? How can we judge other people's autobiographies? Some people value Iwaszkiewicz's novels but would never want to read his journals and cannot forgive Fellini for his $8\frac{1}{2}$.

Joanna Derkaczew

Gazeta Wyborcza nr 231 (selection)