

# The Theatrical Meditation

***Koniec* in the Nowy Teatr is the coping stone of achievements to date for Krzysztof Warlikowski and the actors he work with**

The newest production of Krzysztof Warlikowski resembles surfing the internet or sinking into other people dreams. It does not have linear sequence of events. The consecutive scenes circle around in loops and return to create brilliant meanings and associations or some other time to lead us astray. Each scene is being filmed and projected which multiplies backgrounds. Thanks to formal perfection, genius music by Paweł Mykietyn, lighting by Felice Ross, a spectacular scenography by Małgorzata Szcześniak and incredible sincerity of the actors we can watch a contemplative and beautiful performance.

The script alone written by Warlikowski and Piotr Gruszczyński is a masterpiece itself. Right beneath the loose associations and capricious narration hides an iron construction kept together by an extremely difficult keystone part played by Marek Kalita – on one occasion a guard measuring time or a bureaucratized Master of Ceremony on the other. Kalita is outstanding especially in those grotesque moments when he attempts to explain rather awkwardly and bring down to the earth all the unpredictable events. He knows more than other characters but is only allowed to observe their struggling without being able to influence their decisions.

In Kafka's approach Joseph K. is trying to search for justice, to investigate circumstances of the sentence, in Warlikowski's case K. is passive. Only this kind of dissociation allows him being honest toward himself. Struggling with the opulent justice system turns into struggling with oneself. It's almost as if Joseph K. filed a lawsuit against himself without even knowledge what he is guilty of. It creates a wound that cannot be healed – either by a dodgy spiritual guide (a grotesque acting of Wojciech Kalarus) or relationships with women. This irritating, strange, circling conversation of Joseph K. with himself creates a picture of a man in the pit of despair – alone, suffering and feeling guilty.

This world of existential absurd is entered by a writer from a completely different level, Elisabeth Costello (an outstanding, well balanced part of Ewa Dałkowska). This caustic intellectual, aspiring to present the world in an detached way, meets an embodiment of pure vitality, a Polish cleaning lady (Stanisława Celińska), who suddenly begins to dance the Saragina's rumba from Fellini's *8 ½*. This is truly an extraordinary encounter of two attitudes - an intense observer of life scared to give in to emotions and a master of living who doesn't try to explain anything but simply lives. Which one of them will have fuller knowledge of

life? This is a question we are left with by this play which shows that facing the final gate awaits each one of us, even the artists who escape into fictions.

Paweł Sztarbowski  
Metro (selection)