

AUTOREFERAT
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AUTHOR'S REVIEW OF HIS WORK

Esse est percipi.

George Berkeley

To be, means to be perceived is the motto of the screenplay of the film, created in 1965 under the title *Film*. Its author was one of the greatest creators of the twentieth century - writer, playwright, director - Samuel Beckett. With Buster Keaton in the main role, in slapstick form, the film posed ontological basic questions: can you eliminate all perception and thus is it possible to not be?

It is striking, however, how a quote from Berkeley can metaphorically convey the essence of the cinematographer's work. Although probably the more accurate would be a paraphrase of this famous quote to: *to be, means to be filmed*, because by pressing START on the camera we create and register worlds whose shape and form depends only on us.

But how is Beckett here? "TV art of Samuel Beckett" - this was the title of my theoretical dissertation, where I described how Beckett in television art and in all his work combines minimalism with an incredible formal consequence and a huge emotional charge. Creating, regardless of whether it was a prose, dramatic text or paradox !!!, a radio play, always creates images captivating with their strength. Two tramps under a tree, a blind man in a wheelchair, an old man leaning over a tape recorder, are not only pictures of Beckett's plays, but icons forever inscribed in our culture.

THEATER AND OPERA

The new light above my table is a great improvement. With all this darkness around me I feel less alone. (Pause.) In a way.

Samuel Beckett *Krapp's Last Tape*

Much has been said and written about what light is for the cameraman. Recalling Berkeley, one could say, "To be, means to be lit up," which is particularly apt on stage - in theater and opera.

The emergence of a new profession - lighting designer, is a matter of the last dozen or so years. Previously, directors managed very well with the lights on the stage, the set designers less often did. How come then, are filmmakers on the stage of theaters? This is a consequence of the revolution that led to technological development and a new understanding of light on the stage, far beyond simple lighting.

Undoubtedly, the genesis of this change should be sought in the dynamic development of lighting technology - new, "intelligent" lamps, computer - controlled, allowing to change the luminous flux, its color, direction, intensity and character. There were completely new possibilities, but as a consequence it significantly extended and complicated the process of creating light. Directors appreciated the possibility of treating light differently, in cinematographers they often find partners to create a completely new language of light.

As never before, the "image" of the scene created by the set design and light could be easily and dynamically changed. This ease of change introduced a new quality in the operation and shaping of space and caused light to be treated as a full-fledged "person" of the drama.

Somehow, some years ago, when television became less and less missionary, it had less and less for me, as a creator, to offer. Then the world of theater and opera opened up to me.

I think that every lighting designer, when he stands in front of a dark stage, he feels like a painter standing in front of an empty canvas. Maybe a sketch - a set design, an outline of the action, artists' movements on the stage, a space filled with choir and ballet. But how this all appears to viewers, depends on the light and its character: there will be a lot of it or not, from what direction will it illuminate, what color will it be, will it be sharp or soft, strong or weak?

On the stage it is different than in film and television - there is no editing, variability of shot sizes, one scene goes into the other scene, the space is once full of people, at other times there is only one soloist in it. Changing the light can mean changing the place, stage, mood. But very often, light can be used to create "editing" and changing shot sizes as in a film. Changing the light from full illumination of the entire stage to a narrow stream illuminating only one soloist is like editing scenes in various shot sizes. This change does not have to be caused by a change in the situation - it can be a director's indication - "we look here". It is impossible not to refer once again to Samuel Beckett and his play *Not I: Beginning of the stage directions: The scene in the dark, you can only see the lips ...*

In an extreme form, I used this "editing" in the opera *Der kaiser von Atlantis* (Krakow Opera 2009, dir. Beata Redo-Dobber), where the whole stage was often extinguished and only one element was lit - in one of the arias, for example, only the hands of the soloist were lit.

But "new light" is not always modern technologies. Sometimes it is a simple transfer of film thinking to the stage. In the opera *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Krakow Opera 2012, dir. Laco Adamik) the interior of the living room through the window is illuminated by only one lamp - a spotlight 5000W - a power rarely seen on the stage. Similarly, in the *Der Zigeunerbaron* (Teatr Wielki in Łódź 2015, dir. Tomasz Konina), the rising sun imitated the 2000W HMI discharge with orange foil, which gradually lightened up by the use of a special shutter, filled with red previously gray interior.

An undoubted contribution of cinematographers to the development of stage lights is the introduction of backlight. Of course, backlight was always present in the theater, but as an effect but now has become, like in film and television, a permanent complement to key light.

Returning to the use of light as an "actor". An example is the *Der Zigeunerbaron* finale (Teatr Wielki in Łódź 2015, dir. Tomasz Konina). The wickedly used waltz *An der schönen blauen Donau*, announcing the birth of fascism, was drowned in a dark red light, brightened only by two old reflectors visible on the stage, being moved like searchlights by two actors. Associations are obvious.

Another example of the use of "dramatic" light is the *La forza del destino* (Opera Śląska 2016, dir. Tomasz Konina). In the first scene of the opera, a accidental shot is taken which determines all subsequent actions. Normally lit, the palace interior at the moment of the shot is flooded only with a red light. This red will appear several times - for example in the revolution scene, when an inscription is painted on the wall - but we do not see it because it is painted with red paint and the wall is illuminated in red. Only the change in the color of light reveals its content: "viva la muerte". Also in the final scene, the death of Leonora, the ruins of the palace are flooded with a red light.

A small digression about video projections on stage. Projectors are standard equipment for most theaters and operas. Front projection, back projection, projection on tulle. Very often their authors are film operators creating light, which guarantees the aesthetic coherence of light and video image. Unfortunately - but this is my personal opinion - the use of projection is very often a result of the weakness of the set design. Usually, this is related to money and too often video projections are **INSTEAD** of the set, and are not an inherent element of the stage work. Action in the open air - we display clouds, in the castle - we display a castle - these are of course exaggerated examples, but how often this way of thinking replaces the defects in the set design.

DOCUMENTARIES

*Yes strange darkness best and the darker the
worse till all dark then all well*

Samuel Beckett *PLAY*

The second half of the 90s and the first decade of the 21st century is a time of extremely intensive cooperation with Polish Public Television. I was the author of a number of television documentary films about culture and art, and this was the time when TVP 2 gave the possibility of ambitious and difficult productions, at the same time putting high demands on quality and form.

From many productions from that time I wanted to mention a series of films entitled *Pejzaż wewnętrzny (Internal landscape)*, telling about writers and spaces related to them: Krakow - Wyspiański, Prague - Kafka, Moscow - Bułhakow, Gdańsk - Grass, Dublin - Joyce and finally for me the episode nearest and most important Ireland - Beckett.

It's only THERE, in Ireland, that you can understand the meaning of Beckett's light. The low clouds in the autumn sky, sun spots wandering over the Wicklow moorland, are images of such power that they move the imagination and are always under the eyes.

At that time, a number of films about the creators and phenomena in culture were created, in which I often combined the functions of the director and the camera operator. Looking from a distance, the most interesting ones are probably: *Drugi po Boy'u* (1995) about Maciej Słomczyński, Jerzy Pilch. *Wyznania człowieka piszącego po polsku* (1998), *Człowiek zwany Świnia* (1999) and *Zawód: podróżnik na południe* (2009) about Andrzej Stasiuk, *Podróż do miejsca urodzenia* (2001) about Tadeusz Nowak, *Zawód: inteligent* (2006) about Andrzej Dobosz.

In these productions, there was a lesson in the precision of form taken from Beckett's work. Of course, these are completely different scales - the work of Beckett and documentary films, but striving for maximum simplicity, elimination of unnecessary elements, clarity of the message, formal consistency are just a few, seemingly obvious, tips for each creator.

This time is also a "fight with television image", i.e. looking for ways to "escape" from the vulgar realism of a television image. Filters for the lens, black and white or color-transformed images, unusual framing, use of extreme focal lengths - either wide-angle or long-range lens, strobe, unusual light, unconventional camera movements. And also caching, or trimming a 3 x 4 image with black bars from above and below, to transform the image into a 16 x 9 format. All these methods were to bring the television picture/image closer to movie image.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

*Please! (Tuning dies away.) How much longer
cooped up here, in the dark?*

Samuel Beckett *Words and music*

The turn of the century is also intense cooperation in television with the Classical Music Editorial of TVP(Polish Public Television). (yes, it's so hard to believe here today, but there was such an editorial office). It resulted in the creation of several documentary films and a series of television productions.

In the case of documentary films, among others: *Dla ludzi mam twarz pogodną* - Grażyna Bacewicz (1999), *Karol Szymanowski - linia życia* (2000) was also very important form - in the first among others, the interpenetration of the past and the present on the basis of old photographs and finding the same places today, or designing a projector for contemporary places in Warsaw of archival materials. The film about Karol Szymanowski in the narrative layer based on letters, in the image layer was a collage of photos, graphics, posters and various iconography from his life.

Classical music has been pushed out of the main TV channels and this applies not only to Polish Television. It appears only as a supplement (read "ennoblement") of socio-political events. Before one of the broadcasts from the National Theater, even before I got the repertoire of the concert, I was sent a list of "VIPs" with the indicated places where they are sitting. It is known for what purpose.

I have recorded as tv director many classical music concerts during my work. In concert halls, in churches, in television studio and outdoors. As the only one I think in Poland, I have been using a storyboard for some time. The ability to follow the score allowed me to write the entire work to specific shots. This is nothing special at all - a standard used all over the world, but in Poland, the method was preferred, which I call "cap-hoop" - meaning an assistant who knows the notes prompts with some anticipation, the camera operators and the broadcast producer what will be played. And either it will be captured or not.

The fact that I feel empowered, let me at this point make a bold statement: classical music does not make sense on television. Particularly instrumental in concert halls. Forced camera settings very often do not give the possibility of clean and aesthetic frames. Even in such broadcast television transmissions, as broadcasts of New Year's concerts from Vienna, the frames are often far from perfect, and in one year in the frame for the announcer of the next works, a camera with a hot head was visible all the time.

Secondly, showing close-ups of musicians playing on different instruments usually does not transmit the tension that arises at the moment of creating the sound. Someone wrote: *"The most unusual horn player the world has ever seen is - the perspectives of the voyeuristic movement of television - unimpressively boring, uninteresting, colorless."*

Thirdly: the possibilities of television speakers - even those of today - are far from being able to transfer the dynamics of classical music.

In my opinion, showing classical music on TV has no sense. Returning to the motto, you can once again paraphrase about the music: "To be means to be heard" and it does not necessarily have to

accompany the picture. The aesthetic value of classical music concerts is, in my opinion, comparable to the aesthetic values of sports broadcasting.

Someone will ask: and magnificent concerts by Karajan? Extremely precise in assembly and cropping? It is worth to look closely at them and see that they are shots set and played back under playback. And besides - Karajan conducted with his eyes closed. Maybe it is not worth opening them.

But on the other hand, when I put in my player DVD with the III symphony of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki, conducted by the composer and Zofia Kielanowicz performing the vocal part, I think that I was very lucky to register this concert and it is a great thing that this recording will be everlasting .

TELEVISION THEATER

CLOV: Do you see how it goes on?

HAMM: More or less.

CLOV: Will it not soon be the end?

HAMM: I'm afraid it will

Samuel Beckett Endgame

In fact, my review should start with the words: "I was fascinated by theater during my studies, which became the basis for my entire professional career." Which, however, was not true. The fact is undoubtedly that as part of my exercises, as the first in Poland, I realized all the television art of Samuel Beckett. In 1988, professional productions on TVP, directed by Antoni Libera and my television production, will be created.

My first theater project as well as diploma presentation is *Choroba młodości* in 1986, directed by Krzysztof Zaleski. I do not know how prof. Michał Bogusławski persuaded Krzysztof Zaleski to take on a fresh graduate from the Radio and Television Department, but it happened.

The realization was quite atypical: natural interior, two-chamber transmission car and parallel recording of both cameras. So the technology commonly used today in television serial productions. The mid-eighties at the Television Theater is discovering new aesthetics.

The technical possibilities that allowed artists to leave the studio slowly began the process of bringing together film and theater productions. This is not a place to analyze the differences and

similarities between film and television theater - it only wants to point out that this process of approaching began quite early. And as long as there was a difference in the medium - a film tape or a magnetic recording, the matter seemed obvious what is movie and what is theater.

An important difference was the structure of the realization team. The vision/broadcast producer and the light producer are the cinematographers of the image. This division existing on television has a justification for working in a studio. In general, the profession of "vision/broadcast producer" is somewhat "suspicious" and occurs actually only in Polish Television. There is a television director and mixer in other parts of the world. The mixer presses the buttons and has little to say about the artistic shape of the program.

Why is the vision engineer in Poland in such a strong position? For many years, television theaters were created only by theater directors, often not knowing much about the language of the film. The screen shape of the show depended on the vision/broadcast producer and very often in different productions he fulfills the tasks usually assigned to the director.

Two television producers became my masters models while I was still working as a cameraman. Stanisław Zajączkowski and Laco Adamik. The first showed me how to translate the energy and tension of acting to the language of images. It's long - sometimes a few-minutes-long scenes mixed with three, sometimes four cameras, which resulted in a ready fragment of the show. And also ritually, watching the take together, together with the actors who then knew how they were filmed and could adapt their acting to it.

I tried to follow the footsteps of the master in my studio realizations. For example: *Glupi Jakub* 1988 dir. Michał Kwieciński, *Indyk* 1989 dir. Maciej Wojtyszko, *Krótką noc* 1990 dir. Robert Gliński, *Rozbity dzban* 1994 dir. Maciej Englert. This way of registering television theaters is in my opinion the essence of what this genre is. The actor is most important, his expression, emotions perfectly visible in close-ups, which in a way "forced" technology.

Television created by the second master, Laco Adamik - director and television producer in one person, has always been perfectly formal. All elements from the set design, through the light, the lenses used, the way of framing were always subordinated to a specific formal assumption. This lesson allowed me to understand that the television camera is a tool for creating reality, not registering it. That the "unpleasant mechanicity" of the electronic television image - the same in the news broadcast, sports broadcast and unfortunately in the television theater, requires from cameramen and vision/broadcast producers to use all available operator art tools to change the character and definition of the image.

The fact that Laco Adamik was a vision producer and director simultaneously allowed him to subordinate the form to the staging and acting of the actors. Usually, as I later found out myself, the vision/broadcast producer who collaborates with the director must often limit his creative temperament and submit to the director's vision. But fortunately, many times I've met directors at work, who understood the necessity of creating a screen reality with means of cinematography as well. For example: *Diaboliada* 1989 dir. Waldemar Śmigasiewicz, *Bóg* 1990 dir. Wojciech Biedroń, *Monolog z lisiej jamy* 1998 dir. Jerzy Krysiak, *Przypadek Iljona Tichego* 1999 dir. Lech Raczak.

We are now touching here an extremely important moment in the history of television theater, which in my opinion was one of the causes of the crisis that continues to this day. The appearance of BTC cameras gave the possibility of easily leaving the studio. Television opened to independent producers, whose only property was often a desk. It started to produce a lot, cheap and unfortunately very often substandard. No exaggeration, because then there were many outstanding performances, general artistic quality dropped significantly and viewers perfectly sensed it. I emphasize that this is not the only cause of the crisis, of course, but from the point of view of the vision/broadcast producer and camera operator, certainly one of the most important.

The first professional meeting with Beckett for television, is the realization of the Samuel Beckett television "*Krapp's Last Tape*" (TVP 1988, dir. Antoni Libera). It was the recording of a stage performance, realized for the Studio Theater. The play was moved to the TV. Tadeusz Łomnicki agreed only to two rehearsals to present and record the whole show on the first day of recording, and re-register it once more in the evening, on the second day of the recording. A voice whispered to me to record the second rehearsal. During the editing, the director decided that Tadeusz Łomnicki's acting was "brilliant" during the rehearsal, while both recordings were, in the director's opinion, exaggerated. The screen version is practically the registration of the rehearsal with small fragments from the other two recordings. This is a good example illustrating the fleetiness and uniqueness of acting interpretations that are possible to register thanks to television cameras.

I have deliberately stayed longer on the way that *Krapp's Last Tape* was realized, because we also touch here an extremely complex issue, which is the so-called transfer. This is the industry term for the registration of a television theater, consisting in the registration of a theatrical performance originally prepared for the stage. However, as Stanisław Radwan pointed out in a private conversation, the essence of theatrical performance registration is the "transfer" to a new medium, which is the television, the sense and the idea of the performance, and not only the objective recording of the spectacle from the stage.

Mentioned several times, Samuel Beckett did not allow the adaptation of his works. What was written for the radio could only be presented on the radio, stage arts - on stage, television - on television. If he allowed to record stage arts on television, he supervised the realization himself. He was perfectly aware of the specifics of each medium.

I dealt with the issue in my doctoral dissertation in more detail, where in detail I described the realization I did of Jerzy Grzegorzewski's works: *Śmierć Iwana Iljicza* (1994), *Sonata epileptyczna* (1997), *La Boheme* (1997), *Tak zwana ludzkość w obłądnie* (1998), *Król umiera, czyli ceremonie* (1999), *Operetka* (2001).

The essence of these transfers was a complete breakdown of the structure of the stage performance and the creation of a completely new form for television - including resignation from the stage and transferring the action into completely new places.

A completely different experience is the transfer with the participation of the audience, especially if it is live. (*Wielkie kazanie księdza Bernarda* dir. Krzysztof Jasiński 2012; *Goła baba* dir. Joanna Szczepkowska 2016; *Historia filozofii wg Tischnera* dir. Artur Więcek, 2018; *Wszystko o mojej matce* dir. Marcin Borczuch 2018, There is little room for creation here - the realization resembles more a transmission, whose purpose is of course the most faithful transfer sense of the stage performance.

I am definitely an advocate of transfers that go beyond simple registration, in a conscious way using contemporary technologies and the language of television (film), with the intention of creating a new quality by moving to the screen what is most important on the stage.

Do DNA

Someone is looking at me still. (Pause.) Caring for me still...

Samuel Beckett *Happy Days*

Do DNA is the graduation performance of the 4th year of the Acting Faculty, vocal and acting specialization of the Academy of Theater Arts in Krakow. Dominika Guzek, Agnieszka Kościelniak, Weronika Kowalska, Jan Marczewski, Łukasz Szczepanowski with the director, Ewa Kaim, created an extraordinary performance, based on Kolberg's songs. Włodzimierz Szturc built from them a story, and life and love, and Dawid Sulej Rudnicki developed it in a remarkable way musically. An unusual performance was created, full of movement, live music, sometimes funny, sometimes a bit sentimental

and always with spontaneous reaction of the audience. The premiere on the stage of AST took place in November 2016, the TV premiere on TVP Kultura on December 26, 2017.

In the case of this transfer at the time of determining its form, several things were obvious. The show had to be recorded on the stage where it was normally played, the sound had to be recorded 100% - it was impossible to record the playback due to the nature of the music and singing, and the movement on the stage was such that there was no chance of setting the camera situation.

The obvious and intrusive solution was to set 4-5 cameras in the audience and record two or three performances, and edit an objective, "cold" report from the stage. But such a way would certainly not convey the energy and emotionality of the performance. Therefore I made the decision that the performance will be recorded scene after scene without the participation of the audience. Four cameras were used. Two were placed on dolly just before the stage, one automatic dolly with a hot head about 30 cm above the stage, the other a dolly with operator about 150 cm above the stage surface. The third camera was behind the carts and showed close-ups. The fourth camera - the key for the entire realization was on the steadicam.

The initial assumption was to maximize the dynamic performance of the cameras, so that their movement would be best combined with the movement on the stage, what happened on the stage. The cameras were practically on the move all the time, whether they were riding or steadicam, which very often moved around the stage between the artists.

As the cameras recorded their shots independently, the individual scenes were filmed with a minimum of 3, maximum of 7 points of view. But that's not all. On the third day of the recording, the show was recorded with the audience, but in a very unique way, unprecedented so far in the transference of theater performances.

In agreement with the director of the show Ewa Kaim and the actors, the camera on the steadicam moved during the performance on the stage, filming broad plans of the audience and the actors in the foreground. Viewers were, of course, forewarned that a "new" actor would appear on stage, and they knew that they were coming to a show recorded by television.

Such work of the camera required adjusting the light, which primarily involved eliminating counterpoints, because it was looking at the camera in a controversial manner. Of course, all four cameras were used - one more was placed on the stage and statically worked similar to the steadicam, the other two placed in the audience showed broad plans in those situations when the steadicam was invisible. Of course, only the visions were used for this recording, synchronizing it to recordings from the previous two days.

After the photo shoot, I had extensive material to my disposal in which each scene was filmed

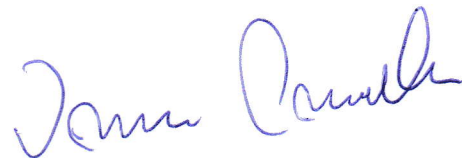
from at least 7 points of view - a maximum of 11. Of course, this is not a unique way of recording (except using steadicam) theater performances. However, it must be pointed out that it works in musical spectacles, or very formalized ones.

The way I traveled as the sound engineer from the first show recorded with two cameras (*Choroba młodości*) to one of the last (*Do DNA*) perfectly showed the technological, artistic and aesthetic evolution that the television theater has experienced over the last thirty years. The question is what will the future be like?

I'm a pessimist. I think that the formula of performances prepared especially for TV registration is running out. The economic factor is not without significance, but Television Theater is not looking for a new language, but is trying hard to imitate film. It is doomed to fail in these attempts. What then does the future hold? Probably it will focus on transfers, more or less technologically and formally complicated.

And maybe it's good - because there are no new artistic ideas and it gives financial conditions to create new productions, let it record what is best in Polish theater. In the end, thanks to the transfers, the works of the greatest directors were saved forever: Swinarski ... Grzegorzewski ... Jarocki ... Kantor

And to end with Beckett and not to be the pride of the wizard of beings, to which I compared the camera operator's work at the beginning of the considerations, yet another quote: *Figment dawn dispeller of figments and the other called dusk*. Samuel Beckett, *Lessness*.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Janusz Paweł". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.