

SUMMARY

The subject of this dissertation is an analysis of character work in preparing the role of the matchmaker Leibeck in Hanoach Levin's play *Jakiś i Pupcze*, directed by Małgorzata Bogajewska at the Bagatela Theatre, named after Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński in Kraków.

Paraphrasing the title of Piotr Kruszczyński's review of the play *Krum* (directed by Krzysztof Warlikowski), I knew immediately: "Leibeck is me." Although there is an unspoken rule in acting to avoid roles that feel "too close" to one's personal life, I had no hesitation in accepting the part of the matchmaker. The fact that Leibeck shares similarities with my own life circumstances made the task even more challenging. (OR: The fact that Leibeck's situation shared similarities with my own and that his life circumstances at the time resonated with mine only made the task more difficult.) This tragicomic character seemed filled with questions and doubts that began to surface within me, and with which I had to grapple. Of particular significance to me was the correlation between Leibeck and my own experiences of constant travel, frequent relocations, and shifting relationships. Unfortunately, in Levin's work (and in Bogajewska's staging, symbolized by tracks), all paths lead right back to where they began. No matter the direction we take, we ultimately return to the same place, to familiar ground. Leibeck's life is a perpetual pilgrimage through the same stations of the cross. Levin's characters are reminiscent of Chekhov's heroes, dreaming of a mythical "elsewhere" and convinced that life would unfold differently in another place. This illusion sustains them—or, in Leibeck's case, he clings to this illusion for survival. (OR: This illusion keeps them alive—or, in the matchmaker's case, he clings to it for survival.) Yet there comes a time for acceptance and reconciliation, for embracing the terms life offers. I, too, had to reevaluate my goals, dreams, and achievements to discern where true life lies and what it truly means.

Leibeck is the driving force of the entire play and the catalyst for the events experienced by the other characters. As the bride's dying father, Chrupcze, declares in front of everyone: "Ah, Leibeck! Everything begins and ends with Leibeck." The play opens with a scene in which the matchmaker sits in a corner of the stage with his "portable world" of suitcases and blankets, watching the audience enter. He waits for another chance, another opportunity—or perhaps he simply opens a story before the audience about unfulfilled and unhappy souls, the residents of Flaczki, Paluszki, and Palacynki—about ourselves. Leibeck also closes Levin's drama with a monologue that dispels any illusion about the possibility of changing one's fate or reversing one's perspective.

I have divided this dissertation into two parts: theory and practice. In the first part, I explore the objective and subjective influences on Hanoach Levin's work. No work of art is created in isolation; analyzing and understanding the factors that shaped an artist's development allows us to uncover hidden meanings, grasp the full message, and understand the artist's true intentions. A significant portion of this dissertation is devoted to examining and presenting the contexts that greatly influenced Levin's sensibility, the themes of his works, and the world he depicted (?). The convergence of numerous events and circumstances in his life led the author of *Jakiś i Pupcze* to dedicate himself to literature and theatre. Various events and circumstances in Levin's life, including the rebirth and formation of the state of Israel, the

emergence of new philosophical and literary movements, ongoing conflict, his father's death, social revolution, the cultural diversity of Tel Aviv, and the theatrical interests of his brother, all had a profound impact on his life and work. An awareness of these contexts allows the actor to critically analyze the text, find a personal interpretive approach, and deepen their intellectual engagement with the work.

In the second part, I compare thematic similarities and connections with other roles I have encountered in my stage work and present insights and reflections on preparing the role of the matchmaker Leibech. These observations are presented as extensive commentaries on individual scenes, included in the attached play text. The theatrical script is the primary literary material with which an actor works, and it is my practice to record all notes, observations, and reflections that arise during the creative process. For this dissertation, I have expanded and elaborated on these personal "stage directions." This unique appendix documents the personal associations, observations, and correspondences I uncovered within Levin's drama and in the character of Leibech as they relate to both my professional and personal life. This dissertation aims to document the process of developing the role and to reflect on the phenomenon of investing one's resources in the creative act of building a character whose fate will not leave audiences indifferent.