Theatre

DramAcum – THE NEW WAVE OF ROMANIAN CONTEMPORARY DRAMATURGY

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Abstract*: During the nineties, a new theatrical trend developed. It was called New European Drama or New Writing. It was represented by authors such as the British Sarah Kane, Mark Ravenhill or the German playwright Marius von Mayernburg. The classical theatre will never be able to return to itself, unless giving the spectator the utopian sense of life that only a staged play could perform, not from a delusive perspective, but from a real and personalized perspective, giving a certain meaning to reality. Being against the conservatory type, the authors put an end to all the theatrical conventions. They considered that it had to come to a point of changing the old patterns, of introducing new themes, new structures, new means of performing in the attempt of seducing and shocking the audience. Most of the dramatic texts focus on the plots about hard human existence such as racism, madness, suicide, sexuality, drug addiction and any type of abuse. The language is vulgar and slangy. All the dramatic texts when performed on stage invade the personal space of the people watching, who is now considered one of the characters. It is not only the dramatic text that is taken into consideration, but the performance itself. The new type of theatre developed in Russia, Poland and Romania, giving specific projects (Teatr.doc, The Drama Laboratory and DramAcum). All were influenced by the verbatim dramatic style performed in theatres under the slogan of the in-yer-face. The study intends to explore the importance of the Romanian theatrical project – DramAcum, as a new type of theatre and dramaturgy.*

Key words*: Contemporary dramaturgy**; In-yer-face; Verbatim**; Romanian dramaturgy; DramAcum project*

The Shock of the New Theatre

Regarded as a theatre of violence and cruelty, the new contemporary dramaturgy that influenced the manner of writing, staging and performing in many European countries, had its beginnings in 1995 with Sarah Kane's[17]

[17] The author of only five plays, *Blasted* – Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, January 1995, *Phaedra's Love* – Gate Theatre, May 1996; *Cleansed* – Royal Court Theatre Downstairs,

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play *Blasted* at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs in London. It was followed by Mark Ravenhill's[18] *Shopping and Fucking* in 1966 and Marius von Mayenburg's[19] *Fireface* in 2000. Started during the nineties, this new theatrical current, known as *New European Drama* or *New Writing*, rejected all the old patterns of drama writing and performing and introduced new ways of theatrical expression with the purpose of continuously readjusting the image of reality according either to the new values or to the lack of them. The message of this cruel theatre, as Antonin Artaud characterized it in his manifesto, was revealed on stage and it was meant to shock the audience not only through words but also through the settings and the acts of performing (Artaud 2018: 99). Most of the plays belonging to the new current generated certain reactions from the audience as well as from the critics mainly because such a discourse developed the uncomfortable tendency of invading the individual space. Based on themes such as madness, suicide, aggression, any type of abuse, drug addiction and sexuality, the new texts modelled the dramatic structures adapting them to the new manner of staging, more provocative for the audience. Opposed to the previous manner of playwriting, in which case the text was considered a completed work, this time, the text is more a work in progress, whose development never ends. The language of the plays became an instrument of dynamic expression revealed on stage through voice intonation, all types of sounds, cries, gestures, movements, positions, reactions, all under specific light shades. In other words, the aim of the new type of theatre was to create the metaphysics of the word, gesture and expression, but not by using metaphysical ideas or plots but by turning the theatre into a means of revealing true illusions. Thus this new theatre represented a possibility for dealing not only with all the aspects of the descriptive and objective external world but also with all the aspects of the internal world. The intention of these playwrights was to represent the

April 1998; *Crave* – Traverse Theatre, August 1998; *4.48 Psychosis* – Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, June 2000; Sarah Kane became famous because of her controversial writings influenced by Beckett and Büchner and characterized by a naturalistic approach of themes such as loneliness, power, mental alienation and love.

[18] Considered as a very important figure of the British contemporary dramaturgy, Mark Ravenhill reveals the image of a society completely distorted by economic values in plays such as *Shopping and Fucking* – Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, September 1996; *Faust is Dead* – Actors' Touring Company, April 1997; *Handbag* – Actors' Touring Company, September 1998; *Some Explicit Polaroids* – Out of Joint, September 1999.

[19] Marius von Mayenburg may be regarded as the representative of a sacrificed generation that does not how to deal with reality as illustrated in plays such as *Fireface* – Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, May 2000; *Sugar* – Jerwood Theatre Upstairs, December 2001; *The Ugly One* – Jerwood Theatre Downstairs, June 2008; *The Stone* – Jerwood Theatre Downstairs, February 2009.

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contemporary society as it is without any improvements, determining the people watching the show also to face reality.[20]

According to Aleks Sierz, the new wave of dramaturgy was impossible to be ignored since its message was so powerful that took the audience by the scruff and shook it until it got it (Sierz 2001: 12). Named *in-yer-face*, this unconventional kind of theatre[21] did not allow the audience to sit back and contemplate in detachment but took it on an emotional journey. More experimental than speculative and taping into more primitive feelings and smashing taboos, it forced the audience to react because it was no more enough for the theatre to be a vital necessity for playwrights and actors but also for audience itself (Brook 1997: 118-120). Staging private and intimate situations may lead to a strong emotional charge that could become more unsettling than the same experience in real life. Such a play may be regarded as provocative because its content was usually expressed in blatant or confrontational language or stage images but, at the same time, because of its form[22]. Content and form became able to exhibit vulgar language, provocative situations and specific typology of characters[23] in order to change theatrical sensibility.

The new kind of playwriting was called *verbatim* mainly characterized by its specific elements: aggressive language, violent scenes and social plots. The first play based on this new manner of writing was Caryl Churchill's *Serious Money*[24], staged at Royal Court Theatre in 1987. Before this moment, the method was used only for documentation, as in the case of Maxim Gorky's *The Lower Depths* for which Stanislavsky interviewed many people

[20] Many times, the plots of the plays were inspired or even taken from TV or radio news.

[21] Aleks Sierz makes a distinction between the *hot* and *cool versions* of *in-yer-face* theatre. The *hot versions* are performed in small studio theatres and use the aesthetics of extremism: explicit actions, heighted emotions, blatant language with the intention to make the experience unforgettable. The *cooler versions* use several distancing devices among whom a larger audience, a more naturalistic style and a more traditional structure with the intention to mediate the disturbing power of extreme emotions generated by the theatrical performance. (Sierz 2001: 13)

[22] The Elizabethan stage was more often used instead of the Italian one mainly because all the boundaries between the conventional space and audience were banished. Now, by placing the audience on stage or by setting the scenes in unconventional spaces, the performing space joined the space of reception.

[23] As opposed to the 90s when the feminine character was mostly employed as a central figure, after 2000 the male character was more often used; but this figure was not similar to Ibsen's, Pirandello's or Chekov's characters, it was more of a character facing all sorts of crises. The new typology favoured characters such as impotent fathers, abusive husbands or puzzled teenagers.

[24] The plot of the play was inspired by the parliamentary elections and the crisis of the stock exchange in London. Moreover, the text was written using the interviews taken by the author to real persons.

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of the streets in order to catch the real meaning of the play; or Peter Weiss' *The Investigation,* a play that used the records of the war trials between 1963 and 1965, in Frankfurt as well as the Auschwitz survivors' testimonies. The list of examples may continue with Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues* for which the author interviewed more than two hundred women on the topic of woman's social discrimination, which later generated V-Day, the international movement against abuse. The British version of this American contemporary play was Stephen Daldry's experimental performance *Body Talk*, staged at the Royal Court Theatre for which the director interviewed men between twenty and forty year-old describing different parts of their body.

Using the same manner of documentation, the new playwrights no longer adapt nor brush up the interviews. Furthermore, they reversed the process of writing: instead of starting with the theme or, at least, the idea of the future text, now they find a particular topic that may correspond to the interviews already taken. In April the 15th 2000, during a conference in Moscow, Stephen Daldry delivered an incipient theory of the method stating that one of the purposes of the documentation process is to lead the playwright to the theme, plot, characters and dramatic structure. A bit later, Royal Court Theatre together with British Council started to organize many international meetings, conferences and master-classes with the topic of the new manner of playwriting, promoting, at the same time, the new authors. This fact had a great impact generating the foundation of many experimental groups gathering directors, actors and writers that chose the *verbatim* manner for their creative process. Similar to *Dogma-95*[25], these theatrical movements proposed a manifesto for their art whose main purpose was to reflect a dynamic society exactly as it is. The three major means of their artistic expression were *docu-drama*[26], *life game* and *interview on stage.*

Based on interviews, *docu-drama* represents an entire process of collecting information about real, ordinary people among whom the most interesting ones were the baggers, the soldiers, the disabled veterans, the possible suicides, the convicts, all the dregs of society and then staging these true stories sharing all the characteristic features that might be needed. Most of times, the actors tend to improvise or to improve the story with facts from their real life. Things could be pushed even further with *life game* as a means

[25] *Dogma-95* represents an avant-garde current of the European cinematography influenced mainly by the New French Wave. It was founded in 1995 by the Danish directors Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg.

[26] The term *docu-drama* comes from the cinematographic field where it defines a cinematic hybrid, a mixture between documentary and fiction, a category officially introduced in 1942 when José Leitão de Barros's film *Ala-Arriba!* was released. The first Romanian movie very close to this type of cinematic narration was Octav Minar's *Eminescu, Veronica, Creangă*.

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that brings on stage true stories of characters that are embodied by actors who improvise having no written script at all. The whole performance develops a draft containing only few specific directions more for individualizing the characters than for plot or conflicts. Regarded as a theatrical form of *happening*, the *interview on stage* gives the actors the possibility to embody real persons and to stick to their true story and, at the same time, to take into account the audience's points of view that become new perspectives of conflict development.

These means of theatrical expression introduced a new approach that placed the dramatic discourse reception in the position of a constitutive part of the whole process of artistic creation. Although the rejection of any theatrical conventions and the preference for social topics that facilitate those true stories to be brought on stage, making the delimitation between fiction and reality more difficult to be distinguished, are the facts to be imputed to this new manner of playwriting as well as of directing and performing, *verbatim* turned to be essential for emphasizing particularly the moral intention of the new dramaturgy.[27]

The New Wave of Theatrical Projects

Exceeding the border of the United Kingdom, *in-yer-face*, the new type of theatre, influenced lots of other European theatrical movements mostly those developed in Russia, Poland and Romania. Thus, in December 2000, in Moscow the first festival of documentary theatre took place and it was later developed into a new project called *teatr.doc*. The new wave of contemporary Russian dramaturgy introduced playwrights such as Ivan Viripaev, Vladimir Zabaluev, Iuri Klavdiev, Aleksandr Rodionov, Olga Mihailova, Elena Isaeva, Alexei Zenzinov and Maksim Kurochkin. The most specific features of the Russian new dramaturgy correspond to the new aesthetic norms stating the *in-yer-face* naturalism, the vulgar language and the topics dealing with physical and psychological aggression, any kind of abuse and violence. In this respect, the Russian version of the new theatre proposed the one act play based mainly on dialogues and less on a narrative development of the plot that could be staged without any directing interventions except the basic ones. Most of the Russian projects complied with *docu-drama* method for plays such as Galina Sinkina's *Crimes with Passion*, inspired by the interviews taken to women imprisoned for murder or Iuri Klavdiev's *The Transpolar Truth* about HIV patients or Ivan Viripaev's *Dreams* that pointed out the problem of drug addiction. Almost in a similar manner, in Poland, the most important project of contemporary playwriting

[27] On the other hand, a traditional approach to the same true stories might turn them into classical representations highlighting mainly the aesthetic aspect of the performance and thus losing the authenticity.

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was *Laboratorium Dramatu* (Drama Laboratory). Gathered round Tadeusz Slobodzianek, the young actors, directors and playwrights, among whom there were Tomasz Kaczmarek, Tomasz Man, Magda Fertacz, Pawel Jurek, Robert Boleso and Joanna Owsianko founded the neorealist dramatic current. Rejecting any theatrical convention, their texts use a colloquial language and develop topics regarding the new capitalist system and its social effects: unemployment, immigration or distrust. These plays aim to present the Polish society in a critical manner as in Przemyslaw Wojcieszek's *Made in Poland* and *Whatever It Happens, I love you* or Pawel Sala's *The Bang Band* or Robert Bolesto's *147 Days*. In 2002 Pawel Demirski set up another theatrical project called *The Rapid Urban Theatre* which introduced themes such as the Iraq war or the problem of Neo-Nazism. Besides the neorealist current, embodied by the aforementioned projects, the contemporary Polish dramaturgy proposed *TR/PL* as a project highly influenced by the contemporary German Theatre represented by Christoph Marthaler, Heine Muller and Franz Castorf and by Boguslaw Schaeffer's theatre. Most of the plays written by Michal Bajer, Marek Kochan or Dorota Maslowska were meant more for reading than for staging. It is the case of Michal Bajer's *War Zone* that focuses on the family relationships as war strategies or Dorota Maslowska's *Two Poor Romanians Who Speak Polish* about two Polish who travel around pretending to be Romanian baggers.

The same tendency involving the playwright into the theatrical production as well as the necessity of new theatrical projects was also identified in Romania, during the period between 2002 and 2006. The *verbatim* manner of playwriting generated not only *DramAcum*[28] *Project* but also *Tanga Project*[29] and *The Offensive of Generosity Project*[30]. All these three projects introduced new theatrical experiences by changing the perspective regarding the relationship between the author of the play and the author of the theatrical performance. This fact facilitated the conceptual and

[28] The name of the project is an acronym for *dramaturgie – acum – cum / dramaturgy – now – how*, having the purpose of highlighting the topics either inspired or even taken as such from reality and the manner of creating the dramatic text. .

[29] Different from *DramAcum Project*, *Tanga Project* intends to develop a new manner of performing instead of playwriting by introducing the *game theatre* based on virtual settings as in Bogdan Georgescu's *XXX Cartoons* or very short plays of only ten minutes as Vera Ion's *Red Bull*. Emphasizing more the *performative* aspect of theatre as autonomous art, *Tanga Project* was also involved in performances such as Ioana Păun's and David Schwartz's *Let's Food!* At the same time, *Tanga Project* denied the necessity of a theoretical basis and used its own means to develop and promote its theatrical productions while *DramAcum* defined itself as a theatrical alternative, similar to the other ones. (Popovici 2008: 208)

[30] Under the slogan *Build Your Community! The Offensive of Generosity Project* was initiated by *Tanga Project* in 2007. It developed on stage real events and social experiences documented in Rahova-Uranus district in Bucharest.

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structural transfer of the play from the literary field to the field of theatre as performing art. The new kind of playwriting was adjusted in order to correspond not only to the literary-dramatic strategies but also to the theatrical ones for turning the act of performing into reality. All these plays abandoned the old patterns concerning the unity of time, place and plot development as well as the cause-effect logic offering instead a direct and individual intrusion of the actors into the process of theatrical construction of reality. In doing so, the theatrical performance intended to reveal its main conflicts which thus exceeded the limits of the stage and entered the social field. Moreover, the play may function as an open discourse inviting the audience to participate in the act of performing as an equal partner. Reality was brought on stage using performativity as a necessary condition of this new kind on theatre.

As a theatrical project, *DramAcum* was the first and the only artistic movement[31] that neither was included nor depended on any public institution. Its aim was to develop and promote the local playwriting. The founders of the project were initially Andrea Vălean, Gianina Cărbunariu, Alexandru Berceanu and Radu Apostol, followed by Vlad Massaci, Sorin Militaru, Adriana Zaharia and Ana Mărgineanu and later Vera Ion, Ștefan Peca and Bogdan Georgescu joined the same project, all being gathered by the professor Nicolae Mandea. The first event was a play contest[32] having the slogan: *Ai o idee? Ți-o facem! / Got an idea? We'll make it!* It was followed by a second edition of the contest[33] with another slogan: *Trece(-)ți granița! / Pass the border!* Besides the play contest, which gathered six editions, the project extended its activity by becoming involved in the process of translation for lots of important contemporary plays and by organising workshops of creative writing or master-classes and conferences on topics such as new theatrical forms and concepts or documentary theatre. Most of the representatives also started to write and direct their own texts. The first one was Geanina Cărbunariu who wrote and directed *Stop the Tempo*[34] or *madybaby.edu* followed by all her other plays. The same thing also did Ștefan Peca for his plays *Showdown* or *New York (Fuckin' City).* For all these authors the play was more a work in progress and less a completed work.

[31] Before *DramAcum,* there were few previous attempts to place under the spotlight the Romanian contemporary dramaturgy such as *Dramafest*, organized by Alina Nelega-Cadariu in Târgu Mureș, but none of these lasted too long.

[32] The winner of the contest was Ștefan Peca's *Punami*, a play that unfortunately was never staged.

[33] This time, one of the nominated plays, Gabriel Pintilei's *Elevator*, directed by Adriana Zaharia was staged.

[34] The play was a huge success and its nominalization at Wiesbaden New Playwriting Biennial in 2004 represented the opportunity for an international career.

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Revising the play led to the possibility of a continuous process of re-writing and re-adjusting the text according to the other dramatic or theatrical perspectives provided by the actors, the stage designer or the audience. This sort of theatre proved to be a theatre of contemporary society full of real characters telling their true stories that reflect the most important social concerns and problems. Staging a social conflict in a live performance, opposed to any theatrical *frozen moment*, may be interpreted as an open access to *performativity* for all the instances involved in such a process, from the playwright to the audience (Popovici 2008: 50). The concept of *performativity* could be regarded as a dramatic dimension of the text that is not necessary to be also identified on stage. Needless to mention that, while theatrical dimension represents an open access for the actor to the fictional story which, in its turn, belongs to a meaningful reality, *performativity* may be translated as the search for a trustful sense to be assumed by both the actor and the audience. It is the *performative act* that shades light upon reality on stage. In other words, it is expected for the theatrical performance neither to describe nor to speak about the world but to rebuild it for the moment when the play is on stage.

***DramAcum* – Made in Romania**

Generally speaking, the verb *to perform* denotes the ability to execute an action. Transposed into artistic fields, it refers not only to the very act of playing an instrument, singing and dancing but also to the possibility of acting in a play. When these actions are realized in a theatrical performance, they are presented in their pluri-medial dimensions sustained by the spatial proximity between performance and audience (McAuley 1998: 10-12). In terms of playwriting, the same proximity allows the transfer of the documentary discourse, based on real characters and their true stories, into a fictional one, having the main aim of reflecting reality as it is but in a more intensive manner. The performed reality is exaggerated on purpose in order to make the public much more aware of it. The relationship between performance and common reality is employed by language itself. As the major means of theatrical expression, language[35] becomes capable to rebuild on stage real situations and true events. As Peter Brook stated, a word does not start as a word, but it is an end product which first began as an impulse, stimulated by attitude and behaviour which have dictated the need for that particular expression. Such a process starts inside the playwright and repeats itself inside the actor, both being conscious of the words. Brook, 1996: 12)

[35] According to Austin, words are not purely reflective, and linguistic acts do not simply reflect a world but actually has the power to make a world. In other words, each word may represent a bond to reality. (Austin 1975: 10)

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The connection between audience and actors is no longer based on pre-established conventions and codes but presupposes a direct intervention into reality. Actors do not represent characters anymore; instead they present themselves as real characters. Their performance rejects the unity of character as well as the cause-effect logic. Their acts build another true reality.[36] Transferred on stage such a reality needs to become *performative*. Building a play could be translated by experiencing reality in a *performative* manner and this represented the very beginning of *DramAcum Project* as a theatrical means of developing and promoting the Romanian contemporary playwriting. For these playwrights the dramatic text is no longer a matter of literary theory but of performing. Their texts seem aggressive but based on a true Romanian reality, revealing a *temporary contemporary*[37] world (Popovici 2008: 155). None of the plays was written, staged and promoted for posterity but for the direct influence upon the audience in search for intense theatrical experiences. Using only few instruments, these authors' intention was to generate a concise essentialism of theatre as performing art, building up a new theatricalism. Practicing a politics against the system[38], these playwrights tried to make their voices heard and, most important, distinguished from the linguistic and thematic limited background. Opposed to the classical theatre of entertainment that, so far, proved not to be interested in the true aspects of real life, the new type of theatre could generally be characterized by its unrestrained language full of poetry as well as by an anarchist aspect in perfect resonance with the contemporary society described as dark and artificial. What is staged is not fiction, but reality itself.

In order to build up a new dramaturgy, *DramAcum* organized in 2004 two main workshops of creative writing: the first one at Act Theatre in April and the second one at Colibița in August. Following Roberta Levitow's method[39], the young playwrights produced several short plays later developed in stage productions. Among all these texts, there are few that need to be mentioned: Carmen Vioreanu's *Anathema* (four boys and a mute girl meet in an abandoned building in order to perform so called satanic rituals), Vera

[36] A good example of such a case in Romanian contemporary theatre is Ana Mărgineanu's play *89.89... Hot after '89*, staged in 2004, when the actress Coca Bloos introduced herself to the audience using her own name.

[37] Imported from visual arts, the concept of *temporary contemporary* turns the notion of contemporary into a contextually more relative one. In other words, being contemporary is only for a limited period of time.

[38] At that time, the only social play staged by a Romanian director in a public theatrical institution was *Home* at Ion CreangăTheatre.

[39] The basic principles of Levitow's method refer to the importance of dialogue and reality. Since theatre means a staged story, the playwright should be able to transpose any moral value into a life story and any real instance into a character. From this point of view, any play could represent the opportunity for a real life story to become a narrative.

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Ion's *Vitamins* (all the members of a family live in their fantasies), Gabriel Pintilei's *Elevator* (a boy and a girl have their first sexual experience in an abandoned elevator which, in the end, becomes their grave), Bogdan Gerogescu's *D.W.*[40] (a boy tries to escape his parents' violence into a virtual dream world), Nicoleta Esinescu's *Fuck you, Eu.ro.pa!* (a girl from Moldova, because of her identity crisis, turns against her own country). In October 2004, these plays became staged reading performances at Foarte Mic Theatre in Bucharest and, a bit later, staged in Romania and abroad.

Either it is an existential drama or an absurd comedy or even a poetic monodrama, the theatrical experiment is always related to specific aspects that reshape the manner of playwriting such as the language resetting, the very short scenes, a dynamic development of the plot, real life stories presented from the teenagers' perspectives. All the plays under *DramAcum brand* relate stories of average people apparently having no important significance but their message is the most powerful one as in most cases. In fact, most of these plays may sum up a general condition of the teenagers plunged into a cruel reality, as in Geanina Cărbunariu's *Stop the Tempo*[41], or refer to small and detailed fragments depicted from the very same reality, as in Maria Manolescu's *Sado-Maso Blues Bar*[42].

In the former case, the story relates about three lonely people who meet one another in a pub: Maria has three jobs in order to be capable to pay her parents' needs as persons who enjoy to buy things all the time, Rolnado wants to be cool and a DJ in order to impress girls and Paula who is a copywriter sick of her own life. They spend the night together but, in fact, they tend to isolate themselves in false identities. Each of them speaks about himself or herself without listening to the others, as in the following fragment.

> "Paula: Shit.
> Rolando: If I remember well, I haven't received a phone call for two weeks.
> Paula: Shit.

[40] The title is an acronym of *Dream World*, a computer game.

[41] The play was first staged and directed by its author at LUNI Theatre of Green Hours in Bucharest, in 2003 and later at Focus Theatre in Dublin, in 2005. The same play, directed by Christian Benedetti, was staged at Theatre Studio d'Alfortville in Paris, in 2005. In 2006 under Wolf E. Rahlfs's direction it was staged at Die Badische Landesbuehne Bruchsal and two years later it was directed by Paolo Correira at Theatre National de Nice. During the same year, the play was also directed by Katrin Hiller at Volkstheater in Vienna and it was staged at Yorick Theatre in Târgul Mureș too.

[42] The staged performance of this play was directed by Geanina Cărbunariu at Foarte Mic Theatre, in 2007.

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Maria: This job business really fucked me up. I still don't want to believe, but I have three jobs. Yes. And I am so tired that I cannot sleep at night.

Paula: Shit.

Rolando: I don't like to use important words... in fact I never use such words... as... I don't know... well... I don't remember... But, at that time, I was really...

Maria: Three jobs and the hope that someday I would have a place of my own. A reasonable studio... A reasonable car... A reasonable man... A reasonable kid... A reasonable dog... A reasonable shit...

Rolando: No important words... no... n...

Maria: I am 27 year old and I have three jobs. My faculty colleagues are terrible jealous of me. The only thing that I haven't experienced too often is sex. But this is my very little secret.

Paula: Shit, that's it." (Cărbunariu 2003).

The latter case is made of small flash-backs inserted into other small scenes that compose the present life of two teenagers. Two friends, an unsuccessful actor (Sa) and a former convict (Ma), plan to open the first sado-maso bar in Bucharest not only to gain some money but also to revenge on those who have hurt them. As expected, things do not follow the characters' intention so they have to change the business plan several times. The play has to rearrange the temporal line of the fragmented story, shifting from one direction to another. Each moment of the story stands for a conjunction of at least two possible narrative lines. The following fragment deals with the characters' relationship with their mutual friend, Pilă, at a certain moment of the story, but it also contains a second possible development concerning the characters' relationship with the mother of one of them.

"MA: Sa!

SA: Yes?

MA: I go now.

SA: What do you mean? Where?

MA: Home, to my mother.

SA: What about the bar? What about Pilă?

MA: Pilă isn't coming anymore.

SA: I don't believe you!

MA: I spoke to him right now.

SA: You told him not to come? You don't trust me, right? You think I'm not ok.

MA: You're ok. He just doesn't come anymore. I think we asked too much money.

SA: Ask for less!

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MA: I don't think he has any. He just got out. Sa, imagine this!

SA: You had money when you got out. He had money. I heard you when he told you he has. You're lying to me. I think you don't believe in me.

MA: Yes, I do,

SA: Tell him... tell him I'm gonna do it for free, like a special offer. First night is for free. I just want an opportunity to prove how good I am; just a small chance.

MA: Tomorrow, ok? Now I have to go.

SA: Don't leave me. […] Please, Ma! I'll do anything.

MA: No. My mom is waiting for me.

SA: Bring her too. I'll make her happy. I can. I already made her happy once."[43] (Manolescu 2007).

Being written by young authors, these plays are destined for young people. The major topics belong to their area of interests while the staged theatrical performances resemble very much the reality they live in. Most of the teenagers' interests are to be found in the staged stories. Besides the topics concerning family conflicts, generation gap problems or social matters, these texts also shed light on different aspects of young people's identity crises. On one hand it is questioned the possibility of adapting to a totally new reality as in Geanina Cărbunariu's *madybaby.edu* or the impossibility to choose what nationality to belong to as Ștefan Peca's *New York (Fuckin' City)* and, on the other hand, the dilemma of having no identity at all as in Nicoleta Esinescu's *Fuck you, Eu.ro.pa!* [44]

The third edition of *DramAcum* contest selected the following texts: Gabriel Pintilei's *Blifat*, Maria Silvia Pintea's *Fragile/Do not Drop*, Ioana Blănaru's *In Two*, Maria Manolescu's *With a Little Help of My Friends*, Laurențiu Bănescu's *Karmacuantic*, Cristian Panaite's *Decomposed Bodies* and Mihaela Michailov's *I'm Afraid*. This time things were a bit changed since the new type of playwriting produced so many well-written texts that overwhelmed the directors. Their purpose was to mark the existence of the new wave of Romanian dramaturgy that has become representative for both their generation and their culture. Besides the interest for intergeneration

[43] The fragment was translated by its author.

[44] In her monologue, the character of Esinescu's play has to face the situation of living in a country which does not exist. Being a Moldovan, she thinks that enjoying shopping facilities and advertisements as well as TV commercials may turn Chișinău into a European city. In the end she realizes that Europe is not an enormous supermarket with anything someone could possibly want and words like privatization, federalization, globalization, standardizing, popularizing, devaluing or modernization lack their meaning. Oscillating between being a Moldovan or a European, she finds herself lost in such an impossible dilemma and asks her father what her country has done for her and how could she return the favour. (Esinescu: 2006)

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conflicts or contemporary society's hypocrisies and anxieties, the playwrights intended to put under the spotlight their own country. Staging Romania represented a theatrical ambition but proved to be a difficult task and only Geanina Cărbunariu continued to deal with such a topic. Nevertheless, all these plays turned into staged reading performances and some of them were staged in different important theatres.

Till 2006, the other *DramAcum* editions followed the same pattern, discovering new important young authors and promoting them. At present, most of the events under this brand changed the perspective from mainly theatrical to social and interdisciplinary and this fact kept the project still visible. What remained after *DramAcum* theatrical experiments was the fact that all of the playwrights were involved in theatrical productions based on their texts and thus emphasizing the creative relationship between the author and the director, trying and sometimes succeeding in changing the position of the playwright inside a theatre. Moreover, these authors became known because of their writings and, in time, developed their own theatrical projects.[45]

Conclusion

According to Ereinov, the main important purpose of theatre is to reject any tendency to imitate reality (Mandea 2006: 109). Being adjusted in order to fulfill such a task the new kind of theatre which implies the new type of dramaturgy focused on finding new means and forms of theatrical expression involving not only the playwright, the actors, the director and the stage designer but also the audience. The new theatre as well as the new dramaturgy introduced the theatrical experiment as the possibility to reconfigure the dramatic settings, topics, conflict development and language. Based on *verbatim* playwriting, initiated by *in-yer-face* theatrical movement, the Romanian projects, mainly *DramAcum*, accomplished most of their goals.[46]

Similar to the Russian and Polish theatrical projects, the Romanian version of the new type of theatre and dramaturgy succeeded in exposing and augmenting the reality of *here* and *now*, as the name of the project, highlighting the importance of the unconventional methods of happening and performance and thus turning the dramatic act from *interpretative* to *performative*. What is specific to *DramAcum* as a theatrical aesthetics is

[45] Besides the aforementioned theatrical projects highly influenced by *DramAcum* – *Tanga Project* and *The Offensive of Generosity Project* – there were other projects that continued *DramAcum* main objectives as *Replika*, developed by Radu Apostol and Mihaela Michailov or Bogdan Georgescu's *Turneu la țară / Touring the Country*.

[46] Although it was considered a very important theatrical project, *DramAcum's i*ntention to change the laws of Romanian theatrical system was never accomplished.

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given by the new main perspective upon the dramatic act as means of social interaction and/or communication based on direct experience of reality as well as on common language and vocabulary. Increasing the importance of the playwright, the new wave of Romanian dramaturgy made its voice heard nationally and internationally and imposed its texts for many theatrical festivals and repertoires.

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