NATIONS, IDENTITIES, AND THEATRES: REFLECTIONS ON THE CONCEPTS OF NATIONAL THEATRE IN EUROPE

ZOLTÁN IMRE

Department of Comparative Literature and Culture, Eötvös Loránd University,
Budapest, Hungary

In my paper I shall investigate the major changes in the concept of the national theatre from the early debates on the Hamburg Theatre in 1767 until the 2005 establishment of the National Theatre of Scotland. The starting assumption is that while in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the notion of the national theatre was regarded as a means for the integration of a nation or even an empire in most Western-European countries, in Eastern-Europe, the debates on and later the realization of the national theatres took place within the context of and against oppressive imperiums. In Eastern Europe, the realization of National Theatre was utilised for representing a unified nation in a virtual way, and its role was to maintain national identity and national culture. In present day Scotland, however, the notion of the national theatre has changed again as the National Theatre is used to represent a diverse and multicultural Scotland.

Keywords: nation, theatre, National Theatre, national identity, Scotland, Hungary

Investigating the formation of a national theatre and its relation to cultural legitimation in her book, *The National Stage,* Loren Kruger correctly pointed out that

> the notion of staging the nation, of representing as well as reflecting the people in the theatre, of constituting or even standing in for an absent or imperfect national identity, emerges in the European Enlightenment and takes concrete shape with the Revolutionary fêtes.[1]

After that general statement, however, Kruger focused merely on a phenomenon she called 'theatrical nationhood' which 'manifested itself fully in the course of the nineteenth century with the rise of mass party politics, "universal" (male) suffrage, and the demand of the people for legitimate representation as protagonist on the political stage'.[2] As a result, she focused her research in time from the 1870s until the 1980s, in space from France to England, and the USA, and in subject 'comparing English, French, and American

advocates of national popular theatre at moments of crisis or critical success'.[3] In France and the USA, she dealt with the realisations of national theatre for those groups without proper representation in the legitimate theatres like the French National Popular Theatre for the 'urban working class',[4] and the Federal Theatre Project (1935–39) for 'the [working class] people across the United States'.[5] As an opposition, in England, she dealt with a case when the representation of the entire nation (or even imperium) was narrowed in the English movement for 'a [British] "National House" for the [mainly English educated] middle class'.[6] Hence, she investigated the late realisations of national theatre in functioning and independent Western states when their imperial context was lost (France and England), and when it was developed (USA).[7]

In other countries of Europe, however, national theatres were established much earlier and with different purposes.[8] Among the first ones, there was the Hamburg theatre in 1766, which was utilized as source of German cultural identity and values, and as an institution expressing the will for uniting the separate small German(-speaking) states finally achieved by Prussia during the course of the later nineteenth century.[9] Due to 'disorganisation, internal disagreement and poor public support',[10] however, it ended in a financial disaster within a year. As T. James Reed pointed out its basic problem, 'the ambition to create or found a German national theatre could not have been achieved at that time in the sense that such a company could not have been representative of a defined nation within a recognized country as Germany was not united until 1872'.[11] Nevertheless, the Hamburg National Theatre was one of the first attempts to regard (the German-speaking) people as nation that can be symbolically represented on stage.

In Austria – following the practice established partly by the French Sun King in the 1680s with the Comédie-Française,[12] and partly by the Monarch of Prussia, Frederick the Great in the 1740s in Berlin,[13] it was also the centralized power which established a national theatre when the Burgtheater was renamed as Hof-und National Theater in 1776. As part of the monarch's reforms, the symbolic functions of the theatre were also utilized by Joseph II, whose aim was not only to establish territorial integrity but also to unite the multicultural territories and multilingual ethnic groups in a centralized, modernized and fully bureaucratized civil state.[14] As a result, the monarch's centralized plan to establish a national theatre in the capital was regarded as a symbolic representation of a unified imperium under the rule of the Austrian Monarchy.

While the notion of national theatre was often regarded as a means for the integration of a (supposedly single and unified) nation as in France, Denmark, Sweden, and Germany; or even an empire as in Austria, Russia and Great Britain; the debates on and later the realisations of national theatre took also place within the context of and against oppressive imperiums like in Poland, Hungary, Romania, Croatia, Norway, Serbia, Ireland, and in some respect Scotland.[15] In

these countries, the establishment of national theatre was regarded as an (often idealistic) expression for political, cultural, and economic independence. The national theatre was to represent the (often unified image of) nation, and to maintain (often a single and fixed) national identity and (often a homogenous and dominant) national culture.[16]

Nation and Theatre as Contested Sites

In the countries of Europe, where the notion of national theatre has appeared, it has been situated alongside the formation and/or re-formation of nationhood and the nation-state.[17] The problem with the nation and its (re)formation, however, derives from the fact, as Benedict Anderson remarked, that 'it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'.[18] A nation forms a real community only in imagination, as only its members can imagine that it can be confined by nature as a sovereign entity. 'The members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.'[19] Nations have to be imagined in particular and selective styles, which achieve tangible and symbolic forms in the traditions, museums, galleries, monuments, ceremonies and other practices by which the images of their communion are constructed. In *The Body of Spirit,* Allucquere Rosanne (Sandy) Stone called those communities *virtual* where the physically separated members are connected through mutual beliefs and practices.[20] As a result, nation can thus be best viewed as an imagined *virtual community*. For the creation, maintenance, self-definition of such a community, it needs to manifest link(s) between the physically separated individuals by representing their common elements and their difference from other peoples and communities. Kruger's concept of 'theatrical nationhood' can thus be absolutely relevant here as the means of representation (i.e., of staging) are essentially theatrical. Hence, the representation of a nation as an *imagined virtual community* is theatrical both on-stage – in the (national) theatre (especially), and off-stage – in the various performative manoeuvres of everyday life (parliamentary debate, strike, reception, dinner, opening ceremony, etc.).[21]

Apart from the inherent representational character of nation as imagined virtual community, Anderson's notion has other advantages. As Jen Harvie has recently argued in her book, *Staging the UK,* Anderson's phrase imagined is resonant in at least two ways. First, it emphasizes that 'people's sense of community is produced through cultural practices that are creative and artistic', and second, his phrase 'conveys the impression that the practice of imagining is largely or entirely volitional'.[22] As a result, national communities are under

constant construction, and their identities are 'culturally produced, dynamic, and (...) inherently troubled'.[23] As national identities are constructed, they can be changed and (re)formed. From here, however, Harvie easily jumps to the conclusion that due to the fact that national identities can be imagined by various people or groups, 'authority is necessarily dispersed from the normal centres of power'.[24] The problem with her formulation is that even today the means and apparatus of representation are not equally accessible to everyone. Therefore, authority might be dispersed, but the normal centres of power still have vital roles and functions in the construction and legitimisation of national identities.

The (re)formation of nation as imagined virtual community is even more complicated as it is often thought to be based on a collective identity supposedly shared by most of its members. Collective identity needs to have (a mutually formed) past. The past, however, does not exist in itself, but as the German cultural historian, Jan Assmann rightly claimed that 'the past comes into being at all, when one gets into contact with it'.[25] The past has to be (re)constructed consciously and (of course) unconsciously through the selective process of remembering and forgetting in a retrospective way. As the nearly forgotten memory researcher, Maurice Halbwachs noted, though it is always the individual who remembers, the past is also constructed collectively and socially by collective memory. Memory is active backwards and forwards, because memory does not only reconstruct the past, but organizes how to experience present and future.[26] As the past cannot be 'eternally' erased (i.e., as if it *never* happened) or 'authentically' reconstructed (i.e., as it *really* happened), it is *re*-constructed and re-ordered again and again *from* and *in* the present by various people and groups. Hence, the past is not a single and fixed entity, but rather the representations of the past are constantly realized constructions that are always utilized *for* the present. The different representations of the otherwise attainable and unrecoverable past serve as legitimation, reinforcement for, and sometimes symbols for the lack of the present, and basis for the future as well. As these representations (are) construct(ed by) different collective identities, different people or groups, and different communities exist even within a (seemingly unified and homogeneous) nation. Hence, nation is a contested site.

Though Assmann mentioned that memory needs locations and has a tendency for localisation,[27] it was the French historian, Pierre Nora who argued that, for remembering the past, a community needs certain means, which he called 'mnemonic sites' *(lieux de mémoire)*.[28] The collective creation of these sites is the result of a process in which the spontaneous and privately lived through individual memories are transformed into and regarded as collective histories of a nation. The sites of historical remembrance can be manifested in various forms as institutions, topographical places, objects, cultural creations, social habits, and even buildings. These symbolic, real or even virtual sites are utilized not only for

remembering, but as sites on and in which cultural identities can be presented and confirmed in the present and projected onto the future by performative manoeuvres referring to various, but not stable symbolic meanings.

Architecture has always been utilized for these purposes. Investigating the various theatre spaces and their meanings, the theatre historian Marvin Carlson argued that 'as "urban ideologies" change, the meaning of the urban environment as a whole changes as well, a change reflected in the "repertory of architectural objects". New normative types (...) replace abandoned types (...), representing not only new urban activities but entire new social organisations.'[29] In the changing repertory of architectural objects, the theatre is one of the most persistent ones in the history of Western culture. Its stability, however, 'does not mean that its urban role is stable, on the contrary, it shows that it has been able to accommodate itself to a variety of urban functions'.[30]

In her article on the Elizabethan Rose Theatre (London) Peggy Phelan clearly demonstrated not only the various urban functions of theatre in the seventeenth and in the twentieth centuries but, excavating the underlying connections between the various political agendas, power systems, and cultural performances at play in and around the 1989 excavation of the theatre, she tried to demonstrate how the past was re-constructed according to present political and cultural needs, claims and fears.[31] This way, she demonstrated that theatre as institution, phenomenon or even building can be well utilized for accommodating a real community as the representation of a virtual one; where collective identities can be tested, formed and manifested; and where the various images and memories of the past can be transformed into the present and even projected to anticipate the future.[32]

Pesti Magyar Színház (Hungarian Theatre of Pest) as a Multifunctional Institution in 1837

In practice, the formation of a nation-state in nineteenth-century Europe, argues Eric J. Hobsbawn, was to be connected to a historically accepted and/or territorially independent country, administrative institutions, an aggressive political practice, a deeply rooted cultural elite, a national literature, and an administrative language.[33] Without an independent country and administrative institutions, people were supposed to supply their legitimisation through cultural practices and semiotized institutions. In the Hungarian context of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, these substitutive institutions and practices were extremely important as Hungary was part of the Habsburg Empire.[34]

By the 1810s the Hungarian language as a possible link among the members of the national community was recognized by the so-called 'neologist' movement,

which was spearheaded by leading Hungarian writers and thinkers who modernized Hungarian from 'above' to express the contemporary ideas of everyday life properly. Language and then the development of national literature functioned as one of the basic providers of the mythical national past and a desired future. As Latin was the main language in administration, German in business, and French in the salons of the aristocracy, the renewal of Hungarian and formation of national literature were also seen as signs of *passive resistance* against the Austrian political oppression and the Austrian, German and French cultural influences.

Apart from modernizing national language and establishing national literature as 'key factors' for national 'survival', cultural and civil institutions were transformed into mnemonic sites. Institutions such as the Academy of Sciences (1825), the National Museum and Library (1808), or even a bridge across the Danube (1842–48), beside their obvious practical, modernising functions, were seen as monuments to express the power and the values of the nation by means of their size, design, ornaments and location. These newly established institutions in Pest-Buda were seen as sites for cultural performances by which Hungarian national prestige and pride, as well as longed-for independence were articulated.

By the last quarter of the eighteenth century, Pest-Buda enjoyed a growing economic significance and it was transformed into one of the administrative centres of the Austrian government. By 1835, its average population was about sixty-seven thousand out of which only almost a fifth were Hungarians. The rest were Germans and those of various Slavic backgrounds.[35] Though Pest-Buda was by that time recognized by contemporary Hungarians as their capital, its legitimate culture and widely-spoken language were Austrian/German. That situation was culturally manifested in the fact that, besides the various German newspapers, in 1812 a new German language theatre (Pesti Német Színház – German Theatre of Pest) was opened in Pest with the capacity of three thousand and five hundred (sic!), while another one had already been operating in Buda since 1789.

In that context, a Hungarian theatre could not function merely as a business venture because of the low number of its would-be spectators. Since its inception, the project of a Hungarian theatre was dependent on politics, especially national politics not only for its legitimisation, but for its financial security as well. In exchange, it was obviously utilized for political purposes. Although not all political implications could be articulated clearly in the debates because of political oppression and censorship, they appeared symbolically both in literature and on the stage, as was clearly expressed in the very name of the new theatre: Pesti Magyar Színház (Hungarian Theatre of Pest).

Apart from its possible (disguised or open) political purposes, the theatre was regarded also as a cultural institution. The renewal of Hungarian was seen as

crucial in terms of everyday life and of national survival, so the theatre was also employed to create, spread and maintain the public usage of national language through playing translated, adapted, and original Hungarian dramas, and later to establish a national repertoire. One of its main proposed functions was to find the national tragedy for articulating the representations of the once famous Hungarian past and project it towards the desired Hungarian independence and dominance over the Monarchy's smaller ethnic groups (Serbs, Croats, Romanians, Slovaks, Slovenes, etc.).

The political and cultural functions were obviously connected to moral and social ones. For the contemporaries, the purpose of the theatre was to establish and represent the characteristics of the 'good' Hungarian citizen, train the audience for the roles it needs to play in a reformed and modernized capitalist society while maintaining their national character and identity. Theatre was also to present the appropriate costumes, habits and behaviours of the day and to propagate the actual political and social views through contemporary Hungarian and foreign dramas.[36] Consequently, as the national theatre was imagined as a multi-functional national institution, and was regarded as a public monument, it was extremely important who builds it, where and when.

Anxieties of Building a Theatre

In her above mentioned article, Peggy Phelan, investigating the connection between architecture and theatre, referred to Denis Hollier, who argued that the invention of architecture was motivated by a desire to forestall and forget death. Hollier pointed out that

> the monument and the pyramid are where they are to cover up a place, to fill in a void: the one left by death. Death must not appear: it must not take place: let tombs cover it up and take its place. [...] One plays dead that death will not come.[37]

From this, Phelan rightly concludes that architecture plays a significant role in the strategy with which one can outlast the temporal decomposition of one's body by displacing its terror to a solid monument, to a tomb or a pyramid for instance. Therefore, besides its political, cultural, social, and moral functions, the construction of a theatre might have implicit ontological functions in face of death. In this sense, a theatre building itself can be seen as a solid monument for the past and of the present. At the same time, it can also be regarded as a site where, remembering the past, 'the survivors [i.e., members of the nation can] create identity for themselves',[38] and where its founders' temporary personalities

can be manifested in stone, transforming them into physical and visible manifestations, and where their temporality can hope to survive.

The concept of theatre as public monument was revitalized by the absolutist European rulers of the Enlightenment because of a correlative concept between the regularized city spaces and orderly society. While theatre was regarded private possession in the medieval and Renaissance concepts of theatre space, their signifying possibilities as a public monument were recognized and their possible cultural and political implications to publicize their founders' fame and name were utilized by the Enlightened absolutist rulers of the European kingdoms in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[39] The first such theatrical monument was the Berlin Opera House of Frederick the Great in 1745. In order to elevate his minor kingdom to international prominence, Frederick rebuilt his capital as a rationalized modern city with great vistas, squares, and public buildings, including a new palace, an academy, and an opera house.[40] Frederick's effort to establish a palace, an academy, and an opera and rearrange a whole city centre can in fact demonstrate that architecture is not only connected to fight against decay and death, but also to express, publicize and visualize power. As Marvin Carlson observed that 'harmoniously constructed districts would call to mind the power of their author, standing out by the degree to which reason, and reason alone, determined their features [order, symmetry, and focus]'.[41] By the end of the eighteenth century, theatre as public monument with its cultural, political meanings was firmly established feature of the new urban design in the newly rebuilt European cities. That movement reached Pest-Buda around 1800, when Viceroy Joseph, the highest public dignitary and the representative of the Emperor in Hungary, established the Királyi Szépítő Bizottság (Royal Architectural Committee) which rearranged the city centre and built the German Theatre of Pest (1808–12).

The cultural, social, moral and political possibilities of theatre were recognized by the Hungarians as early as the 1780s. In 1830, the feudal assembly laid down the basic principles of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and declared the establishment of a national theatre for the promotion of the Hungarian language. In 1831, Pest county formed a Committee for Promoting Hungarian and asked one of the leading reformers, Count István Széchenyi for a detailed plan for a permanent theatre. According to him, as expressed in his book, *Magyar játékszínrül* (On the Hungarian Playhouse, 1832), the theatre should be a national institution, run by a corporation, supported by the feudal assembly, located in the city centre by the Danube and its building should follow a Parisian model.[42] The leaders of Pest county were not entirely satisfied with Széchenyi's plan because they wanted to keep the theatre within the county's control. In August 1835, Pest county started the construction of a temporary building. In October 1835, Széchenyi who had not given up his plan for a feudal-assembly-supported permanent theatre,

received as a gift by the Viceroy the area proposed in his book, while the city of Pest announced a third plan with a third location. By the Viceroy's instruction the city's plan was abandoned and, in February 1836, Pest county also postponed the construction for four weeks in order to leave time for the feudal assembly to authorize a permanent theatre for the nation. That was refused by the Upper House. Thus, in March 1836, the Pest county could continue the construction. After that decision, the county's project received nation-wide moral and later nation-wide financial support, especially after the Emperor dissolved the feudal assembly and persecuted the leaders of the reformist opposition.[43]

The process of the realisation of a national theatre as the Pesti Magyar Színház between 1790 and 1837 expressed the struggle for power among the Hungarians and also a symbolic resistance against the Austrian Monarchy and its representatives in Hungary. Furthermore, it was also surrounded by prejudices against the theatre as an institution. Finally, the Theatre Committee of Pest county built, supported, and controlled it. As a result, the theatre represented the power of the landed gentry (középnemesség), which rose to power in Pest and other counties, and utilized the theatre and its programme to propagate civil reforms and liberal national political views. For these reforms and views, centred on the idea of extending the nation to incorporate the non-nobilities, a theatre could be well utilized, because it was designed to see and to be seen at the same time. At that time, it was the only medium with the capacity to bring together the various strata of society on and off-stage – members of the various classes in terms of occupation, wealth, social status, and gender – and display them in such a way as to be seen and recognized together as a nation. For the Hungarian poet and dramatist, Mihály Vörösmarty, the spectators of the opening night were transformed into a real community, representing a virtual one, a nation: 'The audience (...) was immersed in its clear patriotic feeling (...) and in its silence there were amazement, deep emotions and the dignity of a self-respected nation.'[44]

Therefore, for Vörösmarty, the theatre, especially the auditorium, represented the united body of the desired nation. At the same time, however, it also made visible the social and economic divisions articulated in the separate places, entrances and exits for the different groups within the theatre building.[45] In this respect, for the contemporaries, the establishment of the theatre was seen as a site for struggle over social, political and moral dominance and control, and thus it was formed along the line of power and legitimisation: What representations would be regarded as worthy of display on its stage and which would be hidden? Whose concepts would be officially presented and whose would be excluded? Whose stories and histories would be remembered and whose forgotten? What images of social, political and cultural life would be projected and which would be marginalized? What voices would be heard and which silenced? Who would represent whom and on what basis?

Performing Theatre – Opening Night

In her above mentioned article, Phelan observed also that architecture is implicitly linked to 'theatre, to the art of disguise. Theatre itself is the space in which death is made to play, to be a play.'[46] Besides its political, cultural, social, and moral functions, the construction of a theatre is supposed to have implicit ontological function not only in face of death but of life as well.

On 22 August 1837, the opening performance of the Pesti Magyar Színház played with death and made it to be a (part of the) play. It was an evening of celebration, including Hungarian dances, music, songs and the melodrama *Belizár* (Belisarius, 1828) translated from German.[47] At the very beginning of the festive evening, in a poetic fantasy of the *Prologue – Árpád ébredése* (Árpád's Awakening), Árpád, the Conqueror, the mythological leader and territorial establisher of an independent, imperial Hungarian Kingdom, and of the first Hungarian dynasty – those necessary criteria for national legitimisation, described by Hobsbawn and Assmann –, was awakened on stage by a Ghost for the (real and symbolic) opening of the theatre. Árpád's awakening in the first scene of the *Prologue* set in a graveyard could obviously be interpreted as the awakening of the Hungarian nation by and for the theatre, but Árpád's historical dimensions were also emphasized by the *Prologue*'s intertextuality.

The *Prologue* was written by Mihály Vörösmarty, the author of the Hungarian national epoch, *Zalán futása* (Zalán's Flight 1825). This epoch is concerned also with Árpád and his territorial fights in which finally Árpád wins over Zalán, a Bulgarian prince, and regains the territory of the so-called historical Hungary. Through this intertextual reference, the performance could be seen as the re-creation of the famous Hungarian mythological past on stage; and as the symbolic legitimisation for the contemporary national(ist) claims: the Hungarians were supposed to have an independent national state in the Carpathian Basin, on the basis that it was occupied by Árpád as his legacy from King Attila. As in literature as on stage, Árpád's historical figure was thus connected to the great Hun Kingdom and was supposed to conjure up the images of a mythological past and to serve as the origin for a desired contemporary Hungarian independence.

Apart from recycling the images of the Hungarian mythological past for present national(ist) claims of independence, the performance of the *Prologue* was also utilized to legitimize theatre as a useful institution for spreading language, moral values, social customs and liberal civil reforms. The legitimation of theatre was manifested in the last scene in which an actress, symbolising the theatrical profession, was defended from various ghosts (Poverty, Hunger, Shame, Desire, etc.) by the national hero Árpád. In that scene, at least two interrelated topics are worth of consideration: the theatre as a suspicious

institution, and the identification of the theatrical profession with a female subject.

In his book, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice,* Jonas Barish pointed out that 'at least as far as from Plato's time, theatre has been suspect because it is mimetic (...) – and so it is deceitful, unscrupulous, and hypocritical. It is also ostentatious, exhibitionist, and lacks modesty'.[48] These anti-theatrical prejudices appeared also as the claims against the national theatre in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century. Noblemen and clergies regarded the theatre as an immoral institution, based on manipulation, which stirs audience's emotions, and teaches its subjects how to deceive, while due to identification, they loose their own ability to judge and form an independent opinion.

In their claims, as well as in the *Prologue,* the suspicious character of theatre was often connected to the identification of the theatrical profession with a female subject. As Ruth Padel suggested that the 'idea of femaleness' is intrinsic to Western theatre:

> Character, mask, persona: all those theatrical concepts were façades,
> invented by men using an idea of femaleness, its made-upness. (...)
> Like actors, women are 'made up'. They play a part in order to
> please.[49]

Michael Managan strengthens her view, pointing out that 'theatre and acting are repeatedly associated with those attributes that fall on the feminine side of the ideological binary divide: illusion, display, emotion, the body. By this process theatre becomes culturally encoded as feminine or female: not just, as Padel punningly suggests, because if its association with "make-up" but because it falls on one side of this larger binary divide – the culturally conditioned structure of oppositions, which is itself an instrument of masculine power and control'.[50] In this sense, the scene of the *Prologue* suggested that only the male national hero's approval and power could save the female subject, and through saving her, he could legitimize the theatre as a useful institution and place the theatrical profession among the worthy occupations. The representation of the masculine as an active ruler and the feminine as the tormented and then saved passive subject could also strengthen the contemporary male and female images: the actor playing Árpád was the real husband of the woman who played the actress. As a result, not only theatre (profession), as a useful institution, was created, not only the contemporary representations of masculinity and femininity were saved, but the proper (i.e., patriarchal) relationship within the family was also maintained by the power of Árpád's mythical figure.

In addition to regarding theatre as useful institution and strengthening the gender stereotypes, the ideas of liberal reform politics were also expressed. In the third scene, set on the street in front of the theatre, characters from various social

strata – Old Man, Young Man, Father and his Son, Women – appeared, and then they all entered into the theatre building. That image symbolized partly that the construction of the theatre was the result of national co-operation, excluding of course the oppositional views; and partly that the representation of the nation had shifted. Previously, nation had been thought of exclusively as noblemen (only males). At around the 1840s, however, the liberal reforms intended to extend the concept of nation to include the other strata of society: non-noble middle-classes, peasants, urban workers, and, as supporters and educators of the reform, women. As a result, like Schiller, Vörösmarty also proposed with the *Prologue* that 'the national theatre might in fact call the nation into being'[51] by way of metonymic association of the characters presented on stage with the nation sitting in the auditorium decorated with the colours of the national flag (red, white, and green) as a whole in harmony. The disturbing elements of this representation of the nation was that though due to its conquests, the once great Hungarian Kingdom had always been a multicultural and multiethnic territory (including Slovaks, Slovenes, Serbs, Croats, Romanians, Germans, and Romanis), there was no reference to this ethnic and cultural diversity. From their point of view, the lack of minority characters was in fact seen as a sheer sign of homogenisation, Hungarian dominance and oppression.

Apart from Árpád's mythical figure, the unification of the historical past with the contemporary present was also emphasized in the third and fourth scenes of the *Prologue* by its meta-theatrical visual imagery. For these scenes, the set was a painted back curtain and a door, depicting the perspectivic reconstruction of the actual front of the theatre building. The characters from various social strata entered the theatre building on stage, and after having been saved from the ghosts, the Actress was also escorted by Árpád to the theatre. As a result, they entered symbolically the same auditorium where the contemporary audience was sitting, and then they were watching symbolically the rest of the entire evening together. Therefore, ancient times far away, contemporary lived through a past not so far away, and the present moment in the theatre they were all united. Thus, the *Prologue* intended to re-create a seamless, harmonic, and unbroken history of Hungary.

The mythical past utilized for legitimising the present can be reassuring, but as Assmann argued, it can also draw the attention to the problems of the present situation.[52] In this case, the present is not only reassured, but 'becomes relative in relation to a greater, more beautiful past'.[53] In the second scene of the *Prologue,* the Poet told Árpád what had happened to the Hungarians since his death: he depicted the slow but permanent disintegration of the Hungarian Kingdom, and then the Turkish and the Habsburg occupations. Thus, the difference between the heroic past and the contemporary situation could be seen as a relativisation of that situation and also as an urge to change that situation. That urge was realized on 15

March 1848 when the Hungarian revolution broke out in Pest. Its celebration in the evening performance with the by-then national drama, *Bánk bán* by József Katona, partly shows the important social, cultural and political functions of the National Theatre, and partly extends the notion of the national theatre in the sense Kruger used the term. As after that date, the notion of national theatre has been connected to the 1848 revolution in particular and the independence of Hungary in general.[54]

Consequently, the Hungarian National Theatre was initiated by educators and elites from 'above' as a multi-functional national institution and was realized as a semiotized site with political, cultural, and moral functions, connected to national identity and 'survival'. Later, these functions were consciously preserved, remembered and/or u(tili)sed for national(ist) purposes when the existence of Hungary as an independent state was (felt) threatened, after 1849, 1920 and 1949; and/or she was supposed to redefine her cultural, political, and moral status and her national identity after the Trianon Treaty in 1920, after 1945 and 1989.[55]

Challenges for the Contemporary European Nation-states

Performing (the single) national language, establishing (the authentic) national dramatic literature, maintaining (the genuine characteristics of the) national character, and creating (the solely authorized) national past, national theatres like the Hungarian were often supposed to serve as a means for forming and maintaining a single, fixed, and unified national identity. Apart from national theatres, the national institutions were also supposed to construct ethnically (or culturally, religiously or racially) closed or 'pure' formations, in which one people, one ethnicity, can gather under one political (or cultural) roof. In this sense, the nation-state (or even the imperium) was imagined as a single, unified, and homogeneous entity, based on what Homi K. Bhabha called 'cultural homogeneity or the nation's horizontal space'.[56]

The inherent problem of this concept of the nation-state (or imperium) is that the history of the nation-states has never been of this ethnically (or culturally, religiously or racially) pure kind, neither in Western Europe, nor in Eastern Europe. As Stuart Hall remarked, nation-states 'are without exception ethnically hybrid – the product of conquests, absorptions of one people by another'.[57] Against this hybridity, continued Hall,

> it has been the main function of national cultures (…) to represent what is in fact the ethnic hotch-potch of modern nationality as the primordial unity of 'one people'; and of their invented tradition to project the ruptures and conquests, which are their real history,

> backwards in an apparently seamless and unbroken continuity
> towards pure, mythic time.[58]

Apart from the always present though suppressed hybridity of the modern nation-state, the recent phase of globalisation has also witnessed one of the largest forced and unforced contemporary mass migrations. As a result, the nation-state already hybridized, diaspora-ized, has become inextricably multicultural, and its stabile collective of class, race, gender and nation have been deeply undermined by social and political developments. The nation-state is increasingly stretched by political, economic, ecological and cultural forces pulling power up from above (globalization, multiculturalism, information technology, supranational integration, and international media) and down from below (ethnic, social, racial, cultural, gender, and class/group difference and diversity). 'One result has been a slow, if uneven, erosion of the "centred" nationalism of the Western-European nation-state and the strengthening of both transnational relations and local identities – as it were, simultaneously "above" and "below" the nation state'.[59] As a result, the main challenge facing the European nation states, especially within the borders of the European Union, and their institutions today is how to present the various discourses, views, and perspectives of their diverse communities on national and international levels.

National Theatre of Scotland

Since New Labour's elections in 1997 a paradigm shift has taken place in the UK on political and cultural levels. Politically, the New Labour model has focused on and emphasized the several nations. This remains true for both the overreaching new 'Cool Britannia' or the nations of Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland, who hold greater responsibility for their own home and arts policies and budgets since 1999 when Welsh and Northern Irish assemblies were established and a Scottish parliament was re-established after three hundred years. Culturally, the New Labour model has emphasized art and design as 'creative industries', but the concept contained some of the problems inherent in the commercialisation of the arts. Jen Harvie summarized these problems as

> this model's economic emphasis prioritizes commercial value over
> social value and fashions culture as marketable commodities rather
> than as social acts performed by human agents. It potentially limits
> the right to artistic expression to those who can make it economically
> productive. (...) The term potentially disempowers people by
> transforming them from collective audiences and makers into
> individual and alienated consumers. It celebrates anti-social capi-
> talist commodity fetishism at the expense of social practice.[60]

Nevertheless, the new model might be seen as 'a welcome change after decades of government neglect when the arts were perceived as worthy but irrelevant because [they were] rarely financially profitable'.[61]

The new emphasis on arts and culture gave the opportunity to Scotland and the other nations within the United Kingdom to adopt the language of the 'creative industries' and to rebrand themselves in the image of 'New Britannia'. For the benefit of the Scottish cultural sector in general and theatre in particular, it meant further investments and funding in order to improve and update Scotland's national and international images. 'The Scottish Executive has supported a heterogeneous, democratic Scottish theatre, investing not simply in its promotion, (...) but in its very making, while simultaneously resisting making an autocratic decree about what it should be'.[62] As early as 1999, the Executive recognized the need to support Scottish theatre suffering from under-funding, and pledged in its Strategy 'to take steps to establish a national theatre for Scotland'.[63] A few years later, in 2001, the final report of the Scottish National Theatre Working Group gave a detailed analysis on the roles and functions of the national theatre. It summarized that,

> 4. 3. The Scottish National Theatre should be a creative producer which engages with the whole theatre sector as its 'production company', working with and through the existing Scottish theatre community to achieve its objectives.
> 4. 4. The Scottish National Theatre should develop a quality repertoire originating in Scotland. This will include new work, existing work and the drama of other countries and cultures to which a range of Scottish insights, language and sensibility can be applied.
> 4. 5. The Scottish National Theatre should commission and initiate works of excellence on a variety of scales and tour them to all parts of Scotland and abroad.[64]

These clear and well-defined aims gave the possibility to the establishment of the National Theatre of Scotland as a 'production company' in 2005. As a production company, the NTS can invest extra funding in existing theatres and theatre work, instead of taking away all available public theatre funding, infrastructure and human resources (directors, actors, designers, writers, actors, etc.). As the NTS is not building-based, it does not limit itself to 'what it can produce within one particular set of built constraints, and draining scarce resources into material infrastructures instead of cultural practices'.[65] As the NTS is not based in one location, it cannot reinforce Scottish metropolitanism as the sole representation of the nation. In addition, as the work of NTS is not about atomized, individual 'creativity', but instead built on a collaborative model, 'it requires co-operation and co-production between groups of institutions and people in order to succeed'.[66] Therefore, the activities of the NTS can range from

small scale to large scale work, from international collaboration to community theatre, from building-based work to touring, and from urban-metropolitan experience to small village projects. In this sense, as Harvie also proposed before the opening of the NTS, it 'will at once assume the authority of being national while maintaining the confidence to devolve and disperse its powers. It will also work collaboratively, and be adaptable to Scotland's geographical and cultural diversity'.[67]

The opening performance of the NTS clearly put in motion the expectations of the Report, and also proved Harvie's above assumptions right. The launch of the NTS was presented by a project, called *Home* at the end of February, 2006. For *Home,* the NTS asked ten directors to devise a piece of theatre around the word 'home' while working in partnership with a specific area and community to create an experience for each particular audience in Aberdeen, Caithness, Dumfries, Dundee, East Lothian, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness, Shetland, and Stornoway. As the director of the NTS, Vicky Featherstone put it before the opening,

> *Home* is our way of launching [NTS] all over Scotland: allowing somebody in Inverness or Stornoway or Caithness to see an entirely different performance by a completely different director but at the same time part of the opening night; for the work to reach across Scotland as far as possible.[68]

In Aberdeen, for instance, the director of Afterlife Theatre Company, Alison Peebles with writer Rona Munro and designer Martin McNee put together – in Joyce McMillan's phrase – 'a vivid, edgy, and moving meditation, in six flats and ten parts, on what "home" means today'.[69] In Edinburgh, writer-director, Anthony Neilson asked ten to twelve-year-old schoolchildren to write scripts about what they imagine *First Minister's Question Time* to be, and these scripts were performed by well-known actors to an audience at the Queen's Hall. While in Shetland, in a installation staged aboard the Northlink Ferry by director Wils Wilson, a poetic text by Jackie Kay – delivered through personal guided-tour handsets – 'led us through a storey of deeply-buried female experience, and of the perennial island tension between leaving and staying, as ghostly actors dressed in 1940s or 1950s costume drifted through the lounges and saloons of the ship'.[70] In Glasgow, NTS director, John Tiffany presented 'the ultra-dramatic story of hero Mudro's return from London to his old hire-rise home'.[71] *Lord of the Ring*'s Billy Boyd and *Taggart*'s Blythe Duff led the performance in which actors were filmed inside the tower block by three men abseiling down the buildings with handheld cameras. Then these shoots were projected onto a huge screen, seen by a thousand of people from the natural amphitheatre of the ground below.

As a result of these different performances, *Home* worked on both 'intercultural' and – in Rustom Bharucha's phrase – 'intracultural' levels. The former

could be seen in the presence of international stars, technology, and presentation techniques and materials. The latter could be seen in the presentation of the experiences drawn from different territories, age groups, and gender within the borders of Scotland. This way, *Home*'s focus on intraculturality could explore 'the differences that exist within the boundaries of [this] particular region in what [was previously] assumed to be a homogenized culture',[72] and at the same time, it could call 'attention to the internal cultural diversities within [this] specific region'.[73] Based on these diversities, *Home*'s focus on interculturality could project the different and diverse images of Scotland back onto the international theatre and media scenes. Therefore, the different images could represent Scotland as an imagined virtual community.

As we can see from *Home,* the NTS intends to present Scotland as a diverse cultural, social, and political community. The NTS does not want to define what Scotland is and does not impose a uniform Scottish identity in advance and then to cut and narrow its working methods and performances to fit those preconceived images. Instead, the NTS is used as a possible public forum, as a virtual stage, where the different voices and discourses, and the variety of cultural/political identities can be formed and presented. As Featherstone remarked that the NTS has 'the chance to undefine, to throw open the doors of possibility, to encourage boldness and, (…) to be surprised about where that boldness may take you'.[74]

As a result, the NTS can challenge authority, give alternatives, and facilitates the different groups' identities, voices and theatre practices, their different images of Scotland which all are and consist of what Scotland means and is today. Moreover, this fragmentary concept of national theatre fits perfectly well in the age, characterized by globalisation, fragmentation, hybridisation, diasporas, uncertainties, and displacement of identities.

In the practical, everyday life of the NTS, there are certain concerns, of course. With a theatre which is said to be 'a theatre without walls', the first problem comes from touring. If NTS produces large a scale work in one of the well-equipped city-theatres, can it really tour? Are there proper infrastructures in small towns and villages? If not, does the lack of infrastructure effect artistic decisions? If large scale works cannot tour, can people travel in to the big cities? Can everyone afford it? Are they willing to do it? The NTS intends to commission work from writers/directors and existing theatre companies. Are there properly functioning, permanent and well-funded companies that can produce performances on both national and international levels? The standard rehearsal period for an NTS production is usually six to seven weeks.[75] What can be achieved on an international level within this short time-span? As the NTS is 'within the reach of all', it is accessible to everyone by allowing space to express different views. But what is the limit? Whose views are not tolerated? Who decides? As a result of these concerns, the NTS can only work properly on

international and national levels, when the entire Scottish theatre system is working properly. As theatre is under-funded in Scotland, that can only be achieved by investing more resources in the infrastructure of existing theatre buildings and community centres across Scotland; by making travel easier and cheaper by cultural subsidy; and by increasing the subsidy for the *entire* theatre sector. As the 2001 Report suggested, the NTS 'cannot by itself solve the problems of under-investment in Scotland's theatre infrastructure', but it 'can play a major role in enhancing and energising the Scottish Theatre scene, and in winning a higher profile for the achievements of Scottish Theatre'.[76] (Report 2001, 5) Therefore, the NTS can immensely contribute to the Scottish theatre scene in general, and can also increase the awareness of arts as useful elements for the well-being of today's Scottish society.

Final Thoughts on National Theatre

So far I have tried to demonstrate some of the different concepts of national theatre. It was used for national unification without an existing country (Germany for instance) or within an existing country (France, Denmark for instance); and in opposition to foreign oppressors (Hungary, Serbia, Croatia, Norway for instance), as well as even for imperial unification over other nations and ethnic groups (Austria, Russia, Sweden, the UK for instance). It was also used as a possible forum for those who did not have representations on the stages of the legitimate theatres (the NTP in France and the FTP in the USA). In its last appearance so far (NTS in Scotland), however, it was used rather differently from the previous models. Until recently, national theatre had been thought of as a centralized monumental institution reflecting nationhood and identity often as an exclusive and inward-looking through a textual canon and a unitary, unifying language. The Scottish example has redirected it as a concept based on plural, diverse and de-centred network of groups, one which can represent the scattered and culturally divided population of a(ny) nation. What this temporary and fragmentary list of national theatres tends to provide is that even in today's postindustrial, post-socialist and globalized world, when theatre in general is a marginal commodity in the capitalist cultural industry, *national theatre* projects still can draw people, parties, groups, and institutions as performers into debates, demonstrations, and panels of what it might be or should be within their real or virtual walls. As a result, the current advocates of national theatre projects might be able to transform an old idea and an old institution into new methodological territories and alternative sites where the status quo can be reconsidered, and where the constant (re)constructions of nationhood, nationality, and national identity can be analysed and understood. The rest we shall see...

Notes

[1] Loren Kruger, *The National Stage – Theatre and Cultural Legitimation in England, France, and America.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992, 3.

[2] *Ibid.,* 3.

[3] *Ibid.,* 4.

[4] *Ibid.,* 79.

[5] *Ibid.,* 134.

[6] *Ibid.,* 87.

[7] As she summarized it in her introduction: 'The English and French national theatre projects were marked by notions of a national culture in the imperial context at the turn of the twentieth century, notions that sought to mobilize but also to discipline the masses subjecting them to the dual authority of the centralized state and metropolitan high culture. The American debates attempted to resurrect not merely discourses of popular sovereignty invoked by the *theatres populaires,* but also their implicitly regional politics and local culture, to renegotiate critically the unquestioned metropolitanism of the English and French projects.' *Ibid.,* 5. – Emphasis LK.

[8] In France in 1680, Denmark in 1746, Sweden in 1765, Poland in 1765, Germany (Hamburg) in 1767, Austria in 1776, Germany (Mannheim) in 1778, Russia 1812, Hungary 1837, Romania in 1840, Belgium in 1853, Croatia in 1860, Norway in 1876, and Serbia in 1884. Apart from these countries, national theatres were founded in Ireland in 1904, Belgium again in 1945, Great Britain in 1969, and Scotland in 2005.

[9] See, for example, Marvin Carlson, *Places of Performance – The Semiotics of Theater Architecture.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989, 94; John Russell Brown, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, 292–294; and Erika Fischer-Lichte, 'Some Critical Remarks on Theatre Historiography', in S. E. Wilmer, ed., *Writing and Rewriting National Theatre Histories.* Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2004, 1–16.

[10] T. James Reed, 'Theatre, Enlightenment and Nation: A German Problem', in Samuel S. B. Taylor, ed., *The Theatre of the French and German Enlightenment.* Edinburgh, 1979, 48.

[11] *Ibid.,* 48.

[12] See, for example, F. W. J. Hemmings, *Theatre and the State in France, 1760–1905.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 6–10.

[13] See, for example, Carlson, *ibid.,* 73–74.

[14] See, for example, Peter Simhandl, *Színháztörténet,* Budapest: Helikon, 1996, 182–191.

[15] The Pesti Magyar Színház (later called the National Theatre) was realized against the Habsburgs in 1837, while the Serbian National Theatre was created against the Hungarian domination in 1884.

[16] For a detailed analysis of the early attempts of establishing national theatres in Eastern, and Northern Europe see Laurence Senelick, ed., *The National Theatre in Northern and Eastern Europe, 1746–1900.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

[17] The co-existence of the nation-state and national theatre is not so evident, as Italy, for instance, has never had a national theatre.

[18] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities – Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* London and New York: Verso, 1991, 6.

[19] *Ibid.,* 6.

[20] Rosane Allucquere Stone, 'A szellem teste', *Replika,* V, No. 2 (1995): 298.

[21] For a detailed analysis of the various practices a nation can be imagined and represented see Boswell and Evans 2004.

22   Jen Harvie, *Staging the UK*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2005,
     16.

23   *Ibid.,* 3.

24   *Ibid.,* 3.

25   Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politsche Identität in frühen
     Hochkulturen.* München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1999, 31.

26   *Ibid.,* 35–43.

27   *Ibid.,* 40.

28   Pierre Nora, 'Entre mémoire et historie. La problémetique des lieux', in *Nora, Les lieux de
     mémoire. I. La Républic.* Paris, 1984, 2–25.

29   Carlson, *ibid.,* 6.

30   Carlson, *ibid.,* 7.

31   Peggy Phelan, 'Playing Dead in Stone, or, When Is a Rose not a Rose?' in Elin Diamond, ed.,
     Performance and Cultural Politics. London and New York: Routledge, 1996, 65–88.

32   Apart from the usual financial, contractual and legal difficulties and problems, Phelan
     demonstrated that the homosexual references of the Rose Theatre in the seventeenth century
     were also among the hidden reasons why certain homophobic politicians of the 1990s British
     establishment did not want to continue with the excavation of the remainings, despite of the
     fact that the further excavation could have given us valuable insights on Elizabethan theatre
     architecture; and also did not want to elevate the status of the discovery on national and
     international levels.

33   Eric J. Hobsbawn, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*. Cambridge: Cambridge University
     Press, 1992, 50–53.

34   Though the Hungarian feudal assembly in 1723 accepted that the Austrian hereditary
     provinces and the Hungarian Kingdom were connected to each other as one indivisibly and
     inseparably ("indivisibiliter ac inseparabilier, invicem et insimul"), and in case of an outside
     attack they are supposed to defend each other mutually (see I–III paragraphs/1723.), Hungary
     could keep its quasi independence with its own administrative institutions. These institutions,
     however, were subordinated to the Emperor and located in different cities: the Kancellária
     (Hungarian Chancellery) in Vienna, the feudal assembly (Dieta) in Pozsony (now Bratislava,
     Slovakia); the Helytartótanács (Council of the Governor-General; Consilium locumtenen-
     tiale) in Buda. The political rights belonged to and were practiced by only the nobility at the
     Dieta or locally at the county meetings. The Hungarian nobility's authoritative institutions
     locally, the counties were rendered under the Helytartótanács, led by the Nádor (app.
     Governor-General) who was appointed by the Emperor. Foreign affairs, defence and treasury
     were controlled by the emperor, who could also decide to convoke or dissolve assembly when
     his political purposes needed, depending on the Monarchy's foreign affairs. As the Monarchy
     was multi-ethnic, the Habsburg Monarchy usually utilized the aims of the various ethnic
     groups for his own purposes. The institutional systems and political relations were reinforced
     by the Hungarian nobility in the Dieta in 1791, and again in 1825, and they were not changed
     until the war of independence of 1848/49 (Berényi-Gyapai 1997), 305–307 and 323–347.

35   See, for example, Gyula Viszota, 'A Nemzeti Színház és Gróf Széchenyi István', in Viszota, *A
     századéves Nemzeti Színház.* Budapest: Pallas, 1938, 64–68.

36   See, for example, Ferenc Kerényi, *Magyar Színháztörténet 1790–1873*. Budapest: Akadémiai
     Kiadó, 1990, 259–263; and Ferenc Kerényi, 'A Nemzeti Színház – és amiről nem beszélünk',
     Magyar Napló, XVI. No. 3 (1999): 40.

37   Hollier in Phelan, *ibid.,* 75.

38   Kosselleck in Assmann, *ibid.,* 63.

39   See Carlson, *ibid.,* 72–73.

40 *Ibid.*, 73–75.

41 *Ibid.*, 73.

42 István Széchenyi, *A magyar Játékszínrül*. Pest: Füskúti Landerer, 1832.

43 See, for example, László Szekér, *A nemzet színháza építésének 150 éves története*. Budapest: Műszaki Könyvkiadó, 1989, 23–37; Mihály Vörösmarty, *Összes Művei: Drámák V.* Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1971, 537; Mihály Vörösmarty, *Összes Művei: Dramaturgiai Lapok.* Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1969, 363–371; and Iván Berényi and Gábor Gyapai, eds, *Magyarország rövid története*. Budapest: Maecenas, 1997, 343–347.

44 Vörösmarty, *ibid.*, 66.

45 In those countries of the continent, where the institution of royalty was powerful (like Germany, Russia, Austro-Hungarian Monarchy) in the national institutions like the National Opera House, National Theatre, a Royal Box was placed opposite the stage on the first floor, surrounded by other private boxes. The distance from the main box in the theatre signified the economical and political distance from the strongest element of the society. As the performance, the arrangement of the stage and the structure of the auditorium were created from this central point of view, so the places of the Royal Box, were the best seats available in the theatre, where the monarch could appreciate the whole spectacle. From his position, the monarch could see both the entire audience and the performance. Thus the 'glance' of the sovereign was always on his/her subjects, physically in the theatre and symbolically in reality. The industrial and political power of the royalty predestined the monarch to possess the leading roles in these societies, and it was expressed by the best seats of a theatre. Moreover, these national institutions were usually sponsored by him/her financially. In Hungary, however, as the theatre was built by Pest county and the representative of the Emperor, József Nádor, did not really support its construction, the Royal Box was not finished on time and the theatre opened without the Nádor's invitation.

46 Phelan, *ibid.*, 75.

47 *Belizár* was written by Eduard von Schenk, and translated into Hungarian by János Kiss – the lack of Hungarian drama is clearly evident here, as contemporary critics also noted.

48 Barish in Harvie, *ibid.*, 117–118.

49 Ruth Padel, *I'm a Man: Sex, Gods and Rock and Roll.* London: Faber and Faber, 2000, 229, and 239.

50 Michael Managan, *Staging Masculinities – History, Gender, Performance.* London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, 18.

51 Friedriech Schiller, 'Was kann eine stehende Bühne eigentlich wirken?', in Schiller, *Werke 1.* Munich: Hauser, 1984, 728.

52 Assmann, *ibid.*, 79.

53 *Ibid.*, 79.

54 That liveliness of the tradition can be recognised in the fact that the permanent building of the Hungarian National Theatre was opened on the same day, 15 March 2002.

55 Since its inception, the cultural, political, and financial control over the National Theatre has been debated. The control over the existing theatre (company) had been connected to the proposed permanent building, which was not built until 2002. The first temporary building was demolished in 1913, the second in 1965. The company then stayed in its third temporary building until the opening of the new building on 15 March 2002, on the Danube shore, further down from the present city centre. Though the company of the National Theatre has worked since 1837 in Budapest and four other National Theatres exist in smaller towns in Hungary – Győr, Miskolc, Pécs, and Szeged –, the notion of a permanent building had been the most significant *(virtual) theatre* project in Hungary until 2002, around which (real and virtual) cultural, political, moral, and social performances occurred. Even after the end of socialism in

1989, when theatre in Hungary became a marginal commodity in the capitalist cultural and entertainment industry, that *theatre* project still drew people, parties, and institutions as performers into a debate or a demonstration. The architectural concept of the new building of the National Theatre, its construction process and budget, artistic leadership, ensemble, repertory, finance, and the use of Imre Madách's *Az ember tragédiája* (Tragedy of Man, 1861) at the opening night of 15 March 2002, all were areas of passionate public controversy.

[56] Homi K. Bhabha, 'DissemiNation: Time, narrative and the margins of modern nation', in Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004, 220.

[57] Stuart Hall, 'Culture, community, nation', in David Boswell and Jessica Evans, eds, *Representing the Nation: A Reader – Histories, Heritage and Museums*. London and New York: Routledge and The Open University, 2004, 38.

[58] *Ibid.*, 38.

[59] *Ibid.*, 37.

[60] Harvie, *ibid.*, 23.

[61] *Ibid.*, 23.

[62] *Ibid.*, 32.

[63] Scottish Executive, Creating Our Future: Minding Our Past: Scotland's National Cultural Strategy, www.scotland.gov.uk/nationalculturalstrategy/docs/cult-05.asp

[64] *Scottish National Theatre: Final Report of the Independent Working Group*. Glasgow: Scottish Arts Council, 2001, 5.

[65] Harvie, *ibid.*, 32.

[66] *Ibid.*, 32.

[67] *Ibid.*, 33.

[68] Vicky Featherstone, 'Dream Theatre Becomes Reality', *Scotland on Sunday*, 19 February 2006.

[69] Joyce McMillan's review continued: 'To the left, as we crowded into the cold staircase, a door was labelled "home is where the heart is"; behind it, in a room full of old photographs and nostalgic décor, an old lady was living out of a life of crushing loneliness, haunted by the ghosts of her long-gone family. In the top flat, an ageing fisherman thrown on the economic scrapheap wondered who was suffering the more painful slide towards extinction – himself, or the cod he once fished. What the Aberdeen show achieved was a bringing-together of all the strands of meaning in the word "home," from nostalgia to the quest for new places to call our own.' Joyce McMillan, 'For One Weekend, All the World's a Stage – Or All the Country, at least', *The Scotsman*, 27 February 2006.

[70] *Ibid.*

[71] *Ibid.*

[72] Rustom Bharucha, *The Politics of Cultural Practice – Thinking Through Theatre in an Age of Globalization*. London: Athlone, 2000, 8.

[73] *Ibid.*, 9.

[74] Featherstone, *ibid.*

[75] Though it is longer than the average rehearsal period (three-four weeks) in Scottish theatre, it is still very short, especially if you compare it to the European state-funded theatres where the rehearsal period is usually more than two/three months or even longer.

[76] Final Report, *ibid.*, 5.