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Theatre's heterotopia. Invading urban space: The FairyBus by the Wrocław Puppet Theatre

Due to the obviousness and multidimensionality of its nature, theatre can be viewed as a pedagogical place. In such a context, the concept of a travelling theatre, on the example of FairyBus, gains particular significance and allows, in turn, for interpretations in the categories of heterotopia.

Maria Mendel, the forerunner of the category of place-based education in Poland, notes: "Education, which beyond any doubt is a form of interference, always happens 'somewhere' and has a 'place', and since it initiates a dialectical relation between the pupil and the world, it becomes metaphysics; an ontology that occurs in the conditions of reciprocity and transcendence"¹. In her deliberations on space and culture, Mendel begins with, and expands, the understanding of a place as proposed by Michel Foucault. The philosopher defined heterotopias, the "other places", in opposition to the notion of utopia: a place with no place, an unreal space. Thus, a heterotopia is a real place existing in society – or more likely on its "fringes" – and is shaped by that society². In Mendel's interpretation, the culture shapes space as it is composed of "our own" intertwining places, to which we ourselves assign meanings. In other words, we co-create the world, making it "our own", "fitting inside of it", meaning "having our place (places) within it"³. In the words of the authoress, the culture "constitutes a place of places" that intersects in the gaze of human beings⁴, i.e. the reflections of the material fragment of reality,

¹ M. Mendel, *Wstęp* [Introduction], [in:] *Pedagogika miejsca* [Place-based Education], M. Mendel (ed.), Wydawnictwo Naukowe Dolnośląskiej Szkoły Wyższej Edukacji TWP we Wrocławiu, Wrocław 2006, p. 9.

² M. Foucault, *Of Other Spaces* (1967), *Heterotopias* [online], accessed on: 18.04.2012, available at: <http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html>.

³ M. Ejsmont, B. Kosmalska, M. Mendel (eds.), *Obraz, przestrzeń, popkultura. Inspiracje badawcze w polu pedagogiki społecznej* [Image, Space, Pop-culture. Research Inspirations for Social Pedagogy], Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2007, pp. 169–170.

⁴ Mendel refers to the mirror that Foucault describes both as a utopia and a heterotopia. A mirror is an intersection of the existing, i.e. heterotopia, and the non-existent, i.e. utopia, and the gaze of the person standing in front of it; M. Foucault, *Of Other Spaces...*; M. Ejsmont, B. Kosmalska, M. Mendel (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 170.

and can only be captured by a person who “is-in-place (Heidegger’s “being-in-the-World”) and interacts with it”. Therefore, heterotopias constitute “real places that can only exist socially in the conditions of social interactions and a distanced ‘insight’, which functions, as if in a mirror, on a principle of a twofold look, which moves away and returns to the same spot”⁵.

This multidimensionality of the meanings of places can be observed also in the case of Wrocław Puppet Theatre’s FairyBus, described by Roberto Skolmowski (the executive and art director in the years 2007–2011) as a travelling theatre with its traditions: “For centuries the puppeteers would take their theatres to places where there were no theatres and ‘the FairyBus serves the same purpose’”⁶.

FairyBus: the phenomenon, the firework of the year

The FairyBus is a stage that belongs to the Wrocław Puppet Theatre (WPT), which is housed in a neo-baroque building at Plac Teatralny 4 in Wrocław. The Theatre, apart from its mobile stage, has three permanent stages and a seasonal Summer Stage⁷. Although the WPT owes its name to its puppet performances, its audiences include not only children, but also youths and adults. The children’s repertoire offers adaptations of classic fairy tales (“Little Red Riding Hood”, “The Beauty and the Beast”, “Puss in Boots”, “Cinderella”), children’s literature classics (“The Humpbacked Horse” by Yershov or “Oh, Emil” by Astrid Lindgren), and the theatre’s own performances based on modern plays (some of them written specially for the WPT)⁸.

The FairyBus “is a unique, one of its kind in Europe, mobile theatre stage, which is a replica of the neo-baroque house of the Puppet Theatre. The entire stage area, i.e. the superstructure of the FairyBus, is hand-crafted and amazes with details and the superb representation of the beauty of the original building”⁹. Cutting edge lighting and sound systems contribute to the high mobility of the “stage-vehicle” (making it possible to deliver performances “anywhere”). “This allows the Theatre to both pursue an intensive repertoire policy and simultaneously carry out its social mission”¹⁰. The FairyBus has three stages: “The top stage on the roof, which opens automatically, is where we can perform with puppets” says Skolmowski, “the stage at the back, for marionettes, is where we present the tales

⁵ M. Mendel, *Spółczesność i rytuał. Heterotopia bezdomności* [Society and Ritual. Heterotopia of Homelessness], Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2001, pp. 16–17.

⁶ *O Teatrze* [About Theatre] [online], accessed on: 10.03.2012, available at: <http://www.teatrlalek.wroclaw.pl/index.php/o-teatrze>.

⁷ *Wynajem* [Rental] [online], accessed on: 10.04.2012, available at: <http://www.teatrlalek.wroclaw.pl/index.php/o-teatrze>.

⁸ *O Teatrze* [About Theatre], *op. cit.*, accessed on: 10.03.2012.

⁹ *Bajkobus* [FairyBus] [online], accessed on: 28.02.2012, available at: <http://www.teatrlalek.wroclaw.pl/index.php/separators/o-bajkobusie>.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, accessed on: 29.02.2012.

about Wrocław dwarves, and there is also the shadow theatre stage"¹¹. The FairyBus is a travelling theatre (it has its own scene), which in the eyes of the director plays an important part in the mission of the vehicle: "This is a journey back to the roots. After all, puppet theatre was created to reach out to the audience. [...] With the technology, with the fact that we do not need anything, that we have everything with us [...] we want Wrocław Puppet Theatre to reach where theatre cannot reach, to children in all of Lower Silesia"¹². Katarzyna Krajewska, the literary secretary of the Theatre, also emphasises the need to search for the audience. Upon Skolmowski's initiative, says Krajewska, the WPT became engaged in a series of educational undertakings (the entertainment aspect was pushed into the background). The workers and the company focused on promoting texts and plays with high educational potential. And thus, "reaching out to persons who do not necessarily seek theatre and not necessarily know it" became one of the priorities¹³. Instead of waiting for the audience, the director and the company chose to step forward, in this case into the urban space, and meet them, and "move the theatre out of the building"¹⁴. What is more, they "appropriated" places that have never before been associated with the theatre as such. This is how the plays outside the WPT stage were conceived, e.g. "Sharks in the pool"¹⁵ at the Wrocław Waterpark or the plays performed at the Nova Stage in the Renoma Department Store¹⁶. This appropriation of space is one of the cornerstones of the FairyBus concept. The basic premise for the FairyBus activities is to deliver plays for children from peripheral areas of the voivodship, from the smallest towns, i.e. for those who do not have the opportunity to participate in the life of the theatre. This is how, at the beginning of its career, the fairy-tale-vehicle travelled to the remote areas of Lower Silesia. The second idea behind the FairyBus was to perform in the heart of Wrocław in order to reach viewers who lacked sufficient financial resources or, using Pierre Bourdieu's phrasing, had limited access to cultural and economic capital, or limited rights to such access¹⁷.

In line with this notion, and following the modern tendencies of placing art at entertainment venues, the WPT created stages outside the theatre house. Based on this premise, the stages were set in designated areas of the Wrocław Zoologi-

¹¹ *Ibid.*, accessed on: 06.03.2012.

¹² *Ibid.*, accessed on: 06.03.2012.

¹³ Respondent 1, *Interview 1 with Katarzyna Krajewska, the Literary Secretary of the Wrocław Puppet Theatre*. Interview carried out by Agnieszka Janik.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ A. Saraczyńska, *Teatr Lalek w Aquaparku: Na ratunek porwanej syrence* [Puppet Theatre at a Waterpark: Rescuing the Kidnapped Mermaid] [online], "Gazeta.pl Wrocław", available at: http://wroclaw.wyborcza.pl/wroclaw/1,35771,7615318,Teatr_Lalek_w_aquaparku__Na_ratunek_porwanej_syrence.html.

¹⁶ See *Wrocławski Teatr Lalek zaprasza [Wrocław Puppet Theatre Invites]* [online], accessed on: 18.02.2012, available at: <http://www.renoma-wroclaw.pl/wroclawski-teatr>.

¹⁷ Respondent 1, *Interview 2 with Katarzyna Krajewska, the Literary Secretary of the Wrocław Puppet Theatre*. Interview carried out by Agnieszka Janik.

cal Garden and Wrocław Waterpark. Also, another stage opened in the Renoma Department Store in Wrocław. Moreover, the FairyBus also overtook the most ancient areas of Wrocław. The plays are performed at the “FairyBus Stops” located around tourist attractions (Fig. 1) such as: the Market Square-Pillory, the Market Square-Kuźnicza, Plac Gołębi, the Cathedral Island, St. Elisabeth church, the Old Town Garden, the Centennial Hall, or the Wrocław Waterpark¹⁸. The selection of the locations is by no means accidental: these sites are heteropias.

On the other hand, the FairyBus serves as a daring example of a marketing campaign. As Krajewska points out, theatres face an increasing competition from a host of cultural and entertainment institutions that, in their majority, operate on commercial basis, e.g. shopping centres and cinemas¹⁹. Thus, the theatre can no longer rely on the group of faithful viewers who will “always be there”. In other words, it is necessary to actively attract viewers, and the FairyBus, according to Krajewska, is “a mobile advertisement for the Puppet Theatre. The FairyBus sends a message that the theatre is open, friendly, and democratic. The FairyBus overcomes barriers”²⁰. The commercialisation of the vehicle is also reflected in its non-gratuitous activities²¹. Still, beyond any doubt, each performance gathers hundreds of viewers and the audience continues to grow. “We do not know if it is because of the theatre vehicle itself” Krajewska comments “but the FairyBus has been declared a phenomenon”²².

The plays performed by the FairyBus represent an extremely important category of heterotopia, in relation to the aspects of place-based education that were the subject of my analysis. The spectacles enter, or “invade”, not only the urban space, but also its traditions, social practices, and legends associated with specific sites. Particular plays are performed in actual places where they are set (e.g. a play

¹⁸ *Bajkobus rozkład jazdy* [FairyBus timetable] [online], accessed on: 06.03.2012, available at: <http://www.teatrlalek.wroclaw.pl/index.php/separador>.

¹⁹ The increasingly heated debate on the commercialisation of public theatres and allowing them to enter the free market is an interesting topic. Actors and companies of Wrocław theatres undertake efforts to counteract the current situation, i.a. by calling upon the audience (e.g. Mariusz Kiljan, actor at the Teatr Polski in Wrocław during the play “Dwadzieścia najśmieszniejszych piosenek na świecie [World’s Twenty Funniest Songs] on 15.03.2012, Small Stage). In this context the activities of the WPT, i.e. the appropriation of commercial spaces by the theatre, gain particular significance. The spectacles performed on the Renoma Stage (from February 2009 to June 2010) were met with a mixed reception by the local community and a negative one on the side of the theatre milieu. The questions of how far should the theatres go to attract clients remains open, see R. Pawłowski, *Teatr to nie produkt...* [Theatre is not a Product...] [online], accessed on: 12.04.2012, available at: http://www.wysokieobcasy.pl/wysokie-obcasy/1,114377,11431304,Teatr_to_nie_produk.html.

²⁰ Respondent 1, *Interview 2...*, *op. cit.*

²¹ While in the remainder of my paper I shall focus on the gratuitous activities of the travelling theatre, including charitable initiatives, it is worth noting that persons who wish to use the services of FairyBus must incur the related costs, such as actors’ remunerations, fuel, technical team, etc.

²² It is also worth adding that while the FairyBus provokes exclusively positive reactions – both in the social and the cultural environment – the theatre performances at the Renoma Stage in the Renoma Department Store, or at the Wrocław Waterpark proved highly controversial and were criticised by the theatre milieu; Respondent 1 *Interview 2...*, *op. cit.*



Fig. 1. FairyBus Stops

Source: <http://www.teatrlalek.wroclaw.pl/index.php/separator> [accessed on: 05.03.2012].

dedicated to the history of Wrocław Cathedral was staged in the Cathedral itself, the story of the Piwnica Świdnicka restaurant was told in front of the entrance). “The FairyBus enters/invades” them, converting them into both the heterotopias of the theatre as such and the heterotopias of the theatre in relation to social and urban problems or matters that are addressed.

The plays presented by the FairyBus can be divided by their subjects into the following four categories:

1. Powrót Mamuta (The Return of the Mammoth);
2. Legendy wrocławskie (Legends of Wrocław);
3. Wrocławskie krasnoludki (Wrocław dwarves);
4. Spacerownik z Bajkobusem (FairyBus walking guide).

One of FairyBus’s key plays is the “Powrót Mamuta” (“The Return of the Mammoth”). This seemingly trifling story about a small animal found by ice-cream makers in a chunk of ice²³ addresses a socially important matter, i.e. the polluting of

²³ *Spektakle Bajkobusu* [FairyBus Plays] [online], accessed on: 06.03.2012, available at: <http://www.teatrlalek.wroclaw.pl/index.php/separator/spektakle>.

urban space (especially parks and green areas) with dog faeces. Agata Saraczyńska wrote bluntly in *"Gazeta Wyborcza"* that it was a "play against dog poop left on the pavement"²⁴. Skolmowski disputed the opinion of the journalist, since for him dog faeces were a pretext for educating the viewer and fighting bad habits using any means available that would effectively reach the target group, which in this case were the children. Skolmowski notes: "Our role is not to install trash bins, but to show that they should be where they are needed, which is everywhere. [...] I am convinced that after seeing our play the children will take better care of their surroundings. [...] We are not saying explicitly that littering is bad, we are just illustrating it. Showing it in a humorous manner is more efficient than a serious, argument-filled discourse [...]"²⁵.

The "Legends Wrocławskie" ("Legends of Wrocław") series represents another important category of plays. They are an adaptation of four novels ("Czarownica z mostka" ["The Witch from the Bridge"], "Dzwon grzesznika" ["The Sinner's Bell"], "Piwniczna opowieść" ["Cellar Story"], and "Opowieść Kamiennej Głowy" ["Stone Head's Tale"]) that present either true or fictitious historical accounts from Wrocław, collected in the form of legends and urban stories. The play was prepared by Mariusz Urbanek and directed by Józef Frymet²⁶. Each of the legends is set in its actual and original location, i.e. a place which is inseparably related to the fate of the protagonists. And so, by watching the "Stone Head's Tale", the viewers will learn of the origins of the mysterious stone head in the wall of the southern tower of the Cathedral, which gave the title to the play. The "Cellar Story" is set next to *Piwnica Świdnicka* (Świdnicka Cellar), one of the most popular restaurants in Wrocław. Meanwhile, "The Witch from the Bridge" and "The Sinner's Bell" transport the audience to the church of Saint Mary Magdalene. It is worth noting that the soundtrack to "Legends of Wrocław" was composed by a popular jazzman, Piotr Baron, and the theatre performances include pyrotechnical effects and stunts²⁷. In this manner random passers-by gain access to art filled with breath-taking effects.

"Spacerownik z Bajkobusem" ("The FairyBus Walking Guide") sheds a different light on educational initiatives of the FairyBus (which I will allow myself to view as the quintessence of FairyBus's activities). It combines elements of a history class, open air theatre play, and a guided tour. It is a folk tale dedicated to the curiosities and the history of the capital of Lower Silesia. It was written by journalists of "Gazeta Wyborcza": Beata Maciejewska (a historian, who appears on the roof of

²⁴ A. Saraczyńska, *Rozmowa z Robertem Skolmowskim, dyrektorem Wrocławskiego Teatru Lalek* [An interview with Roberto Skolmowski, the director of the Wrocław Puppet Theatre] [online], "Gazeta.pl Wrocław", accessed on: 06.03.2012, available at: http://wroclaw.gazeta.pl/wroclaw/1,35771,8013844,Sztuka_wymierzona_w_psia_kupe_zostawiana_na_trawnikach.html#ixzz1o-MfNtobN.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, accessed on: 06.03.2012.

²⁶ *Spektakle* [Plays] [online], accessed on: 03.02.2012, available at: <http://www.bajkobus.za.pl/spektakle.htm>.

²⁷ A. Saraczyńska, *Rozmowa z...* [An interview with...], accessed on: 06.03.2012.

the FairyBus during the performances) and Mariusz Urbanek, who was mentioned earlier. It was directed by Skolmowski. During the show, the audience explores Ostrów Tumski (the Cathedral Island), the oldest part of Wrocław. The places whose meaning the artists and actors of the WPT transform (into heterotopias) include, among others: the Churches of St. Giles and St. Martin, the Cathedral, and Brama Kluskowa²⁸. A story told in this manner becomes attractive for children. As Anna Broniszewska explains: "The theatre vehicle transports the audience into a world of legends and tales of people who once lived in this charming part of the city that sits on the bank of the river Oder"²⁹.

Another important aspect of promoting art and providing access to art among the social strata unequipped with cultural and economic capital is the spatial outreach of the FairyBus phenomenon. Apart from performing locally in Lower Silesia, in 2009 the vehicle started its mission across Poland, and in 2010 it initiated its first foreign travels³⁰. Moreover, this local-patriotic concept, as Broniszewska calls the FairyBus, received media patronage from "Polska The Times – Gazeta Wrocławska", which made it possible to draw several hundred persons to the performances and made its large (or even mass) outreach possible³¹. Statistical data gathered by the WPT also reflect the vast popularity of the initiative. In total, (in the years 2007–2010) the audience of the FairyBus reached 46,270 viewers (in 2007 it was ca. 1,000 persons, 5,390 in 2008, 16,300 in 2009, and 14,580 in 2010), while the "The FairyBus Walking Guide" attracted 2,350 viewers over a course of two months³². The theatrical and social success of the FairyBus was confirmed not only by the massive turnout, but also by the titles and the prizes it collected, such as the "Fajerwerk roku 2008" ("The Firework of the Year 2008"), which was awarded by the press in the category "theatre", or the 2008 Lower Silesia Voivodship Marshal's Award for the Most Important Theatre Event. Additionally, on numerous occasions, the FairyBus participated in the largest events in Wrocław, such as those organised for the Academic Christian Ministry "Maciejówka", the "Wrocławianie na polanie" initiative, or during large charitable events (The Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity 2008–2011, the 2008 Municipal Public Library's initiatives, the 2008–2010 Dreamnights in Wrocław ZOO, the 2009–2010 Long Nights

²⁸ *Spacerownik z Bajkobusem* [FairyBus Walking Guide] [online], accessed on: 11.03.2012, available at: <http://www.teatr-lalek.wroclaw.pl/index.php/separatorspektakle/spacerownik-z-bajkobusem>.

²⁹ A. Broniszewska, *Spacerownik po Ostrowie Tumskim* [Cathedral Island Walking Guide] [online], "Dziennik Teatralny", accessed on: 11.03.2012, available at: <http://www.teatry.art.pl/n/czytaj/22361>.

³⁰ B. Maciejewska, *Bajkobus rusza w świat. Odwiedzi Czechy i Niemcy* [FairyBus Sets Out to the World. It will Visit the Czech Republic and Germany], [online], "Dziennik Teatralny", accessed on: 11.03.2013, available at: http://wroclaw.gazeta.pl/wroclaw/1,35771,7847174,Bajkobus_rusza_w_swiat__Odwiedzi_Niemcy_i_Czechy.html#ixzz1ok3Xmcjg.

³¹ Apart from the Wrocław edition, the news of the timetable or the reviews of the plays were also published in regional editions, e.g. in Zgorzelec and Opole, *Ibid.*, accessed on: 11.03.2012.

³² The activities of FairyBus carried on also throughout 2011 and 2012, but owing to the fact that the WPT discontinued the detailed statistical analyses, the data presented above refers predominantly to the activities carried out up to the year 2010 inclusively, *Bajkobus* [FairyBus], *op. cit.*, accessed on: 10.03.2012.

of Museums at the National Museum in Wrocław, and the 2008 “Voltek” project for children from orphanages in Jelenia Góra)³³.

Theatre’s heterotopia. A desirable social practice

Here I would like to return to the concept of the heterotopia, postulated by Foucault, which I have briefly presented in the introduction. The FairyBus and the idea behind it oppose the vision of theatres as solemn and elitist institutions. Namely, the theatre as such (using the example of the WPT building, Fig. 2) is seen as monumental structure, an imposing hall that demands respect from those who enter, be it through requiring the audience to wear proper dress or expecting their solemn behaviour (the theatre is no place for children). In other words, only certain social groups are allowed go to the theatre, i.e. in the words of Bourdieu, those who were equipped with adequate cultural and economic capital by means of the reproduction of capitals. Meanwhile the FairyBus (Fig. 3) is the theatre’s “other place”, in the form of light entertainment, which does not entail financial expenditures or any prior preparations. It is dedicated to the general public, including also the one that is lacking the funds mentioned above. The FairyBus allows the two worlds to meet/intersect, i.e. the world of the privileged culture vs. the subordinate culture, stability *vs.* mobility, pathos and ceremonialism *vs.* lightness and everyday life, the intellectual class *vs.* the rest of society, theatre for adult audiences *vs.* family theatre, or intent *vs.* randomness. Finally, it confronts art, theatre, and entertainment *with* art, theatre, and entertainment.

I shall now refer to the understanding of the concept of heterotopia proposed by Maria Mendel. Although according to Mendel’s interpretation the heterotopias “phenomenologically happen, therefore they occur, but do not last permanently”, and to “see” them the researcher needs to take the effort of interacting with human beings, who through the creation of their own life narratives “see” themselves and their world, and allow others to perceive these visions³⁴, the social category created by the FairyBus transcends the intersection of the perspectives of the researcher, the culture, and the reality. The FairyBus is not as much located at the intersection of these meanings, as it comes forth to the researcher, like it does to the crowd of random persons (occasionally, to thousands at a time), challenging their current perception and understanding of a place (in the urban space), subjecting their life narratives to a reflection and, in a way, forcing them to reinterpret its dialectical relation with the spaces that shape them, and which they themselves shape as well. Therefore, the FairyBus can be considered a creator of new social practices.

³³ *Ibid.*; J. Bryndza, *Bajkobus bawił przed ratuszem w Jeleniej Górze* [FairyBus in Front of the Jelenia Góra Town Hall], [online], “Gazeta wroclawska”, accessed on: 10.03.2012, available at: <http://www.gazetawroclawska.pl/artyku/161715,bajkowoz-bawil-przed-ratuszem-w-jeleniejgorze,idt.html>.

³⁴ M. Mendel, *Spółczesność i rytuał... [Society and Ritual...]*, p. 17.



Fig. 2. The house of WPT

Source: http://www.rekreacja.wroc.pl/bazy_obiekt.php5?id=102.



Fig. 3. WPT FairyBus

Source: <http://wrocnam.bikestats.pl/520356,Dzien-siedemdziesiaty-siodmy.html>.

Using the language of cultural anthropology, it creates new rituals, such as: forcing the viewers (through the content of the plays, which addresses social taboos, i.e. dog faeces on city lawns) to critically reflect upon the reality perceived in the categories of time, space, people, and the culture, in which all these factors coexist and formulate one another.

I shall briefly refer to Bourdieu's understanding of "capitals". The sociologist sees the cultural capital as a basic factor that determines social stratification. Cultural capital, governed by the rules of accumulation, exchange, and other market principles, contributes increasingly to determining social position and the access to goods and services³⁵. Such capital can be seen as a form of cultural dispositions, which the individuals receive as a part of their own social background, the education they acquire, the class they belong to, or their position in an institution³⁶. In this context, the FairyBus may be seen as an exception that opposes the cultural reproduction through active promotion (the majority of FairyBus performances are free of charge, which implies dissemination and the promotion of theatre activities among the various social and educational strata of Lower Silesia), the appropriation of urban space or the intersection of perspectives of random viewers (the active search for the audience through organising performances on the outskirts of cities and peripheral locations of the Lower Silesian Voivodship being the basic premise of FairyBus's activities), and equipping them with cultural capital, thus becoming a theatre's heterotopia.

Nevertheless, the situation is not as clear as it may seem. With all the benefits the FairyBus offers, it seems appropriate to reconsider how economically viable would all these practices be if it was not for the "mobile advertisement" that carries the message of the friendly theatre. In other words, to what extent is the FairyBus a desirable social initiative that coincides with the critical theories that postulate the emancipation of the mind from the oppression of capitalism and consumption, and to what degree is it a mere neoliberal practice, perfectly in line with the proceedings of the capitalist market? Moreover, it is reasonable to investigate more closely the phenomenon of its mass outreach to the audience. The culturally excluded social elements of Wrocław or city peripheries (and those at risk of exclusion), who have difficult access to high culture, represent the target groups of the FairyBus mission, but only in terms of its initial premises. In practice, the FairyBus visits places that are highly attractive for tourists. This, in turn, poses yet another question: how many persons from dysfunctional families/excluded communities spend their Sunday afternoons at the Market Square or on the Cathedral Island? And also: To what degree can a single theatre spectacle equip a random viewer with cultural capital and encourage them to visit a theatre, if they do not possess the economic capital? The answers seem to be rather obvious.

³⁵ P. Bourdieu, J.-C. Passeron, *Reprodukcja. Elementy Teorii Systemu Nauczania* [Reproduction. Elements of the Theory of the Education System], transl. E. Neyman, PWN, Warszawa 2006, p. 346.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

In this context, also other initiatives undertaken within the wide array of the WPT activities should be brought to one's attention. The Old Town Park (which opened on the 11 September 2010, after over 1.4 hectare of the Copernicus Park, earlier known as the Hanka Sawicka Park was reconstructed) serves as one example. The area is organised so as to resemble the pre-war city garden, with neatly kept lawns, a high, forged fence, and alleyways that follow their 19th century layout, since it was the 1800s Tivoli Gardens that inspired the designers of the garden³⁷. Although the garden is the property of the City of Wrocław, it is most frequently associated with the WPT – mainly owing to its location (from the south it borders with Promenada Staromiejska street, Teatralna street is located to the north, the Proxima building and Promenada Staromiejska street are to the east, while the WPT sets its western boundary)³⁸. Skolmowski is the author of the pre-war design of the garden, which was warmly received and incorporated into the green rhythm of the life of the alleyways³⁹. Additionally, a monitoring system, a 24/7 security service, as well as a fence with a gate that closes at night⁴⁰ to protect the area against vandalism, give the park not only an air of prestige, but also require that a question is asked regarding its hidden function (agenda). The lack of the possibility to cross through the park (the entrance is located only from one side), the playground surrounded by a fence, a merry-go-round “watched-over” by the Gentleman in the Bowler hat (*Pan z Melonikiem*), and wide alleyways flanked with benches, shrewdly suggest: “do not walk on the lawn”, “do not touch”, “do not break”. Additionally, everything is being surveilled by the “big brother”, who efficiently monitors how the (educational) potential of the place is being put to use. In short, the Park invites the citizens of Wrocław to “feel comfortable”, “feel free”, and “have fun”.

Another question that needs to be answered (in the context of the access to cultural capital) is the following: what is, in general, the social background of the children who participate in the theatre initiatives, and in the case of this paper, in those offered by the WPT? It is impossible to answer this question unreservedly. It is not as much the children as the parents or the teachers – who as their care-takers take them to theatres – that constitute the audience of the theatre. The social backgrounds of school groups and individual viewers who attend the available classes and activities are diverse and heterogeneous; theatres gather children both from public and private schools. Moreover, this issue relates to the matter of the promotion of theatre institutions. The media, such as television, radio, or newspapers that have the capacity to reach wide audiences are rarely used to promote theatrical initiatives aimed at primary-school-aged children (except for the FairyBus,

³⁷ *Ogród Staromiejski* [Old Town Garden] [online], accessed on: 09.04.2012, available at: <http://www.teatrlalek.wroclaw.pt/index.php/park-staromiejski>.

³⁸ *Wynajem* [Rental] [online], accessed on: 10.04.2012, available at: <http://www.teatrlalek.wroclaw.pl/index.php/wynajem-sal>.

³⁹ Respondent 1, *Interview...*, *op.cit.*

⁴⁰ *Ogród Staromiejski* [Old Town Garden], *op. cit.*, accessed on: 09.04.2012.

which used inter alia the patronage of “Gazeta Wroclawska”, and was widely publicised particularly in the year 2008). In most cases, theatres use their webpages for promotion, and it is there where they publish the information regarding their on-going educational initiatives. In Wrocław there are plenty of posters and leaflets promoting spectacles and other shows, but those events are not necessarily intended for children. Thus, the conclusion is the following: to learn about a particular type of children-oriented initiatives undertaken by the theatres (WPT), it is necessary to take the effort and actively search for them. Therefore it would seem appropriate to ask, who is likely to make such an effort?

Using Bourdieu’s terminology, this effort will be undertaken by the persons who are interested in theatre and wish to instil this interest in their children. In other words, it is the people with access to cultural capital, i.e. the conscious and competent audiences, who place their knowledge on theatre and the pleasure of using its services high in their hierarchy of values. One can imagine that these are certainly not the parents from impoverished social backgrounds or those who were never interested in the city’s cultural life; those who represent the under-privileged strata with limited or no access to cultural or social capital – to use Bourdieu’s words.

However, let us return to the main subject of this paper. In conclusion, in comparison to other WPT initiatives, or those of other theatres, e.g. Teatr Polski or the Wrocławski Teatr Współczesny im. Edmunda Wiercińskiego (Edmund Wierciński Wrocław Contemporary Theatre), the FairyBus cannot serve as an example of radical emancipatory actions. Nonetheless, I do consider it a desirable social practice in terms of the formation and non-formal education of primary school children (more specifically the cultural education; theatre education in a narrow sense). It constitutes an exception, which stands in opposition to the cultural reproduction and the currently popular ghettoization of the urban space (i.e. the creation of gated communities; the ghettos of the rich and the poor)⁴¹.

Summary

*Theatre’s heterotopia. Invading urban space:
The FairyBus by the Wrocław Puppet Theatre*

Heterotopias, according to Michel Foucault, are perceived as “other spaces”, real places existing in the society (rather than that on the suburbs), which is easy to notice in the case of the FairyBus – the concept of a theatre packed onto a bus, conceived by the Wrocław Puppet Theatre. This article is an attempt at a critical approach to the reality in its cultural dimension. The paper intends to find, expose, and explain the relations between the ac-

⁴¹ B. Jałowicki, W. Łukowski, *Gettoizacja polskiej przestrzeni miejskiej* [Ghettoisation of the Polish Urban Space], Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 2007.

tivity of the FairyBus, the transmission of cultural capital (by Pierre Bourdieu), and the location of individuals in the social stratification. In this process, the FairyBus is seen as an example of both a new (and a desirable?) social practice and a way of motivating individuals to reflect critically.

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