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Contemporary Theatre in Catalonia : A Story of Creative Struggles

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कॅटलोनियामधील समकालीन रंगमंच : एक खडतर संघर्षाची कथा

कॅटलोनियाच्या सांस्कृतिक आणि वैचारिक पुनरुत्थान पुन:प्रस्थापन आणि पुनरुज्जीवनाच्या संदर्भात 'नॉर्मलायझेशन' ही संज्ञा तेथील राजकीय आणि भाषिक वर्तुळांमध्ये नेहमी वापरली जाते. १९३९ ते १९७५ या दीर्घ कालखंडात फ्रेंच हुकुमशाहीखाली हा प्रदेश होता. त्यामुळे 'नॉर्मल' म्हणजे केंद्रस्थानी स्वत:च्या हक्काने दाखल होणे, स्वतःची अस्मिता प्रस्थापित करणे असा हा प्रवास आहे. दीर्घ काळ अडवलेले, गप्प केलेले, अनामिकतेच्या बेघर अवस्थेत ढकलले गेलेले आणि सार्वजनिक विस्मृतीच्या अंधारात गायब झालेले एक स्वत्व या संपूर्ण प्रक्रियेत केंद्रस्थानी येण्यासाठी धडपडत होते. सतत प्रतिवादाची आणि जटिल सामाजिक आणि राजकीय वास्तवाशी करावी लागणारी लढत हा येथील नाट्यक्षेत्रातील मंडळींचा इतिहास आहे.

कॅटलन नाटककार आणि रंगकर्मी स्वतःची संहिता सादर करू पाहात होते. त्यांना एका प्रतिमेत अडकलेले नाटक नको होते. जोसेफ एम. बेनेट इ जॉर्नेट हा कॅटलोनियाचा मुख्य नाटककार. त्याने १९६० पासून काम सुरू केले. युद्धोत्तर हुकुमशाहीत संहितांना सरकारी परीक्षणाचा काच जाणवत हेता. फ्रॅकोच्या काळात कॅटलन भाषा हीच त्यांची मुख्य खूण आणि ओळख होती. अनेक नाटककारांच्या लेखी हे भूतकाळातील दमन आणि दडपण यांनाच इतर कोणत्याही आशयापेक्षा महत्त्वाचे होते. कॅटलन थिएटरची कल्पना नेमकी घडवण्यात अनेक गुंतागुंती होत्या. त्यात अगदी ईश्वरदत्त मानल्या गेलेल्या स्वत्वापासून विविध राजकीय भौगोलिक, ऐतिहासिक आणि सामाजिक दृष्टिकोन होते. या सर्व भिन्नतेसहितच विसाव्या शतकातील कॅटलन रंगभूमीची प्रेरण वर म्हटल्याप्रमाणे 'नॉर्मलायझेशन'ची आणि औद्योगिकीकरणाची होती. त्या दिशेने संस्थानिर्मितीचे प्रयत्न चालू होते. पहिल्या दोन तीन दशकांत जोसेफ एम. मिलान रौरेल यांनी युरोपियन पद्धतीच्या साहित्यिक आणि संस्थात्मक प्रारूपाचे अनुकरण करण्याचा प्रयत्न केला. १९३१ ते १९३६ मध्ये कॅटलन सरकारची सांस्कृतिक धोरणपत्रिका तयार झाली. त्यात राष्ट्रीय रंगमंचाची कल्पना होती. या कल्पना स्पेनमधील यादवीच्या आणि फ्रॅकोच्या काळात मूकच बनल्या. १९४० मध्ये बार्सिलोनामध्ये सार्वजनिक थिएटर उभारण्याचे प्रयत्न झाले. तिथे कॅटलन भाषेतील नाटककारांच्या नाटकाचे नियमितपणे प्रयोग करण्याचे ठरले होते; परंतु १९५० च्या सुमारास आर्थिक आणि वैचारिक संघटनात्मक अपयशामुळे ते बंद पडले. १९६८ ते १९७४ या काळातही छोट्या प्रमाणावर प्रयत्न झाले. पण कॅटलनवर स्पॅनिश भाषेची सक्ती फ्रॅको राजवटीकडून झाली. १९६० ते १९७६ या काळात स्वत: कॅटलन रंगभूमीचे कार्यकर्ते काम करतच होते. यातून कॅटलन राष्ट्रीय रंगभूमीचा वारसा तयार झाला.

लोकशाहीच्या काळात प्रेक्षागृहाच्या इमारतींचे बांधकाम झाले. फ्रॅंकोच्या मृत्यूनंतर नट आणि दिग्दर्शकांची एक परिषद संघटित झाली. ही 'नॉर्मलायझेशन'ची सुरुवात म्हटता येईल. यावर युरोपमधील व्यवहाराची छाप होती. यात रंगभूमीच्या कार्याविषयी वेगळा दुष्टिकोन होता. कला म्हणजे श्रीमंतांच्या चैनीचा विषय नव्हे, तो माणसाच्या जगण्याच्या गरजेचा विषय आहे. यामधून एक कलात्मक आणि नैतिक बांधिलकीचा विचार निर्माण झाला. अनेक मागण्या सुरुवातीला मान्य झाल्या नाहीत. तरीही एक सार्वजनिक चर्चा सुरू झाली आणि वसंतमहोत्सवाला सुरुवात झाली. मूळ गटातून काही लोक बाहेर पडून अधिक प्रागतिक विचाराने रंगकर्मीची परिषद उभी राहिली. ही १९७९ पर्यंत कार्यरत होती आणि आजही स्मरणात आहे. १९७६ मध्ये तिआत्र ल्यूरे ही कॅटलोनियामधील सर्वांत स्थिर संघटना उभी राहिली. त्यांची जागा आजही वापरात आहे. आविष्कार स्वातंत्र्याचे प्रतीक म्हणून त्याला एक वेगळे स्थान आहे. प्रायोगिक पातळीवर अभिजात नाटकांचा पुनर्विचार, स्वभाषेतून नाटक करण्यासाठी बांधिलकी आणि यासाठी प्रयोगशाळा हे त्याच्या कामाचे विविध पैलू. त्यांच्यावर 'परकीय भाषांमधील प्रयोगांना प्राधान्य देऊन कॅटलन भाषेला मागे ठेवणारे' अशी टीकाही झाली. १९८८ मध्ये ही सार्वजनिक संस्था झाली. बार्सिलोनाच्या नागरी प्रशासनाचा पाठिंबा मिळाला होता. याचे मोठ्या प्रमाणावर नूतनीकरण होऊन बार्सिलोना युरोपियन रंगभूमीचे एक केंद्र बनावे यासाठी वेगवेगळ्या दिशांनी संसाधन स्रोत जमा झाले आणि नृत्य आणि नाटक यांना घर मिळाले. १९९७ मध्ये पास्कुआल हा युरोपात प्रसिद्धी पावलेला दिग्दर्शक येथील कलादिग्दर्शक म्हणून रुजू झाला. फेब्रुवारी २००२ पर्यंत या प्रकल्पाचे काम पूर्ण होऊन एक ८०० आसनव्यवस्थेचे आणि एक लहान प्रायोगिक कामासाठी २०० चे प्रेक्षागृह अत्याधुनिक सोयींनी सुसज्ज उभे राहिले. २००३ मध्ये ॲलेक्स रिगोला ल्युरेच्या प्रमुखपदावर रुजू झाले. त्यांनी आधुनिक युरोपियन प्रवाहांशी नाते जोडणारी निर्मिती स्थिर नटसंच यांच्या योजनेने आंतरराष्ट्रीय पातळीवर संस्थेचे नाव पोचवले. त्यांनी रंगमंचावर आणलेली मामेट ब्रेख्त आणि शेक्सपियर यांची नाटके आधुनिक तंत्रज्ञान आणि संगीत यांचा वापर करून नेत्रदीपक स्वरूपात आली. खेरीज त्यांनी कॅटलन नाटककारांना, नृत्यरचनाकारांना आणि संगीतकारांना मोठा वाव दिला.

फ्रॅंकोप्रणित परिनिरीक्षण आणि नियंत्रण उठल्यावर आणि १९७९ मध्ये कॅटलन स्वायत्ततेचा अधिनियम झाल्यावर या व्यवसायाला अखेर स्वतःच्या आकांक्षा पूर्ण करण्याची संधी मिळाली. १९८२ पासून कॅटलन नाटकाला विशेष उठाव मिळाला. संधी आणि प्रेरक वातावरण यात पुढची वाटचाल सुलभ झाली. झोसेप मारिया फ्लोटाट्स या नट दिग्दर्शकाने अनेक प्रकारे प्रयत्न करून राष्ट्रीय रंगभूमीच्या निर्मितीकडे लक्ष वेधले. १९८४ पासून चालू असलेल्या प्रयत्नांची परिणती या रंगभूमीची निर्मिती होण्यात आणि फ्लोटाट्स यांना त्या संस्थेचे संस्थापक दिग्दर्शक म्हणून मान्यता देण्यात आली.

या संस्थेचे भव्य संकुल उभे राहिले. तरी त्यात वाद, वादळे आणि धोरणात्मक बदल या गोष्टी होतच राहिल्या. कॅटलोनियाच्या अस्मितेचा रंगमंच सतत स्वत:ची जागा राखण्यासाठी जागरुक राहिला. कॅटलन रंगभूमीवरील काही महत्त्वाच्या प्रयोगांची नोंदही या लेखात घेतली आहे. त्यात नर्तक नृत्यरचनाकार या सर्वांच्याच आविष्काराला जागा मिळाली.

गेल्या दशकात विकेंद्रीकरणाची प्रक्रिया सुरू झाली आहे. रंगभूमी अस्थिरतेच्या कचाट्यात राहू नये यासाठी प्रयत्न होत असतात. समाजातील तळागाळातल्या आणि कामगारवर्गाच्या आस्थांना स्पर्श करत राहणारी ही रंगभूमी वेगवेगळे प्रयोग करत आली आहे आणि आजच्या काळात स्वत:चे स्थान कायम करून उभी आहे.

The term "normalization" is typically employed within Catalan political and linguistic circles to refer to the process of recuperation, revival, and relegitimization of Catalan cultural and intellectual life that ensued following the period of the Franco dictatorship (1939-1975). Here, to be "normal" is to move from the periphery to the centre, to be regarded as valid rather than illicit, and to be visible and vociferous even obvious and everyday—instead of obstructed, silenced, or relegated to the margins of exile, the recesses of memory, or the darkness of invisibility. The path along which the contemporary Catalan theatre scene has struggled to recover and reconstitute the professional legitimacy and visibility that it lost during the dictatorship has been a complex and polemical process, for there would be concerns with regard to the distribution of public subventions for the theatre, the diminished support for the figure of the playwright or author (in favour of the director), and the privileging of imagebased performance over text-based drama. Josep M. Benet iJornet, one of Catalonia's most prominent dramatists, who began staging his works in the 1960s, has likened the "normalcy" of the current period of Catalan theatre history to the arrival of the Jewish people at the Promised Land following their Exodus from Egypt and their subsequent desert crossing.¹ Benet's focus is the situation of text-based drama in Catalan; that is, the literary genre that, during the post-war period of the dictatorship, was perhaps most vulnerable to censorship. Once the desert was crossed, however, as he observes, the path to "normalcy" was still not complete, and new challenges would ensue.

In democratic times, as was the case during the Franco dictatorship, the presence of the Catalan language as a vehicle of theatrical expression has continued to hold symbolic value as a crucial marker of identity and a vindication of Catalan culture. For many contemporary Catalan dramatists and theatre practitioners, innately conscious of the oppressive realities of the past, the linguistic distinction appears to have taken precedence above all other thematic or aesthetic indicators of national identity. To write and/or stage a play in Catalan is, in effect, to inscribe and reclaim a specific cultural space.

Within the complex space of contemporary Catalan cultural identity, there has been great difficulty, as Helena Buffery as observed, in characterizing with precision the idea of a national stage, for it is a notion whose meaning fluctuates according to "diverse claims to legitimacy," as well as a varied range of political, historical, geographic and/or social perspectives.ⁱⁱ Despite varying contemporary connotations, Catalan theatrical life throughout the twentieth-century was, nevertheless, largely underpinned by a desire for normalization and institutionalization, derived in part from the nationalist dreams of the *noucentista* movement, which was named for the year 1900. Such aspirations surfaced during the early part of the century in the voices of key figures, such as Josep M. Millàs-Raurell, a vital intellectual force, who, during the 1920s and 1930s, sought to bring the Catalan stage in line with European literary and institutional models.ⁱⁱⁱ Likewise, during the period comprising 1931 to 1936, the Republican Generalitat (government of Catalonia) articulated a cultural policy advocating the creation of a National Theatre of Catalunya. Its goals, which, under

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"normal" circumstances, would have been considered worthy of any modern industrialized nation, would fall silent with the advent of the Spanish Civil War and the subsequent censorship practices of the Franco Regime.^{iv}

Significant precedents with regard to normalization and institutionalization emerged during the period of the dictatorship, though not without severe difficulties and constraints. Enric Gallén recounts the attempt to create a public Teatre Municipal de Barcelona in the 1940s, and how, in 1949, the formation of the Patronat del TeatreCatalà (Advisory Board of Catalan Theatre) of Barcelona's Teatre Romea represented an effort to devote programming to Catalan drama and to promote, in large part, the work of author Josep Maria de Sagarra. Other dramatists, such as Ferran Soldevila, Frederic Soler, ÀngelGuimerà, AdriàGual and IgnasiIglésias were included in the Romea project; vet the Patronat died a precipitous death in the early 1950s, the result of economic, conceptual and organizational failures.^v Gallén calls attention, in addition, to the activities of the Capsa Theatre, a platform for the Catalan independent theatre groups, and to the failed, short-lived project that was the TeatroNacional de Barcelona (1968-74), a theatre devoted to Spanish-language productions, officially-sanctioned (and imposed) by the Franco Regime under the auspices of the Spanish Ministry of Information and Tourism.vi While the non-professional, non-official, and sometimes furtive activities of the AgrupacióDramàtica de Barcelona (1955-63) and the Escolad'ArtDramàticAdrià Gual (1960-76), critical components of the Catalan independent theatre movement, constituted a renewal of the Catalan theatre scene, they also, in effect, laid the foundation for what would become, in the future, the repertoire of a national theatre.vii

During the democratic period, the renovation of Catalan theatrical life has entailed the construction and restoration of theatrical infrastructures in Barcelona (and, more broadly, Catalonia) whose existence had been thwarted by the dictatorship. It has also included the remodelling of non-theatrical spaces and the recovery of locales that had been transformed into cinemas. The year immediately following Franco's death, 1976, represents a key moment, in that it marked the establishment of the Assemblea d'Actorsi Directors (Standing Conference of Actors and Directors). With its creation, the Catalan stage embarked on the road to normalization. Inspired by European paradigms that included Jean Vilar's Théâtre National Populaire and Giorgio Strehler's Piccolo Teatro di Milano, Catalan theatre professionals during the democratic transition were motivated by a seemingly utopian and equalitarian view of the theatre as a public service. viii They did not regard culture as a luxury; instead, it was considered a necessity for ensuring the overall wellbeing of society. Emphasis was thus placed on "an aesthetic and ethical commitment," rather than commercial and economic interests.^{ix} It was with these concerns in mind that the Assemblea launched an appeal in 1976 for the creation of a Teatre de Barcelona, a Teatre de Catalunya, and a LleidelTeatre (Theatre Law). Although these demands were initially denied, the Assemblea did succeed in inciting public debate and establishing, that same year, the Grec summer festival under the auspices of the

। ३१६। अक्षर वाङ्मय। जुलै २०१२ ते मार्च २०१३। नाट्यविशेषांक।

Barcelona municipal government. It was an event met with resounding public enthusiasm, whose opening night each June continues to serve as a reminder of past struggles.^x Shortly after the creation of the first Assemblea, an alternative group with more progressive political tendencies broke away to form the Assemblea de Treballadors de l'Espectacle(Standing Conference of Theatre Workers). Its activities were based at Barcelona's Saló Diana until 1979, and it is still remembered today for its stunning production of the classic romantic work *Don JuanTenorio* (1844), by José Zorrilla (1817-1893), at the historic Born Market in November 1976.^{xi}

The year 1976 also marked the creation of the Teatre Lliure, Catalonia's most stable, accomplished and distinguished repertory company. The Lliure was founded by Lluís Pasqual, Pere Planella, FabiàPuigserver, and Carlota Soldevila as a private collective with public aspirations.xii Its original performance space, still in use, is located in the Gràcia district of Barcelona in a late-nineteenth-century building that once belonged to the Catalan workers cooperative La Lleialtat.xiii Faithful to its name and to its establishment during the democratic transition, the Lliure-both the building and the resident company-has stood since its beginnings as an emblem of freedom of expression, a vindication of Catalan-language theatre productions, and a laboratory for experimentation. Its unique view of the creative process has emphasized the notion of artisanship, as opposed to authorship, in its innovative interpretations of classic plays drawn from an international repertoire. The Lliure has functioned as a formative training ground for many talented Catalan actors; yet it has also been a site of contention. During the late 1970s, for example, the theatre was criticized by several Catalan dramatists for privileging the so-called "universal" repertoire rather than encouraging the creation of original Catalan-language plays.xiv

In 1988, the Lliure became a public entity, the FundacióTeatreLliure-TeatrePúblic de Barcelona, with the support of the Barcelona municipal government. In 1989, through the perseverance of director/scenic designer Puigserver, the Barcelona City Council granted the Lliure its dream of creating world-class theatre space: plans were begun to renovate a building known as the Palau d'Agricultura, an historic building situated along the slope of Montjuïc, originally constructed for the Barcelona International Exposition of 1929.^{xv} During the late 1990s, the Ajuntament (municipal government) and Diputació (provincial council) also began converting the lower part of Montjuïc into the Ciutat del Teatre, a multi-space "theatre city" that would contain the new Lliure, along with the Mercat de les Flors, the Teatre Grec (centrepiece of the Barcelona summer arts festival), and the new headquarters of the Institut del Teatre de la Diputació de Barcelona (the conservatory of theatre of dance). Motivated by cultural-political aspirations to transform Barcelona into a European theatre capital, the Generalitat and Spain's central government also provided funding for the new Lliure and the Ciutat del Teatre.

In 1997, Pasqual, who had garnered notoriety throughout Europe for his directorial work, returned to Barcelona from his position as director of the Théâtre de l'Odéon in

- vii. Gallén, "Catalan Theatrical Life," 23-24. See also Jordi Coca, *L'AgrupacióDramàtica de Barcelona: Intent de teatrenacional (1955-1963)* (Barcelona: Edicions 62/Institut del Teatre de la Diputació de Barcelona, 1978).
- viii. Jordi Coca, "Vint-i-cincanysdelGrec," Avui, 25 June 2000), 35.
- ix. Lluís Pasqual, *ProjecteCiutat del Teatre*, http://www.ciutateatre.com (accessed June 1999).
- x. Gallén, "Catalan Theatrical Life," 30-32; Coca, "Vint-i-cincanys," 35.
- xi. AntoniBartomeus, *Elsautors del teatrecatalà: testimonid'unamarginació* (Barcelona: Curial, 1976). See also, Gonzalo Pérez de Olaguer, *Elsanysdifícils del teatrecatalà (memòriacrítica)* (Tarragona: Arola, 2008).
- xii. Lluís Pasqual, ProjecteCiutat del Teatre.
- xiii. Cf. EmiliTeixidor, "Petitahistòriadels primers deuanys del Lliure," in *Teatre Lliure: 1976/1986* (Barcelona: Teatre Lliure/Institut del Teatre de la Diputació de Barcelona, 1987), 11-21.
- xiv. See, for example, Benet iJornet, *Material d'endarroc* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 2010) and Rodolf Sirera, "Les misèries de l'autorteatral," *Serra d'Or* (December 1977), 101-3.
- xv. On FabiàPuigserver, see Guillem-JordiGraells and AntoniBueso, Fabià Puigserver (Barcelona: Diputació de Barcelona, 1996) and Fabià Puigserver: scénographe, ed. Guillem-Jordi and Giorgio UrsiniUrsic, Trans. Gérard Richet and Myriam Tanant (Paris: Union des Théâtres de l'Europe, 1995).
- xvi. Gallén, "Catalan Theatrical Life," 32-4
- xvii. Josep Maria Flotats, Un projecte per al teatrenacional, Prefaces JordiPujol and Pasqual Maragall, Intro. Max Cahner (Barcelona: Edicions de la Revista de Catalunya, 1989), 25.
- xviii. See Helena Buffery's adept deconstruction of the rhetoric of Flotats's *Projecte* in "Theater Space and Cultural Identity," 199.
- xix. Cf. Jacinto Antón, "DomènecReixach, Director del TeatreNacional: El TNC debeempezarya a respirarnormalidady no morbo," *El País*, 18 July 1998, 26 and "Flotatsdeja el TNC con nuevascríticas al Gobierno de Pujol," *El País*, 1 July 1998; and Marcos Ordóñez, "Una nit al Nacional," *Avui*, 22 September 1997 and "No entenc res," *Avui*, 17 November 1997.
- "El mètodeGrönholm' baja el telóntrastresaños de éxito en el Poliorama," *La Vanguardia*, 15 June 2007. A simultaneous premiere took place in Madrid in Spanish, under the direction of Tamzin Towsend at the Teatro Marquina (with Carlos Hipólito, Cristina Marcos, Jorge Roelas, and Elezar Ortiz), where it ran for two seasons.
- xxi. See "Domènec Reixachdeja el TNC con ocupaciónequilibrada en lastressalas," *La Vanguardia*, 29 June 2006.
- xxii. Clua, Guillem, Marburg (Barcelona: Proa/TeatreNacional de Catalunya, 2010).
- xxiii. Llei6/2008, del 13 de maig, del Consel lNacional de la Culturai de les Arts.Barcelona, Department de la Presidència, Generalitat de Catalunya (May 2008).