

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens  
Department of English Language and Literature  
M. A. Programme  
“Anglophone Literature and the Greek Element”

*Antigone and Dionysus in '69: When Performance Meets Rebellion*

Student's Name: Ploumaki Eleftheria

i.d. number: 217023

Supervisor: Blatanis Konstantinos

Committee: Blatanis Konstantinos, Germanou Maro & Karavanta Asimina

Date of Submission: 08/02/2019

Declaration: This submission is my own work. Any quotation from, or description of, the work of others is acknowledged herein by reference to the sources, whether published or unpublished.

Signature:

## Abstract

This thesis will discuss two prominent and highly influential American rewrites of Greek tragedy that have marked the cultural history of the 1960s. Specifically, I will examine The Living Theater's *Antigone* (1967), which is an adaptation of Bertolt Brecht's version of Sophocles's homonymous tragedy, and The Performance Group's *Dionysus in '69* (1968), which is a radical reinterpretation of Euripides's *Bacchae*. The primary purpose of the current thesis is to thoroughly discuss how The Living Theater and The Performance Group managed to give a contemporary political interpretation to an ancient subject matter and thereby express sensibilities unique not only to the extremely politicized and cultural environment of the sixties, but also to their own revolutionary political convictions. More precisely, great emphasis will be placed on the distinctive ways in which *Antigone* and *Dionysus in '69* reflect but also reinforce and contribute primarily to the vehement anti-war movement which arose to oppose U.S. government's extensive military intervention in Vietnam.

By attending to larger historical, social, cultural but mostly political events of the decade during which both plays were first performed, this thesis will examine the possible interrelations between these events and the experimentation these two theater groups undertook in that particular historical moment. More to the point, the thesis focuses on the spirit and structure of the late sixties in order to discuss its possible impact on The Living Theater and The Performance Group's *Antigone* and *Dionysus in '69* respectively. By examining at length the reasons behind both groups' choice to revisit these two ancient Greek tragedies, I aim to demonstrate that there are political and aesthetic reasons for their rediscovery in the turbulent decade of the sixties. In particular, I will explore in what ways and to what extent *Antigone* and *Bacchae* appear to be a fertile resource for probing issues related to the sociopolitical and cultural context of that time. In the case of The Living Theater, the critical reasons that led Julian Beck and Judith Malina to return towards both the Sophoclean prototype and Bertolt Brecht's modernist rereading of it will be taken into serious consideration. However, closer attention will be paid to the reasons that led the group to adhere with remarkable fidelity to Brecht's adaptation. Furthermore, while examining The Living Theater, great emphasis will be given to

the group's revolutionary political agenda, and, specifically, to their anarchist and pacifist beliefs. In this context, I intend to demonstrate that the latter have been embedded in *Antigone*, while the play itself seems to have been motivated by them. In the case of The Performance Group, the considerable negative criticism that has been leveled against the discrepancy between Richard Schechner's life and philosophical beliefs is taken into consideration, but I will argue that the critics fail to realize that Schechner, through his work, engages in a counter-hegemonic act, as he performs a role that the Italian Marxist philosopher, Antonio Francesco Gramsci, felt intellectuals had to play.

More than on any other aspect or parameter, this thesis focuses on the exact ways through which *Antigone* and *Dionysus in '69* manage to promote a revolutionary frame of reference. By exploring the techniques and methods both groups developed to revitalize a tradition of revolt, I will primarily emphasize on the revolutionary potential of these experimental endeavors. Specifically, I intend to demonstrate that The Living Theater and The Performance Group, by means of placing the transformative power of performance, as well as its revolutionary potential, at the forefront, attempt to promote a rebellious, anti-hierarchical and at the same time communal ethos during this period of crisis. My research also intends to shed light on the ways that both groups manage to expand our preconceptions of what theater is or is meant to be.

## Contents

1. Introduction .....	1
1.1. History and Political Movements .....	1
1.2. Historical Context: 1967 -1968 .....	2
1.3. Political Climate .....	4
2. The Living Theater; Antigone.....	9
2.1. Introduction.....	9
2.2 Beck and Malina.....	9
2.3 Why Brecht’s Antigone?.....	11
2.4. Staging the Revolution.....	14
3. Richard Schechner and <i>Dionysus in 69</i> .....	23
3.1. Introduction.....	23
3.2. Richard Schechner: an “Organic Intellectual”.....	24
3.3. Why Bacchae?.....	26
3.4. Performing the revolution .....	29
4. Conclusion.....	37
Works Cited.....	45

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Historical and Political Movements

The sixties- This is the decade that gave birth to *Antigone* and *Dionysus in '69*; two plays whose very names appear in almost every discussion or examination of the radical and revolutionary potential of theatre. *Antigone* is Julian Beck and Judith Malina's adaptation of Bertolt Brecht's version of Frederick Hölderlin's translation of Sophocles's homonymous tragedy, which was premiered by The Living Theatre in Krefeld Germany, on 18 February 1967. *Dionysus in '69* is the title of Richard Schechner's radical interpretation of Euripides's tragedy *Bacchae*, first performed by The Performance Group in New York, the following year and specifically on 6 June 1968. In order to understand and analyze in detail the way both plays have facilitated or even revitalized a tradition of revolt, it is of extreme significance to attend to larger historical, social, economic, but mostly political events of the decade during which they were first performed. The main purpose of this chapter is thus to establish a historical and sociopolitical background and perspective of the 1960s in order to depict how The Living Theatre's *Antigone* and The Performance Group's *Dionysus in '69* "articulated what was already within society not something exterior to it" (Marwick 358). Only after thoroughly examining the spirit and structure of the decade that shaped The Living Theatre and The Performance Group's artistic sensibilities and gave birth to this specific mode of theatre, is someone able to discuss, as I will do in the second and third chapters of my thesis, *Antigone* and *Dionysus in '69* as two plays that create a revolutionary frame of reference.

This revolutionary frame of reference would not have been emerged if the political, economic and cultural climate of the sixties had not been a hospitable environment for such artistic explorations. The emergence of the civil rights and feminist movements, the rise of the New Left, the opposition to racial segregation, and, most importantly, the opposition to the Vietnam War became the principal focus of a large part of the American society. The latter protested the need for change in many areas, including democracy, egalitarianism, artistic liberation, sexual and bodily freedom, but also envisioned collectivism as an antidote to the materialist and individualistic ethos entrenched in American culture. The aforementioned demands gave rise to countercultural movements that found in theater the means, through which

they could express, or even protest their political agenda, as well as their aspirations and ethos. It is not coincidental that the turbulent decade of the sixties gave birth to a great majority of experimental theaters motivated by the desire to create plays that would “challenge and help to modify [what they saw as] ‘repressive democracy’ ”, since according to the American literary critic and Marxist political theorist Fredric Jameson the sixties was “a moment in which the enlargement of capitalism on a global scale simultaneously produced an immense freeing or unbinding of social movements, a prodigious release of untheorized new forces” (Marwick 358; Jameson 208).<sup>1</sup>

## **1.2 Historical Context: 1967 -1968**

It is within the above climate of political turmoil and social upheaval that the first performances of The Living Theatre’s *Antigone* and The Performance Group’s *Dionysus in '69* take place in the most tumultuous years in modern American history; in 1967 and 1968 respectively. These were two landmark years for Europe as well as for the American culture and society and its theater. These turbulent years marked the end of a decade of cultural ferment, which experienced a social revolution that promised to do the impossible; to radically question the antidemocratic, authoritarian and hierarchical culture, its social norms, as well as the very mode of expression of the dominant forms of culture that were in force at the time. These years may have signaled the end of this volatile era, but at the same time, they have signaled the prolongation of the Vietnam War. It is of extreme significance that both *Antigone* (1967) and *Dionysus in '69* (1968) were performed two and three years after the U.S involvement in the Vietnam War, respectively.

It is worth noting that less than two months before *Antigone* was first performed in Germany, news about U.S. government’s extensive military intervention in Vietnam had spread around the globe. Specifically, on 1 January 1967 “the number of US troops in Vietnam reache[d] 380.000” (Wilmeth and Curley 50). The escalating role of the US military in Vietnam resulted in an increase in antiwar sentiment that gave birth to the Anti-war movement, which subsequently mobilized individuals who either peacefully protested against the war or committed acts of violence. The Vietnam War could not fail to have an impact upon both The Living

Theatre and The Performance Group. The first, adhered to their anarchist and pacifist philosophy, resorted to theatre and specifically to *Antigone* in order to express their opposition to the war; a war they considered not only morally reprehensible, but also the outcome of the American society's military - industrial complex.<sup>2</sup> Julian Beck and Judith Malina relied on art as a vehicle of change, since it is in *Antigone* that they saw "an analysis of the nature of nonviolent protest and the play [as] deal[ing] with the pitting of violence against nonviolence [as well as] rais[ing] a question of how do you create protest against an authoritarian figure or government or circumstances without the cities falling" (Beck et al. 33).

By staging *Antigone*, a play whose very *raison d'être* is the theme of civil disobedience and specifically Antigone's transgressive burial act that is performed in the prohibited context of Creon's politics, Beck and Malina emphasized the need for individuals to "take action before it is too late" (Beck, *Life of Theatre* 66). They managed to illustrate the futility of war, whether this is identified as the civil war between two city-states; Argos and Thebes, as in the case of *Antigone*, or the Vietnam War, as in the case of America at the time. With *Antigone* they performed the crisis and demonstrated the consequences of a warlike society, which are nothing else but death and destruction. The great impact the Vietnam War had on The Living Theatre's production of *Antigone*, is also encapsulated in the critic Irwin Silber's open letter to the group in which he claims: "Let tomorrow understand that a generation came of age in America in 1967 and 1968, the children of Vietnam" (86-87). The "generation" and the "children of Vietnam", Silber refers to, is The Living Theatre, who, repelled by the very notion of war, sought to depict its atrocities through *Antigone*.

In a similar vein, Richard Schechner's *Dionysus in '69* was staged the following year, in 1968; a year that was considered the most traumatic in both American and European history. In Europe, 1968 was punctuated by the Prague Spring and the demonstrations in Paris in May. When examining The Performance Group, greater attention should be paid to the historical events that occurred in America at the time, since, in contrast to The Living Theatre that also toured in Europe between 1964 and 1968, Schechner's troupe was performing in America.<sup>3</sup> Only then is it possible to deeply comprehend or at least envision Schechner's enigmatic play, as a promise of a rebellion that is yet to come. For Americans, 1968 was marked by the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, the My Lai massacre of hundreds of Vietnamese civilians as well as the

assassination of Martin Luther King in April.<sup>4</sup> But more significantly, it was the assassination of Robert Kennedy on June 5th, one day before the first performance of *Dionysus in '69* that shattered America's last hope that "a president with an anti-war ticket could be elected the following November" (Hall 1). The aforementioned traumatic event could not but influence Richard Schechner, who managed to create a glimpse of hope in an otherwise gloomy decade. His radical interpretation of *Bacchae* became the instrument and intermediary for the revolution that Dionysus demanded that involved his candidacy for president of the U.S.A in the following year, in 1969. "If anything, [*Dionysus in 69*] demonstrates the degree not only to which each era chooses the interpretations that correspond to its own preoccupations, but to which those preoccupations regulate even the choice of a particular drama itself" (Zeitlin 51).

### 1.3 Political Climate

The aforementioned events have allowed us to historically locate both plays in order to gain a deeper understanding of the historical period during which they were first performed. However, it would be a mistake to examine the historical context of the decade as separate from its political aspirations, since the latter seem to be defined as well as be dependent on the former. It is thus of equal importance to examine the political climate of the sixties in an attempt to account for its possible impact on The Living Theatre's *Antigone* and The Performance Group's *Dionysus in '69*. The sixties- these "[y]ears of [h]ope and [d]ays of [r]age", as have been described by the American sociologist and political activist Tom Gitlin- were a decade characterized by an unprecedented politicization, which permeated all vital areas of social life.<sup>5</sup> Theatre, therefore, could not be an exception. This decade saw the rise of a new wave of "insurgent political and social movements . . . – including civil rights and black power, the New Left, environmentalism and feminism [that] sought to transform the beliefs and values deeply rooted in American political culture" (Isserman and Kazin 4-5). The aforementioned antisystemic movements as well as various individual activists rebelled against a society, which they found militaristic, authoritative, oppressive, individualistic, unjust but more significantly undemocratic. The dissenters saw post-industrial capitalist society as the main cause of human exploitation, alienation and suffering. By directly participating in social movements, they attempted to resist the coercive forces of the state and dismantle its structures in order to propose



a redefinition of politics, a new kind of democracy that would be direct and participatory. Characteristic of their aforementioned effort is the argument developed by the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in their 1962 Port Huron Statement, in which they claim that politics need to be redefined as “the art of collectively creating an acceptable pattern of social relations” (Bloom and Breines 55). It is worth quoting at length here the historian Maurice Isserman’s description of the various movements’ objectives, since it summarizes the decade’s main sensibilities and concerns, and thus allows us to examine the ways *Antigone* and *Dionysus in '69* reflect these sensibilities:

The dissenters advocated pacifism instead of Cold War, racial and class equality instead of a hierarchy of wealth and status, a politics that prized direct democracy over the clash of interest groups, a frankness toward sex instead of a rigid split between the public and the intimate, and a boredom with cultural institutions — from schools to supermarkets— that taught Americans to praise their country, work hard, and consume joyfully. Dissenters did not agree that an expanding economy was the best measure of human happiness and empathized with the minority of their fellow citizens who had little to celebrate. (11)

Julian Beck, Judith Malina and Richard Schechner; these charismatic individuals realized that theatre could remain neither stagnant nor inert to society’s ills. Instead, like the New Left and the social movements, it must play a decisive role and foster societal change. They saw theatre, life and revolution as inseparable entities, while they saw themselves similar to the guerrilla fighter, who “[f]rom the very beginning of the struggle he has the intention of destroying an unjust order and therefore an intention, more or less hidden, to replace the old with something new” (Davis 130). The degree to which the New Left and the social movements would have influenced both The Living Theatre and The Performance Group may be difficult to assess. However, what is certain is that *Antigone* and *Dionysus in '69* reflect the New Left and the social movements’ sensibilities and concerns. Specifically, in terms of both subject matter and stage organization, *Antigone* and *Dionysus in '69* prove that they are more than anything two plays that not only emphasize the denial of authority, but also promote revolt as the antidote to the ills of society.

In the case of The Living Theatre’s play by performing the prohibited burial act, *Antigone* transcends the legal boundaries in order to honor the enemy, constituting this way her

conflict with Kreon, the ἄρχων of the *polis*. By projecting her unwritten laws as the moral force that guides and justifies her act, Antigone “does not [only] want to mourn and bury her brother but beyond that his death, his body, also provide an occasion for [her] to object to the democratic order of the day” (Honig 97). A democratic order that she finds deeply undemocratic. Julian Beck and Judith Malina could not have found a better paradigm of political dissidence than through the figure of Antigone. As Beck claims in an interview with Lyon Phelps: “[W]e did *Antigone* to see if it was possible to do a play 2.500 years old with a strong, modern political interpretation to see if we could relate to the poetry and wisdom of the Greeks, of Marx, of Brecht, of the madness force that is Artaud. We feel that it is possible to revolutionize ourselves without burning down the past” (130). The figure of Antigone seems not only to reflect, but also to embody the New Left and the social movements’ call for dissent and denial of authority, but most significantly the call for a social revolution. As Theodore Shank argues: “[i]t was natural that they would be drawn to a play contrasting the pacifism of Antigone with the tyrannical government of Kreon and demonstrating the civil disobedience of Antigone as a necessity of conscience” (19).

In the same line of thinking, The Performance Group’s *Dionysus in '69* embodies the epitome of revolt. It is Dionysus the mythic figure that Richard Schechner sought to explore, in order to prove that America needs to imitate the god’s rebellious, irrational, chaotic, and even violent nature, because violence is considered to be a prize worth paying for attaining personal liberty. As William Hunter Shephard recalls the reason why they chose *Bacchae* is because “the basic themes of the play—violence, madness, ecstasy, challenge of authority, moral choice—were all issues of great concern in American society at the time” (52). Dionysus/William Finley being lifted up on the crowd’s shoulders purported in an ecstatic voice; “You have nothing to lose but your chains... we must have absolute freedom.” It is this Dionysian freedom that reveals the New Left’s great influence upon *Dionysus in '69*. The New Left and the political movements of the decade struggled to acquire this Dionysian freedom that Schechner also envisioned. A liberation from the constraints of a capitalist society, which not only expropriates individuals, but also deprives them of their most fundamental human right; their imagination. Euripides’s tragedy allowed Schechner a “sensitive revisiting of critical moments of the West’s experience,” since the latter’s highly experimental play interrogated the axes of power in society by proposing a revolution through the Dioysian figure, proposing this way an alternative in a world where there

are none (Sanders 44). One could argue that the decade of the 1960s could be seen to be defined by the Dionysian temper, since the latter represents energy, love, chaos, rebellion, death, but also life. It should not be forgotten that it is under the spell of Dionysus that Agave even murders her own son, Pentheus, the king of Thebes, who highly questions Dionysus's divinity.

*Antigone* and *Dionysus in '69* were performed in this extremely politicized cultural environment. They reflected the decade's political fervor, but most importantly the New Left and the social movements' democratic impulse and rebellious ethos. *Antigone* and *Dionysus in '69* did not exist in a vacuum, instead, they were nothing but products of their times and as such they should be approached. They were the outcomes of a period of intense historical and political change. Within this climate of massive political convulsions, The Living Theatre and The Performance Group via these plays offered "an alternative to the theatre of the dominant complacent middle-class society which tended to perpetuate the status quo in its aesthetics, politics, working methods and techniques" (Shank 1).

Although many experimental theatres emerged during these volatile years, The Living Theatre and The Performance Group stand at the forefront of the avant-garde scene. The reasons behind their prominent position should be sought not only in their politically radical and theatrically innovative productions, but also in their commitment to emancipate audiences and "generate popular unrest" while at the same time "change the terms of social conversation" (Sell 5). However, in order to do so, first, they had to question the very role they occupied as directors and thus the authority which this role represents. By questioning the role of the individual directorial figure, they denied any notion of hierarchy and instead seemed to promise that "collective creation is a secret weapon of the people" (Beck, *Life of the Theatre* 85). They questioned "the theoretical, sociopolitical, and material- aesthetic assumptions of their times and places, but also produced innovative methods for addressing these assumptions. Methods that were cognizant of the critique of avant-garde thought mounted by the liberal intelligentsia" (Sell 44). These methods and techniques will be thoroughly analyzed in the second and third chapters of my thesis, in which great attention will be paid to both groups' use of performance.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that these avant-garde groups were not the first to attempt a marriage of theatre with politics. Similar attempts occurred in the 1930s during which political plays were also produced. However, it is during the volatile 1960s that political theatre reached a high level of activity and visibility.

<sup>2</sup> For a greater understanding of the American society's industrial-military complex, see *The Military-Industrial Complex and American Society* by Sterling Michael Pavelec and specifically pages xxi-xxii. See bibliography for further information on the issue.

<sup>3</sup> For further information on The Living Theatre's performances in Europe, see Theodore Shank page 14. See bibliography for further information on the issue.

<sup>4</sup> The "1968 My Lai massacre of hundreds of Vietnamese civilians including women and children . . . provoked outrage when it was revealed after an attempted cover-up in the fall of 1969." See Bradford, Martin D. page 148. Also see Wilmeth, Don B. and Jonathan Curley and specifically the chapter; "Timeline: Post- World War II to 1998", pages 51- 52. See bibliography for further information on the issue.

<sup>5</sup> The phrase "[y]ears of [h]ope and [d]ays of [r]age" comes from the title of Tom Gitlin's book; *Sixties: Years of Hope and Days of Rage*. See bibliography for further information on the issue.

## 2. THE LIVING THEATER; *ANTIGONE*

### 2.1 Introduction

The Living Theatre could not have found a better way to express their revolutionary political agenda, and specifically their anarchist and pacifist beliefs, than through the staging of *Antigone* in 1967. In order to discuss the exact ways through which The Living Theatre's *Antigone* manages to promote a revolutionary frame of reference, first attention must be paid to the troupe's radical political convictions. The latter have not only been embedded in *Antigone*, but also the play itself seems to have been motivated by them. Only after examining how The Living Theatre has integrated their political philosophy into the theatre, is it possible to comprehend the reason behind the group's choice to revisit Sophocles's tragedy. Why did Julian Beck and Judith Malina choose an ancient Greek tragedy? A play nearly two and a half millennia old in order to promote what Beck defined as the "Beautiful Non-violent Revolution" they envisioned? (qtd. in Biner 200).<sup>1</sup> Specifically, why did they choose Brecht's version of Sophocles's tragedy?

In what ways and to what extent has Brecht's play allowed them to revive a tradition of revolt, which they considered a moral imperative? How have they managed to give ancient subject matter a contemporary political interpretation and thereby express sensibilities unique not only to the extremely politicized and cultural environment of the sixties, but also to their own anarchist and pacifist philosophy? This chapter will attempt to shed some light on the aforementioned questions by carefully examining The Living Theatre's *Antigone* as a play that manages to encapsulate the troupe's artistic sensibilities and politics and in this way manages to become a powerful disruptive force to a "society that was speedily becoming apathetic" (Swift 628).

### 2.2 Julian Beck and Judith Malina

In contrast to Richard Schechner, Julian Beck and Judith Malina "did not come from the theatrical profession, but were drawn to theater as a means of expression for the social and

political commitment” (Shank 2). Influenced by Peter Kropotkin and Paul Goodman’s anarchist views as well as Dorothy Day’s pacifism, The Living Theatre envisioned a new social order that would be anarchist, revolutionary but mostly non-violent. Anarchism and pacifism; these revolutionary possibilities, which emerged as a response to “the debilitating isolation and lack of nerve felt by people,” had a significant impact on The Living Theatre’s life, thought, but mostly work (Taylor 207).

At this point, it is significant to consider an incident that occurred twenty years before *Antigone*’s first performance, in 1949, in Taxco, Mexico, and which played an essential role in reinforcing Beck and Malina’s anarchist and pacifist positions and led them to the realization that their theatre ought to “get closer to life” (Beck, “Barricades” 11). When a blind little boy, approached them and asked for money, they realized that their work “must ultimately aim at wiping out his pain, his poverty, his sickness . . . [but mostly] their causes” (Beck, *Life of Theatre* 82). From that moment onwards, theatre was reconceived as a serious calling “for an unconditional NO to the present society”; a calling that was primarily political and secondarily aesthetic (Beck qtd. in Shank 3). By consistently focusing on the questions of politics, the theatrical troupe prioritized the political over the aesthetic and expressed its commitment to using theatre as the ideal means for furthering social change. As Beck himself claimed “we are more concerned with being directly a part of the political activity of our time than . . . being a part of the theatrical activity of our time” (Ryan 9).

Although their choice to use theatre as merely a means of furthering social change attracted a lot of negative criticism from the theatrical intelligentsia of that time, Beck and Malina remained faithful to their original goal and performed *Antigone*. It is worth quoting at length here the theatre critic Margaret Croyden’s fierce criticism;

*Antigone* might have been the Living Theatre's masterpiece. Certainly, it had the makings of a masterpiece. But a sloppy approach to aesthetics, typical of the Becks, remained a central problem. If the Becks had been more adept at synthesizing styles, or if they had rectified either badly trained or untrained voices in the company, the production might have been splendid. But the Living Theatre actors lacked plain audibility; they shouted raucously, garbled their words

incoherently, or were otherwise difficult or impossible to understand; half the play was incomprehensible. (112)

In contrast to Croyden, the main purpose of this chapter is to prove that the aesthetic qualities of *Antigone* are neither overshadowed nor abandoned in favor of politics. Instead, by borrowing Linda Hutcheon's idea of an adaptation as coming second without being secondary, I attempt to argue that in the case of The Living Theatre, the artistic explorations may be second, however, they are "not to be [considered] secondary or inferior" (xiii). Instead, both aesthetics and politics should be seen as intertwined entities within theatre's web of signification, since the first are consciously employed in order to not only facilitate a modern political interpretation, but also to express the Living Theater's political stance.

### 2.3 Why Brecht's *Antigone*?

Having defined the philosophy of the theatrical troupe in largely political terms rather than aesthetic ones, one could easily understand the reason behind The Living Theater's choice to revisit Bertolt Brecht's *Antigone*. It appears natural that Julian Beck and Judith Malina, two self-proclaimed and dedicated anarchists and pacifists, would be drawn to a play whose very subject matter reflects their own political stance and moral philosophy. The reason why Beck and Malina chose Brecht's adaptation of Hölderlin's poetic translation of Sophocles's *Antigone* should not be considered as coincidental, since as early as 1964 – three years before *Antigone*'s first performance – Beck stated that they "would like to wrestle with Brecht's *Antigone*, his adaptation of Hölderlin's lines" ("Barricades" 15). In order to discuss how The Living Theater managed to stage the revolution it envisioned, first it is significant to examine the reasons that led them to confront contemporary politics through Brecht's version of *Antigone*. The latter appears to have paved the way for Beck and Malina not only to express the anarchist and pacifist views in their entirety, but also to explore new avenues of expression. Therefore, their choice should be regarded as serving a dual purpose, both in terms of theme and aesthetics.

What attracted Beck and Malina to Brecht's *Antigone* is the fact that "[p]olitical concern or engagement [lies in the work itself] and not in the mind of the observer", because according to the former editor of The Drama Review Michael Kirby "something somehow and to some extent

may be interpreted as being political does not mean that it is political” (130). However, The Living Theatre saw Brecht’s *Antigone* for what it is; a fundamentally political oriented adaptation that takes a clear political stance against war and imperialism, while at the same time “stresses collective cultural responsibility for historical disasters and the role of collaborators and those who passively tolerate imperialistic policies” (Foley 135). Set in a contemporary socio-historical and political context and specifically in a Berlin air raid shelter during the fall of Germany in 1945, Brecht’s version departs from Sophocles’s tragedy in many ways. Not only has he inserted *Antigone* into the tragedy of World War Two, but he also depicts Creon as a Nazi leader, or even Hitler himself. Brecht’s Creon is the ultimate tyrant, an undemocratic archon (ἄρχων) of a fascist state and a totalitarian regime, Nazi Germany and not a defender of the democratic polis, as Sophocles depicts him. He has become the embodiment of death, destruction and autocracy, but mostly of war and imperialism, since “[t]he tyrant . . . has engaged in an imperialistic war of aggression to acquire wealth in the form of metal from the mountains of Argos” (Foley 134).

Brecht deprives Creon of any worthy motives, placing at the forefront his imperialist pursuits and his hegemonic dominance, since he not only wishes to subjugate Argos to Thebes, but most importantly to ensure the accumulation of capital, which is iron. He has been turned into what Frank Jones and Gore Vidal described as a “power-drunk vulgarian whose mind keeps shouting, BEAT ARGOS!” (42). It is evident therefore that it is Brecht’s Creon that gave The Living Theatre the opportunity to develop strong political messages against American imperialism and specifically against the War in Vietnam, which they viewed as “a classic example of the way the American ruling class exploited helpless people to sustain a decadent capitalist system” (Herring 171). “[W]hereas in Sophocles the treason is armed rebellion, for Brecht it is rebellion from arms,” since in the latter’s version Polyneices and Eteocles are soldiers fighting on the same side against the Greek city of Argos (Jones and Vidal 39). They are not the Sophoclean enemies, who claim the throne and start a fight over sovereignty. Polyneices is killed and specifically hanged from a lamp-post for deserting Creon’s imperialistic war against Argos, and is thus punished and denied burial rights and mourning, in contrast to Eteocles who has received a dignified burial as is the custom. Brecht’s Creon thus becomes the instigator of war and the source of death both at home and abroad. Had Beck and Malina chosen to remain loyal to the Sophoclean Creon, they would not have been able to expose —to the extent that they



did— the deep complicity between fascism and capitalism as well as to express their anarchist beliefs; that the very existence of an *ἄρχον* or a state is a source of war, violence, individual repression, but mostly death.

Brecht appealed to The Living Theater more than Sophocles not only for his depiction of Creon's despotic imperialism and inhumanity, but also for his depiction of Antigone as a pacifist figure, who, repelled by Creon's ruthlessness, commits a nonviolent act against his authority. According to William R. Elwood the Brechtian Antigone becomes "the embodiment of peace in the face of Creon's overwhelming military power. It is Antigone's refusal to kill which characterizes her most clearly as an exponent of peace, [since] [w]hen Creon attempts through rhetoric, to lure her into the trap, she replies that it would be better to sit in ruins than with him in the house of the enemy" (58). Antigone embodies The Living Theater's pacifist views as well as anarchist ideals, since by disobeying Creon's decree, the ban on lamentation, and by choosing to bury her brother Polyneices, she commits an act of civil disobedience and thus becomes the ultimate paradigm of political dissidence. The Brechtian heroine expressed The Living Theater's belief in the necessity of revolt and disrespect of authority, especially when this authority is deeply undemocratic and tyrannical. Through her act, Antigone manages to interrupt Creon's sovereignty, its structure and temporality. She dares to challenge and resist Creon's war policy, while at the same time to pose a threat to the autocratic order of the time, its imperialist pursuits as well as its encroachments. It is Brecht's Antigone that provided Beck and Malina the impetus that allowed them to reimagine a very different democracy, which would be based on anarchist and pacifist principles, or what Beck himself calls "a system in which the people take care of themselves without designating abstract forms to control them —small communities in which we can tell each other what our needs are" (Neff 230).

However, another significant reason that led The Living Theater to adhere with remarkable fidelity to Brecht's adaptation should be sought in the fact that Brecht emphasizes the aspect of human responsibility over divine intervention or fate. For Brecht "man is [not] more or less at the mercy of destiny and has no power over it," as the Elders in Sophocles's tragedy declare (qtd. in Phelps 125). Instead for Brecht "man's fate is man himself" and it is human action or inaction rather than fate that defines his play (qtd. in Phelps 125). Brecht's characters, including Antigone herself and Heamon, fail to act or when they do act it is too late.

“Aristocratic Antigone is unmoved when her brother Polyneices is brought down by Creon's blows. Her rebellion comes too late and precipitates the defeat of her people” (Brunel 75). All characters could have prevented the war and its atrocities if only they had rebelled or at least reacted earlier. They are, therefore, all complicit in the disastrous outcomes. The greatest advantage, therefore, of Brecht's version of *Antigone* was that it allowed The Living Theater to demonstrate to their audiences that neither present reality is immutable, nor its conditions are unalterable by nature. Instead, it is human action or the lack of it that defines social reality and its conditions.

Only after taking into serious consideration Brecht's commitment to the Marxist philosophy of ‘dialectical materialism’; of “the idea that the individual is created by socio-political and economic factors and is, therefore, able to change his circumstances and environment”, is it possible to deeply comprehend not only how Brecht's reinterpretation of *Antigone* reflects political commitments to ideals, but also The Living Theatre's choice to perform it (Eddershaw 2). The Living Theatre departs from Sophocles's *Antigone* and instead embraces Brecht's reinterpretation, since by relocating the emphasis on human responsibility, Brecht wishes to “educate [his] audiences to the causes of their oppression and most importantly indicate means for alleviating it” (Shank 51). Taking into account the fact that Brecht was committed to Marxism and the communist cause as well as dedicated to use theatre as a means to bring about the advent of a Marxist revolution, The Living Theatre's choice to recontextualize his version of Sophocles's tragedy could be seen as fundamentally political.

#### **2.4. Staging the Revolution**

“Although [the aforementioned] thematic issues were of [great] interest to [The Living Theatre], [its] most important contribution was to communicate [*Antigone*] through fresh modes of performance and aesthetic vision” (Foley 28). Beck and Malina abandoned traditional modes of theatrical representation, acting techniques and methods of staging, since the latter have failed not only to awaken the audience from its lethargy, but also to elicit revolutionary behavior from them. Their dissatisfaction with existing theatrical forms led them to adopt new promising and performance-based approaches as well as to experiment with unique theatrical techniques and

processes in an attempt that they might succeed in reaching the audience. By “inventing or adapting nearly every experimental concept associated with the alternative theatre groups of the sixties and seventies,” The Living Theater managed to pose a threat to not only the established theatre, but also the status quo and consequently the state itself (Shank 9). Since the latter is supported by the status quo, and, therefore, any variation from it constitutes a threat to the state as well as its capitalist and militarist logic. It is of paramount importance to take into consideration the fact that Beck and Malina chose to experiment with a wide range of artistic strategies, instead of engaging in a specific acting technique or style, as the latter would be “alien to the concept of anarchy with its implicit abolishment of established systems” (Ryan 17). The Living Theater did not hesitate to do anything that would cause the audience to revolt against the atomizing pressures of capitalist society, but mostly against the War in Vietnam.

In order to realize the aforementioned political aims, Beck and Malina sought to de-emphasize the hegemonic role of both spoken and written language as the sole vehicle through which meaning, truth, and communication could be attained and, therefore, suggest that “[a] visual focus [can become] an alternative to the established theatre’s dependence on words as the chief medium of expression” (Shank 4). Since, according to Beck, the established theatre’s use of “gorgeous language,” does not manage to “pierce the shell” and thus fails to jolt the audience into a new awareness and ultimately motivate them into social action (Beck, “Barricades” 16). However, I do not intend to assume that words are abandoned in favor of performance, since such a position would be absurd and completely wrong, as Beck and Malina, unlike their mentor Antonin Artaud, do not “really want to burn the script” (Beck qtd. in Phelps 126). The translation of Brecht’s play is conventional, since Malina claimed: “[w]here Brecht leaned heavily on the Hölderlin poem, I have translated the poetry [Brecht’s] verbatim” (qtd. in Phelps 126).

Instead, I hope to prove that by prioritizing performance over text, Beck and Malina “are trying to reach towards some kind of communication of feeling and idea that push toward some other area that is beneath words or beyond words or in addition to words. The object was not to destroy language [but] . . . to deepen it and amplify it and to make the communication real rather than a series of lies” (Beck qtd. in Neff 235). To this end, they explored new avenues of non-verbal expression that could complement, or even replace verbal language, when necessary, but definitely not renounce it. This new language The Living Theatre envisioned is more corporeal

than cerebral and is related more to feelings rather than the mind. It is the language that Peter Brook described in his book *The Empty Space* as “a language of actions, a language of sounds—a language of word-as-part-of movement, of word-as-lie, word-as-parody, of word-as-rubbish, of word-as-contradiction, of word-shock or word-cry” (58). Finally, I would even argue that it is a language of emotions, but also a language that manifests itself even in its very absence; in silence.

Characteristic of the aforementioned claim is the fact that *Antigone* opens in complete silence. Although it is not unusual for plays to begin with silence, particular attention should be paid to *Antigone*'s silence, as this differs substantially in both its duration and intention. *Antigone*'s silence is not to be interrupted anytime soon; instead, it is a prolonged period of silence and stillness that lasts more than ten minutes. During this silent scene, one by one, each actor enters the stage, “takes a relaxed stance” and stands motionless and mute staring at the audience. Twenty-two actors are finally kept on stage only to include the audience in what Beck called “their tyrannous stare” (qtd. in Phelps 130). The performers' refusal to speak increases dramatic tension and paves the way for Creon's war, which is about to begin. The actors' conscious denial of talk also has a two-fold performative dimension, as it not only serves to deemphasize verbal language in favor of physical communication, but also serves to emotionally engage the audience in the play in an attempt to motivate them to social action. The authorial and restrictive presence of logos, or what Freud called the “straitjacket of logic,” which logos requires, is greatly challenged by means of the central position that silence occupies (qtd. in Esslin 282). From the very beginning of the play, The Living Theatre abandoned verbal language, as they considered that it was confined in the rationalist mentality; in what Paul Ryder Ryan called “the jail of the Establishment” (10). They prioritized physical communication over verbal communication, performance over text, since the former enabled them to “devise actions that could address simultaneously the structures of language, economics, politics, institutions, cultural history, [but mostly] the body” (Sell 16). By negating the possibility of speech, The Living Theater forced the spectators to pay more careful attention to non-verbal elements of theatre, and specifically to the physical presence of the actors, as this will be later examined in detail.

However, the silence of the motionless actor should also be seen as a dramatic technique consciously employed by The Living Theater in an attempt to provoke the spectators' minds and challenge their senses. Influenced by Brecht's epic theatre, Beck and Malina also sought to challenge the notion of audiences as merely spectators and passive observers. However, in contrast to Brecht, who used alienation effects in order to keep his audiences at an emotional distance, alienated from the action, in the belief that only "cool reason" and rationality can raise the spectators' political awareness and ultimately motivate them to engage in social action, The Living Theatre vehemently believed that it is emotional involvement that would result in feeling that would force the audience to rebel (Beck qtd. in Phelps 129). Therefore, Beck and Malina used silence in order to provoke intense feelings in their audiences and realize the aforementioned political aim. *Antigone's* silence generates strongly ambivalent emotions in the spectators towards the performance itself, as it subverts their expectations. Such absolute silence should be seen as a theatrical weapon that The Living Theater uses in order not only to shock the spectators out of their complacency, but also to revitalize their way of perceiving the theatrical event itself. According to Susan Sontag "[s]ilence administered by [The Living Theater] is part of a program of perceptual and cultural therapy, often on the model of shock therapy rather than persuasion" (21). This prolonged period of silence disturbs and evokes powerful anxiety and intense feelings of discomfort in the audiences. It manages from the very beginning of *Antigone* to unsettle them, to engage them in the play, to "awaken them from their passive slumber, to provoke them into attention, shock them if necessary, [but also] . . . to involve the actors with what was happening to the audience" (Beck, "Barricades" 22). For The Living Theater, a deep emotional involvement of the audience appears to be a condition sine qua non of social action or even revolt, since as Beck claims "when we feel, we will feel the emergency: when we feel the emergency, we will act: when we act, we will change the world" (*Life of Theatre* 9).

In order to achieve this goal, Beck and Malina departed substantially from Brecht's dramatic text and involved thematically the audiences in the action of the play, as they believed that apart from silence, audience participation could also "take the spectator to such an intense level of emotional involvement that he [would be] forced to react" (Neff 32). The spectators, therefore, represented the enemy army Argos, whereas the actors represented Thebes. The Living Theater's choice to involve the audience is of extreme thematic, aesthetic and political significance. By inserting the spectators into the position of the victim of an imperial war and by

assuming “throughout that [they are] peace-loving, though susceptible and contemporary”, The Living Theater hoped to relocate the emphasis on their immediate reality, and thus extend their sympathy to the true victims of the War in Vietnam (Beck, qtd. in Phelps 130). The Living Theater’s purpose or even mission was to emotionally engage the spectators, to “touch” them and “not just to show them something,” because they were seeking “intense somatic responses from the audience as a consequence of intense feeling on the part of the performer” (Beck, “Barricades” 22; Sell 64). They wanted the spectators to directly experience, to intensely feel the war and its atrocities and not to be informed about them, in an attempt that they might achieve identification with the Vietnamese victims. Beck hoped that “if people feel how atrocious is to kill each other, if they feel it physically then perhaps they [will] be able to put an end to it” (qtd. in Biner 159). By transforming the spectators into victims of Creon’s imperial violence, Beck and Malina —adhered to their anarchist beliefs— hoped that the spectators would realize that the very existence of the state —whether this is identified as Creon’s autocratic rule, as in the case of *Antigone*, or the American government itself, as in the case of contemporary politics— is a source of violence, and specifically it is an inherently militaristic body.

By destroying the audience-actor barrier, The Living Theater also demonstrated that fiction and reality should be seen as intertwined entities. Both actors and audience were part of the performance, reflecting this way an integrationist ethos, in which the boundaries of art and life are completely eclipsed. Actors and audience form a community this way, even if temporarily, and through it they divulge that there is no limit to the theatrical event, the latter being in constant communication with the communal and political life. According to Theodore Shank, “[i]t was important to create a sense of community among the spectators who then would have the potential for collective action. Such a community was possible only if the spectators were psychically present” (5). By destroying the audience-actor barrier and by uniting performers and spectators, the intention was not only to transform the latter from passive recipients to active participants/agents, but also “to equalize, unify and bring everyone closer to life. Joining as opposed to separation,” since the latter cannot light the path to the revolution The Living Theater envisioned (Beck, “Barricades” 21-22). It should not be forgotten that Beck and Malina used theatre and performed *Antigone* in order to effect a societal transformation, or even a revolution against the Vietnam War. Their primary purpose of staging *Antigone* was to change spectators so that they could change the capitalist-imperialist system. For The Living Theater an

interior change was an essential prerequisite to the external socio-political transformation. However, this political change The Living Theater envisioned could only be the result of a community, which could ultimately engage in collective social action.

Beck and Malina celebrated the physical presence of the actors, and specifically relocated the emphasis on the human body, because they considered it to be “the heart of performing” (Schechner, “Speculations on Radicalism” 110). In *Antigone*, nothing is represented; instead everything is revealed to the audience through the actors’ corporeal presence. Beck and Malina emphasized the actors’ bodies, gestures, facial expressions, postures and movements, because they were interested in creating “that spectacle . . . that would so shake people up . . . so move them, so cause feeling to be felt . . . that the steel world of law and order which civilization had forged to protect itself from barbarism would melt” (Beck, “Barricades” 24). The Living Theatre used no setting, no props and no sound. Instead, everything was created by the actors’ bodies and voices, because they wanted “the physical presence of the human being to tell everything” (Beck qtd. in Phelps 128). The performers were continually transformed from characters to actors to props. Instead of props, the actors themselves became war machines, walls, the throne for Creon, the chair for Tiresias, Antigone’s cell as well as weapons that kill Polyneices.

The only sound used was the one created by the actors’ bodies and voices. Specifically, The Living Theater’s *Antigone* included sounds of bombs falling and sirens blaring over the stage as well as “chants, laments, shrieks, hums, imitations of wind, and a period of forty-five minutes in which the chorus celebrated Dionysus by dancing to the sound of tongue clacking and thigh slapping” (Foley 135). The emphasis on the bodily presence of the actors was also greatly encouraged and enabled by the performance space, the lighting and the fact that the actors did not wear costumes. The performance space is a bare stage, devoid of scenery and of all theatrical equipment. The scenic austerity of the stage, the lack of light changes in tandem with the simple clothes the actors wore forced the audience to pay close and careful attention to the actors’ bodily presence. Malina admitted that “[they] did [not] want a single prop or light or anything onstage but [them] because [they] wanted to go to the other extreme” in order to “[s]ee what can happen without the government of sweet reason” (“Containment” 38; Beck, “Barricades” 24).

Characteristic of the predominant position the body occupies is also the fact that Beck and Malina replaced Brecht’s prologue, in which Polyneices is found dead by Antigone and

Ismene, with “the murder of Polyneices in the laps of the audience” (Tytell 221). Polyneices’s death, which is enacted in front of the audience, is depicted through a distressing and gruesome spectacle. Specifically, this involves an actor holding Polyneices’s body while at the same time two other actors, whose hands have been transformed to weapons, are murdering him. Polyneices’s screams and cries of terror and pain heighten the brutality of his murder and create an atmosphere of cruelty and suffering. The Living Theater’s choice to depict such a horrific scene is of extreme aesthetic and political significance. By emphasizing the brutality of his murder, The Living Theater stimulates all of their spectators’ senses and evokes feelings of horror and terror in the audience. Beck and Malina hoped to force the spectators to intensely feel the pain of Polyneices, because they believed that “if we could only be made to feel, really feel anything, then we might find all this suffering intolerable, the pain too great to bear, we might put an end to it” (Beck, “Barricades” 25). By emotionally engaging the spectators, The Living Theater hoped to heighten their identification with Polyneices in an attempt to ensure that his murder will not be forgotten any time soon.

This is also greatly encouraged by the fact that Polyneices’s corpse remains on stage throughout the play reminding the audience of their complicity in his murder. The Living Theater implicates the spectators who are implicitly criticized for failing to act and prevent Polyneices’s murder. Beck and Malina “dramatized the responsibility of everyone. That is why people are on stage all through the play; that [is] why the confrontation is between the people and themselves” (Beck qtd. in Phelps 129). His corpse acts as a “magnetic pole which governs not only the play’s action, but also the spectators’ concentration. He is the locus of factual guilt” (Beck qtd. in Phelps 129). The constant presence on stage of his corpse also acts “as a sign of injustice and a stimulus to revolt” (Foley 136). Polyneices’s corpse becomes thus a symbol and the way for Beck and Malina to communicate effectively their political messages, and specifically the need for action, for an anarchist revolution which could subvert the imperialist and capitalist structure as well as the violence, death and suffering it provokes.

However, this new stress on the truth of the body is not incidental, as The Living Theatre hoped to prove that the future of theatre lies not in language, words and literature, but in action. Characteristic of the aforementioned claim is the fact that Antigone speaks also through her body, which is involved in numerous, detailed, small-scaled movements. Antigone does not



speak “without uniting what [she says] with an actual physical locality in the body” (Beck qtd. in Phelps 128). Specifically, during her speech with her sister Ismene Antigone grabs the back of her head and forces her to see the corpse of their dead brother Polyneices in an attempt to persuade her to bury him. When Creon asks her if she actually did bury Polyneices, Antigone’s response is not only verbal; instead she lays over her brother’s body “in a sexualized posture” while at the same time she admits her act (Foley 136). The Living Theater wanted to “develop ways to make the words always adjunct, so even without them it [is] perfectly clear what [Antigone is] saying” (Malina, “Containment” 39). Beck and Malina, therefore, used performance, since it is performance that engages with what Hans-Thies Lehmann defines as “more presence than representation, more shared than communicated experience, more process than product, more manifestation than signification, more energetic impulse than information” (85).

Whether or not The Living Theatre succeeded in creating professional plays was of minor significance, since what constitutes its most important achievement was the fact that it managed not only to “[i]nfuse[e] theatre with serious political thought”, but also to prove that theatre can be a pacifist alternative to traditional political means of protest (Bradford 51). In contrast to terrorist or militant groups on the Left, which resorted to violence in their effort to challenge or even subvert bourgeois capitalist structure, The Living Theater’s deeply abhorrence of warfare led them to resort to theatre and specifically to *Antigone* in order to achieve the same goal. Although The Living Theater diverged significantly from the aforementioned groups, what renders such a comparison fertile is their shared revulsion for the liberal managerial state. Both not only questioned, but also condemned the militaristic and capitalist culture, though by different means. The first used violence, whereas the theatrical troupe adhered to its pacifist beliefs performed *Antigone*, in order to raise the audience’s political consciousness and thus propose that a spiritual change —and not violence— was an essential prerequisite to the social transformation they envisioned.<sup>2</sup> In rejecting affinity with these extremist groups on the Left and by performing *Antigone*, The Living Theater engaged in what the anarchist writer and poet Hakim Bey defined as “poetic terrorism”; a prioritization of art —and in this case theatre— as a revolutionary activist practice that can effect social change (35). For Beck and Malina's The Living Theater “the moment of performance cleared a conceptual and affective space in the claustrophobic market halls of imperialist capitalism” (Sell 16).

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> In order to understand the revolution The Living Theater envisioned, see also Bradford D. Martin *The Theater Is in the Street: Politics and Performance in Sixties America*, page 63. See bibliography for further information on the issue.

<sup>2</sup> At this point, it is important to clarify that I do not intend to assume an identification of terrorism or militancy with The Living Theater. Instead, the aforementioned comparison only serves three major purposes; to reinforce the troupe's deeply felt condemnation of political violence, to propose that its attitude was more militant in comparison to the other theatre groups of that time and to suggest that a pacifist alternative does exist, and this is theatre.

### 3. RICHARD SCHECHNER AND *DIONYSUS IN '69*

#### 3.1. Introduction

*Dionysus in '69*- This is the title of Richard Schechner's radical interpretation of Euripides's tragedy *Bacchae*, first performed by The Performance Group in New York, on 6 June 1968, the day following the assassination of the Democratic presidential candidate Robert Kennedy (Wilmeth and Curley 51). His assassination at the dawn of the decade marked a major turning point in American history, society and culture; it signaled the end of the optimistic post-World War II era during which a radical transformation of society, but most importantly the potential to end the war in Vietnam seemed possible.<sup>1</sup> Within the American social imaginary, Kennedy embodied the spirit of promise that characterized the turbulent decade of the sixties during which "the United States has been in the midst an ongoing "cultural war," fought over issues of political philosophy, race relations, gender roles, and personal morality" (Isserman and Kazin 4). His death was at the same time a symbolic death of the sixties, since Kennedy represented the last desperate hope for positive social and political change, and his assassination, on 5 June 1968, seemed to bring an end to that hope. This was the moment when Schechner's theatre registered a heightened concern with what form avant-garde theatre can take when optimism, hope and rebellion have all but disappeared as the decade of the sixties was coming to an end and its promises disintegrated.

The Performance Group under the direction of Richard Schechner could not have found a better way to revitalize a tradition of revolt, which they found latent during the historical moment of the late 1960s, than through the staging of *Dionysus in '69*. As the American classicist Froma I. Zeitlin claimed, "the match between [*Dionysus in '69*] and the age that it embraced it [and specifically the year 1968, I would add] is stronger than almost any other" (51). The main purpose of the present chapter is to discuss how Euripides's *Bacchae* allowed The Performance Group to promote a rebellious, anti- hierarchical, and at the same time a communal ethos during this period of crisis in which the American society was "perched between great optimism and great fear" (Isserman and Kazin 7). In order to do so, first attention must be paid to the specific

reasons that led Schechner to revisit Euripides's tragedy. Why did Schechner choose an ancient Greek tragedy in order to promote a revolutionary frame of reference?

Only after providing an answer to the aforementioned question, is it possible to deeply comprehend how Schechner's radical interpretation of *Bacchae* manages not only to encapsulate the zeitgeist of the early sixties, but also to express sensibilities unique to his own libertarian philosophy, and thereby genuinely communicate his vision of social change. My discussion of "this landmark play in the history and reception of Greek theatre in the twentieth century" identifies Jerzy Grotowski's views on performance as seminal to the formation of Schechner's political theatre pallet (Zeitlin 51). Great emphasis, therefore, will be placed on how Schechner uses performance as an artistic and protest strategy in order to challenge both the theatrical and societal frame and, therefore, promote the Dionysian revolution he envisioned.

### **3.2. Richard Schechner: an "Organic Intellectual"**

Taking into consideration Richard Schechner's academic background and his privileged socio-economic status, it may appear atypical or even paradoxical that he would be a strong advocate of the fundamentality of the material world as well as a staunch critic of the American establishment. In contrast to the majority of the founders of the avant-garde theatre groups that emerged during the combustible sixties –including The Living Theatre's founders, Julian Beck and Judith Malina-, Schechner differs substantially from them in many ways. Not only is Schechner part of the theatrical intelligentsia, and specifically an eminent theatre university professor, as well as an editor of an acclaimed academic journal, *The Drama Review*, but he also "lives in middle-class comfort . . . on Washington Square" (Lee 23). At first glance, Schechner's academic background and his advantageous socio-economic position appear to be antithetical to his political views and philosophical beliefs regarding the necessity of rebellion, the abolition of all power relations, the celebration of community as well as the prioritization of performance over text. Specifically, his academic background implies an intellectual approach, which is the opposite of what performance represents, while at the same time renders him a figure of intellectual authority, which is the opposite of the non-hierarchical and truly egalitarian

community he envisioned. More to the point, his socio-economic position situates him within the very hegemonic order he wishes to resist.

A significant number of critics have already noted that Schechner's life "seems to be crammed with contradictions" (Lee 23).<sup>2</sup> Characteristic of this claim is Joseph Papp's 1966 letter to the *New York Times Book Review* in which he claims; "Mr. Schechner . . . seems anxious to promote his image as a flaming radical of the avant-garde, but unfortunately his barricades are always covered with ivy" (24).<sup>3</sup> However, despite the considerable and legitimate criticism that has been leveled against the antithesis between Schechner's life and thought, what the majority of critics need to reconsider is the question of whether or not "intellectuals [who] occupy privileged positions within bourgeois ideological [and economic] relations" can also engage in counter-hegemonic activities (Wright 192). Attempting to address the aforementioned question, I intend to argue that what most of the critics fail to realize is best summarized by Antonio Francesco Gramsci;

A human mass does not distinguish itself, does not become independent without, in the widest sense, organizing itself; and there is no organization without intellectuals, that is without organizers and leaders . . . without the theoretical aspect of the theory-practice nexus being distinguished concretely by the existence of a stratum of people 'specialized' in the conceptual and philosophical elaboration of ideas. (334)

The critics, therefore, fail to realize that by staging *Dionysus in '69*, Schechner does engage in a counter-hegemonic act, as he performs a role that the Italian Marxist philosopher, Gramsci, felt intellectuals had to play. Specifically, Schechner should be seen as representing or even embodying what Gramsci has called an "organic intellectual" (3). In Gramscian theory, the organic intellectual "engage[s] in a different kind of cultural practice" (Lipsitz 10).<sup>4</sup> He aims at initiating "a process that involves people in social contestation" in an attempt to combat bourgeois ideologies and challenge dominant interests (Lipsitz 9). For Gramsci, the organic intellectual is not only "*homo sapiens*", but also "*homo faber*", since he personifies the unity of theory and praxis (9). As Gramsci further explains in his *Prison Notebooks* "[t]he mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence, which is an exterior and momentary mover of feelings and passions, but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organiser, "permanent persuader" and not just a simple orator" (10).

Schechner appears to embody the role that Gramsci envisioned for intellectuals, as he is at the same time an intellectual and a theatre practitioner - a *homo sapiens* and a *homo faber* - who vehemently believed that “theory [must be] rooted in practice” (Schechner, *Performance Theory* xii). Admitting his powerlessness to “change the social structure through any personal action” as well as realizing that “[t]he ‘acceptable modes’ of protest are ineffectual,” Schechner resorted to theatre, which he saw as more than simply cultural intervention (Schechner, *Public Domain* 210). For Schechner, theatre was a serious calling, both professionally and socio-politically, which allowed him not only to explore in practice his performance theories, but also through them to attempt to initiate a “process that involves people in social contestation” (Lipsitz 9). Specifically, Schechner resorted to *Dionysus in '69* in order to express his opposition to the political-military-industrial complex of American society and the war in Vietnam in particular, but also to propose that an alternative reality is possible.

By choosing to reinterpret Euripides’s *Bacchae*, Schechner does personify the Gramscian intellectual, as he “conduct[s] [his] intellectual inquiries through the practical activities of social contestation; [he] measures[his] own efforts more by [his] effect on changing society than by [his] correspondence to preestablished standards of eloquence and originality” (Lipsitz 10). Schechner’s goal was to raise the spectators’ consciousness and to ultimately motivate them to engage in social action; what Gramsci has called “active participation in practical life” (10). In order to achieve this goal, Schechner emphasizes the material and theatrical dimension of *Dionysus in '69*. By placing at the forefront the transformative power of performance as well as its revolutionary potential, Schechner engages in a “different kind of cultural practice,” since as Elin Diamond notes performances “are cultural practices that conservatively re-inscribe or passionately re-invent the ideas, symbols and gestures that shape social life” (Lipsitz 10; 1).

### **3.3. Why *Bacchae*?**

Having defined Schechner as the Gramscian intellectual who is devoted to using theatre as a means for furthering social change, and specifically performance as an artistic strategy that allows him to achieve this goal, one could easily understand the reason behind his choice to revisit Euripides’s *Bacchae*. It appears natural that Schechner -an intellectual, who realized the

necessity of rebellion, the significance of community and the need to question authority-, would be drawn to a play whose very subject matter reflects his own political stance and moral philosophy. In order to discuss how Schechner uses performance as an artistic strategy, through which he reflects the decade's revolutionary fervor, addresses his political agenda, but most significantly defines the pathway from action and emergency to the permanent revolution, first it is significant to examine the reasons that led him to confront contemporary politics through Euripides's *Bacchae*. The reason why The Performance Group chose to reinterpret Euripides's tragedy should not therefore be considered as coincidental, since there are both political and aesthetic reasons for the rediscovery of *Bacchae* in this turbulent decade of the sixties, and specifically the year 1968.

What attracted The Performance Group to Euripides's *Bacchae* is the fact that "the basic themes of the play —violence, madness, ecstasy, challenge of authority, moral choice, [release of libidinal energy, the quest for freedom as well as communality]— were all issues of great concern in American society at the time" (Shephard 52). Specifically, in America as well as in the West, the sixties were a time of radical transition and transformation and "a time of an exaltation of life on the margins" (Zeitlin 52). It was a decade of cultural ferment, which experienced what the philosopher Herbert Marcuse has called a "cultural revolution" (95). Broadening his definition, I would add that it was also a time of politically motivated violence and an era of social and moral revolution, as this is reflected in "diverging social values between old and young, rich and poor, whites and blacks, male and female sexual roles, and above all, between advocates and opponents of war in Vietnam" (Shephard 238-239). It is worth quoting at length here the American classicist Karelisa V. Hartigan's opportune description of the socio-political climate of the sixties, since it allows us to deeply comprehend and better examine the reasons behind The Performance Group's choice to revisit Euripides's *Bacchae* in 1968;

Protests against [the Vietnam War] and against all authority figures became the order of the day, while freedom of expression was carried to the realm of sex as well as speech. The use of drugs marked the culmination of these protests, as American youth—and those who wished to be so—sought ecstasy and escape via various narcotic substances. It was a time of self-expression, combined with a sense of community; free love blended with a subconscious narcissism. Violent

demonstrations were led by those who put flowers into guns, while others led peaceful protests and civil rights marches: brotherhood was the operative idea, a brotherhood with clearly marked boundaries. (67)

Schechner could not have found a better play that best encapsulates the zeitgeist of the sixties other than *Bacchae*. At the heart of Euripides's tragedy lies Dionysus; a mythic figure whose challenge of authority and transcendence of boundaries are what most characterizes him as an exponent of the sixties. *Bacchae* should be considered to be a tragedy for Dionysus and about Dionysus. The latter does not remain within the margins of the tragedy; he is neither a personified background nor a specter. Instead, Euripides has placed him at the forefront; he is the protagonist, as he dominates the play and determines the action of the tragedy. Being both human and god, male and female, Dionysus is a transgressor and opposer to the repressive forces which Pentheus, the king of Thebes, personifies. Specifically, Dionysus has come to the city of his birth, Thebes, to establish his rites and reveal his divinity, which not only has not been acknowledged, but it has also been highly questioned by Pentheus. In an attempt to reassert his divine authority and establish his divinity, Dionysus roused the women of Thebes to emotional frenzy. More to the point, Agave in an ecstatic frenzy mistakes her own son for a lion and kills him being unable to recognize him. It is evident the reason why The Performance Group sought to explore Euripides's *Bacchae*. Schechner wanted to prove that America needs to imitate the god's rebellious, irrational, chaotic, and even violent nature, because violence is considered to be a prize worth paying for attaining personal liberty. It was his rebellious and ecstatic nature that attracted Schechner the most. For Schechner, it was obvious that Dionysus was present in America in the sixties, since as he claims in his book *Public Domain; Essays on the Theater*;

Dionysus' presence can be beautiful or ugly or both. It seems quite clear that he is present in today's America – showing himself in the hippies, in the “carnival spirit” of black insurrectionists, on campuses; and even in disguise, on the patios and in the living rooms of suburbia . . . LSD is contemporary chemistry, but freaking out is ancient. I take this special, ecstatic quality to be essentially theatrical. (217)

One could easily understand that The Performance Group's reason behind their choice to revisit Euripides's *Bacchae* was thematic. However, it would be wrong to ignore the fact that



Schechner's reason behind his reinterpretation of *Bacchae* was also aesthetic and political. *Bacchae* gave Schechner the opportunity to explore in practice his performance theories. According to Zeitlin, Euripides's tragedy "has all the necessary ingredients for Schechner's idea about theatre" (59). Schechner may have found personal resonance in Euripides's radical and modern approach to tragedy, and specifically so in *Bacchae*, which questions the role of the character and individuality within the limits of the Athenian democratic polis. The tragedian's experimentation with tragic forms, as well as his radical critique or even subversion of the workings of power, seem to have a great impact on the formation of Schechner's artistic ethos, which is greatly manifested in his theatrical production *Dionysus in '69*.<sup>5</sup> *Dionysus in '69* should be seen as an appropriation that "affects a more decisive journey away from" *Bacchae* "into a wholly new cultural product and domain" (Sanders 26). The very title of the play, *Dionysus in '69*, suggests that Euripides's play has been fully indigenized into American culture. Departing from classical antiquity, it is instead historically located in 1969. It is worth noting that Schechner vehemently believed that "[t]he work of those doing . . . production[s] is to re-scene the play not as the writer might have envisioned it but as immediate circumstances reveal it" (*Performance Theory* 76).

### 3.4. Performing the revolution

By celebrating the material and theatrical dimension of *Dionysus in '69*, Schechner chose to stage the revolution he envisioned, whose very possibility lies in performance. He prioritized performance over text as he considered the former to be the only vehicle and source that can lead to the political and social transformation he envisioned in this turbulent decade. Schechner realized the transformative power of performance as well as its revolutionary and disruptive potential, as he claimed that performance "resists or rejects definition, [because it] is 'inter' – in between, [i]t is [transgressive,] intergeneric, interdisciplinary, intercultural – and therefore inherently unstable . . . [it] cannot be pinned down or located exactly" and therefore be controlled ("What is Performance" 360). However, I do not intend to assume that words are abandoned in favor of performance, since such a position would be absurd. Instead, I attempt to explore how the emphasis on performance as a communal experience in this play appears to be the fundamental unit of its existence.

Exemplary of action's precedence over the text in the play is Schechner's choice to contain less than half of the lines from the Arrowsmith's translation of *The Bacchae* (The Performance Group).<sup>6</sup> It is significant to state that "[t]he performers wrote their own dialogue" because Schechner "wanted as much personal expression as possible in a play which deals so effectively with the liberation of personal energy" (The Performance Group). *Dionysus in '69* does not depend on the reality of the dramatic written text of Euripides's play. The text has to be dismissed and sacrificed for the advantage of performance. Characteristic of the aforementioned claim is the fact that The Performance Group treated "the text as if it were part of an oral tradition" (Schechner, *Public Domain* 228). The authorial and restrictive presence of logos is thus greatly challenged by means of the central position that performance occupies. The actors of The Performance Group questioned the hegemonic role of both spoken and written language as the sole vehicle through which meaning, truth, and communication could be attained. This would lead to the assumption that spoken and written language is also not the sole means of political change. Instead, they chose to perform their vision of politics via non-verbal means of communication and relocate the emphasis on the human body, movements, gestures, lightning and stage.

Dionysus should be seen as the embodiment of performance, as the theatrical aspect of life itself, since he even introduces himself to the audience through a spectacle, the 'birth ritual' that involves his passage through a "birth canal composed of four women in alternating formation with five men" (Zeitlin 61). His demand that he be worshiped on the mountain Cithaeron is also exemplary of a predominantly performative act, in which the maenads divulge their ritualized dedication to the god via their ecstatic dance, singing and hunting. Their bodies are transformed into sites for the eruption of irrational impulses that lead even to death. It should not be forgotten that it is under the spell of Dionysus that Agave even murders her own son, Pentheus, the king of Thebes, who highly questions Dionysus's divinity. By establishing his divinity in Thebes, the misrecognized god brings chaos and allows sexual and death instincts to come to the surface, while at the same time functions as a liberating force for the bacchant women. The latter depart from the domestic sphere and embrace the untamed wilderness of nature, as well as the mysterious world of primordial emotions and violence that Dionysus represents. Dionysus is thus both the "instigator of total ecstasy but also absolute terror" (Hall 2). It is these ecstatic and terrifying moments that performance also encapsulates, since it allows the

performers to be transformed, even temporarily, into other characters and enter into unknown territories. Whether positive or negative, these territories become theatrical topoi.

Borrowing Sigmund Freud's homonymous title, I would even argue that Dionysus represents both "[c]ivilization, and [i]ts [d]iscontents".<sup>7</sup> Specifically, he is both culture and nature, as he embodies elements taken from both and moves between them. The ambiguous god appears to occupy what the American classicist Charles Segal has called a "liminal status", as he exists in a state of in-betweenness. (216). According to Segal, Dionysus's "place is *between*—between truth and delusion, sanity and madness, divinity and bestiality, civilization and the wild, order and chaos" (216). Dionysus's highly enigmatic nature opposes the Apollonian nature of Pentheus, who represents the hierarchical structure of society, as expressed by its norms, rationalizing speech and logocentric ethos. Instead, Dionysus resembles the enigmatic nature of performance per se, whose anti-structural nature and energy also lead to outcomes that cannot be predicted. Performance could be seen to be defined by the Dionysian temper, since the latter involves a release of energy, and chaotic creativity. It also primarily presupposes the inferiority of the written script. It should not be forgotten that it is "the performance mode [that] teaches us that language is not the only way to express or relate to stories" (Hutcheon 23).

Characteristic of action's precedence over language is the fact that even Dionysus' words emphasize the need for action. Specifically, he claims "it's absolute freedom, you do it, you do what you feel like." And he goes on to argue that "if you do what you feel like, you feel good and if you cause pain you feel good pain." His confident tone of voice and its high intensity highlight the action verb to "do," which is repeated three times in order to demonstrate the need for physical action. Dionysus's words coexist with the accumulation of vocal sounds; "grunts, cries, moans, whispers...varying from the quiet to the frenetic, from the ecstatic to the orgiastic" (Brokett 141). This accumulation of vocal sounds, which resembles music, functions as a means to stimulate the spectators' brain as well as to activate their bodies in an attempt to transform them from being passive recipients to becoming active agents, but mostly performers themselves. This activation of the kinesthetic sensations of the spectators' bodies, has been purposefully applied by Schechner, since for the latter, bodies "are psycho-physical systems-[that he] want[ed] to make them a whole [that will be] receptive, open, able to contact [the actors'] feelings [as well as] be alert to the feelings of the others" ("Speculations on Radicalism" 109). It

is within this climate of freneticism caused by these eerie vocal sounds that when the doors of the Performance Garage were opened, the actors and the spectators' bodies were united and transformed into sites of political struggle and protest. Their bodies revealed their full kinetic potential and revolutionary possibilities, since "not only the narratives but the bodily actions of drama express crisis, schism, and conflict" (Schechner, *Performance Theory* xi).

Bodies became the instrument and intermediary for the revolution that Dionysus demanded that involved his candidacy for president of the U.S.A in the following year, in 1969. Dionysus/William Finley being lifted up on the crowd's shoulders purported in an ecstatic voice; "You have nothing to lose but your chains... we must have absolute freedom," urging this way the spectators to follow him outside of the setting of the production. This was a revolution "of the flesh, and a [demand for a] completely unrepressive society," but most predominantly it was a revolt against the Vietnam War (Lester 134). Actors and spectators alike marched through the streets of New York in a frenetic mode while they were singing and some of them dancing. Their bodies became the non-verbal means that communicated the anti-war sentiments and the need for absolute freedom. One of them also held a placard emphasizing this way that the march has been transformed into a political demonstration.

In this context, actors and audience form a community, even if temporarily, and through it they divulge that there is no limit to the theatrical event, the latter being in constant communication with the communal and political life. Performance is an integral part of the society and "feed[s] into ongoing systems of social and aesthetic life" (Schechner, *Performance Theory* xi). Both actors and audience were part of the performance, reflecting this way an integrationist ethos, in which the boundaries of art and life are completely eclipsed. The political message evolved this way into an actual praxis in which The Performance Group attempted to "make a collective out of the individuals who constitute[d] an audience, a temporary collective—a community for the time being" (Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* 148). This community they form celebrates the idea that theater is not only a predominantly artistic or aesthetic event, but also a revolutionary activity that could lead to social and political change by "mak[ing]possible the creation of new human beings capable of transforming their world even as they transform themselves" (Holzman 64-75).

The audience's participation was encouraged and greatly enabled by the performance space, in what Schechner believed was "an actual, living, relationship between the spaces of the body and the spaces the body moves through" (*Environmental Theatre* 12). To facilitate this end, the setting of the production was not an official theatrical place. Instead, the play is situated in a garage that has been transformed into a theater for the purposes of the play. According to Schechner, it is this exact "transformation of space into place [that] means to construct a theater" (*Performance Theory* 149). The place of the performance is significant, since it allows audience to participate freely. Specifically, by providing no separate space between the cast and the audience, it allowed the spectator to engage freely in the theatrical production and participate thus in the experience the play offers.<sup>8</sup> Although the actors would chant "May I take you to your seat, sir?" there were no seats. Instead, the audience could sit either on the floor or on the platforms at various heights. The spectators could neither be isolated, nor remain passive recipients, since the performers were moving in and around them, transgressing this way the traditional notions of theater that involved a clear demarcation between onstage and offstage.

The technique of blurring the boundaries between onstage and offstage was also enhanced through the use of lighting. The latter made it impossible to "look at an action without seeing other spectators who visually, at least, are part of the performance, [n]or is it possible to avoid a knowledge that for the others you are part of the performance" (Schechner, *Environmental Theater* 18). The aforementioned techniques of lighting and arrangement of space denied hierarchical relationships between performers and audience, as all members appeared to share an equal relationship. However, they mostly managed to promote an integrationist and communal ethos by urging spectators to engage in an active interaction with the play. The latter could participate or stay uninvolved. Audience participation was also encouraged by what Jerzy Grotowski called the "act of the total unveiling of one's being" (131). This technique has been purposefully applied by Schechner and has a significant performative dimension. It stimulates and provokes the audience to participate in the play; since William Finley, a non-fictional character, is Dionysus, then anyone from the audience can become Dionysus as well. This in-between identity, this simultaneous presence of dramatic character and individual creates a locus of immediacy between actors and spectators. It also reminds them that art and life should coexist.

Through his performance based approach, Schechner managed to promote a communal ethos as an antidote to the materialist and individualistic ethos that is entrenched in American culture, but also to emphasize the historical and political dimension of the play. *Dionysus in '69* did not exist in a vacuum, instead, it was nothing but a product of its time. *Dionysus in '69* managed to question the place of theater in society and to prove that “theater is both intentionally and non-consciously a paradigm of culture and culture-making” (Schechner, *Performance Theory* 171). Schechner was aware that “[t]o understand Dionysus is to understand that the order imposed on the world by human culture is arbitrary, and the permanent potential for a reversal or collapse of this order exists” (Foley 124). By reinterpreting Euripides’s *Bacchae*, Schechner attempted to bring the Dionysian revolution to the American stage.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Robert Kennedy was assassinated at Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles on 5 June 1968. (Wilmeth and Curley 51). Only after taking into serious consideration the fact that preceding Robert Kennedy's assassination were those of his brother John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, is someone able to understand the profound impact his murder had on the American social imaginary. His death shattered America's last hope that an alternative future was possible.

<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that Schechner himself is fully aware of the incongruity between his words and his actuality. He expressed his anguish in an essay entitled "The Politics of Ecstasy" in 1968, the same year *Dionysus in '69* was staged. For more information on Schechner's dilemma see *Public Domain* pages 210- 211. See bibliography for further information on the issue.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Papp, whose original name was Joseph Papirofsky, was an American theatrical producer and director. He founded the New York Shakespeare Festival and the Public Theatre.

<sup>4</sup> In his biographical study of Ivory Perry, George Lipsitz offers a useful definition of the Gramscian organic intellectual. See bibliography for further information on the issue.

<sup>5</sup> For a greater understanding of Euripides's modern and radical approach to tragedy, see Olga Taxidou's book *Tragedy, Modernity and Mourning* and specifically the chapter "Euripides and Aristotle: Friends in Mourning," pages 106-28. See bibliography for further information on the issue.

<sup>6</sup> Information about the script is taken from The Performance Group, *Dionysus in '69*, New York, 1970. Unfortunately the book is unpaginated. See bibliography for further information on the issue.

<sup>7</sup> The phrase "[c]ivilization, and [i]ts [d]iscontents" comes from the title of Sigmund Freud's book; *Civilization and Its Discontents*. See bibliography for further information on the issue.

<sup>8</sup> Schechner seems to have been greatly influenced by the “[t]he Greek theater’s semicircular tiers of seats” that were “not individuated as in modern theaters but curving communal benches as in modern sports stadiums - literally enfolded the drama, containing its agons within the Athenian solidarity” (*Performance Theory* 154). See bibliography for further information on the issue.



#### 4. Conclusion

Despite their apparent differences regarding their socio-economic backgrounds and political beliefs, Julian Beck, Judith Malina and Richard Schechner shared a philosophical conviction regarding the transformative power of art. They rejected art for art's sake, as they believed that theatre could not remain detached from the social and political reality. Instead, they argue, theatre should take up a political function; it should be socially committed and implicated in rethinking society. For Beck and Malina, theater ought to create "forms in which alienation from life is changed into integration with life", while Schechner's view was that theater "is coexistent with the human condition, and a basic element of this condition" (Beck, *Life of Theatre* 81; Schechner, *Environmental Theater* 200).

The above mentioned artists believed that theater could be used as an important weapon that could have an impact on political and social change, themselves as being instrumental agents of that change. To this end, Beck, Malina and Schechner's input can be traced in two areas; in raising the spectators' political consciousness and highlighting the importance of the artist's role. While examining their work, we must also take into consideration the timeframe of the sixties, a turbulent decade that underwent radical social, moral and political changes. It was in this context, that they advocated that "[t]he goal of theatre is to get as many people as possible to overcome fear by taking action", while "[t]he role of the revolutionary is to create theatre which creates a revolutionary frame of reference" (Rubin 142).

Specifically, Beck, Malina and Schechner realized that established theater had failed to achieve the above political objectives. It is worth quoting Julian Beck's fierce criticism of the Broadway Theater. The passage summarizes his deeply felt abhorrence of established theater, of which the Broadway Theater is a prime representative. It also allows us to discuss the type of theater The Living Theater and The Performance Group envisioned and aimed to produce:

I do not like the Broadway theatre because it does not know how to say hello. The tone of voice is false, mannerisms are false, the sex is false, ideal, the Hollywood world of perfection, the clean image, the well pressed clothes, the well scrubbed anus, odorless

inhuman, of the Hollywood actor, the Broadway star. And the terrible false dirt of Broadway, the lower depths in which the dirt is imitated, inaccurate. (*Life of Theatre* 7)

Beck considered the Broadway Theater -and hence mainstream theater in general- to be artificial, superficial, pretentious and false. He believed it to be complicit in perpetuating bourgeois values as well as responsible for the audience's inertia and apathy. In contrast to commercial theatres, Beck and Malina's The Living Theater and Schechner's The Performance Group are not "primarily concerned with entertainment as a product to be sold" (Shank 3). Instead, the kind of theatre that they have advocated for and aimed at producing was grounded in a democratic vision, which involved both questioning social norms and dismantling the existing bourgeois, capitalist and imperialist structures. Beck, Malina and Schechner seem to share what Rebecca Klatch has called a "common sense of generational mission and . . . [a] shared revulsion . . . for the liberal managerial state" (qtd. in Sell 22). They envisioned a theater that would pose a threat to what Herbert Marcuse called "[t]he enlarged universe of exploitation", which is a "totality of machines- human, economic, political, military, educational" (13). For Beck, Malina and Schechner, theatre was a serious calling both culturally and politically. Its primary goal was not only to awaken the spectators from their lethargy, but also to elicit revolutionary behavior from them. In an attempt to discuss the ways that *Antigone* and *Dionysus in '69* respectively engage with what Baz Kershaw described as "the 'great liberal motives' underlying most conceptions of democracy", this paper mostly concentrated in both groups' use of "resistant and transcendent practices" (qtd. in Shaughnessy 3). The thematic reasons behind both groups' choice to revisit Sophocles's *Antigone* and Euripides's *Bacchae* are also discussed, but great emphasis has been placed on the specific techniques these plays have used to promote a revolutionary frame of reference.

In terms of theme, Sophocles's *Antigone* allowed The Living Theater to demonstrate that rebellion is a fundamental and primitive human instinct, as well as a necessary prerequisite for liberty. In the case of Sophocles's tragedy, by disobeying Creon's decree and choosing to bury her brother Polyneices, Antigone transcends the legal boundaries and rebels against a democratic order that she considers to be deeply unjust. Thus she becomes a figure of civil disobedience. The Living Theater chose to interpret *Antigone*, because they wanted to emphasize that it is the duty of human beings to rebel in the face of unjust laws. Specifically, they resorted to Bertlot

Brecht's version of Frederick Hölderlin's translation of Sophocles's homonymous tragedy, because they wished to highlight that resisting the undemocratic status quo, its imperialist pursuits, as well as its encroachments, is the primary duty of human beings.

More to the point, one could go so far as to claim that Beck and Malina chose this version because they followed Brecht's belief that the collapse of the Nazi regime could only come as a result of a people's revolution, by means of which catharsis could be achieved. For Aristotle, catharsis could be the outcome of "pity and fear"; for Brecht, however, only a people's revolution could light the way to catharsis (26). Keeping this ideological background in mind, it is important to note that The Living Theater performed Brecht's *Antigone* in 1967. The timeframe should not be overlooked, as the group attempted to raise the audience's political consciousness against the Vietnam War, and therefore to provoke demonstrations or even a revolution against a war they considered to be unjust.

In the same line of thinking, The Performance Group interpreted Euripides's *Bacchae*. In contrast to The Living Theater's *Antigone*, Schechner's attempts a more radical take on Euripides tragedy, given that his interpretation departs from the tragedian's text significantly. The very title of the play *-Dionysus in '69-* is suggestive of the serious dislocations of Euripides's tragedy. The reason behind their choice lies in the play's ambiguity, which allows for such an open interpretation. Specifically, *Bacchae* is an enigmatic tragedy that resists definition, since its main protagonist, Dionysus, who dominates the play and determines the action of the tragedy, is a deeply ambiguous character. He is both male and female, human and god, a representative of total freedom and ecstasy, as well as a symbol of violence and vengeance. The Performance Group used *Bacchae* only as a starting point for their work, claiming that "[w]e worked in terms of 'project' not a production" (The Performance Group).<sup>1</sup> They were not interested in remaining faithful to Euripides's tragedy. Instead, it was Dionysus, the mythic figure that drew their attention, as he provided the basis upon which the group could articulate its political convictions, express the decade's main concerns, and challenge American conservatism. Specifically, they wished to propose a rebellion through the Dionysian character, whom they went as far as to propose as a candidate for U.S. presidency for the year 1969.

In contrast to The Living Theater's play, The Performance Group's *Dionysus in '69* is not proposing the rejection of state authority. The latter group was not interested in the abolition of

all power relations; rather, they were seeking an institutional and political change, which could be accomplished by means of electing Dionysus as president of the U.S.A. This clearly indicates that The Performance Group does not intend to subvert the existing state, but to provide an alternative in the face of Dionysus. The Performance Group could not have found a better president to become the exponent of his era, Dionysus being both human and god. Dionysus's candidacy for president appeared as a necessity and a natural consequence of a society that needed change. They considered that Dionysus would become an antidote to the Apollonian tendencies of the existing state, in which rationality and logos dominate. The Performance Group was convinced that an absolute adherence to both logos and rationality could potentially lead to atrocities, as was the case of the Vietnam War. The Performance Group's vision that Dionysus could be elected president of the USA in 1969 and The Living Theater's venture to instigate an anarchist revolution through the performance of *Antigone* share a utopian backdrop. For the majority, Schechner, Beck and Malina's plays have failed to effect the social transformation they envisioned. However, their work remains a source of great inspiration for a promise of a rebellion that is yet to come.

By staging *Antigone* and *Dionysus in '69*, The Living Theater and The Performance Group have respectively assumed the moral obligation to awaken, socially mobilize, politicize and bring their audiences together. To realize the aforementioned political aims, they were seeking a new language that could facilitate their ideological undertakings. This new language could not be what Ilka Saal has described as "the language of a proven, that is, commercially successful" (109), as they were concerned with finding a language that would oppose the established and conformist theater, emancipate their audiences, create a sense of community among the spectators as well as be a challenge to the senses. They used different techniques to achieve the above mentioned goals, but performance lies at the core of both groups' approach. For The Living Theater and The Performance Group, performance has been invoked as a counterhegemonic and protest strategy, as "an act of intervention, a method of resistance, a form of criticism, [but also] a way of revealing agency" (Denzin 9). However, in the case of The Living Theater, performance was also used primarily as a way of questioning capitalism itself and "indicating new directions" (Goldberg 7).

In both plays verbal language is deemphasized, or even replaced in certain cases. Corporeal has replaced cerebral language. The Living Theater and The Performance Group sought to translate words into actions in the hope that the latter could lead to reactions from the spectators. Their choice to downgrade verbal language is deeply political, as they were convinced that verbal language has failed to elicit revolutionary behavior from the audience. In this context, they relocated the emphasis from language to the non-verbal elements of theater, and specifically to the actors' bodies, gestures, movements, sound, lightning, space, and, in the case of The Living Theater, to silence. Prioritizing physical communication over verbal communication was a means of highlighting the physical presence of the actors as well as the spectators' immediate reality, since for both groups, the "essence of the theatre is found neither in the narration of an event, nor in the discussion of a hypothesis with an audience, nor in the representation of life as it appears from outside, nor even in a vision - but [in] . . . the theatre [that] is an act carried out here and now" (Grotowski 118).

This renewed attention to the present reality is not incidental. Rather, it is part of Beck, Malina and Schechner's overall attempt to prove that the theatrical event must be in constant communication with the communal and political life, as it is communal and political life that will benefit from the societal changes their theater attempts to realize. To this end, in *Antigone* and *Dionysus in '69*, spectators are not intended as passive recipients, but as active participants, or even producers. Actors and audience form a community, which, according to the American professor of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies Bruce McConachie, "can provide a context for political change", whether this change is meant as a free utopian anarchist community, like The Living Theater envisioned, or as a Dionysian society following the designs of The Performance Group (97). Beck, Malina and Schechner "came to reject that kind of theatre in which individuals are required to sit isolated from one another in the dark and live by proxy, surrendering their freedom and their imagination to those on the stage who alone can move and act" (Biggsby 63). Instead, by means of actively engaging their audiences, The Living Theater and The Performance Group managed to expand our preconceptions of what theater is or is meant to be.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Information about the script is taken from The Performance Group, *Dionysus in 69*, New York, 1970. Unfortunately the book is unpaginated. See bibliography for further information on the issue.

## Περίληψη

Αυτή η διπλωματική εργασία θα συζητήσει δύο αξιοσημείωτες και εξαιρετικής επιρροής Αμερικανικές επανεγγραφές της ελληνικής τραγωδίας, οι οποίες σηματοδότησαν την πολιτιστική ιστορία της δεκαετίας του 1960. Συγκεκριμένα, θα εξετάσω το *Antigone* του Living Theater (1967), η οποία αποτελεί διασκευή της ομώνυμης τραγωδίας του Bertolt Brecht, καθώς και το *Dionysus in '69* του Performance Group (1968), μια ριζική επαναπροσέγγιση πάνω στις *Βάκχες* του Ευριπίδη. Ο πρωταρχικός σκοπός της εργασίας είναι να συζητήσει διεξοδικά πώς το Living Theater και το Performance Group κατόρθωσαν να δώσουν μια σύγχρονη πολιτική ερμηνεία σε ένα αρχαίο θέμα και, ως εκ τούτου, να εκφράσουν ευαισθησίες που παραμένουν μοναδικές στα πλαίσια όχι μόνο του εξαιρετικά πολιτικοποιημένου πολιτιστικού περιβάλλοντος της δεκαετίας του εξήντα, αλλά και των δικών τους επαναστατικών πολιτικών πεποιθήσεων. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, θα δοθεί μεγάλη έμφαση στους διακριτούς τρόπους με τους οποίους τα έργα *Antigone* και *Dionysus in '69* αντανakλούν, ενισχύουν και πρωτίστως συμβάλλουν στο έντονο αντιπολεμικό κίνημα που αναπτύχθηκε για να αντισταχθεί στην εκτεταμένη στρατιωτική επέμβαση της κυβέρνησης των ΗΠΑ στο Βιετνάμ.

Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη τα ευρύτερα ιστορικά, κοινωνικά, πολιτισμικά και πολιτικά γεγονότα της δεκαετίας κατά την οποία ανέβηκαν για πρώτη φορά και τα δύο έργα, η παρούσα διπλωματική εργασία θα εξετάσει πιθανούς τρόπους συσχέτισης του συγκεκριμένου ιστορικού πλαισίου με τον πειραματισμό που εξέφρασαν με τα έργα τους οι δύο θεατρικές ομάδες. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, η εργασία επικεντρώνεται στο πνεύμα και τις κοινωνικές δομές που επικρατούσαν στα τέλη της δεκαετίας του εξήντα, έτσι ώστε να εξεταστεί ο πιθανός αντίκτυπος που είχε στην *Antigone* και στο *Dionysus in '69* του Living Theater και του Performance Group αντίστοιχα. Μελετώντας εκτενώς τους λόγους πίσω από την επιλογή των ομάδων να επανεξετάσουν τις συγκεκριμένες αρχαίες ελληνικές τραγωδίες, επιχειρώ να καταδείξω ότι υπάρχουν πολιτικά και αισθητικά κίνητρα για την εκ νέου ανακάλυψη αυτών των έργων στην παραγμένη δεκαετία του '60. Ειδικότερα, θα διερευνήσω με ποιους τρόπους και σε ποιο βαθμό η *Αντιγόνη* και οι *Βάκχες* φαίνεται να αποτελούν γόνιμη πηγή για την διερεύνηση ζητημάτων που σχετίζονται με το κοινωνικοπολιτικό και πολιτιστικό πλαίσιο της εποχής.

Στην περίπτωση του Living Theater, θα ληφθούν σοβαρά υπόψη οι κρίσιμοι λόγοι που οδήγησαν τον Julian Beck και την Judith Malina να εξετάσουν τόσο το πρωτότυπο του Σοφοκλή, όσο και τη νεότερη ανάγνωση του έργου από τον Brecht. Ωστόσο, θα δοθεί μεγαλύτερη έμφαση στους λόγους που οδήγησαν την ομάδα να ακολουθήσει την διασκευή του Brecht με αξιοσημείωτη πιστότητα. Επιπλέον, εξετάζοντας το έργο του Living Theater, θα αναλυθεί εκτενέστερα η επαναστατική πολιτική ατζέντα της ομάδας και, πιο συγκεκριμένα, οι αναρχικές και ειρηνιστικές πεποιθήσεις της. Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο, σκοπεύω να καταδείξω ότι αυτές οι πεποιθήσεις έχουν ενσωματωθεί στη συγκεκριμένη ερμηνεία της *Αντιγόνης*, ενώ το ίδιο το έργο φαίνεται να έχει επηρεαστεί από ανάλογες πολιτικές πεποιθήσεις. Στην περίπτωση του Performance Group, λαμβάνεται υπόψη και η έντονα αρνητική κριτική που αφορά την αναντιστοιχία μεταξύ της ζωής και των φιλοσοφικών πεποιθήσεων του Richard Schechner. Ωστόσο, θα υποστηρίξω ότι οι κριτικοί δεν αντιλαμβάνονται ότι ο Schechner διαπράττει μια αντι-ηγεμονική πράξη μέσω του έργου του, καθώς επιτελεί ένα ρόλο που ο Ιταλός μαρξιστής φιλόσοφος Antonio Francesco Gramsci θεωρούσε ότι οι διανοούμενοι έχουν χρέος να αναλάβουν.

Περισσότερο από οποιαδήποτε άλλη πτυχή ή παράμετρο των έργων, η εργασία εστιάζει στους ακριβείς τρόπους με τους οποίους τα *Antigone* και *Dionysus in '69* κατορθώνουν να προωθήσουν ένα επαναστατικό πλαίσιο αναφοράς. Ερευνώντας τις τεχνικές και τις μεθόδους που ανέπτυξαν οι δύο ομάδες για να αναζωογονήσουν μια παράδοση εξέγερσης με εργαλείο την τέχνη, θα τονίσω κυρίως την επαναστατική δυναμική αυτών των πειραματικών προσπαθειών. Συγκεκριμένα, σκοπεύω να δείξω ότι το Living Theater και το Performance Group, θέτοντας στο επίκεντρο τη μετασχηματιστική δύναμη της επιτέλεσης (performance), καθώς και τις επαναστατικές δυνατότητές της, προσπαθούν να προωθήσουν ένα επαναστατικό, αντιεραρχικό και ταυτόχρονα συλλογικό ήθος κατά τη διάρκεια αυτής της περιόδου κρίσης. Η έρευνά μου σκοπεύει επίσης να ρίξει φως στους τρόπους με τους οποίους και οι δύο ομάδες κατορθώνουν να διευρύνουν τις απόψεις μας για το τι είναι το θέατρο ή τι πρόκειται να είναι στο μέλλον.



## Works Cited

- Aristotle. *Poetics*, translated by Joe Sachs, Focus Publishing, 2006.
- Beck, Julian, et al. "The Living Theatre Abroad: Radicalizing the Classics. Interview with Julian Beck and Judith Malina." *Performing Arts Journal*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1981, pp. 26–40. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/3245163](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3245163). Accessed 19 Oct. 2018.
- . "Storming the Barricades." *The Brig: A Concept for Theater or Film*, edited by Kenneth H. Brown, Hill and Wang, 1965, pp. 1-36.
- . *The Life of the Theatre: The Relation of the Artist to the Struggle of the People*, City Lights Books, 1972.
- Bey, Hakim. "Communique of the Association for Ontological Anarchy." *T.A.Z.: The Temporary Autonomous Zone*, Autonomedia, 1991. Hermetic Library, [https://hermetic.com/bey/taz\\_cont](https://hermetic.com/bey/taz_cont). Accessed 17 November 2018.
- Bigsby, Christopher W. E. *A Critical Introduction to Twentieth-Century American Drama*, vol. 3, Cambridge University Press, 1965.
- Biner, Pierre. *The Living Theatre*, translated by Robert Meister, Avon Books, 1972.
- Bloom Alexander and Wini Breines. "My Generation: The Student Movement and the New Left." "Takin' it to the Streets": *A Sixties Reader*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 49-102.
- Bradford, Martin D. *The Theatre Is in the Street: Politics and Public Performance in 1960s America*. University of Massachusetts Press, 2004.
- Brockett, Oscar G. *History of the Theatre*. Allyn & Bacon, 1982.
- Brook, Peter. "The Holy Theatre." *The Empty Space: A Book about the Theater: Deadly, Holy, Rough, Immediate*, Simon & Schuster, 1996, pp.49-77.
- Brunel, Pierre. "Antigone." *Companion to Literary Myths, Heroes and Archetypes*, translated by Wendy Allatson and Judith Hayward et al., Routledge, 2016, pp. 69-76.

- Denzin, Norman K. *Performance Ethnography: Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Culture*. Sage, 2003.
- Diamond, Elin. *Performance and Cultural Politics*. Routledge, 1996.
- Eddershaw, Margaret. *Performing Brecht: Forty Years of British Performances*, Routledge, 1996.
- Elwood, William R. "Hasenclever and Brecht: A Critical Comparison of Two 'Antigones'." *Educational Theatre Journal*, vol. 24, no. 1, March 1972, pp. 48–68. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/3205388](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3205388). Accessed 17 November 2018.
- Esslin, Martin. *The Theater of the Absurd*. Bloomsbury, 2014.
- Foley, Helene. *Reimagining Greek Tragedy on the American Stage*. University of California Press, 2012.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*, translated by David McLintock, Penguin Books, 2004.
- Gitlin, Tom. *Sixties: Years of Hope and Days of Rage*, Bantam Book, 1987.
- Goldberg, RoseLee. *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*. Harry N. Abrams, 1988.
- Gramsci, Antonio Francesco. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, Lawrence & Wishart/ International Publishers, 1971.
- Grotowski, Jerzy. *Towards a Poor Theatre*. Simon and Schuster, 1968.
- Hall, Edith. "Why Greek Tragedy in the Late Twentieth Century?" *Dionysus since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium*, Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 1-46.
- Hartigan, Karelisa V. "Greek War Responds to War, Drugs and Flower Children: 1960- 1970." *Greek Tragedy on the American Stage: Ancient Drama in the Commercial Theatre, 1882-1994*, Greenwood Press, 1995, pp. 67-110.

- Holzman, Lois. *Schools for Growth: Radical Alternatives to Current Educational Models*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997.
- Honig, Bonnie. *Antigone Interrupted*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *A Theory of Adaptation*. Routledge, 2006.
- Isserman, Maurice, and Michael Kazin. *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s*, Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Jameson, Fredric. "Periodizing the 60s." *The Ideologies of Theory: Essays, 1971-1986, The Syntax of History*, vol. 2, University of Minnesota Press, 1988, pp. 178-210.
- Jones, Frank, and Gore Vidal. "Tragedy with a Purpose: Bertolt Brecht's 'Antigone'." *The Tulane Drama Review*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1957, pp. 39–45. *JSTOR*, *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/1124792](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1124792). Accessed 20 Nov. 2018.
- Kirby, Michael. "On Political Theatre." *The Drama Review: TDR*, vol. 19, no. 2, 1975, pp. 129–135. *JSTOR*, *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/1144954](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1144954). Accessed 13 Nov. 2018.
- Lee, Betty. "Schechner's one-man revolution." *The Globe and Mail*, 9 May 1970.
- Lester, Eleonore. "Professor of Dionysiac Theater." *The New York Times Magazine*, 27 April 1969.
- Lehmann, Hans-Thies. "Panorama of Postdramatic Theatre." *Postdramatic Theatre*, translated by Karen Jürs-Munby, Routledge, 2006, pp. 68-133.
- Lipsitz, George. *A Life in the Struggle: Ivory Perry and the Culture of Opposition*, edited by Susan Porter Benson et al., Temple University Press, 1995.
- Malina, Judith, et al. "Containment Is the Enemy." *The Drama Review: TDR*, vol. 13, no. 3, 1969, pp. 24–44. *JSTOR*, *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/1144455](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1144455). Accessed 30 Nov. 2018.
- Marcuse, Herbert. *Counterrevolution and Revolt*. Beacon Press, 1972.

- Marwick, Arthur. *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States c.1958-c.1974*. Oxford University Press, 1998.
- McConachie, Bruce. *Engaging Audiences: A Cognitive Approach to Spectating in the Theatre*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- Neff, Renfreu. *The Living Theatre: USA*. The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1972.
- Papp, Joseph. Letter to the editor. *New York Times Book Review*, 11 Sept. 1966.
- Pavelec, Sterling Michael. *The Military-Industrial Complex and American Society*. ABC-CLIO, 2010.
- Rubin, Jerry. *Do It!: Scenarios of the Revolution*. Simon & Schuster, 1970.
- Ryan, Paul Ryder. "The Living Theatre's 'Money Tower.'" *The Drama Review: TDR*, vol. 18, no. 2, 1974, pp. 9–19. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/1144898](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1144898). Accessed 15 Dec. 2018.
- Saal, Ilka. "Vernacularising Brecht: The Political Theatre of the New Deal." *Interrogating America through Theatre and Performance*, edited by William Demastes and Iris Smith, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, pp. 101-119.
- Sanders, Julie. *Adaptation and Appropriation*. Routledge, 2006.
- Schechner, Richard. *Environmental Theater*. Hawthorn Books, 1973.
- . "Speculations on Radicalism, Sexuality & Performance." *The Drama Review: TDR*, vol. 13, no. 4, 1969, pp. 89–110. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/](http://www.jstor.org/stable/). Accessed 13 Dec. 2018.
- . "The Politics of Ecstasy." *Public Domain: Essays on the Theater*, Bobbs-Merrill, 1969, pp. 209-228.
- . "What is Performance Studies Anyway?" *The Ends of Performance*, edited by Peggy Phelan and Jill Lane, New York University Press, 1998, pp. 357-362.
- Segal, Charles. "Metatragedy: Art, Illusion, Imitation." *Dionysiac Poetics and Euripides' Bacchae*, Princeton University Press, 1997, pp. 215-267.

- Sell, Mike. *Avant- Garde Performance and the Limits of Criticism: Approaching the Living Theatre, Happenings- Fluxus, and the Black Arts Movement*. University of Michigan Press, 2005.
- Shank, Theodore. *American Alternative Theatre*. Grove Press, 1982.
- Shephard, William Hunter. *The Dionysus Group*, Peter Lang, 1991.
- Shaughnessy, Nicolas. "Setting the Scene: Critical and Theoretical Contexts." *Applying Performance, Live Art, Socially Engaged Theater and Affective Practice*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, pp. 3-14.
- Silber, Irwin. "Open Letter to the Living Theatre." *The Drama Review*, vol.13, no. 3, Spring 1969.
- Sontag, Susan. *Style of Radical Will*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969.
- Swift, Jonathan. "Don't Put It down!" A Teacher's Session with HAIR. " *The English Journal*, vol. 60, no. 5, 1971, pp. 627–628. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/813079](http://www.jstor.org/stable/813079). Accessed 9 Nov. 2018.
- Taxidou, Olga. *Tragedy, Modernity and Mourning*. Edinburgh University Press, 2004.
- Taylor, Karen Malpede. *People's Theatre in Amerika*. Drama Book Specialists, 1972.
- The Performance Group. *Dionysus in 69*, edited by Richard Schechner, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1970.
- Tytell, John. *The Living Theatre: Art, Exile, and Outrage*, Grove Press, 1995.
- Wilmeth, Don B. and Jonathan Curley. "Timeline: Post- World War II to 1998." *The Cambridge History of American Theatre: Post-World War II to the 1990s*, edited by Christopher Bigsby, vol. 3, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 21-86.
- Wright, Erik Olin. "Intellectuals and the Class Structure of Capitalist Society." *Between Labor and Capital*, edited by Pat Walker, South End Press, 1979, pp. 191-212.

Zeitlin, Froma. "Dionysus in 69." *Dionysus Since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium*, edited by Edith Hall et al., Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 49-75.