

Workshop techniques of theatre and theatre as a technique

Date: 22 March 2017

Location: Library Lab, University of Ghent

Number of participants: 10-15

Language: English

This workshop is intended for pre-docs, PhD's and post-docs in the field of theatre studies and theatre history.

Organised by

GEMS (Ghent University): <https://gemsugent.wordpress.com/>

THALIA (Ghent University): <http://www.theaterwetenschappen.ugent.be/thalia>

ITEMP (University of Amsterdam, University of Leiden, Ghent University, Free University of Brussels): <https://itempviolence.wordpress.com/>

Objectives of the workshop

Combining expert lectures with student presentations and discussion forum on:

- methodological issues regarding theatre as a research object.
- theatre as a technique of knowledge production.

Part one - theatre techniques

Theatre historiography cannot be written with recourse to actual performances. Instead, it relies on documents, remnants, and other types of primary and secondary sources that provide information about performances in the recent or distant past. Sources can come down to us in a wide variety of media, such as theatre texts, stage notes, props, reviews or posters, each of which requires a different approach. The focus of this first section of the workshop will be the methods to study historical theatre, as well as the problems researchers encounter while investigating theatrical events. How can primary or secondary sources be interpreted and how should we deal with lacunas in our research? Questions such as these will be tackled by theatre experts Karel Vanhaesebrouck (VUB, EHB, RITCS) and Kurt Vanhoutte (UA). Participants are kindly asked to send in a brief notice of the methodological challenges they face regarding their source material. These preparations will be the incentive for a group discussion.

Part two - theatre as a technique

From the early modern period onwards, the idea and concept of 'theatre' played an important role in the representation and dissemination of scientific knowledge. The theatre metaphor was applied in books that 'staged' new fields of knowledge (such as anatomy, or the world of the machine) as a kind of theatre. Likewise, theatre itself was a space in which these new 'scenes of knowledge' were performed. This conceptual cross-fertilization is highlighted in the work of theatre historian Jan Lazardzig (UoA), who has extensively studied early modern theatre as a technique to represent

and elucidate complex knowledge to a larger audience. His dissertation examined the relation between theatre and the science of fortification in the 17th century. Both the theatre and fortifications had to produce effects of surprise and wonder among audiences, and therefore the theatre was highly 'technologized'. Vice versa, the military sciences of that time were inspired by the theatre, developing a kind of 'dramaturgy' of fortification. After a short introduction by Jan Lazardig, participants will be invited to present their research project in the light of questions about theatre as a technique to imagine worlds outside the theatre, followed by group discussions.

Time schedule

Part one - techniques of theatre (10h - 13h)

Teachers: Kurt Vanhoutte (UA), Karel Vanhaesebrouck (VUB/EHB/RITCS)

About this session:

10h - 11.15h Karel Vanhaesebrouck and Kurt Vanhoutte give a presentation on their methodological approach of bygone theatrical events.

11.15h - 11.45h Q&A

11.45h - 12h Coffee break

12h - 13h For this session 4 students are asked to prepare 5-minute presentations about source material from their projects (image, script, recording, stage props) and the methodological questions related to those materials. The presentations are followed by a group discussion.

Preparatory reading:

- fragment (pp. 71-98) from Fischer-Lichte, Erika, *The Routledge Introduction to Theatre and Performance Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2013).
- fragment ('Typography', pp. 24-28) from Bernhard Siegert - 'Cacography or Communication? Cultural Techniques of Sign-Signal Distinction', in: *Cultural Techniques: Grids, Filters, Doors, and Other Articulations of the Real* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015).
- TBA

13h - 14.30h: lunch

Part two - theatre as technique (14.30h - 18.00h)

Teacher:

Jan Lazardig (UvA)

About this session:

14.30h - 15.45h Jan Lazardig gives a presentation on his work for the book series *Theatrum Scientiarum*, a study on the intersection between the history of science and the history of theater. The focus will be on how the theater is a technique on the production of knowledge.

15.45h - 16.15h Q&A

16.15h - 16.30h Coffee break

16.30h - 18.00h Three students give a presentation on a case study from their research in which the theatre functions as a technique to develop knowledge, critical reflection or emotional responses among audiences.

Preparatory reading:

- Jan Lazardzig and Hole Rößler, 'Joseph Furttenbach and the Transfer of Mechanical Knowledge New Perspectives on Early Modern Theatre Cultures', in: Jan Lazardzig and Hole Rößler (eds.), *Technologies of Theatre Joseph Furttenbach and the Transfer of Mechanical Knowledge in Early Modern Theatre Cultures* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Vittorio Klostermann, 2016).
- Jan Lazardzig, 'A mechano-poetology of spectacles: Ménéstrier's *Traité des Tournois, Joustes, Carrousels et autres Spectacles publics* (1669)' (draft version).

18.00h - ... : drinks