

## Adecuaciones de la espera: la repetición como forma de construcción dramática

*Adaptations of waiting: repetition as a form of dramatic construction*

*Adequações da espera: repetição como forma de construção dramática*

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### Resumen

El presente trabajo es un análisis sobre la obra *Audiencia*, del dramaturgo checo Václav Havel (1936-2011), a partir del método dramatólogico propuesto por José Luis García Barrientos. Tomamos como base el texto dramático, el cual es un texto lingüístico de codificación verbal y no verbal, reproductivo a la vez que descriptivo. Nuestro objetivo es conocer el funcionamiento de los cuatro elementos que componen el texto dramático: espacio, tiempo, personaje y público (visión) en el conjunto de la obra, a partir del método propuesto. Estos elementos fundamentales forman la acción dramática; lo que ocurre entre unos personajes en un espacio y durante un tiempo frente a un público. A través de este análisis podremos observar a partir de cada uno de ellos como interaccionan para construir este universo ficcional.

**Palabras clave:** Dramaturgia, Espacio, Dramatología, Teatro, Checoslovaquia.

### Abstract

The present work is an analysis on the work *Audience*, by the Czech playwright Václav Havel (1936-2011), based on the dramatological method proposed by José Luis García Barrientos. We take as a basis the dramatic text, which is a linguistic text of verbal and nonverbal coding, reproductive as well as descriptive. Our objective is to know the operation of the four elements that compose the dramatic text: space, time, character and public (vision) in the

whole of the work, based on the proposed method. These fundamental elements form dramatic action; what happens between some characters in a space and for a time in front of an audience. Through this analysis we can observe from each of them how they interact to build this fictional universe.

**Keywords:** Dramaturgy, Space, Dramatology, Theater, Czechoslovakia.

### Resumo

O presente trabalho é uma análise do trabalho *Audiencia*, do dramaturgo checo Václav Havel (1936-2011), com base no método dramatológico proposto por José Luis García Barrientos. Tomamos como base o texto dramático, que é um texto lingüístico de codificação verbal e não verbal, reprodutivo e descritivo. Nosso objetivo é conhecer o funcionamento dos quatro elementos que compõem o texto dramático: espaço, tempo, caráter e público (visão) em todo o trabalho, a partir do método proposto. Esses elementos fundamentais formam a ação dramática; o que acontece entre personagens em um espaço e por um tempo na frente de uma audiência. Através desta análise podemos observar de cada uma delas como eles interagem para construir este universo fictício.

**Palavras-chave:** Dramaturgia, Espaço, Dramatologia, Teatro, Tchecoslováquia.

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### **Adequacies of the wait: repetition as a form of dramatic construction.**

*Audiencia* is a work by Václav Havel (1936-2011), writer and Czech politician, who was the last president of Czechoslovakia and the first of the Czech Republic. This text, together with *Inauguration*, was written at the end of the 1960s, after the invasion of the Soviet Union. The two works have the same character as a diegetic thread, *Vaněk*, a writer who is forced to work in a brewery after the persecution. If we take a look at the life of Havel, we will know that in 1975 he worked in a brewery that inspired this absurd drama. The two

works are part of a whole, by sharing the historical moment, and in one and the other you can see references to the other.

In *Audiencia* we observe the working environment in which the protagonist does not finish fitting. This work deals with the theme of conversion, education, the adaptation of an ideology in a country oppressed by a communist government system and the communist comrade.

Our objective is to observe how the parts that make up a dramatic text work, starting from what was proposed by José Luis García Barrientos (2007) in his dramatological method, which is a linguistic text of verbal and non-verbal coding, reproductive as well as descriptive, in which four fundamental elements that compose it are analyzed; space, time, character and public (vision) in the set of the work. From there, we can configure what constitutes the dramatic action, which we understand as what happens between characters in a space and for a time in front of an audience, which highlights its specular aspect (Pavis, 2000) and semiotic (Bobes Naves, 2001).

The characters of the work are: the Brewer; character without proper name, image of mass, identified by the office that he exercises in the diegesis; and Vaněk. Later the dialogues of the Brewer will be configuring this character, in such a way that one gets to know that, formerly, he was a theater writer, married and without children.

Havel's work takes place in an immutable space during the entire diegesis. The space occupied by the characters is the office of a brewery. The work has a spatial statism, or so it seems from the reading; the characters are always seated, except for the times that the brewer will come out to vent the bladder.

From textuality, thought unfolds adapting to the need of the moment in a clear struggle for survival. In this sense, we could identify two lines of thought corresponding to each of the characters: the Brewer tries to gain the confidence of Vaněk so that he writes his own reports that the party requires him. Ironically, the comrades have stopped accusing themselves and now it is the individual who has to give himself away. Instead, Vaněk's character seeks to adapt to this new form of reality he faces.

The description of the place in the first dimension gives us a spatial reference, which comes after the list of characters. It iconizes us a ruined territory, a store of memories, objects, denigrated objects, some among many, forgotten in the corners like the Brewer himself:

Next to the walls and especially in the corners of the office there are all kinds of difficult-to-define old junk, like used fans, an old radio set, a broken rack, a lot of newspapers of the year of the pear, a couple of water boots, etcetera. (Havel, 1997, p.307)

It is worth highlighting three elements that are mentioned in this dimension:

- On the wall, hang a diploma.
- A collection of beer bottles of different brands.
- A picture not very good that represents the good soldier Svejek. At the foot of the drawing you can read an ornate legend: "Who drinks beer knows no weakness". (Havel, 1997, p. 307)

The place then becomes a place of worship, but an ironic cult that as the drama progresses will become more apparent. The object of worship becomes the very evil that makes the owner of the brewery vulnerable. From the dimension and the list of characters, Havel has already shaped the drama that will deal with the power struggle. The same fight will take place in the Brewer's space; a space full of objects without identity against a character, Vanêk, whose name confers autonomy and identity.

The Brewer is a parody character, ridiculous caricature of the "not very good picture that represents the good soldier Svejek" (Havel, 1997, p.307) and that is hanging in his premises: ironic and antifrástico character with himself.

Most of the following dimensions are, by function, dramatic. We find that the constant is a repetitive action:

The brewer takes a bottle from the box, opens it and serves beer in two jars; he places one in front of Vanêk and takes the other in one gulp.

The brewer opens another bottle and serves it.

The brewer opens another bottle and serves it.

In this way a constant is established: serve, go to the bathroom -by the brewer- and throw beer-by Vanêk-. The cycle of repetitions that is established in the dimensions can be found, in turn, in the dialogues and in the same advance of the drama.

The types of dialogues we find are, by function, dramatic. This favors that the drama has a constant dynamism: to convince, to thank, to ask, to humiliate, to seduce, to be silent.

VANÊK: Good morning.

CERVECERO: Ah, Vanêk! Pass! Sit down!

Vanêk sits with a certain shyness.

Do you fancy a beer?

VANÊK: No, thanks -

CERVECERO: Come on, man, a beer does not hurt. (Havel, 1997, p.308)

(...)

CERVECERO: So we're friends?

VANÊK: Yes.

CERVECERO: Do you have confidence in me now?

VANÊK: Sure.

CERVECERO: Well, listen. I know one of those who come here to find out about you. We were schoolmates, you know? He is a good friend of mine - a certain Toni - a piece of bread - at least with me - (Havel, 1997, pp. 328-329)

(...)

CERVECERO: Do you know what risks I run treating you so well? What will happen to me if you give me away? I am at your mercy!

VANÊK: I'm not going to tell anyone - (Havel, 1997, p. 329)

The dialogues constantly announce an exterior that is configured as an oppressor of that brief world. This same outer space becomes patent at the moment when the brewer invites Vanêk to reveal himself. Bribery and blackmail are added to the functions of these dialogues:

CERVECERO: Look, in the store you would have all the time in the world - It would not bother you to write a few things about yourself once a week - it would be worth it, would not it? I would protect you and you would live - like a king! And you could even take beer, all you want. For you to write that must be a children's game! You're a writer for something, fuck! Toni is a good person and this report is very bad, we can not leave him hanging. - Damn, have not we promised to help each other? That we would form a gang? Have not we offered for it? Well, tell me, have we offered for it or not?

VANĚK: Yes, but -

CERVECERO: Ferdinand, now everything depends on you. If you help us everything will be fine. You help me and I help you, and everything will go smoothly. It is not necessary to make life hell. (Havel, 1997, p. 336)

As the drama progresses, the anguish on the part of the brewer becomes patent at the same time that his drunkenness is increasing, which leads him to explode and pose an ethical position corresponding to an ideology:

CERVECERO: Damn, you, the intellectuals! The young men! The only thing you know how to do is to talk the elbows in a way that everyone likes. You can afford that luxury because nothing can happen to you. You are always in the center of attention, you already know how to ride, now! Always at the top, even if you are below everything. On the other hand, an ordinary person kills himself and does not get anything out of it at all - everybody turns his back on him, yells at him as he pleases and sends him to take him for a sack - And if that were not enough, the gentlemen They reproach you that you have no principles. The gentleman would love to have a good job in the store, yes, but wet his ass in the crap in which I have to wallow every day, he does not even want to hear about it. You are very smart, you have it perfectly calculated, you know how to protect yourself from fucking mother. Principles, principles! Of course you keep them very well, your principles! It is that you take advantage of them, sell them at the price of gold, they allow you to live like pashas! Instead, what? I can be beaten to death if you feel like it, by your principles, of course. You always find some way out, but what is my exit? Nobody will support me - I do not fear anyone - no one will write about me, no one will get wet, because it does not interest anyone - I serve only to fertilize the dung-bar on which your principles grow, to look for hot rooms for your

heroism, and the only thing I get out of it, deep down, is contempt. You will one day return with your actresses and you will give them to them to have rolled barrels - you will be a hero - and I, where can I go? Who will notice me? Who will appreciate my actions? What have I got out of life? What awaits me? What? (Havel, 1997, p. 339)

What do the dispossessed do, what to do if they do not have principles? Without principles there is no proper name, the mass has no principles, the caricatures of men either, the dead in life either, a being without ambitions either. Without hope, the principles disappear in the bottom of the beer glass. By the cited text we observe the conscience of the character, of his own historical condition of which he is not a part. History will not pay homage. Who is nobody, nothing possesses but the amorphous name of the function he performs.

Special mention deserves the style of dialogue that configures two worlds. The language of the Brewer is vulgar and colloquial; Vanêk's is caring and respectful. This will change at the end of the drama in a repetitive game proposed by the author, in which Vanêk's character will adapt his language and actions to which the Brewer would wait. At the beginning of the work we observe:

*When the curtain rises, the Brewer is sitting behind the desk, in a robe, with his head resting on the table, and he snores loudly. You hear a knock on the door and the brewer wakes up.*

*CERVECERO: Go ahead.*

*Vanêk enters the office dressed in a work suit and waterproof boots.*

*VANÊK: Good morning.*

*CERVECERO: Ah, Vanêk! Pass! Sit down!*

*Vanêk sits with a certain shyness.*

*Do you fancy a beer?*

*VANÊK: No, thanks.*

*CERVECERO: Come on man, a beer does not hurt.*

*The brewer takes a bottle from the box, opens it and serves beer in two jars; he places one in front of Vanêk and takes the other in one gulp.*

*VANÊK: Thanks. (Havel, 1997, p. 307)*

At the end of the work we find a similar scene, which configures us a spiral drama:

*After a moment you hear a knock on the door. The Brewer wakes up immediately. After the nap he becomes sober again and behaves in the same way as at the beginning of the work. It is seen that in the meantime he has forgotten everything that happened.*

*CERVECERO: Go ahead.*

*Vanêk enters the office, fastens his fly.*

*Ah, Vanêk, come in, sit down.*

*Vanêk sits down.*

*Do you fancy a beer?*

*Vanêk nods. The brewer takes a bottle from the box, opens it and serves two glasses, one of which brings Vanêk closer. Vanêk empties it in one gulp.*

*How's it going, how's it going?*

*VANÊK: This is all crap! (Havel, 1997, p. 340-341)*

In the first round we can speak of a contrast of language styles, but in the second round, which we do not attend because the curtain is lowered before, the idea of a unification of language is left to the viewer's imagination. The decorum, the harmonic concordance of all the elements of the discourse is congruent with the communist world posed by Havel. The dramatic action is presented from beginning to end as a single and complete unit, in which the situation of the characters is adapted: in the Brewer for the intake of alcohol; in Vanêk for the knowledge of the world that the Brewer lives, which leads him to understand and commiserate with him and thus modify his behavior.

*Vanêk waits a while, then very carefully supports the Brewer's head on the table, gets up without making a sound and goes to the door; there he stops, turns around, hesitates for a moment and then goes to the sleeping Brewer.*

*VANÊK: Do not be sad.*

*Vanêk goes out. After a moment you hear a knock on the door. The brewer wakes up immediately. After the nap he becomes sober again and behaves in the same way as at the beginning of the work. (Havel, 1997, p. 340)*



The Brewer is not an opponent from the actantial model for Vanêk, rather he is configured as an opponent of himself and Vanêk's assistant.

The work is a great unique painting. The exit and entry of the character of the Brewer to the bathroom does not affect, from our point of view, the situation posed. The state of things is not altered, but until the end, with the departure and entry of the character of Vanêk. It is thus a structure of closed construction, because it follows the rules of unity of action, time and space. All these components are subordinated to the totality of this action drama. In it, the "composition of the facts is the central element, and as the soul of the work, to which all others must be subordinated, in particular the characters, whose character is at the service of the action and not the other way around" (García Barrientos, 2007, p.94).

We can identify the work with the drama of the environment, in which the central element and soul of the work becomes the historic, social or picturesque «setting», and to which all the elements of which the drama is composed are subordinated. The characters act in a certain way conditioned by the space in which they are and the historical reality that surrounds them. In this way, Audience is a drama that configures all the actions of the characters from the external space surrounding the action bounded space, so the reading can take a path to the oppressive outside or to the reiteration of the cycle of action. The enhancement of one or the other can be given from the vision of the stage director.

Regarding the time category, only the narrative allusions that the Brewer makes to a past moment in relation to his former gang are highlighted:

CERVECERO: What a pity that you were not here five years ago! So we had a gang that was fun. Now it is not like before. What goodies we organized among all! We met at the factory, a certain Karel Maránek, who is no longer there, Honza Peterka, the bottlers and me. We spent whole nights of partying, and in the morning we worked together with a trunk like a house. Ask Honza Peterka, he will tell you.

VANÊK: You already told me. (Havel, 1997, p. 314)

It is a time remembered and venerated, not only by the brewer but by some other members of that gang, a moment in which they were someone, a longed-for time. Also, another example of time missed by the Brewer is the following:

CERVECERO: Do you know what could have come, me?

VANĚK: To what?

CERVECERO: A master brewer in Pilsen.

VANĚK: Really?

CERVECERO: Well, you see it: and here I am. What a paradox, right? (Havel, 1997, p. 318)

The paradox is what we yearn for in contradiction with reality: these times alluded to, venerated in contradiction with the present time of the Brewer .. Almost a question to himself of when that destiny was truncated. The work is presented in a chronological sequence that is only altered by a wink of repetition, as we announced before, which affects the concept of frequency of the drama, that is, the relation between the different occurrences of a phenomenon of the fable in the staging and vice versa. The final spiral repetition affects the frequency of the work, generating in the viewer or reader the sensation of starting again with an adaptation. The same could be said of the semantic repetitions of words and situations that we have already mentioned, but shaped by the spiral construction of the drama. This series of repetitions directly affect the internal speed proposed in the work. Each pause adds a moment of stalking and observation of the characters in a delicate game of status.

As we already mentioned, the obvious space of the drama is unique. There is a series of latent spaces where VanĚk's other colleagues are working, as well as the office offered by the brewer to the aforementioned character, in such a way that the brewery becomes the place of procedure between the wild and inclement outdoors and the security of the interior. A brief purgatory:

When you present an offering to the altar, if you remember there that your brother has a complaint against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go first to make peace with your brother and then return to present it. Reach an agreement with your enemy while they are on the road, lest your enemy hand you over to the judge and the judge to the jailer and they will throw you into the dungeon. I assure you that you will not get out of there until after you have paid every penny. Mateo 5:23-26

A dungeon, in this case, where there is an imitation of a judge, a place that becomes the prison of the person who inhabits it, although to live in this case is to have nowhere to go.

Unable to be, it collapses. The power that he held with certainty at the beginning of the work has been undermined: he threatens a hollow threat, as the only way out.

*The Brewer suffers a collapse in the chair, rests his head on Vanêk's chest and begins to cry. After a while he calms down, looks at Vanêk.*

*Quietly:*

*Ferdinand -*

*VANÊK: Hum -*

*CERVECERO: Are you my friend?*

*VANÊK: Yes -*

*CERVECERO: I ask you, go find her, bring her here right now - I implore you -*

*Pause.*

*Tell him you have a friend here, an animal from a brewery, but a good person.*

*Pause.*

*I'll get you the position in the warehouse. I will not ask you to write any report, just fix that, I beg you.*

*Pause.*

*Will you do it for me? You will do it for me? Only for one night - after I will find myself well - then everything will change - I will know that I have not lived in vain - that my life has not been total shit - is it true that you will bring it?*

*Pause.*

*Then the Brewer takes Vanêk by the clothes and desperately screams at his face.*

*If you do not bring it - I - I do not know - I can - maybe I -*

*He begins to cry silently and rests his head on Vanêk's chest. (Havel, 1997, pp. 339-340)*

The series of elements found in the drama make us a geographical place: a canteen in communist Czechoslovakia, although we could relate it to a series of spaces that, varying one or two elements, is designed and becomes a place of transit, a «no place» where it is impossible to inhabit. The characters are constructed in that space and by their words generate a psychological, moral and social configuration conditioned by a historical environment. Also, the allusions from the text iconize a historical moment that we can detect, but the situation that is represented in it updates the work.

The repetitions of situations and ideological allusions make up a drama of indoctrination. The classroom is a place that has lost meaning and whoever attempts indoctrination is the most unlikely being and without self-control that will collapse by its very nature, if you have patience.

Havel seems to tell us that it is not society that determines the conscience of the individual, but the individual himself who determines his consciousness. Society will try to adapt and modify the conscience of the individual through education, indoctrination: thus the repetition of situations accentuates what has been said. Audience is the drama of the survival of the individual's conscience.

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