

Open Peer Review

Current Peer Review Status:   

Version 1

Reviewer Report 30 June 2023

<https://doi.org/10.21956/openreseurope.17077.r31420>

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The article is a presentation of the ERC Advanced Grant Project *PuppetPlays. Reappraising Western European Repertoires for Puppet and Marionette Theatres*, directed by Didier Plassard.

The main object of the project is the repertoire of text written for puppet theatre from 17th century in Europe.

The author, in order to include the phenomenon of the puppet theatre into the general sphere of theatricality, uses the category of "double vision" theorized by Steve Tillis.

The aim of the project is not only to analyze puppet theatre as sort of "minor" theatre, or substitute of theatre, in contexts where theatre was absent (for economic, moral or geographical reasons).

The project, in fact, traces more interesting hypothesis of research in the field of co-existence of actors theatre and puppet theatre, focusing on the "**expressive potential**" of puppet theatre.

The research is, above all, dramaturgical.

The project explains in detail a first preliminary and quantitative objective: mapping the dramaturgical repertoire of puppet theatre in Western Europe. The construction of a database (puppetplays.eu) is clearly defined, also evidencing (with some precise examples) the difficulties and disparities, in different countries, due to differences in conservation, typology of authoriality, centralization or dissemination of collections, quantity of published or unpublished texts. The approach of the database itself is comparative, aiming to provide a tool capable of highlighting how puppet theatre contributed to the dissemination of common cultural references in Europe. The importance of the project is highlighted in the last part of the open letter. The author dwells on the methodological difficulties encountered in integrating puppet theatre with the general history of theatre.

Of particular relevance and heuristic potential is the hypothesis of applying to dramaturgy of the puppet theatre the category of heterochrony of the visual arts highlighted by Aby Warburg and more recently theorized by Didi-Huberman.

The analysis of the puppet theatre and its expressive potential, not as a "minor" theatre or surrogate theatre, but as an integral part of the history of the theatre, defines the project as extremely important, hypothesizing the possibility of a study which, also thanks to the quantitative approach, will allow a "in vitro" study of some very relevant dynamics for the entire history of western theatre in the modern age and its role in the construction of social time.

The open letter describes the project more than adequately from a scientific point of view in all its components.

Is the rationale for the Open Letter provided in sufficient detail? (Please consider whether existing challenges in the field are outlined clearly and whether the purpose of the letter is explained)

Yes

Does the article adequately reference differing views and opinions?

Yes

Are all factual statements correct, and are statements and arguments made adequately supported by citations?

Yes

Is the Open Letter written in accessible language? (Please consider whether all subject-specific terms, concepts and abbreviations are explained)

Yes

Where applicable, are recommendations and next steps explained clearly for others to follow? (Please consider whether others in the research community would be able to implement guidelines or recommendations and/or constructively engage in the debate)

Yes

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Modern Theatre, with particular reference to XVIIIth Century; Italian Theatre.

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

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