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Revisiting the Anthropo(S)Cene: Theatrical Practices Beyond the Human Stage?

Abstract: This article outlines the specifically modern understanding of an anthroposcenic theatre by (among others) referring to August Wilhelm Iffland's concept of the "Menschen-darsteller" and takes a closer look at Max Herrmann's article "Das theatralische Raumerlebnis". As I will show in my reading of Herrmann's now canonical text, the early discourse of theatre studies not only reproduces the anthroposcenic dispositive of theatre but also already hints at its limits and the breaking up of the closed and privileged scene of the *Anthropos*. The article tries to show how, by asking and focusing the question of space and theatrical transformation, while still focusing on the human actor, his actions and the mimetic relationship between actor and audience, Herrmann decenters and denaturalizes the anthropocentric, universalized, and naturalized framings of theatre.

Keywords: Anthropocene; anthroposcene; theatre studies; scene; actor; post-anthropocentrism; field recording.

Being-with Swarms and Plankton

The scene is empty, or is it? In a space between the Muziekgebouw and water flooding along the piers of the IJ harbour a frame holding just a few music speakers. The scene is full at the same time: not only can one see the modern urban surroundings – the Amsterdam waterfront, the Eastern Docklands and the other visitors – but there is also a multitude of sounds appearing before and among them. Processed and unprocessed sounds of the deep sea, the calls of whales, the movement of plankton and whole swarms of fishes [...] it is a theatre and stage of sounds and voices far removed from the human ear and the human voice, made listenable by special microphones and artistic editing of Jana Winderen. Climate change and its realities enter the scene in a swarm of sounds and drones that moves before but also around the audience and through which it can move. Because of this Winderen's audio-installation *Spring Time in the Marginal Ice Zone* is as unsettling and unhomey as it is fascinating to listen to and experience. In the booklet of the audio-installations CD-version Winderen writes:

The marginal ice zone is the dynamic border between the open sea and the sea ice, which is ecologically extremely vulnerable. The phytoplankton present in the sea produces half of the oxygen on the planet. During spring, this zone is the most important CO₂ sink in our biosphere. In *Spring Bloom in the Marginal Ice Zone*, the sounds of the living creatures become a voice in the current political debate concerning the official definition of the location of the ice edge.

The listener experiences the bloom of plankton, the shifting and crackling sea ice in the Barents Sea around Spitsbergen, towards the North Pole, and the underwater sounds made by bearded seals, migrating species such as humpbacks and orcas, and the sound made by hunting seithe and spawning cod, all depending on the spring bloom.¹

Winderen's work is primarily situated in the context of what is most often simply called *field recordings*. Yet, not only are most of the sounds heavily edited and treated, their appearance and entrance on the staged situation of the audio-installation can also function as a productive starting point for the discussion of the relationship between the theatrical scene and what is today called the Anthropocene – the geological-political epoch of earth-history dominated and significantly defined by global humanity and, for example, its effects on climate, biodiversity, and climate. By setting up a stage that is by design open to its social as well as natural surroundings and that features among others the absences and presences of non-human as well as human animals, buildings, and the weather, while remaining outside of theatrical traditions that equal theatre or scene with the logic of the dramatic text or dramatic dialogue. In this way *Spring Bloom in the Marginal Ice Zone* opens a theatrical scene that is not fixed on human presences and mimetic acts but togetherness, community, and kinship beyond the anthropocentric paradigm.

Theatre and the Scene of the *Anthropos*

Obviously, Jana Winderen's work is not part of a canon of the performative arts, yet, precisely because of this, *Spring Bloom in the Marginal Ice Zone* can be a starting point to question the limits and concepts of the performative arts in the Anthropocene: What do we know of the theatre of the Anthropocene and how do we know it? What are its frames of power and knowledge embedding the artistic but also scientific practices of theatre? And how much are these institutionalized and traditionalized forms of scientific and artistic practices influenced and defined by modern anthropocentric diapositives, their figures and metaphors? In short: How are our very own concepts of theatre and the scenic arts themselves defined by anthropocentric forms of knowledge and practice?

¹ Jana Winderen, *Spring Bloom in the Marginal Ice Zone* (London: Touch 2018).

For example, Peter Brook's popular definition of theatre functions not only as a minimalist modern reevaluation of the concept of theatre: "I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of the theatre to be engaged."² In its paradigmatic minimalism this passage can also be read as the theoretical scene of an essentialist anthropocentric performance: Brook's "empty space" stages the upright walk of the *Anthropos*, the upright walking (hu-)man who is watched while walking through space by another, as a bare minimum but also as an or, more precisely, the essential element of theatre. The minimal definition of theatre or, as in this case, the "act of theatre" turns out to perform a gesture that has anthropocentric effect because it works in an essentialist way and that has essentialist effects because it 'is' fundamentally anthropocentric.

Let us now re-visit another theoretical scene. In 1785 the German actor, author, and theatre reformist August Wilhelm Iffland published his *Fragmente über Menschendarstellung auf den deutschen Bühnen*. In these fragments Iffland describes his vision of theatre and drama as follows:

The theatrical performance is a *painting of humans*, their passions and actions. The actor, through the human he depicts as a role, makes this painting come alive. Therefore, *Nature on stage* is: The representation of humans³

Iffland's concept of the actor as someone who does make the paintings of humans come alive on stage logically leads to the definition of nature on stage as a representation and depiction of humans. In consequence nature on stage can only be human nature while at the same time the stage itself becomes a human stage as well as a *stage of humanness*.

The animated picture that Iffland invokes and his interlinked concepts of theatre, the actor and the stage are a very precise representation of a secularized, theatrical stage that has exiled the fantastic, the sacred, non-human animals as well as machines, natural landscapes, and phenomena. In the center of this theatre and stage there is once again, following the religious notion of a Ptolemaic world theatre, 'man', because human passions and actions are what constitute theatre and drama.⁴ In this anthropocentric vision of theatre, nature equals human nature and its scene describes a scene in which humans play humans for other humans as *Menschen darsteller*,

² Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 7.

³"Das Schauspiel ist ein Gemälde der Menschen, ihrer Leidenschaften und Handlungen. Der Schauspieler macht, durch den Menschen, den er in einer Rolle hinstelle, dieses Gemälde lebendig. Natur auf der Bühne, ist also: Menschendarstellung." Wilhelm August Iffland, *Fragmente über Menschendarstellung auf den deutschen Bühnen, Erste Sammlung* (Gotha: Karl Wilhelm Ettinger, 1785), 32. All translations (unless noted differently) are done by the author (M. W.)

⁴ For the concept of a Ptolemaic world theatre also compare: Günther Heeg, *Das transkulturelle Theater* (Berlin: Theater der Zeit, 2017), 87–90.

thereby not only representing but also instituting a specific image of man and his likeness. In her studies on the history and styles of acting in Europe, Gerda Baumbach links this focus on the human reference closely to the problem of bourgeois acceptance of actors, theatre, and theatrical mimesis:

Acting received bourgeois acceptance through the exclusive fixation on the imitation and representation of man by man. [...] From this the concept of acting is deduced: to represent with voice, facial expression, gestures and motricity the feelings and thoughts of other persons as if they would actually be them. In this way the art of the actor is restricted to being an impersonator of verifiable persons.⁵

Following the project of the bourgeois acceptance of theatrical actors through their confinement to the imitation and mimetic *depiction of humans by humans* therefore can be reconstructed as an important step towards a hegemonic theatre and stage exclusively defined as human. As such Iffland's perspective fits not only into the history of bourgeois acceptance of theatre and theatricality but also reminds of the modern renaissance paradigm of theatre described by Peter Szondi in his classic *Theorie des modernen Dramas* that traces modern drama back to the decline of the medieval world-paradigm:

The Drama of modernity came into being in the Renaissance. It was the result of the bold intellectual effort made by a newly self-conscious being, who after the collapse of the medieval worldview sought to create an artistic reality within which he could fix and mirror himself on the basis of interpersonal relationships alone. Man entered the drama only as a fellow human being, so to speak. [...] Everything prior to or after this act was, had to remain, foreign to the drama – the inexpressible as well as the expressed, what was hidden in the soul as well as the idea already alienated from its subject. Most radical of all was the exclusion of that which could not express itself – the world of objects – unless it entered the realm of interpersonal relationships. [...] The verbal medium for this world of the interpersonal was the dialogue. [...] The absolute dominance of the dialogue, that is, of interpersonal relations, is only cognizant of, what shines forth within this sphere.⁶

⁵ "Bürgerliche Akzeptanz erhielt Schauspielen durch die alleinige Festlegung auf die Nachahmung und Darstellung des Menschen durch den Menschen. [...] Davon leitet sich die Auffassung vom Schauspielen her: mit Stimme, Mimik, Gesten und Motorik die Gefühle und Gedanken anderer Personen so darzustellen, als ob sie es tatsächlich seien. Darin erschöpft sich nahezu die Kunst des Schauspielers als Darsteller verifizierbarer Personen." Gerda Baumbach, *Schauspieler. Historische Anthropologie des Akteurs. Band 1 Schauspielstile* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2012) 22.

⁶ Peter Szondi, "Theory of the Modern Drama, Parts I-II," *boundary 2* 11, 3 (*The Criticism of Peter Szondi*, Spring, 1983): 194–5.

Szondi's critical reconstruction of modern drama reconstructs the relation between humans, their pure reference, as the core of the dramatic experience realized in and via the medium of dialogue. It is here, in the context of the modern arts, or to be more precise – theatre, that man 'fix[es] and mirror[s] himself', thereby creating the human imaginary that we can associate with the practices and forms of the Anthropocene. Everything beyond the dialogue as the absolute inter-human form of relation is defined alien, excluded from representation. This becomes even more clear in the German version of the text on which the translation is based.⁷ For example, where the translation speaks of a 'a newly self-conscious being', Szondi's original text explicitly uses the expression of a "zu sich gekommenen Menschen".⁸ In a similar way it is not the exclusion of 'that which could not express itself' but the "Ausdruckslose", meaning something without expression – for example things or phenomena of the natural world. And where the translations speak of the hegemonic form of the dialogue as a form of 'the interpersonal' and 'interpersonal relations', Szondi very clearly uses the words "zwischenmenschlichen Bezuges" – meaning the reference between humans.⁹

Brook's and Iffland's as well as Szondi's theoretical scenes are not only stages of theatrical concepts but, in their individual ways and at the same time function as stages and scenes of the *Anthropos*. All three examples can help to sketch out a formation of theatrical forms that not only represent and frame the anthropocentrism of the Anthropocene but a theatrical *anthroposcene* – a theoretical as well as practical scene in which (hu)mans and humanity function as the imaginary center and mimesis itself is framed in an anthropocentric way. By using the neologism *anthroposcene* I aim at conceptually framing a formation of theatrical practices, concepts and models that functions as a place and representational mode in which human animals communicate, talk, fight, feel, move, act, and speak with other human animals as well as watch, observe and hear them doing so. Often but not necessarily accompanied by a drama that produces, in the words of Szondi, the relationships between those human animals that are present and talk on stage, anthroposcenic theatre and theatrical performance *institute* what is human, what is not human, what humans do, what they do not do, how they act and how they do not act.

To analyze and criticize the paradigm of the Anthropocene we also have to reconstruct it as an *anthroposcene* – a scenic dispositive that continually produces and reproduces images, discourses and models of "the human", "humaneness" and "humanity" as part of the symbolic and biopolitical order of modern societies. In this sense the term *anthroposcene* conceptualizes a *doing humaneness* or *doing species* that not only reproduces and represents the already defined *Anthropos* but first of all continually institutes it aesthetically. From this perspective, many forms of theatre deal with the practical institution of "the human" and "humanity" even if its actors are critical of the Anthropocene, certain modes of human behavior or specific forms

⁷ Peter Szondi, *Theorie des modernen Dramas (1880–1950)* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1963).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

of the capitalist human subject. To question the anthropocentric paradigm therefore necessarily also means to question as well as to challenge the anthroposcenic dispositive, its practices and its institutional formations.

Inside and beyond the Anthroposcene

The long-lasting impact of the anthroposcenic dispositive of the theatrical stage can also be found in some of the foundational and relatively early texts of German theatre studies. One of the most intriguing documents of this time is a short text by Max Herrmann, who founded the institute for theatre studies in Berlin in 1923 and became its first director. The text in question is called *Das theatralische Raumerlebnis*, which can roughly be translated to *The Theatrical Experience of Space*. It was first held as a lecture during the *Vierter Kongress für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* in 1930 and was finally published in 1931, only shortly before Herrmann was forced into retirement by the national socialist regime in 1933 because of his Jewish heritage.

Herrmann's text is so productive in the context of contemporary debates about a post-anthropocentric theatre because it is reproducing and representing a normative anthroposcenic discourse of theatre but is also a document of its then contemporary crisis. Especially when Herrmann is referencing the norms of theatre or focusses on the norms and necessities of theatrical human mimesis, the text is as much a representation of the anthroposcene as it is a very detailed description and precise analysis of its fundamental structural fragility.

Herrmann's ambivalent writing of the anthroposcene already shows itself very early in the text as it opens another scene beyond the human drama and stage that doubles the reproduction of theatrical norms. Herrmann writes:

Theatrical art is spatial art. But this should not be understood as if the representation of space in theatre could be an end in itself. The stage as a site without humans actually never presents itself to the gaze or only if there is a moment of embarrassment, or in the case of a short emptiness of the scene for extraordinary means; applauding a well-made decoration only happens when the curtain goes up, before the real theatrical play starts. Therefore, theatrical art is not about the representation of space, but the performance of human movement 'in' the theatrical space.¹⁰

This early part of the text already stages a scene of theatre in which theatre itself

¹⁰ "Bühnenkunst ist Raumkunst. Das darf aber nicht so verstanden werden, als ob die Darstellung des Raumes Selbstzweck im Theater sein könnte. Die Bühne nur als Schauplatz ohne Menschen stellt sich eigentlich niemals dem Blicke dar oder doch nur, wenn es sich um einen Moment der Verlegenheit handelt, oder auch wohl bei einem ganz kurzen Leersein des Schauplatzes zu außergewöhnlichen Zwecken; das Beklatschen einer wohl-gelungenen Dekoration findet höchstens statt, gleich wenn der Vorhang in die Höhe geht, ehe das eigentliche Theaterspiel anhebt. In der Theaterkunst handelt es sich also nicht um die Darstellung des Raumes, sondern um die Vorführung menschlicher Bewegung 'im' theatralischen Raum." Max Herrmann, "Das theatralische Raumerlebnis," in *Raumtheorie. Grundlagentexte aus Philosophie und Kulturwissenschaften*, ed. by Jörg Dünne and Stephan Günzel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006), 501–2.

is discussed and at the same time fundamentally linked to the performance of human movement. Having defined theatrical art as a spatial art, Herrmann's discourse is led to the necessity of excluding the representation of space in theatre as an empty space without humans and as an end in itself. Nevertheless, *ex negativo* he describes a scene within a scene – the empty stage devoid of human life and the things present or exposed on it – that is as surreal as it seems unhomely and, as he himself notes, embarrassing. Herrmann's text not only describes the appearance of the stage itself on the anthroposcene as a moment of embarrassment for the humans which are present. It also contrasts the movement of the curtain that opens the theatrical performance and is part of its institutionalized framing with the movement of the actor, which is the focus of theatrical art. Only when the actors miss their parts is the empty stage presented to the audience and the shamefully hidden other of the anthroposcenic performance revealed.

Linking theatre and drama Herrmann then states that:

drama normally takes place in the human world, putting man against man, not man against nature, whose realm the representation of a space directly or indirectly is always about; it will always only be exceptions in which the real space is included into the dramatic-poetic as something existing-for-itself and essence-defining.¹¹

Because drama takes place in the 'human world' and is about the conflicts of 'man versus man, not man versus nature' the inclusion of real space, like in the theatre of the theatre reformers around 1900, can only be an exception. Nevertheless, Herrmann later also notes and discusses the manifold influences of space on humans and because of this on theatre. While the empty space of the stage is not allowed to show itself

Here we have to underline something that might sound trivial at first but cannot be ignored in regards to our ends, something, that relates not only to the representation of humans by the actor, but to the relation of each man to space in general. Each man is depending on the space he is located in, with regards of his whole habitus: our walking, our gestures, our speaking are different in free nature than in a closed space and in their details are determined by the specificities of this nature or this closed space.¹²

¹¹ "Das Drama spielt ja doch normalerweise durchaus in der menschlichen Welt, stellt Menschen gegen Menschen, nicht Menschen gegen Natur, um deren Reich es sich bei der Darstellung eines Raumes direkt oder indirekt immer handelt; es werden stets nur Ausnahmefälle sein, in denen der reale Raum ins Dramatisch-dichterische als etwas Für-sich-existierendes und Wesen-bestimmendes einbezogen wird." *Ibid.*, 503.

¹² "Hier müssen wir etwas Allgemeines betonen, was zunächst trivial klingt, was aber für unsere Zwecke nicht außer acht gelassen werden darf, etwas, was sich nicht nur auf die Darstellung von Menschen durch den Schauspieler, sondern auf das Verhältnis jedes Menschen zum Raum überhaupt bezieht. Jeder Mensch ist von dem Raum, in dem er sich jeweilig befindet, in Bezug auf seinen ganzen Habitus durchaus abhängig: unser Gehen, unsere Gesten unser Sprechen sind anders in der freien Natur als im geschlossenen Raum und

Herrmann closes his thoughts on the “räumlichen Elemente des schauspielerischen Spiels”, explaining that the exact influence on space and surroundings on human behavior have not been scientifically studied yet.¹³ Interestingly enough in a footnote after this paragraph Herrmann thanks his colleague, Professor Dr. Kurt Lewin for his insights and sharing his knowledge on the known effects of space on man and on this particular lack of studies.¹⁴ During the early 1930s Lewin was working in the field of *Gestalt Psychology* and later became a founder of experimental social psychology, especially the so-called field theory. It is interesting to note, that after his emigration from Germany and from 1946 until his death in 1947 Lewin was also a member of the core group of the Macy Conferences – a series of highly influential meetings of scientists focused on topics like cybernetics, robotics and others that today are widely regarded as a significant step toward a postanthropocentric understanding of relations and interactions. By referencing Lewin, Herrmann’s theoretical text about the spatialness of theatre links itself to scientific discourses which were already beginning to change the anthropocentric dispositive of (post-)European philosophy and science. With the question of space and surroundings, the inner space of the human subject is potentially as much de-centered as the inner space of anthropocentric theatre. Yet, after acknowledging the dimension of external surroundings and their influence, Herrmann counteracts his opening to the in- or *ahuman* dimensions of space and nature by reframing acting via the concept of transformation:

It is precisely these relations to free nature that are the least suitable for the problem of the actor that interests us here, because the real landscape seems to be most unfavorable for the actor’s transformation in general and the transformation of space in particular [...], and conversely, also the actor’s transformation of the closed stage into a free landscape seems to succeed infinitely more difficult than the transformation into some interior.¹⁵

‘Real landscapes’ seem to irritate and subvert the transformation of the actor and of the space he acts in. Herrmann’s defense of the closed theatrical space precisely counteracts the de-centering of the human actor by creating an isolated inner space that not only reflects the inner space of the human subject but also shuts out other voices associated with the surroundings of the scene. In Herrmann’s text the

im einzelnen wieder entscheidend von den Besonderheiten dieser Natur oder dieses geschlossenen Raumes bedingt.” *Ibid.*, 505.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 505.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 505.

¹⁵ “Gerade diese Beziehungen zur freien Natur kommen für das uns hier interessierende Schauspielerproblem am wenigsten in Frage, denn die wirkliche Landschaft scheint der schauspielerischen Transformation überhaupt und der Transformation des Raumes im besonderen am ungünstigsten zu sein [...], und umgekehrt scheint auch die schauspielerische Transformation der geschlossenen Bühne in eine freie Landschaft meist unendlich viel schwerer zu gelingen als die Transformation in irgendeinen Innenraum.” *Ibid.*, 505.

only advocate of these outer voices is the poet, who, unsatisfied with the constriction of his own spatial experience by the theatrical necessities, shows the poetic tendency to “include the ‘surrounding space’ of the stage (via calls from the inside to the outside or from the outside to the inside and similar things)” [“den ‘Umraum’ der Bühne (durch Rufe von drinnen nach draußen oder von draußen nach drinnen und ähnliches) einzubeziehen”].¹⁶ “Herrmann’s description of the authors use of outside calls or voices can be understood as a text-immanent reflection and humanized echo of what has been left out of the anthroposcenic stage.

Herrmann’s metaphorical as well as argumentative spatial closing of the theatrical space is legitimized by the logic of theatrical mimesis itself. Defined by transformation – not only of the actor but also of the audience – the process of performance is bound to the spectators and the audiences mimetic desire to reproduce the movements, actions, and words of the actor – a situational set up that, as we will see, has very specific spatial requirements:

That creative and co-creative activity of the audience in >all< acting consists of, in its deepest sense, a secret reliving, in a shadowy imitation of the performance of acting, in an absorption not so much via the sense of sight but through the feeling of the body, in a secret urge, to perform the same movements, to create the same sound of the voice in the throat. [...] But in the movements of the actors, in the sound of his voice, as we have seen, his feeling of space, his experience of space are revealed. His spatial experience can now be taken over by the audience all the more because this audience is in the same real, only to be reinterpreted space with him, even if there is a strong separation, a special differentiation of the stage space from the auditorium.¹⁷

The audiences secret reliving and shadowy imitation of the actors performance is defined by ‘a secret urge, to perform the same movements, to create the same sound of the voice in the throat.’ If theatre, as Iffland proposed, is *Menschendarstellung* it is not just a question of representation and observing but also, as an audience, of becoming human – it functions as much as a theatrical anthropology of mimesis as it is an anthropology of theatre. But to make this shadowy reiteration of acting possible, the audience has to share the same real bodily space with the actor:

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 504.

¹⁷ “Jene schöpferische, mitschöpferische Tätigkeit des Publikums an ‘allem’ schauspielerischen Spiel besteht zu allertiefst in einem heimlichen Nacherleben, in einer schattenhaften Nachbildung der schauspielerischen Leistung, in einer Aufnahme nicht sowohl durch den Gesichtssinn wie vielmehr durch das Körpergefühl, in einem geheimen Drang, die gleichen Bewegungen auszuführen, den gleichen Stimmklang in der Kehle hervorzubringen. [...] In den Bewegungen aber des Schauspielers, im Klang seiner Stimme offenbart sich, wie wir gesehen haben, der Ausdruck seines Raumgefühls, seines Raumerlebnisses. Sein Raumerlebnis kann nun umso eher vom Publikum mitübernommen werden, als dieses Publikum sich im gleichen realen, nur umzudeutenden Raum mit ihm befindet, wenn auch eine starke Trennung, eine besondere Differenzierung des Bühnenraums vom Zuschauerraum vorliegt.” *Ibid.*, 508.

that emotional becoming-one of the spectators experience with that of the actor can actually only happen in the parquet, where one is at least to some degree on a similar height with the body of the actor and one can experience the space more or less in the same position as he does.¹⁸

This gesture is highly ambivalent. While Herrmann's text reproduces the modern and anthropocentric model of theatrical mimesis of human animals by human animals, his spatial discourse also localizes the mimetic process in a situation that affects its once anthropological and naturalized dimensions of meaning. By examining the relation of space and theatrical practice, Herrmann turns the understanding of the human nature and framing of acting as well as the associated, anthropocentric concept of theatrical mimesis into a specific, historical and architectural situation: Only if the audience is in the parquet with a similar enough placement of the actors and audiences' bodies their emotional becoming-one of their experiences can work.

The effect of this discursive strategy borders on parody when the theatrical mimetic desire of the anthroposcene that is prevalent in the relation of spectator and actor is positioned as the effect of an optimal placement of seats in the architectural space of theatre. By asking the question of space, while still focusing on the human actor, his actions and the mimetic relationship between actor and audience, Herrmann (involuntarily) decenters and denaturalizes the anthropocentric, universalized, and naturalized framings of theatre, thereby producing insights into the anthroposcenic machine demonstrate its practices and normativity as much as its precariousness in a time of social, political and aesthetical changes. In the precise and detailed descriptions of Herrmann's text the other scene of the anthroposcene already resonates, and the grand narrative of anthropocentric modern anthropology as well as anthropocentric human mimesis comes down to *a question of seats*.

Beyond the Anthropo(c)ene

At the end of this article, I would like to return to Jana Winderen's audio installation *Spring Bloom in the Marginal Ice Zone* as a non-anthropocentric theatre of voices and sounds. Reframed from the perspectives of the texts discussed above it becomes very clear that nature on stage in this case does not and cannot mean the Ifflandian representation of humans. In a way the scene that is created is closer to the surreal stage without humans that Herrmann dismisses in the beginning of *Das theatralische Raumerlebnis*. *Spring Bloom in the Marginal Ice Zone* creates a stage that is non-mimetic and non-anthropocentric – a scene in which not human mimesis is the centre of attention but where we can hear the voices and sounds and noises that are mostly excluded from the anthroposcene and its figures. These sounds are even more

¹⁸ “[...] jenes gefühlsmäßige Einswerden des Zuschauererlebnisses mit dem des Schauspielers kann eigentlich nur im Parkett erfolgen, wo man einigermaßen in gleicher Höhe mit dem Körper des Schauspielers sich befindet und den Raum daher ungefähr in der gleichen Lage wie er erlebt.” *Ibid.*, 510–11.

strange and (un-)familiar than the calls from outside the inner space of Herrmann's stage. Winderen's audio installation (p)re-stages the re-entering of non-human animals, things, spaces and voices that have been excluded from the anthropocene and its representations and lets their traces mix not only with the harbor, the sky and the cityscape but also with those human animals who are co-habitating the installation for a time, like her testing their abilities of unlearning anthropocenic privilege.

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