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SAMEVATTING VAN DIE PROEFSKRIF

DIE DRAMATURG EN SY GEMEENSKAP

HERMIEN McCAUL-DOMMISSE

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Die ondersoek na die dramaturg en sy gemeenskap gaan uit van die veronderstelling dat die toneel nie net 'n verbygaande vermaaklikheidsvorm is nie maar 'n noodsaaklike en sinvolle uitingsvorm van die gemeenskapslewe in sy geheel. Die mens se behoefte om by wyse van 'n gebare- en mimiekspel uiting te gee aan sy diepste gevoelens, is 'n oerdrang wat reeds in die mees primitiewe gemeenskappe aanwesig is. Die gemeenskapslewe word in die geskrewe dramaturgie uitgebeeld in 'n situasie waarin enkele persone vir hulle in 'n historiese, sosiale of religieuse verband met die medemens of die gemeenskap bevind. Daar word beweer dat die bloeitydperke in die toneel voorkom in ekonomies bloeiende stadsgemeenskappe waar daar reeds 'n stewige kulturele onderbou bestaan en die gemeenskap as gevolg van historiese omstandighede intens bewus is van hul nasionale verbondenheid. 'n Kenmerk van die groot bloeitydperke is dat hul verskyning saamval en parallel loop met groot historiese omwentelinge en gevolglike sosiale spanninge wat die homogeniteit van die gemeenskap of die heerskappy van 'n besondere groep bedreig. In teenstelling hiermee verval, verbrokkel of vervlak die toneel in verspreide, heterogene gemeenskappe wat deur 'n welvarende, stabiele middelstand oorheers word. Die ontwikkelingsgang van



die toneel word ooreenkomstig hierdie stelling in breë trekke vanaf die primitiewe oerbestaan van die mens tot aan die twintigste eeu geskets.

In die eerste hoofstuk word die ontstaansvorme van die toneel in die rituele feesgeleenthede van vroeë beskawings nagegaan. Die oerdrange en instinkte van die mens word in die verband belig.

Die tweede hoofstuk gee 'n oorsig van die ontstaan, ontwikkeling en verval van die toneel in Athene met aandag aan die dramaturgie van Aischulos, Sophokles, Euripides en Aristophanes. 'n Ondersoek na die aard van die dramaturgie dui daarop dat dit intieme verband het met die religieuse, historiese en sosiale omstandighede van die gemeenskap. Veranderinge in die genoemde omstandighede word, ooreenkomstig die persoonlike instelling van die dramaturg, in die dramaturgie weerspieël.

Met die vernietiging van die Atheense staat aan die einde van die vyfde eeu, en derhalwe ook van die besondere gemeenskap waaruit die Griekse tragedie en blyspel voortgekom het, verval die toneel in die laat Hellenistiese tydperk. Dit word hoofsaaklik 'n vermaaklikheidsvorm wat tot 'n groot verskeidenheid van gemeenskappe spreek. In die verspreide, heterogene Romeinse Ryk gaan die verband tussen die dramaturg en die gemeenskap in so 'n mate verlore dat die toneel uiteindelik in oppervlakkige, dikwels bloot sensasionele en vergrofte uiterlikhede verval en deur die Christelike Kerk in die ban gedoen moet word.

Gedurende die tussen- en eindtydvakke van die Middeleeue herleef die toneel in die homogeen verbonde Christelike Kerkgemeenskap. Gedurende die Renaissance keer die toneel terug na die oorspronklike dramaturgie wat veral in die Latynse skooldrama weer eens 'n neerslag in die wêreldlike gemeenskap vind. Hierdie vorm van die toneel wat uit monde van 'n vergange gemeenskap spreek, vind nie aansluiting by die breë volkslaag nie. Die volkstoneel herleef in die Commedia dell'Arte, 'n gemeenskapsverbonde mimiekkuns.

Die sestiende eeu word gesien as 'n belangrike oorgangstyd wat aan die einde van die eeu in Londen, hoofstad van Engeland, gestalte vind in die kragtige dramaturgie van Shakespeare. Die aandag word daarop gevestig dat die dramaturgie, soos in die geval van dié van Athene, op 'n sterk ontwikkelde kulturele onderbou



berus en dat Shakespeare se toneelstukke voortvloei uit die besondere religieuse, historiese, sosiale en ekonomiese gemeenskaps- en tydsomstandighede. Die ontwikkeling van die dramaturgie loop, weer eens soos in die geval van die Atheense dramaturge, parallel met die veranderinge wat in die gemeenskap en in die persoonlike lewensinstelling van Shakespeare plaasvind.

Die opkoms en verval van die Spaanse toneel, wat gelyktydig met die Engelse plaasvind en hoofsaaklik in Madrid voltrek word, word nagegaan aan die hand van enkele toneelstukke van Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina en Calderon de la Barca. Die klem val op partikuliere aspekte van die lewensbeskouing wat in die weg gestaan het van 'n tydloos-universele dramaturgie soortgelyk aan die wat in Athene en Londen aan bot gekom het.

In 'n oorsig van die bloeitydperk van die Franse toneel val die klem veral op Molière. Die intense gemeenskapsverbondenheid van sy blyspele word geskets in teenstelling met die letterkundig georiënteerde tragedies van Corneille en veral van Racine. Aandag word bestee aan die invloed wat Lodewyk XIV se politieke bestrevinge op die ontwikkelingsgang van die Europese toneel gehad het en die invloed van die prosceniumverhoog op die verhouding tussen die dramaturg en sy gemeenskap.

Die prestasies en tekortkominge van die Duitse bloeitydperk word met die toenemende verburgerliking van die toneel verbind. Anders as in die geval van die bloeitydperke van die Griekse, Engelse, Spaanse en Franse toneel, bereik dié van Duitsland sy hoogtepunte in verspreide nasionale skouburge. Die indirekte maar beslissende invloed wat die splitsing van die gemeenskap as gevolg van die Hervorming en sosiaal-ekonomiese omstandighede enersyds en die verdwyning van betreklik afgesonderde gemeenskappe andersyds, op die opkoms van die Duitse toneel en die verhouding van die dramaturg tot die gemeenskap gehad het, word met aandag aan enkele toneelstukke en geskrifte van Lessing, Schiller en Goethe toegelig. Weens die verbrokkeling en verburgerliking van die gemeenskap spreek die digterlike dramaturgie nie meer, soos in vorige tye, tot die gemeenskap as geheel nie. Die dramaturgie word in 'n groot verskeidenheid van aanspreekvorme gedwing om tot 'n ewe groot verskeidenheid van gemeenskapsgroepe te spreek.



Die twintigste eeu word ten slotte as 'n nuwe oorgangstyd beskou. Die geslote homogene gemeenskappe van voorheen het lank reeds verdwyn en is met groot pluralistiese volkegroepe vervang. Die tydgenootlike drang na sintese te midde van die geweldige bevolkingsverspreiding en heterogene gemeenskapsgroepeerings, word ten opsigte van die opkoms van die regisseur, die aard van die tydgenootlike dramaturgie en die gebruik van die rolprentmedium belig. Die gevolgtrekking word bereik dat die draaiboekskrywer die volksdramaturg grotendeels vervang het en in toenemende mate die hele Wes-Europese gemeenskap aanspreek. In die huidige uitermate wetenskaplike eeu is daar oral in die kunste, dus ook in die dramaturgie, tekens van 'n soektog na of 'n behoefte aan oervorme, -simbole of -tekens wat die eiendomlike besit van alle mense is en met gebruik waarvan die kunstenaar hoop om vreemde gemeenskappe te kan aanspreek.

Die aandag word deurgaans daarop gevestig dat die groot bloeytydperke van die toneel deur 'n innige verband tussen die dramaturg en sy gemeenskap gekenmerk word en dat die dramaturgie in die tye altoos op een of ander manier 'n juiste weerkaatsing van daardie gemeenskap is. Nabootsing of oornameword van die vreemde toneel het nêrens in die geskiedenis 'n eie ontwikkeling of selfs 'n organiese groeiproses as gevolg gehad nie.

Die ondersoek toon die afwykings en ooreenkomste in die herhalende ontwikkelingspatrone en eienskappe van die groot bloeytydperke van die toneel. Suid-Afrikaanse omstandighede en die moontlikheid van 'n opbloei van die toneel ter plaatse word in die lig hiervan bespreek.



SUMMARY OF THE DISSERTATION

THE DRAMATIST AND HIS COMMUNITY

HERMIEN McCAUL DOMMISSE

PROMOTER:	PROF. G. CRONJÉ
DEPARTMENT:	DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA
DEGREE:	D.PHIL.

The enquiry into the relationship between the dramatist and his community has as the point of departure the assumption that the theatre is not merely a passing form of entertainment but a necessary and meaningful expression of the life of the community in its entirety. Man's need to express his deepest emotions by means of gesture and mime is a primordial urge which is already present in primitive societies. The written drama gives expression to the life of the community by means of historical, social or religious situations in which individuals find themselves in relation to their fellowmen or to the community. It is claimed that the flowering of the theatre occurs in prosperous civic communities where a solid cultural base already exists and in which the community, due to historical circumstances, are intensely conscious of their national coherence. A distinguishing feature of the great ages is that their occurrence runs parallel to and occurs simultaneously with ages of historical change and consequent social strain which threaten the homogeneity of the community or the supremacy of a particular group. In contrast to this the theatre declines, disintegrates or becomes shallow in dispersed, heterogeneous communities dominated by a prosperous and stable middle class. The development of the theatre is sketched, in accordance with this concept, in broad outline, from man's primitive primordial existence up to the twentieth century.



Chapter one traces the genesis of the theatre in the ritual festivals of early civilizations. The primordial urges and instincts of man are elucidated in this connection.

Chapter two reviews the origin, development and decline of the theatre in Athens with particular reference to the dramas of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes. An inquiry into the nature of the plays indicates that it is intimately related to the religious, historical and social circumstances of the community. Changes in the above circumstances are reflected in the plays in accordance with the personal attitudes of the playwrights.

With the destruction of the Athenian State and therefore of the community out of which Greek drama and comedy emerged, it falls into decay during the late Hellenistic age. It becomes principally a means of entertainment that appeals to a great variety of communities. The relationship between the dramatist and his community is lost to such an extent in the dispersed, heterogenous Roman Empire that the theatre eventually declines into shallow, often purely sensational and coarse superficialities and has to be banned by the Christian Church.

During the middle and late Middle Ages the theatre is reborn in the homogenously coherent community of the Christian Church. During the Renaissance the theatre returns to the original dramaturgy and is once again precipitated in the secular community especially by means of the Latin school drama. This form of the theatre, which reflects the life of a bygone community, does not find a response amongst the broad populace. The theatre of the people is reborn in the *Commedia dell'Arte*, a mime art closely connected with the community.

The sixteenth century is seen as an important age of change which, at the end of the century, in London, capital city of England, finds expression in the powerful plays of Shakespeare. Attention is drawn to the fact that, as in the case of Athens, the plays rest on a strongly developed cultural infra-structure and that Shakespeare's plays emerge from the particular religious, historical, social and economic circumstances of the community and the times.



The development of the plays runs, once again as in the case of the Athenian playwrights, parallel to the changes which occur within the community and in the personal life and attitude of Shakespeare.

The rise and fall of the Spanish theatre, which occurs simultaneously with that of England and comes to fruition principally in Madrid, is traced by way of some of the plays of Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina and Calderon de la Barca. Particular aspects of the view of life which mitigated against an equally universal and timeless dramaturgy such as had emerged in Athens and London, are stressed.

A review of the flowering of the French Theatre places special stress on Molière's plays. The intense coherence of his plays with the life of the community is contrasted with the literary orientation of the tragedies of Corneille and more especially of Racine. Attention is given to the effect which Louis XIV's political aspirations had on the development of the European theatre and the influence of the proscenium stage on the relationship between the dramatist and his community.

The achievements and the shortcomings of the flowering of the German theatre is linked with the increasing domestication of the theatre. Other than in the case of the Greek, English, Spanish and French theatre, the German peaks are achieved in dispersed national theatres. The indirect but decisive effect which the splitting of the community as a result of the Reformation and social and economic circumstances on the one hand and the disappearance of relatively isolated communities on the other hand, had on the rise of the German theatre and the relationship of the dramatist to his community, is illustrated with reference to some of the plays and writings of Lessing, Schiller and Goethe. As a result of the disintegration and domestication of the community, the poetic drama no longer, as in former times, addresses the community as a whole. The dramaturgy is forced into a great variety of forms in order to address an equally large variety of communities.



Finally, the twentieth century is seen as a new period of change. The former enclosed, homogeneous communities have long since disappeared and been replaced by great pluralistic national groups. The contemporary urge towards synthesis in the midst of the tremendous spread of populations and the heterogeneous communal groupings is illustrated in respect of the emergence of the producer, the nature of the contemporary drama and the use of the film medium. The conclusion is drawn that the scenario writer has largely taken over the function of the former national dramatist and increasingly addresses the whole of the European community. The present extremely scientific age shows signs everywhere, and thus also in the drama, of a search or a desire for primordial forms, signs or symbols which are part of the personal equipment of all peoples and by means of the use of which the artist hopes to be able to address foreign or strange communities.

Attention is drawn throughout to the fact that the great ages of the flowering of the theatre are distinguished by a deep relationship between the playwright and his community and that, in these times the dramaturgy is, in some or other way, an exact reflection of that community. Imitation or adoption of foreign theatre has at no time in history resulted in an indigenous development or even in an organic process of growth.

The enquiry points out the differences and similarities in the repeating patterns of development and characteristics of the great ages of the theatre. South African conditions and possibilities of a flowering in this country are discussed in the light of the above.