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## Postmodern Theatre in Europe (1950s–2010s)

### A. Major European Events of the Last Half Century, TIMELINE

- 1954, the “Western European Union” was established among Cold War allies of the US through NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1949)
- 1955, the USSR and seven Eastern European countries, including East Germany, established the “Warsaw Pact,” reacting to West Germany joining NATO that year
- 1956, Hungary’s revolution against Soviet-imposed policies, starting with student protests, led to the Communist government collapsing, a new government forming, and the USSR invading to reassert control
- 1968 (May), protests by students and strikes by 11 million workers turned into riots and police violence in France, evoking revolutions in “postmodern” art and theory
- 1968 (August), “Prague Spring” reforms in Czechoslovakia, with greater rights for journalism, speech, and travel, ended in a Soviet (USSR and Warsaw Pact) military invasion
- 1972 (January), in Derry, Northern Ireland, British soldiers shot 28 unarmed protesters, killing 14, on “Bloody Sunday”
- 1972 (September), at the Summer Olympics in Munich, West Germany, Palestinian terrorists killed 11 Israeli athletes and a German policeman
- 1978, Polish Cardinal, Karol Wojtyła, became Pope John Paul II, which also encouraged the Solidarity movement in Poland to rebel against atheistic, totalitarian Communism

- 1981–83, Poland declared martial law, using riot police (ZOMO) and military power to suppress the democratic trade-union Solidarity and any public gathering, while censoring political theatre as in other Communist countries
- 1985, the one-year UK Miners' Strike ended with unions weakened and Margaret Thatcher's government strengthened
- 1989, economic and political pressures, with strikes and protests, caused Communist governments to collapse in Poland (August), Hungary (October), Czechoslovakia (November), Bulgaria, and Romania (December)
- 1989–90, the Berlin Wall came down and then West and East Germany were reunited, after free elections in the East and large payments to the USSR by the West
- 1990–2008, the USSR's communist satellite, Yugoslavia, dissolved through warfare into Slovenia, Serbia, Kosovo (which Serbia still claims), Montenegro, Macedonia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina
- 1991, the USSR's dissolution turned its Soviet Eurasian republics into independent countries
- 1993, the "European Union" (EU) was established with Parliamentary Elections the following year
- 1995, civil war ended in Bosnia, after a three-year siege of Sarajevo killing 12,000 citizens and the Serbian (Orthodox Christian) "cleansing" of areas with Croat Catholics and Bosniak Muslims (including the massacre of 8000 Muslims in Srebrenica), later judged as "genocide" in the war crimes trial of Radovan Karadžić (President of the Serbian region of Bosnia)
- 1998, "The Troubles" in Northern Ireland diminished with the "Good Friday Agreement," after bombings, shootings, and other violent acts between Catholic republicans and British security forces, along with Protestant loyalists, killed 3500 people in 30 years—but new paramilitary groups emerged and 150 more deaths occurred in the next 20 years
- 1999, the "euro" became a collective currency for EU members (except the UK and Denmark) and three years later began appearing as notes and coins, replacing others
- 2000, Vladimir Putin became President of Russia, asserting his dominance by pointing to the threats of Chechen "terrorists" and American support for popular democratic movements in Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia
- 2002, armed Chechen Islamist rebels captured a theatre in Moscow, holding 850 people hostage, resulting in 200 deaths

- 2003, in February, millions in London, Glasgow, Belfast, and other cities protested against military action in Iraq, but in March, UK forces joined the US war
- 2004, the European immigrant crisis began with the EU criticizing Italy's deportation of Africans back to Libya—and continued with the deaths of hundreds of immigrants in sea crossings from Africa and the Middle East in subsequent years
- 2005, on July 7, four Islamist terrorists set off homemade bombs in London, killing 52 people and injuring 700, in the “7/7 Attacks” on one bus and three underground trains
- 2008, Russia invaded (and later occupied) parts of neighboring Georgia in support of separatists in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which involved ethnic cleansing (removal of Georgians) and the first use of cyber-warfare in a military theatre
- 2009, the European Debt Crisis began with Greece, Portugal, Spain, Ireland, and Cyprus unable to refinance government loans or bail out banks without external aid
- 2011, thousands rioted across Britain after police killed Mark Duggan, a black 29-year-old, during an arrest in London—with riots and police brutality also occurring in Greece while its parliament voted to accept economic austerity demands from the EU
- 2014 (February), Russia invaded Crimea, part of Ukraine, and a month later the majority there reportedly voted to join Russia, which then annexed the territory
- 2014 (September), Scotland's independence referendum produced 55.3% votes against independence from Britain
- 2015, in Paris, in January, Islamist terrorists killed 12 people at the *Charlie Hebdo* satirical newspaper office, after a cartoon image of the prophet Muhammad appeared on its cover, mocking Muslim Sharia law, and in November, 130 people were killed by suicide bombs and mass shootings, including 89 in a theatre
- 2016 (March, July, and December), terrorist attacks killed 32 in Brussels, Belgium, 86 in Nice, France, and 12 in Berlin, Germany
- 2016 (June), 51.9% of British voters on “Brexit” (with 72.2% of the electorate participating) decided to leave the EU
- 2017, an Islamist suicide-bomber killed 23 people and injured hundreds in Manchester, England, during the “Dangerous Woman” tour of 24-year-old American pop-star Ariana Grande

## B. British and Irish Theatre

1. Joan Littlewood (1914–2002) co-founded the Theatre Workshop in 1945, with actors living communally in the theatre building. In 1955, she directed and starred in the first British production of Brecht's *Mother Courage*. In 1963, she directed the ensemble-devised, epic musical, *Oh, What a Lovely War!*, which showed people losing their individuality by submitting to authority during World War I.
2. Various British playwrights in the 1950s became known as “the angry young men,” especially John Osborne (1929–94) and Edward Bond (1934–). Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1956) shows an educated, working-class hero, who is angry at society and his upper-middle-class wife. Edward Bond's *Saved* (1965) presents young unmarried Londoners on welfare who have a baby that they neglect, which gets teased and then stoned to death in its carriage in a public park by several men, including its father. The Lord Chamberlain censored this play, allowing its performance with certain cuts, and then prosecuted and fined the producers.
3. Reactions to that prosecution and to the censoring of Osborne's *A Patriot for Me* (1965), due to its “Drag Ball” climax of upper-class Viennese homosexuals cross-dressing and dancing in the 1890s, led to the abolition, in 1968, of two centuries of British censorship by the Lord Chamberlain's Office. The end of such censorship enabled the tour to London of the New York production of *Oh! Calcutta!* (1969), an erotic revue with sex-related, serious and comical sketches and dances, including extended scenes of full nudity.  
**[Is there censorship of today's theatre, film, or television, like/ unlike in the past and should there be?]**
4. In 1955, eclectic director Peter Hall (1930–2017) was the first to stage Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* in London. Hall founded the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC, 1960–68) and then headed London's Royal National Theatre for 15 years (1973–88).
5. Peter Brook (1925–) emphasized experimentation with his theory of the “empty space” while defining four modes of theatre as deadly, holy, rough, and immediate. He directed Peter Weiss's *Marat/Sade* in London (1964), with the audience as visitors to an early nineteenth-century mental asylum. This was part of his “Theatre of Cruelty” season at the RSC. Brook made a film of that production (1967) and a film of Grotowski's *Akropolis* (1968). He staged many Shakespeare plays,

especially a minimalist, acrobatic, Meyerhold-influenced *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1970). He made other films, too, including *Lord of the Flies* (1963), *King Lear* (1971), and *Meetings with Remarkable Men* (1979). He also created a controversial stage production and television mini-series about the sacred Hindu epic poem, *Mahabharata* (1985), exploring universal themes with a multicultural acting company.

6. In 1971 with Michelle Rozan, Brook founded the International Centre for Theatre Research, which has been based in the Bouffes du Nord theatre in Paris since 1974, with a multinational company touring globally. In the 1970s, Brook invited Moshé Feldenkrais there to teach his method of uniting self and body-image through conscious awareness of the fine details of movement.

**[How does Brook's work resonate with Artaud's or Brecht's, or others' today, exploring identity and culture?]**

7. Peter Shaffer (1926–2016) took Britain's angry-young-men realism of the 1950s in a new direction with Dionysian ritual twists and metaphysical questions. In *Equus* (1973), a psychiatrist envies his patient, a boy who rode horses naked in divine rapture and then blinded six of them. In *Amadeus* (1980), Antonio Salieri mentors and envies the young Mozart, manipulating him toward death, while addressing the theatre audience as "Ghosts of the Future" (14). Both were made into successful films.
8. Czech-born British playwright Tom Stoppard (1937–) developed existential experiments with witty, philosophical explorations. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1966, film 1990) shows the offstage waiting game of two minor characters in a Shakespearean tragedy. *The Real Thing* (1992) depicts the meta-theatrics of adultery. *Arcadia* (1993) explores chaos theory, history, and gardening.
9. Alan Ayckbourn (1939–) wrote over 70 plays, including popular comedies about suburban, middle-class marriages, such as his trilogy, *The Norman Conquests* (1975).
10. David Hare (1947–) wrote postmodern tragicomedies of intrigue, such as *Plenty* (1978, film 1985) about a bored, former spy, with flashbacks to her wartime career, and *Racing Demon* (1990) about gay ordination in the Church of England. He also wrote a trilogy about sacrificial love: *Skylight* (1995), *Amy's View* (1997), and *The Judas Kiss* (1998), the last of which concerns the Oscar Wilde scandal with his young lover, Lord Alfred Douglas. Hare helped to found the Joint Stock Theatre Company (1974–89) with a workshop method for writers (including Howard Brenton and Caryl Churchill) working with actors to develop new plays.

11. Michael Frayn (1933–) became best known for *Noises Off* (1982, film 1992), which shows both the front and backstage wildness of actors performing a farce. His *Copenhagen* (1998, film 2002) illustrates the “uncertainty principle” of past and future with the spirits of physicists Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg reenacting different versions of their historical meeting, discussing the possibility of Germany building an atomic bomb for Hitler.
12. Caryl Churchill (1938–) created feminist plays using Brechtian techniques, which twisted history and gender-identities while double casting actors. *Cloud Nine* (1979) parodies a Victorian-era, British, colonial family in Africa, making their affairs and pedophilia explicit, and then shows some of the same characters, just 25 years older, but 100 years later, in 1970s London. *Top Girls* (1982) depicts women from various historical periods at a dinner party together, through a modern business-woman’s fantasy, and then her problematic relationship with her daughter, who was raised by her sister. Churchill’s later plays involved more Artaudian, surreal elements to challenge the audience in other ways, such as *A Mouthful of Birds* (1986), *The Skriker* (1994), and *Far Away* (2000).
13. Timberlake Wertenbaker (1956–) wrote plays exploring political ambiguities, as in *Our Country’s Good* (1988, based on Thomas Keneally’s novel, *The Playmaker*) about Royal Marines and convicts in an Australian penal colony, staging Farquhar’s *The Recruiting Officer* in the 1780s, with Brechtian scene titles and a lone Aborigine offering comments.
14. Sarah Kane (1971–99) became known for her Artaudian, expressionist, poetic tragedies, experimenting with actor-audience relationships and violent stagecraft in the 1990s—although she suffered from severe depression and committed suicide at the age of 28.
15. Kane has been grouped (by Alek Sierz) with Anthony Neilson (1967–) and Mark Ravenhill (1966–) as “in-yer-face” playwrights, who explored sexual violence in consumerist culture.
16. Journalist Richard Norton-Taylor (1944–) created political docudramas based on transcripts of political hearings: *The Colour of Justice* (1999) and *Justifying War* (2003).
17. Robin Soans (1947–) created *Talking to Terrorists* (2005), using verbatim interviews structured as dialogs with the audience, to present various perspectives on terrorism in Britain and elsewhere.
18. Dennis Kelly (1970–) wrote the three-act, in-yer-face play, *Osama the Hero* (2005) about an awkward teenager who gives a school presentation sympathetic toward Osama bin-Laden and then, after a local bombing, is violently attacked by his frightened neighbors.

19. Laura Wade (1977–) wrote *Colder than Here* (2005), a comedy about the family of a woman dying of bone cancer, and *Posh* (2010), about Oxford University students in an elite “Riot Club” who get drunk, sexually wild, and violent at a dinner party, but handle the damage through upper-class political connections.
20. Jez Butterworth (1969–), a playwright and filmmaker, penned *The Ferryman* (2017) about the family of a former IRA activist during “The Troubles” in rural Northern Ireland in 1981.
21. Joe Robertson and Joe Murphy wrote *The Jungle* (2017), directed in London by Stephen Daldry and Justin Martin, which placed the audience at tables in a refugee camp café and in theatre seats above it. The play drew on the British writers’ experience of creating a theatre in Calais, France, where migrants from the Middle East and Africa organized a tent-dwelling community while trying to cross the channel illegally to England.
22. Leading English playwrights of the new millennium also included Mike Bartlett, Debbie Tucker Green, Alistair McDowall, Nick Payne, Penelope Skinner, and Simon Stephens.
23. British designer Cecil Beaton (1904–80) created scenery and costumes, for stage and screen, winning four Tony Awards and two Oscars. He was also knighted in 1972.
24. Designer and director Pamela Howard (1939–) wrote the influential book, *What Is Scenography?* (1998), insisting that design is vital and varied, not just background, in theatrical storytelling.
25. Welsh poet Dylan Thomas (1914–53) wrote the radio drama *Under Milk Wood* (1954), which later became a stage-play and film, about townspeople’s dreams and daily lives in Llareggub.
26. Saunders Lewis (1893–1985) penned *Siwan* (1956) in Welsh about the illegitimate daughter of England’s King John, who married the thirteenth-century ruler of Wales.
27. In Scotland, the annual Edinburgh Festival Fringe, which started in 1947, is now the largest arts festival in the world with over 3000 shows in 300 venues during 25 days.
28. Scottish dramatist Stewart Conn (1936–) penned *The Burning* (1971) about witchcraft, superstition, and the power struggle between James VI, King of Scotland (later of England also), and his cousin, the Earl of Bothwell.
29. Scottish playwright and director Anthony Neilson created *The Wonderful World of Dissocia* (2004) about a young woman’s imaginary life, shown in color, and her hospitalization for it, in black and white.

30. David Harrower (1966–) wrote *Blackbird* (2005) about a woman meeting a middle-aged man 15 years after being abused by him when she was 12.
31. Gregory Burke (1968–) created *Black Watch* (2006) about Scottish soldiers fighting in Iraq, performed on a traverse (corridor) stage with the audience on two sides.
32. David Greig (1969–) wrote *Dunsinane* (2010), a sequel to Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.
33. Brian Friel (1929–2015), known as the “Irish Chekhov,” became famous for his *Translations* (1980) about language, history, and cultural imperialism, and *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990, film 1998), a memory play about a boy's aunts and their brother, an old priest and former missionary in Africa. Both plays are set in the fictional, small town of Ballybeg.
34. Frank McGuinness (1953–) scripted plays about female workers in a small Irish town (*Factory Girls*, 1982), British Protestant soldiers during World War I (*Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme*, 1985), and British soldiers killing 14 Catholic protesters on Bloody Sunday in Northern Ireland in 1972 (*Carthaginians*, 1989). He also wrote about men absurdly held hostage in Lebanon (*Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*, 1992), two gay partners who founded the Gate Theatre in Dublin (*Gates of Gold*, 2002), and a middle-class family in conflict after the suicide of one of the three children (*There Came a Gypsy Riding*, 2007).
35. Martin McDonagh (1970–) penned black comedies about violence, often with shocking props, set in Ireland during “The Troubles” (*The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, 2001), in a fictional police state (*The Pillowman*, 2003), and in the US (*A Behanding in Spokane*, 2010).
36. Leading Irish playwrights of the new millennium also included Conor McPherson (1971–), with plays often composed of alternating monologues, and Marina Carr (1964–), whose *By the Bog of Cats* (1998) offers a modern version of *Medea* in an Irish village and *On Rafferty Hill* (2000) shows a woman raped by her father onstage.  
**[How do recent British and Irish theatre artists relate to earlier ones—with changing values and styles, involving Self/Other identities and inner theatre elements?]**
37. Since the 1960s, London's Royal Court Theatre has promoted the avant-garde works of many playwrights, including Osborne, Hare, Churchill, Kane, Ravenhill, and Tucker Green.
38. *Monstrous Regiment* (1975–93) developed new plays about women's lives through solo-shows, cabaret, epic theatre, and performance art.

39. In 1983, Simon McBurney (1957–) founded the London-based Théâtre de Complicité, which develops Lecoq movement, high-tech, often surrealist, and devised (collectively created) pieces, touring internationally.
40. Founded in 1986, DV8 Physical Theatre addresses sociopolitical issues through dance, theatre, film, and text.
41. Adrian Noble (1950–) was Artistic Director of the RSC (1991–2002) and made a film adaptation of his surrealist, boy-through-a-rabbit-hole staging of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1994, film 1996).
42. Kenneth Branagh (1960–), originally from Belfast, Northern Ireland, starred in and directed many of Shakespeare's plays—while also making film versions of *Henry V* (1989), *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993), *Othello* (1995), *Hamlet* (1996), *Love's Labours Lost* (2000), and *As You Like It* (2006).
43. In 1991, Adrian Jackson created Cardboard Citizens in London, a homeless people's professional theatre company, inspired by Augusto Boal's "Forum Theatre" techniques.
44. In 1997, Shakespeare's Globe opened in London as a best-estimate, historical replica of the Bard's theatre, built with original materials, near its original site on the south bank of the Thames River. This occurred through the fund-raising efforts of American actor Sam Wannamaker, with Mark Rylance (1960–) as its first Artistic Director, staging shows with Elizabethan-Jacobean performance practices, plus modern techniques. It added an indoor, candlelit, Jacobean-type theatre in 2014.
45. Along with London's big, commercial, West End theatres, and its government supported RSC, Royal National Theatre, and Royal Court Theatre, the Old Vic put on quality, non-profit, "Off-West-End," non-subsidized productions, especially under the 11-year management of American theatre and film actor Kevin Spacey (2003–15). But just a few years later, Spacey's career was tarnished with 15 accusations of homosexual harassment across several decades.  
**[How are London's theatres like and unlike those in New York or other major cities, in developing certain types of performances, sharing and shaping inner theatres?]**
46. Wales developed two national theatres, Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru (performing in Welsh) and National Theatre Wales (in English), in 2003 and 2009.
47. National Theatre of Scotland was founded in 2006, producing Burke's *Black Watch* that year.

## C. Continental Theatre

1. In **France**, Roger Blin (1907–84) worked with Artaud on *The Cenci* in 1935 and then directed early productions of Beckett's and Genet's plays in the 1950s–60s.
2. Jean-Louis Barrault (1910–94), a French actor, mime-artist, and director, worked with Artaud and became known for using his and other techniques, especially in staging Ionesco's plays.
3. Jacques Lecoq (1921–99) created a mime school in Paris in 1956, influenced by Copeau's concept of "natural gymnastics," by the ideas of Artaud and Barrault, by commedia (through his work with Dario Fo), and his own training as a gymnast. Lecoq emphasized *mask work*, with a neutral to larval (abstract shape), expressive (specific emotion), commedia, or half mask, and clown's red nose. Lecoq's technique also involved *gestures* of action, expression, and demonstration—while encouraging playfulness, togetherness, openness, and intimacy with the audience.
4. Étienne Decroux (1898–1991), another innovator of *physical theatre* influenced by Copeau and commedia, developed *corporeal mime* as a metaphor-based expression of universal emotions and ideas. This emphasized the trunk of the body, with or without texts.  
**[How does French mime and physical theatre, especially with masks, relate to earlier periods and current, inner or outer, personal or social theatres?]**
5. Ariane Mnouchkine (1939–) studied psychology in England and then mime at the Lecoq school in Paris, where she founded Théâtre du Soleil in 1964. It usually performed in large found spaces, such as barns, with actors putting on makeup and costume elements in full view of the audience as they entered. Mnouchkine rehearsed her actors to perform just one emotional state in each *present* moment in the script and was critical of Stanislavskian explorations into the character's past. She staged adaptations of classics by Aeschylus (a ten-hour *Oresteia* in 1992), Euripides, Shakespeare, and Molière, often applying Asian theatre styles. She directed new political scripts, including projects with deconstructive feminist Hélène Cixous (1937–), such as *The Indiade, or the India of Their Dreams* (1987). Mnouchkine also created *The Last Caravan Stop* (2003), a six-hour play with 169 characters about the epic journeys of refugees, using actor improvisations, and she directed a film of it in 2006.

6. Antoine Vitez (1930–90) gave radical reinterpretations of French classics in the 1980s stressing complexities, contradictions, and possibilities. He used minimal set elements moved by actors, sometimes with models onstage (such as a ship) to represent larger structures, lateral lighting to create planes of action, and actors shifting between realistic and anti-realistic styles.
7. Director Oliver Py (1965–) became famous for his long productions: *La Servant* (1995) with 5 pieces across 24 hours about spreading an angel's message and *Face of Orpheus* (1997) about a young masked man dismembered onstage for 4 hours.
8. Yasmina Reza (1959–) reached international acclaim through her intellectual comedy of manners, *Art* (1994), with friends debating the value of an abstract painting. In her *God of Carnage* (2007), two sets of upper-class parents discuss a fight between their boys, with civility devolving into bitter argumentation and vomit.

**[How did postwar French theatre reflect the grandness and violence of prior eras?]**

9. In **Norway**, Klaus Hagerup (1946–) wrote Brechtian parodies about Western romance (*Bullets at Sundown*, 1971), neo-fascism in Germany (*In this World Everything is Possible*, 1978), and the popular loss of identity through idolizing stars like Elvis Presley (*Heartbreak Hotel*, 1987) (Rubin 623).
10. Friends with Brecht after the war, **Swiss** writer Max Frisch (1911–91) created dialectical parable-plays in German, such as *The Firebugs* (1958) about a kind man who gives shelter to vagrants, but they burn down his house, and *Andorra* (1961) about people who treat a boy as “typically” Jewish although he was actually adopted by his Jewish father.
11. Friedrich Dürrenmatt (1921–90) wrote tragicomedies in German, including *The Visit* (1956), about a wealthy old woman who promises to revitalize her former hometown if the people there will kill a man who got her pregnant and then jilted her. In *The Physicists* (1961), set in an asylum, a brilliant scientist pretends to be insane (with visits from the biblical Solomon) to save the world from his dangerous knowledge. Two others, who seem to believe they are Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein, become killers, as spies from different countries trying to get the scientist's secrets.
12. In **Austria**, Peter Handke (1942–) explored the actor-audience relationship in his “speech plays,” without character, plot, or setting, such as *Offending the Audience* (1966), in which four unnamed speakers attack and reformulate statements about theatricality. Handke also explored the theatricality of alienation in *Kaspar* (1968), about the

feral child, Kaspar Hauser (1812–33), who grew up in a cell without learning to speak and was then forced by society to conform, even when freed.

13. In **Germany**, Peter Weiss (1916–82) wrote documentary dramas, based on historical events and documents. These included his Brechtian tragicomedy, *The Persecution and Assassination of Jean Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade* (a.k.a. *Marat/Sade*, 1964), about two, very different, historical figures of the French revolution, and *The Investigation* (1965), about the Frankfurt war crimes trial of former guards at extermination camps.
14. In the 1970s–90s, Franz Xaver Kroetz (1946–) wrote consciousness-raising plays about the Bavarian working class, with naturalistic depictions of social horrors, including rape, child murder, and neo-Nazism.
15. Director Peter Stein (1937–) ran the Schaubühne in West Berlin (1970–85), staged monumental productions as head of the Salzburg Festival (1992–97), and created the first full staging of Goethe's *Faust*, which took 15 hours to perform (2000).
16. Frank Castorf (1951–), Artistic Director of the Berlin Volksbühne (1992–2015), became known as the “text destroyer” with his irreverent, anarchist, anti-realistic, and grotesque staging of scripts.
17. German writer/director Heiner Müller (1929–95), who lived in East Berlin, used classics with added symbolic elements to explore social and political problems, thus dodging Communist government censorship in the 1970s–80s. Müller was also critical of capitalism in West Germany, even as it reunited with the East in 1990, and led the Berliner Ensemble in 1993–95. His short, tragicomic *Hamletmachine* (1979) is an exemplary postmodern deconstruction, mixing German and English, with monologues by an actor (or Hamlet) who “was Hamlet” and says he wants to be a woman, an Ophelia who comes back after her suicidal drowning, and various surreal images, including three naked women as Marx, Lenin, and Mao.

**[How did Norwegian, Swiss, Austrian, or German theatre artists reflect postwar identities and audience-performance-script relationships, involving similar, inner-theatre networks?]**

18. Director-dramatist Kazimierz Braun (1936–), Artistic Director at the Contemporary Theatre in Wrocław, **Poland** (1975–84), also used symbolic imagery to bypass political censorship, with non-traditional spaces increasing the “interhuman process” of viewer-performer

relations. His stage adaptation of Camus's novel, *The Plague*, in 1983, reflected the disease of Communism, especially under martial law, imposed by the regime for over a year to control opponents. He was fired from his artistic position in 1984, due to such coded yet dissident productions. He directed plays at various US theatres and universities, eventually becoming a professor at SUNY-Buffalo.

19. Polish artist and designer Tadeusz Kantor (1915–90) reintroduced absurdist dramas, such as those by Witkiewicz. He also founded Cricot 2 in 1955, a company that displayed his inner theatre's memories and fantasies. *The Dead Class* (1975) exemplifies his "Theatre of Death" (and Life), presenting the children he knew who died in World War II, shown as adult ghosts in a schoolroom with child-puppet appendages while dancing, with Kantor appearing onstage, redirecting them.
20. Jerzy Grotowski (1933–99) developed a theory of the "holy actor" and "poor theatre," based on ideas from Artaud and Brecht. This involved intensive actor-training with archetypal forms, non-verbal vocalizations, and the face as a "life-mask," focusing on presence and "translucination." Grotowski also made spectators part of the setting. In his adaptation of Stanisław Wyspiański's *Akropolis* (1962), they were witnesses as concentration-camp prisoners built a crematorium, on the eve of Christ's Second Coming. They were diners at the table where Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* was being performed (1964). And yet, Grotowski shifted to paratheatrical activity in the 1970s, in the US and Italy, working solely with actors in private rituals, and in a more anthropological direction in the 1980s with his "theatre of sources" and "objective drama."
21. Ryszard Cieślak (1937–90) was the lead actor in Grotowski's company, his closest collaborator, and teacher of his method.
22. Sławomir Mrożek (1930–2015) wrote witty absurdist plays with striking metaphors and political edges, such as *Tango* (1965) about totalitarianism and *The Émigrés* (1975) about two Poles in Paris. He was forced to emigrate (to Italy, France, and Mexico) during the martial law period of the 1980s when his writings were banned in Poland and other Warsaw Pact nations, as orchestrated by Moscow, due to Mrożek's criticism of the 1968 Czechoslovakia invasion.
23. Another Polish émigré, but to the US, Janusz Głowacki (1938–2017), achieved success with his absurdist mix of reality and grotesquerie in *Hunting Cockroaches* (1987) about an apartment in New York and then, after he returned to Poland, with *The Fourth Sister* (2003) about Chekhov's characters in today's Moscow.

24. In **Czechoslovakia**, Communist control in the 1950s meant that Soviet plays dominated with socialist realist propaganda. In the 1960s, various styles developed, from Brechtian to absurdist, poetic to nationalistic. But after 1968, the government's secret police attacked opponents. Many artists, including novelist and playwright Milan Kundera, left the country.
25. Václav Havel (1936–2011) achieved international notice with his first full-length play, *The Garden Party* (1963), with its absurdist hero conforming to the nonsense talk of bureaucrats in the "Liquidation Office," reflecting the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia. But after 1968 and the failure of the Prague Spring rebellion, his plays were banned. He became a leading dissident and was imprisoned multiple times, the longest for nearly four years. Yet he became the country's first president when the USSR dissolved and Czechoslovakia changed to a democracy, serving from 1989 to 1992, and again as president of the Czech Republic (after Slovakia split off), 1993–2003.
26. Czech scenographer Josef Svoboda (1920–2002) took an architectural, holistic, non-naturalistic approach, introducing film projections, black light, and other electronic devices. In the 1990s, he became head of *Laterna Magika*, which combined video and live-action through computer programming.  
**[How did Polish and Czech theatre artists develop ritual, political, and non-naturalistic techniques through personal, Communist, and international contexts, related to other artists in the past and today?]**
27. In **Italy**, director Giorgio Strehler (1921–97) was a postwar eclectic, who became friends with Brecht after directing several of his plays in the 1950s. Strehler was also famous for staging Shakespeare, Chekhov, and various Italian authors in subsequent decades. Strehler worked with Svoboda in a nine-hour production of Goethe's *Faust*, shown in three parts, with some scenes read and some staged.
28. Eclectic director Franco Zeffirelli (1923–) became famous for his staging of operas and his film versions of *The Taming of the Shrew* (1967), *Romeo and Juliet* (1968), and *Hamlet* (1990, starring Mel Gibson). He also served in the Italian Senate (1994–2001), as a member of the center-right Forza Italia party, led by Silvio Berlusconi.
29. Italian Eugenio Barba (1936–) studied with Grotowski for three years, writing a book about him in 1965, and studied *kathakali* in India. Then he founded Odin Teatret in Denmark, directing over 60 productions across four decades, and created the International School of Theatre Anthropology in 1979.

30. Italian actor-playwright Dario Fo (1926–2016) was awarded the 1997 Nobel Prize. His plays offered current political parodies through traditional commedia and *guillari* (medieval strolling players). In the 1960s–80s, they criticized government corruption, assassinations, organized crime, Catholic theology, racism, and war, and then in the 1990s–2010s, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and his party, European banks, and the continuing debt crisis of EU countries.
31. Actress-playwright Franca Rame (1929–2013), wife of Dario Fo, co-founded their theatre company in Milan in 1958. She began writing feminist plays, often as monologs, in the 1970s. But in 1973 she was kidnapped by fascists (at the behest of police, a court found, after the statute of limitations for the crime had lapsed). She was raped, beaten, burned with cigarettes, slashed with razors, and left in a park. Later, she returned to the stage with her anti-fascist plays. She also entered politics, becoming elected to the Italian Senate in 2006, at age 77.

**[How did postwar, Italian directors and dramatists express conservative or progressive ideas, regarding tragicomic traditions and contemporary politics?]**

32. In **Romania**, Horia Lovinescu (1917–83) created poetic realist plays, despite government controls (as in Poland and Czechoslovakia), including *A Game of Life and Death in the Ashen Desert* (1979), a Cain and Abel story during a global nuclear winter (Rubin 689).
33. Romanian director Andrei Serban (1943–) moved to the US in 1969, working there and across Europe, giving new meanings to classics through his distinctive poetic style. Then, he became head of the National Theatre of Bucharest, 1990–93, and later a professor at New York's Columbia University.
34. Director Liviu Ciulei (1923–2011) had a 50-year international career, offering stunning visual metaphors, often blending discordant elements. He became Artistic Director of the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis (1980–85) and a professor at Columbia University (1986–90) and New York University (1991–95).
35. A teacher at the Vakhtangov Theatre School in **Russia**, actor Yuri Lyubimov (1917–2014) became a director at age 46, using techniques from Brecht and Meyerhold, and then headed the Taganka Theatre in Moscow (1960s–80s). He staged over 100 plays and operas, working also in the US and Europe. He became known for his deconstructive adaptations of poems and novels, sometimes in conflict with political authorities. They banned his work in the USSR from 1980 to 1989

and took away his citizenship in 1984. In the 1990s, his status was restored and he again headed the Taganka.

36. **Macedonian** (Yugoslavian) playwright Goran Stefanovski (1952–) wrote *Hotel Europa* (2000) about immigrants in transit, including the ancient Odysseus returning home. Each scene was staged by a director from a different country, in derelict buildings in five European cities. Spectators were split into six groups, 50 in each, and taken to 15-minute scenes in various orders, with a longer, collective banquet in the middle.
37. Although socialist realism dominated postwar Yugoslavia, **Serbian** writers Aleksandar Obrenović and Djordje Lebović (both 1928–) wrote about historical reality in *Heaven's Detachment* (1956), with seven Auschwitz prisoners gaining three months of life by killing and cremating fellow inmates.
38. Ljubomir Simović (1935–) wrote *The Travelling Troupe Šopalović* (1985) about actors creating poetic beauty in Serbia during World War II, with one killed absurdly onstage and in reality, as they perform the Orestes story.
39. Serbian performance artist Marina Abramović (1946–) staged *Rhythm 0* in 1974, allowing viewers to do anything they wanted to her body with 72 given instruments, including cut away her clothes, slice her skin, and put a loaded gun to her head. In *The Artist is Present* (2010), she sat in a chair for 736.5 hours, while people stood in line to sit opposite her and look in her eyes, for as long as each one wanted.  
**[How has Eastern European theatricality expressed conflicts between democracy, communism, and capitalism, yet also shown potential resolutions--with parallels today?]**

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