

The post-postdramatic period is characterised by a flirtation with key forms of world drama, such as ancient and Elizabethan tragedies, and their themes, which are applied to thoroughly contemporary problems. In this regard, three of the many texts can be selected: E. Jelinek's *Die Schutzbefohlenen*, S. Hertmans's *Antigone in Molenbeek* and V. Möderndorfer's *Romeo and Juliet Were Refugees*. In addition to their relationship to antiquity, all three plays are linked by a thematic thread: migration and the unfortunate fate of refugees. It turns out that the only optimistic version of this theme came from Aeschylus, and all three contemporary plays could easily be classified as tragedies. Jelinek's play is based on an actual event from 2012 when a group of migrants stormed the Votive Church in Vienna in protest and demanded decent asylum treatment for themselves and others like them. Jelinek exposes the whole ethical decay of Europe, which hides behind high-flying ideals of humanitarianism but does the exact opposite. In this case, it is the relationship between migrants – the real foreigners – and Europeans. Hertmans introduces a foreigner, who is already a fully-fledged citizen of Europe, only to complicate his *Antigone* with the classic story of the burial of a dead brother, who in this case is a terrorist. Möderndorfer takes the final step in this direction by treating economically deprived European citizens as migrants, i.e., as foreigners. None of the three plays has a way out, and the fate of the everyman ends tragically.

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# Post-postdramatic Reincarnations of Classic Tragedies: Jelinek, Hertmans, Möderndorfer

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The establishment of human (albeit mythical) identity is linked to space, to the Earth, but also to its prohibition: the Earth, which defines human beings, is immediately taken away from him/her by his/her expulsion (e.g., Adam and Eve, Cain). While the ideal place is unattainable for humankind, the real one is not too pleasant. However, the binary division of the real world is based on the boundary between the two and thus establishes them as opposing categories. Therefore, the boundary is primarily an ideological formation since its essence includes its crossing. The setting of borders is the foundation of human identity, and the border itself is its metaphysical guarantor.

The basic characteristic of drama is its contemporary commentary on reality. If it may have receded somewhat into the background in the postdramatic period, the post-postdramatic period can be said to be characterised by its flirtation with key forms of world drama, such as ancient as well as Elizabethan tragedies, and their themes, which it applies to thoroughly contemporary problems. Thus, among the many texts, three can be selected: E. Jelinek's *Charges*, inspired by Aeschylus's *The Suppliants*, S. Hertmans's *Antigone in Molenbeek*, and V. Möderndorfer's *Romeo and Juliet Were Refugees*, which, in addition to their relationship to antiquity, are linked by a thematic thread: migration and the unfortunate fate of refugees. It is significant for our times that the only optimistic version of this theme was Aeschylus's, where the classical refugee situation was only apparently so since the Danaids turned out to be distant relatives of the people of Argos, which, of course, changes the value of the refugee situation fundamentally. All three contemporary plays, however, can be unreservedly classified as tragedies.

Jelinek's play is based on an actual event from 2012 when a group of migrants stormed the Votive Church in Vienna in protest, demanding decent asylum treatment for themselves and others like them. The refugees achieved nothing, and

the authorities used the police to drive them out of the church and deport most of them. It is this attitude that Jelinek deals with in the play, which uses the examples of European corruption and the betrayal of ideals to demonstrate the whole moral decay of Europe. This rich place acts purely in a predatory manner and contradicts the high-flown ideals of humanity and human dignity. This drama is about the classic external relationship, that is to say, the relationship between migrants, who are in fact foreigners, and Europeans. It turns out that the European authorities are actually comfortable with migrants (in manageable numbers) as they help them to give the impression that the authorities are struggling and caring for their citizens, thus protecting their own positions. This can only be done by persecuting refugees and treating them inhumanely. If Aeschylus's Danaids are granted asylum by the people of Argos, modern Europeans do not grant it to refugees, which is also our contemporary reality.

Hertmans's *Antigone* is one step more integrated. The author plays with the theme of migration and subtly links it to *Antigone's*: an Arab (Moroccan?) woman searches for the remains of her terrorist brother, who blew himself up in the Paris attacks of 2015. The authorities refuse to hand his remains over to her, which leads her to take matters into her own hands. She is caught, imprisoned and, in the end, the modern *Antigone* dies. The girl is a naturalised Belgian, a citizen of Europe. However, she is still understood as a foreigner, tolerated (she even studies law in Brussels) but not integrated into Belgian society. From this position, it was not too difficult for her brother to turn radical and become a "martyr". Hertmans continues his narrative, then, where Jelinek left off: one such Danaid, then, lives in Argos, but she is always a foreigner in appearance, in costume, in culture. Integration is therefore not possible; Europe keeps her isolated and at a distance.

Möderndorfer takes a final step in this sense, however, by no longer dealing with external migrants – foreigners – but tracing migration among Europeans themselves. Modern society is stratified to such an extent that those at the lower end of the social scale are, as it were, in the function of (internal) migrants. Even if they are legal citizens, their fates are the same as those of migrants. For a young couple, Roman and Juna, fate blows in their faces and prevents them from living a successful (at least not unhappy) life. This drama also ends tragically, as they fail to provide material conditions for their family. Their former pure love ends in separation, where they do not know whether they will ever meet again. The true European thus becomes a migrant, continuing the cycle of misery due to poverty and exploitation by criminal gangs. If for Jelinek, it is foreigners who "invade" Europe, for Möderndorfer, it is the Europeans who are fleeing wretchedness. There is no privileged place in the world. The circle of misfortune is complete because none of the three plays has a way out, and each fate ends tragically.

The question is raised about the modern world's humanity – that is to say, ethics. Compared with the ancient world, where people did, after all, adhere to common laws, it turns out that today our behaviour is no longer guided by values, but that the main driving force behind human behaviour is personal gain, which always comes out only at someone else's expense. This state of mind in society cannot be called anything other than tragic: tragic because of the ruined human destinies and equally tragic because of the vacuum of values in which we exist.

Even more worrying is the question of whether anyone cares anymore.