

## #METOO IN POLISH THEATRE EDUCATION

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**Abstract.** *This article discusses the #metoo movement in the Polish theatre. The author, referring to the thesis by Agnès Grossmann, notes that just like in the cinema, in which #metoo was initiated, the theatre reproduces images of women subjected to the male gaze. She then looks at how this problem of representation translates into the working conditions of women in the theatre. The paper presents the current state of research and actions regarding violence (including sexual violence) in theatres around the world. Applying these considerations to Poland, the author writes how this problem resonates with the situation of women in Poland. In the context of the theatre, the location of substantive and practical preparation for #metoo were theatre schools. Surveying events in the two most important and prestigious centres of theatre education, the author first makes a diagnosis of existing problems and then examines the process of combating them through the prism of Sarah Ahmed's concept of "walls" and the affective theory of paranoia and reparation according to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick.*

**Key words:** #metoo, theatre, acting, institution, education, affects.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The #metoo movement was started in 2006 by Tarana Burke, who founded a non-profit organization under this name to help people who have experienced sexual violence (Dzhambazova 2020, 390). However, the movement began on a large scale in Hollywood as a consequence of allegations of sexual harassment and rape against producer Harvey Weinstein, reported in October 2017 in *The New York Times*. Affected by these events, Alyssa Milano wrote on Twitter that those who had experienced sexual harassment should write "#metoo" in response. The response was unprecedented and spread to social networking sites in countries around the world, revealing the incredible scale of the phenomenon in women's private lives and very diverse workplaces. After a few months, in January 2018, parallel to the #metoo grassroots movement, the international activist

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organization Time's Up began to operate. Its activities are aimed at bringing women together, creating networks of help, support and cooperation in creating and implementing good practices. Over time, there has been a shift from revealing the problem to initiating several structural and institutional changes aimed at creating safe and equal environments for work and life (cf. e.g. Dzhambazova 2020; <https://timesupfoundation.org/about/>).

As Agnès Grossmann points out, it does not seem coincidental that the #metoo movement started in Hollywood, a factory of female images subordinated to the male gaze, and that it was initiated by actresses, in other words, people who embody these male fantasies (Grossmann 2019). At the same time, the revealing of the structure of power and violence against female actresses in the film industry was quite soon followed by the question of the situation in the theatre, which seemed to be a refuge of liberalism, mutual care and concern, alternative models, and non-patriarchal masculinity (Cover 2019, 302). Here, too, however, it turned out that the process and character of the images that are produced, as well as the power structures, reflect hierarchical, patriarchal and sexist social systems. Thus, on the wave of #metoo, the most popular techniques of psychological acting were revised (which arose from Konstanty Stanislawski's system, developed further by numerous followers under the name of the Method) to reveal the patriarchal, sexist methods of working with actresses and models for the representation of female characters, which are applied and legitimized as early as at the level of theatre education (Derr 2019). In turn, an open letter by former female and male associates of Belgian choreographer and director Jan Fabre which accused him of, among other things, sexual violence, pointed to the area of possible abuses within the framework of experimental art, which lies outside the traditional rules of representation (which Derr pointed out), aimed at breaking the taboo of carnality and sexuality. Fabre's case raised discussions on the intertwining of institutional power (Fabre is the manager of the Troubleyn Theatre) with the symbolic power that arises from the status of a "master", who in the name of art is allowed to do more than others (in this spirit Fabre defended, among others, Marina Abramović<sup>1</sup>; and writing critically were: Anna Tilroe 2019; Katarzyna Tórz 2018, Marta Keil 2018). As in cinematography, the problem of representation in the theatre was associated with violent institutional practices. Already in 2011, Anne-Marie Quigg pointed out that the art sector is the work environment most affected by violence (Quigg 2011, in Harvie 2019). The letter against Fabre, on the other hand, was provoked by a survey conducted by the Belgian Minister of Culture in 2017, which concluded that "one in four women in the cultural sector had experienced sexual harassment in the preceding year" (Saad 2018). A similar report from the UK, based on a survey of 1755 people in the industry, showed that only 34% of people in the theatre industry had not experienced any types of violence (bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, sexual assault, other inappropriate behaviour – The Stage 2017) at any point in their career. The results of "The Day of Acts" organized by the director of The Royal Court in London, during which one could report cases of sexual violence in institutions of the theatre, proved equally alarming (150 cases of sexual assault were reported - see: Coffey, Jones, Selva, and Zachar 2019). As a result of this research and the events taking place in theatrical and educational institutions in the United Kingdom (see: Equity: "Manifesto for casting", "Agenda for Change report", "Safe Spaces Statement"; O'Brien 2018), the United

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<sup>1</sup> Accessed October 17, 2020:

[https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=10156597238365610&id=17340030609](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10156597238365610&id=17340030609)

States (“Chicago Theatre Standards” 2017) and other countries,<sup>2</sup> several regulations have been introduced, such as codes of ethics or catalogues of good practice covering issues such as rehearsals for intimate scenes, nude scenes and violent scenes.

In Poland, the #metoo movement did not generate much of a response, although one cannot say that it did not resonate at all. However, the changes are very gradual and affect only particular areas (including, for example, the theatre, but bypassing cinema entirely). This is certainly related to the general situation of women in Poland after 1989, i.e. since the introduction of democratic government. Women are gradually gaining political power, their situation in the labour market (Prończuk 2017), at universities, in the media, art and business is slowly improving (Czerwińska and Piotrowska 2009). Since 2009, The Congress of Women Association – the largest social movement in contemporary Poland, whose activity led to the adoption of the law on parity in political elections by the legislature in 2011 – has been working for women’s rights: “It adopted a policy of a minimum share of 35% of women candidates”<sup>3</sup>. However, according to the European Institute for Gender Equality research for 2005–2015, the situation of women in Poland still remains far worse than the European average (Prończuk 2017).

The fundamental issues that have been taken up by the emerging feminist movement since the 1990s are abortion, violence against women, the feminization of poverty, and the participation of women in politics (Czerwińska and Piotrowska 2009). Two of the issues that have caused the greatest controversy and simultaneously also protests by women concern the right to decide about one’s own body and protect it. One of the first legislative initiatives in democratic Poland was a provision limiting the right to terminate pregnancy, which is considered an attempt to take control over women’s bodies. While after 1956 abortion was a procedure available on-demand, in 1993 a law came into force allowing it only in three cases: when the pregnancy poses a threat to a woman’s life or health, when the fetus is severely and irreversibly disabled, when there is a suspicion that the pregnancy is the result of a criminal act. Because of the pressure exerted on doctors and women by the Catholic Church, right-wing politicians and the media, even this restrictive law is not respected (Chelstowska 2017). Since 2015, when the right-wing Law and Justice party assumed power in Poland, the Sejm has regularly returned to drafting legislation to tighten abortion law. Women responded in 2016 with mass protests (the largest since the 1980s, when workers went on strike against the communist authorities) in many cities in Poland, known as the “Black Protest” (see: Kubisa and Wojnicka 2018). Although the protests effectively deterred the government’s actions, they only postponed the threat of the law on abortion being tightened. On October 22, 2020, at the request of the MPs of the ruling party, the Constitutional Tribunal (whose judges were almost entirely selected by the Law and Justice government) ruled that abortion in cases of a “high probability of severe and irreversible impairment of the fetus or an incurable life-threatening illness” is unconstitutional. The fetus was thereby regarded as a person, and women were deprived of their right to freedom and dignity. Since about 98% of legal abortions performed in Poland in 2019 were due to fetal defects, this change in the law practically entails an abortion ban. Although the decision of the Constitutional Court was made at a high-point during the COVID-19 pandemic, women took to the streets again (Sitnicka 2020). Another

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<sup>2</sup> On the Influence of the #Metoo Movement on the Theatre in Hungary, Serbia, Romania, and Poland, see: *Játekter* 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Accessed: October 17, 2020. <https://www.kongreskobiet.pl/about-us>

problem that triggered mass demonstrations by women is violence against women. Poland signed the Istanbul Convention addressing this issue in 2012 but only ratified it three years later (“Czas na kobiety” [Time for Women]). While international reports describe the prevalence of “violence against women in Poland and the lack of a comprehensive strategy to eliminate all forms of gender-based violence against women” (Piotrowska 2016, 14), Polish politicians claim that the Istanbul Convention is a threat to traditions and religion, portraying these as a source of violence against women (in 2017 President Andrzej Duda spoke about the Convention: “Above all, do not apply it” – Danielewski 2020). For these reasons, on July 16, 2020, Marlena Malag, the Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy announced with the approval of the government and the president the country’s withdrawal from the convention. The reaction of women’s organizations was protesting under the slogan “NO to the legalisation of domestic violence” organized on July 24, 2020, in twenty cities in Poland (Chrzczonowicz 2020). However, they were not as large-scale in nature (certainly also due to the pandemic) as the Black Protest had been and were not successful... One day later, Minister of Justice Zbigniew Ziobro filed a motion to withdraw from the convention (Danielewski 2020).

The discussion regarding the convention is focused mainly on domestic violence in Poland. Meanwhile, the #metoo movement, which as I mentioned before did not give rise to many spectacular cases in Poland, has nevertheless led to an intensification of research on the problem of discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment in various sectors of employment (e.g. in hostessing – Kulik, et al. 2019 and in the uniformed services – Oklejak and Wilkońska-Żurowska 2018) and at universities (reports by the Ombudsman – Kwaśniewska et al. 2018 – and the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights – Gerlich 2019). They showed, among other things, that the number and scale of the problems are alarming and concern mostly women (since the studies began, 31.1% of men and 47% of women have experienced some form of harassment – Gerlich 2019, 21). An important factor indicated in these documents as conducive to discrimination and sexual violence was “the lack of consideration in the structures and mechanisms of universities, of separate regulations and bodies concerning the prohibition of discrimination (...) with particular emphasis on the prohibition of harassment, including sexual harassment” (Namysłowska-Gabrysiak [in:] Kwaśniewska et al. 2019, 2).

This situation is undoubtedly related to discrimination against women in the labour market. “In all regions, compared to men, we are less active professionally and more often unemployed. We work mostly in the public sector in lower positions. We find jobs mostly in the so-called ‘female’ sectors and professions – especially those of a caregiving or service nature. We are less well paid, although better educated” – reads the *Czas na kobiety* [Time for Women] report published on the occasion of the centenary of women’s right to vote in Poland in 2018. Discrimination against women at art schools was revealed in 2015 by the actresses in the report significantly titled *Marne szanse na awanse* [Poor chances for promotion]? (Gromada et al. 2015). Similar conclusions were drawn by the feminist research project HyPaTia, which investigated women’s history in the Polish Theatre<sup>4</sup>. As Kinga Dunin wrote, discussing the theatre as a “peculiar labour market” (2018, 9) in the introduction to the project’s volume on statistics, “there is little space for women in the theatre. This includes leading theatrical groups, directing, the number of dramas published and directed by women, participation in bodies granting theatrical

<sup>4</sup> Accessed October 17, 2020. <http://www.hypatia.pl>

awards” (Dunin 2018, 7) – in 2010, women only held 14% of managerial positions (director, art director). The author also points out that due to cultural androcentrism, i.e. the dominance of male values, it is hardly surprising that male juries give awards to male artists. The prestige and money in this, as she asserts, very precarious labour market are therefore mainly directed towards men (8–9). As the cases of sexual harassment in the theatre have made their way into the media, it is those men with institutional and symbolic power who are the most frequent perpetrators of violence (including sexual violence), directed mainly against women under their control (actresses, administrative workers).

The most important case of sexual harassment in the Polish theatre began in November 2019 as a result of accusations made by the employees of the Bagatela comedy theatre in Krakow against its long-time director. According to employees (actresses and administrative workers), the director, using his position as manager of the institution and the director, harassed them both physically through unwanted touching, kissing and verbally by propositioning them sexually (see: Kwaśniewska 2020a). The problem of violence was also recently revealed in the working methods of the founder and leader of the Gardzienice Theater Research Centre, Włodzimierz Stanowski. A growing number of victims speak about mental and physical violence as well as sexual gestures (Frost 2020). Both cases have been widely covered in the media and are still ongoing. Similarly, as seen in the examples above from other countries, the problem of violence against women exists in the theatre regardless of the institutional form of an organisation (in repertory and alternative theatres) and the aesthetic direction of artistic work (in traditional theatres and experimental activities). However, the substantive, mental and practical grounds for these two issues were prepared by previous events in theatre schools in Warsaw and Kraków. It was there that, as a result of revelations about the problem of violence – including sexual violence – and discrimination against women, discussions began about the limits to intimacy in the theatre, about the violent methods of working with actresses, the influence of patriarchal and professional hierarchical structures on the scale and nature of abuse. New regulations were also created there to change the way of thinking about ethics in the theatre (see: Kwaśniewska 2019; Kwaśniewska 2020b). In this respect, theatre training institutions are the “vanguard of change”. Tracking these events seems all the more important because these cases seem to comprehensively encapsulate the various institutional and affective conditions that have and continue to constrain the #metoo movement and point to methods of how they can be broken. In this text, I would like to look first at the course of actions that are part of the #metoo movement in both institutions. Next, taking into account the regulations that have been introduced, I will consider at what stage we are in the struggle against sexual violence in theatre education, and more broadly, in the Polish theatre.

## 2. SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

In my analysis of the events at these schools, I will refer to various sources. In the case of the Academy of Drama Art in Warsaw, the course and context of #metoo and the related changes were described and commented on by participants in the events at the *Change – Now! What Have We Been Silent About at Drama Schools* conference and published in Polish and English in the *Polish Theatre Journal* (2019). These sources provide a multifaceted, clear and detailed picture of the events. In the case of the Academy of Theatre Arts in Kraków, in addition to the materials from the above mentioned

conference (the conference in Warsaw brought together representatives of various centres of theatre education to speak about their experiences), there will primarily be theatrical performances and texts for theatre created by the students of this school, addressing the topic of violence (including sexual violence) in theatre education and comments and discussions on these projects. It was the artistic works of the students that initiated the change, and their “unclear” status resulting from the mixing of fiction with reality strongly influenced the nature of subsequent actions and events. The nature of this research material, as I will emphasize in my analysis, is quite diverse – there are both documentary materials and artistic works, while some sources are on the borderline between these genres. The fundamental difference between the testimonies from the ADA and ATA will also necessitate a change in methodology.

The most systematic method of describing the structure enabling and blocking the reporting of harassment and sexual harassment within the institution was created by Sara Ahmed. Her theory of “walls” described in the book *Living a Feminist Life* (2017) and used in the lecture *On Complaint* (2018) to analyse cases of sexual harassment at universities, will be used to describe the situation at the Theatre Academy in Warsaw. This is all the more justified because, as in the aforementioned lecture by Ahmed, the sources concerning the events at this school are documentary in nature and focus on describing systemic problems and changes. In his research, however, Ahmed usually combines tools of institutional criticism with affective theory. In this way, she examines both the institutional mechanisms and how violence affects the behaviour and decisions of those involved in it in a way that is independent of procedural conditions. Violence and its disclosure are accompanied by a highly intricate affective dynamic that is characteristic of individual “affective communities” distinguished by their specific, repetitive actions and affective performances (cf. Wetherell and Beer 2014). Most often this is not related to fully conscious decisions, but it is situated between the discursive meanings and practices created by the institution and the bodily, impulsive, reflexive reactions. Following in the footsteps of Ahmed’s research practices, but no longer using her tools directly, I apply the affective category of paranoid and reparative reading created and described by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick to analyse the situation at the Academy of Drama in Krakow, where the sources are artistic and documentary in nature.

### 3. THE POLISH SYSTEM OF THEATRE EDUCATION

There are two large public schools in Poland where theatre artists are educated. Both are solely devoted to the theatre. The Academy of Drama in Warsaw has a Directing Department, Acting Department, and Theatre Studies Department, as well as a branch in Białystok with a specialization in puppetry. The Academy of Theatre in Kraków has a Faculty of Drama Directing, a Faculty of Acting and a Faculty of Puppetry in Wrocław and a Faculty of Dance Theatre in Bytom. There is also a Faculty of Acting at the National Film, Television and Theatre School in Łódź, whose graduates also often work in theatres. In 2019, the first private university in Poland opened a course in acting (Chojnowska 2019) – there are no graduates yet, so it is difficult to determine its status. Moreover, there are also smaller, private theatrical training centres in Poland, but in the thoroughly saturated labour market, it is difficult to find employment in the profession after graduating from one of these. They are regarded rather as a form of preparation for

the quite difficult entrance exams for the public schools (see: Kaleta 2015; Mrozek 2016; Biernat and Kwaśniewska 2017). Signs of their quality are their famous graduates who often stay at the school to teach the next generation. The Polish theatre system, like education, is thus monopolized by public institutions. This “closed circuit” of art is also a “closed circuit” that establishes a rigid hierarchy and cultivates peculiar working and teaching methods. Scholars of the developing institutional criticism in Poland agree with the description of the entire system of Polish public theatres and drama schools, in which the same artists work, as a violence-filled system of connecting vessels. According to Kempa, “Polish public theatres, based on permanent companies of actors and boasting an ethos of teamwork, also remain a space of brutal, ‘almost feudal’ (...) relationships of subordination and dependency. (...) In the theatre hierarchy, actors occupy the lowest places” (Adamiecka-Sitek 2019, 2). The violence present in this system has many dimensions, from the economic through the symbolic, mobbing, discrimination, all the way to sexual violence and is much more frequently targeted at women than men in higher positions (*ibid*). In order to repair this violent system, both state drama schools held broad, difficult discussions and an academic conference, there arose performances, Drama texts, and finally, documents and procedures which were to start the process of profound change. In both institutions, those who initiated the change were women drama school students and alumnae.

#### 4. INSTITUTIONAL WALLS AT THE ACADEMY OF DRAMA IN WARSAW

At the Academy of Drama in Warsaw, the struggle against violence and harassment began with student complaints. Although one instructor was particularly problematic, it was pointed out that violence was encouraged by the entire system of theatrical education. “For me, the process started sixteen years ago, with an experience of violence I could describe as bullying and harassment” (Adamiecka-Sitek et al. 2019, 1),<sup>5</sup> said the renowned Polish director Weronika Szczawińska, speaking in 2019 about her experiences at the Academy of Drama. “Infringing on their physical boundaries was common practice: putting a hand on a student’s shoulder, stroking her neck, touching her exposed stomach. The appearance of female students was constantly discussed (...). And so we were fed remarks about our big blue eyes or a low-cut black blouse against a white body, a detail so enthusiastically received by the academy’s admissions panel that it actually became a factor in the candidate being accepted to study there. (...) Furious outbursts, and the establishment of a scapegoat mechanism, were another issue [*sic*] we had to face, regardless of our gender” (Adamiecka-Sitek et al. 2019, 2). Then, with the support of all the students in her year, Szczawińska reported the situation to the Dean of the Directing Department. Despite hearing a disturbing comment that such situations had taken place in the past and had been reported, she agreed to a solution that guaranteed the relative safety of the students in her year but did not solve the problem in a systemic manner that would ensure the safety of others.

However, this situation revealed the existence of systemic walls, in the context of which Sara Ahmed analyses discrimination that also permits sexual violence. According

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<sup>5</sup> Because people who have experienced or witnessed violence have spoken of this and authorised or recorded their testimony and also checked the translations, I prefer to quote their statements rather than paraphrase them, so as not to distort their meaning.

to her, the areas of visibility and agency in public spaces – accessible to one group and closed to others (e.g. women or people with non-normative sexual identity) – are delineated by walls which, although they may appear to be metaphorical, act as real obstacles: they deprive people of the possibility of real action, render them “invisible”, create barriers, inhibit movement. (“A wall is what you come up against. It is a physical contact; a visceral encounter. When I write this, I might not at first be talking of literal walls. A wall is an effect of coming up against” – Ahmed 2017, 136). A person fighting such a wall (for example, a student trying to file a complaint about harassment or bullying by an instructor) finds themselves in a situation in which privileged persons do not see, or underestimate the obstacles and problems (“if an actual wall was there, we would all be able to see it, or to touch it. And this makes an institutional wall hard. You come up against what others do not see” – Ahmed 2017, 138). Wishing to maintain the status quo, they ignore or block attempts to point out and destroy the walls or propose only ostensible solutions. All these reactions could be seen at the ADA.

Since the problem reported by Weronika Szczawińska’s year was resolved in isolation (that is, only ostensibly) and the professor continued his activities, the situation repeated itself: “I remember running by chance into directing students I knew; I remember their stories, in which familiar tropes recurred: humiliation, teaching a class while drunk, personal remarks, subjecting students to chronic stress”. The academic authorities explained these events as “coming into contact with a real character” or as “preparation for work in a theatre”, and some students, male and female, also claimed that “it was a worthwhile experience”. Under these conditions, violence – both as a tool and as an experience – becomes part of everyday life, and seeing, exposing, and naming violence only partially serves to justify it<sup>6</sup>. “Two years ago, when I was in my second year, I had classes with a professor of whom my fellow academy students said: ‘You’ll have to get through this. After that, things will start to look up. (...) So as we started the seminar, all students in our (exclusively female) year had the internalized sense that ‘we needed to get through this’” (all above quotations in Adamiecka-Sitek et al. 2019, 3), said Agata Koszulińska, a directing student at the ADA. This situation was also a perfect fit for the traditional conviction prevailing in Polish schools, that it has always been that way and always will, that the school tempers both female and male artists for the resilience work will demand of them in the future (6). Students had no chance to be heard, because by speaking of violence, they would in a way “expose” their unpreparedness for the profession. Even when they decided to do so, it was to no effect. An evaluation questionnaire filled out in the 2016/17 academic year by one student concerning the professor (anonymous questionnaires are a standard evaluation procedure at Polish universities) included a description of “pathological behaviour”. Only the student faced any consequences: “When the professor received the questionnaire from the Dean, he pounced on me and shouted that I was lying”. Apparently, the questionnaire never reached the Rector, since he claims that the professor’s evaluations were good and that the first complaints only appeared a year later (Diduszko-Zyglewska 2018). When the next year of directing students reported the professor’s violent strategies to the authorities of the Directing Department, the information again reached the accused and caused a number of repercussions against those who had been

<sup>6</sup> “If we are hit by something, again and again, our body might register this impact as an expectation: that the wall will come up” (Ahmed 2017, 138) and “Because all around you there is a partial sighting of walls, a partial sighting that is at once a justification: oh he’s a bit of a womanizer; oh yeah I was warned about him”, Ahmed writes (Ahmed 2017, 141).



harmed. An official written report was not made because, the Dean of the Directing Department, clearly amused by the insults that the instructor had used in regard to the female students, decided that “our accusations would look ludicrous on paper” (Adamiecka-Sitek et al. 2019, 4). And although his deputy was clearly of a different opinion and wanted to open official proceedings in the case, she quickly learned that there were no such procedures and the students feared how an official complaint might affect them at the academy. This led to the typical situation in which the repercussions were feared not by the molester, but by those reporting the offences (as Ahmed has also described – cf. e.g. p. 139). Ahmed asks, “what stops movement moves” (2017, 137). These are strategies in which walls become material, hard objects, impacts, which only results in “scratching at the surface, scratching the surface” (Ahmed 2017, 138) and pain. This materiality of the walls is revealed precisely in the resistance to action and change, but also in concrete acts of violence that have their materiality (Ahmed 2017, 140): in humiliating meetings, phone calls and text messages, nicknames, laughter, suggestions that you are the problem because this is how the group of students were treated by the instructor when their complaints were presented to him. To notice a problem in such conditions, you have to first overcome the wall in your own head (“Maybe you too start to feel that the wall is inside your own head” – Ahmed 2017, 141). Changing the institution requires then the titanic effort and determination of people Ahmed calls “diversity workers” (Ahmed 2017, 139).

In the end, the case went up to higher rungs on the institutional ladder thanks to a group of students who told the Rector about the problem. Another meeting was held, where standing alongside those who had been harmed was a group that brought together female students and ADA alumnae - forty people, all of whom had similar experiences. It turned out then, however, that at the Academy of Drama, “in light of the existing legal solutions (and non-existent procedures), nothing could be done” (Adamiecka-Sitek et al. 2019, 5). According to Ahmed, even after an official complaint is filed, the walls continue to block its performative power (“If that complaint is made, then a wall can be what happens to a complaint; how it is stopped from going through the whole system”). The complaints did not prevent the election of the professor about whom the most doubts had been raised to the Academy Senate. This gesture not only signified a refusal of help to those harmed but was also a clear sign of support for the professor and his “teaching” method. At that time, three alumnae, Małgorzata Wdowik, Weronika Szczawińska, Aleksandra Jakubczak and a student, Katarzyna Łęcka, took the initiative and decided to make the case public, acting against the mechanism of sexual violence in which information is blocked in a closed circuit (Ahmed 2017, 140), and in line with Ahmed’s recommendation, “We need to give support to those who are willing to expose the will of the institution as violence; we need to become our own support system” (2017, 159). They thus began to seek further allies, including public opinion. In an open letter by ADA alumnae and alumni (signed by twenty-four individuals), published on the most popular theatre website in Poland ([www.e-teatr.pl](http://www.e-teatr.pl)), not only did they give the name of the instructor who was the biggest problem, but they also incisively and emphatically described the system of violence and institutional walls: “For many years, DD [Directing Department] students have been experiencing harassment from one of the instructors, Andrzej Pawłowski. (...) The accusations against him are very serious and include psychological violence, threats of physical violence, intimidation, manipulation, harassment of women, insults and humiliation of students, the performance of professional duties under the clear influence of alcohol (...) We would like to emphasize that the case has been known to the departmental

authorities for many years. Successive years of students have returned evaluation questionnaires (...), in which abuses were described in detail (...). As it is clear from the many reports by students, all attempts to fight for good practices at the academy are silenced, students who express their disagreement with the above-described behaviours are regularly intimidated, possible problems are suggested that might result from complaints and could impede further studies as well as their start in professional life” (Stankiewicz 2018). And although later narratives stressed the goodwill of the academy’s authorities, if it had not been for the open letter, the pathological state of affairs might well have continued into the present.

Media coverage of the case brought immediate and constructive effects. It led to the development of a Code of Ethics by a group of female students, graduates, instructors, and the Academy authorities. This document defines the fundamental values, rights and freedoms on which the social order and interpersonal relations in the Academy are to be based. A Student Ombudsman was also appointed with duties and available instruments defined in a dedicated set of regulations. The office of the Student Rights Advocate was entrusted to Dr Agata Adamicka-Sitek, one of the most important scholars and activists of Polish theatre working on issues of feminism, gender and queer studies and institutional criticism. It is also important that Adamicka-Sitek, although she has been working with the Academy of Drama for several years, is not an artist, so she is rather detached from arguments about professional peculiarities that justify various types of violence in education and theatre practice. In October 2019, the Academy of Drama also organised the conference *Change – Now! What Have We Been Silent About at Drama Schools* on the various types of violence and ways to reform the system in order to solve the problem. The conference was opened by the Polish Ombudsman. Actress and activist Alina Czyżewska presented the alarming results of a survey she conducted among female and male students and graduates of drama schools (Czyżewska 2019). Her presentation included numerous examples of verbal abuse (vulgar insults), physical violence (kicking, spitting in the face, shaking), gender discrimination (favouring students, sexist, misogynistic comments, e.g. calling women “sluts”), humiliation and mental abuse (humiliation, blaming, refusal to contact, extreme mood swings, manipulation, lying), homophobia (also among the students). In the context of sexual harassment on the part of instructors, the students spoke of ambiguous comments and unwanted compliments (e.g. bust, buttocks, legs), touching, “ogling”, kissing on the cheek, hugging, and comments regarding female students’ sex lives. A multitude of similar descriptions of people from different schools confirmed that we are not dealing with isolated individuals who use violence, but with a systemic problem, and different types of violence are closely related.

Large sections of the description of the process of change at the ADA contained in the present text come from this conference. The version of the events that led to it – published under the title *Allies: How We Broke the Silence and Drafted the Documents* – as told together by those involved (Agata Koszulińska, Karolina Szczypek, Weronika Szczawińska, Małgorzata Wdowik, Agata Adamicka, Marta Miłoszewska, Beata Szczucińska), as well as the conference as a whole were quite consolidatory. The tone of the speech differed significantly from the open letter quoted earlier. There were no names, and the Rector, who was present for some time at the conference, was only spoken of in positive terms. The Rector himself (Wojciech Malajkat, who has held the office since 2016), attending the conference for a moment, presented himself as a “troubled father”, who confessed his “sins of omission”, but also cautioned against

“throwing the baby out with the bathwater” during the proceedings and over the entire process of change (Hevelke 2020). And so, it was nice. Constructive? That, too, certainly. The conference was primarily a platform for the exchange of experiences and practices between drama schools in Poland and abroad (including the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland). It is a pity, however, that it was mainly attended by speakers and theatre scholars interested in the subject. There was a shortage of female and male educators and theatre students. As a result, almost everyone agreed with each other. On the topic #metoo in Polish theatre, this is far from assured. One might also get the impression that the consolidatory nature of the whole event was a testimony to a brake being put on the rebellious energy too quickly. Polish theatre did not have its Day of Action, like, for example, Great Britain did<sup>7</sup>. Cases of harassment are exposed rather in isolation - usually provoking an outcry from the environment that emphasizes solidarity with those harmed and the prevalence of (sexual) violence in the theatre, and then... silence<sup>8</sup>. As Ahmed writes, “agreeing to something is one of the best ways of stopping something from happening. Agreeing to something is an efficient technique for stopping something because organizations can avoid the costs of disagreement” (Ahmed 2017, 137).

The great contribution of the process described here and of the conference at the ADA which summarized it, was to trace, name and thus “materialize” the systemic “walls” which Sara Ahmed (2017) writes about, that is, the prevailing legal and mental principles that hinder the reporting and combating of discrimination and (sexual) violence. This knowledge is essential for the process of further change. Some of these walls have been broken, but certainly not all.

##### 5. THE AFFECT AND THE EFFECTS OF PARANOIA AT THE ACADEMY OF THEATRE ARTS IN KRAKÓW

“I am not speaking up to incite a witch hunt” – Alina Czyżewska (2019, 9) assured the audience as she presented the results of the survey discussed above. Similar declarations were made repeatedly by people involved in the #metoo movement at the ATA in Kraków. Witch hunts obviously refer to collective paranoia. Those fighting against sexual violence must constantly attest that they are not driven by paranoia (and demonstrate that it is in fact so). Yet the need to constantly provide assurances that they are not paranoid demonstrates the paranoia of those making the accusations of paranoia. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, referring to Guy Hocquenghem, describes a very similar mechanism of how paranoia operates in the context of homosexuality and homophobia: “If paranoia reflects the repression of same-sex desire, (...) then paranoia is a uniquely privileged site for illuminating not homosexuality itself, as in the Freudian tradition, but rather precisely the mechanisms of homophobic and heterosexist enforcement against it” (Sedgwick 2003, 126). The scholar also listed other features of paranoia, which we can observe in the context of the #metoo movement at the ATA. Paranoid reading, founded on “hermeneutics of suspicion”, according

<sup>7</sup> “In the immediate aftermath of Alyssa Milano’s revelations, Vicky Featherstone, artistic director of the Royal Court Theatre in London, organized a Day of Action for 28 October 2017, which elicited 150 anonymous testimonials of sexual assault” – Coffey et al. 2019.

<sup>8</sup> It seems that the reactions of the community also depend on the status of the accused. The strong symbolic position of Włodzimierz Staniewski, director of the Gardzienice Theatre Research Centre, has led many people to defend him against accusations of violent working methods (cf. e.g. Holcgreber, Żórawski and Oreshko-Muca 2020: <https://e-teatr.pl/gardzienice-listy-ws-publicacji-gazety-wyborczej-i-dwutygodnikacom-4160>).

to Sedgwick, has a tendency to create symmetrical and mimetic systems (“mobilizes guile against suspicion, suspicion against guile”, 2003, 127). Paranoia looks ahead, and therefore expects all possible attacks. As a “strong theory of negative affect”, due to its selectivity and susceptibility to a tautology, it can explain a wide range of phenomena. Moreover, the paranoid reading of reality is symmetrical with the paranoid experience of reality – thus paranoid theoretical practices imitate bodily and life experiences. However, paranoia does not eliminate the threat, which gives it strength and blocks the search for positive affect and effects. She does believe in the critical and perfunctory power of disclosure – revealing the problem should therefore be a step towards solving it. Yet according to Sedgwick, this is not the case, because reading is paranoid: “they may have made it less rather than more possible to unpack the local, contingent relations between any given piece of knowledge and its narrative/epistemological entailments for the seeker, knower, or teller” (Sedgwick 2003, 124).

The nature of #metoo activity at the Kraków Drama school (and its Wrocław puppet troupe) led to a number of surprising situations, occurring from various sides openly or “behind the scenes” of accusations and suspicions. The feeling of uncertainty as to what is true, what is imaginary, what is a description of events, and what is exaggerated and grotesque, was fostered by a number of circumstances. Information about the problems reached the people outside the school not through open letters or other public speeches, but from the stage. This was therefore framed by theatrical or Drama fiction, but at the same time presented in a way that weakened the power of theatrical conventions and included elements of a documentary nature. This provocative blurring of the boundary between fiction and reality has been one of the basic tools of Polish political theatre in recent years (strongly influenced by Oliver Frljić’s aesthetic and political strategies). For this reason, it is hardly surprising that also in regard to #metoo, artists eagerly used these tools, and the audience was not sure where the boundary between a performance about #metoo and #metoo itself was (see: Kwaśniewska 2020b).

Most of the texts and performances that address the topic of violence at school were created as exams at the conclusion of a year-long course in directing or drama (*Aktorki, czyli przepraszam, że dotykam* [Actresses, or I’m sorry for touching] by Michał Telega, *Otello* [Othello], directed by Wiktor Bagiński), or as final examination performances by graduating students (*#Gwałt na Lukrecji* [#The Rape of Lucretia] in 2018 and *Słaby rok* [A Poor Year] in 2019), which were created at the school and evaluated by the ATA teaching staff. Students came together only in groups for these performances, but conflicts arose within these, because some people were afraid to express views critical of the school in their final examination performance (Gańczarczyk 2019, 1–2), and they did not form the kind of broad alliances that were formed at the ADA in Warsaw. Apart from director Katarzyna Szyngiera, who twice addressed the #metoo theme in relation to the ATA in her work, no ATA alumnae or alumni spoke up outside the walls of the school. The adoption of the art form as a medium to speak about violence (including sexual violence) in artistic education thus led to dispersion – temporal, factual, spatial, and institutional. It is therefore difficult to sum up these performances without incidentally falling into the paranoid tracking of all the threads and their mimetic and tautological, paranoid descriptions that have the power of exposure and accusation.

Paranoid reactions were also fostered by the fact that part of the process of change took place openly but did not usually have open and obvious institutional effects. At the same time, many of the issues related to the reaction of the school authorities to the

information about violence (including sexual violence) occurring within its walls remained hidden, both from the public and from most people studying and working at the ATA. When subsequent information made it outside (whether in the form of artistic works, or the conversations or gossip that accompanied them), it only intensified the uncertainty of observers – what do we not know, do the hidden actions of the school authorities serve to solve the problem or as a cover-up? The conjectures and interpretations of those who observed the matter from the outside (including my own), who expected to see censorship and bad will more than real solutions, were sometimes paranoid. When people studying at the ATA began to talk about their experiences in performances, and journalists and theatre scholars started to take an interest in the subject, the school authorities felt they were under attack. The problem that had been dealt with until that time internally within the school, (“We learned that in the past there were instances of teachers’ inappropriate behaviour in the Faculty of Acting, and complaints from male and female students had led to the dismissal of at least two people”; Kempa 2019, 2), began to get out of control and required transparent reactions, and these were sometimes paranoid. Sedgwick’s thesis that “paranoia tends to be contagious” (Sedgwick 2003, 126) was thus confirmed. In order to escape this closed circle, like her, I would be “for moving from the rather fixed question is a particular piece of knowledge true, and how can we know to the further questions: What does knowledge *do* – the pursuit of it, the having and exposing of it, the receiving again of knowledge of what one already knows? *How*, in short, is knowledge performative, and how best does one move among its causes and effects?” (Sedgwick 2003, 124). For as Sedgwick writes, “some exposés, some demystifications, some bearings of witness do have real effectual force (though often of an unanticipated kind). Many that are just as true and convincing have none at all, however; and as long as that is so, we must admit that the efficacy and directionality of such acts reside somewhere else than in their relation to knowledge *per se*” (Sedgwick 2003, 141). In my analysis of individual cases, it will be important who does the revealing, how and in what framework, how the “revealed” knowledge circulates, and what reaction it unleashes.

The final examination performance in the ATA Faculty of Acting, which took place at the beginning of 2018, *#Gwałt na Lukrecji* directed by Marcin Liber, was one of the first performances about #metoo in Poland, and certainly the first in a drama school. In addition to many different motifs about the movement, playwright Martyna Wawrzyniak (at the time an AST student) included in her original script, inspired by William Shakespeare’s work, the stories of the actresses and actors performing in the play about instructors or directing students crossing the boundaries of intimacy, about verbal violence and abuse of power (Wawrzyniak 2019). Students also pointed out how highly assessed and welcomed transgressions in acting very often come down to scenes of sexual violence against women, forcing actresses to play in scenes of abasement and humiliation. The performance also quoted vulgar and provocative statements by professors, used as an “educational tool”. These quotations, devoid of any names and enclosed in ironic brackets, operated on two levels. For students (and likely some still in secondary school), they were a reference to the knowledge they already had. They had surely sometimes heard similar or the same phrases and anecdotes of a sexual nature. So in this circuit, it was important to place them in the context of #metoo, in which the joke was no longer innocent. For people from outside the academy, however, the performance had the character of disclosure. However, the effect may have been weakened by the strongly dramatized, ironic frame of these self-referential fragments of the performance. Such a

convention for the scenes resulted from the students' fear of the possible repercussions of the final examination performance addressing issues in a manner that was critical of the school (Wawrzyniak 2019, 20).

As part of her work on the play, actress Weronika Warchoń also initiated an action inspired by a YouTube account by a woman who put out the mattress on which she had been raped six months earlier in front of her house; she wrote “#metoo” on it and encouraged others to write their experiences. Warchoń, with the consent of the school authorities, put up a similar mattress in the school corridor, and on the Student Government's Facebook group, she encouraged her colleagues to write their experiences on it. Among the various anonymous testimonials of the students, there was apparently also an entry concerning rape during the so-called “*fuksówka*” or “lucky time” ritual. The “lucky time” ritual is an adaptation period lasting several weeks, during which first-year students carry out the orders of the older students to prepare them for school life (sometimes compared to the *fala* or ‘wave’, a well-known period of severe hazing of new army recruits). The note written on the mattress was therefore about sexual violence among students. The response from the school authorities was a note on the mattress by the Rector of the ATA: “Please come to me if something bad happens. I will always help you – Dorota Segda” (Gańczarczyk 2019, 2). The inscriptions were all hardly visible during the performance; only a few could read them during a one-off discussion with the audience during which the mattress was presented. I know the details of this story from an official conversation with the actresses playing in the play, which took place during the university course I teach. Access to what was declaratively documentary in the play was therefore limited for people outside the school. Apart from the question of why it happened this way, it is also worth considering whether we can be sure about the “documentary” character of the notes. Were some of the testimonies on the mattress an element of creation or provocation? After all, the very starting point of the action at school was a certain appropriation of the documentary in favour of theatrical fiction. Weronika Warchoń, who initiated the action and then repeated the text of the YouTube recording translated into Polish during the performance, was using someone else's story. The Facebook announcement was quite general – it encouraged people to write down their experiences, but also “thoughts, and whatever comes to your mind about #MeToo” (Gańczarczyk 2019, 2). The status of this whole action was thus quite unclear. In view of the ironic brackets around the testimonies of female and male students, the limited visibility and credibility of the “documentary material” in the performance, could the gesture that the performance initiated produce real effects?

*#Gwałt na Lukrecji* was well received at school, there was no attempt to censor or soften it. It was only puzzling why one of the best final examination performances in years had not been submitted to the annual Drama Schools Festival in Łódź, but there was a rational explanation for this too, and the performance was given at other festivals. Martyna Wawrzyniak expressed hope: “There were many instructors, women and men, present to see the performance, so I hope that this issue [the boundaries of intimacy in theatre work] has been raised in some way” (Wawrzyniak 2019, 13). This may have happened, but it did not fundamentally change the situation. At the *Change – Now!* conference, Vice Dean of the Directing Department Gańczarczyk described the next developments during the “adaptation period” in 2019, two years after the premiere of *#Gwałt na Lukrecji*: “On 4 October 2019, students from the Faculty of Drama Directing of different years, independently of each other, reported to me that the ritual had reached

a level of unacceptable terror. We decided to act. (...) Unexpectedly, the same day, in the evening, *fuksówka* ended. We don't know what directly influenced this decision, how, or to whom it was communicated" (Gańczarczyk 2019, 4). So again, the situation was settled "quietly" and without clear consequences. To summarize the agency of #*Gwałt na Lukrecji*, one can probably say that both sides – the female and male creators and ATA authorities - behaved symmetrically. The critical gestures weakened in many ways, evoked an equally weak reaction. Any attack from the school could cause an unwanted commotion.

This was the case with the ATA puppetry department of *Słaby rok*, which was created a year later in Wrocław, and which also included a number of scenes illustrating a system of violence (including sexual violence, although it was not the leading theme of the play) operating at the school. The play was to be withdrawn from the Drama Schools Festival. The decision was made by Rector Dorota Segda (supported by the teaching staff) after seeing the performance<sup>9</sup>. In order to remove it from the festival programme on the pretext that it had too few puppets for it to represent the Faculty of Puppetry, within five days, certainly outside the required procedure, changes were introduced to the regulations of the Drama Schools Festival (such changes should be approved by the Senates of the participating academies, which is rather impossible at such a pace). It is worth mentioning that the additional clauses introduced did not change anything, and the presentation of the performance at the festival was still in line with the rules of the review. Alina Czyżewska, who scrupulously followed all the events and regulations, summed it up as follows: "This is, dear grown-ups, a fraud. Breaking the law. And in the name of what? To stab your students in the back? (...) We aren't likely to find any logic here, only ill will and behind-the-scenes interests" (Czyżewska 2019b). Defending herself, Dorota Segda assumed the position of a persecuted victim. One who was attacked from two sides: not only by those who unjustifiably called for her censure but also by the minister of education, who would like this to lead to the closure of the Faculty of Puppetry. Thus, operative here is the principle that for the sake of our common good, you should sit quietly because you are only feeding arguments to our common enemy. In the end, it struck an emotional tone: "I'm very sorry in human terms, but this is obviously what matters the least" ("Rector Dorota Segda..." 2019). Somewhere here the circle of paranoia begins to reveal itself and to tighten.

As Sedgwick notes, however, paranoia grows in strength in proportion to danger and fear of danger (Sedgwick 2003, 133–134). This was also the case in this story. Despite attempts to ignore disturbing signals, to solve problems "quietly", block the spread of knowledge about it, the topic of sexual harassment and institutional violence in the ATA hit the school with ever-increasing force.

The breakthrough work, this time a work of drama that was written as a final examination, was the text of *Aktorki, czyli przeproszam, że dotykam* by Michała Telega (2019). The script is "a record of mixed statements from students at the Academy of Theatre Arts (...) It was created thanks to the kindness of representatives of each class year, who previously gave their responses to nine open questions" (Telega 2019, 1). The artistically adapted responses of randomly selected female respondents are evidence of the widespread problem of discrimination against and sexual harassment of actresses - both at the school and during casting or theatre work. Actresses experience unwanted touching – "he is using his position," "he comes up to me and touches my breasts (...) not the sternum

<sup>9</sup> For a description of the performance and the situation surrounding it, see Waligóra 2019.

which the movement comes out of, he never asks for permission,” “he would touch me where I felt he wanted to do some touching” (Telega 2019, 8); remarks full of sexual allusions – “I BET YOU’VE NEVER FUCKED/ IMAGINE YOU’RE GIVING A BLOW JOB / THAT’S NOT HOW YOU GIVE A BLOW JOB IS IT / ALL OF YOU ARE WHORES” (Telega 2019, 9); sex discrimination (a constant theme is hampering the development of actresses by casting them “with conditions” along the lines of “what you can’t dub over you can cover with your looks” (Telega 2019, 6). Telega’s text also shows how the mechanisms of abuse of power and submissiveness developed at school are reproduced in theatre and film<sup>10</sup>.

The motif of power of this text can be compared to the effect of the open letter from the graduates of the Academy of Drama in Warsaw, which initiated a process of real change. Its power emerges from several aspects. The text has a clearly defined theme, centred around sexual violence against actresses – starting at the level of studies. It contains a declaration concerning the documentary character of the text together with a precise description of how the material was obtained (the questions that Telega asked his interlocutors are given). The author has also clearly defined his position: he has marked his artistic contribution (the reports that he has mixed the statements, that he has combined some of them into choral statements, although the “[i]nterviews were conducted separately and none of the students communicated with one another at that time” (Telega 2019, 1); the precise literary and graphic form, the very restrictive instructions on how the lines are to be read leave no doubt that the text is Telega’s own artistic creation) and the position in relation to the subject at hand (“and when I played for the author of this text he permitted the actors / to treat me like an object / I was wearing a chemise / a particular chemise / and I was fed up with the constant comments the author of the text / wouldn’t react / he isn’t such a saint”, Telega 2019, 18). Key in this case was also the attitude of the authorities of the faculty, as they treated the text as a basis for naming the problem and starting the process of change. After the exam, which included reading the text of *Aktorki, czyli przepraszam, że dotykam*, Iwona Kempa (dean), Iga Gańczarczyk (vice-dean), and Michał Telega sent a letter to the rector of the ATA asking for the appointment of an ombudsman for equal treatment and the creation of a code of ethics for the academy.

Their support also provided the text with a framework for visibility, not only at the school. Very few people came to its first reading, which was also an exam (Gańczarczyk 2019, 3). The reading of the text, probably at the initiative of the deans, also took place during the *Change – Now!* conference in Warsaw and it was published together with the papers in Polish and English in the *Polish Theatre Journal*. At the next reading at the ATA, during the Young Directing Forum, there were crowds (Morawski 2019). The discussion accompanying the reading, however, became one of the strongest testimonies to the growing paranoia around the subject. It showed strong mistrust and resistance to the effects of the #metoo movement in the theatre, also among the ATA authorities and well-known female and male artists. It was said that women are also perpetrators of violence in the theatre, and was suggested that the problem concerns the entire education system, not only artistic education. On the one hand, it was said that violence in the theatre is a new phenomenon (contemporary institutional criticism clearly refutes such claims), and on the other, it was pointed out that violence is an inherent element of interpersonal relations, especially in the artistic process. Fears were expressed that the

<sup>10</sup> A broader analysis of Telega’s text can be found in Kwaśniewska 2020b.



Code of Ethics at school would turn into a witch hunt (and how), would lead to false accusations and paralyze the education system (paranoia, as we know, is predictable). A theatre scholar, Piotr Morawski, highly critical of the discussion, drew attention to its deceptive rhetoric: “A lot of effort has been put into making the conversation about harassment of young women at school a conversation about something supposedly similar but in fact quite different” (Morawski 2019). As a result, instead of the figure of a harassing man, there appeared the figure of a violent young female director. The parties in the dispute over the validity of #metoo in theatre schools dug into their positions. Some time after the publication of Morawski’s text, the recording of the discussion was removed from YouTube.

In the discussions in the academy reported by Iwona Kempa about the changes introduced at the school to counteract violence - including sexual violence - there was also a prevailing atmosphere of mistrust: “The turbulent debate at the Statutory Committee meeting revealed various attitudes of professors towards the problem as well as some previously unknown situations. (...) The potential involvement of someone from outside the academy, for example, an appropriate specialist, as an equal treatment ombudsman or a member of the ethics committee, met with protests, claiming that such persons would lack knowledge of the peculiarities of teaching acting” (Kempa 2019, 2). These situations reflect well the tension and quite widespread atmosphere of mutual distrust, suspicion, and accusations, which arose around the subject at some point. In the discussion, the situations and perspectives of people who have experienced violence were lost somewhere, because general issues came to the fore: the image and tradition of the school on the one hand, exposing and combating sexual violence on the other. Ultimately, however, at the end of the 2019/2020 academic year, more or less a year after the first reading of Telega’s text, the Code of Ethics was published, and ATA Ethics Officers were appointed, and in October 2020, Rector Dorota Sedga put an end to the tradition of the *fuksówka*, calling it the “last relic” of the school’s violent tradition (quoted in Piekarska 2020).

## 6. REPARATION

Sedgwick adopts Melanie Klein’s concept of “position” to describe paranoid situations because it contains the potential for change. She points to the possibility of transitioning from paranoid to reparative practices. Reparation, on the other hand, means “to use one’s own resources to assemble or ‘repair’ what previously seemed fragmented and dangerous. A new whole, that is “*not necessarily like any preexisting whole*” (Sedgwick 2003, 128). Introducing specific regulations in both schools, “The aim [of which] (...) is to ensure that the conditions of the educational process are such that artistic freedom, creativity in teaching and freedom of expression are practised in a responsible, ethical manner and that the fundamental rights and freedoms of all those individuals who study and those individuals who are employed by the Academy are respected” (“Kodeks Etyki...” [Code of Ethics] 2018; “Kodeks etyki...” 2020) may open a period of reparation and of reparative reading. According to Sedgwick, these allow that “the reader has room to realize that the future may be different from the present” (Sedgwick 2003, 146). They can mitigate the paranoid thinking that nothing will change, and violence cannot be resisted. It is certainly difficult, but reparation not only permits surprises, but also allows that they can be good (Sedgwick 2003, 146). Following Silvan S. Tomkins, Sedgwick however believes that the only reason for a paranoid person to start looking for a positive affect is to potentially

use it as a shield against humiliation (Sedgwick 2003, 136). Being perceived and understanding itself as a progressive institution for introducing high ethical standards in the theatre not only provides protection from humiliation but can also be a source of positive affect. Documents can influence practices and later the collective mentality. It would therefore be my dream that Polish theatres, which are accepting more and more people who have initiated the change or are studying under new ethical standards, would follow the example of schools and introduce similar regulations as well. We all need them very much – including critics and scholars – to escape the vicious circle of paranoid reading, surrounded by institutional walls.

### CONCLUSIONS

Polish public life (including the theatre) is full of systemic walls that block the emancipation of women and create conditions that are conducive to discrimination and sexual violence. The actions I have described in theatre schools are therefore a precursor to other institutions of the theatre, as well as many public institutions, and are a response to a very wide and complex problem. Drawing inspiration and following similar processes in other countries - mainly in the United Kingdom and the United States – they try to adapt their ethical principles to the highest global standards. The results, although they are already visible, remain difficult to predict in a longer and wider perspective. This is especially so since all anti-discrimination regulations seem to be threatened in Poland by the government and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (the governmental authority responsible for theatre schools and theatres), which are increasingly hostile to both women and to speak out about systemic violence. I hope, however, that these fears turn out to be paranoid...

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## #METOO U POLJSKOM POZORIŠNOM OBRAZOVANJU

*Ovaj članak raspravlja #metoo pokret u poljskom pozorištu. Autorka, koristeći se zaključcima Agnes Grosman, opaža da kao i u bioskopu, u kome je #metoo otpočeo, pozorište reprodukuje imidže žena kao podređene muškom pogledu. Potom, autorka raspravlja kako se ovaj problem reprezentacije prevodi u radne uslove žena u pozorištu. Rad predstavlja trenutno stanje istraživanja i aktivizma u vezi nasilja (uključujući i seksualnog nasilja) u pozorištu u svetu. Primenjujući ove rasprave na Poljsku, autorka zaključuje kako problem korespondira sa položajem žena u Poljskoj. U pozorišnom kontekstu, mesto značajne i praktične pripreme #metoo pokreta bile su pozorišne škole. Istraživanjem događaja u dva najvažnija i najprestižnija centra pozorišnog obrazovanja, autorka prvo izvodi dijagnozu postojećih problema te potom ispituje postupak borbe koji se može izvesti uz upotrebu pristupa koncepta „zidova“ koji je razvila Sara Ahmed i afektivne teorije paranoje i reparacije prema Iv Kosofski Sedžvik.*

Ključne reči: #metoo, pozorište, gluma, institucija, obrazovanje, efekti.