

**Theatre Space and Authenticity:
From a *Non Sequitur* to a Real Make-believe**

With the problematization of knowledge in postmodernism, there has lately been a renewed interest in the notion of authenticity, and various definitions of the term are presently at work in arts and humanities. It is therefore of consequence to examine the import of the notion of authenticity within the context of theatre space, given that the aesthetic juxtaposition of authenticity and make-believe is apparently a *non sequitur*. Once the common denominator of the various running definitions is established, the paper will attempt to find out whether the search for authenticity in theatre space is a veiled return to nineteenth-century Realism. But, most importantly, it is the implications and the questions arising from the study of recent productions (which aimed at achieving authenticity on stage) that should concern us. How can authenticity be communicated to the audience? What is the emotional potency of visual recognition—so important for the establishing and reaffirmation of national identity—and what are the practicalities of its implementation? To achieve authenticity, should the designer adopt a minimalist or a Naturalist stance? Should “authentic” artifacts be used or should copies do? May the search for authenticity incorporate the use of new technologies, so prevalent in other artistic media? And finally, is authenticity possible in theatre space, where mimesis or make-believe is the rule? These are some of the facets of the problematics of authenticity in theatre space that this paper will discuss.

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