



Title: Disunity of time and place in contemporary set design

Abstract

Starting from the definition that in Aristotle's *Poetics* is attributed to the so-called "unity of time, place, and action", the paper aims to define how, in the course of modern and contemporary theatre, this characteristic, wrongly interpreted as a rule, has been gradually abandoned in favor of increasingly free, complex and articulated dramaturgy. Particularly in musical theatre, the action, although not unitary - in the Aristotelian sense of the term - is, however, adherent to the composer's prediction and bound to the performance. The staging variables "space" and "time" can be displaced in the interpretive and design process.

Concerning the same text, depending on the displacements of the parameters "time" and "place" adopted as referents of the staging, four different interpretative modes can be theoretically identified and summarized in a process whose two extremes are represented by a scene of a realistic and descriptive kind, on one side, against another one, synthetic and schematized, on the other.

Analyzing some case studies taken from the opera repertoire, the paper wants to conduct a study on these modalities, finding that in these processes of actualization and displacement, we try not so much to bring the public closer to the work as to put contemporary society in front of its reflection, as in front of a metaphorical mirror.

Keywords: Unity of time, unity of place, contemporary theatre, contemporary staging