Thomas Ostermeier
Reinventing Directors’ Theatre
at the Schaubühne Berlin
An International Symposium

presented by

London, 25 & 26 September 2014
Symposium Schedule

Thursday 25 September 2014

Venue: Barbican Centre, Silk Street, London EC2Y 8DS
Location Map: https://goo.gl/maps/PAxI3; nearest underground stations: Barbican (Circle, Hammersmith & City, and Metropolitan Line), Moorgate (Northern Line)

- As there will be little time between the Backstage Talk and the performance, delegates are advised to pick up food and drinks from the Barbican food outlets before the start of the event.
- Alternatively, you can find Pret-a-Manger and EAT sandwich shops around the corner from the Barbican Underground exit (right and right again), and a Waitrose supermarket on Whitecross Street (from the Barbican main entrance on Silk Street turn left and go straight on).
- If you have booked a Full Conference Package, you will receive your theatre ticket at registration, and not from the Barbican Box Office.
- You find the Frobisher Room, where the Backstage Talk takes place, on the 4th Floor of the Barbican. Take the lifts near the lake terrace.

From 5pm Conference Registration, Barbican Frobisher Room.

5.30pm Backstage Talk ‘Making Theatre at the Schaubühne’
with Jan Pappelbaum (set designer) and Florian Borchmeyer (dramaturg) in conversation with British designer Chloe Lamford and playwright Duncan Macmillan, who have worked at the Schaubühne on several occasions. Chair: Vicky Angelaki, University of Birmingham.

7.45pm performance ‘An Enemy of the People’
(Barbican Theatre; running time 2hrs 20mins, no interval)
followed by a post-show discussion with Simon Mc Burney, Thomas Ostermeier and members of the company (Barbican Theatre)

Friday 26 September 2014

Venue: Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, 62-64 Eton Avenue, London NW3 3HY
Location Map https://goo.gl/maps/0q63e, nearest underground stations: Swiss Cottage (Jubilee Line, directly outside), Finchley Road (Metropolitan Line, 10-min walk).

Sessions take place in the New Studio, except for Workshop 2, which is in Room D.
Coffee and tea will be available from 9am.
9.30 PLENARY SESSION: Art and the Political in Thomas Ostermeier’s Theatre

- Welcome from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and the conference organisers Clare Finburgh (University of Essex), Vicky Angelaki (University of Birmingham) and Peter M Boenisch (University of Kent)

- Jitka Goriaux Pelechová (Academy of Performing Arts DAMU, Prague), The Baracke Phenomenon

- Hana Worthen (Barnard College, Columbia University), Liberal Humanism and Theatrical Propriety: Ostermeier’s Ein Volksfeind in New York/BAM 2013

- Marina Ceppi (University of Buenos Aires), Ostermeier in Buenos Aires: Transforming theater reception through politics

- Arnaud Maïsetti (Université Aix-Marseille), Thomas Ostermeier: Le Dépli politique de l’histoire (Paper in French, English summary provided)

11.30 Break

11.40 KEYNOTE LECTURE
Professor Frédéric Maurin (Université de Paris Sorbonne Nouvelle), Thomas Ostermeier Within and Without the Schaubühne.
Chair: Clare Finburgh, University of Essex

12.30 Lunch

1.30 PLENARY SESSION

- Lecture by Thomas Ostermeier
  Totus mundus agit histrionem: Staging and Playing Shakespeare.
  Chair: Simon Shepherd, Deputy Principal, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

- Acting Ostermeier – Schaubühne ensemble actors Christoph Gawenda, Eva Meckbach, David Ruland and Moritz Gottwald
  in conversation with Ramin Gray (Artistic Director, Actors Touring Company) and Andrew Haydon (Theatre Critic, The Guardian, ‘Postcards from the Gods’-blog)

3.15 Break

3.30 PARALLEL WORKSHOP SESSIONS

- Workshop 1 – New Studio
  Ostermeier’s Directions: Texts, Techniques and Practices
  Chair: Robert Shaughnessy, University of Kent
  - Jozefina Komporaly (Independent Scholar and Translator), Regietheater or Collaborative Practice: Thomas Ostermeier’s Border Politics
  - Benjamin Fowler (University of Warwick), From Podium to Cube: Ostermeier, Shakespeare & Sensuality
  - Viktoria Volkova (Freie Universität Berlin), Rehearsing a sketch: Thomas Ostermeier’s work on Death in Venice/Kindertotenlieder
o Claire Legendre (Université de Montréal),
  
  Reality beyond Effect: Games, Anchoring and Discourse in An Enemy of the People and The Marriage of Maria Braun

❖ Workshop 2 – Room D

Ostermeier around the world: Global perspectives (Room D);
Chair: Vicky Angelaki, University of Birmingham

 o Viktoria Ebel (University of Mainz),
   Ostermeier’s Les Revenants in France: Cultural Difference in Theatre Systems

 o Yuh J. Hwang (Trinity College Dublin),
   Women, locked alone in a room with no exit: Ostermeier in Korea

 o Andrew Goldberg (CUNY Graduate Center),
   Whistleblowing in the Age of WikiLeaks: Thomas Ostermeier’s An Enemy of the People and Individual Agency

 o April Albert (University of Melbourne),
   A German national treasure: Kane or Ostermeier? The reception of Thomas Ostermeier’s Zerbombt in London and Berlin

5.10 Break

5.15 Lecture and Concluding Debate.

Professor Marvin Carlson (CUNY),

Capitalist Realism, Socialist Realism and Ostermeier Realism

Chair: Kim Solga, Western University, Canada
Is the bourgeoisie the same class as in the past? Isn’t there a difference between the cultivated bourgeoisie that emerged from the industrial revolution, with its keen interest in art and theatre, and today’s middle class, that’s more focused on business and new technologies?

For sure. In our high-tech society, theatre no longer holds the central position that it once used to. One might even say that theatre is in a serious crisis and the eminent role that it played in Europe in the past, from Ancient Greece to the 1980s, belongs to a bygone era. But this isn’t only the fault of actors, directors or authors, whose responsibility is, however, great. It’s also owing to a certain laziness for the part of urban bourgeois spectators. Theatre mustn’t be mere entertainment; it’s more complex than a video game. It’s an art with an educational, even an edifying dimension. The crisis I’m talking about is the same everywhere: in the theatre, but also in cinema and in visual art, which is now nothing more than a speculative market for the nouveaux riches.

What is the nature of this current crisis in theatre?

First and foremost, it’s a crisis of authors and actors. The function of the director only appeared very recently in theatre history and if it disappeared, it wouldn’t be very serious. But authors and actors can’t disappear. The author is there to create a link between the stage and the social reality that surrounds us. If we represent on stage certain social or generational conflicts that are present in our society, we need to do it with subtlety. We can be politically engaged, but we need to be true to the complexity of the situation. Today, there’s a whole spectrum of engaged theatre that shows the complexities of the modern world in such a simplistic and binary way. It’s a theatre of good intentions, the intellectual ambition of which is seriously limited. Theatre isn’t a church, or a worker’s union, or a political party. Theatre must ask questions, not provide answers. The debates that we have around theatre are often weak. Should we use video on stage or not? Should we incorporate other arts and disciplines
or not? These are questions of no importance at all. What’s essential is to search for a theatre that’s an art of conflict. There aren’t enough authors today who do this work of staging contemporary intellectual, social, economic or geopolitical conflicts.

**Are actors also in crisis?**

Yes. Too many actors don’t understand that the most important duty and the most noble task they can perform is to represent human beings on stage, in all their complexity, via characters we can identify with. This has nothing to do with the kind of narcissism that involves actors looking at themselves acting, spouting out their text, even if it’s in what might seem to be a “modern” way. They must act in a way that relates to what they observe in the street, during intimate moments in their lives, at work, while shopping. They must demonstrate how the neoliberal world impregnates our bodies, our social behaviour, our intimacy, even who we choose to spend our lives with. This is what “documentary theatre” does, by putting amateur performers or “real people” on stage, to take on subjects like exile, or the demise of a region. The evident success of this kind of theatre is the proof of a serious crisis that the world and the profession of acting are confronting today.

[...]

**Are there any reasons to hope for a renewal of theatre?**

I think so. Quite a lot of young people come to see us at the Schaubühne and seem to appreciate our shows, that break with a dated aesthetic. I hate “theatrical theatre”, with actors who are on stage to flatter their own egos and who have totally forgotten the reason why they first got up on stage. Our programming at the Schaubühne is demanding and politically engaged. Even though we’re located in a working-class district outside the centre of Berlin, we’ve managed to attract a very young and international audience.

I have the impression that for these young people, the theatre is the only place that really differs from the television or the internet because this three-dimensional space is a democratic space, because the spectator can decide which character she or he agrees with or sympathises with. The theatre today is one of the last public spaces, in a world where public space has become a site of transit and consumption.
Abstracts and Biographies

Thursday 25 September 2014

5.30 BACKSTAGE TALK: Making Theatre at the Schaubühne

JAN PAPPELBAUM has been stage designer and head of design at the Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz since 2000. Born in 1966 in Dresden, he trained in volleyball at competition level and as a bricklayer in Leipzig. He then studied architecture at the Bauhaus University of Weimar, where he worked on his first student theatre productions. He has worked continuously with Thomas Ostermeier for almost 20 years. He first rebuilt the ‘Baracke’ at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin as an experimental stage in 1997, and then joined Ostermeier at the Schaubühne in 2000. Additionally, he has held architecture exhibitions in Frankfurt am Main, Dresden, as well as workshops and individual exhibitions of his set designs in Oslo (2009) and Krakow (2011). Dem Einzelnen ein Ganzes/A Whole for the Parts: Jan Pappelbaum. Bühnen/Stages was published 2006 by Theater der Zeit/Berlin.

FLORIAN BORCHMEYER was born in 1974 in Wasserburg am Inn in Bavaria. He studied literature in Berlin, Havana and Paris. In 2006, he was awarded a PhD for his dissertation on chronicles of the discovery of America. The same year, he won the Bayerischer Filmpreis award for his documentary movie Habana – Arte nuevo de hacer ruinas. He has continued to work as a filmmaker and literary critic for the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, and as author for German TV cultural magazines such as aspekte, Kulturzeit and Foyer. He also curates the international programme at Filmfest Munich. Since 2011, he has been dramaturg at the Schaubühne.

CHLOE LAMFORD trained in Theatre Design at Wimbledon School of Art. She is Associate Artist at the Royal Court Theatre, London. She has worked as designer for opera and theatre, including Atmen at the Schaubühne Berlin, 1984 (West End/Headlong/Almeida), The World of Extreme Happiness (National Theatre); The Events (ATC and Young Vic).

DUNCAN MACMILLAN is a writer and director, whose work has been shown at the Festival d’Avignon, Studio Theatre Washington, and Theatertreffen Berlin. A former Writer in Residence at Paines Plough and the Royal Exchange Theatre, he is currently developing new plays for the National Theatre, Paines Plough and BBC Radio. His co-adaptation of George Orwell’s 1984 with Rob Icke for Headlong/Nottingham Playhouse has run at the Playhouse Theatre in London's West End. His play Lungs (Atmen) is in rep at the Schaubühne Berlin, directed by Katie Mitchell. With Mitchell, he recently worked on The Forbidden Zone, again produced by Schaubühne, and premiered at the Salzburg summer festival 2014.

ca 10.30pm POST-SHOW DISCUSSION

SIMON McBURNEY OBE is founder and artistic director of Theatre de Complicite, and also an established screen actor (The Last King of Scotland, Harry Potter). His work as a theatre director includes Street of Crocodiles (1992), The Three Lives of Lucie Cabrol (1994), Mnemonic (1999), The Elephant Vanishes (2003), and The Master and Margarita (2011).
The Wende, the Turnaround of 1989, has been perceived as a new Stunde Null, a “zero hour”, as the starting point of a new world. In order to make a clean sweep of the past, Germany needed strong personalities, able to foster a theatre that would embody and convey this renewal. Thomas Ostermeier was thus the man for the situation: his experience combined both East and West, he was young, and his career path was already closely linked to the global sociopolitical and cultural context of Berlin and of the whole country.

Before becoming the leader of the prestigious Schaubühne of Berlin, Ostermeier had directed, between 1996 and 1999, the little theatre of the Baracke, the secondary stage of the Deutsches Theater. He based its identity on a double opposition, an aesthetic and an ideological one: the former against the Regietheater, the “theatre of directors” which had deeply marked the German stage since the 1970s; the latter against the repetitive and worn-out political discourse of most German theatre institutions. Ostermeier was then presented as a leading figure of the young generation, and opposed – probably much too expeditiously – to the “old masters”.

The aim of our contribution is to try to understand the “Baracke phenomenon” and to explain its impact and its success; so as to determinate the extent to which the subsequent work of Thomas Ostermeier at the Schaubühne can be seen as an extension, or rather as a break with this first experience. Our research will draw upon the analysis of the stage productions of the director in this theatre, as well as upon the consideration of the broader context of the structural changes in the theatrical landscape of Berlin in the 1990s, since the swift rise of the Baracke and of Thomas Ostermeier cannot be conceived as separate from the geopolitical, social and cultural background.

Jitka Goriaux Pelechová is currently a research fellow at the DAMU - Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. She is the author of a PhD dissertation entitled Le Théâtre de Thomas Ostermeier (Études théâtrales n° 58/2013, 2011). It is also published in Czech by Disk Editions. Since 2006, she has taught in the departments of Theatre Studies at the universities of Paris-Ouest Nanterre, Poitiers and Lille 3. She also collaborates with the Manufacture Theater School in Lausanne. Her research focuses in particular, but not exclusively, on contemporary European stage direction and its major figures (Thomas Ostermeier, Guy Cassiers, Christoph Marthaler, Einar Schleef…), on which she has published about twenty articles, in French and in Czech, in specialized journals (Théâtre/Public, Cahiers d'Études Germaniques, Disk…). Along with her research activities, Jitka Goriaux Pelechová is also dramaturg and translator.
Arranging audiences into both a voting voice and voicing agents within the frame of each performance, Thomas Ostermeier's *Ein Volksfeind* insists on the public and "democratic", plural and indeterminable, confrontation between the auditorium and the stage, between spectator and character, and between citizens and artists. In the United States, where the journalistic discourse of theatre is conditioned by the embrace of a liberal humanism evacuating the political, distinguishing art from politics according to its own rationality, *Ein Volksfeind*'s critique of neo/liberal democracy, the constitutive role of the free individual in it, and indeed of the vindication of a "universal", "rational" consensus in the public realm, simply cannot be engaged. Setting *Ein Volksfeind* at the intersection between an American and a European imagination of the ethico-political potential of theatrical performance and a liberal "critical" practice, I consider how a distinctive opposition of art to the political continues to exert public hegemony on theatrical propriety in the United States, as witnessed by the critical and public reception of *Ein Volksfeind* in New York (Brooklyn Academy of Music, November 2013).

**Hana Worthen** is Assistant Professor of Theatre and Performance Studies at Barnard College, Columbia University, where she is also on the faculty of the Ph.D. in Theatre Program and an affiliate of the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society; she serves as an Associate Director of Barnard's Center for Translation Studies as well. Her publications include *Playing Nordic: The Women of Niskavuori, Agri/Culture, and Imagining Finland on the Third Reich Stage* (University of Helsinki, 2007), a co-edited anthology *Finland's Holocaust: Silences of History* (Palgrave, 2013), and scholarly articles appearing in major professional journals, such as *Contemporary Theatre Review, TDR: The Drama Review, Modern Drama*, and *Theatre Journal*. Her scholarship takes up the intersection between modern European theatre and political/social/aesthetic ideology, performative acts and totalitarian regimes, aesthetics and dramaturgy, and cultural translation. Currently, she is finishing a book on transatlantic humanisms and performance in the late twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries, which includes a chapter on Thomas Ostermeier's *Ein Volksfeind*. 
The paper reviews and analyzes the Schaubühne Berlin performances in Buenos Aires of Hamlet and Ein Volksfeind in 2011 and 2013, respectively. Both performances were staged during distinct moments that helped to visualize the impact of Thomas Ostermeier’s theater on the cultural and political landscape of Argentina at the time. These facts lead us to divide our analysis into three different aspects: the political impact of theater and its possibility to open new spaces of debate and questioning; Ostermeier’s aesthetics applied in these two stagings of Shakespeare's and Ibsen's texts; the dialectic formed by the particular cultural and political scenery of Buenos Aires at the time and the performances that resulted in these particular events that involved the audience.

We will use as a paradigm for the analysis a number of features from Bertolt Brecht’s thoughts such as staging procedures, the possibility of the political impact of theater and his thoughts around the audience and reception. We will analyze how the performative strength in Ostermeier’s stagings has opened up, through his aesthetics, both texts and their meanings to Buenos Aires spectators. With regard to Hamlet, Ostermeier dismisses traditional ways of perceiving Shakespeare plays, whose staging’s are usually part of a state-owned official repertory. With regard to Ein Volkesfeind we will focus on analyzing how Ibsen's play and its staging together with the political scenery of Argentina at the time resulted in a lively, effusive and overwhelming participation of the audience in the fourth act. We will demonstrate with these two examples how Ostermeier’s theater, walking the line between reality and fiction, manages to turn audiences from passive to active spectators.

Marina Ceppi started acting when she was 12 years old. She has worked in several plays on Buenos Aires’s independent theater circuit, not only acting, but also playwriting and working as assistant director. Her last play, Un Novio Para Mis Domingos (A boyfriend for my Sundays), staged in different apartments across Buenos Aires, experimented with alternative dramatic spaces. She has also acted in cinema, in both long and short films. She has studied acting as well as contemporary dance with some of the main theater schools in Buenos Aires.

She studied Arts at the University of Buenos Aires and is finishing her degree to become a professor in Arts in the same institution. She teaches theory of theater at secondary schools in Buenos Aires, as well as the theory of cinema privately. She is part of the UBANEX project, sponsored by the university, to establish a cultural circuit in economically vulnerable locations in Buenos Aires.
Mass für Mass (Mesure for mesure) — Les revenants (Ghosts): from Shakespeare to Ibsen, visibly there is nothing in common except the ambition for experimentation, or rather, a laboratory. For Thomas Ostermeier, who we know is attracted by these two authors, these experimental works (political questions posed by Shakespeare and personal questions posed by Ibsen, both putting morality to the test) seem to engage in a “theatre of unfolding” (théâtre du dépli). In fact, these productions become less a means for showing an art (in terms of staging), and more a space to ask or pose questions, to expose them in the present, and yet with the distance of time, owing to the implicit distance that the theatre offers. Shakespeare and Ibsen, who obviously do not offer at all the same statements or the same answers, paradoxically lead the German director along the same path, towards a “wound”: one, an impossible depiction of history, and another, a powerful wish to reconquer its forces. Ostermeier’s theatres throws the truth of history into question, from political, familial, and affective perspectives.

By selecting two of Ostermeier’s recent works, I demonstrate how he breaks down history, to expose the story (and in each of these works, I will note the importance of rhythm over historical time). He also, and significantly, indicates the various points in time where history is at fault. The two variants of experimentations, dramatic and philosophical, point out some of the most salient aspects of the extensive work of Ostermeier: the pressures to which the individual is subjected, crisis used as a condition of revelation, the inadequacy of political or familial superstructures, and the bodies that are crushed under them. In sum, Ostermeier’s art offers art as a vengeance against history.

Arnaud Maïsetti graduated in “lettres modernes” and has been Lecturer in Theatre Studies at the University of Aix-Marseille since 1 September 2014. Since completing his thesis in 2012, on the works of Bernard-Marie Koltès, he has been working on the playwright’s biography. Maisetti’s research focuses predominantly on contemporary theatre, notably questions of how history is represented both lyrically and politically. Since 2010, Maisetti has adapted plays for the theatre for La Controverse theatre company. He is also an author (Où que je sois encore…, Seuil, 2008 ; La Mancha, La Nuit mytride, 2010), and he has recently written a play (Les Tombeaux sont appelés des solitudes, Entretemps, 2014)

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11.40 KEYNOTE LECTURE
Chair: Clare Finburgh, University of Essex
Since 2000, the name Thomas Ostermeier has been closely, and unquestionably, linked with the Schaubühne, and the director’s reputation owes largely to the productions born in and of this Berlin institution. However, Ostermeier gained recognition earlier with his beginnings at the Baracke des Deutschen Theaters and he simultaneously worked in other German-speaking theatres – notably the Burgtheater in Vienna and the Munich Kammerspiele. Today, he is also in demand abroad: after a first venture in English at the Edinburgh Festival in 2002 (The Girl on the Sofa by Jon Fosse), he recently directed Miss Julie in Russian in Moscow (2010), Ghosts in Dutch and in French (2011 and 2013) and The Seagull in Amsterdam (2013).

As they branch off from the ‘Berlin base’, these productions confer a new meaning on internationalism, pushing further both the politics of European co-productions and the practice of worldwide tours. They may look similar to the principles of opera (a genre that Ostermeier has, in fact, always shunned) and the trend to duplicate versions of the same plays in different languages (which he seems to resist), yet they are largely distinct from them. Indeed, they stand as new creations in and of themselves.

What is the measure of relocation in these productions? Do they retain some sense of continuity with the ‘core work’ produced at the Schaubühne, or do they displace it and somehow challenge it? To what extent do they participate in the same artistic process, or else represent an opportunity for new forays? On what terms do they altogether contribute to Ostermeier’s signature, whether by consolidating it or opening it up?

Analysing Thomas Ostermeier’s work without the Schaubühne raises questions, as much as it may provide answers, regarding both the development of his work within and the emergence of a ‘nomadic’ figure in European directors’ theatre.

**Frédéric Maurin** is a lecturer in the Department of Theatre Studies at Université Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3. His research focuses mainly on contemporary performance in Europe and the United States, international cross-overs and the interplay between the arts. He has published books and articles on Robert Wilson, Peter Sellars, Ivo van Hove and other directors, performers and artists, and recently edited a special issue on Le Grand Format in Alternatives théâtrales (December 2013).
1.30 PLENARY SESSION with Thomas Ostermeier and his Ein Volksfeind actors
Chair: Simon Shepherd, Deputy Principal, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

THOMAS OSTERMEIER studied theatre directing at the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Art, Berlin, under Manfred Karge. From 1996 to 1999, he was Artistic Director of the Baracke at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin, where he directed Fat Men in Skirts by Nicky Silver (1996), Knives in Hens by David Harrower (1997), Man Equals Man by Bertolt Brecht (1997), and Shopping & Fucking by Mark Ravenhill (1998). Since September 1999 he has been Artistic Director of the Schaubühne, where to date he has directed 33 productions, many of which have been shown around the world. He has also worked at the Münchner Kammerspiele, the Festival d’Avignon, the Edinburgh International Festival, Burgtheater Vienna, and Toneelgroep Amsterdam. He has received multiple awards for his work, and has been appointed Officier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture. He was awarded The Golden Lion for his work at the International Theatre Festival by the Biennale in Venice in 2011.

CHRISTOPH GAWENDA joined the Schaubühne in 2010, after working for five years at Staatsschauspiel Stuttgart. He trained at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hannover, where, as part of his training, he spent time at Saint Petersburg State Theatre Arts Academy, and at the Lee Strasberg School. At the Schaubühne, he has performed in works directed by Ivo van Hove (Gaveston in Marlowe’s Edward II), Katie Mitchell (Duncan Macmillan’s Lungs), as well as by Alex Rigola and Michael Thalheimer. An Enemy of the People was his first work with Thomas Ostermeier. He initially played the role of Hovstad, and since May 2014, he has played the lead role, Thomas Stockmann, in the production’s second cast.

DAVID RULAND trained at Ernst Busch Academy Berlin and worked at the Deutsches Theater, Berlin, before joining the Schaubühne ensemble in 2003. Here, he worked with directors Luk Perceval (Schiller’s Mary Stuart, 2006; Chekhov’s Platonov, 2006), Benedict Andrews (Sarah Kane’s Cleansed, 2004; Debbie Tucker Green’s Stoning Mary, 2007; Tennessee Williams’ Streetcar, 2009; Edward Bond’s Saved, 2010) and Ivo van Hove (Molière’s Misanthrope, 2010; Marlowe’s Edward II, 2011), as well as performing in around ten productions by Thomas Ostermeier, including Williams’ Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (2007), Mark Ravenhill’s The Cut (2008), and Lillian Hellman’s Little Foxes (2014).

EVA MECKBACH trained at the University of the Arts Berlin before joining the Schaubühne ensemble in 2006. Directed by Thomas Ostermeier, she has played Hermia in A Midsummernight’s Dream (2006), Desdemona in Othello (2010), and Jenna in Lars Noren’s Demons (2010). At the Schaubühne, she has also performed in productions by guest directors Benedict Andrews, Romeo Castellucci, Alvis Hermanis, and Alex Rigola.

MORITZ GOTTWALD performed in youth theatre productions in his hometown of Halle, before training at the Ernst Busch Theatre Academy, Berlin. He joined the Schaubühne ensemble in 2012, while still in his final year at the school. Since then, he has played Claudio in Much Ado About Nothing (dir. Marius von Mayenburg), Spencer in Marlowe’s Edward II (dir. Ivo van Hove), and Romeo in Lars Eidinger’s production of Shakespeare’s Romeo & Juliet.

RAMIN GRAY is Artistic Director of Actors Touring Company, London. From 2000-09 he was Associate Director for international new writing at the Royal Court. He has also directed work at the Deutsches Schauspielhaus Hamburg, Volkstheater Wien, Wiener Festwochen, Hamburgische Staatsoper, Royal Opera House, Schaubühne Berlin and the Royal Shakespeare Company. His 2013 production of David Greig’s The Events was named “Production of the Year” by The Guardian.

ANDREW HAYDON is a theatre critic for The Guardian and writes his blog ‘Postcards from the Gods’ on directors’ theatre.
Robert Shaughnessy has been Professor of Theatre at the University of Kent since 2004, having previously taught at the University of Roehampton. He has published extensively in the areas of contemporary and early modern theatre, including work on a wide variety of playwrights (ranging from Edward Bond and Howard Barker to Ben Jonson and Shakespeare), performers (from Margaret Woffington to Johnny Cash), and practitioners (from Tyrone Guthrie to Complicite). His books include *The Shakespeare Effect* (2002), *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Popular Culture* (2007), the volume on Margaret Woffington in the *Lives of Shakespearean Actors* series (2008), *The Routledge Guide to William Shakespeare* (2011); and recent essays and articles include work on backstage theatre tours, the performing prosthetic body, the predicament of the Shakespearean understudy, Hamlet and the art of the British political cartoon, and the politics of Shakespearean silences. He is currently writing a performance history of *As You Like It*; other work in progress includes a collaborative interdisciplinary investigation, with colleagues in social psychology, of the cognitive dimensions of actor-audience interaction.

**Jozefina Komporaly**

*Regietheater or Collaborative Practice: Thomas Ostermeier’s Border Politics*

This paper seeks to examine the complex relationship between director-led theatre and collaborative practice, with reference to Thomas Ostermeier’s brand of *Regietheater* and his long-standing alliance with key collaborators. On the one hand, the paper explores directing as the ultimate artistic authority in the creative process, and considers arguments for the continued allure of the theatre director as auteur, on a par with the creators of what might be termed as hypo-texts, originals or source texts. In such cases, the resulting production bears the hallmarks of the director’s highly personal vision and epitomizes its creator’s worldview; for instance, when staging classical or indeed contemporary authors, pre-existing texts constitute a mere departure for the director’s scenic writing towards a highly subjective and entirely autonomous work of art. In many cases in this line of directors’ theatre, beyond the concept for the mise-en-scène the director is also responsible for the overall semiotic system of the production, in a bid for achieving total theatre. On the other hand, the paper indicates that Ostermeier regularly shares the responsibility of approaching productions/pre-existing texts with the help of in-house dramaturgs (such as Marius von Mayenburg), casts a relatively regular pool of actors (led by Lars Eidinger) and returns time and time again to the same designer (Jan Pappelbaum). In addition, having been at the helm of Berlin’s Schaubühne for over a decade, Ostermeier has nurtured a well-oiled ensemble and a regular audience, all of which operate as active participants in the creative process and contribute to the consolidation of the Schaubühne as a major forum for a new type of interactive and politically-attuned theatre.

**JOZEFINA KOMPORALY** researches contemporary European and British theatre; translation and adaptation for the stage; directing and dramaturgy; interculturalism; women’s writing. Her publications include *Staging Motherhood: British Women Playwrights, 1956 to the Present* (Palgrave, 2006) and articles in various edited collections and academic journals. Jozefina is editor and co-translator of the first English-language anthology of Matei Visniec plays, entitled *Matei Visniec: How to Explain the History of Communism to Mental Patients and Other Plays* (forthcoming from Seagull Books, 2015). She is currently preparing a monograph on radical revivals as adaptation for Palgrave.
Thomas Ostermeier conceives of Shakespeare’s texts as multi-dimensional objects in space. In approaching the script of Hamlet as a “cube”, Ostermeier employs synaesthetic perception (which, according to Merleau-Ponty, is foundational to our experience), collapsing the distinction between two-dimensional words on the page and three-dimensional objects. Ostermeier’s practice thus reveals, I argue, the intellectual and artistic limitations of binaries that hold in opposition page and stage, writer and director, words and sensuality.

Touching on Ostermeier’s appropriation of Meyerhold’s biomechanics – which sensitises actors to the body in 3D space—this paper also explores how Ostermeier’s actor becomes a Meyerholdian "word-equivalent" (Ronald Levaco), with "every movement a hieroglyph with its own peculiar meaning" (Edward Braun on Meyerhold). These synaesthetic operations articulate the generative potential of a strong link between text and performance in Ostermeier’s work, which seeks to make writing speak rather than making it mean. Sensuality, in these productions, seeks not to deliver meaning, but to open up the metaphorical space Ostermeier perceives in the writing. I argue that this approach became intensified through Ostermeier’s engagement with Shakespearean text, visible in the shift from the “podium” stagings that distinguished his work on Ibsen to the literal cubic spaces of his Shakespeare productions. This paper demonstrates how these productions give physical form to Ostermeier’s perceptual encounter with words, functioning as sensual, embodied texts that offer spectators (and the actors who inhabit them) starting points for further creation and access points to new modes of perception.

BENJAMIN FOWLER is working on a PhD at Warwick University examining the relationship between text and performance in the work of Katie Mitchell and Thomas Ostermeier. After graduating from an MFA in Theatre Directing at Birkbeck College, Ben spent four years as a freelance director and assistant director, working with companies including the RSC, the Almeida Theatre, and the Manchester Royal Exchange, and on a Japanese Romeo and Juliet in Tokyo/Osaka. He has published on the Wooster Group/RSC in Shakespeare Bulletin and has contributed working group papers on his research at annual meetings including ASTR (Dallas 2013), SAA (St. Louis 2014), IFTR (Warwick 2014) & TaPRA (Royal Holloway 2014).
Presented originally as a scene of 15 minutes in a Venetian palazzo during a Biennale workshop, the performance itself – in the form it exists now in the repertoire of the Schaubühne – preserves the features of a workshop or sketch: it is short (it lasts only 75 minutes), is reminiscent in some moments of the public rehearsal situation, and even in the description it is called Versuchsanordnung (an “experimental arrangement”) which confirms its specific creation history. In Stanislavsky’s terminology, it is a sketch method (for which Stanislavsky himself used the term étude,”ɛˈtuːd”) that Ostermeier usually applies in his productions: looking for justification of every movement of the actors’ work, zooming in on the depth of the situation and the variety of psychological, historical and cultural circumstances, giving the actors extraordinary artistic tasks, from time to time demonstrating the way the moment should be embodied on stage. But Death in Venice is a sketch itself, and the logical question follows, How was that sketch rehearsed? The interweaving of different performing levels – text, choreography, movements, live music, singing, video; an experimental arrangement rehearsed in Germany and France over 18 days – Death in Venice is rather atypical of Ostermeier’s work when compared to his other (“psychological”) productions of Ibsen, Shakespeare or Strindberg. Ostermeier’s adaptation of Thomas Mann’s novella, accompanied by Gustav Mahler’s music, preserves, in fact, the form of a workshop: as a rehearsal participant I became aware that the spontaneous ideas, discussions and arguments emerging in the rehearsals remained in the performance as they had in the rehearsals. In this paper I study this experimental rehearsal method in its application to the sketch Death in Venice/Kindertotenlieder.

VIKTORIA VOLKOVA was raised in Moscow where she completed her studies in German, Linguistics, Pedagogics and Psychology at Moscow State Linguistic University. Her early interest in theatre dates back to her school period, when she participated in theatre performances. On top of her main studies, she also attended a theatre course on Michael Chekhov’s Acting Technique in Moscow. This was the impulse for her to investigate the concealed potential of improvisation in her postgraduate studies. Currently she is completing her Ph.D. under the joint supervision of Professor Erika Fischer-Lichte and Professor Christoph Wulf in the International Research Training Group InterArt Studies at the Free University of Berlin. Her dissertation, entitled The Constitution of the Art Object through Social Emotions: An Empirical Study Based on the Rehearsal Processes at Major Theatres in Berlin will be published in German. Her research material is based on rehearsals at theatres in Berlin with international standing, such as the Deutsches Theater Berlin, the Berliner Ensemble and the Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz.

Volkova’s research interests include history, methodology and the rituality of rehearsals, the role of stage improvisation in rehearsal, and the emergence of social emotions in social interaction in rituals.
Thomas Ostermeier’s theatre is characterized among other things by his willingness to update historical conflicts (it’s a dramatic theatre, in H-T Lehmann’s perspective) while playing on the organic (a human theatre turned towards the actors). Having dedicated my thesis to studying truth as a theatrical issue, especially in theoretical texts by Brecht, Artaud and Stanislavski, I find in Ostermeier’s work a current and very effective combination of these irreconcilable singularities without a precedent. Here I would like to study one specific aspect: the way Ostermeier anchors the action of the play in the conditions of its performance, not only by updating the drama, sets, costumes, etc., but also by building an interaction with reality through breaks, winks, quotes, or by giving a voice to the audience.

I will consider two specific examples in which chance held a significant place: An Enemy of the People (Montreal, FTA, May 2013) and Die Ehe der Maria Braun (Avignon, July 2014). Ibsen’s play was performed in the unique context of a water contamination crisis - one million people being given notice to boil their water the very morning of the premiere -, while the second, played in the context of a festival, became the issue of a social conflict between the entertainment industry (intermittents du spectacle) and the French government. In both cases, the immediate actuality playing its full role on the stage produced more and better than a "reality effect" (Barthes) - something almost "magical", like an unpredictable dialectic, giving a new dimension and discursive relevance to the theatrical performance.

CLAIRE LEGENDRE is Assistant Professor in creative writing at the University of Montreal’s French Literature Department. Born in Nice (France), she studied at the University of Nice-Sophia Antipolis where she earned a Ph.D. in comparative literature and theatre studies in 2009. Her research focused on the drama of the theatre of the Absurd, as well as on theories of theatrical staging (Constantin Stanislavski, Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht and their contemporary legacies), especially on the issue of truth as a scenic, epistemological and ideological stake in twentieth- and twenty-first-century theatre. After having taught literature, theatre semiotics and playwriting at the University of Nice, she lived in the Czech Republic where she taught creative writing at the French Institute from 2008 to 2011. A resident at the Villa Medici in Rome in 2000 and author of several novels (Making-of, Viande, La méthode Stanislavski, L’Ecorchée vive, Vérité et amour - all published by Grasset), short-stories and plays, she also co-authored with J. Bonnetto a collection of "textimages" (Photobiographies). Her current research focuses on truth as agreement in various forms of referential literature, especially autofiction and biographical fiction, and on performance as a creative process in theatre, art and literature.
3.30 Workshop 2 (Room D), Ostermeier around the world: Global perspectives
Chair: Vicky Angelaki, University of Birmingham

Viktoria Ebel
(University of Mainz, Germany)

Ostermeier’s Les Revenants in France: Cultural Difference in Theatre Systems

While Thomas Ostermeier’s productions have been successfully shown in many countries outside Germany, one country has been especially welcoming to the German director. Since his first guest performance in Paris in 1998, Ostermeier and his productions have thrived in France. However, not only the director’s theatrical work, but also Ostermeier himself attracts massive media attention. Thus, media attention and audience expectations were high when, in 2013, Ostermeier produced his first work in French featuring French actors. During a one-year tour, the staging of Ibsen’s play Ghosts (Les Revenants) was shown in different cities in both France and Switzerland. While some critics were extremely enthusiastic about the “French Ostermeier,” many others were disappointed in the production that allegedly did not live up to the quality of Ostermeier’s Schaubühne productions. Different reasons were given, for instance language deficiencies. Regardless of the reasons why, it can be stated that Ostermeier’s Les Revenants did not fulfill the expectations of the French public.

I would like to argue that it is not the difference of language, but another – largely overlooked – aspect that is responsible for both the success of Ostermeier’s Schaubühne productions in France and the, in comparison, rather lukewarm reception of Les Revenants: Ostermeier’s success depends to a great degree on the different theatre systems of Germany and France. By comparing the French theatre system to the system of the Schaubühne, I want to illustrate how the former’s influence on the Revenants production resulted in its inability to live up to the public’s prospect.

VIKTORIA EBEL studied Theatre Studies, French and Comparative Literature in Mainz and Paris. In July 2014, she obtained a Master’s degree from Gutenberg University in Mainz. Her master’s thesis Théâtre en route: Thomas Ostermeier’s Work in France, discusses Ostermeier’s success in France by examining Nora – one of the most successful guest performances – and Les Revenants (Ghosts), Ostermeier’s first French production. During her studies, Viktoria Ebel worked for the German-French television station ZDF/Arte and the Goethe-Institut in Paris, where she was employed in the cultural department. Originally from Germany, she has been permanently living in Paris since 2012, where she is about to begin her career in arts and culture.
This paper aims to show how Thomas Ostermeier's two productions, Wunschkkonzert (2005) and A Doll's House (2005), were received by Korean critics and audiences in the context of Korean theatre. For this argument, first of all I will discuss how Ostermeier’s Wunschkkonzert and A Doll's House are situated in the context of contemporary Korean theatre, at the time both performances were staged in Korea, in terms of the relationship between city and everydayness. In order to explore the Korean reception of Ostermeier, I will investigate how daily life is framed and structured by female characters during both performances. This is done in the knowledge that both Wunschkkonzert and A Doll’s House highlight enclosed aspects of daily life represented by their respective female protagonists.

By dealing with Korean reviews on both productions and an interview with Ostermeier, which appeared in Korean media and theatre journals, I will also show how the female characters in these productions are represented and how they are perceived by Korean audience members in relation to the way in which they lead their daily lives on stage. In doing so, I will argue that these female characters could be understood as subjects who get locked in their daily lives, as if there was no exit through which to escape. In this respect, I will thus consider how death – the female character's suicide (Wunschkkonzert) and Nora's act of killing her husband (A Doll’s House) – could be regarded as the end of these female characters’ daily lives during the performances.

YUH, J. HWANG is a PhD candidate in the Drama department at Trinity College Dublin and Lecturer in Korean Studies at University College Cork, Ireland. She studied Korean theatre at the Korean National University of Arts and Korean Cultural Studies at Leiden University in the Netherlands. She is also a member of IATC-Korea (International Association of Theatre Critics) and has been writing theatre reviews for the Korean Theatre Journal since 2006. Her PhD project is based on two Abbey Theatre Riots, the so called The Playboy riots (1907) and The Plough and the Stars riots (1926). She won the New Scholars' Prize of the International Federation for Theatre Research IFTR this year.
Andrew Goldberg  
(CUNY Graduate Center)

Whistleblowing in the Age of WikiLeaks:  
Thomas Ostermeier’s An Enemy of the People and Individual Agency

In this paper, I propose to examine Thomas Ostermeier’s production of An Enemy of the People through the lens of contemporary sociological theory surrounding the WikiLeaks phenomenon. Our understanding of whistleblowing has undergone a radical shift in recent years. Because of digital platforms such as WikiLeaks, a single individual’s actions can profoundly impact geo-political international relations. Moreover, Manning and Snowden, along with groups like Anonymous and WikiLeaks, represent a fundamental shift in the nature of social activism and the individual’s relationship to activist movements. Ostermeier’s production, with its provocative contemporary setting and reworking of the fourth act into a participatory town hall meeting, arguably addresses what sociologist Kevin McDonald calls the “experience movement” and “affinity groups.” What McDonald is describing is a turn towards the primacy of individual subjectivity and agency at the heart of contemporary social activism, in contrast to previous models of activism in which individuals subsumed their personal needs and desires in the service of a higher ideal.

This paper will consider how Ostermeier’s reconceptualization of Ibsen’s play resonates in our digitally networked age of globalization. What might a sociological reading of Ostermeier’s dramaturgical strategies reveal about activism today, particularly in regards to the solicitation of audience participation in the fourth act? Is there a relationship between audience participation and democratic participation? The paper will conclude by considering the role that the theatre might play in contemporary activism as suggested by Ostermeier’s production.

ANDREW GOLDBERG is a director, educator, and scholar. He is currently a PhD candidate at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. He holds a BA in English from Stanford University and an MFA in Performance and Interactive Media Arts from Brooklyn College. His directing credits include The Bomb-itty of Errors seen in London, New York, and many cities throughout the world, and his one-man version of Macbeth co-directed with John Tiffany and performed by Alan Cumming at the National Theatre of Scotland, Lincoln Center Festival, and on Broadway. His collaborative performance group, The Institute for Psychogeographic Adventure, recently presented Experiment #39 (OLD CITY) as one of the presented productions in the 2014 Philadelphia FringeArts Festival.
April Albert

(University of Melbourne)

A German National Treasure:
The Meteoric Rise of Thomas Ostermeier and Sarah Kane.

This paper is an investigation into the reception of Thomas Ostermeier's *Zerbombt* (Sarah Kane's *Blasted*) in London and Berlin. How was the reception of Ostermeier's 2005/2006 German-language production of Sarah Kane's play in London and Berlin different? This paper will look at the relationship between the audience and that which is staged through the framework of critical reception by asking the question: what is the difference in how spectators relate to what they are presented with on a theatre stage in London and Berlin? Or simply, how does the historical function and tradition of theatre in these respective theatre systems also produce a different kind of spectator? “Despite the widespread influence of Brecht on contemporary theatre practice, and despite the extensive debate on the ideological gaze of the cinema audience,” writes Susan Bennett in *Theatre Audiences*, “we lack a detailed picture of the theatre audience, and in particular, their role(s) in the production-reception relationship.” The relationship between production and reception positioned within and against cultural values, remains largely uninvestigated, yet theatre relies on the existence of the audience to confirm its cultural importance.

APRIL ALBERT grew up in both the US and Europe. She is a dramaturg, performer and lecturer who has studied and performed in the US, Germany, the UK and Australia. She has a B.A. in Theatre and French, studied Germanistik at the University of Heidelberg, Germany and has an M.A. in Text and Performance Studies from the Royal Academy of Performing Arts/ King's College London. She is currently on leave from her PhD in Contemporary European Theatre at the University of Melbourne whilst touring internationally in a one-woman show.
5.15 Lecture and Concluding Debate.

Chair: Kim Solga, Western University, Canada

Kim Solga is associate professor in the Department of English at Western University, where she is spearheading the new undergraduate major in Theatre Studies. From 2012-2014, she was Senior Lecturer in Drama, Queen Mary University of London. Kim is the author of Violence Against Women in Early Modern Performance, now available in paperback, and the co-editor of the ground-breaking volumes Performance and the City and Performance and the Global City. (The first of these is already out in paperback; the second will follow in paperback early next year.) Kim’s research interests range from urban performance to early modern cultural studies to the politics of realism and naturalism; her new book in progress is titled Realism After Neoliberalism: Women at Work on the Twenty First Century Stage. She is also a committed teacher and blogs about teaching, performance, and politics at http://theactivistclassroom.wordpress.com.

Professor Marvin Carlson
(CUNY)
Capitalist Realism, Socialist Realism and Ostermeier Realism

In a Theater heute interview in 1999, Thomas Ostermeier characterized his approach to theatre as based on “capitalist realism,” as opposed to socialist realism. According to this approach, even plays whose authors did not conceive them as primarily political, like Marius von Mayenburg’s Feuergeschichte, can be staged politically, that is, as documents of the suffering engendered by the dynamics of modern capitalism. Looking back over the choice of dramas that Ostermeier has made as a director and even more over the stylistic and interpretive choices that he has made in their presentation, this concept of Capitalist Realism can be seen to have been a consistent and defining thread uniting much of his work. I propose to trace this thread, giving particular attention to the early work at the Baracke and interest in the Royal Court dramatists and particularly Sarah Kane, and then trace how this interest developed and was modified by his work at the Schaubühne. This would include his interest in the dark studies of modern society by the Scandinavians Lars Norén and Jon Fosse, Germans Marieluise Fleißer and Franz Xavier Kroetz, and other English dramatists in the tradition of the modern Royal Court realists. Internationally, Ostermeier is probably best known for his unconventional productions of the Ibsen classics Nora and Hedda Gabler, both of which brilliantly demonstrated how the concept of Capitalist Realism could be powerfully applied not only to contemporary realists like Ravenhill, Fosse, Norén and von Mayenburg, but also to classic works of the modern realistic drama. This presentation will trace the development of this conceptual approach and how it has manifested itself in these and other key works of Ostermeier’s career.

Marvin Carlson is the Sidney E. Cohn Professor of Theatre and Comparative Literature at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. He has received an honorary doctorate from the University of Athens, the ATHE Career Achievement Award, the ASTR Distinguished Scholarship Award, the George Jean Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism, The Edgar Rosenblum Award for Contributions to Theatre and Education and the Calloway Prize for his book The Haunted Stage (Michigan, 2001). He is the author of over two hundred fifty scholarly articles in the areas of theatre history, theatre theory and dramatic literature, and his work has been translated into Chinese, Japanese, Korean, French, Italian, German, Galician, Portuguese, Finnish, Polish, Arabic, Slovenian, Slovakian, Spanish and Turkish. Among his books are The German Stage in the Nineteenth Century
(Scarecrow, 1972), Goethe and the Weimar Theatre (Cornell University, 1978), Theories of the Theatre (Cornell University, 1984), Performance: A Critical Introduction (Routledge, 1996), Speaking in Tongues: Language and the Theatre (Michigan, 2007), and Theatre is More Beautiful than War: German Stage Directing in the Late Twentieth Century (Iowa University, 2009).

Symposium Organisers

PETER M BOENISCH is Professor of European Theatre at the University of Kent, where he was, with Paul Allain and Patrice Pavis, one of the founding directors of the European Theatre Research Network (ETRN). His primary interest is in the intersections between aesthetics and politics in contemporary theatre, drawing on critical philosophy by Hegel, Žižek, Rancière and others. His work discusses directing, mise en scène, Regie and dramaturgy, with a particular focus on the German- and Dutch-speaking European countries. His monograph Directing Scenes and Senses: The Thinking of Regie will be published by Manchester University Press in Spring 2015. He is co-author, with Thomas Ostermeier, of the book The Theatre of Thomas Ostermeier, to be published by Routledge in Spring 2016.

CLARE FINBURGH is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Literature, Film and Theatre Studies at the University of Essex. One of the UK’s leading experts on Francophone drama and theatre, her research focuses on “interartistic” theatre (theatre that converges with other arts), political theatres, and stage representations of war. She is co-author, with the late David Bradby, of Jean Genet (Routledge 2011) and co-editor of Genet: Performance and Politics (Palgrave 2006). She also co-edited Contemporary French Theatre and Performance (Palgrave 2011). Her forthcoming monograph, Watching War: Spectacles of Conflict on the Twenty-First-Century British Stage will be published by Bloomsbury in 2016.

VICKY ANGELAKI is Lecturer in Drama at the University of Birmingham. Her research is internationalist in its scope, with a specialism in modern and contemporary British and European theatre, translation, adaptation, spectatorship and citizenship, aesthetics and politics, as well as performance, critical/cultural theories and philosophy, with a focus on phenomenology. Major publications include The Plays of Martin Crimp: Making Theatre Strange (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) and Contemporary British Theatre: Breaking New Ground (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). Angelaki also co-edits the series Adaptation in Theatre and Performance (Palgrave Macmillan, launching in 2016) and runs the Thinking Theatre Blog, <http://www.vickyangelaki.com>.

DANIEL HETHERINGTON is Research Manager at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London. As symposium administrator, Daniel has co-ordinated all pragmatic aspects of this symposium, and is to be thanked that everything will be running smoothly.

Student Volunteers: Helen Gush, Judita Vivas, Philip Watkinson.

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