

## Theatre cover sheet: practical performance proposal HL only

Submit to: **Examiner**

Arrival date: 30 Apr / 30 Oct

Session: May 2012

School number: \_\_\_\_\_

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- Write legibly using black ink and retain a copy of this form.
- Complete this form in the working language of your school (English, French or Spanish).
- Complete one copy of this form to accompany each practical performance proposal submitted.

Subject: Theatre

Level: Higher

Candidate name: \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate session number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Instructions to candidates

Check that your candidate session number is on each sheet of paper used in your practical performance proposal and attach this cover sheet to the front of your work.

Complete the following information:

What is the prescribed performance stimulus you have used? HAGIA SOPHIA

Section 1—approximate number of words: 250 ✓

Section 3 (HL only)—approximate number of words: 1180 ✓

**Candidate declaration:** I confirm that this work is my own work and is the final version. I have acknowledged each use of the words or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

Candidate's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012

**For completion by the teacher:** I confirm that to the best of my knowledge, the material submitted is the authentic work of the candidate.

Teacher's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 2 Feb. 2012

Teacher's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### For completion by the examiners

Examiner's name and code: \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner's  
total mark

Total  
0–25

17

Senior examiner's name and code: \_\_\_\_\_

Senior examiner's  
total mark

\_\_\_\_\_

### The pitch.

Do not await a provocation, nudity, or abstract collage. This piece will last only for about forty minutes, so seriously consider if it is worth watching, but the tickets are cheap. Sila opens the door to another world, but it is not Wonderland that she will find there. Instead, she will encounter humiliation, hostility, freezing indifference, the everyday fate of die Gastarbeiterin (foreign worker in Germany). The writer wants freedom, but the taste he discovers under his tongue once he flees his homeland is instead the bitter herb of frustration, a burning longing for acclaim. The mother doesn't live nor she is dead, she is indifferent, inhumane, she never speaks. The lawyer becomes a stranger in her own country, as she is pulled into the den of the immigrants, you will hate how shallow and cliched she is. On a simultaneous stage consisting of two mansions – the house in Turkey and the hovel in Munich, the actors portray desperate, lonely people, evoking in you a sense of living life on the rocks. Tragedy fills the glass of this performance, brims over, and that is why it successfully manages to leaves you laughing, because it takes itself and its overt sensationalism too seriously. You will see them in the merciless neon lights reminiscent of shady hotels, devouring the cheapest meats and reading Yeats. I would feel sorry for you if you identified with any of the characters. Wait, who are you, the spectator of "Is Hagia Sophia under the same heaven?"

Word count: 250

## The commentary – inspirations, possible impacts and resonances

The influence of history, tradition and culture (including modern culture) must have been far-reaching in a performance inspired by the Hagia Sophia. My commentary serves as a summary of all the 'external' ideas, people, texts of culture and thoughts that to a smaller or greater extent became a part of my Practice Performance Proposal. I have written the following essay once the vision became coherent, like a child putting the puzzles together and observing the ~~developing~~ picture.

I recently came across an article in the Polish press telling its readers that Jacek Głomb, the director of one of the most prominent theatres in the country, the Helena Modrzejewska Theatre in Legnica, has along with few other theatre practitioners issued a manifesto against the newest fashion among directors – producing pseudo-artistic, pseudo-intellectual and highly media-like performances. He argues that it is ridiculous that theatre in current times is made for the sake of festivals, awards and juries, and not for the audience. He ridicules the pride some creators take in the fact that "half of the house" left during the intermission, for him it is a sign of a failure rather than one of a provocative success. Głomb announced a three-year project for the Legnica Theatre that he called "The theatre of tales" which promised to provide the people with theatre that is new and exciting, and yet retains the charm of its yesteryear ancestors. Another interesting aspect of Głomb's view of contemporary theatre is his opposition to the common belief that due to the popularity of cinema, the audience of theatre is limited to only the affluent upper middle class with a strong interest in culture. He proves that in Legnica, a town of about 40,000 inhabitants, there are not enough lawyers and doctors to account for his large and faithful audience, where housewives and plumbers sit beside the bankers and teachers. He claims that subjecting the fashion to the trends and waves of popularity can prove fatal to the art and his manifesto inspired me to choose a very simplistic way to present the story, yet I was tempted to add some "voyeuristic" elements – the door in the middle, the closing scene, the silent mother...

The plot of the performance seems overly tragic, too tragic for anyone to either identify with it or mourn the characters; tragedy unconsciously transforms into comedy when masterfully exaggerated. To an extent, through this performance, I both agree with Głomb and play with the capacity of the audience, subjecting them to a voyeuristic and absurd commentary on the twisted reality of immigrant life in Germany. I have purposefully introduced the experiences of immigration, rape, incurable disease, euthanasia and possibly also suicide in the span of a short forty-minute play. I have merged what are assumed to be the gloomiest themes in ancient Greek theatre, distilled tragedy from wine, olive oil and laughter, and combined the product with arguably the merriest of the gloomy theatre of the European Middle Ages – the danse macabre, memento mori. The tragedy is multiplied to an absurd degree, but all the atrocities happen out of sight for the audience – even I do not know if the sound of the gunshot at the end marked Sila's suicide or if she actually went back to Turkey, once she injected the lethal dose of morphine into the writer's vein. The lights go out, all the tragedies are implied rather than acted out like they would be in a cheap horror movie, because we have never seen Iocasta hanging herself on the belt of her peplum. The overdose of tragedy is so ridiculous that Friedrich Dürrenmatt's beloved Dramödie comes to mind. The

closing scene, so ridiculous to a contemporary consumer is an attempt at danse macabre, is my tribute to Ingmar Bergman and his “Seventh Seal”

A major inspiration for the piece was the play “The Emigrants”, written in 1974 by a Polish playwright, Sławomir Mrożek, the master of absurd. The two characters are Polish immigrants, an intellectual called just “AA” and a worker called “XX”. They live in an unidentified country in Western Europe after leaving Poland either as political refugees (AA) or simply in search of money (XX). The play consists mainly of dialogue between the two (mostly in the form of arguments) and is entirely set in a dirty basement where they co-exist (to say “live” is too much). Therefore the spectators of “Is Hagia Sophia under the same sky?” will only see the writer and Sila in their quasi-apartment, and all the events that comprise the plot will happen “outside”. Another inspiration were contemporary movies (see “Link to movie trailers that inspired me”): a Turkish family moving to Germany and facing identity crises, a lonely and distant woman becoming friends with a lonely and distant man somewhere in Ireland, a nurse who loves to play God and murders her patients, an old man who decides to hide an illegal emigrant boy from Africa from the authorities, a rich blonde girl who is severely depressed – all these issues gave me the idea of merging many of the world’s problems into one piece which takes its name from one of humanity’s greatest accomplishments – the Hagia Sophia.

I am also aware and mindful of the fact that sometimes theatre plays became causes of political unrest; I have decisively named the country my characters are from, and the country they emigrated to, making the play very politically Turkey-Germany. In 1968, the anti-Russia play ‘Dziady (Ghosts)’ (written by Adam Mickiewicz and directed by Kazimierz Dejmek) from Poland, the biggest USSR satellite country and my homeland, caused major riots and political turmoil. In 2004, Sikh protestors from Birmingham, UK, enraged by the depiction of murder and rape in a Sikh temple (gurdwara) in Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti’s play ‘Behzti (Dishonour)’, vandalized the theatre it was staged in and freely handed out death-threats. I was careful not to put too much context into the “Turkish Gastarbeiters”, so that it remains universal and no one can threaten the author (me!) with censorship (in the case of Poland) or death (in the case of United Kingdom).

I was afraid that ‘Is Hagia Sophia under the same heaven?’ could be distilled into the rather cliched ‘a rape-victim and an aging would-be writer become friends, he is afflicted by an incurable malady, she decides it is better he dies than suffers’, but I find that it grew into a sort of collage, a play derived from many roots, moulded into an austere performance meant for anybody who will not force himself or herself to understand it. He or she will be immersed into the world of the protagonists only for a few minutes, and yet be forced to acknowledge that they are not necessarily people of flesh and blood. Rather, they are metaphors of personal and continual tragedy, with no rays of sunshine during the intermission – there will, of course, be no intermission, afraid as I am that people will get up and leave for good (a major flaw in contemporary theatre, to paraphrase Głomb).

Word count: 1,180 words

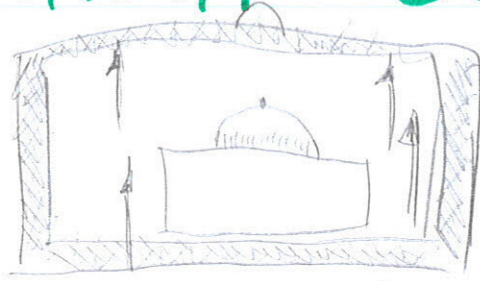
## Bibliography:

- [http://www.wysokieobcasy.pl/wysokie-obcasy/1,114757,11039615,Jacek\\_Glomb\\_Teatr\\_moj\\_widze\\_ludowy.html](http://www.wysokieobcasy.pl/wysokie-obcasy/1,114757,11039615,Jacek_Glomb_Teatr_moj_widze_ludowy.html), accessed on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2012
- [http://www.wysokieobcasy.pl/wysokie-obcasy/1,114757,11003835,Czula\\_jest\\_smierc.html](http://www.wysokieobcasy.pl/wysokie-obcasy/1,114757,11003835,Czula_jest_smierc.html), accessed on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2012
- [http://books.google.pl/books?id=x\\_hPqrjXUaUC&pg=PA121&lpg=PA121&dq=leicester+haymarket+theatre+sikh&source=bl&ots=pBA0oIlxoQ&sig=3U9RIEnVVB7FthsJpHKvkR9LjY&hl=pl&sa=X&ei=eCAmT67mAYaGrAeqxvmmCA&ved=0CEYQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=leicester%20haymarket%20theatre%20sikh&f=false](http://books.google.pl/books?id=x_hPqrjXUaUC&pg=PA121&lpg=PA121&dq=leicester+haymarket+theatre+sikh&source=bl&ots=pBA0oIlxoQ&sig=3U9RIEnVVB7FthsJpHKvkR9LjY&hl=pl&sa=X&ei=eCAmT67mAYaGrAeqxvmmCA&ved=0CEYQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=leicester%20haymarket%20theatre%20sikh&f=false), accessed on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2012
- S. Mrozek, *Emigranci*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Warszawa 1974

# THE STIMULUS



# HAGIA SOPHIA



CHURCH  
MOSQUE  
MUSEUM

CONSTANTINOPOLE  
ISTANBUL  
BYZANTIUM  
TSARGRAD

changeability

possibilities  
of interpretation

**THEATRE**

lost  
glory

First, you need to change your name  
Then, you need to change your  
character, your nature.  
Then, you change the way you  
speak, dress, move, behave...

YOU ARE A FOREIGN ELEMENT,  
AN EMIGRANT/AN IMMIGRANT.

# THE MAIN IDEAS:

## 1. austerity:



target audience:

→ both immigrants and the members ("by birth") of the society



"All theatre is political"  
B. Brecht

↳ setting (but only the "new life" part)

↳ lights (fluorescent, strip lights → cheap light bulbs)

↳ costumes (characters trying to "merge" into the background)

↳ characters

↳ dialogues (inspirations: Mrozek, Grawacki, Antoniak)

↳ even ticket prices! (cheap, so a lot of seats to make up for that)

## 2. status games

## 3. use of multimedia

## 4. mansion-simultaneous

## 5. props - very significant (memorabilia)

## 6. somewhere, there must be closed doors

"There is no other paradise than paradise lost." J.L. Borges

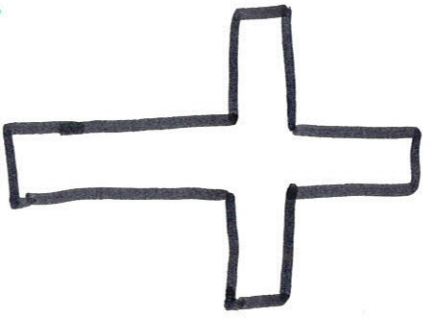


# EXPLORING

## HAGIA SOPHIA

P. I

360 A.D. → built by Emperor Constantius



↳ largest church in Constantinople

↳ named "Megale Ekklisia" (the Great Church)  
↳ "Sophia" - Holy Wisdom (one of the names of Christ)

404 A.D. → original church destroyed by mobs of Christ)

415 A.D. → new church completed

532 A.D. → Hagia Sophia destroyed again

537 A.D. → Emperor Justinian re-opens the temple "Oh, Solomon, I have surpassed thee"

1453

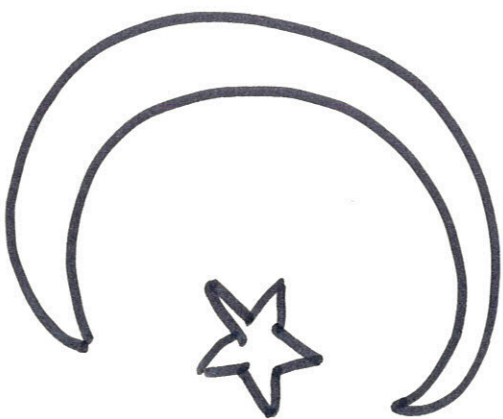
→ the church converted → mosque

# EXPLORING HAGIA SOPHIA P. II

↳ Sultan Mehmed II "the Conqueror" builds an altar in the east

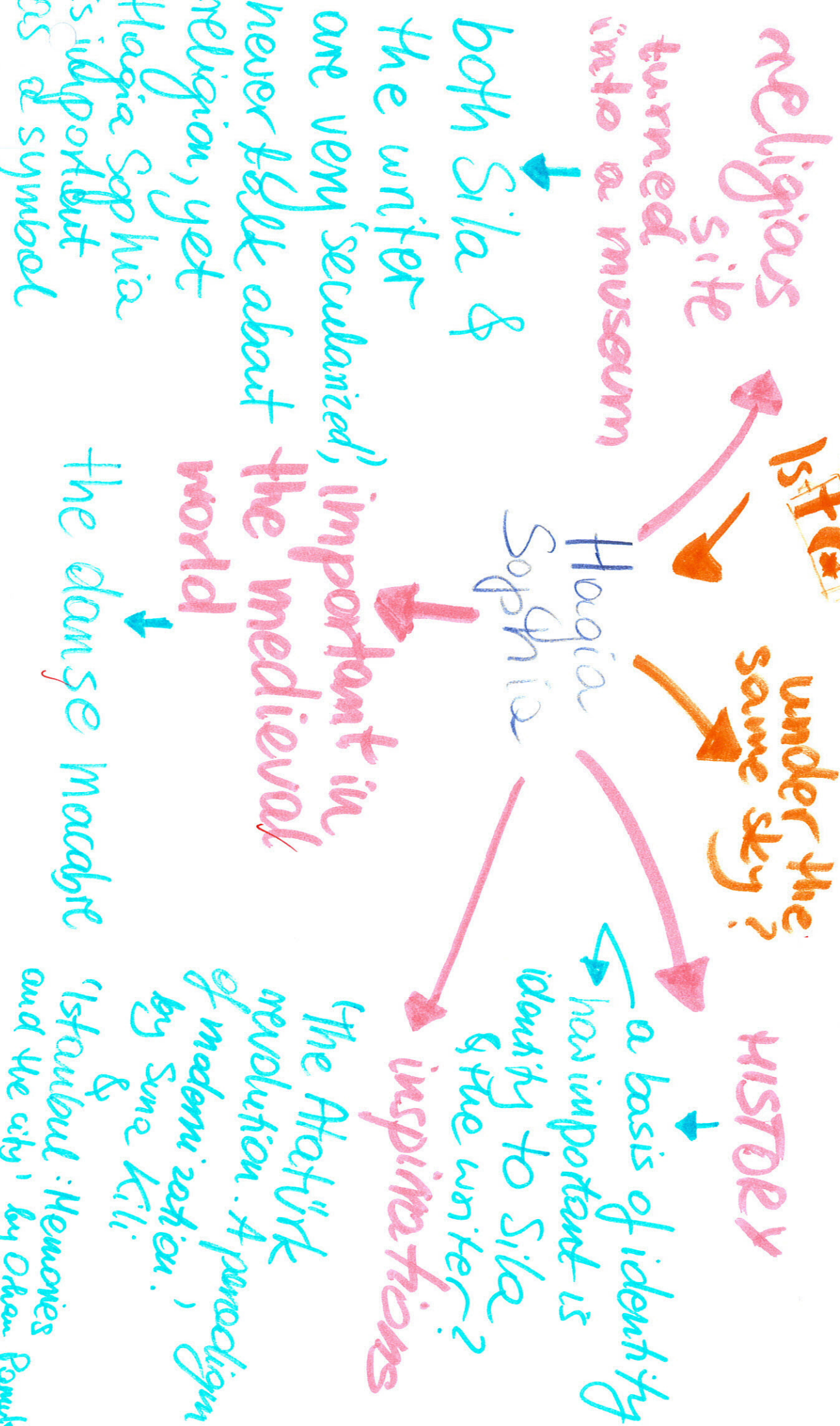
↳ minarets added

↳ Sultan Mahmud I builds a library & a primary school in the south



1926 → the Republic of Turkey (no longer the Ottoman Empire) decides to convert Hagia Sophia into a museum (1935, Kemal Atatürk)

From the stimulus to the proposal...



# THE STORY

2

## STORYLINE IN POINTS:

1. Sila leaves Turkey, her mother dotingly bids her farewell. Meanwhile, the writer sits in the sad room, reading a newspaper and thoughtlessly eating drying bread. From now on, Sila's mother in Turkey will remain silent, cooking or looking out of the window while the actual action of the play happens in the Munich apartment.
2. Sila arrives in Munich and knocks to the door of the writer; he greets her rather coldly and goes back to his typewriter.
3. Sila comes home and puts on a white uniform, examines herself in a small mirror, talks laconically with the writer about mundane issues.
4. Writer comes back one evening in a terrible mood – his article has just been rejected by another magazine. He finds Sila in front of the mirror, dressed in a revealing dress and high heels, putting on make-up. He makes a witty, mean remark that Hagia Sophia has also transformed from a church to a mosque, but now is a museum and so will be Sila, sooner than she thinks. Sila goes out; the writer opens a can of cheap meat and eats alone over a newspaper, saying it is unworthy to dirty a plate.
5. While he is eating, we can hear the jolly sound of a restaurant, the wine glasses tinkling. The sounds stops, now we can hear steps on a sidewalk. Next sound – opening and closing of the door of a car. Then – Sila's terrifying scream. All the audience can see is the eating writer who does not react to any of the sounds, but goes to sleep without even undressing. He hears knocking on the door and complains about the girl forgetting her keys, but once he opens the door and sees the girl, all in tears, he silently hugs her and brings her tea.
6. The writer puts Sila to sleep (by giving her sleeping pills) and calls the police, reports the rape in broken German. He goes to sleep, lies down next to her.
7. The next morning a lawyer comes to talk to Sila and support her. The lawyer is shocked to find out that it was a prominent doctor who committed the crime when the girl did not want to make love to him on a first date. The two cannot fully understand each other, even though the lawyer does her best to comfort the girl, yet she appears to be slightly suspicious, as if she did not believe in the rape, she keeps asking questions. When she leaves, Sila is crying.

8. The writer recites the Yeats poems to her that evokes memories about home. The two consider the possibility of going back to Turkey, but Sila needs money and the writer is too afraid to return, although he attempts to hide it.
9. The bond is established between the two main characters, marked by them joining the beds and talking in the light of a night-lamp. However, it is implied that the relationship between them is purely platonic.
10. Some time passes, though we do not know how much. In the next scene, the writer's head is bald. He reads pieces of his newest novel on Ataturk and his modernism. He is very weak, his voice is breaking. When he falls asleep, we can see Sila approach him and inject a lethal dose of morphine into his forearm, well aware that she is killing him. Lights go off.
11. The lights come on. Sila is packing her bags. She goes to the door in the middle of the stage and the audience can see her open it. The lights go off just as the audience hears a gunshot.

Did she kill herself, or did she finally return to Turkey?

Sila's mother spoonfeeding her before departure



② Sila trying her nurse uniform on



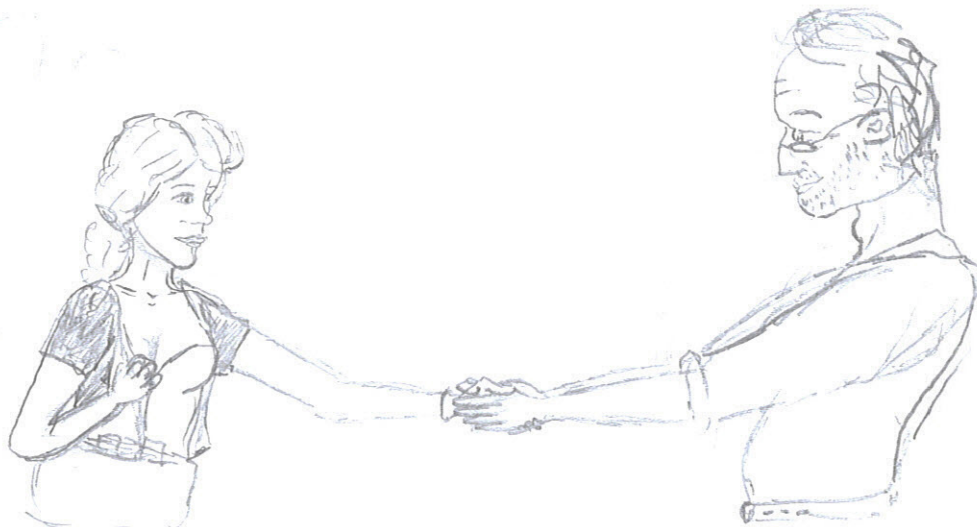
③ The writer watching Sila dress up for the date with the doctor.



4) Sita coming back after the doctor raped her.

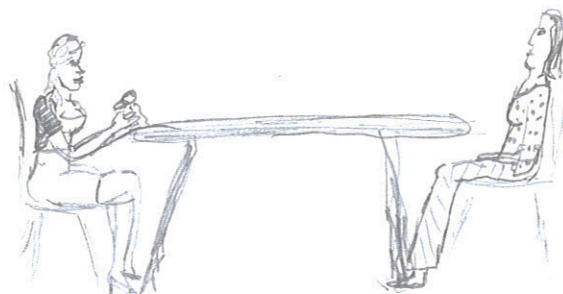


5) The lawyer comes to talk to Sita about what happened.



6) Lawyer and Sita talking.

Lawyer sitting  
cross-legged.

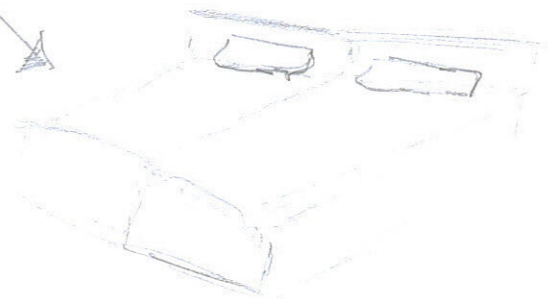


Sita sitting  
straight, nervous.



Once Sila and doctor become friends,  
they join the beds.

their  
joined beds



A DINNER

the writer  
is already  
bald

they drink  
coffee in nice  
cups - more attached  
to life



SILA'S CHOICE - THE EUTHANASIA SCENE



### The ending scene.

In the final scene (after the scene where Sila moves out and the spectator hears the gunshot), all four of the actors go out of the mansion and the song of Camille Dalmals titled "Home is where it hurts" is played in the background (that is the only time in the performance when music is used). As if they were kids again playing on a playground they start holding hands and dancing in frenzy on the proscenium. The scene is light-hearted, but the lyrics of Camille Dalmals' song contradict the momentary idyll : "My home has no heart/My home has no veins" and once again refer to the main part of the performance, exposing the spectators to the distress of homesickness / homelessness of an emigrant once again. The inspiration for the scene was the famous finale of Ingmar Bergman's masterful film "The Seventh Seal" (1957) depicting dance macabre, one of the most popular motifs in medieval art (what thematically is also linked to the choice of stage consisting of mansions), that presents personified death (in long, black robe, holding a scythe), asking representatives of all social classes to dance in order to remind them about the remoteness of life and the inevitability of death (Latin saying "memento mori" – "remember about death").<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Source of picture: <http://filopoloath.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/dance-macabre1.jpg>, accessed on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2011

**Full lyrics of “Home Is Where It Hurts”<sup>2</sup> :**

My home has no door  
My home has no roof  
My home has no windows  
It ain't water proof  
My home has no handles  
My home has no keys  
If you're here to rob me  
There's nothing to steal  
A la maison (English: At my house)  
Dans ma maison (In my house)  
C'est là que j'ai peur (It is there where I am scared)  
Home is not a harbour  
Home home home  
Is where it hurts  
My home has no heart  
My home has no veins  
If you try to break in  
It bleeds with no stains  
My brain has no corridors  
My walls have no skin  
You can lose your life here

A link to the song on youtube.com:

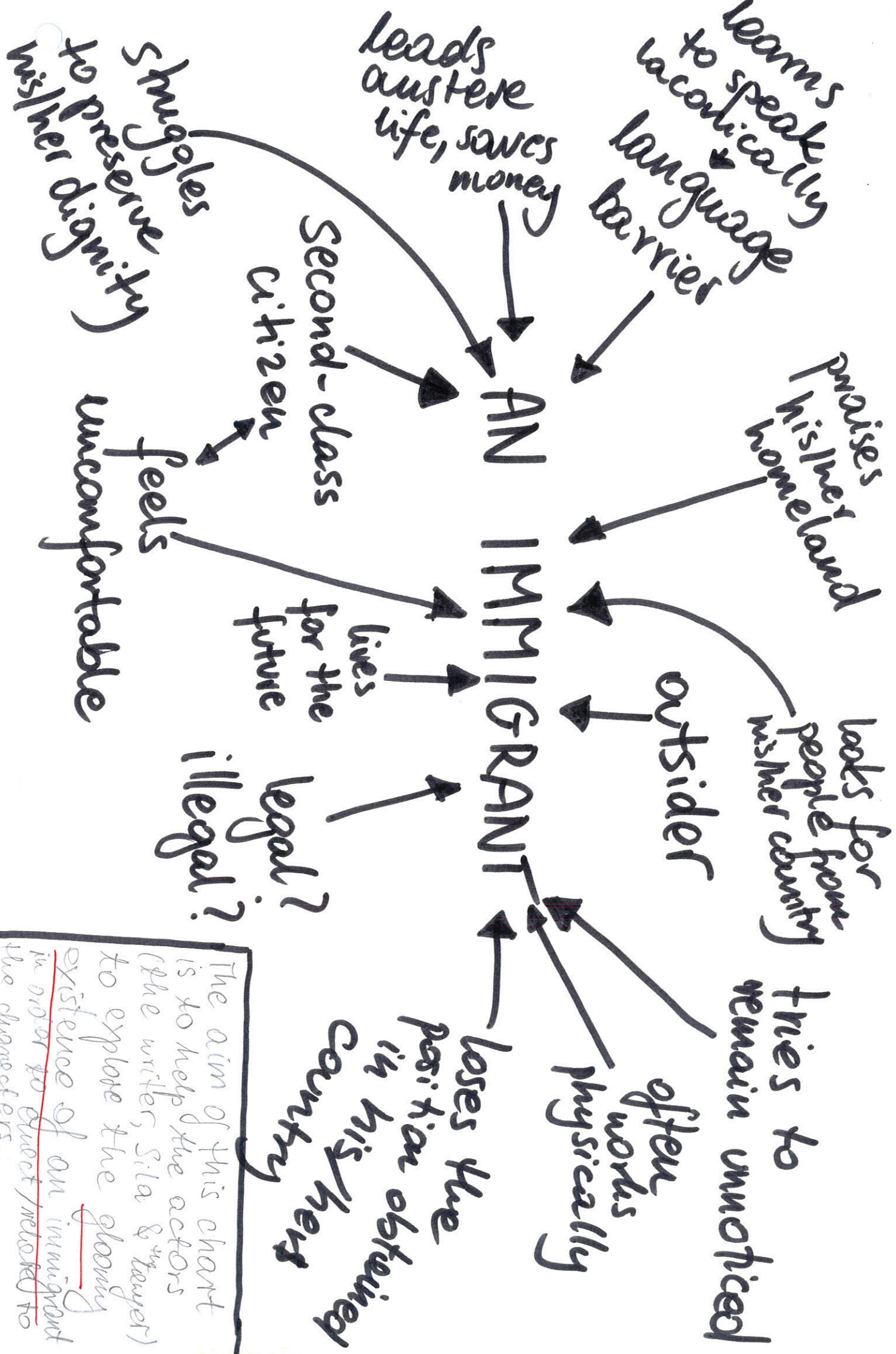
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5goc\\_uJiDY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5goc_uJiDY), accessed on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012

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<sup>2</sup> Source: [http://www.lyricsmania.com/home\\_is\\_where\\_it\\_hurts\\_lyrics\\_camille.html](http://www.lyricsmania.com/home_is_where_it_hurts_lyrics_camille.html), accessed on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012

# THE CHARACTERS

3



The aim of this chart is to help the actors (the writer, Sila & Sawyer) to explore the showing existence of an immigrant in order to quest/related to the characters.

Sila

show the emigrant experience, writer

old

a young female

educated uneducated

the

lawyer

modern

both

similar different

young full of hope active

THE

GAME

OF

FOILS

frustrated old

intellectuals

emigrated

age, roots

stayed in Turkey

mother

conservative

passive

there are only four characters in the play, yet they are very often foils to each other - nobody lives in void, right?

# THE OLD WRITER

a political refugee?

W. B. Yeats

W. Gombrowicz

Ad from  
S. Mrozek

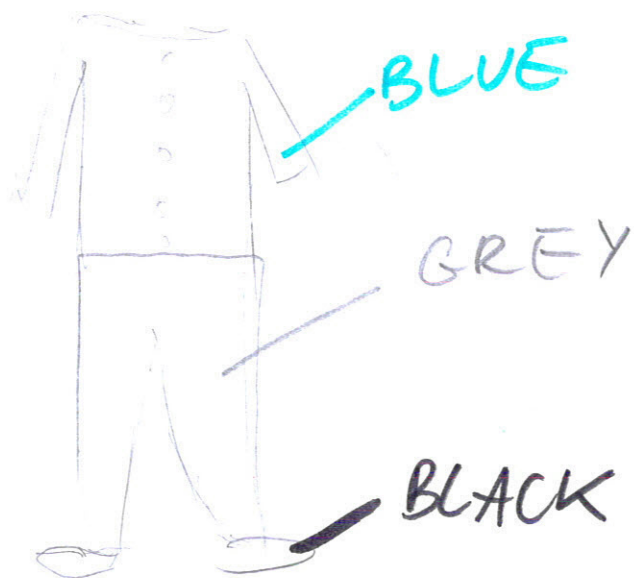
O. Pamuk

- it is implied that he fled Turkey years before Sila came
- he is an old acquaintance of her mother, hence he agrees to live with her
- he is very introverted, hence the reader never gets to know why he left Turkey or what he writes, if he had family...
- cold at first, he is the one to help Sila to shake off her depression
- extremely frustrated — an unfulfilled

WRITER — his works are not published in Turkey while no publishing house is willing to publish them in Germany — language and cultural barriers are limiting him

- his actual name is never revealed
  - Sila refers to him 'you' in English and 'Sie' in German (a polite form of 'you' used to express respect)

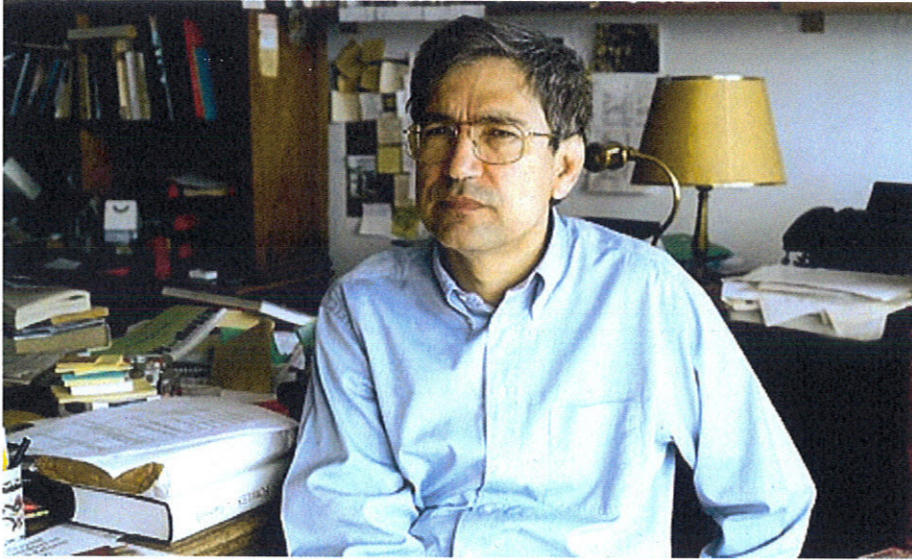
**COSTUME - BLACK & BLUE & GREY**





## THE WRITER

Inspired by Orhan Pamuk (who himself spent many years abroad) and his love of the city where he was born – Istanbul, I have decided that I would like the writer to look like him – like an aging intellectual.



Source of the picture: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/booksblog+orhanpamuk>, accessed on 29th January 2012

*What literature needs most to tell and investigate today are humanity's basic fears: the fear of being left outside, and the fear of counting for nothing, and the feelings of worthlessness that come with such fears; the collective humiliations, vulnerabilities, slights, grievances, sensitivities, and imagined insults, and the nationalist boasts and inflations that are their next of kin ... Whenever I am confronted by such sentiments, and by the irrational, overstated language in which they are usually expressed, I know they touch on a darkness inside me. We have often witnessed peoples, societies and nations outside the Western world—and I can identify with them easily—succumbing to fears that sometimes lead them to commit stupidities, all because of their fears of humiliation and their sensitivities. I also know that in the West—a world with which I can identify with the same ease—nations and peoples taking an excessive pride in their wealth, and in their having brought us the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and Modernism, have, from time to time, succumbed to a self-satisfaction that is almost as stupid.*

—Orhan Pamuk, *Nobel Lecture* (translation by Maureen Freely)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source: [http://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Turkish\\_writer\\_Orhan\\_Pamuk\\_receives\\_Nobel\\_Prize](http://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Turkish_writer_Orhan_Pamuk_receives_Nobel_Prize), accessed on 29th January 2012

In scene 8., once the lawyer leaves and Sila sits by the table, depressed, I want the writer to recite two poems of his master, Yeats, two poems that are directly linked to the stimulus: Hagia Sophia and the city of Byzantium.

**William Butler Yeats**

### **Byzantium**

The unpurged images of day recede;  
The Emperor's drunken soldiery are abed;  
Night resonance recedes, night walkers' song  
After great cathedral gong;  
A starlit or a moonlit dome disdains  
All that man is,  
All mere complexities,  
The fury and the mire of human veins.  
Before me floats an image, man or shade,  
Shade more than man, more image than a shade;  
For Hades' bobbin bound in mummy-cloth  
May unwind the winding path;  
A mouth that has no moisture and no breath  
Breathless mouths may summon;  
I hail the superhuman;  
I call it death-in-life and life-in-death.  
Miracle, bird or golden handiwork,  
More miracle than bird or handiwork,  
Planted on the star-lit golden bough,  
Can like the cocks of Hades crow,  
Or, by the moon embittered, scorn aloud  
In glory of changeless metal  
Common bird or petal  
And all complexities of mire or blood.  
At midnight on the Emperor's pavement flit  
Flames that no faggot feeds, nor steel has lit,  
Nor storm disturbs, flames begotten of flame,  
Where blood-begotten spirits come  
And all complexities of fury leave,  
Dying into a dance,  
An agony of trance,  
An agony of flame that cannot singe a sleeve.  
Astraddle on the dolphin's mire and blood,  
Spirit after Spirit! The smithies break the flood.  
The golden smithies of the Emperor!  
Marbles of the dancing floor  
Break bitter furies of complexity,  
Those images that yet

Fresh images beget,  
That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea.

### **Sailing to Byzantium**

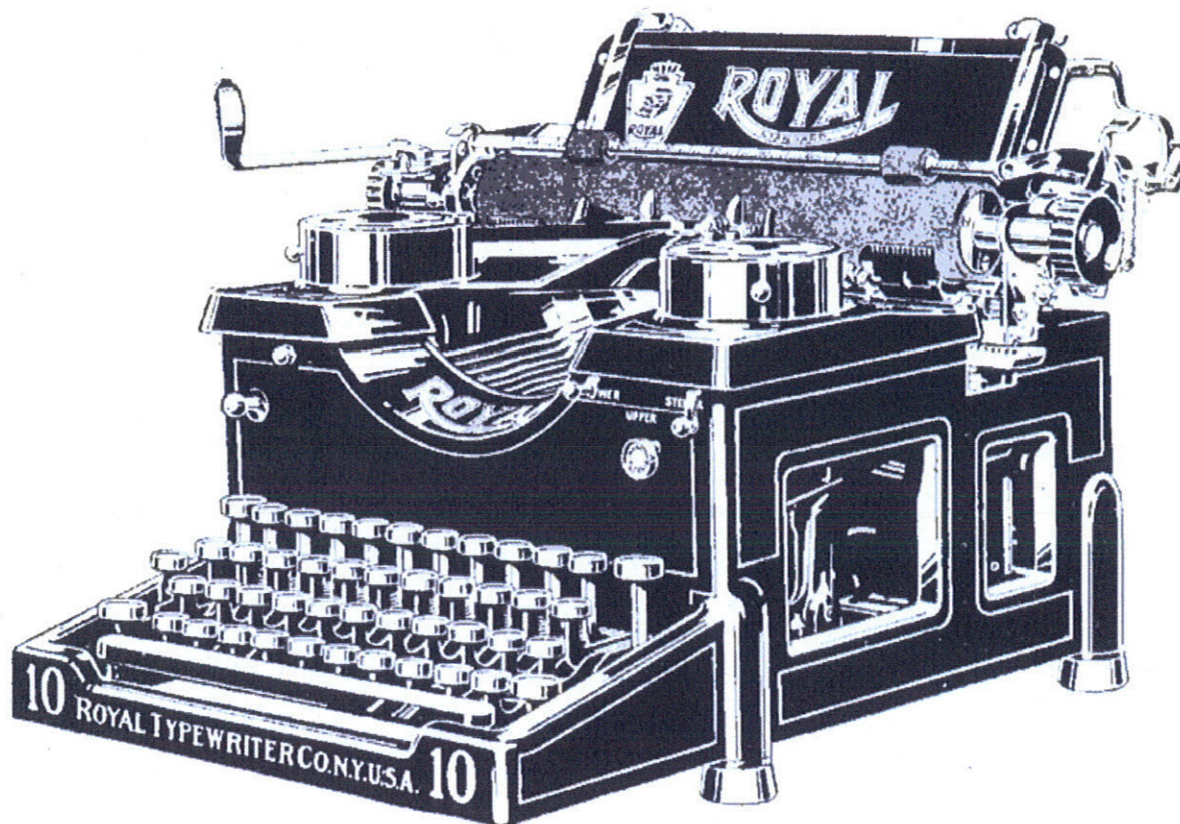
THAT is no country for old men. The young  
In one another's arms, birds in the trees  
- Those dying generations - at their song,  
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,  
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long  
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.  
Caught in that sensual music all neglect  
Monuments of unageing intellect.

An aged man is but a paltry thing,  
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless  
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing  
For every tatter in its mortal dress,  
Nor is there singing school but studying  
Monuments of its own magnificence;  
And therefore I have sailed the seas and come  
To the holy city of Byzantium.

O sages standing in God's holy fire  
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,  
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,  
And be the singing-masters of my soul.  
Consume my heart away; sick with desire  
And fastened to a dying animal  
It knows not what it is; and gather me  
Into the artifice of eternity.

Once out of nature I shall never take  
My bodily form from any natural thing,  
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make  
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling  
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;  
Or set upon a golden bough to sing  
To lords and ladies of Byzantium  
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.

# HIS PROP:



Source: [http://etc.usf.edu/clipart/4200/4253/typewriter\\_1.htm](http://etc.usf.edu/clipart/4200/4253/typewriter_1.htm), accessed on 30th January 2012



Source: [http://www.techdigest.tv/2011/04/reports\\_of\\_last.html](http://www.techdigest.tv/2011/04/reports_of_last.html), accessed on 30th January 2012.

Since I have decided not to clearly define the times in which the play is set, I want to at least give the audience a slight clue – the writer does not use a computer, he uses a typewriter.

in Old Arabic (pre-Islamic) beliefs, Sila was a demonic witch living in a desert, a female

Jinn ✓

# Sila

sila (Polish)

↳ power, strength

Sila (murti)

↳ round black stones found

in Gandaki river

in India and Nepal,

symbolize Hindu god

Vishnu

in Turkish  
home  
homeland

'Sila hasreti' means  
homesick

- exploring

the name

(since I'd rather not discover her character) why?

Why did I

choose that name

for the main

character?

The girl who appears on the pictures portraying Sila is my friend from Turkey. Her name is... Sila!

To be honest, I have mixed feeling about that girl. I feel that I do not know her, I feel that I created her and then she slipped out of control. What is her aim? Why did she become a nurse, an angel of relief and death? She is brave enough to leave her home, she is brave enough to decide when to end the suffering of her companion, yet she does not let us know if she decided to move on and live, did she go home, did she splash her brain on a wall?

That is how I imagine in Germany, in plain clothes, without make-up, with dyed blonde hair, attempting not to stand out so that her foreignness remains unnoticed:



Sila in her nurse uniform:





dressed for her date with the doctor, wearing red lip-gloss:



Close-up on the shoes:



At least I can imagine how she looks like!

The model:

## THE LAWYER

- Elegant, blonde, tall
- initially very self-confident
- very politically correct, but in the course of her conversation with      , it occurs that she thinks in schemes and has little actual understanding of the problems that emigrants face
- her dress and classical black heels:



Source of the picture: <http://www.zeberka.pl/art.php?id=2440&b=1>, accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2011

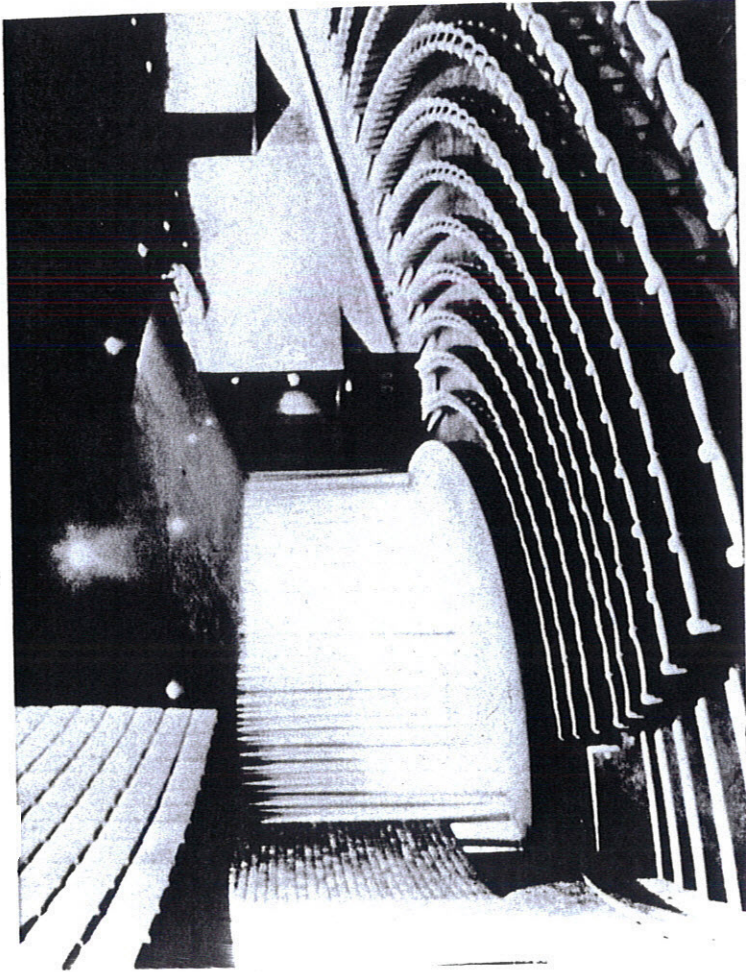
- her briefcase:



Source of the picture: <http://www.torebki-damskie.eu/aktowki-i-teczki/produkt/czarna-lakierowana-damska-aktowka.html>, accessed on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012

# THE STAGE

4

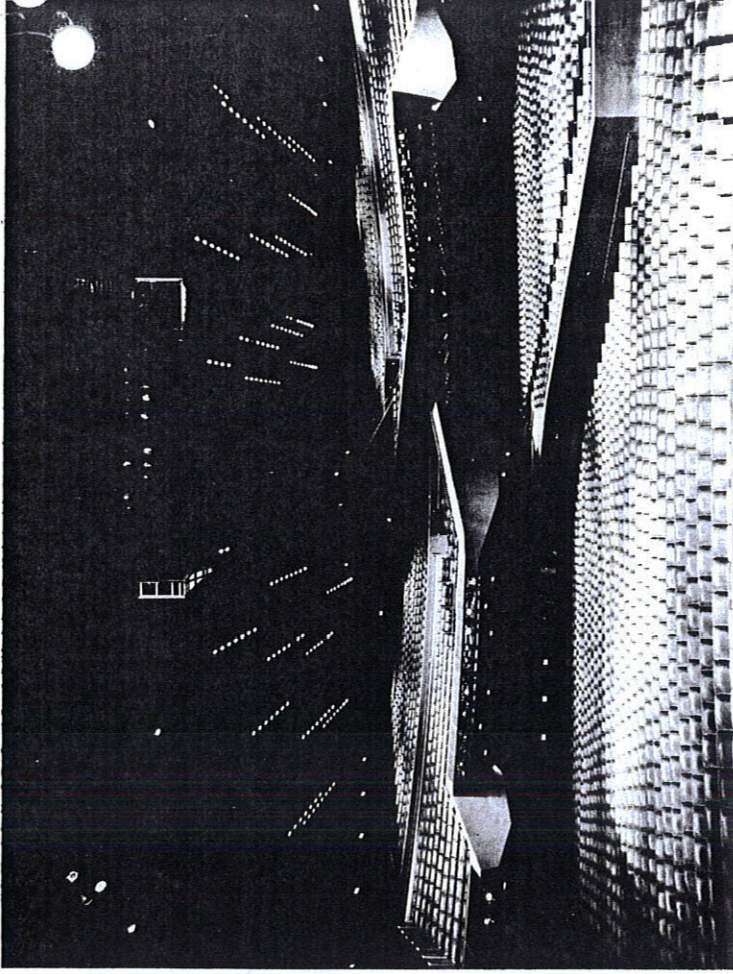


The 1969 *Thorndike Theatre at Leatherhead* is an intimate single tier playhouse (520 seats) where the stage is framed by the natural termination of the auditorium walls and ceiling. (Architect: Roderick Ham).

although some of them have a poor sightline to it. A balance has to be struck between contact and field of vision: this is currently the major area of concern in deciding the architectural form of new theatres.

### British theatres

In Britain, the main surge of theatre building was the 1960s' and 1970s' chain of regional playhouses. Each has its own acting company and production facilities to present one play at a time within a three week cycle of simultaneous preparation, rehearsal and performance. Most of these theatres have a seating capacity of five or six hundred seats which can be accommodated within a single tier offering a good sightline to, and contact with, the stage. Virtually no large scale theatres were built, and the nation's stock of such theatres was allowed to run down with near disastrous consequences for housing the performances of major works of music theatre. However, the redevelopment of these theatre sites was halted just in time to keep a barely adequate circuit of refurbished old theatres which can receive, with both technical difficulty and audience discomfort, tours of large scale musicals and national opera and dance productions.



A theatre with 3000 seats has to be very large, especially if each seat is to have a clear sightline to the stage. And there can be acoustic problems arising from the distance which lateral sound reflections have to travel from the side walls to the centre seats. California's *Orange County Performing Arts Centre* inserts mid-auditorium walls to divide the audience space into smaller acoustic units.

## INSPIRATIONS

After the war devastation of central European cities, particularly in Germany, the reinstatement of theatres was accorded a very high priority. Most of these theatres work in the repertoire mode with several productions simultaneously available for permutation to give a varying nightly performance schedule. With a strongly operatic tradition (West Germany alone has over 80 civic theatres, of which some 50 perform opera) the city theatres in small towns have a company capable of presenting evenings of opera, musical, dance and drama. The city's orchestra plays in the pit and gives symphony concerts on the stage. As cities become bigger, the drama and opera/dance performance spaces are given on separate stages.

Such repertoire theatres require extensive stage space and technical facilities to accommodate the twice daily changeovers between different performances and rehearsals. And the staffing levels for performers and supporting personnel require budgets only dreamed of outside the central European tradition. These new

Source: Francis Reid,

"Designing for the Theatre"

A & C Black

London 1996

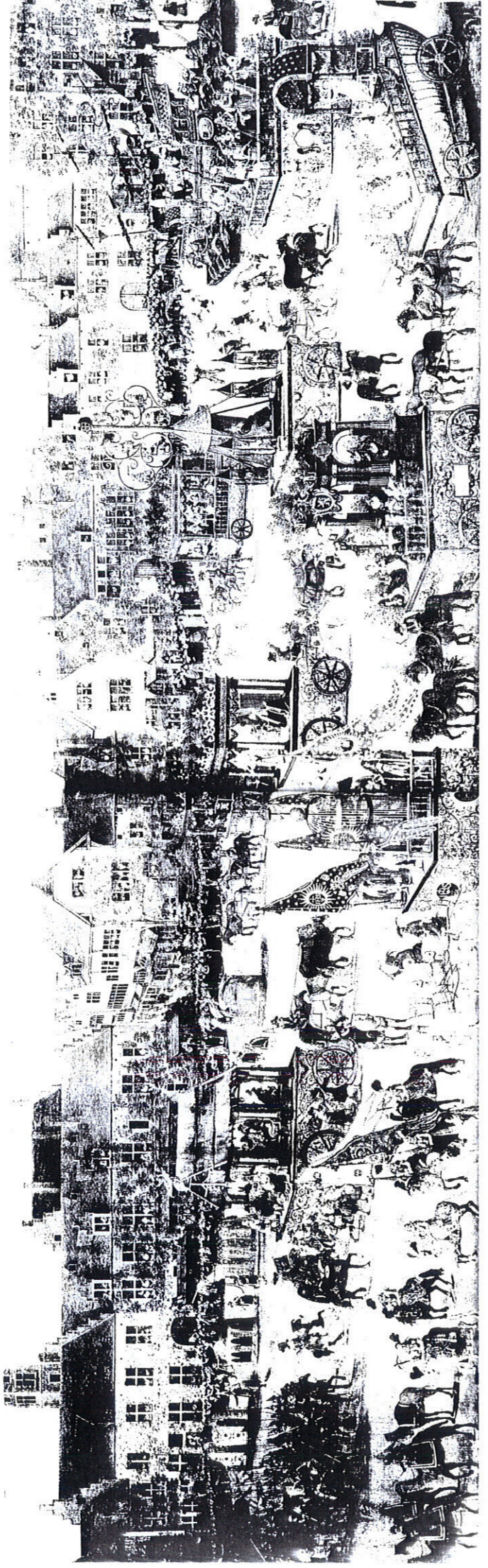
p. 10-11

# SIMULTANEOUS STAGE (MANSION)



36 (above) The setting for the Valenciennes Passion Play, 1547. Here the 'houses' are more numerous than in the *S. Apolline* (Ill. 33) and are arranged in a straight line. In addition to Hell-Mouth there is a torture-chamber and a lake for St Peter

37 (below) The Triumph of Isabella, Brussels, 1615, including pageants of the Annunciation (centre middle-ground), followed by Diana and her Nymphs, and the Nativity (centre, left-hand page), with an angel perched on the roof





Source: Phyllis Hartnoll

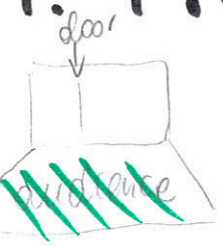
"The Theatre. A concise history"

Thomas and Hudson 1998

pages 42-43

For set design, I had the following ideas:

# 1. Proscenium stage/end stage



✓ all the people in the audience will be able to see everything

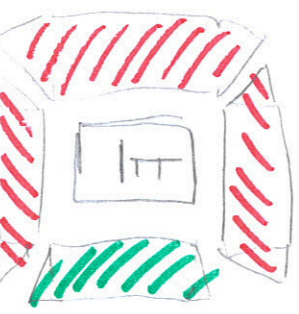
# 2. Thrust stage

✓ → the audience may 'peek' into the world of the play

X people on the sides will see only one of the 'rooms'



# 3. Theatre-in-the-round



X completely impossible as only one-fourth of the audience will be able to fully enjoy the play



The nature of the set designed 'forced' me to choose the proscenium/end stage. A huge advantage of such a solution is that it is very universal, so 'Is Hagia Sophia under the same heaven?' can actually 'travel' to various theatres and be adapted to the conditions there, for example black boxes, concert halls... or it may be easily set in a non-theatre building!

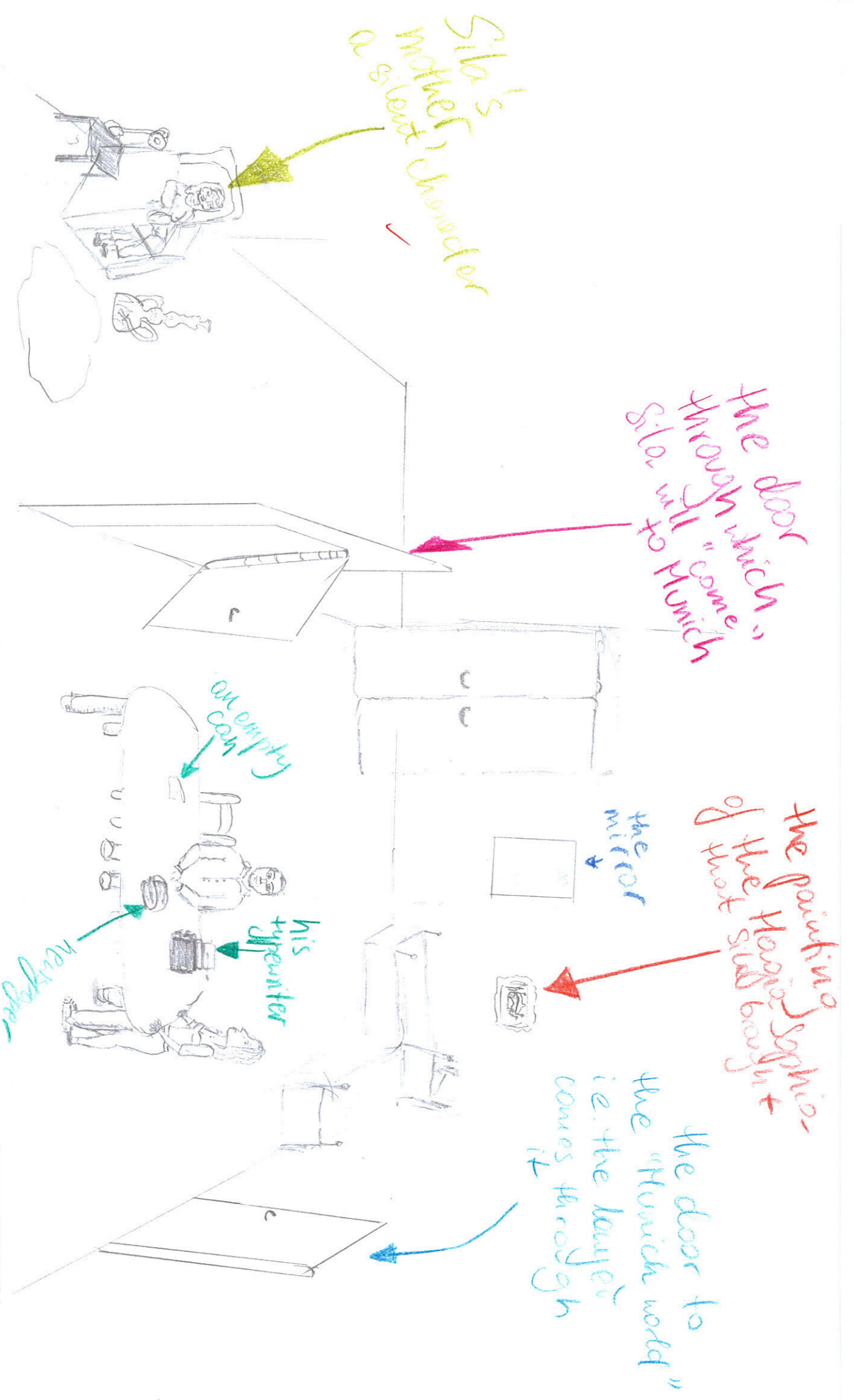
Silo's  
mother's  
a silent character ✓

the door  
through which  
Silo will come  
to Munich

the painting  
of the movie Sophie  
of that Silo bought

the door to  
the "Munich world"  
i.e. the lounge  
comes through it

an empty  
can  
his  
typewriter  
newspaper



# THE

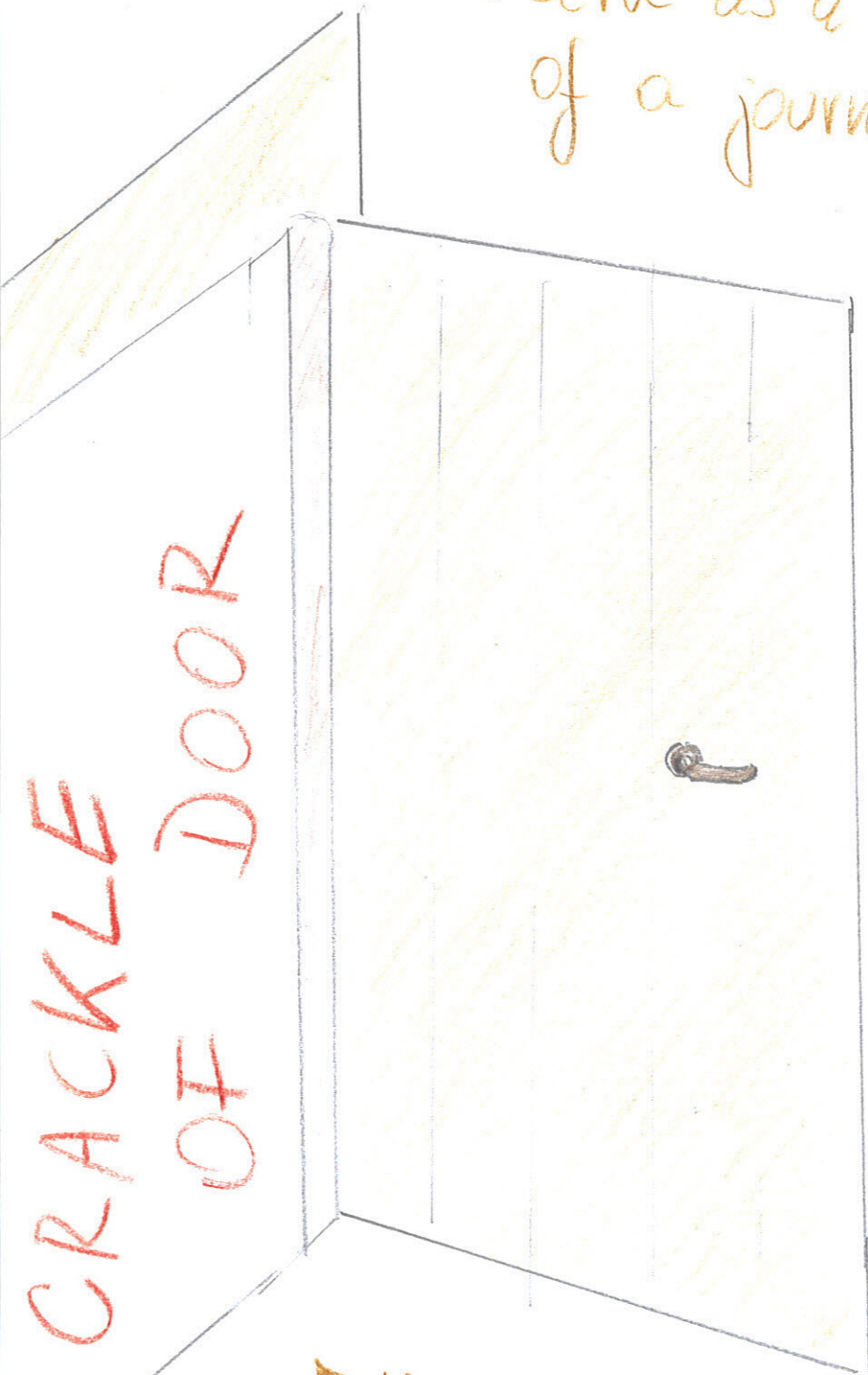
# DOOR

→ serve as a symbol of a journey, of transition, of change...

→ it seems really absurd that Sila travels from Turkey to Germany by merely opening the door...

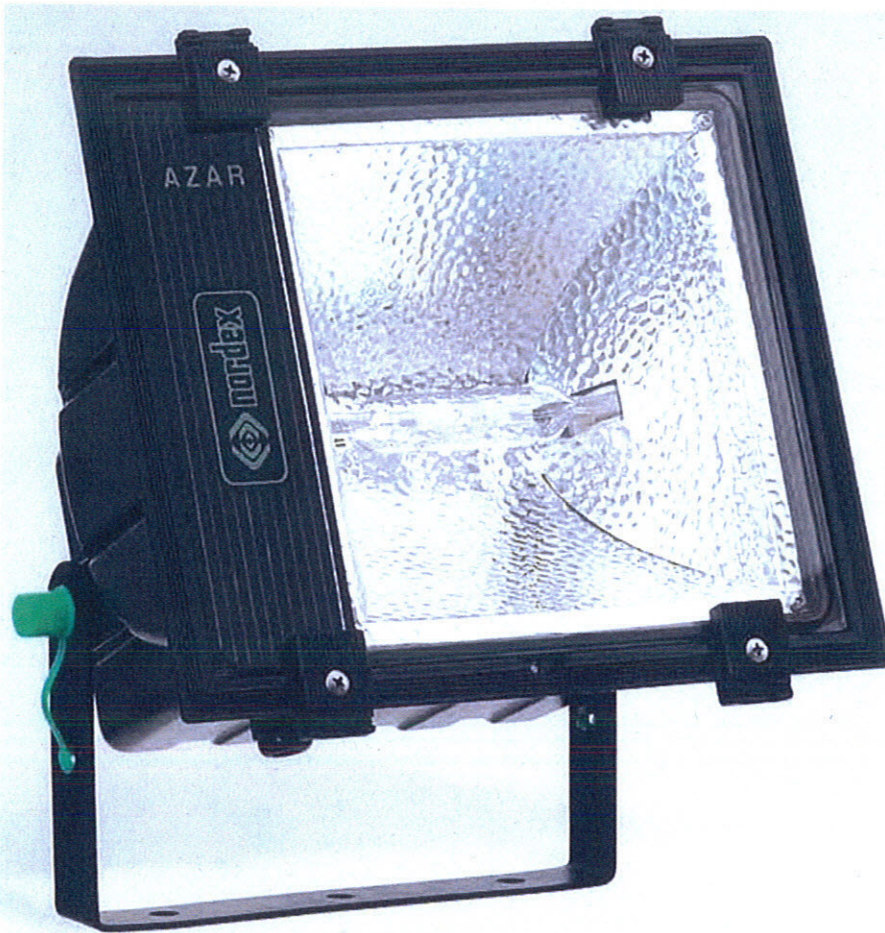
→ moreover, she returns using the door - returns from work, from the fatal date, finally - returns to her homeland - does she reach though?

CRACKLE  
OF  
DOOR



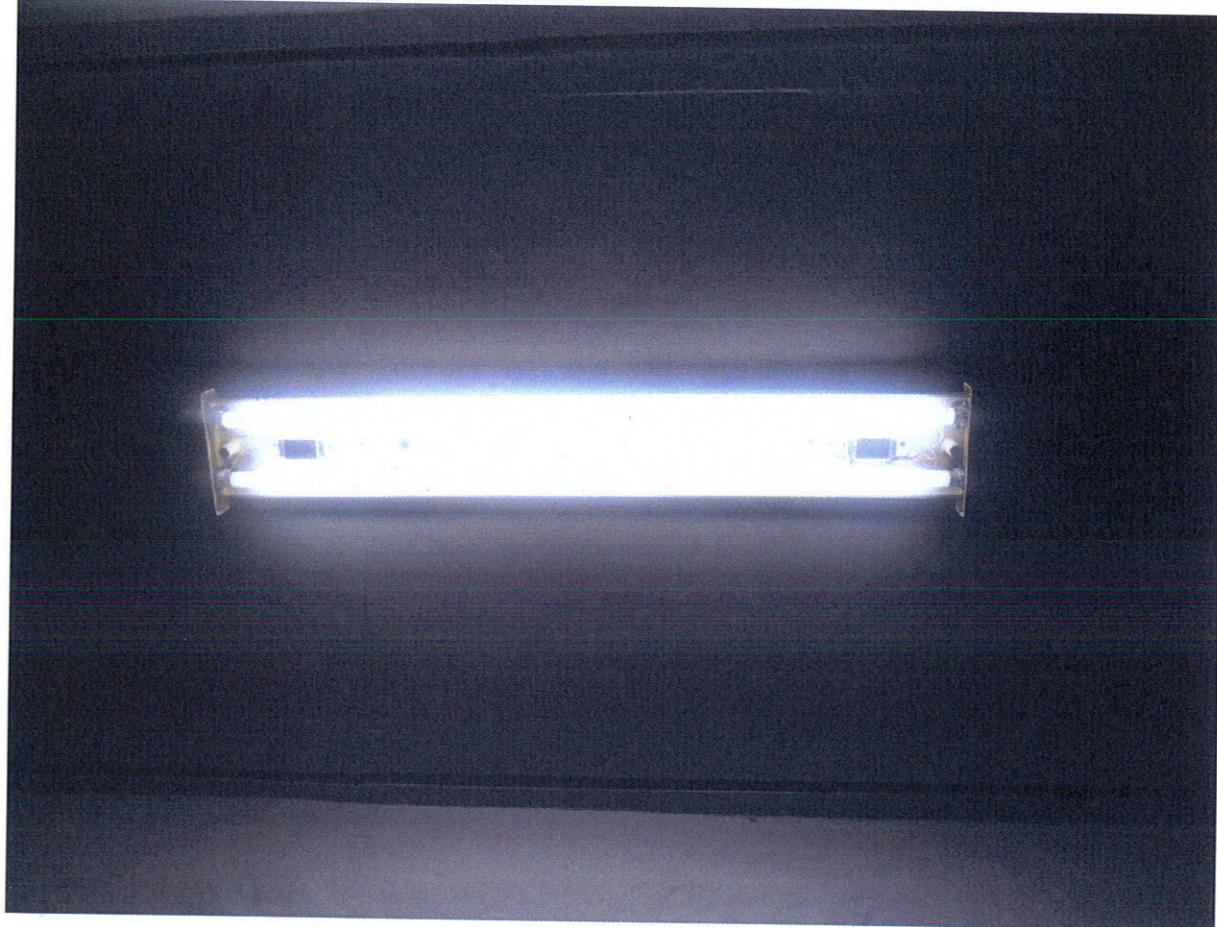
## Lighting

At the very beginning, the stage should explode with lights (only white light will be used) – that effect will be obtained by switching on the flood lights hanged around the proscenium, so that every spectator can for exactly 30 seconds, in total silence, precisely see the “mansions” and the actors sitting in them, as if it was a picture, not a real setup. Then, equally unexpectedly, all the flood lights should be switched off. After another 30 seconds, a focus spot with a barndoor shutter (in order to precisely shape the beam of light) should be switched on, with focus on the mother and Sila. Once this speechless scene is finished, the focus spot should be switched off for 10 second and switched on with a focus on Sila knocking on the door dividing the two worlds. During the rest of the play, the light should be switched on and off between every sequence, marking the unevenly passing time. In the final scene the floods should all be lit like in the opening scene.



Source: <http://www.directindustry.com/prod/nordex/floodlights-16988-45660.html>, accessed on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012

The tubelight in the room of the writer and Sila:



# MISCELLANEOUS

5



# Food in the play:

The role of food is very significant and symbolic. Food from home is a symbol, food on the foreign soil is another obstacle to overcome.

1. When Sila is leaving, her mother feeds her Turkish delight → in the act of spoonfeeding she expresses her maternal care.

2. In Munich, the writer eats the cheapest food he can find → meat from cans, bread... He does not care how it is served, does not use a plate (scene 4.)

3. Although the audience cannot see the restaurant where Sila and the doctor are having dinner, one can hear the sound of clinking glasses → wine symbolises feasting, celebrating.

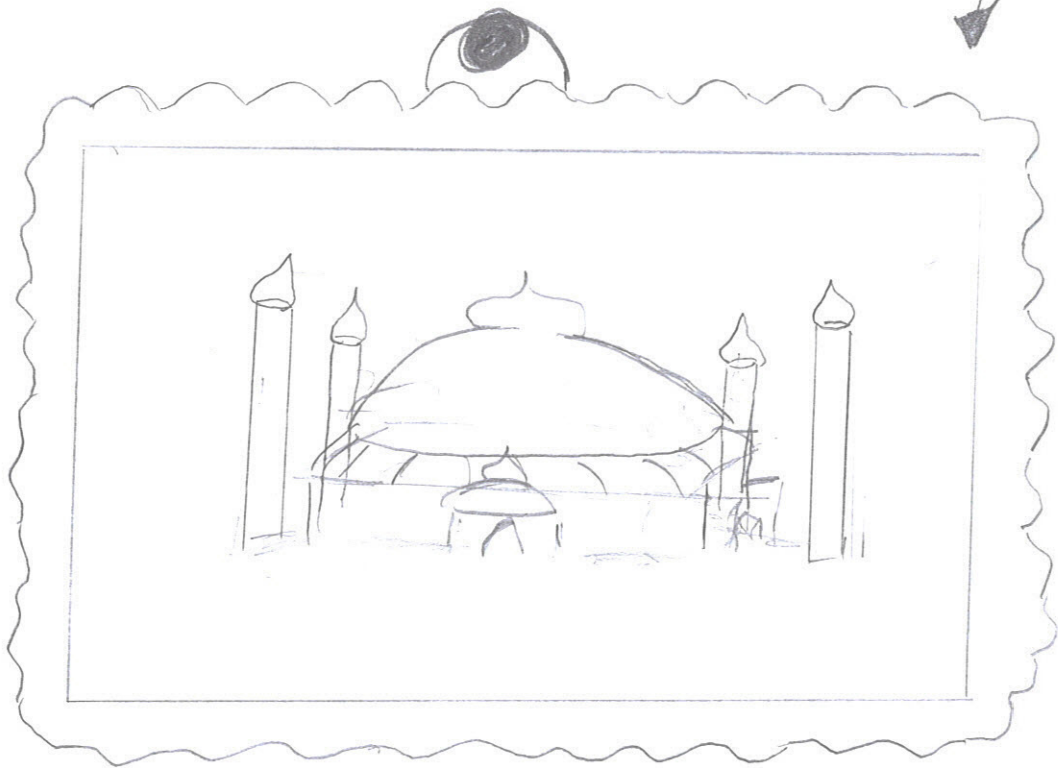
4. In scene 5., when Sila comes back in despair, the writer serves her tea → simple, cheap tea, a contrast to wine.

LE AFFICHE

THEATRE X PRESENTS . . . .

# Is Hagia Sophia

obviously  
just a painting



## under the same heaven?

by

starring

Sila Aksen as Sila  
Adam Cengiz as the Writer  
Verena Isfort as the lawyer  
Ece Kumal as mother

fictional  
names →

# ARRIVING AT THE TITLE

HAGIA } this name is too symbolic,  
SOPHIA } too well-known,  
too poetic to be avoided

heaven → paradise

For Sila, Germany must have seemed like a paradise, with its money, job market etc. But once she arrived there, she started to idealize Turkey, home ... (i.e. she hangs the picture of Hagia Sophia on the wall)

relates to my personal experience (going to a boarding school and one of my favourite quotes:

"There is no other paradise than the paradise lost."

J.L. Borges

→ forming the title as a question keeps the mystery (and ~~of~~ the doubt) awake ....

→ 'same heaven' emphasizes the homesickness, ~~or~~ looking for home in the symbols

'Is Hagia Sophia under the same heaven?'

## **YOUTUBE LINKS TO THE MOVIE TRAILERS THAT HAVE INSPIRED ME:**

1. "Le Havre" by Aki Kaurismaki, 2011  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OeKM0fjOtgA&feature=related>
2. "Almanya" by Yasemin Samdereli, 2011  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzWWObywANQ>
3. "Nothing personal" by Urszula Antoniak, 2009  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PuNxINUR-R0>
4. "Code blue" by Urszula Antoniak, 2011  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0oisXRNmscc>
5. "Melancholia" by Lars von Trier, 2011  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzD0U841LRM>
6. The performance of "The Emigrants" by Kazimierz Kutz, starring Marek Kondrat (AA) and Zbigniew Zamachowski (XX) – not a trailer, first 10 minutes of the play (the rest of the play is also available online)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQOdc3utLOU>

All links accessible on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012.