

BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

**THEATRE AS THE SOCIETY'S MIRROR: Generational
Confrontation of Gender Stereotypes**

Bachelor Thesis

Bratislava, 2023

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this bachelor's thesis is my own work and has not been published in part or in whole elsewhere. All used literature and other sources are attributed and cited in references.

In Bratislava, February 15, 2023

Petra Bačová

Signature: _____

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Báčová: Generational Confrontation

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Abstract

This thesis aims to study the nature of the relationship between different generations of women in relation to stereotypes which were acquired through four selected theatre plays. For research and investigation, four theatre plays were chosen from the Slovak scene repertoire: *Generation Z—Unparalleled Beauty (Generácia Z - Krása nevidaná)*, *The Owl (Sova)*, *Headmistresses of the Globe (Riaditeľky zemegule)*, and *Escaped Alone (Čaj a apokalypsa)*. The selection was made explicitly for similar content and characteristics based on feminism and generational dialogue. The plays address issues related to the current state of stereotypical female problems related to different societal expectations and misunderstandings of generations stemming from the insufficient intergenerational dialogue. Condemnation, misunderstanding and lack of respect from younger generations to older generations and from the side of older to younger generations present features that contribute to the gap between ages. The main reason for this is a lack of respect and understanding of being raised in different stereotypical models. Each generation is exposed to other stereotypical models, which results in shaping their perception of gender role expectations. The results indicate that generational confrontation could be eliminated through mutual communication and respect which can bring mutual enrichment.

Keywords: generations, gender roles, intergenerational dialogue, feminist theatre, gender stereotypes, feminisms

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Abstrakt

Účelom tejto práce je preskúmať povahu vzťahu medzi rôznymi generáciami žien v súvislosti so stereotypmi, prostredníctvom štyroch vybraných divadelných hier. Na výskum a vyšetovanie boli zo slovenského repertoára vybrané štyri divadelné hry: *Generácia Z – Krása nevidaná*, *Sova*, *Riaditeľky zemegule*, a *Čaj a apokalypsa*. Výber sa uskutočnil výslovne pre podobný obsah a charakteristiky založené na feminizme a generačnom dialógu. Hry sa zaoberajú otázkami týkajúcimi sa súčasného stavu ženských stereotypných problémov súvisiacich s rôznymi spoločenskými očakávaniami a nedorozumeniami generácií vyplývajúcimi z nedostatočného medzigeneračného dialógu. Odsúdenie, nedorozumenie a nedostatok rešpektu zo strany mladších generácií k starším generáciám, ako aj zo strany starších generácií k mladším generáciám, predstavujú prvky, ktoré prispievajú k rozdielom medzi generáciami. Jedným z dôvodov je nedostatok rešpektu a porozumenie pri výchove v rôznych stereotypných modeloch. Každá generácia je vystavená rôznym stereotypným modelom, čo má za následok formovanie ich vnímania rodových očakávaní. Výsledky naznačujú, že generačné konfrontácie by sa mohli odstrániť vzájomnou komunikáciou a hlbším pochopením, ktoré môže priniesť vzájomné obohacovanie.

Kľúčové slová: generácie, rodové role, medzigeneračný dialóg, rodový stereotyp, feministické divadlo, feminizmy

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Introduction

From a historical perspective, traditional gender-based societies did not consider women legally competent. Some even compared the status of women to objects. For example, Lengyelová (2006) mentioned the possibility of gaining women in the past through rape or arranged marriage. The bride's parents sold her to the groom, which could be compared to a business transaction. Considering the twenty-first century in Slovakia, such a thing is unimaginable. However, some cultures still believe this notion of being the only right way. Piscová (2006) suggests that gender equality is one of the significant indicators of democratic development in today's society. As Lengyelová (2006) points out, gender equality is a concept that does not have a long tradition in Central Europe. In the past, the only alternative role for women was raising the family, which indicates that family and women were strongly connected.

From a young age, girls are expected to wear different kinds and colours of clothing, play with other toys, and pursue a suitable career later in adulthood. According to European Institute for Gender Equality (2017), gender stereotypes “are traditional ideas about what boys and girls can or should do.” The stereotypes about women are constantly changing, but some aspects remain, such as taking care of the household, being the image of beauty, and being more vulnerable. Living in a world with different generations, each of which carries its story, makes society even more diverse. Generations of Baby boomers, Generation X, Y, or Z, are the generations present today. Since every generation arrives at a different time, there is a generational gap. The fact that different generations have different definitions of "feminism" illustrates how social structures, significant social movements, and the cultural environment can form stratified groups of people known as "generations," who then define and project who they are (Peltola, Milkie, & Presser, 2004, p. 140). The older generations have lived for a more extended period, and for that reason, these generations are more experienced in certain aspects than the younger ones. On the contrary, the younger generation is more experienced regarding technological capacity.

This work aims to study the nature of the relationship between different generations of women about stereotypes which will be acquired through four selected theatre plays.

Literature Review

Generational Theory

When discussing the different generations, it is essential to define the term “generation” first. Every generation lives in a specific period under certain circumstances and conditions. As a result, each generation possesses its set of values and views. Furthermore, every generation is dedicated to upholding the principle they believe in. The generational gap is a critical concept because of the different age categories of people born in distinct eras. No one can eliminate this generational gap, but there are some ways it can be reduced. Now the world is progressing at a quicker rate than ever. Since the twenty-first century, profound changes have occurred, brought about by innovations like cars with autopilot, computers that teach themselves, currencies sustained by algorithms, and medical discoveries and research (Beard, 2019).

According to generational theory, a person’s worldview is shaped by the time period in which they were born. The value systems are shaped in the first decades of life by family, friends, community, significant events and the general era when the individual is born (Codrington, 2008). In the past century, global forces combined with the effects of media and news channels, communication technologies and the increasing interconnectedness of the world have meant that a rising number of people are impacted by defining events. People of the same age are likely to share similar fundamental value systems regardless of their country or community of birth since they are confronting similar concerns, being impacted by the same events, and sharing similar experiences (Codrington, 2008).

Young people learn values from their parents and communities, which often share common ideals throughout their lives (Mannheim, 1952). In the process of becoming aware of the world around them, younger generations experience society differently (Codrington, 2008). Similarly to social class or culture, Mannheim (1952) explained that generations are defined as social locations that can affect an individual's consciousness. On the other hand, William Strauss and Neil Howe popularised the theory of generations in the 1990s (Codrington, 2008).

Mannheim's theory

Karl Mannheim was the first modern scholar to attempt to explain and define generations. According to Mannheim (1952), as a result of the gap between older generations' ideals and the realities experienced by them, young generations are imperfectly socialised. Mannheim explains in his book "The Problem of Generation" that generation has the potential to affect a person's consciousness in the same way as social class or societal culture does. As Mannheim argues, major historical events significantly influence generations. Mannheim contends that historical influences and occurrences can be utilised to understand how generations respond to their social contexts (Newcombe & Twist, 2021). He defined a generation as a group of individuals of similar ages whose members have experienced similar events. According to Mannheim, generations are influenced by the socioeconomic environment of their youth. Moreover, Mannheim (1952) stated that generations are made up of two essential things: a commonplace in time history and a sense of that history.

The duration of a generation is variously estimated. Assessing in fifteen years, but most take it to thirty years. People are still learning in the first thirty years of life, and men usually quit public life at sixty (Mannheim, 1952, p. 278). Mannheim (1952) said that "different generations live at the same time, but since experienced time is the only real-time, they must all be living in qualitatively quite different subjective eras"(p.283). People of different ages live together, with various possibilities of experience facing them all together. Nevertheless, for every individual, the "same time" is an additional time representing a different period of the self, which they can only share with people of their age (Mannheim, 1952, p. 283). Mannheim defines a concrete group as "the union of several individuals through naturally developed or consciously willed ties" (p. 289). Therefore, generation is a group of people distinct from affiliations, such as organisations created for a particular purpose.

Mannheim talks about generation location. Generation's location exists on the base of biological rhythm in the existence of humans. People having the same year of birth and belonging to the same generation are endowed with a common location in the historical dimension of social process (Mannheim, 1952, p. 290). That means that the phenomenon of generations represents a particular kind of identity of location,

embracing related age groups embedded in the historical-social process. In conditions, a generation's location is determined by how specific patterns of experience and thought tend to be brought into existence by the natural data of the transition from one generation to another (p. 292).

Strauss and Howe's theory

Strauss and Howe's generational theory discusses a cycle of age cohorts called generations (Newcombe & Twist, 2021). The idea was developed by William Strauss, an American author, playwright, and theatre director, along with American author Neil Howe. According to Strauss-Howe's theory, every 80 years marks the "fourth turning" of generations. It is characterised by the destruction of social order and the creation of a new one that characterises the "fourth turning." Strauss and Howe suggest that historical cycles take 80-90 years to complete, and this period is called the "Speculum" (Strauss & Howe, 1991). For each historical cycle, there are four turnings (Newcombe & Twist, 2021):

- 1.st turning - The High
- 2.nd turning - The Awakening
- 3.rd turning - The Unravelling
- 4.th turning - The crisis

Strauss and Howe describe these turning points as the seasons of history. They have found that every 80-90 years in the history of the United States, a national crisis occurred, while halfway between crises, a cultural awakening took place. The theory of cycles puts generations in tension, arguing for different cultural priorities. Many critics have argued that the timing of Strauss and Howe's generational theory is too culturally specific and that it only considers American history. However, some have applied the theory to other countries and recognised similar awakenings and crisis patterns (Newcombe & Twist, 2021). Another term Strauss and Howe refer to is cohort groups. People belong to several cohort groups since they were born on various dates. Cohort groups are distinct because all of their members experience the same occasions, feelings, and fashions around the same age. In other words, throughout their lives, they maintain a "similar age location" in history (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Common age

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location is what gives each cohort group a distinct biography and distinct lifespan since history impacts people quite differently, depending on their age. People have no issue appreciating age location when considering significant historical events like war, depression, revolution, or spiritual prophesy, according to Strauss and Howe (1991).

Gender Theory and Gender stereotypes

According to West and Zimmerman (1987), gender was, from the western perspective, an achieved status constructed through sociological, psychological and cultural means, whereas sex was ascribed by biology. According to them, gender is the product of social doing. West and Zimmerman criticise this concept and are moving from it. Gender roles are based on the expectations of individuals or groups based on their sex, values, and beliefs about gender (Blackstone, 2003). Gender-appropriate behaviour is defined through structures, norms, and beliefs. Gender or gender-appropriate behaviour is done so that other people can recognise it as belonging to one or the different sex categories. However, it is essential to distinguish between sex and gender. The features associated with an individual's sex are used to determine their sex in biological terms. Gender, unlike sex, is a social construct created through human interactions and their environment. Since this matter, gender has been referred to as a social construction (Blackstone, 2003). Phillips (2005) defines gender as “a social, rather than a biological construct, that varies with the roles, norms and values of a given society or era.” Gender, therefore, refers to what constitutes masculinity and femininity. Delap (2020) contends that sexual distinctions are not a natural separation that is imposed in various ways over time and space. Social and political structures uphold gender ideologies. While some communities may have a binary approach to sex and gender, others may have various formulations based on factors like age, social standing, and spiritual role.

Nowadays, it is still present that the two genders are still far from achieving equal status and values. In today's society, men hold a higher position than women (Banyard, 2010, p. 3). As was already mentioned, sex is understood to be a biological aspect of the female and male body. At the same time, gender is the social construct created through repeated performances that are particular to a specific time and place (Butler, 1986, p. 35). However, rather than a state of being, “gender could be considered as a plastic process” (Delap, 2020, p. 340). Therefore, Butler (1986) distinguished that being a woman and being a female is not identical (p. 35).

Society creates scientific categories, such as race, sex, gender, or sexuality, to oppress people who do not fit into those categories. Roles are assigned to men and women according to their gender. Women have traditionally been considered to be more

nurturing than men. Conversely, men are expected to be robust, courageous, and leaders. In the workplace, for instance, men and women are expected to perform different tasks based on their sex (Kanter, 1977). To fulfil the traditional feminine role, a woman might work full-time rather than take employment outside the home (Blackstone, 2003).

Gender stereotypes

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines stereotype as “something conforming to a fixed or general pattern, especially a standardised mental picture held in common by members of a group and representing an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment” (Merriam-Webster, 2023). At all stages of life, gender stereotypes represent one of the most persistent forms of gender inequality. One of the ongoing gender stereotypes is that men are more dominant than women. Thus, they achieve better results in activities directly related to their roles. In society, mothers play an important role in raising children, and this role is associated with the idea of femininity (Osad'án, R., Belešová, M., & Szentesiová, L., 2018).

According to Eisend (2019), gender stereotypes have decreased over time. When it comes to the degree of gender stereotyping, there are differences between the countries when it comes to gender-related values. The Institute of Public Affairs created a survey containing sixteen attributes. The respondents were supposed to choose the most suitable qualities for the ideal woman and an ideal man (Bútorová, 2008). According to Bútorová, most women in Slovak society “perceive their gender as a biological attribute rather than a socially construed identity” (p.19).

Table 1.1 distinguishes the attributes of the ideal women and men viewed by the Slovak population. The aim was to examine the Slovak citizens' expectations concerning the perfect woman and man, delivering differences between the years 1995 and 2006 in this matter. The differences between perfect women and men are significant. The ruling attribute of the ideal woman supported is the ability to care for the household supported by the majority of the population, with 86% in 1995 and 70% in 2006. At the same time, a minority of the population supported the ideal man with the same attribute.

Table 1.1 Qualities of the ideal woman and ideal man viewed by the Slovak population in 1995 and 2006 (%)

	Ideal woman		Ideal man	
	1995	2006	1995	2006
Ability to take care of the household	86	70	46	44
Pleasant appearance, beauty	38	42	8	15
Authority at home, within the family	40	35	53	46
Ability to provide for the family	23	18	92	79
Desire to excel at work	16	17	29	25
Physical strength	5	7	33	34

Note: Sample consisted of respondents older than 15. Adopted from “She and He in Slovakia” by Zora Bútorová et al., 2008, p. 21. Copyright 2008 by the Institute of Public Affairs

While the ability to take care of the household in 1995 was supported by 86% of the population, in 2006, the overall percentage lowered to 70%. The same goes for the attributes such as being the authority at home or within the family; and ability to provide for the family. On the other hand, the percentage of attributes that increased compared to the year 1995 is the pleasant appearance and beauty; resourcefulness; to achieve the highest possible education; to have an interest in public affairs; and physical strength (Bútorová, 2008, pp. 22-25). The reason behind these phenomena, as stated by Bútorová, of significant decrease is the fact that more women help support their households or provide for their families. And the issue is even more visible in the regions with high unemployment rates and low social capital (p. 23).

Women as objects

When a woman from Paris was complimented on her slim waist during the seventeenth century, she died from the implications of wearing a corset. This was due to the damage it could have on human ribs and organs (Alizadeh, 2019). Body image expectations have been a topic of discussion among many young adults. In the twenty-first century, female body ideals have shifted to a skinny, toned, and tall body. Some of these often unrealistic ideals may lead to body dissatisfaction.

Feminist theorists believe that the female body is viewed as an object, leading many women to look at their bodies from the outside (Spitzack, 1990). According to McKinley & Hide (1996), this could result in attitudes toward control, body surveillance, body shame, and objectified body awareness. According to McKinley & Hide (1996), a negative correlation exists between objectified body consciousness and body esteem. This suggests that body objectification may result in unattainable standards for women and body dissatisfaction. Women are often portrayed as sexual objects in social media, movies, and television. They are expected to eat small amounts of food, care about their appearance, and act inappropriate and stereotypical ways. If a woman does not behave and work a certain way, she is often seen as masculine or unattractive.

According to Raewyn W. Connell, an Australian theorist of masculinity, men's dominant position in the gender order has a material pay-off, and the discussions of masculinity have constantly underestimated how big it is. Men's average incomes in wealthy capitalist nations are around twice as high as women's. Men have ten times the political access of women worldwide. And they control the means of violence through weapons and armed forces. Delap interpreted all these advantages as a "patriarchal dividend" (Delap, 2020, p. 97).

Feminist theatre

Feminism

According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2022), feminism is “the belief in an advocacy of the political, economic, and social equality of sexes expressed especially through organised activity on behalf of women’s rights and interests.” Three waves of feminism refer to the three most intense periods in which significant world reforms were brought about (Banyard, 2010, p. 3). Besides these monumental reforms, there has also been a tremendous cultural shift.

The first wave of feminism began in the late nineteenth century and aimed to create more accessible possibilities for women (Rampton, 2008).

According to Rampton (2008), the second wave of the feminist movement, which began in the 1960s and lasted till the 1990s, was concerned with sexuality and reproductive rights, as well as passing the Equal Rights Amendments to guarantee social equality. Furthermore, in this phase, gender and sex were differentiated. Gender was defined as a social construct, and sex was described as a form of biological identity. Many of the goals of the second wave were achieved, such as the more excellent representation of women in leadership positions, increased abortion rights, greater acceptance and expression of female sexuality, increased public awareness of the matter, and greater access to education (Rampton, 2008, p. 5). No area was more central to second-wave feminism than health and the female body. The feminist second-wave theory began to theorise the oppression of women as a class. The relationship between women and work was one of the most debated topics of second-wave feminism (Aston & Diamond, 2009). It was not about equality but how it worked for women from different classes, such as working-class women, middle-class women, or unemployed women. The categories feminists used to describe themselves were liberal, bourgeois, radical, cultural, socialist, or materialist (Aston & Diamond, 2009).

The third wave of feminism started in the mid-90s and broke many boundaries (Rampton, 2008, p. 4). Third wavers addressed different social contexts and challenges than the first and second wavers. Other times that the young generation of women faced, times of technology and mass media play a big difference compared to the previous

generation of women. The main goal of this wave is to create conditions of freedom, justice, and equality for all people. According to Snyder (2008), third-wave feminists make a central feature of diversity; furthermore, “they have a broader vision of politics, where they focus more on than just women's issues” (p. 181).

The fourth wave of feminism began around 2010. It could be defined as an extension of the third wave of feminism and shares similarities with its predecessors, such as a focus on empowering women and LGBTQ+ rights. However, the most significant differences between the fourth wave and the forerunners are social media and its use in activism (Castanier, 2022, p.3). The fourth wave of feminism is moving back into the public discourse, where issues like sexual abuse, rape, unequal pay, and violence are receiving national and international attention from politicians and the press. According to Rampton (2008), feminism is no longer just about the struggles of women; it is a fight for gender equality.

Feminism, according to Charlotte Perkins Gilman, is a sort of humanism that encourages "the development of human traits and functions among women" (Delap, 2020). Even though feminist dreams were utopian, they exposed the violence, absurdities, and inequalities inherent in how gender was structured through speculation, fantasy, and imagination about other futures. American author Kate Millet described patriarchy as a pervasive "habit of thought" that made it acceptable for males to dominate women and for white people to dominate racial minorities, young people to dominate older people, and women to dominate other women (Delap, 2020).

Where previous debates had talked about wife-beating, the new terminology said how severe and widespread violence was and that it affected children, girlfriends, and other relatives as well (Delap, 2020, p. 136). As mass capitalism grew, commercial consumption for men and women increased, but women retained their pre-eminent place as consumers of fashion, household goods, and food. The United Nations had responded to pressure from Communist-aligned members to include gender equality in its 1945 Charter. In 1979, the General Assembly helped embolden such initiatives by adopting the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Delap, 2020). This treaty guaranteed women's rights in politics, economics,

and social and legal affairs. It helped spark the establishment of feminist claims in policy debates and legislation.

Feminism and theatre

The word “theatre” comes from the Greek word “action”, meaning a performance or drama (Nichols, 1956). A theatre performance is a type of art that satisfies one's emotional and intellectual needs while allowing one to engage in fictitious situations. It also aids in developing a fuller understanding of society. The theatre has always had a social function, to bring people together through shared experiences. According to Nichols (1956), “society shapes its theatre as much as theatre shapes its society” (p.183). However, the theatre has had a significant influence on society. Furthermore, human actions have a meaning, whether real or imitations. Therefore, every moment of drama is meaningful (Nichols, 1956).

In the age of deconstructionist and postmodern performance, the focus is still on the stage as a mirror. Feminist theatre historians are tracing the origins of the mirror on stage and defining what kind of mirror reflects what kind of image (Dolan, 2008). Socially constructed gender roles are reflected in language and the body. As an institution of Western society, the theatre has historically placed women in a subservient position, as use value, silenced, fringed, and appropriated by a male model. For particular reasons, the mirrors of the theatre originated from certain kinds of cultures. As a result of the theatrical mirror, Greek society was liberated from its offensive humour and could function smoothly. Traditional theatre is still based on the Greek model, so it seems reasonable to conclude that gender inequality continues to be reflected in it (Dolan, 2008).

Greece's theatre was dominated by male casts, which performed exclusively for male audiences. Women were banned from performing during performances, while male actors assumed their clothing and dramatic power. Women were made invisible on and off the stage (Dolan, 2008). Women have been marginalised in the past two centuries from composing and performing music, writing and directing films, plays, radio and television, making networks, and publishing books. Their lives have been muted,

leaving them poorer and without access to professional roles in music and the arts (Delap, 2020, p. 298).

The most influential plays created by women during the first wave of feminism and theatre were those of British writer Caryl Churchill, whose works expose and criticise repressive systems of class, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender (Aston, 2014). These works influenced ideas about what constituted feminist theatre practice. Feminism entered the theatre scene simultaneously with the second wave of the feminist movement. It belongs to post-modern art and postmodernism, respectively (Škripková, 2022). Many women's music groups, theatrical plays and productions were formed during this period. A woman's identity, subjectivity, and sexuality were subjects of interest. These subjects touched on the models of a woman's existence. Many feminist theatrical studies have been created on academic grounds, and many of its representatives have been active as critics, editors, and in specialised media (Škripková, 2022).

Research Design and Methodology

In this thesis, the author researches the nature of the relationship between different living generations of women regarding stereotypes. This thesis will focus on different generations of women. The most important part of this work is to analyse the differences and similarities between the ages through four selected theatre plays; *Generation Z - Unparalleled Beauty (Generácia Z - Krása nevidaná)*, *The Owl (Sova)*, *Headmistresses of the Globe (Riaditeľky Zemegule)*, and *Escaped Alone (Čaj a apokalypsa)*. It would be crucial to explore further what type of challenges these generations experience, what is the leading creator of the generational gap, and how generations could be enriched from one another.

Theatre plays were selected based on their similar characteristics. In all plays, only female characters are present. Women wrote all plays except one. This exception is the play *Headmistresses of the Globe*, written by a man named Viliam Klimáček. Klimáček gives a full voice to the female characters in his play. The difference among plays is that each works with a different generation, either a monolithic generation or more generations present in one play. The plays discuss topics related to the female environment and what problems women face in today's society of different ages. Those problems are; Societal beauty standards, misunderstandings stemming from insufficient intergenerational dialogue, and various societal experiences between younger and older generations.

The thesis is divided into two parts. The theoretical part of the thesis uses existing theories regarding generations, gender, and stereotypes, and it is implemented in feminist theatre. The thesis's empirical part consists of analysing generational dialogues in theatrical productions. A couple of dialogues have been selected from the plays that were the most relevant to the thesis topic. Existing data from the first part of the thesis have been used and implemented into the second part, supporting the play analysis.

Starting with the play called *Generation Z - Unparalleled Beauty (Krása nevidaná)*, a play written by the collective author and directed by Zuzana Fialová (DPOH¹, 2022).

¹ Divadlo Pavla Országha Hviezdoslava (City Theatre of Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav)

This play focuses mainly on generation Z and their mental and physical problems in today's society. Growing up in a world of expectations of what an ideal beauty should look like intensifies with social media presence. In the end, six generation Z characters realise that beauty comes from within, and it is essential to accept oneself and not listen to others' expectations. The second play is *The Owl (Sova)*, written by Natalie Kocáb and directed by Valeria Schulczová (Abrahámová, 2020). In this play, two generations of women, grandmother and granddaughter, learn how to live together under the same roof. Two generations of different backgrounds try to cope with and understand each other. However, the realisation of understanding comes when it is already too late. The third play *Headmistresses of the Globe (Riaditeľky zemegule)*, written by Viliam Klimáček, is about three women of a different generations. It is a comedy about people who try to cope with today's chaos without going crazy. Three cleaning ladies spent the night in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs talking about their lives, lovers, and breakups while simultaneously wanting to clean up today's messy world. And fourth play, *Escaped Alone (Čaj a apokalypsa)*, was written by British playwright Caryl Churchill and directed by Slovak author Eduard Kudláč. This play addresses the generation of baby boomers in present-day society. The conversation between the four female characters contains everyday challenges they have to face, struggles and random conversations about "everything and nothing" (SND², 2021). Each character faces different problems; striving from depression, having unfulfilled dreams, or having health problems.

² Slovenské národné divadlo

Generation Z – Unparalleled Beauty (Krása nevidaná)

Generation Z- Unparalleled Beauty is an exceptional play written by the collective author of City Theatre of Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav. Play *Unparalleled Beauty* is a part of the cycle of Generation Z, called the Tolerance Project. The project consists of three separate plays that form a coherent generational and dramatic statement, with representatives of generation Z or the “generation of zoomers” above all on the stage. Project contains three plays dedicated to generation Z: *Neighbour whom I do not want (Sused ktorého nechcem)*, *Fantomas*, and *Unparalleled beauty (Krása nevidaná)* (Schulczová, 2022). The play reveals testimony about girls from generation Z. However, this play is not only intended for a female audience but also for any gender identification. The play aims to find understanding by naming the problems, wrongs and anxieties that each character shares in the play. Only then it is possible to look at things with an open mind and open up to other perceptions. According to director Zuzana Fialová, “The whole play is about us learning to love ourselves. But how can it be achieved when it is forbidden to us? We are supposed to love everybody else, parents, relatives or animals, but nobody tells us that we should love ourselves first” (Fialová, 2022).

Collective project

The Tolerance project was developed in cooperation with the University of Fine Arts (VŠMU³). The play *Unparalleled beauty* is collective creation written by actresses, that were coached by professional psychotherapist, dramaturgists, and director of the play. Psychotherapist Katarína Štefaničiaková, dramaturgists Darina Abrahámová and Valeria Schulczová, and director Zuzana Fialová motivated, selected and directed production by actresses Mária Schumerová, Annamária Janeková, and Romana Ondrejkočiová. A theatrical production of *Unparalleled Beauty* received an exceptional Grand Prix award at the New Drama Festival in 2022, the Dosky award in 2022, and Tatra Foundation Award in 2023.

³ VŠMU (Vysoká škola múzických umení v Bratislave)

Single monolithic generation of “Generation Z”

The myth of obedience is a social construct that has given girls an idea of what they should be from a very young age, including the role of women in society and how women should behave. Learning that female opinion is less important and that they should keep it to themselves. Either it is to be a dutiful daughter, a devoted wife or a caring mother. Society constantly demands something from young women, and as a result, they can no longer exert pressure on them to be perfect, to be ambitious, to be monetised, and, at the same time, to be patriarchal, to be configured to suit them. Youth is an essential element of beauty (Schulczová, 2022). Growing up in a world of expectations of what an ideal beauty should look like intensifies with social media presence (Dimock, 2019, p. 5). The ultimate point is that nobody can get any younger. Social media and media have exposed and exaggerated everything even more, resulting in mental diagnoses such as anxiety, depression and a sense of permanent failure (Schulczová, 2022).

Generation Z, the younger generation, has been the only generation that has grown up in a technological world. Recent research shows positive and negative changes in youth behaviour and lifestyle (Dimock, 2019, p. 5). For example, young people now have more significant opportunities than ever before. In the end, six women from generation Z realise that beauty comes from within, and it is essential to accept their true selves and not listen to others' expectations.

In the first scene, named *I love...* characters Ami, Mima and Romana describe ordinary things they love. This scene finishes with a question, Romana; “Who is your dearest person?” “Aren't you your dearest person?” Ami's response: “No”.

The second scene, *Our baby girl was born!* demonstrates what girls are born into. Ami, Romana, and Mima are presented in this scene as fortune tellers who tell the baby girl what is in store for her, who she should be, and what she can and cannot do as soon as she is born. These reports serve as symbolic illustrations of the accepted and maintained social stereotypes. Mom plays a crucial role. Her relationship with her child is the first to develop before everyone else. However, societal preconceptions can occasionally have an impact on mothers as well.

Mima: Our baby girl was born!

Ami, Mima, Romana: We wish you...

Ami: Do you think that you will change the world?

Mima: Do you think they are waiting for you?

Romana: Do you think you can do something important?

Ami: I gave birth to you. I know what is good for you!

Mima: You will bear your cross.

Romana: You will stop laughing, eventually.

Ami: Well, life will teach you.

Romana: You are a woman. You must suffer.

Ami: Suffer, I also suffered. And here I am.

Third scene *Three stories* describe the stories of Romana, Mima, and Ami about their experiences with men. Romana was raped by her boyfriend. Mima is facing rumours and is supposed to be the perfect daughter to her parents. And Ami feels in front of her family like a stranger who is being dictated what to do with her life, while she only wants to be loved and understood.

Romana: He was completely different from everyone else. Sensible and intelligent. He always listened to me. He liked me the way I really was. Even with all my mistakes. I felt like I had found the right one...

Ami: In my head, I go through the schedule of the day. I feel anxious... I want to handle all the responsibilities. But what if I don't make it all? What if I am late and miss some of them?

Mima: That daughter of yours ... is clever, but she should smile more ... that your daughter of yours is so thin, is she sick? That daughter of yours goes to church too much... there are rumours ...

Mima: My parents rely on social status. They cannot stand the shame ... It is important to look in front of other people that we are a harmonious family. And I was supposed to be the perfect daughter ... But I was not. "I am not feeling

good with you! I cannot live with you here!“ My mother told me I was possessed by the devil. I almost threw up.

Romana: Your family does not like me. That is how it started. My parents were trying to discourage me from a relationship with him, but I was no longer a small child. I wanted to prove to them and myself that I could take care of my life on my own. I stopped talking to them. I did not understand what they had against him. After all, he was always attentive, kind and gallant.

Mima: I am kneeling here as if at confession. How about that confession. Confession was the solution to all problems. My mother immediately provided me with a pastor. Remembering his face ... At that confession, I first learned what petting is ... I was twelve. Of course, I had no idea what it was. I was not interested in such things. The priest was thirty. He sent me a friend request on Facebook. I accepted it. Mom said you should always treat the pastor with respect. He started writing to me. He liked the same music as me. He sent me great movie tips. He was nice. And I was careful. I was really careful not to offend him ... I trusted him. He was like a father to me. No, he was better than my father. Sometimes we went to secret places at a designated time to a designated place ... Always on Wednesdays. He called it "our Wednesdays"... Even today is Wednesday.

Ami: I am standing there. They are looking at me. I feel like five pairs of eyes are watching me. It is like stepping on stage. And yet it is our kitchen. I know those people. It is my closest family. But I do not really know them at all. It hurts around my stomach. They are saying something. They are asking something. But I cannot hear it. Even if I heard, I would not answer them. If I wanted to, I could hear them. But I do not want to. They are making decisions about me. Again. They will never understand the words that come out of my mouth. They do not want to understand them. They do not want to see that I'm different. Otherness confuses them, annoys them, irritates them, and otherness denies them. In this world, controlled by them, we keep our emotions under control. Everything has its rules. But my head has completely different rules. It wants love, attention, peace, embrace, freedom, laughter, touch, anger, equality,

music... permission to sing, love, grieve, live. It wants to be perfect. In everything it does... as it looks like, as it thinks.

Romana: I have never cheated on anyone in my life. It really offended me. I told him I do not like when he thinks something like that about me. And he said he just wanted me to be fine and not have to work, and I was like - hello ?! I will work when I want and he slapped me... hit me. No one has ever hit me in my life. He also told me that I was ungrateful and stupid and that I deserved it...

Mima: I should have done more to defend myself. I should have kicked him more and maybe he would have stopped. Maybe it is my fault. I have been putting my fingers in my throat ever since. I feel better when I hurt myself....

Romana: He apologised to me. He cried and swore he would never raise his hand on me again in his life. He hugged me. I was so disgusted. My stomach heaved from his breath, from his closeness. He said that after an argument, you always have to make up. So, he did make up with me, in his own way. He raped me.

The fourth scene, named *Circus*, is about ownership of the body. Actresses express their feelings about their bodies that are sometimes felt like not theirs since everyone around them has some opinion.

Mima: Ladies and gentlemen, friends ... So, to nudity, there is nothing wrong with me. I have a body that arouses a billion ownership rights!

Together: Ownership rights!

Mima: Passers-by, God, future husband, ex-boyfriend, my mother, family members, politicians, deputies, Catholics demand it. Maybe we should have meetings as homeowners. Yes - meetings of the self-proclaimed owners of my body at 6:00 pm, on the stairs between the second and third floors. Yes, maybe we should have meetings. Perhaps we should vote and put the report online. Lose weight! four votes in favour and two against. She should gain weight - three votes in favour and three against. What's wrong with her hair? Cut it!

three hands in the air. What's wrong with her womb? The womb must produce at least three pieces of citizens, ideally non-conflicting. Ideal in a marital relationship. All hands up and the Mexican wave ... I am not sure if I am not just a sublet in this body.

...

Ami: You should worry less. You should not take yourself so seriously. These are my favourites. Are you not a bit hysterical? I would not like to be bothered with things like that. It is sick. Live your life. Be happy. So I stopped asking questions and went to see an expert. A psychologist. Later, I went to a psychiatrist who temporarily prescribed me medication. I drank them with litres of tea! But friends are curious and actually want to know how it was solved and whether their advice was any good. I have anxiety and depression, so I am temporarily on the medication I am telling them. They are looking at me. Some even back off as if it was contagious. And another wave starts. On medication? Why did you get your prescription? This is a farm business! You have to meditate! You should do yoga. I think you should find some natural substitutes. Herbs! Essential oils. You should apply it on your body, even on your butt. And if you have emotional problems, put rose quartz in your vagina because it helped me. It took me a while. I am fine. Cannot you see? I still have it there....

Three main characters of generation Z towards the end of the play, realise that beauty comes from within, and it is essential to accept their true self and not listen to others' expectations. In the last sixth scene *Policy Apocalypse* characters together realize and admit that the only dearest person is themselves:

Together: I am my dearest person.

Adolescence is one of the most challenging periods of every generation, not just generation Z (Štefaničiková, 2022). Within a few weeks, a person transitions from being a child to an adult when their body, speech, thinking, and perspective on the world change. It is a place where the brain gets repaired, making it vulnerable to trauma and potential psychic harm. An adolescent need to be autonomous, capable of self-regulation and know who he is and where he belongs. If these needs are not met, the

adolescent's stability, security and safety will be undermined (Štefaničiová, 2022). According to Psychotherapist Katarína Štefaničiová (2022), In the process of forming identity and integrity, image is equally crucial. Self-harm or purposeful self-harm can happen when individuals reject parts of themselves or struggle with self-absorption, whether it is through punishment or to ease psychological distress. However, the check is only temporary because it has the nature of an addiction. Control disappears when there is a need to go deeper and further. You get the urge, you get the tension, you get cut, and you get the relief (Štefaničiová, 2022). But it is just temporary, and the guilt might come back and again, the compulsion, the tension and the relief repeat.

The Owl (Sova)

The Owl (Sova), a play written by Natálie Kocábová and directed by Valerie Schulczová, was the first online premiere in the history of the Slovak National Theatre. The Owl is about an effort to find a way to understand the two different generations, grandmother and granddaughter. In the text of the play, there are articulated themes that have not yet been articulated before, precisely in terms of this intergenerational dialogue or intergenerational conflict (Turzonovová, 2023). The central theme of this play is the relationship between grandmother and granddaughter, two different generations. An important theme in *The Owl* is the struggle between generations of pre- and post-digital communication. Moreover, the play addresses various struggles associated with providing or receiving care for the elderly. This issue is faced daily; however, it is less projected in theatre arts. Even though there are only grandmother and granddaughter in the scene in *The Owl*, in their dialogue, all the other important people in their lives are actually present. Two generations of different backgrounds try to learn how to cope with each other and understand each other. However, the realisation of understanding between these two generations comes when it is already too late.

Natalie Kocab

Kocab is a writer, playwright, singer, and mother of three. She studied at the Department of Drama and Screenwriting at FAMU in Prague. She is the author of four plays, one of them is *The Owl*. This play was rewritten for the Slovak National Theatre. Besides writing plays and screenplays, Kocab released four studio albums and published several novels and poems. She has been a casting manager for a commercial television station in the Czech republic, "Television Nova", since the beginning of 2016 (Abrahámová, 2020).

Dual generation

The main characters are Babi Martha, played by Božidara Turzonovová, and Wendy, played by Barbora Andrešičová. Babi Martha is on the one hand presented as lonely, vulnerable and selfish character. On the other hand, she is a strong, powerful, and merciful woman with a good heart. Wendy's character is constantly changing, depending on which phase of life she is currently in. Although these two characters

appear to be different, they are more similar than they realise. Babi and Wendy share many characteristics, the most important of which are authenticity, personality, intelligence, and love for each other. Wendy is a woman in her thirties. Her partner's death has greatly affected her, and she is hiding her sadness and despair. Babi is Wendy's grandmother and the mother of her father, Mark. She possesses a similar nature to Wendy. They differentiate between different centuries, perceptions, and understandings by the guilt they feel over innumerable other things and by the responsibility they feel over countless things. Their relationship is full of love and pain. Additionally, each of them represents a different view of the world. However, both are aware of the larger context. Both characters are educated, but they are firmly convinced of their truth. Otherwise, they see the family, society, their place in it, and what is happening to the planet differently (Kocab, 2020). While Wendy struggles with environmental anxiety, Babi refuses to accept environmental change. Babi refuses to take responsibility for what happened to the land of her generation. It is not because she is blind but because she believes her generation to have a high degree of ethics and morality. She is honouring traditional beliefs and perceiving them as unchanging in time and space. Wendy perceives the world as destroyed; therefore, she wants to improve it but realises that her generation will probably also fail in this effort. Additionally, the dialogue of this drama shows that the play has more than two characters, including those on the stage and those not seen in the scene. The characters not physically present are Grandad Bert's ghost and Nick's ghost (Kocab, 2020).

The young Wendy is a single mother. The father of her child was not provided with the opportunity to learn about the baby before his passing. The grandmother, who was an intellectual, also became a widow. She is incapable of living on her own. Wendy and Babi are searching for a new home on which they both depend. Their relationship is far from ideal. At the same time, it gives rise to ever-greater and deeper mutual understanding. It is often the case that they do not realize the ultimate meaning and values of their generational partnership until it is too late. The love between the two female characters running on different tracks does not mean that it is not there and that there is no fundamental reflection of life – something experienced well beyond the two female characters. These two generations differ only from the outside in their date of birth (Kocab, 2020).

By the end of the play, the characters Wendy and Babi will find their way to each other and are closer despite their previous confrontations and misunderstandings.

Scene 2

Babi Martha to herself: No manners today. Terrible generation. Ca not keep up with her family, time schedules... this mess around the house...

...

Wendy: Rain?

Babi Martha: They have been predicting it for days. But nothing yet. They say all hell is going to break loose.

Wendy: It already has in this house.

Babi Martha: You are exaggerating.

Wendy: It will not come...

Babi Martha: No. It always comes.

Wendy: And it will always be late. It is global warming.

Babi Martha: Oh, please. What do you know? I will give you global warming. Maybe roughs! Like in 47. Or 53.

Wendy: Look at the grass! Does it look like „rain always comes “? It is dry and yellow.

Scene 3

Wendy: Ok. I get it. Her husband died. And maybe she is afraid to be home alone, even though I do not know how other old people handle it. She claims it is for safety reasons. But who would want to break into her house in the first place? Maybe ten years ago, you could think of old people stacking hundreds of dollars in mattresses or behind the closet. But today? What is a hundred dollars to a thief?

Scene 5

Wendy: I just cannot understand the biomechanics of her movements- she is everywhere at once; but can hardly walk. She can hardly walk, and she always

catches up with me. It is beyond comprehension. Wait, I will get to that. No, I do not want to order another phone plan. I am satisfied with this one. In a minute, I will explain why I am calling. I just need peace and quiet, I have neither here. I have to announce and explain what I am doing, where I am, and why I am there and not somewhere else. She wants me to iron, wash her laundry, hang up her laundry, shut the door, open the door, find the remote, and take the remoteIf she is not demanding something, she wants me to demand something, like food; or a conversation with her. I know that you monitor conversations, but what am I supposed to do? And what if I do not need anything? What if I just want to talk? No! I do not need more data, do you? I need understanding and calm nerves- I have a child!! Her nerves are shot, too. By the way, you cannot imagine how she acted when the postman came late. Get it? It is an oxymoron...

Scene 11

Babi Martha: ...I miss you. It is just Wendy and me in one house- who would have thought? I do not ask her for anything, but she is always irritable. Angry. Terribly angry. Anytime I politely approach her. I do not want anything from her except to live in the same house. Whenever I see her, she is mad. But I do not blame her. It is her first child. Nick chose to kill himself rather than marry her. I would like to help, but she will not listen. What did I do? I cannot be in our house; it reminds me of you. I was sort of hoping I would go first. Do you remember the day that Nick died? The weather was bad. The end of August. Edna called that Mark called her. They did not even tell me first. Their own mother! I am down. I often think I am dying. I guess it is true. I cannot tell her. She is insensitive. She thinks that if a young person dies, it means nothing to old people. She says my kids will outlive me. Grandkids. So, for whom am I grieving? She knows nothing, that girl. Nothing. I think she is lost control. As you can see, now she is shooting with an air rifle. Irene finally came to see me, and Wendy shot her from the window. I know those are just balls: gosh, she shot me in the elbow when I was hanging out clothes that day. What is with the young

people these days, Bert? Did we not teach them anything about the war? Look at her. She must think she is in Iraq. Just like Nick. Tell me, is that normal?

Scene 16: Babi Martha and Wendy talking with their late partners:

Babi Martha and Wendy: Do not pretend that you are not here, Bert/Nick. I know very well that you are... I can see you. Yesterday/ the day before yesterday, I saw you in the kitchen/in the hall. Wendy takes that after me/ I got that from Babi. She sees ghosts too. I know that she sees them. I can see it in her eyes. But I will never in my life admit it. I would rather be hung on a tree/hang myself with a belt. I would jump in the Vltava River like Jan Tříska/Hang myself with a belt like Michael Hutchence. Sometimes I catch her talking to Grandad/Nick. Poor thing, she is waiting for an answer, and nothing comes. I do not know why it is such a problem to show yourselves. Nobody here lets themselves be seen. The house/ home is full of people, and I am always alone. They hide so they will not have to talk to me.

Scene 20: The situation between Babi Martha and Wendy is getting better. Wendy is letting Babi Martha take care of the baby. However, Babi Martha's health is getting worse:

Babi Martha: Bert, it is a little bit better. Wendy has let me keep the baby twice. She is sleeping in the next room. Nothing wakes her up. She has a cough. Today is Wendy's concert. She insists that none of us come. She sings beautifully; I have always said that. No one would go anyway- I do not meet up with anyone here the whole year. For example- I know that Robert and Lucie are home. My heart hurts, and at night I cannot breathe. I have the cell phone by myself... Whew, I cannot anymore...that dance is not for me. Wait, let me see if Wendy is not calling...

Scene 24:

Babi Martha's generation and Wendy's generation are feeling so apart. Wendy insists that her grandmother being the Homo Sapiens species is over when her belonging to the Homo Deus species is at the beginning.

Wendy: You cannot! Do not you get it?! Never in history has there been a more enormous difference between two generations than between mine and yours. Between us lies ecology, global warming, the internet and divorce. Forty-seven thousand years took for humans to create artificial intelligence. Now it is here, and everything that came before, all of humanity as we know it and to which you belong, is now done. Homo sapiens finished. Everything was bombed, sent to concentration camps, swept away, chopped, burnt, and cut to the ground. And now it ends. A new human has stepped up to the bat. Born into this unbelievable chaos, he formed the age of artificial intelligence, cloning, sharing collective consciousness, flying, and invisibility. I am at the beginning of this age, not you. Homo Deus. I am Homo Deus. Read Homo Deus by Yuval Harari. When he writes about his followers, that is me. I stand at the beginning of this age and not you. You belong to another world. See? That is why we two cannot understand each other. And no house, grandad's guidance, blood relations, none of that will make a difference. I am at the beginning;

Babi Martha: You forgot Dad's generation.

Wendy: Dad's generation is mostly divorced, for which I am deeply grateful- a true blessing. And I get that you understand them. They returned to you after the divorce, and you continued parenting. You are living your parental dream long after it should have ended! You are an ultimate dream team. You and your child.

Scene 33

Babi Martha: You were there yesterday too? She is so sad that it breaks my heart. She bangs her head against the wall and does not see a way out. I am completely unhappy about these young people, grandfather...what kind of world did we leave to them?

Headmistresses of the Globe (Riaditeľky zemegule)

Viliam Klimáček

This play was written and directed by Viliam Klimáček, who is also the owner of the contemporary theatre GUnaGU in Bratislava. Viliam Klimáček was born on 14 September 1958 in Trenčín. He attended Comenius University in Bratislava, where he studied medical science. In 1985 he founded the GUnaGU Theatre together with Ivan Mizera, Milan Pašték, and Zuzana Beneš. Until this day, Klimáček is the theatre's artistic boss, playwright, screenwriter, director, and actor. He also collaborates with other theatres in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Moreover, he writes for radio and television (Slovak Literary Centre, n. d.).

Three generations

Headmistress of the Globe (Riaditeľky Zemegule) is a comedy play about people who seek to understand today's chaos in the world. At night, while working at the Foreign Office, three housekeepers discuss their lives, their lovers and their breakups, and in the process, they have a recipe for cleaning up today's messy world. Mrs Judit, played by Božidara Turzonová, is said to come from a former noble family and wants to maintain her dignity and the country by cleaning up. Another character Darina, played by Darina Abrahámová, dreams of a lover from England who will soon propose to her. However, he does not have the time to do so. And the youngest character Monika, played by Monika Horvathová, comes to the Ministry to clean up for the first time (Klimáček, 2021).

Mrs Judit plays a character that is very ambitious and imperious. She owns a cleaning company in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She feels like a minister herself because the Minister can represent only if Mrs Judit's company cleans the space. The youngest, Monika, is a character that represents activists, the group to save the world. Monika came to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the first time. Darina, played by Darina Abrahámová, dreams about her soon-to-be fiancé from England. Monika believes that global and political engagement can benefit from Wikileaks. Darina is trapped in gender stereotypes and feels that only a man can bring her happiness. And Mrs Judit, the oldest,

basks in the happiness of continuity with previous generations and regimes because she seeks value anchors in them. While the youngest Monika wants to attack and incriminate Mrs Judit, this anchorage attempts to confirm it.

In scene two, *Cleaning ladies*, what is visible are different perceptions of family and relationships. While Darina explains that the oldest character Dača lives only for her children and for order, the youngest, Monika, would rather not have children in today's world. The topic of marriage is irrelevant to Monika. She aims to have privacy, not let someone command her, and be an independent woman. Marriage would, in her case, threaten her private life.

Scene 2: Cleaning ladies

Dača: The world is watching us. You all know what to do. Darina, teach Monika!

Monika: Razor, huh?

Darina: She lives only for order and has no children. Do you have children?

Monika: For what? To this world?

...

Darina: Monika... are you married?

Monika: What for? Am I going to disturb my privacy?

The younger generation takes the theme of marriage differently than older generations. While for the older generation, marriage presented something mandatory in a relationship, for younger generations is more of a formality. The younger generation is more open to relationships, and marriage, in their case, is not their focus. Fear of commitment and high divorce rates can be another reason they do not see marriage as the “highlight” of the relationship.

The third scene, named *Queen*, addresses the death of the famous Princess Diana as an event that belongs to Dača's generation. Dača explains that the tragedy of Diana's death happened when they were the same age. Therefore, the younger generation can not understand because they were not present then. Dača tells Monika that once her generation has a death legend, she will realise what Dača meant.

Scene 3: Queen

Monika: Diana? Did she kill herself on a motorcycle?

Dača: On the car, but whatever, she's not your dead. She is our dead. We are touched by her death because she died young and pretty, as we once were. Once you have your dead, you'll understand.

According to actress Božidara Turzonovová (2023), “there is one huge barrier between my generation and the younger generation, and that is the Internet.” The younger generation is immersed in cyberspace, where it is possible to find everything. However, having so much information needs more critical eyes not to get lost in the amount of data that can lead to disinformation. Another difference is that older generations have been reading to get information (Turzonovová, 2023). Compared to the older generation, the younger generation is now overwhelmed with technology and enormous possibilities.

Escaped Alone (Čaj a Apokalypsa)

Escaped Alone (Čaj a Apokalypsa), was written by British playwright Caryl Churchill and directed by Eduard Kudláč. This play addresses the generation of baby boomers in present-day society. The conversation between the four female characters contains everyday challenges they have to face, struggles and random conversations about “everything and nothing” (Slovak National Theatre, 2021). Each character faces different problems; striving from depression, having unfulfilled dreams, or having health problems. *Escaped alone (Čaj a apokalypsa)* written by Churchill, takes place in Sally’s backyard. Friends Sally, Vi, Lena and Mrs Jarrett are women in their seventies, representing the older generation. The play is divided into eight sections, and an apocalyptic monologue suspends each section.

Caryl Churchill

Caryl Churchill is one of the well-known playwrights of women's feminist and left-wing theatre in Great Britain, whose work is focused on feminist issues and sexual politics (Bžochová-Wild, 2001, p. 78). Caryl Churchill, a writer who writes for the Royal Court Theatre, was born in 1938 in London (Royal Court Theatre, n.d.). Churchill was educated at the University of Oxford and began a writing career in the 1960s as a stay-at-home wife raising small children (Aston & Diamond, 2009). Some of her many works include *Cloud 9* (1979), *Serious Monkey* (1987), *A Number* (2002), and *Escaped Alone* (2016). Her works touch on the social, political, and moral concerns that are prominent in today's culture. With her theatrical language, she constantly challenges the context, theatricality, and dramatic environment in which she works. According to Churchill, it is possible to look at the plays from a political perspective (Aston & Diamond, 2009). However, it is only noticed if it is against the current conditions, which Churchill plays. Churchill's characters are made of words, never revealing motives or presenting a coherent personal narrative (Aston & Diamond, 2009).

Single monolithic generation of “Boomers”

The four characters, who are at least seventy years old: are Mrs Jarrett, Sally, Vi, and Lena. They are played by four well-known Slovak actresses Emília Vášáryová, Božidara Turzonovová, Anna Javorková, and Kamila Magálová. In this play,

Churchill is appealing not just to sexism but also to ageism. The play *Escaped Alone* represents Churchill's ongoing commitment to socio-political writing and experimentation with form. Recently, she has chosen economy in both length and language. This play is an hour long, and the characters often speak in phrases rather than sentences. Churchill writes in fragments and without punctuation. These fragments are meant to create different effects: sometimes, the characters know each other well enough to finish each other's sentences, and other times, they interrupt to correct each other or redirect the dialogue.

Mrs Jarrett delivers an apocalyptic monologue that occurs unexpectedly. Mrs Jarrett uses the past tense to mention tragedies that have already occurred at unknown places and times. Meanwhile, the subject of conversation in the backyard is banal. Characters discuss relatives, kids, hip replacements, and everyday topics and share each other's secrets. Lena is experiencing depression, which is affecting her mental health. She grew disinterested and unmotivated. Vi discovers her secret about her husband's murder in the kitchen, so she is sentenced to six years in prison, and Sally has a phobia of cats.

Drama *Escaped Alone* carries a unique concept which delivers conscientious and unconventional performances. A spectator craving the specific story of characters and acting on stage will not live up to his expectations. On the contrary, the audience seeking the more challenging subject would be satisfied. It takes time to grasp the staging content without knowing the author's work and the play's intent. The biological age of the characters adds to the credibility of the stories and their roles—the lack of fear for the future and the willingness to accept it. The title “*Escape Alone*” in a broader spectrum means humans need to connect with others. Women gathered in the backyard to share stories and memories. They implicitly and explicitly share knowledge about one another's secrets, families, and phobias. Four ladies are having a regular cup of tea and talking about the universe, themselves, the world, and nothing and everything. Their conversation is authentic because of the content, where banal notes mingle with apocalyptic visions. The story is exciting, reasonable because it is woven out of fragments of surviving stories, and funny because of its honesty (Slovak National Theatre, 2021).

Apocalyptic monologues show what the world is like today and what it suffers from, from ecology to the severe depressive conditions people experience (Turzonovová, 2023).

First apocalyptic monologue delivered by Mrs Jarrett:

Four hundred thousand tons of rock paid for by senior executives split off the hillside to smash through the roofs, each fragment onto the designated child's head. Villages were buried, and new communities of survivors underground developed skills of feeding off the dead where possible and communicating with taps and groans. Instant celebrities rose on ropes to the light of flashes. Time passed. Rats were eaten by those who still had digestive systems, and mushrooms were traded for urine. Babies were born and quickly became blind. Some groups lost their sexuality, while others developed a new morality of constant fucking with any proximate body. A young woman crawling from one society to the other became wedged, only her head reaching her new companions. Stories of those above ground were told and retold till there were myths of the husband who cooked feasts, the wife who swam the ocean, the gay lover who could fly, the child who read minds, the talking dog. Prayers were said to them, and various sects developed with tolerance and bitter hatred. Songs were sung until dry throats caused the end of the speech. Torrential rain leaked through cracks and flooded the tunnels enabling screams at last before drownings. Survivors were now solitary and went insane at different rates.

Fourth apocalyptic monologue delivered by Mrs Jarrett:

The hunger began when eighty percent of food was diverted to tv programmes. Commuters watched breakfast on iPlayer on their way to work. Smartphones were distributed by charities when rice ran out, so the dying could watch cooking. The entire food stock of Newcastle was won by lottery ticket and the winner taken to a 24-hour dining room where fifty chefs chopped in relays and the public voted on what he should eat next. Cars were traded for used meat. Children fell asleep in class and did not wake up. The obese sold slices of themselves until hunger drove them to eat their own rashers. Finally, the starving stormed the tv centres and was slaughtered and smoked in large

numbers. Only when cooking shows were overtaken by sex with football teams did cream trickle back to the shops, and rice was airlifted again.

Fifth apocalyptic monologue delivered by Mrs Jarrett:

The wind developed by property developers started as breezes on cheeks and soon turned heads inside out. The army fired nets to catch flying cars, but most spun by, with dozens clinging and shrieking, dropping off slowly. Buildings migrated from London to Lahore, Kyoto to Kansas City, and survivors were interned for having no travel documents. Some in the whirlwind went higher and higher, the airsick families taking selfies in case they could ever share them. Shanty towns were cleared. Pets rained from the sky. A kitten became famous.

The Baby Boom generation (from 1946 to 1959) entered young adulthood during the second wave of the feminist movement age (Peltola, Milkie, & Presser, 2004). During a time of vigorous political action and newly created opportunities for women, these women came of age (Peltola, Milkie, & Presser, 2004, p. 124). According to translator Tereza Hladká (2023), “we are so overwhelmed by the news these days that at some point, you turn off to protect yourself mentally. We live in a time where there is an information overload. We have so much information that, at some point, we cannot seem to sort it out. And Caryl is touching on this issue in the monologues, too, that we have an awful lot of news and that makes us immune in a certain way - which, on the one hand, is normal from a psychological point of view.”

Conclusion

People from the same generation share similar characteristics because they were born at about the same time. Roughly the same sociocultural environment has influenced the interests, objectives, and needs of members of one generation. Therefore, generational sharing of values is essential. A monolithic representation of generation Z, a monolithic representation of the Baby boomer generation, a dual representation of two generations where there is no generation between them, and a three-generation generation were selected for research. In the plays, four women's issues were examined: how a woman defines herself without being dependent on a partnership with a man, how a woman defines herself without being dependent on her professional life, how a woman defines herself without the presence of gender ageism, and, finally, what role the community plays in a woman's life.

At the beginning of the play *Unparalleled Beauty*, the characters remain in chaos and can not cope with themselves. Eventually, through psychological self-acceptance, they find a way to love themselves. The youngest generation that has been studied, the Z generation, is growing up in the modern world of technology, which affects their mental and physical health. The central theme discussed in this generation was the myth of obedience. In addition, research has also looked at the topic of self-harm, displacement, and rape. Obedience was seen as a stereotype to which girls were born. They learn right from wrong when they're young. As women, they should be adjusted; their lives should teach them that as women, they should know about suffering and be prepared for everyone to judge them. Based on the stories told, the audience and the characters will find out that only they are their dearest person.

The Owl is the only play that is set in the traditional psychological model. Two generations of women are represented in the production, granddaughter Wendy and grandmother Babi Martha. Babi Martha, who is dependent on her son, will understand during the staging that her granddaughter and great-granddaughter mean more to her than a son who will not come to her but instead let her follow her with a drone. Through confrontations of attitudes, they begin to understand one another.

Viliam Klimáček's play *Headmistresses of the Globe* presents three generations of women working in the Foreign Office who are having conversations about their lives. The youngest Monika sees the value of WikiLeaks in engaging globally. Darina's character lives in a gender stereotype, in the illusion that her happiness lies with a man. The oldest character, Dača, is influenced by the former regimes and generations in which she seeks comfort and anchorage.

The central theme of the play *Escaped Alone* is sisterhood through the presence of women with the same destiny. The young generation and the men are only marginally perceived as part of the family framework. Four women who meet in the afternoon over a cup of tea have conversations about subjects of various kinds that touch banality. These women who are of retirement age no longer have to deal with children or work. However, their lifetime charge causes permanent psychological damage, which is reflected in the form of lumber. In this staging, the characters are, in a way, even with their lives and don't expect anything anymore.

The diversity of generations has always been present. Although, based on the examination, the discrepancy has been less extensive than it is now. This age's living generations are experiencing a massive contradiction. The plays selected for this research do not simply address how the characters perceive their gender role but rather the nature of the relationship between different generations of women in relation to the stereotypes used. The thesis investigated the extent to which the relationship between generations of women is exacerbated or harmoniously beneficial. Through plays, the main themes explored were communication, interaction, and the distance between the harmonic and intergenerational, enrichment to the irreconcilable contradiction. There needs to be more respect for the younger generation for the older generation, as well as for the older generation for the younger generation. The lack of understanding and condemnation of generations by the younger generation or, the older generation, which is explicitly expressed in the plays, increases the level of confrontation between generations.

By observing the plays, I have come to the conclusion that, nowadays, women's voices and themes are much more pronounced. Although in today's society, there is a certain

persistence of the standard that a woman belongs in the kitchen. Women are still expected to be less dominant, those who can only afford what society allows, demands and desires. Even though the extent of women's freedom varies geographically, women's rights and freedom are on the path to liberation. The generational understanding and understanding between women could not only enhance the generational bond, but also strengthen the female voice.

Resumé

Rôznorodosť generácií bola vždy prítomná. Aj keď na základe skúmania sa dá povedať, že ten rozpor nebol ešte nikdy taký rozsiahly ako je teraz. Môžeme konštatovať, že generácie v tejto dobe zažívajú odcudzenie a veľký rozpor. Vybrané inscenácie nie sú len o tom ako postavy vnímajú ich rodovú úlohu, ale skôr ide o akú povahu má vzťah rozličných generácií žien vzhľadom na zaužívané stereotypy. V bakalárskej práci sa skúma do akej miery je vzťah medzi generáciami žien vyhrotený alebo naopak harmonicky prínosný. Hlavné témy inscenácií sú komunikácia, vzájomné pôsobenie, a vzdialenosť medzi harmonickým obgeneračným obohatením až po nezlučiteľný protiklad. Nedostatok rešpektu mladej generácie ku staršej generácii, ako aj staršej generácie ku mladej je jeden z dôvodov prečo dochádza k medzigeneračnému neporozumeniu, a končí medzigeneračným rozporom. Neporozumenie a odsudzovanie generácií, zo strany mladšej generácie alebo staršej generácie, ktoré sú v inscenáciách explicitne vyjadrené je jeden z aspektov, ktorý vplýva na mieru konfrontácie medzi generáciami. V inscenáciách sú zastúpené rôzne generácie; monolitne zastúpená generáciou Z, monolitne zastúpená povojnovou generáciou, duálne zastúpená dvoma generáciami kde medzi nimi chýba predelová generácia, a v neposlednom rade napokon trojgeneračné zastúpenie generácií. Prostredníctvom inscenácií skúmame štyri ženské otázky; (a) ako žena definuje samú seba, bez toho aby bola závislá na partnerskom vzťahu s mužom, (b) ako žena definuje samú seba v súvislosti s jej profesionálnym zaradením, (c) ako žena definuje samú seba vnímajúc rodový ageizmus, a (d) ako žena vníma samú seba vzhľadom ku komunite.

Teoretická časť bakalárskej práce sa zaoberá jednotlivými aspektami, ktoré sú analyzované v divadelných inscenáciách, napríklad: medzigeneračná teória, rodové štúdie, feminizmy a feministické divadlo. Empirická časť sa zaoberá samotnou analýzou a porovnávaním hier a scenárov, ktorá bola podporená teóriami spomenutými v prvej časti práce. Dve inscenácie boli režirované mužmi a dve ženami, tri inscenácie boli napísané ženskými autorkami a štvrtá bola napísaná mužom, z toho herecké obsadenie je čisto ženské, ktoré sa rovnako podieľalo na kreatívnom procese. V štyroch hrách súčasných autorov, z toho troch autoriek je položený dôraz na ženských hrdinkách a na ženských otázkach alebo videní sveta z pohľadu ženy.

Najmladšia generácia, ktorá bola skúmaná v inscenácii *Krása nevidaná* bola generácia Z, ktorá vyrastá v modernom svete technológie, čo vplýva na ich psychické ako aj fyzické zdravie. Hlavná téma, ktorá bola vystopovaná pri tejto generácii bol mýtus poslušnosti. V rámci toho sa objavili fenomény ako sebaoškodzovanie, odsudzovanie, znásilnenie. Poslušnosť je vnímaná ako stereotyp, do ktorého sú dievčatá narodené. Už od narodenia sú autoritatívne a stereotypne poučované, čo je správne a čo nie. Ako by ženy mali byť upravené, ako by mali vedieť trpieť, a taktiež ako by mali byť pripravené na to, že ich bude každý posudzovať. Na začiatku sa postavy nachádzajú v chaose a nevedia si poradiť samy so sebou. Na základe vypovedaných príbehov postáv sa publikum ako aj postavy dopracujú k dôležitej katarzii, že sú najdôležitejšími osobami práve ony samy. Nakoniec cez artikuláciu svojich zranení, svojho hnevu a cez psychologické seba prijatie si nájdu cestu ako mať rád seba samého. Inscenácia je o očakávaní, naplniť očakávania.

Hra *Sova*, napísaná Natáliou Kocábovou a režírovaná Valeriou Schulczovou, sa najviac pohybuje v tradično-psychologickom modeli. V inscenácii *Sova* sú zastúpené dve generácie žien a to vnučka Wendy (Barbora Andrešičová) a stará mama alebo Babi Martha (Božidara Turzonovová). Babi Martha, ktorá je odkázaná na svojho syna, počas inscenácie pochopí, že jej vnučka a pravnučka znamenajú pre ňu viac, ako syn ktorý za ňou vôbec nepríde a radšej ju nechá sledovať dronom. Cez konfrontácie životných postojov začínajú chápať jedna druhú.

Inscenácia *Riaditeľky zemegule* je komediálne podaná autorom hry Viliamom Klimáčkom. Klimáček ako autor a režisér dáva plný hlas trom ženským generáciám ktoré chcú napraviť svet. Tri generácie žien pracujúce na ministerstve zahraničných vecí konverzujú o svojich životoch. Najmladšia Monika (Monika Horváthová), vidí hodnotu WikiLeaks v globálnom sa angažovaní. Postava Dariny (Darina Abrahámová) žije v rodových stereotypoch, v ilúzií že sa jej šťastie odvíja od muža. A najstaršia postava menom Dača (Božidara Turzonovová) je ovplyvnená bývalými režimami a generáciami v ktorých hľadá hodnotové ukotvenie.

Inscenácia *Čaj a apokalypsa*, napísaná britskou autorkou Caryl Churchill bola preložená do slovenčiny Terezou Hladkou. Hlavná téma tejto inscenácie je sesterstvo,

ktoré na sklonku života nadobúda veľký význam. Mladá generácia a muži sú tu vnímaní len okrajovo, ako súčasť rodinného rámca. Štyri ženy, ktoré sa stretnú počas popoludňajšej hodiny pri šálke čaju, konverzujú o témach rôzneho druhu, ktoré sú zdanlivo banálne. Obsadenie týchto štyroch postáv je zastúpené slovenskými hereckými osobnosťami a to; Božidarou Turzonovovou, Kamilou Magálovou, Annou Javorkovou a Emíliou Vášáryovou. Vek postáv štyroch dám sa odhaduje nad 70 rokov. Tieto ženy, ktoré sú v dôchodkovom veku, už nemusia prioritne riešiť deti alebo prácu aj keď u niektorých z nich vnímame psychické následky a traumy. Dôležitejšie je, že sú vyrovnané so svojim životom a nič od neho neočakávajú. Ich celoživotná nálož vzbudzuje trvalé psychické poškodenie, ktoré sa odzrkadľuje formou tráum.

Analýzou selektovaných divadelných inscenácií som dospela k záveru, že mladé ženy sú viac závislé na mužoch a menej uvažujú o práci ako vtedy uvažovali staršie generácie. Zdá sa, že keď žena dosiahne dôchodkový vek, tak spomienky a sesterstvo sú dôležitou súčasťou jej každodenného života. Na základe analýzy som dospela k záveru, že keď sa stretne staršia žena s mladšou, vyzerá to tak, že ich svety sú odlišné, ale nutnosťou vzájomnej komunikácie si vedia veľa odovzdať. V konečnom dôsledku sa nejedná len o dve ženy rôznych generácií, ale aj o výpovedi éry, ktoré v sebe nesú veľké spoločenské a politické zmeny. Pozorovaním inscenácií som prišla k záveru, že v dnešnej dobe sú ženské hlasy a témy oveľa výraznejšie nastolené, a to práve ženami. Aj keď v dnešnej spoločnosti sa do určitej miery pretrvávajú štandard, že žena patrí do kuchyne. Stále sa od žien očakáva, že budú tie menej dominantné, tie ktoré si môžu dovoliť len to, čo spoločnosť umožňuje, vyžaduje a očakáva. V porovnaní s minulým storočím, práva a sloboda ženy je na ceste oslobodenia, aj keď sa z geografického hľadiska miera slobody ženy líši. Pokiaľ dôjde k vzájomnému generačnému pochopeniu a porozumeniu medzi ženami, mohlo by nastať nie len obohatenie medzi generáciami ale aj posilnenie ženského hlasu.

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Bačová: Generational Confrontation

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Bačová: Generational Confrontation

Plays: Production Team and Cast
Generation Z: Unparalleled Beauty (Krása nevidaná)

Production Team:

Author: Collective Author

Director: Zuzana Fialová

Dramaturgists: Valeria Schulczová, Darina Abrahámová

Set, Costumes, Light Design, Installations, Video projection: Vivien Kvasnicová, Ema Šútocová, Paula Gogola, Ivan Finta

Music: Samuel D. Abrahám

Professional psychotherapist: Katarína Štefaničiaková

Cast: Mária Schumerová, Annamária Janeková, Romana Ondrejkočiová, Vivien Kvasnicová, Ema Šútocová

Length of the play: 60 minutes

Premiere: 22nd of January 2022 at the City Theatre of Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav in Bratislava

Figure 1



Source: Ľuboš Kotlár, 2022

The Owl (Sova)

Production Team:

Author: Natalie Kobac

Translation: Valeria Schulczová

Director: Valeria Schulczová

Dramaturgist: Darina Abrahámová

Text followed by: Alena Hornáková

Assistant Director, Stage Manager: Nad'a Bradáčová

Set, Costumes, Light Design, Masks, Music: Peter Dánay, Mária Olešová, Viktor Petráš, Simona Kyjevská, Ján Jankó

Cast: Božidara Turzonovová (Babi Martha), Barbora Andrešičová (Wendy)

Length of the play: 1 hour and 25 minutes

Premiere: 23rd of October 2020, online at Slovak National Theatre in Bratislava

Figure 2



Source: Ľuboš Kotlár, 2022

Headmistresses of the Globe (Riaditeľky zemegule)

Production Team:

Author: Viliam Klimáček

Director: Viliam Klimáček

Costumes: Simona Vacháľková

Set: Silvia Makovecká

Music: Slavo Solovic

Cast: Božidara Turzonovová (Dača/Mrs Judit), Darina Abrahámová (Darina), Monika Horváthová (Monika)

Length of the play: 70 minutes

Premiere: 24th of September 2021 at Theatre GUnAGU in Bratislava

Figure 3



Source: Divadlo GUNAGU, 2021

Escaped Alone (Čaj a apokalypsa)

Production Team

Author: Caryl Churchill

Translation: Tereza Hladká

Director: Eduard Kudláč

Dramaturgist: Darina Abrahámová

Set and Costumes: Eva Kudláčová-Rácová

Music: Peter Machajdík

Cast: Emília Vášáryová (Mrs Jarrett), Božidara Turzonovová (Sally), Anna Javorková (Vi), Kamila Magálová (Lena)

Length of the play: 1 hour and 10 minutes

Premiere: 25th and 27th of June 2021 at Slovak National Theatre in Bratislava
(January 2016 in Royal Court Theatre London)

Figure 4



Source: Slovenské národné divadlo, 2021