ANNAMARIA CASCETTA*

"GÓLGOTA PICNIC" BY RODRIGO GARCIA
Starting again from man or drowning in nothingness?

1. RODRIGO GARCIA AND HIS WORKING METHOD
FOR A PERFORMATIVE THEATRE

Within the survey of productions in this volume, which seeks to present examples appropriate to a preliminary exploration of performative theatre, I find Gólgota Picnic by Rodrigo Garcia particularly significant because it embodies numerous elements which, as mentioned in the introduction, seem to connote this strand in contemporary theatre. It also makes a powerful impact on audiences, not in formal terms, but also as a courageous reflection on our time.

Rodrigo Garcia is an artist who was born in 1964 to a Spanish family that had emigrated to Buenos Aires, where he spent his adolescence and youth. When barely twenty years old he left Argentina in disappointment at the failure of the new government to bring about change.

He devoted himself to the theatre, at the same time earning a living in advertising. In Madrid in 1989 he founded a theatre company, La Carniceria Teatro, in the search for a theatrical language that would be experimental, definitely not traditional, gaining awards and recognition in many parts of the world, but also stirring widespread controversy and violent reactions.

France, with its cultural openness, on a number of occasions proved receptive to Garcia’s work and ideas. Garcia now lives in Espinaredo, a remote village of the Asturias.

Gólgota Picnic, the work I have chosen for this survey was produced in Spain by the Centro Nacional Dramatico and staged at the Teatro Maria Guerrero in Madrid on January 7, 2011. It was then presented in France at the Théâtre de Garonne in Toulouse on November 16, 2011 and in Paris at the Théâtre du Rond-Point during the Festival d’Automne in 2011. I saw this production on December 8, 2011, and I draw on this performance in the present analysis. Gólgota Picnic was performed by Gonzalo Cunill, with Marino Formenti at the piano, Núria Lloansi, Juan Loriente, Juan Navarro and Jean-Benoît Ugeux.

The idea for the work and the basic text were developed on the author’s travels, while on the move by taxi and train, on plane trips and in hotel stays, during meals in restaurants in Italy and Japan, Switzerland and Hungary. In his imagination cluttered

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1 So relates Garcia himself in the prologue which appears translated into French in: R. Garcia,
with the everyday banalities, the provisional nature of travel and chance encounters, something broke through the tangle and polarized everything that came after it: Haydn, the subject of a conversation between occasional travelling companions, and the Deposition of Lorenzo Lotto viewed at the Pinacoteca Civica in Jesi. It was the body of Christ broken, dying or dead evoked by music (Joseph Haydn’s Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross was a starting point) and painting that elicited other pictures which remained etched in the artist’s memory, from an impassioned and prolonged frequentation (the Deposition in Jesi is certainly associated with Lotto’s Pietà and Mantegna’s Dead Christ seen in Milan at the Pinacoteca Braidense at other times), together with the biblical imagery on which the artist was nurtured and which he began paradoxically to reconstruct mainly after he lost his faith in God in early youth.

The basic text took shape and was delivered to the actors. Just a phone call, since “aucun individu ne peut compter sur plus de huit ou dix personnes qui croient en lui, il suffit de passer huit ou dix coups de fil sans donner trop d’explication”. The actors began work on the text, devising the physical actions, the movements of bodies, music and light, the materials that supplied the criteria for deciding what would suit the original text. The structure was strong, observes Garcia, but the actors were given great freedom, they could act as freely as if in performance art. They were the material in this formal aesthetic and dramaturgy of the stage. There was no need to talk. Garcia could stay away from the place where the work was being shaped for several days. The creation went on.

2. THE OPENING MONOLOGUE: THEMES, STRUCTURES, AMBIGUITIES

We can start with the text published in French.

It is the meditation-confession of a monologuing “I”, divided into fragment-sections. In each section, the start focuses on a powerful, striking image out of which grows an unsettling, provocative series of reflections. It moves between sarcasm, invective and paradoxical preaching which verges on blasphemy, an extreme, outrageous truth, which elicits disquiet and anger, but also shock, turmoil and a surge of existential empathy.

The sections unfold as follows:

i. Christ on the cross and the Christian iconography inspired by it in centuries of painting
ii. Man and death
iii. A car accident and near death on a highway in Asturias
iv. The Christ of Rubens and the faithful dog
v. Giotto’s Lamentation over the Dead Christ and the emergence of the body from the wreckage after surviving the accident
vi. The admonition in Ecclesiastes to remember the long days of darkness
vii. The many objects of faith and every man for himself
viii. The language of Naples and the impenetrability of a city


2 In numerous interviews Rodrigo Garcia has insisted on this passion for figurative culture, especially Christian iconography and the painters of the Italian Renaissance.
3 Garcia, Gólgota Picnic, 9.
4 “Je suis très sensible à la tension qui se produit entre cette structure très rigide et la liberté qu’ont les acteurs de s’y déployer comme s’il s’agissait d’une performance” (B. Tackels, Rodrigo Garcia, Besançon: Les Solitaires Intempestifs, 2007, 65.)
ix. Machines, the unknowns
x. The monad man, closed to communication with others, the generating organ of death
xi. The pit in the ground and the room for living in built with the land accumulated from digging the pit
xii. The fallen angel
xiii. The mirrors veiled so as not to reflect the image of a missing personality
xiv. The tailor who sews and the maker of words (writer, preacher, Christ)
 xv. Language and desire. Whites and blacks
xvi. The story of the earth and the return of the same
xvii. The Berlin Wall: looting and exultation
xviii. Laughter
xix. Sleep
xx. Lonely wandering and identification with Christ
xxi. The rich and their “wisdom”
xxii. I don’t believe it
xxiii. Solitude, a mountain of shit more bearable than social relations
xxiv. The nails in the hands and feet to silence him
xxv. The word continues to flow as if nothing had happened
xxvi. Text of the commandments: the interminable fall and “fly from each other”

The fragments and visions, assembled by association, compose a discourse that is both a denunciation-rejection of the world, in particular the present world, and a philosophy of life which reverses the Christian message and the Gospel story (which nurtured the culture in which the author, a Spaniard educated in Argentina, was educated). It feeds on negative thinking, basically Schopenhauer, interwoven with influences that come from his reading, seemingly “instinctive” rather than critically founded, of Camus, Beckett, Cioran and the Gnostics. Rodrigo Garcia has always declared his passion for literature and philosophy.

Simplifying we can order and summarize the text as follows. God placed us on a flat surface and then went off, certainly for good. Lucifer fell to earth and the fallen angel has overwhelmed man in an endless fall. He is the source of the language that has “named” death and desire, and, in naming, has created an awareness that is the source of fear, moral restraint, ideological faith ... in short, of mankind’s unhappiness.

And Christ? He is a madman who claims to be the son of God, who plans others’ future, disdainful of the normality of everyday life, at the head of a handful of men whom he designates as the chosen people, a guerrilla in the name of love, the bringer of discord, disorder, demagoguery and chauvinism.

The words written about him later are like the holes in a fabric caused by the needle and thread of a tailor, intended to unite but in fact bringing wounds and lacerations.

Obsessed by the terrorizing image of the Crucifixion, as depicted in centuries of painting, preserved in thousands of shrines and ever-present, the monologuing “I” relates the violence of the Western world to this imagery, built on representations of Calvary, crosses, tears, the propaganda of perversions, torments, cruelties.

And all this time mankind continues its interminable fall. Alien to each other, men are strangers to the machine they have built but are unable to control and which turns against them; they are strangers to the earth, which follows its cycle of catastrophes,

5 In section VII Schopenhauer is explicitly mentioned in the “litany” of faiths.
disasters, shocks, barrenness, heating while men struggle to recycle the stones of destruction and rebuild their perishable dwellings.

In its fall mankind surpasses the fall of Lucifer. There is nothing else to be done:

Semer le désordre, je ne peux pas: vous l’avez déjà fait. Peupler d’armes la terre, je ne peux pas: vous l’avez déjà fait
Vous apprendre à baiser des gosses, je ne peux pas: vous l’avez déjà fait
Vous apprendre à faire mourir de faim, je ne peux pas: vous l’avez déjà fait
Je ne peux pas apporter advantage d’obscénité car vous vous moqueriez de moi, vous me diriez: ça, on le sait déjà
Je ne peux pas vous apprendre à décimer des villes et des villages entiers, je ne peux pas vous apprendre la technique pour mener à bien un holocauste: vous l’avez déjà fait
Je ne peux pas faire trembler la terre avec des bombes lances du ciel: grâce à vous c’est déjà fait
Je ne peux pas vous envoyer de nouvelles calamites, je ne peux pas perdre mon temps à m’abattre sur la terre comme le feu, comme un fléau ou un carnage, pour vous tourmenter: vous vous faites ça très bien les uns aux autres.

And then the great idol: money, and the great universal prayer: “Argent, pourquoi m’as tu abandonné?”

All this covers the only truth: death, without the tragic emphasis with which the images of great painting have endowed it in representing the dead Christ, so that the monologist, recalling a near-fatal car accident, is induced to see himself as in the paintings of Giotto, Rogier van der Weyden and Rubens.

All this conceals the only truth, uttered by Ecclesiastes: “Si l’homme vit de longues années, qu’il profite de toutes, mais qu’il se rappelle quel les jours de ténèbres seront nombreux.” It conceals the truth that life is played out between a grave and the house built with the earth removed from the hole of the grave, between the waking and the slumber that we sleep because reality offends us.

And almost paraphrasing Schopenhauer:

La vie vit sa vie
Personne ne peut dire qu’il a une vie devant soi
La vie nous utilise.

Life flows by indifferent to what is happening.

The monologist then chooses his intoxicating fall. It is the leap into the void of silence, solitude, in solitary ecstasy:

je ne vous dis pas: sautez par la fenêtre. Je vous dis: sautez à l’intérieur de vous –mêmes, jouissez de la chute, ne laissez personne vous déranger
La solitude est tout ce dont vous êtes assurés
S’aimer les uns les autres n’a servi à rien, juste à Couvrir les pires outrages. Moi, je vous dis:

Fuyez-vous les uns les autres

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7 Ibid., 75.
8 Ibid., 37.
9 Ibid., 75.
Je le dis depuis ma chute interminable, qui est
Ma place dans le monde et mon état de grâce, ma
plénitude\(^{10}\).

3. WRITING ON STAGE

In the transition to the work on the stage, the original text was reorganized, being distributed in groups of lines between the actors, five young men of today, engaged in a normal picnic-grande bouffe. They do not acquire the distance of characters, but are presences that keep the names they have in real life: Núria, Navarro, Jean- Benoît, Loriente, Gonzalo.

The text underwent cuts, rearrangement and a montage with video images and live images.

If the text published by the author has, as we have seen, a strong philosophical-existential emphasis and a tendency towards introversion, the text produced by the script and the writing on stage (done mainly by the actors, but driven by García’s fascination with images and iconoclasm\(^{11}\)) has a strong, aggressive, striking impact on the reality of the world (rather than of the world, as in the published text, now it is of this world), with its anthropological, aesthetic and moral degradation. It acquires a charge of denunciation and alarm. This is clearly shown by the opening, which anticipates the passage that in the published text precedes the conclusion cited above.

NURIA
TEXT OF CONCORD - Text of the commandments.

Truly I tell you: he that has no sense of humour does not understand life: he that is not surprised at the ideas of others, does not know how to appreciate life.
The fall is sweet, I am the one that falls, I can make the moment of the fall happen and I make it happen inexhaustibly.
Among the clouds I am at my ease. I do not wish to trample the earth.
I cannot sow disorder: you have already done it.
I cannot fill the earth with weapons: you have already done it.
I cannot teach you to exploit children: you have already done it.
I cannot teach you to starve to death: you already done it.
I cannot show any other obscenities because you would laugh at me; you would say, this we already know.
I cannot teach you to raze cities or entire peoples, I cannot teach you how to make a holocaust: you have already done it.
I cannot make the earth tremble by dropping bombs from the sky: you have already done it.
I cannot send you new plagues, I cannot waste time descending to the earth as fire, plague and extermination to torment you: you have already done it.
Imitate me in the fall, do as I do.
Leap into the void of silence and solitude and enjoy meditation. Surrender yourselves to solitary ecstasy.

\(^{10}\) *Ibid.*, 77-78.

\(^{11}\) Figurative culture, vigorously fuelled by art galleries and the religious and civil buildings of the West, is entwined with the experience of advertising (in which the author worked for years in order to earn a living and finance his theatrical passion) and with the increasingly marked striving of the language to make an impact. Think, for example, of Oliviero Toscani’s work for Benetton.
It is to be hoped that the devil in the form of a fallen angel will come to continue to confuse men and you will see nothing more distant than that.

I do not tell you to leap from a window. I tell you to leap into yourselves, enjoy falling, and let nobody disturb you. Solitude is the only certain thing you have.

Loving one another served no end, only to cover greater outrages. I say to you: flee from one another. I say this from my interminable fall, which is my place in the world and my state of grace, my fulfilment.\(^{12}\)

The items follow each other, if we use the numbering proposed above, in the following order:

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<tr>
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Enter the piano. Marino plays.

Among some of them appear large video images: the fallen angel (between xii and iii), “Money, why have you forsaken me?”\(^{13}\) (Between v and xv), hamburger (between 1...and x), “Every man for himself/faith/in proverbs/in muscles/in our animal smell/in our errors/in our repetitions/in the deceit/in the insomniac/in betrayal/in the rivalry/in suicide/in earthly life/in covetousness/in each sin/in Schopenhauer /in the imprint/in

\(^{12}\) Script kindly made available by the Théâtre Garonne of Toulouse. My translation.

The Spanish text is as follows:

De verdad os digo que quien no tenga sentido del humor, no entiende la vida. Que quien no se maraville ante las ideas de los demás, no sabe andar la vida. /La caída es dulce, soy el que cae, el momento de la caída puedo hacerlo y lo hago inagotable. Entre las nubes me encuentro a gusto. La tierra no quiero pisarla. /Sembrar el desorden no puedo: ya lo habéis hecho vosotros. /Poblar la tierra de armas no puedo: ya lo habéis hecho vosotros. /Enseñar a follar niños no puedo: ya lo habéis hecho vosotros. /Enseñaros a matar de hambre no puedo: ya lo habéis hecho vosotros. /No puedo enseñaros las técnicas para concluir un holocausto: ya lo habéis hecho vosotros. /No puedo hacer temblar la tierra con bombas lanzadas desde el cielo: ya está hecho por vosotros. /No puedo enviaros pestes nuevas, no puedo perder el tiempo cayendo a la tierra como fuego, plaga y esterminio para atormentaros: ya lo habéis bien vosotros contra vosotros. /Imidamme en la caída, haced lo que yo. Saltad al vacío del silencio y de la soledad y disfrutad del recogimiento. Entregad al éxtasis solitario. /Se espera que el demonio en forma de ángel caído llegue a la tierra a seguir confundiendo a los hombres y ya veís que nada más lejano de eso:/No os digo saltad por una ventana. Os digo saltad dentro de vosotros mismos, gozad de la caída, no os dejéis molestar por nadie. La soledad es lo único que tenéis como cierto. /Amarse unos a otros no ha servido para nada, solo como tapadera para los mayores ultrajes, yo os digo: huid los unos de los otros. Lo digo desde mi caída interminable, que es mi sitio en el mundo y mi estado de gracia, mi plenitud.

\(^{13}\) “Dinero, porque me has abandonado” (script cit.)
calligraphy/ I do not know how to write/I do not need it Nor what is/happening (between xvii and xviii), Christ fell (finale)\textsuperscript{14}.

But it is the scoring of the images built up out of the bodies of the actors in a tense, feverish, impassioned atmosphere that is the substance of the performance. It is the materialization of what passes in the imaginations of five ordinary young men during a humdrum picnic around a chequered tablecloth strewn with food and an electric guitar, while, to pass the time, they munch food and talk. The are on stage all the time. They speak their lines calmly, ironically, easily, exaggerating and making paradoxical associations, bragging youthfully, offering confessions and reflections. They evoke all the evil humanity has managed to do, pouring out maxims and aphorisms, telling tales of death feared, sought or barely escaped, and of time; in mocking, sarcastic or blasphemous tones they ridicule and travesty the Christian story, satirising fragments of history and chronicle ... The verbal material of the interior monologue written by Rodrigo, almost a confession or reckless meditation, is freely redistributed as fragments among the characters of the group of young people.

Their tone as they chew over these topics rather idly is unheated, but as they go on their imaginations heat up, perhaps warmed by the drink or the “smoke” of the picnic, and it vomits out its ballast, fomented by our chaotic world of images, assembled like the paradoxes of Dali or Arcimboldo, comic strips or advertising. While the figure of the picnic occupies a corner on the left, the stage and screen are invaded by the chaotic and crude obsessions of the imaginations of these young characters/actors. It is galvanized by the words of the text of the monologuing self, which takes over and repeats fragments of it. Everything is polarized around a centre: the body of the crucified Christ, the sign of an unresolved contradiction, overwhelming, oppressive.

Their heads are chaotically filled with all this, a result of autosuggestion.

The screen relentlessly zooms in on details of the images created on the stage.

What is normally “sacred” is inverted and takes on a metaphorical significance that is shocking in its starkness.

The bread, a staple of food and of fellowship among men, is multiplied into “bricks” made out of burger buns, a floor whose smell spreads through the theatre. The stacked buns are a grotesque and disgusting tower of Babel that totters on the point of collapsing with the wriggling of worms in the buns. (The worms are real and living, in keeping with the author’s particular relish for bringing actual creatures onstage.)

The buns are pierced by nails. A symbolic tangle, a polyvalence of the object that reflects the lesson of Kantor, Grotowski, and also film imagery (think of Ermanno Olmi’s \textit{One Hundred Nails}). The evident allusion is to the crucified Jesus, the Bread of life in the Eucharist, pierced by the nails of the Passion.

The naked body is sprayed with strokes of livid colour and the colour of blood, violated or degraded in animal contortions and movements, in erotic aggressions, disguises or obscene parodies of the rituals of beauty, increasingly mingled with the incursions of the body of the dead Christ. This appears in projected images or in reminiscences of Giotto, Rubens, Mantegna and Lotto, going so far as to imitate the crucifix in the postures and movements of the actors on stage. Then the imagination regresses until it touches the origin: a flash brings up the bodies of Adam and Eve.

The food, the meat in the burgers, becomes a giant nightmare (like certain Kafka-
kaesque fears of being overwhelmed by a pebble magnified until it becomes a huge boulder). The meat is churned out by a giant meat grinder; boluses of food emerge disgustingly from mouths.

Everything is covered by the amplified roar of air displaced at high altitudes by the falling angel in a flight suit (no longer black, but fair, like the colour of bare flesh), helmet and pilot’s or astronaut’s goggles.


The pianist himself, entering into harmony with the Spanish artist, offered a brief explanation, which was inserted in the publication of *Golgotha Picnic*. His essential point was that the seven last words should rather be called the seven last silences. The work, composed by Haydn in 1786 for Good Friday at the chapel of Santa Cueva de Cardix, is full of silences; and pauses; it is non-dramatic music at a time when the trend was towards drama, theatricality, artifice. It is made up of silences and silence, in keeping with the rules of musical rhetoric, is the representation of death.

Haydn’s Christ, noted Marino Formenti, it is not the Baroque Christ. “Chez Haydn, il est si proche, il est un corps humain solitaire et endolori, avec un piano en guise de cercueil […] ce Christ est un homme bien réel, en chair et en os. On peut renifler ses blessures, sentir sa proximité, son humanité”15. In Haydn’s music, again notes the pianist, we find not so much what Jesus said as what he did not say. “C’est la chute de Rodrigo”16.

4. WHAT MEANING?

The performative dynamics seem to emerge quite clearly from the description of the performance, on which I have necessarily dwelt at length. They are: the prevalence of presence over performance in both the group of young people and in the pianist; the intersection of languages; the impact on the audience’s perceptions, including the sense of smell (think of the intense aroma of bread); the centrality of the body; the degree of freedom given to the actors.

But it is also necessary to consider the interpretation this piece, both in terms of the more immediate meanings and in its more profound implications.

So what is the significance of this much debated play, involved in polemics, mostly coming from exponents of Catholic integralism?

It is impossible to ask for a linear and absolutely direct significance, but the montage of the two sections clearly expresses the contradiction and authentic tension of this performance artist.

But it is precisely ambiguity, uncertainty, that seems coherent with the situation of

16 Ibid., 13.
stalemate, disorientation and confusion in which our time is searching for an anthropological direction for its future.

The first part contains the sequences of a confused and frenzied world, noisy and strident, made up of nonsense and anguish, hypocrisy and greed, indifference and malice, violence, exploitation and selfishness. The last part consists of the long piano sequence, with the pianist offering his music made up of silence and the defenceless nakedness of his body.

Disillusioned, shot through with a radical melancholy and rage, redeemed by humour, still with the signs and rancour of a religious education that he experienced as terrorising and with his mind impressed by the assiduous reading of his favourite philosopher (Schopenhauer), in this work Rodrigo Garcia arrives at a contradiction rather than a conclusion.

What confronts us here is not, as I believe, an inspiration centred on Christianophobia, as a facile and superficial media reading sought to make the public believe while fomenting the scandal. Rather, as I have said, we have an anthropological, experiential inspiration, which the actors above all push towards a “political” connotation.

The world, filtered through the imagination and experience of five young people having a picnic, is the extreme point of a vertical fall that has continued for centuries and which Garcia, on the basis of the thought of Schopenhauer, is perhaps inclined to interpret as structural, linked to the true essence, but which he would also, perhaps, agree to attribute to the deranged choices of mankind. What he considers myths and rhetoric, invented by mankind and exploited to serve ambitions of power and wealth, have a large share of the responsibility.

The message, if there is one, wavers and remains ambiguous. It is either the search for the zero point from which to start over again: the naked body of man and silence. Through the presence of Marino and his music the performance touches the “compassion” for Jesus as man.

Or else it is the achievement of an irremediable melancholy, a renunciation, a detachment, a “negative way”, which seeks to sink into solitude and nothingness.17

17 I have already mentioned the influence of Schopenhauer in this respect. Moreover, the philosopher’s thought often re-emerges in modern times, when people are disappointed with history fear the defeat of humanity. Rodrigo Garcia feels an affinity for the ideas of the anti-idealistic, anti-historicist, pessimistic philosopher and his solitary, misanthropic, sometimes morbid character, oscillating between compassion, irony and contempt. The World as Will and Representation made a deep impression on him. The world is a continuous transformation of representations, which conceals its substance like the “veil of Maya”. Substance is the unfathomable, blind will to live: not a moral principle, but an ontological principle. It seeks to perpetuate itself, an obscure, impulsive force. In those appearances, there are no purposes, reasons, meanings and progress. “As the magic-lantern shows many different pictures, which are all made visible by one and the same light” (153), revealing and devouring itself, “for there exists nothing beside it, and it is a hungry will. Hence arise eager pursuit, anxiety, and suffering” (154). It underlies all forms, animal, vegetable, human and human, comprising the aspirations, the desires that analogically relate to each other. Wisdom is “noluntas”, detachment, absolute solitude: “then, instead of the restless striving and effort, instead of the constant transition from wish to fruition, and from joy to sorrow, instead of the never-satisfied and never-dying hope which constitutes the life of the man who wills, we shall see that peace which is above all reason, that perfect calm of the spirit, that deep rest” (415). What remains is nothingness. Of all the arts, music is the one that best captures the essence of the inner world and is most immediately capable of making it understood by all. The other arts give the reflection, the forms, the phenomenon; objective music is the essence of the will itself (see 298).

5. WHAT EFFECT?

We still have to understand the effects of this example of performative dramaturgy on the viewer.

It may stimulate a kind of “empathy” with that group of young people having a picnic and talking about the world and life with a calm that is immediately overwhelmed by a tangled mass of dazzling images. It might function as a mirror experience that arouses discomfort, disgust, anger, saturation and the desire to flee. It is a shock, orchestrated with a complex and extremely cultivated construction, which reveals a false consciousness. It is like a slap that startles us out of the lethargy which has accustomed us to a world without meaning, self-destructive and a denier of humanity. It directly provokes and revolts our perception, dulled by the plethora of images, by the chaotic storehouse of post-modernity, by the aesthetics of ugliness. In the protected setting of the theatre (and in this particular case, the irony lay in the fact that the protection was provided by the riot police), it reveals the drift that is opening the floodgates to the worst instincts and urges us to look squarely at it. It arouses some pity and a twinge of guilt for those young people to whom this world has been consigned, and whose head is invaded by this imagery.

But through the final surprise, the experience is reversed and introduces a different experience, an asceticism that has to be traversed and conquered.

In Garcia, as in the work of other artists formed by Christianity, who claim to have long abandoned the faith, the references to Christ remain frequent (even obsessively so), as are the references to the Gospels. Why?

To these artists the Gospel and Christ are a scandalous and symbolic paradigm (as salvation is for believers), one that invests human experience, a paradigm filled with the human spirit and vitality, accrued over two thousand years of encounters with the generations that have recognised themselves in it. He unremittingly stirs mankind, even exasperating it, to rise to a challenge: that of feeling it stands between heaven and earth.

SUMMARY

The essay analyses the production of Gólgota Picnic by the Spanish artist Rodrigo Garcia, seen in the context of the 2011 Festival d’Automme in Paris.

The paper describes the structure of the representation and its relations with the non-dramatic monologue written by Garcia out of which it freely develops.

The essay highlights the elements which justify its inclusion in the context of performative theatre, that is the subject of this special issue of the journal.

It also seeks an interpretation of the ideas and values inspiring the work and clarifies the reasons for its strong impact on the audience.