



Reproductive Technology in Contemporary Theatre Plays: Questioning Gender Stereotypes?

Birte Giesler

1. Bringing IVF and Genetic Engineering onto the Theatre Stage

Dramatic literature and its theatrical performance are cultural practices that structure the order of knowledge within society while being linked to other cultural and historical discourses. As Erika Fischer-Lichte has stated, theatre can be considered an “anthropological laboratory” and a cultural mirror through which society observes itself while different possibilities of personhood and human life are played through.¹ Drama and theatrical performances are significant components of cultural life and specific sites of human self-reflection and self-assurance. Thus, it is hardly surprising that test-tube babies and human clones are currently entering theatrical stages while the public debates issues like in-vitro fertilisation, genetics and bioethics. In the meantime, after theatre events like Caryl Churchill’s *a number* in England in 2002 or Rainer Lewandowski’s *I* in Germany 2003, human clones have even reached the opera stage: *Rosenthal’s Sons*, an opera travesty dealing with the subject of cloning famous composers, was first performed in Moscow Bolshoi theatre in 2005.²

Theatre plays dealing with reproductive technology prove to be particularly useful in investigating the interrelation between the state of reproductive medicine and gender concepts in culture and society. This is, because drama and dramatic literature on the one hand deal with, and reflect on, language and the body as the two major tools of





human cognition. On the other hand, reproductive medicine takes a hand into bodily functions and deals directly with reproduction and sexuality. Theatre and drama deal pre-eminently with the physicality and performances of the body.³ So, the interrelation between biomedical inventions on the one hand and biological and societal dimensions of sex and gender on the other hand is particularly noticeable in the theatrical examination of reproductive medicine.

The following research paper will analyse aspects of subversion and reaffirmation of gender concepts in two contemporary comical plays dealing with reproductive technologies and their impact on gender and family relationships. The first object of scholarly investigation will be *An Immaculate Misconception*, written in 1997 by Stanford Chemistry professor Carl Djerassi.⁴ As a second example, the first German-language theatre play dealing with human cloning and genetic engineering will be investigated. *Futur de luxe* was written by Igor Bauersima and first staged in a production directed by the author in 2002.⁵ Bauersima is one of the currently most frequently performed and best received award-winning German playwrights.⁶

2. Challenging Concepts of Gender and Authorship in Carl Djerassi's *An Immaculate Misconception*

Carl Djerassi's *An Immaculate Misconception* is a comedy of mistaken identity that raises the status quo of in vitro fertilisation technology. Remarkably, the drama focuses on the subject of assisted fertilisation while stressing the fact that individuals involve themselves in the reproduction process in different ways. At the same time, the play entangles issues of procreation with a dispute on ownership and the affiliation of authorship.

The play consists of four characters: First of all, Dr. Melanie Laidlaw, an American reproduction biologist in her late thirties; secondly, Melanie's lover Menachem Dvir, an Israeli engineer of nuclear physics; thirdly, Dr. Felix Frankenthaler, an American specialist on artificial fertilisation and Melanie's colleague; and last but not least Adam, a young teenager and Melanie's offspring. The plot of the play is framed by a prologue and an



epilogue. The prologue takes place in the year 2014, the epilogue in 2011. The inner part of the plot is played out during the years 1997 and 1998. Dr. Melanie Laidlaw is the fictitious inventor of the “intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI)”, a revolutionary new reproductive technology allowing men who suffer from lower sperm production to have genetically own children.⁷ Hearing her biological clock ticking, Dr. Laidlaw starts a self-experiment with her new invention using sperms from her lover who, after having an accident with a nuclear experiment, became infertile. Her colleague Dr. Frankenthaler, who is very interested in the breakthrough and does not want to risk spoiling the experiment with ‘inferior material’, foists his own sperms on Melanie and her egg cells in the petri dish. Melanie however, does not learn of this until fallen pregnant and therefore becomes unsure of whose child she is carrying. When Melanie eventually learns about Frankenthaler’s dead, she and Frankenthaler have a very heavy dispute on the question of who will sign as the author for the scientific invention and thus be entitle to submit the scholarly article on it under their own name. Melanie blackmails Frankenthaler with his dead and takes revenge on him by submitting the publication to a prestigious journal solely under her name. Menachem accepts Adam as his own child and neglects the aspect of genetic paternity. The question about Adam’s genetic father is left open at the end of the play.

Melanie and the other characters within the fictitious plot of the play stand up for the groundbreaking invention, deeply convinced it will lead to a revolution of gender ratio and push women’s liberation forward. Melanie is particularly interested in women’s concerns. She argues IVF and ICSI enable women to take reproduction into their own hands and coordinate professional and family life better. The traditional affiliation of women with nature and biology and the consuetudinary balance of power between the two genders seem to shift in *An Immaculate Misconception*. It looks as if through modern reproductive technologies women acquire a certain kind of power they did not have on their hands before.

Within the fictitious world of *An Immaculate Misconception*, strong and triumphant Melanie comes off as the ‘winner’ in a sense as she is creating a furore as ingenious scientist with her announcement of the



scientific invention. Making the question of authorship a main issue, *An Immaculate Misconception* hints at biology historian Donna Haraway and her interpretation of the history of science. Haraway argues that, in the current secularised world, modern life science has taken over some of the functions that religion used to have in former times. Following Haraway, modern science is a kind of narrative practice empowered to define 'truth': "[...] biology tells tales about origins, about genesis, and about nature. [...] all scientific statements are historical fictions made facts through the exercise of power [...]." ⁸ Similar to Haraway's interpretation of modern life science, readings of Djerassi's fictitious dispute on IVF, the ICSI-procedure and female authorship might come to the conclusion that women become authorised and empowered by new reproductive technologies so that the power balance between the genders inverts. However, a gender critical reading of *An Immaculate Misconception* shows that rather the opposite is true. In the context of new technologies of artificial insemination and in-vitro-fertilisation, traditional gender concepts get in fact re-affirmed and amplified. How come?

During the last two decades, gender research in different academic fields has been critically investigating heteronormativity. One of the major results of this research is the exhibition of the two-genderedness and two-sexedness of our world view as a cultural phenomenon and product of our perception, rather than as a direct reproduction of material reality. Relevant endeavours in social sciences and humanities have been questioning the subdivision between exactly two genders on the social and cultural level whereas corresponding research in science has been demonstrating the dubiety of the generalising and strict classification of all human beings into exactly two sexes. Whereas certain concepts in humanities and social sciences have 'thrown the baby out with the bathwater' by neglecting the fact that humans come somehow sexed and have their sexuality,⁹ fertilisation medicine operates on the basis of the opposite extreme. Reproductive medicine sticks with the perspective that human beings come in two categories, being either (potential) mothers or (potential) fathers, either egg or sperm donors. Reproductive medicine thus tends to reaffirm heterosexuality and heteronormativity.¹⁰



If one takes a closer look at what happens in *An Immaculate Misconception*, it is quite remarkable how ‘women’ – those individuals, who are identified as (potential) egg donors – are associated with nature, the body and the status of being an object by means of reproductive technologies. By demonstrating the new technology on stage – the biotechnological procedure is shown on a video screen between scenes 5 and 6 in the play – the play circles around the question about possible social and emotional impacts of new fertilisation technologies for current and future gender relationships. Thereby the plot is overloaded with gender stereotypes and clichés, clearly indicating that talking about biology and ‘nature’ is already part of the linguistically defined process of ‘doing culture’. For example, the fictitious characters associate science with men:

Frankenthaler: *It's time you stop playing multiple roles.*

Melanie: *What roles?*

Frankenthaler: *That of a woman, who's obsessed with motherhood [...] and simultaneously that of an ambitious scientist. [...] As the ICSI scientist, you want to become famous... [...] But your hurry to become a mother is clouding your scientific judgement. That's where I come in [...] to look at the situation dispassionately. (Djerassi 58-59.)*

Additionally, the characters consistently use traditional gender metaphors and stereotypes to describe the technical events in the laboratory. They call a very actively moving sperm “a real macho” (Djerassi 43), an egg cell “a beauty” (Djerassi 45), consider the successful sperm injection a “beautiful penetration” (Djerassi 45) and call the undamaged appearing egg “involute, almost virginal” (Djerassi 46). At the end Frankenthaler is ridiculed by being called “the fired midwife” (Djerassi 124).

The intention of the play text clearly undermines the characters’ optimism.¹¹ It is not at all the success as a scientist that leads to the single authorship of the female. Melanie Laidlaw becomes an author because she seems to be justified as a quasi raped woman. In fact, Melanie explicitly accuses Frankenthaler of having raped her egg (Djerassi 122). On the male side, we see Menachem as a self-appointed, intellectual and morally superior father. Far from demonstrating a generous and progressive attitude, the upvaluation of social paternity against biological

fatherhood – the uncoupling of the male from biology – is a common issue in European history of drama since Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's 18th century play *Nathan the Wise*. As *An Immaculate Misconception* impressively demonstrates, on the female side, the opposite can be observed. Whilst empirically, egg cells in petri dishes are as exchangeable as sperms, in the play female eggs serve to re-establish a biological bonding solely on the female side. The somewhat active and powerful scientist is reduced to an object as her meaningful surname "Laidlaw" already indicates: She gets laid by a cultural law concerning the affiliation of women to motherhood.¹² As a whole, the play can be evaluated as ultraconservative and radically deconstructive at the same time. On the one hand it clearly indicates the reaffirmation of the heterosexual 'world view' in the context of reproductive medicine. On the other hand, it forcefully demonstrates the linguistic construction of biological 'facts'. Talking about 'biology' and 'nature' is part of 'doing culture' and thus part of the process which is creating two-gendered 'nature'.

3. Subverting Sex and Gender Identities in Igor Bauersima's *futur de luxe*

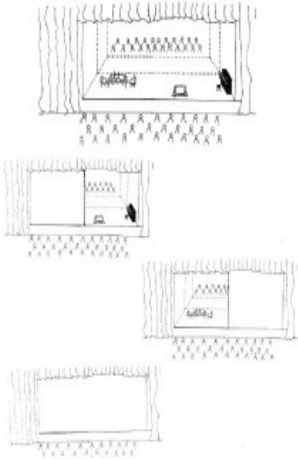
Igor Bauersima's *futur de luxe* narrates the story of a shared dinner had by the members of a Jewish family, the Kleins, on a Friday night in the year 2020. The father, who is named Theo, mother Ulla, the 25-year-old daughter Uschi and the 24-year-old twin-sons Felix and Rudi meet at the parents' house to celebrate Shabbath. At the beginning we see a normal every-day situation. However, in the course of the shared meal the situation escalates as the family members begin to learn things about the family and about themselves they did not know or that they were not allowed to talk about. The conversation develops itself into a forum characterised by the searching for truth because the father, who is a biochemist of international reputation, tells his family about an unique experiment he had made 24 years ago. As a scientist he had aimed to answer the question of whether human good and evil was determined genetically or by other factors. For this reason he had produced the two sons by cloning, albeit illegally and without telling the truth to his wife. He claims that he had produced one embryo from his own DNA whilst producing the second

one by cloning the DNA of Adolf Hitler. The grotesque narration of how Theo supposedly acquired Hitler's DNA then plays a major role within the play. On top of his story about the clone experiment, Theo claims that Uschi had suffered from a lethal genetic damage as an embryo which he had been able to remedy by means of genetic engineering. Having learned this crude news, mother and daughter start an aggressive argument which leads Ulla to disclose to Uschi that in fact Theo is not her biological father; a fact that she claims Theo had also known since the pregnancy. During the various horrendous revelations the identities of the characters, as well as the images they used to have of themselves and of their family members, get more and more destroyed while the events become more and more verbally and eventually physically violent. The dramatic plot plays through two versions of the course of the evening. The first version leads the family members to kill one another until nobody except for the daughter is left. In the second version, which is much more extensively designed, the whole family survives except for Uschi who quietly commits suicide while Rudi, by armed force, makes Theo swear to be finished with science. The play ends with a scene that obviously takes place before the family reunion starts. The mother is standing on the terrace in the dawn; obviously unsuspecting, she proudly holds a monologue about her famous husband and her talented children.

The work of Igor Bauersima, who stages his own drama by combining traditional forms of theatre making with cinematic elements and new media technologies, serves as an interesting and enlightening example of theatre in an age of media. Most of the actual story of *futur de luxe* takes place inside of one room. In the production of his play, the author produced with the Hannover State Theatre in 2002, Bauersima staged this single room as a box on the stage which is accessible from two sides. On each side in front of the room there is a terrace. At the walls of this room are movable blinds and curtains which can be opened and closed in different variations. The blinds and curtains get wind up and down during the play and serve as video screens in various scenes. The spectators are separated into two halves sitting in front respectively behind the 'box-room'. Thus, the audience is not only watching the action on stage but is also observing



itself, while watching *futur de luxe*:



Igor Bauersima: futur de luxe. Stage setting, State Theatre Hannover 2002. Stage director: Igor Bauersima

© Birte Giesler

Futur de luxe is an ironic comment on the discourse on genetic engineering and the recent genetic debate. It is a grotesque drama of family relationships and science that brings up genetic engineering and human cloning while touching on the relationship between language, media and perception. The remarkably intertextual play exposes the human clone as a symbolic figure of postmodern tendencies questioning identity concepts, patriarchal culture and traditional ways of perceiving (historical) 'truth'. The centre of the play, the point where the every-day situation changes and the actual plot starts, is the scene in which Theo tells his family about his clone experiment and reveals that his sons are clones. Thus, the decisive part of the fictitious action is explicitly shown as a male discourse with the father's speech as its starting point. Theo starts his narration with the anecdote on how he supposedly perceived the DNA of Adolf Hitler to be the essence of evil:

Theo: Well. My problem was, I had to get hold of this evil.... And in those days, a rumour emerged. Herbert..... A policeman of Hitler's



guards witnessed the last minutes in the bunker, he saw Hitler dead and before the body went up in flames he took one of Hitler's fingers as a souvenir. This story, I mean, it is interesting for various reasons, this story haunted me for quite some time, you remember Ulla.

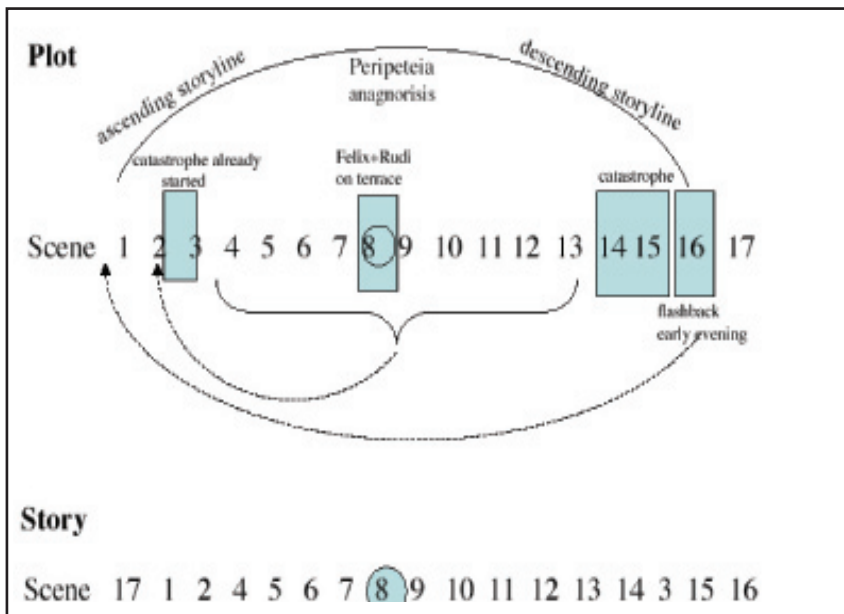
Ulla: I think I preferred to forget it.

Theo: Yes. So I went off and searched for Herbert's loot. I finally came upon a collector of curios. We met, irony of history, at café Einstein. I introduced myself as a collector as well and under false name. I wanted to buy the finger from him. But I was unable to convince him. In any case, he invited me to his home to marvel at the curios. Yes. And when the man had to go to the washroom, I stole for the first and hopefully the last time... I pinched the finger and was off.¹³

While Theo narrates his story its content is shown as a movie by means of video projection on the blinds. The father's narration and its staging is quite remarkable. Theos narration of his clone experiment resembles a kaleidoscope of allusions to images and patterns from cultural history. Whilst almost every part of the human body contains the individual DNA, in *futur de luxe* it is the finger of all body parts providing the DNA. In cultural history the finger is considered a magic part of the body. Biblical culture considers the finger of God to have the power to create and give life and this is also why Michelangelo's ceiling fresco *The Creation of Adam* from the Sistine Chapel is omnipresent in the imagery of the debate on bioethics. The whole play *futur de luxe* can be considered a patchwork of well-known cultural patterns. Cloning Adolf Hitler is already a motif in contemporary popular culture. The latest sensational example is the hype in 2001 when the biotechnology company 'Clonaid' run by the Canadian sect of Rael announced that, in order to finally bring Hitler to trial, they were going to clone Adolf Hitler using a piece of his skullcap which is supposedly kept in the Russian State Archive in Moscow.¹⁴ Popular German gutter press newspaper *Bild* banner headlined: "Wide indignation about uncanny project. Ufo sect going to clone Adolf Hitler! World in disgust about distasteful plan of ufo sect. Can the clone-Hitler become a good person?"¹⁵ While theatre reviews pointed out, *futur de luxe* gives

a bioethical statement against human cloning and demonstrates a ‘test run’ of the prospect technological possibility of cloning Adolf Hitler,¹⁶ this reading argues that the play is rather making fun of that kind of argumentation being part of the public bioethical debates. As underscored by the fact that Theo himself leads his narration back to a “rumour” and by the dramatic irony of the comical video projection, Theo’s story is obviously weird and implausible. Remarkably, however, none of the fictitious characters questions its trustworthiness. On the contrary, the family members take the father’s statements one hundred percent as facts. Being told that they are clones or members of a clone family, they sink into heavy identity crises and start to violate themselves and each other.

Knowledge and ignorance, truth and fate play significant roles in *futur de luxe*. A closer look at the formal shape of the play shows that the structure of the plot bears a strong reference to the antique tragedy.



© Birte Giesler

In scene 1 and 2 the children arrive at the parent’s house one after the

other. The family reunion starts. In Scene 3 the catastrophe already started. The living room looks like a battlefield. The whole scene is shown as a video projection. At its end the fiction is broken when Rudi opens the blind and turns towards the audience announcing that the actors on stage would have to play the story from the beginning. Scenes 4 to 14 make up a flashback showing the events that led to the catastrophe. At the end of scene 14 the plot is again in the narrative present. Scene 15 and 16 present the continuation of scene 3 and show how the catastrophe finally escalates. Chronologically, in regard to the story, Scene 17 is set before scene 1.

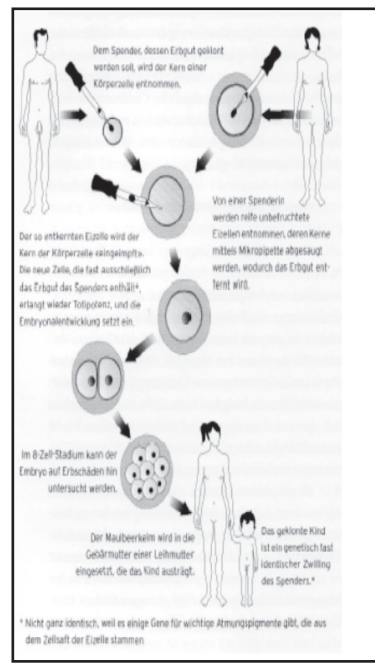
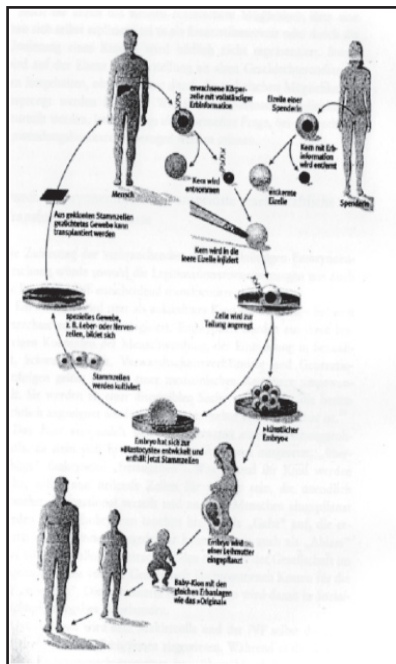
While circling around the crucial question of the meaning of knowledge, as in Sophokles' *Oedipus*, the plot also refers to the bourgeois tragedy of the family (*Bürgerliches Trauerspiel*). As Renate Möhrmann points out, mothers are noticeably absent in the bourgeois tragedy while the daughter and her death covers the father's male identity.¹⁷ In *futur de luxe* a mother figure exists, but her most noticeable quality is that she is busy with disguising her aging body by consistently having plastic surgery. Thus, her children state that her age could only be defined separately for every single part of her body. When Uschi asks her mother: "How old ARE you in fact?" Rudi answers: "Uschi, this question was not precisely posed. Mother's age can only be defined separately for every single part of her body."¹⁸ Uschi, the daughter, is the pivotal point in the double ending plot. In the shorter version she is the only survivor while the rest of the family is killed. In the far more extensively depicted version she is the only one who dies.

The grotesque plot of *futur de luxe* demonstrates the constitution of the male subject in the process of signification. As Lacanian philosopher Luce Irigaray points out in her basic work *Speculum of the Other Woman*, the Occidental concept of the subject in principle creates a male subject. This is because this subject is constituted by the neglect and abjection of the female as 'the Other'. Following Irigaray, the neglect of the own origin in the body of the mother is a major aspect of the abjection of the female. The result is the image of the self created and autonomous male subject:

*The point being that man is the procreator, that sexual production-reproduction is referable to his "activity" alone, to his "pro-ject" alone.
Woman is nothing but the receptacle that passively receives his product,*

even if sometimes, by the display of her passively aimed instincts, she has pleaded, facilitated, even demanded that it be placed within her. Matrix – womb, earth, factory, bank – to which the seed capital is entrusted so that it may germinate, produce, grow fruitful, without woman being able to lay claim to either capital or interest since she has only submitted “passively” to reproduction. Herself held in receivership as a certified means of (re)production. [...] The same re-marking itself – more or less – would thus produce the other, whose function in the differentiation would be neglected, forgotten.¹⁹

Following Irigaray, the idea of a male subject is a tautological and self-referring illusory concept. The vision of male self-(re)production is precisely the overtone of the idea of reproductive cloning and it is exactly what *futur de luxe* plays through. *Futur de luxe* puts on stage what contemporary graphics about the procedure of reproductive cloning demonstrate. Reproductive cloning consequently accomplishes the dream of male self-creation:





In both graphic examples (one taken from the popular German magazine *Stern*²⁰, the other one stems from a book written by biomathematics professor and member of the German National Ethics Council Jens Reich²¹) the DNA donor is male. A female is brought into play as the donor of the denucleated egg cell and the nurturing culture medium to serve and breed the male species. At the end of the procedure we see the duplicate of the 'original' male patient. According to graphical illustrations of reproductive cloning procedures, in current reproductive technologies the female body ideologically serves as the 'container' for the male essence. Pursuant to these visualisations reproductive cloning consequently accomplishes the ancient dream of male self-procreation.²²

Male self-procreation is exactly what happens in the Klein-family according to Theo's bizarre story. Theo claims that he had made his wife deliver his own genetic copy to prove that 'good' is not genetically determined. Pretending that he suffered from a genetic illness he cuts of the genetic-material bonding between the mother and her sons:

*FELIX: After having tried for 24 years to come to terms with the fact, that my mother only carried and delivered me, but that I am not really related to her,... that my biological mother is a stranger, who is running around somewhere out there, only to be told after 24 years that I do not even HAVE a mother at all!*²³

While the characters simply believe the father's speech, the clones / sons seem to come to terms with the situation at the end of the second version of the plot. Opposite to the male figures are the mother and the daughter. The daughter explicitly hints at the abysses of life:

*USCHI: You are not willing to look into the abysses making up life! [...] We have to learn what we are [...] Even if it is that difficult. [...] We must learn to confine. Yes. We also must learn that we have to die one day.*²⁴

Hinting at death being its negation but part of life, Uschi stands for the abyss, 'the Other'. Shortly after pleading for respect of these abysses, she vanishes by killing herself. In the meantime Rudi forces Theo to finish with science, and it seems that the remaining family is going to recover and come to terms with the given conditions. In the end, after having been radically ridiculed and questioned meanwhile, the male subject of the father is being confirmed. *Futur de luxe* traces the construction of the



(male) subject in the process of signification by ironically exposing the idea of the human clone as the most recent remake of the dream of male self-creation and self-(re)production.

4. Bionic Wo-Men or 'Biology as Fate'?

Both plays – *An Immaculate Misconception* as well as *futur de luxe* – staging artificial insemination and/or genetic engineering and reproductive cloning, show that the new bodily technologies reaffirm the idea of 'biology as fate'. However, using comic elements and strategies they simultaneously radically reveal that this 'fate' – biology and physical bodies – is linguistically and culturally defined. Being a product of 'doing culture' our sexual fate is in community's, our own, hands.

Notes

- 1 Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Geschichte des Dramas*. 2 Vol. 2. Edition. Tübingen/Basel: Francke, 1999, 3f; *Theatralität und die Krisen der Repräsentation*. Ed. Erika Fischer-Lichte. Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler, 2001, 1.
- 2 Kerstin Holm, "Mozart lebt, die Musik muß sterben. Die Herrin als Magd: Dessjatinikows Operntravestie *Rosenthals Söhne* in Moskau uraufgeführt", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 73, 30.3.2005, 36.
- 3 On the significance of body and language issues in drama, theatre and performance see: Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatisches Theater*, Frankfurt a. M: Verlag der Autoren, 1999, 361f.
- 4 Carl Djerassi, *An Immaculate Misconception – Sex in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. London: Imperial College Press, 2000. In recent years, Carl Djerassi, the inventor of the anti-baby pill, has been succeeding in his second career as author of novels and theatre plays dealing with scientific issues and the impact of science and technology on society and culture. See: Chloe Veltman, "Carl Djerassi from pill to quill – An award-winning chemist takes his science to the stage", *American Theatre* 19.6 (2002): 53-54. On Djerassi's concepts of 'science-in-fiction' and 'science-in-theatre' see also his comprehensive website: <<http://www.djerassi.com>>.
- 5 Igor Bauersima, "futur de luxe", *norway.today*. 3 *Theaterstücke*, Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 2003, 63-120. I would like to take this opportunity to express my special thanks to Igor Bauersima and the Hannover (Germany) State Theatre for providing me with a video recording of Bauersima's production for research purposes.
- 6 "Kritiker nennen die Höhepunkte der Saison 2000/01", *Theater heute Jahrbuch* (2001): 134-149: 144.
- 7 Facultally speaking, the ICSI technology was actually developed by four Belgian scientists who announced their invention to the scientific community in 1992: Gianpiero Palermo, Hubert Joris, Paul Devroey and André C. Van Steirteghem, "Pregnancies after intracytoplasmic injection of single spermatozoon into an oocyte", *Lancet – a journal of British and foreign medicine, surgery, obstetrics, physiology, chemistry, pharmacology, public health and news* 340.8810 (1992): 17-18.
- 8 Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women – The Reinvention of Nature*, New York: Routledge, 1991, 72, 78.
- 9 On criticism of the radical deconstruction of sex and gender differences see: Hilge Landweer,

- “Generativität und Geschlecht. Ein blinder Fleck in der sex/gender-Debatte“, *Denkachsen. Zur theoretischen und institutionellen Rede vom Geschlecht*, ed. Gesa Lindemann and Theresa Wobbe, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1994, 147-176. Feminist philosopher Hilge Landweer focuses on the observation that individuals involve themselves in different ways into the process of reproduction. She argues, that the obvious phenomenon of generativity tends to be a blind spot in deconstructive gender theories. Notwithstanding, Landweer radically questions two-sexedness and two-genderedness.
- 10 The social and cultural dimension of this reaffirmation becomes even more obvious when one looks at the fact that in many countries only married couples have access to IVF.
 - 11 On the difference between the intention of the author, the intention of the audience and the intention of the literary text itself see: Umberto Eco, *Die Grenzen der Interpretation*, translated by Günter Memmert, München: Beck, 1995, 158.
 - 12 Eva Schindele, a moral philosopher in ethics of medicine, argues that what the IVF business sells as “reproductive autonomy” is in fact illusionary. While IVF becomes more and more important in Western countries since women postpone the phase of reproduction for career reasons, the gender specific division of labour hits women all the more once they get into IVF. Strenuous and time consuming treatment on the female side is hardly compatible with working life and very often forces women to completely withdraw from working life and concentrate on becoming a mother. See: Eva Schindele, “Weibliche Lebensentwürfe im Kontext von Fortpflanzungsmedizin und Pränataldiagnostik“, *Die Genkontroverse. Grundpositionen – Mit der Rede von Johannes Rau*, ed. Sigrid Graumann, Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 2001, 52-66. It is the economy that determines Western life styles in all dimensions so that the terms of ‘sperm banks’ and ‘egg accounts’ could not be more appropriate. As long as individuals and/or society wish to get offsprings, there is no other way to gender equity than making family and working life – for both men and women – compatible.
 - 13 THEO: Ja. Mein Problem war also, ich musste irgendwie an dieses Böse herankommen. [...] Und damals tauchte dieses Gerücht auf. Herbert. [...] Ein Wachmann von Hitlers Garde hat die letzten Minuten im Bunker miterlebt, er hat Hitler tot gesehen und sich als Andenken einen Finger Hitlers mitgenommen, bevor der in Flammen aufging. Diese Geschichte, ich meine, die ist aus verschiedenen Gründen sehr interessant, diese Geschichte hat mich damals lange verfolgt, du erinnerst dich Ulla./ ULLA: Ich habe wohl vorgezogen, sie zu vergessen./ THEO: Ja. Ich hab mich also auf die Suche nach Herberts Beute gemacht. Schließlich gelangte ich an einen Kuriositätenammler. Wir trafen uns, Ironie der Geschichte, im Café Einstein. Ich stellte mich ebenfalls als Sammler und unter falschem Namen vor. Ich wollte ihm seinen Finger abkaufen. Aber nichts zu machen. Immerhin hat er mich zu sich nach Hause eingeladen, um die Kuriosität zu bestaunen. Ja. Und da habe ich, als der Mann kurz auf Toilette musste, da habe ich zum ersten und hoffentlich letzten Mal gestohlen... Ich habe den Finger geklaut und bin abgehauen (Bauersima 89-90). All translations provided by the author in co-operation with Belinda Campbell.
 - 14 Werner Maser, *Fälschung, Dichtung und Wahrheit über Hitler und Stalin*, München: Beck, 2004, 165f.
 - 15 “UFO-Sekte will jetzt Hitler klonen.... Die Welt ist empört über den widerlichen Plan der UFO-Sekte..... Kann der Klon-Hitler ein guter Mensch werden?“ *Bild* 180/31, 4.8.2001, 1, 9.
 - 16 For example see: Volker Oesterreich, “Was wäre, wenn man Hitler klonen könnte? Schön zynisch: Das Heidelberger Theater zeigt *Futur de luxe* im Werkraum“, *Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung*, 25.11.2002, 2.
 - 17 Renate Möhrmann, “Die vergessenen Mütter. Zur Asymmetrie der Herzen im bürgerlichen Trauerspiel“, *Verklärt, verkitscht, vergessen. Die Mutter als ästhetische Figur*, ed. Renate Möhrmann, Stuttgart, Weimar: Metzler, 1996, 71-91: 76.
 - 18 USCHI: Wie alt BIST du denn?/ RUDI: Uschi, die Frage ist unpräzise gestellt. Mutter kann sie nur für jeden Körperteil einzeln beantworten. (Bauersima 80. Original emphasis.)



Reproductive Technology in Contemporary Theatre Plays: Questioning Gender Stereotypes?

- 19 Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the other woman*, translated by Gillian C. Gill, Ithaca/New York: Cornell University Press, 1985, 18, 21. Original emphasis.
- 20 "Therapeutic Cloning", graphic in *Stern* 5/1999. Cited from Ingrid Schneider, "Gesellschaftliche Regulierung von Fortpflanzungstechnologien und Embryonenforschung", *Techniken der Reproduktion. Medien – Leben – Diskurse*, eds. Ulrike Bergermann, Claudia Breger, and Tanja Nusser, Frankfurt a. M.: Ulrike Helmer, 2002, 103-119: 111.
- 21 Jens Reich, "Es wird ein Mensch gemacht." *Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Gentechnik*, Berlin: Rowohlt, 2003, 102.
- 22 On the cultural history of imaginations of the artificial human and male (self-)procreation without sexuality and insemination see Rudolf Drux, "Frankenstein oder der Mythos vom künstlichen Menschen und seinem Schöpfer", *Der Frankenstein-Komplex. Kulturgeschichtliche Aspekte des Traums vom künstlichen Menschen*, ed. Rudolf Drux, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1999, 26-47.
- 23 'FELIX: Nachdem ich vierundzwanzig Jahre lang versucht habe, mich damit abzufinden, dass meine Mutter mich nur ausgetragen hat, dass ich aber nicht wirklich mit ihr verwandt bin,... dass meine leibliche Mutter eine Fremde ist, die irgendwo da draußen rumläuft, nach vierundzwanzig Jahren also wird mir erklärt, dass ich gar keine Mutter HABE!' (Bauersima 94. Original emphasis.)
- 24 USCHI: Ihr seid nicht bereit, in die Abgründe zu schauen, die das Leben ausmachen! Wir müssen lernen zu sein, was wir sind... Auch wenn es so schwierig ist. Wir müssen lernen, uns zu beschränken. Ja. Auch sterben müssen wir lernen. (Bauersima 97.)

