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## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNICITY ON THE EXPRESSIVENESS OF THE ACTOR'S ART THE PARADOX OF EXPRESSIVENESS**

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2026

# The Influence of Ethnicity on the Expressiveness of the Actor's Art

## The Paradox of Expressiveness

### Abstract

This work stems from a personal experience, from a biography in which theatre and identity intertwine. The author was born into a mixed Roma and Romanian family, in a neighbourhood of Iași where Roma and Jewish communities coexisted. The memory of this world - in which the grandmother recounted the 1941 pogrom, and the grandfather worked at the first Jewish theatre founded by Goldfaden - shaped the artistic sensitivity of the child who would later become an actress. The experience of her father, who was involved in the artistic brigades of the 1970s-1980s, further transmitted a passion for the stage. The doctoral research finds its origin in this affective and artistic inheritance: a desire to understand the ways in which the actor's expressiveness bears the imprint of a collective history and an ethnic belonging.

After two decades of theatrical activity, the author feels the need to reflect on her own stage practice through the lens of theory. The central question of the research is: *in what ways does ethnicity influence the actor's expressiveness, and how can this influence be understood beyond essentialist interpretations?* The approach is grounded in a constructivist position: expressiveness is not reducible to biological inheritance or to a reaction to marginalization, but is formed as a cultural and performative process in which the body, memory, and emotion become carriers of history. The actor becomes a living space of collective memory, and their expressiveness is born from a network of affective, symbolic, and political relationships.

Within this framework, the research proposes four fundamental analytical directions: affect, embodied memory, visibility, and the epistemic function of art. These dimensions reveal how expressiveness emerges at the intersection of experience, representation, and knowledge. The decolonial lens offers a critical tool for understanding how minority actors negotiate their stage presence within contexts dominated by hegemonic aesthetics. Expressiveness thus becomes a form of cultural and epistemic resistance, an affirmation of identity through artistic means.

Based on this orientation, the author formulates an original theoretical contribution: the *paradox of expressiveness*. This concept defines artistic expressiveness as the capacity of form to make emotion visible through the refinement of concealment. Emotion becomes

present precisely through the tension between the intensity of lived experience and the elegance of control. In the case of minority actors, this paradox takes on a double significance: minority actors are perceived simultaneously as bearers of an „ethnic” authenticity and as artists who must conform to a universal aesthetic code. This tension is termed the *paradox of the double code of expressiveness*, and it describes the duality between an internal code - artistic and aesthetic - and an external code - cultural and political. The minority actor moves between these two registers, constructing a stratified expressiveness that responds both to the needs of art and to those of identity representation.

The scope of the research encompasses three interwoven levels. The first is the historical and cultural level: how Romanian theatre was shaped through interethnic coexistence and how these histories continue to influence today’s stage. The second is the level of contemporary artistic practice: performances and creative processes in which Roma and Jewish actors assume or negotiate identity on stage. The third is the level of personal experience and direct dialogue with involved artists, through interviews and observation. These levels are not analysed separately, but rather as layers of the same reality. History without the stage remains abstract. The stage without the body remains theoretical. The body without memory becomes mere technique. The scope of the research lies precisely in this space of overlap: where collective memory meets stage practice, and cultural identity intersects with the actor’s work on expressiveness.

Following the delimitation of the research area, it became necessary to clarify the objectives of this undertaking. I did not begin with a rigid plan, but with a question born from practice, which gradually took shape as a research problem. The objectives functioned as guiding directions and as a form of discipline in relation to a living, unstable, and dense material. A first objective was to understand scenic expressiveness beyond the usual technical definitions. Although emotional control, presence, and partner interaction are essential elements in actor training, they become insufficient when the body is already laden with cultural and historical meanings. I thus proposed an understanding of expressiveness as a cultural and performative process, not merely as a professional skill - a shift in perspective that opened up the possibility for new questions about what is actually produced on stage.

A second objective focused on analysing the conditions under which minority actors appear and are recognised in contemporary Romanian theatre: not only what roles they play, but where they perform, who casts them, what types of roles are offered, and what institutional and public expectations structure their presence. It became essential to make visible the framework that enables or constrains expressiveness.

Another central objective was the investigation of the relationship between affect, embodied memory, and expressiveness. Both in the interviews with Roma and Jewish artists and in my own experience, the idea of emotions lived as inheritance - carried in the body and transmitted transgenerationally - was a constant theme. These testimonies were not treated as metaphors, but as relevant data regarding the actor's body as a living archive.

I also examined the strategies through which minority actors negotiate the pressure of stereotypes and aesthetic neutralisation: the concealment of difference, its explicit assertion, or the oscillation between these positions - without privileging a singular solution. Ultimately, the research aimed to formulate a theoretical instrument capable of naming this tension without reducing it, which led to the development of the concepts of the paradox of expressiveness and the paradox of the double code. These do not function as ends in themselves but as a language for an experience shared by many actors yet rarely articulated analytically. Overall, the objectives converge toward the same central question: *how is expressiveness born in the space where art and identity meet, support, and sometimes challenge one another?*

Throughout the research, a persistent question remained: *Why is such a thesis necessary today, and what does it contribute beyond existing discourses on acting and identity?* The answer lies in its dual relevance - scientific and artistic - each reinforcing the other.

From a scientific perspective, the research positions itself within an underexplored area of Romanian theatre studies: the relationship between scenic expressiveness and the cultural conditions of difference. Actor theory and pedagogy have largely been built on the notion of a universal, supposedly neutral body, even though stage practice demonstrates that not all bodies are read the same way, and expressiveness is shaped by cultural and historical grids. In this sense, the thesis introduces a necessary critical dimension, understanding expressiveness as a situated cultural phenomenon, not solely an aesthetic one. The concepts of the paradox of expressiveness and the paradox of the double code provide analytical tools for describing both the scenic action and the external projections that shape the actor's presence, with relevance extending beyond the Romanian context. Moreover, the research legitimises, within the academic space, marginalised practices and voices - Roma performances, self-representational acts, contemporary Jewish projects - contributing to a reconfiguration of the theatrical canon.

The artistic relevance of the thesis derives from the concrete needs of practice: many minority actors live through tensions related to expressiveness without possessing a language to

articulate them. Between artistic freedom and the pressure of identity expectations, between neutralisation and stereotyping, these conflicts often remain individualised. The thesis proposes a reflective framework that transforms such experiences into objects of critical understanding, while also addressing theatre institutions, inviting a more conscious practice regarding how difference is interpreted on stage. For me, as an actress, this research also functions as a clarification of my own practice, by embracing the question itself as part of the artistic labour.

Overall, the relevance of the thesis lies in its capacity to build bridges between theory and practice, between history and stage, between identity and artistic form, proposing expressiveness as a space of convergence between body, memory, and gaze.

The thesis is structured into seven chapters, conceived as an analytical path that begins with the historical and cultural context of the research question, moves through theoretical clarifications, and reaches into the empirical material of artistic practices, ultimately returning to the issue of expressiveness through a set of integrative concepts and conclusions.

The first chapter outlines the historical, social, and cultural background that renders the expressiveness of the minority actor intelligible, tracing the formation of Romania's modern multicultural landscape and the mechanisms for recognising, managing, or marginalising ethnic difference.

The second chapter focuses on Roma culture as an infrastructure of memory and an expressive repertoire, analysing the artistic forms, institutions, and networks that support the visibility and continuity of Roma artistic identity.

The third chapter establishes the conceptual framework of the research, defining expressiveness as a constructed relationship between affect and form, between lived experience, composition, and audience perception.

The fourth chapter deepens the relationship between form and affect through a comparative reading of major models of modern theatre, emphasising expressiveness as an ethics of presence and as a tool for scenic knowledge.

The empirical dimension is developed in the fifth chapter, which brings together interviews with Roma and Jewish artists, direct observation, and case studies—out of which the four analytical axes of the research emerge: affect, embodied memory, visibility, and the epistemic function of art.

The sixth chapter is dedicated to methodology, including reflexive positioning, autoethnography, and the decolonial framework.

The final chapter presents the conclusions, articulating minority expressiveness as an aesthetic, epistemic, and political phenomenon.

Within this structural logic, the **first chapter** serves to anchor the research question in the historical, social, and cultural context that makes the issue of minority actor expressiveness both possible and intelligible. The analysis of minorities in twentieth-century Romania follows the formation of a complex multicultural landscape, marked by successive territorial and political transformations. The Great Union of 1918 integrated diverse ethnic communities-Hungarians, Germans, Jews, Roma, Ukrainians, and Turks-generating new challenges for managing coexistence. The censuses of 1899, 1912, and 1930 indicate a shift from the statistical invisibility of Roma populations to the first forms of institutional recognition, while also revealing the state's tendency to privilege a unified vision of national identity. The chapter also reconstructs the historical trajectories of Romania's major minority communities. The Jewish community, with deep roots in Moldova and Transylvania, played an essential role in urban modernisation and artistic development. Following the interwar period, pogroms, deportations, and mass emigration significantly diminished the Jewish presence, although their cultural contribution remained profound.

The German community, composed of various groups - Saxons, Swabians, and Landlers - brought a tradition of discipline and organisation that strongly influenced the cultural and economic life of Transylvania. In the post-war period, waves of emigration and the policy of „selling” minorities led to the marked decline of this community.

The Hungarian population maintained a significant role in cultural and artistic life, and after 1989, consolidated a network of educational and theatrical institutions.

The Roma, emancipated from slavery in the nineteenth century, underwent a slow process of community organisation and emancipation. The deportations to Transnistria and the forced assimilation during the communist period profoundly affected their social structure and collective memory. However, after 1990, their recognition as a national minority opened up new avenues for cultural affirmation.

The chapter highlights the role of theatre as a space for dialogue among these communities. Romanian theatre developed in a multilingual context, where German, Hungarian, and Yiddish languages coexisted. This diversity fostered the emergence of a hybrid theatrical expressiveness, capable of integrating cultural differences into a shared artistic language. Cities such as Iași, Sibiu, Oravița, and Arad became centres of artistic dialogue among ethnicities.

The founding of the first Jewish theatre in the world by Avram Goldfaden, as well as the development of Hungarian and German theatre in Transylvania, represent key moments in the formation of a pluralistic theatrical tradition. At the same time, the history of Roma theatre in the twentieth century emerges later, in the context of identity recovery and institutional recognition efforts. What results is a complex image of modern Romania, in which culture is defined by diversity and interaction. Each community has contributed to the formation of a shared identity, and artistic expressiveness has consistently served as a space where memory and the present meet. This historical perspective lays the groundwork for the analysis in the subsequent chapters, where minority actor expressiveness is understood as an aesthetic, epistemic, and political phenomenon. The research proceeds with the study of interethnic relations, of theatre as a site of shared visibility, and of the ways in which affect, memory, and identity are translated into scenic gesture.

**Chapter 2** outlines a panorama of Roma culture, its expressive forms, and the ways in which collective memory, aesthetics, and artistic institutions generate both visibility and knowledge. The narrative begins with the community's origins in northwestern India and follows its successive migrations toward Europe - a process through which Roma identity matures in dialogue with the societies it encounters.

The central idea is that Roma artistic identity develops through circulation, adaptation, and continuity, and its expressions - music, dance, orality, theatre, visual arts - coalesce into a living memory and an epistemology of the body and affect. The chapter opens with a reflection on the resilience and diversity that define Roma culture, showing how, over the centuries, this culture has known how to gather influences from different worlds and transform them into its own language of gestures, symbols, and expressions that give shape to a living and constantly reinvented identity. Roma culture integrates multiple influences and, at the same time, conveys outward a distinct repertoire of practices, symbols, and ways of performing community. Oral tradition, intergenerational storytelling, and rituals establish the axes of collective memory; *lăutărească* music becomes an identity marker with transnational circulation and recognition within majority communities. The text also highlights an important historiographical fact: the image of the Roma has long been produced through the eyes of others - travelers, artists - and this filtering has sedimented aesthetic clichés and patterns of representation. The analysis of the corpus of foreign testimonies functions here as a narrative node, as it indicates the mechanism by which exoticization becomes a cultural norm. The dimension of memory through music receives strong empirical articulation through the research of Ioanida Costache in dialogue with violinist Nicu Ciotoi: songs about

the deportations to Transnistria and mourning repertoires become living practices of historical memory, with archival and participatory components. The chapter marks here the relationship between urban space, cultural policies, and self-representation, in an approach that links archives, instrument lessons, rehearsals, and concerts within a broad framework of affective transmission. In parallel, the ethnographic perspective on Roma music in Transylvania (Filippo Bonini Baraldi) brings the argument of affective contagion as a central value of the practice. Music becomes a mechanism of social cohesion and of articulating collective emotions, while threshold moments - such as funerals - bring to the surface a grammar of intensity that organizes the community around sound, rhythm, and improvisation. The analysis then turns toward the aesthetic dimension of Roma visibility, exploring how artistic practices from within the community shape a distinct expressiveness and a consciously assumed self-image. Colors and symbols have identity functions: red refers to sacrifice and the community of ritual mourning, blue opens toward freedom and transcendence, green affirms the connection to nature and the idea of renewal, and the wheel signifies mobility and cyclical time. The flag with the blue and green bands, centered by the red twenty-four-spoke wheel, becomes a visual code and a mark of genealogy. This visual language circulates between traditional attire, objects, and artistic stages. In contemporary fashion, Zita Moldovan recontextualizes traditional chromatics and motifs in the Loly brand, formulating an aesthetic and political discourse in which clothing becomes a vehicle for memory, symbols, and anti-discrimination positioning.

The reconfiguration of motifs (the wheel, the blue-green register, the flowers) toward the urban wardrobe confirms the capacity of this aesthetic to maintain a connection with its roots, within a contemporary vocabulary of visibility. In the same logic of re-signification, Roma Futurism - manifested and theorized by Mihaela Drăgan - proposes a scenography of the decolonial future. The play *Romacen. Vremea Vrăjitoarei (The Witch's Time)* (Andrei Mureșanu Theatre, in collaboration with Giuvlipen) combines ritual performance, digital technology, and elements of stage magic, projecting Roma female figures as protectors of the future and agents of emancipation. The chapter uses this production to illustrate how aesthetics simultaneously becomes politics and a program of collective imagination.

The visual arts add an essential layer through Eugen Raportoru, „the painter of the slums” who brings to canvas the memory of the Roma Holocaust, communal life, and cultural rereadings, within an aesthetic of transfiguration. His painterly writing, marked by energetic brushstrokes and a chromatic selection guided by his atypical sensitivity, avoids overcrowding and creates a timeless space charged with memory. Themed exhibitions

(*Gelem, Gelem - Samudaripen; De căruță; Răpirea din Serai*) become landmarks of a visual history that emerges from marginality and enters into dialogue with international scenes.

Mihaela Cîmpean opens a powerful visual field anchored in material symbolism: wood affirms continuity and connection to the earth, while metal brings into focus the traces of historical constraints. The installation *Aripi de înger (Angel Wings)* works with the aspiration toward freedom, in tension with the weight of trauma, and the artistic positioning produces legitimate space for Roma visual art.

In sculpture, Marian Petre constructs complementarities between large volumes and metallic filaments, configuring a plastic meditation on overlapping identities and the balance between flight and fall.

The chapter also introduces a critical reflection on the historiography of Romanian arts. Valentina Iancu observes massive absences of themes related to slavery and emancipation in canonical museums and narratives, a fact that explains the persistent marginalization of Roma representations in modern heritage. This diagnosis reinforces the stakes of visual recovery and the repositioning of memory within the artistic discourse.

Continuing the analysis, I investigated the theatrical genealogy of the Roma, exploring the role played by artists and early forms of performance before and after emancipation. Mihai Lukacs's study on the „măscărici” - Roma cultural slaves – shows the roots of theatre in Wallachia and Moldavia as early as the sixteenth century, with mentions dating back to the time of Petru Cercel. These popular artists, satirists, and imitators animated princely courts and represented a pre-institutional nucleus of local theatricality. This page, long absent from official memory, explains why Roma stage expressiveness has a structural longevity in local culture.

The chapter then reconstructs key moments from the nineteenth century, when emancipation became a subject for the stage. The melodrama *Mulatrul* (Iași, 1847) enters as a form of social protest in the sensitive context of emancipation, generating strong reactions and altering the leadership dynamics within the theatre. On January 24, 1856, the play *Țigani. Idilu cu cântice* by Gheorghe Asachi marks Moldova's entry into the „family of civilized Europe” on the stage of the National Theatre of Iași, with an explicit message about the meaning of emancipation. These reference points confirm that theatre offered a field for public debate, and the stage generated forms of social consciousness.

The text then maps out institutions and troupes that structure a transnational Roma theatrical field. The Pralipe Theatre in Skopje was born in a context of civic effervescence, amplified by the World Romani Congress (London, 1971), which established a common name and an

anthem (*Gelem, Gelem*). The first productions established the artistic and political profile of the institution, and its presence in festivals confirmed its representative role. The chapter also notes the dynamics of Berlin as a stage for collective projects with Roma artists from several countries; the productions at Maxim Gorki Theatre legitimise a supranational, diverse network oriented toward rights, representation, and interdisciplinary cooperation. Theatre thus becomes a laboratory of identities and a platform of cultural diplomacy, where self-representation becomes a creative norm.

At the end of the chapter, the analysis focuses on the tensions between assimilation, exoticization, appropriation, and self-representation, highlighting the ways in which Roma aesthetics becomes a territory of identity negotiation. Through these directions, the chapter shows how Roma artists take control of their own narratives and transform community experience into embodied knowledge. Expressiveness affirms itself as a common language across the arts, in which colours, symbols, and gestures gain epistemic power. Intense chromatics, musical improvisation, stage magic, and reparative visual discourse come together in a coherent decolonial aesthetic.

In this synthesis, the chapter brings together all lines of the argument: colours and symbols function as signs of belonging; music and improvisation activate collective memory; Roma Futurism proposes a future of emancipation; the visual arts enact historical repair; and Roma cultural institutions become infrastructures of visibility.

After establishing the aesthetic, genealogical, and institutional framework of Roma expressiveness, the inquiry turns toward Jewish artistic experience and interethnic relations in the twentieth century. The next chapter examines how the memory of trauma, cultural infrastructures, and stage practices configure a different dynamic of visibility and a different grammar of affect, in both reflection and dialogue with Roma trajectories, in order to clarify the mechanisms of the „paradox of expressiveness” across different times and contexts.

**Chapter 3** establishes the conceptual framework of the thesis by defining expressiveness and through a comparative analysis between theories and performative traditions. The path begins with the usual meanings of „expression” and „expressive,” then follows the debate between experience and form, including the dialogue between the arts (theatre-painting). A coherent thesis results: expressiveness arises from the relationship between affect and the architecture of form, and the stage becomes the place where emotion is transmitted through gesture, rhythm, energy, and composition, beyond the simple utterance of the text. Initial definitions establish expressiveness as the externalization of experience. The historical debate links this externalization to a constructed effort, supported by technique

and the perception of the viewer. Diderot presents expression as the result of conscious direction; Ruskin privileges authentic sensitivity to nature; Stanislavski proposes an intermediate framework, where control meets live emotion; Rudolf Arnheim shifts the focus to visual codification and the receiver's perception; Grotowski places emphasis on the actor's physical work, where the body becomes the vector of expression. The same logic also crosses into visual arts: the painter communicates through image the way thought and emotion take form, and reception completes the expressive process. In this synthesis, art operates simultaneously with lucidity and intensity, in a balance between construction and inner vibration. From this core, the chapter formulates a logic of fertile tension: *emotion gains force to the extent that form contains and directs it, without raw exposures*. In relation to Adorno and Kristeva, the text outlines a clear positioning: form acts as an expressive filter and a protection of affect, and expressiveness is perceived more intensely as aesthetic codification becomes more refined. This filter does not diminish experience but makes it shareable and memorable.

In the subchapter on different theatrical methods and expressions around the world, I compared multiple genealogies of acting to illustrate cultural variations of the same form-affect equation. In Nō theatre (Japan), expressiveness is articulated through ritual codes, mask, and abstract voice; the mask opens a screen for audience projections, and the actor becomes a channel for archetypes, in a logic close to the idea of pre-expressiveness. In Bali, expressiveness manifests in trance states (Topeng, Kecak), with a corporeality attuned to rhythm, energy, and community; music, fixed gaze, and repetitive movement lead to transformation; the research of Mead, Bateson, and J. Stephen Lansing exemplifies this mechanism. I then continued with African traditions where the mask and polyrhythm structure expression in communal space; the actor functions as a bridge between worlds, and the call-and-response rhythm shapes performativity. In the postmodern West, Robert Wilson allows the body to enter a geometry of composition; while in Anne Bogart's Viewpoints, space, distance, direction, and time become expressive parameters equal to the text; emotion results from the architecture of movement and the relationship with scenography, not from the character's interiority.

In Kathakali, the traditional theatre-dance form from India, long-term bodily training, rigorous symbolic language, codified gestures, and intense discipline unite in a complex process through which expressiveness emerges from the encounter between natural predispositions, technical training, and the cultural context that sustains them.

Along the Diderot-Adorno-Kristeva axis, the chapter constructs its original theoretical contribution. The paradox of expressiveness defines artistic expression as *the power of form to make emotion visible through dissimulation*: emotion circulates, condenses, and becomes legible through the refinement of construction, and form acts as an ethics of affective protection. In this reading, expressiveness reaches high intensity when the poetic filter becomes precise, and the stage functions as a workshop of affective lucidity. Kristeva offers the symbolic–semiotic apparatus, and the emphasis falls on aesthetic mediation: the semiotic dynamizes discourse, the symbolic offers stability, and form harmonizes them in an architecture that conveys experience without direct exposure. Thus, the paradox acquires epistemic value: it expresses how what resists full articulation becomes communicable.

The second theoretical contribution applies the logic of paradox in the field of identity. *The paradox of the double code describes the tension between the inner code (aesthetic, of form) and the outer code (cultural-political, of visibility)*. The minority actor simultaneously performs artistic freedom and public expectations related to identity, and expressiveness enters a regime of political reading. Conceptually, the section extends the idea of double consciousness (Du Bois) into the aesthetic realm and shows the mechanism through which the stage becomes a space of negotiation between art and representation. The text outlines differences in the regime of visibility: Roma actors frequently enter roles „organized” by stereotypes, with the body immediately read as a sign; Timea Junghaus’s research describes a codification that constantly accompanies performance; the framework of postcolonial theory (Bhabha) clarifies the ambivalence: hypervisibility as a marker of diversity, simultaneously with repertoire limitations. Symmetrically, Jewish actors sometimes benefit from strategic invisibility, with identity assumed according to context, which alters the place of expressiveness in relation to visible identity. Sartre’s framework offers a lens for understanding this modern condition. In the logic of the double code paradox, the valorization of emotion depends on the way the artistic form aligns with the regime of visibility. Expressiveness gains in intensity when the inner code works with precision, and the outer code transforms from label into an assumed discourse. From here results the chapter’s stake: aesthetics becomes a strategy of freedom, and minority expressiveness gains political and epistemic value through the way it reorganizes the visible.

**Chapter Four** deepens the relationship between form and affect in the major models of modern theatre and examines how the paradox of expressiveness manifests, with different intensities and directions, in the conceptions of Stanislavski, Brecht, Grotowski, and Brook. The analysis of these four figures is not limited to the history of methods but follows a shared

line of thought: each transforms expressiveness into an instrument of knowledge, each formulates an ethics of presence and a way of understanding the artist's freedom. The chapter demonstrates that between experience and form there is no opposition, but rather a productive tension that defines the very essence of the actor's art.

In the reading of Stanislavski, expressiveness appears as an inner process guided by truth and discipline. The search for authenticity does not mean emotional abandonment but rather the refinement of emotion until it becomes action, rhythm, and intention. Stanislavski's system creates an architecture of controlled emotion, where each gesture carries organic meaning and each scenic action expresses an inner need. From this perspective, the paradox of expressiveness manifests in the balance between the intensity of lived emotion and the lucidity of construction. Emotion becomes believable insofar as it is ordered, and form acquires life when it is fueled by sincere motivation. Thus, expressiveness does not result from spontaneity but from prolonged work on the self, from a dialogue between control and vulnerability.

In the analysis of Brecht's conception, the emphasis shifts to the social and political dimension of expressiveness. The actor no longer represents the experience but comments on it; he distances himself from the character in order to create critical consciousness in the spectator. The distancing effect becomes an instrument of lucidity, meant to remove the audience from passivity and place it in an active role of interpretation. Emotion is reorganized for the purpose of reflection, and expressiveness acquires dialectical value. In Brechtian theatre, the actor's gesture has a cognitive function: it reveals power relations, structures of domination, and social contradictions. Brecht transforms expressiveness into a visible form of thought, and emotion, instead of being suppressed, is directed toward understanding the world. In this sense, the actor becomes an agent of reason and transformation, and the paradox of expressiveness translates into the coexistence of emotion and analysis, of affective involvement and intellectual control.

In Grotowski's theatre, expressiveness reaches a spiritual and corporeal dimension. The actor renounces decor, objects, and visual effects in order to reach essence. The body becomes the main instrument of expression, and voice, breath, and movement transform into channels through which inner energy materializes. Through his rigorous exercises, Grotowski proposes a purification of expressiveness, a revelation of being through an act of total offering. Emotion does not arise from the text, but from the direct relationship between actor and partner, between body and space. Expressiveness becomes a form of absolute presence, in which form and experience coincide. Here, the paradox of expressiveness reaches a point

of maximum intensity: control transforms into surrender, and technical discipline leads to inner freedom. Grotowski conceives theatre as a laboratory of the spirit, where emotion is offered, like a gift, before the other.

The analysis of Peter Brook concludes the series of these models through a synthetic perspective. Brook proposes a theatre of essences, in which simplicity and pure presence become forms of expressiveness. The actor does not seek effect but the truth of encounter; the stage becomes a living space, where energy circulates between performers and spectators. Brook takes from Grotowski the dimension of ritual, from Brecht lucidity, and from Stanislavski organicity, constructing an open theatrical language in which expressiveness is nourished by the authenticity of contact. The paradox of expressiveness is found here in the dynamic between the precision of form and the living unpredictability of the scenic moment. Brook's theatre functions as a form of revelation, where emotion is not explained but experienced together.

Through the reading of these four models, the chapter demonstrates that expressiveness cannot be reduced to a method, but represents a way of understanding the relationship between being and form. Each of these creators formulates an ethics of presence: Stanislavski seeks the truth of experience, Brecht pursues social consciousness, Grotowski explores bodily purity, and Brook rediscovers original simplicity. Together, these perspectives define a map of modern expressiveness, in which the actor becomes a mediator between emotion, thought, and the world. The chapter shows how the paradox of expressiveness is found in all these visions: in the tension between interior and exterior, between control and spontaneity, between lucid form and living emotion.

Finally, the reflection extends to the ethics of the contemporary actor, for whom expressiveness means more than an aesthetic result - it becomes a mode of knowledge and existence. Through body, voice, and affect, the actor produces meanings that exceed the text, and theatre is transformed into a place of self-discovery and of authentic encounter with the other. This conception prepares the ground for the later analysis of the minority actor, where the paradox of expressiveness intersects with the paradox of the double code, and the stage becomes the space where tensions between art, identity, and visibility are revealed.

**Chapter 5** introduces the empirical dimension of the research, in which the expressiveness of the minority actor is analyzed through the concrete experiences of Roma and Jewish artists. After the theoretical chapters, the text descends into a biographical and ethico-political zone of creation, where identity becomes a source of conflict, but also of artistic meaning. The research originates from a dual commitment - epistemic and artistic-

and explores the way in which traumatic memory and historical marginality shape stage expressiveness.

The analysis is based on interviews and direct observation. The voices of Roma and Jewish artists are read as spaces of reflection on expressiveness, constructed from within vulnerable identities. The stage is described as a site of critical intervention, and art as a means of symbolic reclamation. The researcher assumes her position as an actress and Roma woman, transforming personal experience into a legitimate instrument of knowledge. This assumption leads to autoethnography - a method that unites personal reflection with cultural analysis.

Inspired by Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner, autoethnography becomes a form of reflexive writing in which the researcher is both subject and observer. In this work, the method takes on a collaborative dimension: the voices of the interviewed actors and directors become partners in thought, and the semi-structured interviews are treated as spaces of dialogue. Meaning is not extracted, but constructed together, through the ethics of listening and the valorization of collective knowledge.

To ground this method, the chapter integrates the decolonial perspective of Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Walter D. Mignolo, who advocate for research situated within the realities of the marginalized. In this framework, the identity of the researcher is not an obstacle, but a reflexive lens that enables the understanding of expressiveness as an embodied phenomenon, marked by memory and affect. From the analysis of the interviews, four recurring themes emerged - affect, bodily memory, visibility, and the epistemic function of art - which structure the entire investigation. They become axes of reading for what the author calls the paradox of expressiveness, that is, the tension between aesthetic form and lived truth. Within this framework, artistic expressiveness is interpreted as a form of survival, of thought, and of resistance.

### **Affect**

This section analyzes affect as an epistemic force, not merely as scenic emotion. Inspired by the theories of Sara Ahmed and bell hooks, the research shows that emotions are not neutral, but circulate through bodies, shaping perceptions and hierarchies. In the theatre of the minority actor, affect becomes the site where the dominant aesthetic code confronts lived truth. Drawing from her own artistic experience, the author describes the paradox of expressiveness: between too little-invisibility-and too much-caricature. Autoethnography transforms these experiences into analytical data, and interviews with Roma and Jewish actors confirm that affective expressiveness arises from listening to the body, not from technique. In hooks's vision, this „pedagogy of affect” is a form of resistance and situated

knowledge. The chapter introduces a comparative analysis to follow-interviews, performances, and creative processes-aimed at understanding how emotion produces knowledge and how theatre can turn vulnerability into critical force.

The dialogues conducted with Roma and Jewish artists are treated as spaces of shared reflection, where personal experiences become archives of historical trauma and of intergenerational emotional transmission. Affect appears as an energy that persists in the body, transforming the stage into a space of memory reactivation and identity assertion. The minority actor does not reproduce trauma but lives it in real time, converting emotion into presence and resistance.

A relevant example comes from the testimony of a Roma actress who, performing in a play about the Holocaust, describes a total corporeal identification - a lived experience of exhaustion and transfiguration. Affect here becomes a gateway to visceral memory, a mode of knowledge that transcends the distance between role and person. This affective intensity reveals the tension between the aesthetic code, which demands control, and the identity code, which entails vulnerability. Lived emotion cannot be entirely filtered; it becomes a form of critical knowledge and a pedagogy of memory, in the spirit of bell hooks. The same Roma actress speaks of using personal experiences in the creative process, where affect accumulates and is released in every performance. The stage becomes a dual space - of combustion and purification - where emotion is transformed into catharsis and healing. This performative practice is interpreted, in the decolonial sense (Mignolo), as a form of *knowing otherwise*-knowledge lived through body and affect, outside dominant epistemic norms.

Interviews with Jewish artists bring a different affective configuration: transgenerationally transmitted guilt. One actress describes this sentiment as an inherited imprint, a diffuse guilt that manifests on stage through blockages and restraint. Affect here becomes a „structure of feeling” (Raymond Williams): an invisible collective memory that shapes expressiveness. In contrast to the cathartic intensity of the Roma actress, Jewish affect is expressed through interiorization, tension, and control.

Through these testimonies, affect emerges as a shaping force of art and subjectivity. It is simultaneously energy, limit, and archive. In minority theatre, affect is not just scenic emotion but a form of epistemic resistance: a way to transform pain into knowledge and vulnerability into presence. The paradox of expressiveness is revealed here as a strategy of affective protection - a negotiation between intensity and dignity, between exposure and silence. In this balance lies the true ethical strength of minority acting.

The analysis of the performance *Inheritance* explores how affect becomes a form of embodied knowledge and a living archive of memory. Built on the joint stage presence of the author and her father, the performance proposes a meeting between two voices - one shaped in theatre, the other in life. This relationship generates a double level of interpretation: affective-performative and epistemic. The father, co-author of the performance, does not play a role but lives his own story, and the Romani language, poems, and traditional songs become forms of counter-narrative and affective resistance. Affect is expressed through gesture, breath, harmony, and silence, functioning as a link between generations and as a form of situated knowledge, in the sense proposed by Patricia Hill Collins. The Romani language and songs - „*Corolo čhavo*”, „*Romale bră!*”, „*Muri romnyi mulas*”, „*Başnorăia, başnoro*” and „*Nanălă Rua*” - create an oral and affective archive, a space of collective memory that rejects dominant aesthetic norms. In Walter Mignolo’s logic, this gesture becomes an epistemic *delinking*: a detachment from the dominant canon through language, emotion, and corporeality. For the author, the paradox of expressiveness manifests in the tension between the learned theatrical code and the inherited instinctual expressiveness. The father’s moment - lacking in technique but full of authenticity - suspends the boundary between form and truth. This vulnerable presence, charged with memory and lucidity, transforms the stage into a place of affective knowledge and symbolic reparation, where art becomes the continuation of a history spoken from within emotion.

The performance section juxtaposes two productions that activate traumatic memory and minority identity from different positions: *The Great Shame* (Alina Şerban), lived from within the stage, and *The Puppeteer* (Alexander Hausvater, Jewish State Theatre), observed from the audience. This dual anchoring offers a complementary perspective on affect: embodied practice when the performer generates it and aesthetic energy when the spectator witnesses it in motion.

In *The Great Shame*, the Roma experience is expressed through direct, intense affect, linked to history and dignity. The actress’s expressiveness clashes with dominant aesthetic codes, and the tension between the learned form and the lived truth activates the paradox of expressiveness. A rehearsal episode becomes illustrative: the character - a Roma teacher - was to embody silence as a sign of trauma, while the actress’s body demanded retaliation. From this conflict arose an ethical decision: representing silence would have meant reinscribing submission, thus the scene required a deliberate rupture of convention. The performance also contains a memorable image: the mother covering her daughter’s eyes in front of the silhouettes of enslaved people. The act of halting the gaze becomes an affective

vehicle and a declaration of the limits of representation - precisely that „invisible” which protects the intimacy of pain and redirects the gaze toward its own limitations.

*The Puppeteer* constructs an opposite affective regime: distance, mediation, austerity. The puppets - rigid figures suspended between life and death - become supports of memory; the actors animate them as operators of affect. The impact stems from the absence of direct human expressiveness, and the object gains emotional density. The multiple languages (Romanian, Russian, Yiddish, German) open layers of history that cannot be unified, and the actors' physicality - veils, fixed gazes, reduced movement - cultivates what postmemory describes as a ritual repetition of trauma. Emotion accumulates slowly and remains as silent pressure, without cathartic release.

In comparison, *The Great Shame* activates affect as a living, unstable material, with frictions between identity and aesthetic norm; *The Puppeteer* proposes a mediated affect, converted into image, object, and linguistic polyphony. In the former, the paradox of expressiveness arises from the excess of truth that surpasses form; in the latter, from the formal austerity that intensifies impact. A common thesis results: ethical positioning shapes the affective register. On stage, the actor negotiates between authenticity and convention; in the audience, the spectator negotiates between openness and distance. In both contexts, affect becomes a tool of knowledge, a technology of memory, and a political gesture - whether through visibility or through the refusal of exposure.

The performance *Roma Voices from the Slavery Era* functions as affective and political reparation through performative art. The project draws on the research of Adrian Nicolae Furtună and brings five real archival cases into the present, rendered as monologues embodied by contemporary Roma actors (Zita Moldovan, Sorin Aurel Sandu, Mihaela Drăgan, Dragoș Dumitru, Oana Rusu). In the logic of „performing the archive” (Diana Taylor), frontal delivery, austere costumes, and clear gestures transform the document into stage presence. Each body becomes a bridge between the silence of the past and the urgency of the present, and bodily details - clasped hands, upright posture, fixed gazes, controlled anger - compose a rhetoric of dignity. The portrayal of Neaga is built on lucidity and measure: a demand for recognition, not pity; a tension between suffering and control; a grandmother's headscarf as a discreet sign of affective lineage. The expressive direction seeks clear communication with a majority audience through restraint, rhythm of pauses, and a final line with ethical density: „our voices are not heard... yet!”

The play *Decameron 135666* (Alexander Hausvater) proposes another affective regime: traumatic memory filtered through mediation, object, and image. The opening with

coded bodies, striped costumes, and cold lighting installs a ritual of suspended presence. The preservation of faces as masks, the linguistic polyphony (Romanian, Russian, Yiddish, German), and minimal gesture sustain a postmemory that works through ritual repetition. Affect is decanted into images: the wide smile etched in despair; choreographies of emptied exuberance; humor as a survival mechanism. The rigid scenography and economy of expression generate silent pressure, and the theatre becomes a question about art lived at the limits of the human.

Together, the two productions trace an axis of remembered suffering and performed dignity. *Roma Voices* works with controlled testimony and voice restitution; *Decameron 135666* activates an aesthetic of dissociation and ethical grotesque. In both, the relationship with the spectator is built through productive discomfort, attentive listening, and responsibility. Affect operates as a technology of knowledge: it makes the body's archive visible, calibrates ethical distance, and transforms memory into presence.

This section synthesizes the conceptual core of the research: theatre is understood as a space of living knowledge, where affect becomes a form of memory lived through voice, body, and gaze. The analysis, based on interviews and case studies with Roma and Jewish actors, investigates how minority expressiveness reactivates history and produces emotions that cannot be reduced to language. Affect is treated as an epistemic tool - an „embodied epistemology” in which sensation and emotion become legitimate forms of knowledge.

Through these performances, the research maps the affect of minority theatre, identifying tensions between feeling and showing, between sincerity and form, between vulnerability and control. The paradox of expressiveness is affirmed as a fertile territory of reflection, where emotion is not weakness, but critical and political strength.

The work positions itself between art and theory, between life and stage, proposing a hybrid methodology that combines critical analysis, personal testimony, and performative observation. It affirms the value of situated knowledge - a knowledge born from experience and from the identity tension of the minority actor. In conclusion, theatre becomes a space of epistemic resistance, where the voices, bodies, and emotions of Roma and Jewish artists are transformed into sources of history and critical thought.

The transition to the next chapter signals the continuation of this reflection through the analysis of bodily memory, understood as a living archive of gestures and breaths, a way in which the past becomes scenic present.

## **Body memory**

The chapter dedicated to body memory explores the actor's body as a living archive - a space of affective, genealogical, and historical storage, in which experiences are not only represented but lived, sedimented, and reactivated on stage. In minoritarian theatre, the body becomes the bearer of a history that was not learned through discourse, but inherited sensorially: gestures, rhythms, hesitations, vocal inflections that continue to transmit what official history has silenced.

Starting from Henri Bergson, in *Matter and Memory* (1896), the thesis distinguishes between conscious, representative memory and body memory - a form of knowledge sedimented in automatisms and affects. This perspective is extended in the theatrical practice of Jerzy Grotowski, for whom the actor's body is a laboratory of pre-reflexive experiences. In *Towards a Poor Theatre* (1968), Grotowski proposes the liberation of expression from aesthetic conventions, favouring a sincere, intense corporeality oriented toward scenic truth. The body becomes the instrument through which not only one's own experiences can be accessed, but also ancestral, unspoken affects, „what you haven't touched” - as formulated by the interviewed Jewish artist (A.H.). This statement highlights the latent dimension of body memory: not only what was lived, but also what could have been lived becomes scenic material. In this sense, minoritarian theatre functions as a space for reactivating absent memory - a stage of potential, where the body reconstitutes what history has suppressed. For Roma and Jewish actors, this memory is dual: individual and transgenerational. It carries the marks of silence, exclusion, and resilience. The stage becomes a political site for the reincarnation of a collective history, and affect – a form of embodied, living, unmediated knowledge.

However, the author sets her own position apart from Grotowski and A.H. While for them authenticity is achieved through the exposure of experience, here experience is aesthetically filtered, tensed, and hidden in form. There is no „pure” corporeality, but an expressiveness that is suggested rather than offered. At this point, the paradox of the double code of expressiveness is defined: the tension between the inner code (artistic, formal, aesthetic) and the outer code (cultural, political, identity-based). The minoritarian actor is perceived simultaneously through both registers - the more aesthetically expressive, the more politically interpreted. Even the refusal of representation becomes a form of positioning. The minoritarian body is already loaded with projections; it can no longer be neutral. Thus, expressiveness does not mean affective release, but continuous negotiation between lived experience and its ideological reading.

This dimension was confirmed in interviews with five Roma and Jewish artists. Actor A.Ş. describes expressiveness as „transmitting the other layers” - affective layers that are not spoken but are felt in the voice, in pauses, in non-verbal details. It is a memory lived affectively, sedimented in the body, visible only through nuance. Artist C.M. notes that Yiddish speakers have a recognisable cadence, an expressiveness shaped by the rhythm of the language – an example of Bergsonian *mémoire-habitude*, a memory of habit that influences both speech and scenic presence. The rhythm of Yiddish becomes a form of performative belonging (in Judith Butler’s sense), which, in the absence of a communal context, turns into an affective vestige – a sonic identity more felt than collectively lived.

Actor C.D. speaks about „traumas embedded in the Roma genome” as a responsibility, not a fatality: body memory demands transformation, not just acceptance. And artist A.V. links vulnerability and social precarity to heightened stage intensity: living in conditions of risk generates a specific bodily sensitivity and charisma, which transfers to the stage. All these testimonies converge on the idea that body memory is an active medium, in which affect circulates between generations, between personal and collective experiences, becoming a source of scenic expressiveness and knowledge.

This memory is not only aesthetic but also epistemic. It produces meaning without discourse: in breath, in almost invisible gestures, in details of rhythm and silence. The minoritarian actor thus carries a somatic archive - an affective memory of survival, but also an energy of transformation. Through the activation of this archive, theatre becomes a place of sensory knowledge: where history is felt, not told; transmitted, not represented.

In summary, the chapter proposes a reading of minoritarian theatre as a territory of body memory, where affect functions simultaneously as a tool of thought, of expression, and of resistance. The actor’s body is the bearer of a history that precedes consciousness and exceeds language. Through gesture, rhythm, and gaze, it transforms silence into presence, and memory - into scenic form. Expressiveness thus becomes an art of tension: between visible and invisible, between inheritance and creation, between vulnerability and strength. In this liminal space, theatre not only represents memory, it lives it - making the body not merely an aesthetic instrument, but an epistemic medium, a living archive of becoming and affective knowledge.

### **Visibility**

The analysis of the interviews revealed that the onstage visibility of minoritarian actors is never neutral. It does not only describe what is seen, but more importantly what is permitted to be seen. The actor’s body does not enter the stage empty; it already carries cultural

meaning, a set of expectations and historical projections that condition its expressiveness. To be visible does not simply mean to appear, but to be read through an already existing code - and in the case of minoritarian actors, this code is rarely innocent.

Their expressiveness proves to be doubly coded: the lived, authentic, inner affect is constantly confronted with an external, cultural-political reading, which translates it through the lens of ethnicity or difference. The more refined the scenic emotion, the greater the risk of it being interpreted as „authentic” in an ethnic sense or as „exotic.” This tension defines what I have called the paradox of the double code - that ambiguous space where lived experience becomes, against the actor’s will, an ideological sign.

Faced with this mechanism, many actors choose a form of protection: scenic neutrality. This does not mean an absence of expression, but rather a strategy of artistic survival, a deliberate blurring of difference in order to exist within a theatrical system dominated by majority aesthetic norms. Neutrality offers access, but it drains the depth of one’s own affect. Beyond individual intention, institutions - school, theatre, the casting system - function as filters of visibility that regulate difference, granting or withdrawing scenic legitimacy depending on conformity to the dominant model.

Thus, visibility is not a universal right, but a negotiated privilege. It is often obtained through conformity: actors become visible only when they reproduce the expected image of their identity, when they deliver a „truth” compatible with the public’s imagination. In such cases, authenticity is transformed into constrained performativity: what is played is what is demanded, not what is lived. Other times, on the contrary, identity is hidden, protected through invisibility or neutrality. Between these extremes, an intermediate zone takes shape, which I have called *refracted visibility* - a form of controlled presence, through which the actor decides when and how to assume their belonging, but which does not spare them from reductive readings. At times, ethnicity is neither affirmed nor denied, but persists discreetly, as a perceptual residue. Even when the actor refuses to claim it, their body remains legible through a background of collective memory. This residual scenic ethnicity demonstrates that real neutrality does not exist: abstention itself becomes a form of positioning.

Another recurring theme in the interviews is the tension between empathy and exceptionalism. The audience tends to accept minoritarian suffering only when it is individualized and aestheticized, turning it into a story of exception. This affective visibility produces emotion, but it reinforces the stereotype. Collective trauma is recognized only through the filter of the singular hero, and the system remains untouched.

Scenic authenticity is also caught in a web of distortions. The real experiences of

minorities are often validated only when they correspond to the dominant image of how a Roma or a Jewish person „should” appear on stage. Identity becomes visible only through distortion, and authentic expressiveness, when it does not align with expectations, becomes invisible. In this sense, visibility is inverted: stereotypical fiction is perceived as truth, and lived truth is considered unconvincing.

In counterpoint, some artists claim a critical visibility - one that understands the codes through which it is viewed and undermines them from within. This form of presence does not reject identity but refuses to turn it into a superficial sign. To be visible here means to be lucid, to consciously decide how and when to open up meaning.

From all these observations emerges a complex image of the contemporary stage: theatre is no longer just a place of expression but a field of forces where the meanings of identity are negotiated. Visibility becomes an ethical issue, not merely an aesthetic one. The way minoritarian actors are viewed, cast, and interpreted reflects how society manages difference. The stage thus functions as a laboratory of the visible, a critical space of recognition, where not only bodies but also the power structures that define them become visible.

In this context, the paradox of expressiveness is reactivated in another form: being too neutral means being invisible, being too visible means being reduced to identity. Between these two edges, the minoritarian actor constructs their expressiveness as a form of fragile balance and resistance. And theatre, in this light, becomes the place where visibility ceases to be mere appearance and becomes a mode of knowledge - a space of fertile tension between experience and gaze, between form and meaning, between freedom and code.

### **Epistemic Function**

This chapter explores art as a form of situated knowledge and epistemic resistance, going beyond the view of theatre as merely a space of emotion or representation. The research stems from an autoethnographic and decolonial positioning, analyzing how the expressiveness of minoritarian actors - Roma and Jewish - produces alternative forms of understanding the world. Instead of abstract knowledge, theatre proposes an embodied epistemology, in which affect, memory, and historical experience become legitimate sources of critical thought.

Drawing on the concepts of situated knowledge (Patricia Hill Collins) and epistemic disobedience (Walter D. Mignolo), the analysis shows how the stage becomes a thinking space „from the margins,” where historically marginalized subjects can formulate their own paradigms. Minoritarian art does not imitate reality - it interrogates and rewrites it,

transforming scenic expressiveness into an act of reflection and affective archiving. The actor does not merely transmit emotion but activates knowledge - through body, voice, and memory, they restore the link between experience and meaning.

The analyzed corpus - documentary-art films, video monologues, and performances such as *The Great Shame*, *Inheritance*, or *Romacen - The Age of the Witch* - reveals how the stage becomes a space for counter-narrative: a place where historical silences take form, and emotion becomes critical discourse. Thus, the epistemic function of art lies in its ability to produce affective, genealogical, and political knowledge - a living knowledge, born from experience and from the tensions of minoritarian visibility.

The section dedicated to documentary-art films analyzes how visual art becomes a tool of historical restitution and critical knowledge. The films *Ioana's Truths. 10 Years of Fighting Slavery*, *Dukhale-lila / Letters of Pain*, and *Pardon Ticket* reconstruct real experiences of Roma people, transforming the history of silence into a counter-narrative and living archive. In the first film, Ioana's struggle for freedom is rewritten as both a juridical and epistemic act - a form of resistance demonstrating that the subaltern subject can claim the law to assert their humanity. In *Letters of Pain*, the trauma of the Roma deportation to Transnistria becomes a form of affective knowledge: crying, voice, and bodily memory function as living archives, restoring a history erased from national discourse. The film proposes a „*decolonial epistemic disobedience*” (Mignolo), bringing a „view from the margin” that is legitimized through affect and belonging. In *Pardon Ticket*, Alina Șerban complicates the image of slavery, revealing how affect and love can become subtle instruments of domination. The relationships between mistress and enslaved, mother and son, freedom and possession are explored as tense spaces between humanism and power.

All these productions assume the epistemic function of art: they do not merely stir emotion - they produce knowledge, rewrite the archive, and redistribute the authority to tell history. Art thus becomes a critical and reparative act, through which Roma voices assert themselves not as objects of pity, but as subjects who think and interpret their own history.

The section on video performance monologues from the project *Roma Voices from the Time of Slavery* highlights how art becomes a space of historical restitution, embodied knowledge, and epistemic resistance. Through affective reconstitution of archival documents - letters, testimonies, and authentic legal acts - contemporary Roma actors transform historical material into political and cognitive acts. The scenes do not simply replay the past; they critically reactivate it: the actor's body and voice become tools of research, and emotion - a form of thought.

The stories of Crăciun, Neaga, Ioana Rudăreasa, the woman Oprea, and Ianache reconstruct a genealogy of Roma dignity and resistance. The trauma of the child Crăciun, sold three times in two days, exposes the economic logic of dehumanization and family destruction as a strategy of social control. Neaga's religious vision transforms suffering into faith, and prayer into protest, foreshadowing a collective imaginary of freedom. Ioana Rudăreasa becomes a symbol of civic female agency - a Roma woman who defends her family through law, refusing subordination and inaugurating an early form of epistemic justice. The woman Oprea speaks of the inner chains of shame and guilt, formulating a lucid critique of internalized domination, while Ianache breaks the historical silence about imposed servility, restoring a moral voice to those turned into objects.

These monologues function as forms of situated knowledge (Patricia Hill Collins): lived experience and bodily memory become legitimate sources of truth. At the same time, they express epistemic disobedience (Walter Dignolo): the refusal to let history be told only from the center, claiming the right to interpret the world from the margin.

Through performative practice, affect becomes a cognitive tool: crying, pause, gaze, and the rhythm of speech generate in the spectator an understanding that bypasses reason, arriving through empathy and recognition. The monologues do not merely represent the past - they reincorporate it into the present, as forms of counter-storytelling and political pedagogy. They validate bell hooks' idea that marginality can be a space of radical openness and critical thought.

The actor becomes a witness, author, and curator of their own history, and the stage - a territory of epistemological rewriting, where the relationship between art, memory, and knowledge is redefined. In this logic, Roma performative art is not merely an aesthetic form, but a methodology of rehumanization and the restoration of the right to narrate and to know. The theatrical performances explore how the stage becomes a place of critical knowledge production, historical rewriting, and affective transformation.

*The Great Shame* functions as a form of epistemic disobedience, bringing to the forefront the tension between academic discourse and Roma lived experience. The conflict between Magda and the academic supervisor reveals mechanisms of institutional censorship that cosmetize the history of slavery, while the relationship between Magda and Professor Oprea constructs a pedagogy of the margin (bell hooks), where knowledge emerges through solidarity and critical positioning. Role interpretation becomes a process of identity reconnection, in which the actor's body becomes a historical witness.

In contrast, *Romacen - The Age of the Witch* proposes an epistemology of the future,

anchored in Roma Futurism: a feminist and decolonial art form that transforms the figure of the witch into a symbol of emancipation and speculative knowledge. The performance asserts Roma women's narrative sovereignty, offering an aesthetic pedagogy of possibility, where imagination becomes a political tool.

On another register, *A Jewish King Lear* translates the Shakespearean tragedy into a Jewish cultural code, exploring themes like authority, memory, and moral legacy. The play produces embodied knowledge (Patricia Hill Collins), revealing the fragility of family relationships and intergenerational responsibility.

Finally, *Song of Songs* proposes an affective epistemology inspired by Sara Ahmed and bell hooks, where love becomes a form of knowledge and a practice of freedom. The performance functions as a theatre-ritual, rehumanizing the relationship between word, body, and meaning.

Together, these plays show that theatre is not merely representation - it is a method of thinking: a laboratory where history, affect, and identity are transformed into living forms of situated knowledge and cultural resistance.

The next section highlights the fact that the interviews do not function merely as personal accounts, but as living epistemic spaces through which artists formulate direct critiques of history and reclaim the right to speak it in their own languages. From a decolonial perspective, the interviews foreground lived experiences, ways of feeling and interpreting that cannot be reduced to abstract theory. These testimonies configure three major axes:

The first axis, *recovering history*, shows how artists use theatre as a tool of counter-archiving: through bodily storytelling, fragments of family memory, and experiences of transgenerational transmission, they bring to the surface historical episodes ignored or distorted by official historiography. Theatre thus becomes an instrument of symbolic and affective reparation, and the personal story becomes a doorway to collective history.

The second axis, *self-representation and identity assertion*, reveals how the stage becomes a political territory: artists do not merely play roles—they assert their position in the public space. They contest the fixed image of who Roma or Jewish people are, proposing new ways of being seen and understood. In this logic, theatre is not just aesthetic expression, but a strategy of affirming the power to tell from within, in one's own words.

The third axis, *producing collective and situated knowledge*, marks the transition from individual testimony to the articulation of a shared critical perspective. The interviews show that minoritarian theatre, far from being an isolated artistic act, is a communal process of thinking and feeling. Affect, history, and reflection intertwine in a complex form of affective

thought, revealing a world otherwise invisible.

Overall, this section demonstrates that minoritarian theatre does not merely represent communities - it produces knowledge about them: embodied, insurgent, and critical knowledge that opens new spaces of understanding and challenges dominant epistemological hierarchies.

### **Methodological Chapter (Chapter 6)**

This chapter clarifies the foundations of the research and outlines the ethical, epistemic, and reflexive lines that guided the entire approach. It does not merely describe procedures but proposes a methodological perspective in which knowledge is constructed through involvement, relationship, and body. The research takes place at the intersection between science and experience, between rigorous analysis of material and the affective participation of the researcher, who assumes her own position as an artist and as a subject of memory.

The starting point of the method is reflexive positioning. The researcher defines her speaking position as an integral part of the field under analysis, aware that in the study of minoritarian expressiveness, neutrality does not exist. Personal experience becomes part of the research toolkit. Autoethnography here is not a simple autobiographical account, but a method of knowledge that transforms lived experience into analysis and affect into a form of reflection. The writing is constructed on the border between introspection and observation, and this tension offers the research a unique perspective on the relationship between art, identity, and history.

The research unfolds in several interconnected stages. Interviews, performative analysis, and participant observation are the main tools, alongside autoethnographic reflection. The corpus is extensive and diverse: eight interviews with Roma artists, six with Jewish artists, five filmed monologues, three documentary-art films, and eight performances-four from the Roma sphere and four from the Jewish sphere. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured guide and, at times, open narrative, to allow space for the personal voice. Transcription was carried out carefully, with manual verification, and thematic coding followed four analytical axes: affect, bodily memory, visibility, and the epistemic function of art.

This methodology combines discourse analysis with performative analysis. The interviews are not treated as simple texts, but as forms of scenic expression, in which the body, rhythm, and silences are as relevant as verbal meaning. At the same time, the performances are read as living documents, as spaces of meaning and identity production.

The relationship between the researcher and the participants is not one of distance, but of co-presence: the research is constructed together, in dialogue and in trust.

The decolonial perspective provides the ethical and epistemic framework. The research rejects the extractivist model, in which subjects are „sources of information,” and adopts a collaborative approach inspired by Walter D. Mignolo and Linda Tuhiwai Smith. Knowledge becomes a reciprocal process: each participant contributes to meaning formation and to shaping the interpretation. In this perspective, affect, memory, and the body are forms of thought, not merely emotional dimensions. Through them, minoritarian expressiveness acquires epistemic value, becoming a mode of situated knowledge.

The ethics of the research is treated with rigor and empathy. The chapter emphasizes the importance of consent, confidentiality, and respect for personal material. The researcher assumes the limits of her own subjectivity and transforms vulnerability into a source of methodological honesty. Writing becomes a form of ethical transparency: each interpretation is accompanied by awareness of the position from which it is spoken.

In the end, the chapter establishes the logic connecting theory, method, and analysis. Autoethnography, interviews, and performance reading do not function separately but form an integrated whole. What unites these methods is the affective dimension - a type of knowledge that cannot be reduced to data, but is built through relationship and presence. Methodology thus becomes a map of positioning: between affect and lucidity, between body and discourse, between experience and analysis.

The chapter closes with the idea that research on minoritarian expressiveness cannot be neutral: it implies involvement, listening, and responsibility. In this perspective, the method also becomes an ethical gesture, and the researcher, part of a community of voices seeking their place and form. The transition to the empirical analysis in the next chapter occurs naturally: from methodological principles to the living observation of affect, bodily memory, and the paradox of expressiveness on stage.

### **Conclusions**

The conclusions of the thesis bring together the theoretical, empirical, and personal threads of the research into a coherent perspective on the expressiveness of the minoritarian actor. The chapter does not close but opens meanings, transforming the results of the analysis into a reflection on art, ethics, and knowledge. What emerges is a theory of the paradox of expressiveness - a concept that describes the tension between artistic form and lived truth, between aesthetic code and the actor's embodied experience.

At the center of this research lies the idea that minoritarian expressiveness cannot be understood only through aesthetics. It is also a mode of knowledge, a form of epistemic resistance, and an affirmation of existence. The body of the Roma or Jewish actor becomes the place where history and the present meet, where collective memory is translated into gesture, voice, and breath. Expressiveness is not an innate quality but a construction that bears the marks of education, trauma, and belonging.

Through the analysis of interviews and performances, the research has shown how affect, bodily memory, visibility, and the epistemic function of art are connected in a system of meaning. In Roma performances, affect is intense, open, and communal - a form of sharing and healing. In Jewish ones, affect is internalized, concentrated in silence and reflection. Both directions confirm the paradox of expressiveness: emotion becomes artistic when filtered through form, and form gains strength when it preserves affective tension.

The thesis also formulates the concept of the paradox of the double code—the constant tension between the internal code of authentic emotion and the external code of cultural representation. The minoritarian actor always lives between these two registers: what they are and what they must appear to be. In this intermediary space, expressiveness as a form of knowledge is born. The paradox is not a contradiction but a condition of the existence of art.

The notion of refracted visibility completes this perspective. Roma actors face an imposed visibility - their bodies become immediate signs of difference - while Jewish actors experience an optional visibility that can be negotiated depending on the context. Both situations involve a labor of reconfiguring public perception. Expressiveness thus becomes a political gesture: a way of transforming perception into dialogue and gaze into awareness.

The thesis also introduces the idea of residual scenic ethnicity, which designates the visible and invisible traces of cultural belonging in the actor's body. Even when not declared, identity continues to shape movement, breathing, and tone. In this sense, the minoritarian actor's body carries a double memory: one biographical and one collective.

The research affirms the role of theatre as an epistemic space. Art becomes a way of knowing that unites sensitivity and thought, emotion and critical reflection. In minoritarian expressiveness, the artistic gesture is also a gesture of restitution, and the stage becomes a site of symbolic reparation. This perspective opens a new theoretical direction, in which theatre is no longer analyzed only aesthetically, but also as a form of producing situated knowledge.

The researcher's reflexive positioning runs throughout the entire approach. The fact that the author belongs to these histories offers the research a dual perspective: from inside the experience and from outside the analysis. This dual gaze gives the text density and

authenticity. Vulnerability becomes a methodological tool, and subjectivity, a resource for understanding.

Ethically, the research proposes a paradigm of care and solidarity. Ethics is not reduced to rules, but becomes a form of relationship. The interviews, performance analysis, and autoethnographic writing build a shared space of listening and responsibility. In this sense, the research does not merely document expressiveness, but practices it: a way of being together through art.

The general conclusion affirms that minoritarian expressiveness is a place of paradox: between visibility and invisibility, between form and emotion, between representation and lived truth. In this space of tension, knowledge is constructed. Art becomes the language that restores the link between body, memory, and community.

The thesis ends with an opening toward the future of research: minoritarian theatre, understood as a space of affective and political knowledge, can generate new forms of reflection on the world. Expressiveness is not just an artistic quality, but an epistemic force that reconfigures how we understand identity, belonging, and stage presence.

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