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"Please take part in every kind of miracle"

Vortrag von Julia Lindig, mehrmals gehalten vor Kulturschaffenden in Bangladesch
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I am delighted that you have taken the time to come and hear my thoughts about Theatre, Art, Culture and Solidarity. A theme that came to me by chance and that I followed without thinking or asking. And now I am involved in a new area of life and art. It is exciting, but above all moving and very interesting.

I would like to talk to you about Theater, Art Culture and Solidarity.

First I want to talk about the terms. How are they connected to each other?

Is **Theatre** not Art and Culture? We can very quickly and easily answer this with 'yes'. Theatre combines every form of Culture. The Culture of people – their destiny and their stories and looks always for an artificial expression for them that takes the story out of the personal context and into the broader context. Theatre tells of the links between people: their connections and their conflicts.

As we look to the Term **Art**, we are wondering, that such a little term contains this huge and never ending fabric of different consistencies and elements that weave back and forward in time and has a view above, below and inside all things. Art is universal and can grow from every source. So here everyone has his own visions, his own ideas, which go together to connect him with or separate him from others, causing maybe fights and even sometimes wars, and

also sometimes creating deep understanding of each other. This luckily is endless and renews itself every day.

Culture, as you know, is every single thing or thought that is created by man. No matter if it is useful or not, helpful or distracting, banal or a shiny wonderful glitter. It is culture, the thing that is chosen to make one's life complete or sometimes chosen to put the boundaries on life that give shape to a community or society.

You may have noticed by now, that the term Solidarity is not same kind of word as theatre, art or culture. It is a word somehow standing alone, looking around, looking obviously for a connection. Solidarity poses a question to us.

What has solidarity to do with theatre, art and culture?

I have been working in Theatre and Arts since I was 5 years old. I was born into a theatre family, raised by a mother, who had nothing else to do than create choreography for Dancers, even when she was doing housework, washing dishes or doing the laundry. In this life I was working, creating, having fear of failing on stage, dancing, and of course, no wonder, struggling badly with my studies in school. As far as I remember, solidarity was never a big thing, at least no question and not an expectation. It was nothing to look for. The days were filled with training, rehearsing, performing and, of course, the most-loved dream of one day sharing your art with others. When I grew up I became a professional actress and worked in Theater and movies.

Then later, when I had children and they grew up, I noticed that I was responsible not only for their creative minds and the discipline to use it, but also for their education, school and university. Immediately when I found out about this, and with no hesitation, I changed my life around 100% and opened an IT- Company to gain enough money for all of us. The business was successful and prosperous so I jumped into another world and learned about it.

In this way I had the great chance to get to know about 'the other side': the business, 'non Art' side of life. Now after 12 years working in IT business it is still very interesting, exciting, full of wonderful encounters and inspiring conversations and creative in a different way from my work in Theatre and Arts.

May be your question now is: 'where does solidarity take place in this Talk'. You are right; it was not a theme in my professional life up to now. Of course there is a lot of solidarity in my private and professional life, but it never was in focus, it was not an aim.

But now I learned about solidarity as an aim and I would like to share this with you. I learned about solidarity as something that opens minds and doors, and leads to different kinds of actions with different kinds of contents and perspectives. This change of view, in a deeper sense, reaches to a deeper level of existence, not asking who you are, or looking at your position, your way of life, your reputation and whatever is important in your ordinary life.

I stepped into this adventure with a lot of insecurity about the unknown and a double portion of doubts whether I have the right to do it, or not.

My friend Inga Dietrich, a gifted Theatre Director, and I went to visit a small group of young people, who live in a small little house in the **wilderness** of Kirgizstan, Central Asia. These young people are disabled in one way or another. All of them were left alone by their families, and left in **orphanages: places that do not have the best reputations**. They were left alone, with no individual **guidance**, without education, without any perspective for living a normal, **self-determined** life, maybe to learn a profession or maybe the chance to have a family of their own one day.

Luckily, and with the help of some very determined people from Germany, they were taken from the different orphanages and brought to the little house in the wilderness. Now their lives are very different. They learn how to cook, make their one bread, and even they work and make very nice things in the traditional Kirgizstan Handcraft using the material felt. They live together and care for each other with friendship and love. And in the long evenings, they try to find out about their families, try to find out where they live, hoping to find their mothers and at least get an answer to the question they all need to pose: why did you leave me alone, was I not worth being loved or at least respected, worth living with you?

So my friend Inga and I went there and we asked them to work with us and explore the old and **deeply appreciated** Kyrgyz Epic Manas in an artistic way. The Manas Epic deals with a hero who is never frightened and always willing to fight against the suppression and aggression of the ones who dominate the country and the people. They agreed and we all together started the Workshop.

When Inga and I had our get-together every evening we spoke about the day and all that had happened. We spoke about all the 6 young people. For a week, I told Inga about my doubts: if it was right to bring theatre work into this house and into the lives of the young people. I thought that we might bring something that was not needed and maybe destroys the calmness and **seclusion that they seemed to be happy with**. Inga convinced me that the work would add something to their lives and work itself opens up horizons of the mind. I was not sure if it is always a good to extend the horizon: it might confuse, take the calmness away and destroy this very precious thing of having accepted their reality of life as it is. I was very unsure. I loved the way they lived, the way they worked. I thought it was very courageous. I would never have the courage and the inner strength to live that far away from all the flickering things that colors up life, that are a normal **component** of life. When you live for example in a city or you have access to all those usual things, like cinema, theatre, meeting your friends who live around the corner etc. etc. I thought, maybe we might inspire dreams in them that could not come true.

Despite my fears, I saw the young people work with great joy and displaying a great openness in the video interviews. They set aside all boundaries in allowing and inviting us into all that affected their lives.

Where did this openness come from? Clueless and without an answer, I could only be grateful to them. Their Your openness and our curiosity made it happened.

In the video interviews, Inga Dietrich asked them: what had changed for you through the theatre work? Would you be interested in working further with us so as to set up a fine theatre project together?

We found the answer given to us by the wonderful Yildis, who does the cooking for the household, very touching: 'The young people have become much happier. They laugh and they chat now very differently. They have fun and they play together.

Because all agreed in further work we founded the Theatre Group "Heroes".

The theatre work had opened something. We had introduced a theme: a story so age-old it had long since transcended reality and had created this fabric of possibility for a new reality that could be joined with the wishes, hopes and longings of those who told it. This and many other stories are ready to be the basis for new wishes and hopes and invite the participants to tell and to change their own stories within them.

And here, again, is the miracle of theatre! But with a major and important difference! Something else has been added to the mix! Solidarity.

I now know that we should and must set theatre free from its walls and let it go free out anywhere so that the stories can come alive. This is a wonderful process with an unknowable outcome. An adventure in which all share the same uncertainties of abandoning the known paths and are free to take each other by the hand and stumble into the unknown.

Solidarity with Outsiders with poor chances. Why had they poor chances? How? Disability? Blindness? Legs that cannot stand? Thoughts that do not travel the familiar tracks? Awareness of things that to us are very small and meaningless? Something without use? Something not visible? Something injured? Something hidden? Something that stems from the fear of rejection? An adventure.

Where is the openness and the tolerance at our side? In a work by Goethe, it is child's play for a professional to find curiosity and openness. But where do we go from here with a project such as this one in Kirgizstan: how are we to meet in openness and curiosity? To engage and to be rewarded by the gift of these encounters.

Entering into the adventure is what I sought and what my children have always advised.

I can now understand what question the meaning of Solidarity presents.

The idea asks to be found. It calls to us not to forget that somewhere, in the wilderness, or elsewhere, there are small places and communities with which we can materialise something together.

That is a specially beautiful word that has sneakily made its magic way in here: to materialize. How wonderful: out of a dream into life and out of life into a dream. The piece of freedom is real and at every time and in every place there for us. In dream, in imagination and very often in reality.

Reality is naturally also another term, or perhaps just a word, but, I suggest, we do not discuss this now and will embrace reality some time later.

The question of what solidarity has to do with all this is perhaps now clearer. It means the creation of a free space. Possibly doing something without a direct practical use. Finding something that is free: something that allows us to enter a unique space free from purpose. Dream or reality.

That way, hope can emerge and – I have experienced this – that's how hope does emerge.

Theatre and art must give everyone the chance to dream and to build their own unique space. Free and always available: anywhere and anytime.

We, who take for granted that Theatre and Art is a natural part of our lives – of our culture – and have never asked ourselves how it would be not to know that: we have the duty to pass on this miracle. To shine a light on the reality showing everyone, truly everyone, that they can have this too.

I ask for your support in any way possible. Pay attention to the Miniatures and be ready to start bringing solidarity into theatre so that we can live in a more colorful world and can share wonderful adventures together.

I look forward to every initiative, all the calm they bring and all realities.

Thank you all very much for your time and I hope I have not wasted it. Please take part in every kind of miracle.

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