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THEATRICAL FORMS OF CONTEMPORARY EXISTENTIAL THEATRE OF THE ANTHROPOCENE IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE AND GERMAN DRAMATURGY (COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS)

The article explores contemporary English-language plays (“The Contingency Plan” by S. Waters, “Sila” by C. Bilodeau) and German performative narratives from experimental theatrical platforms such as Rimini Protokoll and the Berlin Theater of the Anthropocene, which depict the consequences of ecological disasters and their impact on society. The analyzed and compared works not only address environmental issues but also interpret humanity’s crisis as a result of global changes in the interaction between the natural and social environments.

The author argues that within the contemporary Anthropocene theater, British playwright S. Waters (“The Contingency Plan”) and the German performative platform Rimini Protokoll represent two distinct approaches to understanding the climate crisis: from psychological intimacy and dramaturgical immersion in the inner world of the individual, to performative simulations of political reality and collective responsibility. Despite differences in form and theatrical language, both artistic projects share a common goal – to push the viewer beyond passive observation, compelling them to experience the catastrophe as either a personal or systemic drama, and to question the boundaries of theater, action, and human subjectivity in an era of global transformation.

The play “Sila” by Canadian playwright C. Bilodeau, examined in the article by N. Yuhan, along with the works of the Berlin Theater of the Anthropocene, demonstrate how contemporary theater can become a powerful tool for ecological awareness and social transformation by combining aesthetics, science, and activism. Both approaches – Bilodeau’s intimate and emotional, and the Theater of the Anthropocene’s institutional and analytical – immerse the viewer in ecological issues, expanding the understanding of human responsibility toward nature.

The article concludes that the examined works of German-language dramaturgy reveal a growing interest in the theme of ecological catastrophe in Western European literature. Interpretations of humanity’s existential crises not only highlight the direct consequences of environmental destruction but also encourage the search for new forms of social and cultural responsibility, which is especially relevant in the context of global change.

Key words: contemporary English-language drama, contemporary German drama, Anthropocene theater, existential crisis, comparative studies, experimental theater.

Statement of the problem. Today, contemporary German drama has become a platform for reflecting on the challenges society faces under the pressure of the global ecological crisis. In light of growing threats such as ecological disasters and climate change, both English-speaking and German playwrights find in their productions a space to express doubts, fears, and the dilemmas of the present. The analysis of environmentally themed works allows us to trace how ecocriticism evolves into a symbol of the inevitability of change – a change that affects not only the natural world but also the social fabric of society.

The material of our research includes English-language works such as Steve Waters’s “The Contingency Plan” (2009) [18] and C. Bilodeau’s “Sila” (2014) [4], as well as the performative

narratives of the well-known German experimental theatrical platform Rimini Protokoll [13] and the Berlin Theater of the Anthropocene [17].

Analysis of recent research and publications. The ecodrama “The Contingency Plan” (2009) by Steve Waters has not become the subject of a separate literary study. However, a number of interesting observations have been made in short reviews, particularly about the features of staging the main eco-narratives [16]. For example, a reviewer of Steve Waters’ book in a column for “The Evening Standard” noted: “Waters has done a huge number of things right here, not least in leavening his all-too-believable Armageddon scenario with dialogue crackling with sardonic humour” [15].

In the article by W. Nassim, dedicated to Chantal Bilodeau’s play “Sila”, it is discussed how this

dramatic work represents climate change through the lens of mobility and interspecies interactions in the context of the Canadian Arctic. The author notes that, relying on an interdisciplinary approach to mobility, Chantal Bilodeau's play reveals the mechanisms of constructing meaning in the discourse on climate change, focusing on personal experiences of loss, contradictory forms of mobility, and the complex interaction between the human and non-human dimensions [10]. In M. Morano's note, "Sila" is described as the first play of Chantal Bilodeau's "Arctic Cycle", in which the playwright explores the lives of Arctic inhabitants against the backdrop of climate change. The critic examines the creative history of the play and concludes that the author, based on interviews with local residents, scientists, and activists, creates a dramaturgical canvas that combines personal stories, environmental issues, and cultural conflicts [9].

Several academic works have been dedicated to the analysis of the performances by the German experimental platform Rimini Protokoll, from the perspectives of documentary theatre (M. Dreysse, F. Malzacher, and E. Ringler-Pascu [5–7; 14]), the dichotomy or even antagonism between dramatic and postdramatic theatre (J. Birgfeld [12]), and the reflection of current political and aesthetic discourses (J. Shannon [8]). In several of our studies, we have examined the specifics of representing existential challenges and the intermediality of the performances by this German theatrical platform [21].

Margarete Affenzeller, in her review, presented the work of the Berlin Theater of the Anthropocene, defining its place and significance in society as: "to make knowledge about our planet and its ecosphere and the consequences of our actions tangible" [1]. Sabine Wilke analyzed the term "Anthropocene" as a concept of ecocriticism in the context of theatre studies, based on the experience of the "Theater of the Anthropocene" [20]. Two of our works were also devoted to studying the performances of this German experimental ecological theatre, particularly comparing the works of Ukrainian and German playwrights on ecological disasters [22], and examining the specificity of psychological depth in the performative narratives of the Berlin "Theater of the Anthropocene" [23].

It can be stated that the dramatic representations of ecological problems and contemporary disasters in English-language and German-language drama proposed for this analysis have not been sufficiently studied. Moreover, a comparative analysis of the works has not been conducted. Thus, our research is of scientific novelty.

Task statement. The task statement is to explore the characteristics of the existential crisis and the consequences of ecological catastrophe in contemporary English-language and German plays. To analyze this topic, we apply several interdisciplinary and literary approaches and research methods that help to deeply examine existential themes, the issue of ecological disaster, and the artistic specificity of modern German-language dramatic texts in comparison. The existentialist approach (Martin Heidegger, Maurice Blanchot, Georges Bataille, Colin Wilson, Marshall B. Terry, Richard Kearney, among others). Existentialism as a philosophical and literary movement enables a focus on themes such as the absurdity of existence, the search for meaning in times of crisis, and the feeling of despair. Ecocriticism (Chellis Glendinning, Lawrence Buell, Glen A. Love, Serenella Iovino, Scott Slovic, Timothy Clark). The method of ecocriticism is effective for analyzing the interaction between humans and the environment, and the consequences of ecological catastrophes in literary works. Comparative literature studies (Hans Robert Jauss, René Wellek, Claire Bartlett, Fredric Jameson, Theo D'haen, Christoph Parry) provide the methodology and tools for comparing English-language and German dramatic works.

The combination of these methods allows for a multifaceted analysis of contemporary dramatic experiences that reflect existential crises and the consequences of ecological catastrophe in the context of English and German literature. Such an approach contributes to the study of the philosophical, social, cultural, and psychological dimensions of these themes.

Outline of the main material of the study. Steve Waters' cycle "The Contingency Plan" (2009), consisting of two plays – "On the Beach" and "Resilience" – is one of the most striking examples of contemporary English-language drama that addresses the theme of climate catastrophe not only as a global threat but also as a deeply personal, existential crisis of the individual.

Both plays create an atmosphere of emergency, in which the reader is faced with a dilemma: is it possible to prevent a catastrophe if the very systems meant to provide protection are themselves in crisis? At the same time, Waters' dramatic structure avoids direct didacticism. Instead, what unfolds before us is an intimate, psychologically charged drama, where the private and political are tightly interwoven.

In "On the Beach", the existential crisis manifests through the relationship between a father and son – two generations of scientists who view humanity's

role in a changing world differently. The protagonist, Will Paxton, returns from Antarctica to find himself misunderstood by his father, a former glaciologist who had abandoned his career. Through the lens of familial conflict, the play raises a broader question: can personal responsibility stand against systemic inaction? Symbolically, the setting is a coastal area – a liminal space between land and sea, life and death, stability and disaster. In this “inter-world”, the characters are not just afraid of being flooded – they have already experienced it internally.

In “Resilience”, the focus shifts to the political sphere, where decisions are (or rather, are not) made by a government unable to cope with the scale of the threat. Waters shows how science, despite its potential for foresight and action, is crushed by political interests, selfishness, and institutional inertia. Will’s character clashes with Colin Jenks – a representative of the old scientific guard more concerned with maintaining influence than seeking truth. The discourse of rational knowledge loses its authority, becoming a tool for manipulation.

Despite using a traditional dramatic form, Waters effectively blurs the line between “large” and “small”, between the global landscape and the intimacy of a family living room or a ministerial office. In this sense, “The Contingency Plan” approaches postdramatic thinking: the stage becomes a space not for linear narrative but for the collision of fragmented experiences, political strategies, and personal breakdowns.

A key feature of the cycle is the atmosphere of inevitability, where the action unfolds not by the laws of development, but as a gradual descent into crisis. The catastrophe is not shown directly – its physical presence is deferred in time, but emotionally it has already occurred. This creates deep existential tension: the characters live in a “pre-catastrophic” time, on the edge, where every word carries weight and every action might be the last.

Thus, “The Contingency Plan” is not only an example of “ecological drama” but also a profound reflection on the loss of control, on the limits of human influence over global processes, and on the internal loneliness in the face of climate apocalypse. Waters transforms the stage into a space of slow catastrophe, where the voice of science competes with the voice of fear, and the existential crisis runs parallel to the ecological one.

Like the English-language play “The Contingency Plan”, the German production “Weltklimakonferenz” (2014) [19] by Rimini Protokoll raises deeply existential questions related to the ecological

crisis. The theatrical space simulates the hall of an international climate summit, where audience members, acting as delegates, face moral dilemmas: making decisions that may contradict their own beliefs. This creates a sense of personal responsibility and provokes reflection on the role of the individual in the age of climate change.

The project appeals to internal conflict, as climate change is presented not only as a global threat but also as a crisis of human identity, morality, and the future of existence. Participants experience emotional tension, finding themselves on the boundary between the personal and the political, elevating the performance to the level of existential experience. In the context of the Anthropocene, theatre becomes a means of comprehending the loss of control over the world, symbolizing the disharmony between humanity and nature. Ecocide in these productions emerges as not only an ecological challenge but also an ontological one – a threat to the very meaning of human existence.

In their artistic strategies, both Steve Waters and Rimini Protokoll address the theme of climate catastrophe, but they do so using fundamentally different theatrical languages, reflecting the differences between English-language and German cultural contexts. Both practices operate at the intersection of art, politics, science, and personal experience, yet they offer the viewer distinct ways of immersing in the crisis of modernity.

Steve Waters, in “The Contingency Plan”, constructs a classical dramatic structure in which the ecological threat is filtered through individual experience, family conflict, and political impotence. He focuses on the internal landscape of characters experiencing pre-catastrophic anxiety. Waters operates within the framework of traditional drama but approaches postdramatic thinking through fragmented experience, the atmosphere of inevitability, and the blurring of boundaries between the private and the global.

In contrast, “Weltklimakonferenz” by Rimini Protokoll abandons dramatic fiction. Here, the viewer does not observe the characters – they become the character, taking part in simulated international climate negotiations. The project erases the boundary between viewer and actor, between performance and reality, transforming theatre into a political laboratory. In this sense, Rimini Protokoll implements not so much the aesthetics of existential experience as the mechanics of collective responsibility, modeling decision-making in real time.

In Waters’ work, the existential crisis unfolds within the individual who experiences a loss of

trust in science, in the system, and in themselves. The characters in his plays teeter on the brink of existence in both literal and metaphorical senses: the family home on the coast – a symbol of fragility and temporariness – emphasizes the vulnerability of individual existence in the face of global change.

In Rimini Protokoll, the crisis is presented through institutional paralysis and the paradox of action without action: participants make decisions that simulate political reality, yet feel their own powerlessness to change anything on a global scale. The existential tension here is caused not by an internal rift, but by the clash between personal beliefs and the external role imposed by the format of "negotiations."

Both productions function as a form of diagnosis of the present: Waters explores how psychological and political apathy paralyzes the ability to act in the face of catastrophe; Rimini Protokoll demonstrates how bureaucratic and rhetorical mechanisms turn the crisis into a simulation of action. However, their methods of "diagnosis" differ. Waters emotionally immerses the audience in the inner world of the characters, where the catastrophe is both an external and internal landscape. In Rimini Protokoll, the theater approaches a scientific-media hypertext, in which data, diagrams, interactivity, and a journalistic format create an effect of analytical participation.

Despite the differences in forms, both theatrical projects show that the ecological catastrophe is not only an environmental issue but also a challenge to human subjectivity. Waters speaks of the loneliness of an individual who has lost control. Rimini Protokoll emphasizes the crisis of collective decision-making, where the ethical becomes political, and the political acquires theatrical qualities.

Thus, these two approaches in contemporary German dramaturgy demonstrate the polyphony of theatrical responses to the ecological crisis: from deep psychological drama and traditional dramaturgy to a radical experiment with form, the boundaries of theater, and the very concept of the audience. Waters' English-language model tends towards the internalization of catastrophe, while the German theater of the Anthropocene in Rimini Protokoll leans toward its institutional, collective, and performative understanding. Both approaches become forms of existential theater of the Anthropocene, where the human is portrayed not only as a witness but as an active or passive participant in the ongoing catastrophe.

The play "Sila" by Canadian playwright Chantal Bilodeau (premiered in 2014) embodies and reinterprets the discourse on climate change in the

Arctic region. Bilodeau explores the Arctic not as a remote and exotic place, but as a dynamic space where global ecological processes, political interests, and the way of life of Indigenous communities intersect. Her approach combines scientific perspective with cultural narrative, offering a theatrical exploration of ecological justice, the vulnerability of human and non-human beings, and the struggle for identity amidst rapid environmental transformations.

At the heart of the play is the clash of ideas about mobility – both literal (migration of people and animals) and symbolic (cultural transitions, loss of traditions, transformation of beliefs). Through the imagery of breath, lines, and paths – both material and spiritual – "Sila" emphasizes the experience of personal loss, the fragility of life, and the necessity of memory. Inuit cosmology takes on special significance here: the word "sila" in Inuktitut means both "air", "weather", and "life force", which emerges as the leitmotif of the play.

Bilodeau integrates three languages (English, French, and Inuktitut), elements of oral poetry, mythology (particularly the figure of Nulijuk, the goddess of the ocean and the underworld), and puppet theater, creating a polyphonic and multilayered text where science, the personal, the collective, the rational, and the mythological intertwine. The eight characters – including an Inuit activist, her grandson, a climatologist, a poet, a coast guard officer, and even two polar bears – embody different perspectives on climate change while simultaneously demonstrating how social status, ethnicity, age, gender, and even species affiliation determine access to resources and the right to a voice in the future of the Arctic.

"Sila" is the first play in a cycle of eight works under the collective title "The Arctic Cycle", each dedicated to a different Arctic region country [9]. This project aims to comprehensively reflect the climatic transformations in the polar belt through human stories, with particular attention to the voices of Indigenous peoples. According to Bilodeau, theater is one of the few artistic mediums capable of conveying not only the scale of the crisis but also the emotional, corporeal, and spiritual depth of the ecological threat [9]. As the playwright notes, her task is not to present scientific facts, but to transform them into living relationships, conflicts, and choices with which the audience can identify [9].

Thus, "Sila" not only represents the challenges of climate change in Northern Canada but also questions the very ability of theater to remain detached from the "political". It is an aesthetic response to the "great de-rationalization" (Amitav Ghosh), which points to

the inability of traditional literature or dramaturgy to grasp the climate crisis. Bilodeau demonstrates that when theater becomes a place where science, myth, and life collide in an open dialogue, it transforms into a tool of social transformation.

One of the most recognizable aesthetic strategies of “Sila” is the inclusion of animal imagery – particularly polar bears, which not only embody “wild nature” but also give a voice to those usually unheard in discussions about climate change. In Bilodeau’s play, polar bears do not function merely as symbols of vulnerability or “victims” of ecological catastrophe. They are granted a voice, they think, feel, reflect, and even pose ethical questions – particularly regarding humanity’s role in disrupting the balance of the world.

A poignant dialogue between a mother bear and her cub, who innocently asks who “broke the ice”, becomes the dramatic embodiment of the Arctic crisis. The mother’s response – “The ice was broken by Nuliajuk, and she is angry because people have angered her” [4, p. 41] – shifts the issue from the rational to the spiritual-mythological realm. This moment not only honors the Inuit understanding of the interconnectedness of all life forms but also reminds the audience that every change in the environment is a result of violating a certain cosmic order.

The symbol of breath – or “sila”, as the word simultaneously means “air”, “breath”, “spirit”, and “weather” – pervades the play, acting as a metaphor for the life bond between people, animals, and the environment [9]. In “Sila”, breath is an act of existence, memory, mourning, and hope. It is also an indicator of change: the air becomes warmer, heavier, unbreathable – it changes not only physical well-being but also the cultural ecosystem in which it circulates.

Breath, as a bodily and metaphysical act, unites the characters, providing the play with rhythmic unity. This motif reveals ecological empathy: to understand another – be it a person or an animal – you must “breathe the same air”, feel the change in the climate not only with the mind but with the body. Such empathy, offered by contemporary Anthropocenic theater, serves as a temporary but powerful means of restoring the connection between the human and non-human worlds.

The imagery of animals and breath in “Sila” not only enriches the dramaturgical language but also allows for a rethinking of the very nature of the ecological narrative: not as stories of catastrophe but as stories of coexistence, interdependence, and responsibility. Through these images, the play transforms from an artistic expression into an ethical call – to listen, to breathe together, to act.

The Berlin-based “Theater of the Anthropocene” (“Theater des Anthropozän”), established in 2020 by a collective of scientists, artists, and playwrights, integrates art, science, and public discourse to explore the intricate relationship between humanity and nature amidst ecological challenges. Its mission is to craft stage productions that evoke emotional responses from audiences, fostering new models of ecological consciousness.

One of its pivotal productions, “Advocates of Nature” (“Anwälte der Natur”), delves into the concept of granting legal rights to nature. Grounded in real court cases, expert interviews, and documentary materials, the performance combines theatrical action with multimedia elements, sound design, and scientific simulations. This immersive approach places the audience within a fictional ecosystem they are compelled to defend, utilizing digital interfaces, climate data visualizations, and interactive components to transform spectators into active participants.

The psychological dimension of “Advocates of Nature” is manifested through actors – comprising scientists, lawyers, and activists – portraying themselves and sharing personal narratives. This technique not only informs but also immerses the audience in moral dilemmas, encouraging empathy towards nature as a living entity. The performance even involves the audience in decision-making processes, such as deliberations on deforestation, thereby emphasizing individual responsibility within a global ecological context.

Another notable production, “The Circus of Trees” (“Der Zirkus der Bäume”), centers on the role of trees in urban environments. Through puppetry, video projections, and bioacoustic elements, viewers are transported into a forest ecosystem where trees serve as protagonists and narrators. The performance melds scientific accuracy with emotional depth, featuring macro footage of root systems, sounds of mycelial networks, and visualizations of photosynthesis, effectively transforming the stage into a living ecosystem.

The core idea of this performative narrative is to establish an emotional connection between the audience and nature. Trees “tell” their stories, discussing seasonal changes, storms, and interactions with other trees. This psychological approach cultivates a new form of ecological empathy. Interactive segments, such as sensory “transformations” into trees, allow viewers to experience being part of the natural environment.

The performance synthesizes art, urban studies, and ecological science, functioning both as a

fairy tale and a scientific exploration. Through its transdisciplinary nature, “The Circus of Trees” not only narrates a story but also creates a communicative platform that influences public consciousness and ecological responsibility.

Both productions exemplify how contemporary theater serves as a medium for reflection, education, and action, creating spaces where ecology transitions from an abstract issue to a tangible experience.

The production “Anthropos Tyrann (Oedipus)” (“Anthropos Tyrann (Ödipus)”) offers a modern interpretation of Sophocles’ tragedy, reimagining the myth of Oedipus through the lens of ecological and social crises characteristic of the Anthropocene. This theatrical project demonstrates a profound connection between classical archetypes and contemporary environmental issues. Employing an interdisciplinary approach, the performance fuses drama with scientific knowledge, crafting a transdisciplinary performative narrative.

The central theme revolves around humanity’s responsibility for global changes. The existential dimension is portrayed through characters’ constant confrontations with fate, choice, and the limits of human influence. Through the figure of Oedipus, the audience contemplates the psychological depth of modern individuals, grappling with internal conflicts between knowledge and ignorance, guilt and redemption. The production poses the question: Do we, as a species, still have the opportunity to avert catastrophe, or is our path irrevocably determined?

A distinctive feature of the performance is its intermediality utilizing 360-degree streaming technology that immerses the audience in the events, making them active participants. This approach transforms the viewing of a tragedy into an experimental form of perception, turning the theater into a space for existential experience. Stage symbols, multimedia elements, scientific texts, and ancient Greek allusions intertwine within a complex artistic field open to interpretation.

A thematically similar yet formally distinct project, “Requiem for a Forest” (“Requiem für einen Wald”), is a performance-requiem dedicated to the loss of forest ecosystems. The production combines classical music, poetry, video art, and scientific lectures, creating a ritual of mourning and awareness. Here, the forest emerges as a cultural and existential symbol, whose loss evokes both collective and personal grief.

The performance engages the audience’s emotions, compelling them to feel not only the destruction of nature but also the profound sense of loss as a part of

themselves. Its intermediality is evident in the fusion of texts ranging from the ancient “Edda” to Richard Powers’ contemporary novel “The Overstory”, music by Franz Schubert, and philosophical and scientific excerpts. This creates a transdisciplinary space where theater transcends art to become an ethical platform for dialogue.

The psychological and ritualistic aspects of both productions signify a renewal of theater as a form of existential expression in the Anthropocene era. They unfold modern tragic narratives where humanity confronts its own threats. Both “Anthropos Tyrann” and “Requiem for a Forest” are not merely theatrical works but instruments of thought and reflection, prompting the audience to question: “What is my place in this changing world?”

In this way, Germany’s “Theater of the Anthropocene” establishes a unique space for contemporary existential theater, merging science, art, and activism. These productions embody the transformation of classical forms in response to modern challenges – ecological crises, identity loss, and the limits of human dominion over nature. Through intermediality, psychological depth, and transdisciplinarity, they emerge as pertinent art forms of our time.

The play “Sila” by Canadian playwright Chantal Bilodeau and the projects of the German, Berlin-based Theatre of the Anthropocene, including “Advocates of Nature” (“Anwälte der Natur”) and “Anthropos Tyrann (Ödipus)”, are examples of contemporary theatre that actively engages with ecological themes and questions the role of humans in a world changing under the influence of anthropogenic activity. Both theatrical projects can be compared in terms of their use of theatre as a tool for social transformation, where science, culture, and ecological responsibility become interconnected components.

In “Sila”, Chantal Bilodeau emphasizes climate change in the Arctic, using a polyphonic text that combines scientific perspectives with cultural narrative. The play not only presents environmental issues but also raises questions of identity and the interdependence of humans, animals, and nature. Through the motifs of breath and polar bears – who not only symbolize the fragility of nature but are also given a voice – Bilodeau invites the audience to experience a physical and emotional connection to the ecological crisis, calling for empathy with all forms of life. Bilodeau’s approach to ecology can be seen as a call to action rooted in the understanding that changes in the environment are the result of a disruption of cosmic balance.

The Theatre of the Anthropocene also actively engages with ecological issues, using an interdisciplinary approach that combines scientific knowledge, activism, and art. The production “Anwälte der Natur” explores the idea of legal rights for nature, involving the audience in decision-making through interactive elements that create a sense of direct responsibility. Here, nature takes the role of the plaintiff, while the spectator becomes the advocate, highlighting the importance of personal involvement in global environmental issues. In this way, theatre becomes not only a space of emotional engagement but also a platform for collective reflection.

The performance “Anthropos Tyrann (Ödipus)”, also part of the Theatre of the Anthropocene, employs an intermedial approach and uses Sophocles’ classical tragedy as a metaphor for the contemporary ecological crisis. Through the figure of Oedipus, the production explores themes of fate, choice, and humanity’s responsibility for environmental destruction. Multimedia elements, scientific texts, and classical allusions construct a complex performative narrative, where theatre becomes a space for contemplating human actions in the context of global ecological change.

In its projects, the Theatre of the Anthropocene uses a transdiscursive approach, combining science, art, and activism to create a unique platform for dialogue about environmental issues. Performances (such as “Requiem für einen Wald”, dedicated to the loss of forest ecosystems) add emotional depth to theatrical discourse by integrating music, poetry, video art, and scientific lectures, emphasizing not only the destruction of nature but also the depth of collective loss. This transforms theatre into a tool for environmental education and social mobilization.

Thus, both “Sila” by Chantal Bilodeau and the productions of the Theatre of the Anthropocene demonstrate the powerful emotional and intellectual impact theatre can have on the audience, transforming spectators into active participants in ecological processes. By combining scientific approaches with artistic means, these theatrical works not only pose important questions but also call for concrete actions in response to contemporary ecological challenges. They embody a new approach to theatre that functions not only as a form of art but also as an instrument of social and ecological transformation.

Conclusions. Based on the analysis, it can be argued that all the examined plays of English- and

German-language experimental theatre reflect the complex crisis of contemporary society, where ecological catastrophe becomes not only a theme but also a metaphor for the crisis of values, social institutions, and moral orientations. Playwrights employ poetic and often symbolic language to convey the inner contradiction between humanity’s desire to preserve nature and the inevitable destructive force of technological progress.

In the contemporary theatre of the Anthropocene, British playwright Steve Waters (“The Contingency Plan”) and the German performative platform Rimini Protokoll represent two fundamentally different approaches to interpreting the climate crisis: from psychological intimacy and dramaturgical immersion into the inner world of the individual to performative simulations of political reality and collective responsibility. Despite differences in form and theatrical language, both artistic projects share a common goal – to move the viewer beyond mere observation, making them experience the catastrophe as a personal or systemic drama, while also challenging the boundaries of theatre, action, and human subjectivity in an era of global transformations.

The play “Sila” by Canadian playwright Chantal Bilodeau and the projects of the Theatre of the Anthropocene demonstrate how contemporary theatre can become a powerful tool for ecological awareness and social transformation by combining aesthetics, science, and activism. Both approaches – the intimate and emotional one of Bilodeau, and the institutional-analytical one of the Theatre of the Anthropocene – immerse the audience in environmental issues, expanding their understanding of human responsibility toward nature. Here, theatre emerges not only as a space for artistic expression but also as a living platform for interdisciplinary dialogue that fosters a new ethical sensitivity in the era of climate change.

The studied works of German-language drama reflect a growing interest of the contemporary author and reader in the theme of ecological catastrophe in Western European theatre. They show how artistic engagement with environmental threats can become a catalyst for broader discussions about the future of civilization. These interpretations of crises not only highlight the immediate consequences of environmental destruction but also stimulate the search for new forms of social and cultural responsibility, which is particularly relevant in the context of global ecological and social change.

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Юган Н. Л. ТЕАТРАЛЬНІ ФОРМИ СУЧАСНОГО ЕКЗИСТЕНЦІЙНОГО ТЕАТРУ АНТРОПОЦЕНУ У АНГЛОМОВНІЙ ТА НІМЕЦЬКІЙ ДРАМАТУРГІЇ (КОМПАРАТИВНИЙ АНАЛІЗ)

У статті досліджуються сучасні англomовні п'єси (S. Waters "The Contingency Plan", С. Bilodeau "Sila") та німецькі перформативні нарації експериментальних театральних платформ Rimini Protokoll і Берлінський Театр Антропоцену, які зображують наслідки екологічних катастроф та їхній вплив на суспільство. Проаналізовані та зіставлені п'єси не лише демонструють екологічну проблематику, але й інтерпретують кризу людства як наслідок глобальних змін у взаємодії між природним і соціальним середовищем.

Авторка доводить, що у сучасному театрі Антропоцену англієць С. Уотерс ("The Contingency Plan") і німецька перформативна платформа Rimini Protokoll репрезентують два різні підходи до осмислення кліматичної кризи: від психологічної інтимності та драматургічного занурення у внутрішній світ особистості до перформативної симуляції політичної реальності й колективної відповідальності. Обидва художні проєкти, попри відмінності у формах і театральних мовах, виявляють спільну мету – вивести глядача за межі споглядання, змусивши його пережити катастрофу як особисту або системну драму, а також поставити під сумнів межі театру, дії й людської суб'єктності в епоху глобальних трансформацій.

Розглянута у статті Н. Юган п'єса канадської драматургині Ш. Білодо «Sila» та твори Берлінського Театру Антропоцену демонструють, як сучасний театр може стати потужним інструментом екологічної свідомості та соціальної трансформації, поєднуючи естетику, науку й активізм. Обидва підходи – інтимний, емоційний у Білодо та інституційно-аналітичний у Театру Антропоцену – занурюють глядача в екологічну проблематику, розширюючи його уявлення про відповідальність людини перед природою.

У статті робиться висновок, що твори германської драматургії демонструють зростання інтересу до проблематики екокатастроф в західноєвропейській літературі. Інтерпретації екзистенційних криз людства не лише висвітлюють безпосередні наслідки знищення довкілля, але й стимулюють пошук нових форм соціальної та культурної відповідальності, що є надзвичайно актуальним в умовах глобальних екологічних та соціальних змін.

Ключові слова: сучасна англomовна драматургія, сучасна німецька драматургія, театр Антропоцену, екзистенційна криза, компаративістика, експериментальний театр.