



The story you follow from room to room

What is **TAMARA** Play?

In **TAMARA**, Los Angeles' longest-running play, a dozen characters unfold their stories before a walking, sometimes running, audience. The spectators are expected to choose which characters to follow from room to room. The play was written by John Krizanc and first performed in Canada in 1981. **Tamara** enacts a true story taken from the diary of Aelis Mazoyer. It is Italy, January 10, 1927, in the era of Mussolini. Gabriele d'Annunzio, an Italian poet, cocaine addict, patriot, womanizer, and revolutionary who is exceedingly popular with the people, is under virtual house arrest. **Tamara de Lempicka**, an expatriate Polish beauty, aristocrat, and aspiring artist, is summoned from Paris to paint d'Annunzio's portrait. Instead of remaining stationary, viewing a single stage, the audience fragments into small groups that chase characters from one room to the next, from one floor to the next, even going into bedrooms, kitchens, and other chambers to chase and co-create the stories that interest them the most. If there are a dozen stages and a dozen storytellers, the number of story lines an audience could trace as it chases the wandering discourses of **Tamara** is 12 factorial (479,001,600). Each character in Krizanc's play changes their mask from scene to scene, making it more impossible to make sense. And the spectators become "informers" and "spies" and therefore part of the multiple pathway stories networked across the interconnected stages of

this play. The spectator becomes spec-actor (Augusto Boal's term), in that the character is not just watching a story performed, but choosing the characters to follow between micro-stages.

One theme of the play is fascism and how the ethics of each individual, especially the audience, is complicit in the plot. No one is an innocent by-stander in **Tamara**. I applied this critical postmodern perspective by looking at Disney corporate narratives, contrasting official (hegemonic) and more (corporately) marginalized stories (Boje, 1995).

We pay tribute to Krizanc's (1989) play and note its more critical theory and postmodern implications. As a tag for the journal **TAMARA**, is the "stories we chase from room to room in the mansion of organization science." We seek an interview with John Krizanc - if you run into him give us a call.

References

- Boje, David M. (1995) "Stories of the Storytelling Organization: A Postmodern Analysis of Disney as 'Tamaraland.'" *Academy of Management Journal*. August, Vol. 38 (4): 997-1035
- Krizanc, John (1989) *Tamara*. Toronto, Canada: Stoddart Publishing Co. Limited.

***Tamara** Drawings in this issue are by Rodney Lphrim (1990).