

## Rhizome and fructification: Matthew Zajac's *The Tailor of Inverness* (2008)<sup>1</sup>

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*The Tailor of Inverness* is concerned with the life and adventures of Mateusz Zajac, tailor, narrated and performed by his son Matthew, Dogstar Theatre Artistic Director. This article examines how the concept of rhizomic pattern, minutely dealt with by the philosophers Deleuze and Guattari, underlies Matthew Zajac's auto/biographical dramatic work which is shown to be more than a simple quest for personal roots.

### I. Introductory intra and extra contextual elements: fable, *diegesis* and 'family mythology'

*The Tailor of Inverness*<sup>2</sup> is a solo-performer play, though a violinist accompanies the actor onstage. In the production presented on the play's première and subsequent tours, music is of dramatic and theatrical importance. It was written, produced and performed by Matthew Zajac – paying tribute to his father who used to work as a tailor first in Glasgow then in Inverness, so accounting for the title of the work – and was directed by Ben Harrison, artistic director of Edinburgh's Grid Iron Theatre Company.

The play deals with Polish tailor Mateusz Zajac, who was chased and displaced throughout Europe, and then through the wider world, during World War II. After many adventurous journeys, not willingly undertaken, he settled in Scotland. Although it is mainly the life of the wandering migrant-recruit which is being reported, there is also a fair account of the wandering people he belonged to. It is the chronicle of a specific community (the tailors, whether Jewish or Catholic<sup>3</sup>) and of the whole Galician national group.<sup>4</sup> The audience follows Mateusz through Ukraine, Russia, Persia, Iraq, Egypt, North Africa, Italy, kolkhozes (collective farms), prisoners' and labour camps, through fields and woods, across the seas and eventually the English Channel. On the way, unexpectedly and surprisingly, he was conscripted in turn into the Polish, Soviet, German and British armies. The whole unfolding gallimaufry sounds like a hotchpotch in which the eponymous man was engulfed by the folly of war. Carted about, he was enrolled as a soldier to fight for one side or another, according to diverse and seemingly random historical events, victories and defeats. He fortunately survived the general chaos and finally found asylum in Scotland. The scope of his nomadism reduced little by little, and when in Glasgow, it shrank to the confines or boundaries of the city within which he seems to have roamed. At long last, he moved for professional reasons to Inverness and his Beckettian figure rested at anchor there, for ever:

I was living with Kazik's father-in-law on Berkeley St. just off Argyll St., near, near to, to Kelvingrove Park, you know. Kelvin Hall. Then I decided to go on my own. Och, I stayed in so many places, always movin, always movin'. I stayed in Argyll St, Watt St., Ibrox, in Townhead for a while, Royston Rd., then Alexandra Parade, then to Maryhill. There I met Mary. Mary from Maryhill. After that we got married, so then we stayed on Bollan St., Angela was baby. Then Dumbarton Road, small house, a room and a kitchen. And a rent was very very cheap. It was... pound a month!

So, after a couple of years, I seen the advert for the tailor and cutter to take a charge of the shop in Inverness. So I went for the interview and got the job! (p. 3-4)

The author's art turns the adventures of Mateusz into picaresque-like expeditions. His epic narrative is somehow amplified by the subjective vision of the playwright, the hero's loving son, and by the effects of time. In *Further than the Furthest Thing*, Zinnie Harris calls such a generic content: "family mythology"<sup>5</sup>. The whole course of events is Homeric, both unthinkable and larger than life-size. It mixes a certain sense of martyrdom and the sense of derision said to mark a Slavonic worldview.

## II. The record of Mateusz's life: palimpsest and rhizomic tracing,<sup>6</sup> structures and processes

### From life to saga

This biographical drama—or should we say this dramatised biography—is a very personal testimony delivered in its first performances by a single, highly committed, author-performer. Yet, this unique voice breeds and multiplies: the father's inscribes itself within the text which his acting son verbalises. The story is in the first person singular and yet, other discourses are grafted on the initial dramatic stem. Whether embedded or metatextual, these speeches both illustrate its content and comment upon it. Their metalanguage is polyphonic and the play historical. The personal, domestic and international overlap, and this is rendered and magnified by the author's treatment of time and place, as well as by a collage of epistolary documents.

The playtext is a 'life', as Plutarch would call it. It re/traces an individual and a family saga. It depicts a series of events climaxing with the key moments of a collective exodus, but also with the wild rush forward and re/construction of a Polish migrant in twentieth century Scotland. As in the Theatre of the Absurd, and more particularly in Beckett's works, a sense of grotesque—or even burlesque—paradoxically screens and yet reveals people's sufferings and their fates. Life goes on as, onstage, the show must go on whatever is happening. The playwright draws on various generic and stylistic sources for what feeds his own work and roots, what makes them grow and fructify. Zajac's play is one example, among many others, of how theatre has always freed chronicles from down-to-earth facts to transcend them through art. Turned into universal fables, they stage and embed various degrees of general history.

Although the dramatist's digging out of his roots is a personal quest, it is nonetheless metonymic of the pursuit and mission of all the sons and daughters of migrants—whether from the East or elsewhere—who were carried away by the floods of exodus or conscription. The younger generations dig up and search the earth of history and memory. In their soil, their individual radicles (embryonic roots) detach from mother plants. As vegetal organisms show it, there exists some interdependence between the deep feeding ground, undergrowth and surface life. With *The Tailor of Inverness*, Matthew Zajac invites the spectators into his secret garden, his 'inner landscape'<sup>7</sup>. The dramatic space—fable and text—becomes some archaeological field and site where the personal and the intimate are excavated, discovered, unveiled and little by little turned into the landmarks of a family chronicle in which ascendants and descendants are never judged.

### **'radicle-chaosmos' and dramatic genre**

However its proper genre may be defined, like Shakespearean comedies, the play ends in recognition and reconciliation scenes. Yet, a certain sense of tragic determinism keeps looming, deriving from the tearing apart of families and from the displacement of people, the very foundations of Zajac's story. To account for these supporting ideas, historical layers and dramatic fabric, the present study will rely on the notion of rhizome—concept of the arborescent system—as it was explained by Deleuze and Guattari in their work, *A Thousand Plateaus*<sup>8</sup>.

In the botanic world, the rhizomes of vivacious plants consist of main underground stems from which nodular secondary ones emerge. Their structures differ from other stems and roots. They are organs of propagation and storage. Yet, as Deleuze and Guattari put it, 'The rhizome itself assumes very diverse forms, from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers' (p. 7). These characteristics depict and metaphorise Mateusz's peregrinations. His survival instinct and energy are incredibly strong all throughout his journeys. He acquires the experience and philosophy displaced people are said to possess and transmit. His own knowledge, verve and existence are exemplary. This does not mean they are ideal and perfect, but they reflect and display the oxymoronic force and folly of men – for didactic purposes of course: 'The world has become chaos, but the book remains the image of the world: radicle-chaosmos rather than root-cosmos. A strange mystification: a book all the more total for being fragmented.' (Deleuze and Guattari, p. 7)

Throughout the play, as in real life, Mateusz keeps moving on and progressing from one country to the next, paying attention to the meaninglessness and the absurdity of his situation. On the strategic chessboard, the soldiers are pawns kept utterly in ignorance; they don't even know when the war is over or are unaware they could easily escape. His progress is geographic and horizontal; it is bristling with micro adventures and difficulties, fraught with pitfalls. He marries twice, in Galicia and in Scotland, while, in Italy, young loving Aeola (Vittorio Bolognese's daughter) would have liked to keep him by her for ever. But he departs, attracted up north. As in any rhizomic system, without interrupting or breaking the horizontal linear movement or sequence, a vertical shoot appears. He leaves Rome and heads towards England where he stays for a short time. He then travels to Scotland where his brother has settled.<sup>9</sup>

### **Rhizome and multiplicity**

Deleuze and Guattari observe, 'It is our view that genetic axis and profound structure are above all infinitely reproducible principles of tracing' (p. 13) and in *The Tailor of Inverness*, the wanderer's route is re/traced; circumstances are reported and commented upon from inside. Acting makes it possible for the two men bearing the same name, though linguistically differentiated (Matthew and Mateusz), to speak with the same voice and be one. The palimpsest superimposition of biography and autobiography at the core of the playtext written by an author who is endowed with almost all the functions in the production, renders an axiomatic rhizomic multiplicity. This is amplified by the theatrical medium and devices, as Cicely Berry explains it,

We need the language to be informed by what I call the inner landscape—the way in which an actor makes the words his own and inhabits them. But we also need the language to be presented in a way that the audience hears not only what the actor is feeling, but something beyond that, beyond the naturalistic, which makes what is spoken remarkable.<sup>10</sup> (Berry 2003: 189).

As an insider, Matthew tells the family tale, a narrative for which paradoxically he seeks some omniscience, by human definition unattainable. Consequently and nevertheless, he

sometimes tries to understand and pierce the secrets and mysteries of the unsaid. Once Mateusz has gone for ever, Matthew engages in research to find the half-sister he discovers he has, Irina, born of a first marriage celebrated in Galicia in his father's younger days.

At this stage, the rhizome loses its vectorial nature; it becomes ambivalent as Matthew undertakes the return journey his father could not. The process is then double: he both visits his ancestors' land and writes *The Tailor of Inverness*. Through drama and theatre, Mateusz's rhizomic experience can be seen (visualised) and heard. In the enterprise, Matthew plays all the parts. Roles are multiplied; but is proliferation not the very essence of a rhizomic structure within an arborescent pattern? Deleuze and Guattari are explicit about the concept of multiplicity in their chapter on rhizomes: 'Multiplicities are rhizomatic, and expose arborescent pseudo-multiplicities for what they are' (p. 8). The fields or domains involved in the chain process are numerous and miscellaneous as the following quotation shows:

A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. A semiotic chain is like a tuber agglomerating very diverse acts, not only linguistic but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive: there is no language in itself, nor are there any linguistic universals, only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs and specialized languages." (p. 8)

The two philosophers articulate language and life, artistic and social modes of expression as intertwining and interweaving.

Through the theatrical combination of semiotic and linguistic devices, Matthew tells the hi/story, of many a man and many a group. The networks of familial, political, religious matters and figures emerge from the assemblage of clusters occupying statistical schemes. Like outgrowth, the offshoots, social struggles and working class of Scottish textile manufactures come out of the general configuration and design. The Glasgow tailors and the old sweatshop 'sweating system' are necessarily correlated issues. Mateusz and his family represent a corporation and a larger population whose living conditions are known through historical documents. *The Tailor of Inverness* recalls facts and figures in a realistic dramatic form based on true reports, whether oral or written. For example, the sweating system is defined and discussed in detail in a 1889 House of Lords report<sup>11</sup>:

Daniel McLaughlin, a tailor in Glasgow and ex-president of the Scottish National Operative Tailors' Protection Society (pp. 3-19) defined a sweater as someone who took work from an employer, received a certain price for it and then had it made at a lower price. He said there were two types of sweaters in Glasgow "wholesale" sweaters and "real" sweaters. A "wholesale" sweater took work from wholesale and export dealers and manufacturers under contract and employed others to make "readymade" garments. The "real" sweaters, on the other hand, took work from customers to be done in their own homes and, unlike the wholesale sweater, participated in this work themselves. [page 239]

The substrate soil is there. In *The Tailor of Inverness*, Mateusz explains how, even after half a century later, salaries and pay-rises were negotiated, how the whole circular system worked (more or less based on assembly-line patterns and conditions) and how difficult it was to produce two hundred costumes a day.

### III. 'The rhizome is altogether different, a map and not a tracing.'

#### Staging and performance; scenography, realism and symbolism

Although Deleuze and Guattari affirm that 'The rhizome is altogether different, a map and not a tracing' (p. 13), in *The Tailor of Inverness*, it is both map and tracing. The rhizomic structure of the play provides a rich structure that the play then simultaneously employs and transcends. The set of the play as first produced is visually minimal but also richly representational and referential.<sup>12</sup> Through its scenography, realism and symbolism, the design of the working space becomes Mateusz, his life and universe. Its simplicity and efficacy are striking. It features the world of the tailor(s), territory and profession: a table or workbench, and a tailor's dummy, a rack for jackets and shirts, and an enormous pair of scissors. The backdrop consists of a cloth composite, a plain white patchwork used as a screen. On its surface, maps are projected, on which Mateusz's rhizomic route, flight, and his fellows' evacuation, real mass departures are drawn. On the platform, the actor becomes polymorphic; he splits into many men and women, and undergoes a series of metamorphoses in order to embody all the people his father met on the roads of the evacuation, an absolute exodus. Quick changes are operated, onstage, in front of the audience; these iterative transitional sequences may be regarded as successive inductions. The tailor's props become multifunctional objects; they can also feature people as, for example:

'The chair becomes Kazik' [Mateusz's brother]' (p. 18)

'He uses the chair as a car' (p. 17)

'He sits. The sound of a plane cruising at altitude. The actor a passenger' (p. 24)

'He takes off his glasses, becoming the actor' (p. 11)

'He becomes the Tailor' (p. 12)

'He reverts to the Tailor, donning his glasses' [...] 'He reverts to the actor' (p. 25)

Such didascalias, to use an Aristotelian term, emphasise the metatheatrical dimension and the actor's multilayered part. He uses the synecdochic rack and its hanging jackets as an open tiring-house. He puts them on to incarnate a German officer of the Wehrmacht, a Pole or some other character. The stage fills with imaginary *personæ*, spirits from earlier periods, the very components of the saga: "The Tailor begins to dance, first with the suit jacket, then with each of the military jackets in turn. The tone of the song changes with each jacket" (p. 7). The performer modulates and idiosyncratises his singing, in order to individualise the members of the crowded past / tale. He, from time to time, puts one arm inside one of the sleeves of a still hanging coat and becomes some sort of puppeteer; he animates props and, playing with the suits and the dummy, he creates object-partners to perform some quick dances. Whether mere tool, 'absent' fourth player (at whist), mannequin or lay figure, the signifier 'dummy' indicates a form of human substitute. Splitting into many, the performer is himself, the teller, his father and all the characters of the tale: '*The tailor picks up the dummy and dances with it. [...] He poses for a photograph, the dummy as a bride. [...] He continues dancing with the dummy, more wildly. The violinist spins into the centre of the stage and the Tailor dances around him. [...] He places the dummy on its stand. He dons the scarf and dances.*' (p. 9) [...] '*He dresses the dummy (Aeola) with the scarf.*' (p. 17)

Whether on the clothes dummy or held up by the player, the metonymic piece of woven cloth materialises human beings, their neat appearance and young female coquettish ways. All by itself, the tailor's mock model can impersonate a whole group of juvenile Polish village girls, mere memories in Mateusz's own youth: '*He uses the scarf on the dummy to describe each girl*' (p. 9). As in Beckett's *Endgame*, the enclosed space of the tailor's workshop can be seen as a skull full of recollections, some sort of *camera obscura*. The

atmosphere is one of nostalgia and joy. The performance animates creatures of thin air and Matthew pulls all the strings. As Deleuze and Guattari reckon:

Puppet strings, as a rhizome or multiplicity, are tied not to the supposed will of an artist or puppeteer but to a multiplicity of nerve fibers, which form another puppet in other dimensions connected to the first: "Call the strings or rods that move the puppet the weave. It might be objected that its *multiplicity* resides in the person of the actor, who projects it into the text. Granted; but the actor's nerve fibers in turn form a weave. And they fall through the gray matter, the grid, into the undifferentiated [...] The interplay approximates the pure activity of weavers attributed in myth to the Fates or Norns." (Deleuze and Guattari, p. 9)

The weft of the fabric—whether text or textile—offers the tailor the atemporal dimension of the myth of Arachne and Athena and its later developments. Matthew's dramatic text unfolds like some material—piece of cloth—given its shape by scissors, yarn and art. All the parts of the work are assembled and pieced together with some fine and astute needle and linguistic thread: 'An assemblage is precisely this increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections' (Deleuze and Guattari, p. 9)

To the eye, basting and oversewing threads look like railway tracks, and railway tracks, conversely, like threads in extended space. They may be reminiscent of the railway lines Mateusz, his friends and brothers followed when they fled the camps and headed towards better worlds. Linear patterns recall their routes and escapes through territories that were foreign and strange to them. Linguistic confusion and misunderstanding added to their bewilderment; these made their flights even more difficult and absurd. The runaway men had to adapt to the chaos around and to communication made impossible.

### **Segmentation and communication; deterritorialisation, plurilinguism and identity**

For Deleuze and Guattari, language 'forms a bulb. It evolves by subterranean stems and flows, along river valleys or train tracks; it spreads like a patch of oil.' (Deleuze and Guattari, p. 8). Scientists have demonstrated that, paradoxically, chaos can be found in order and that, conversely, territorialisation and deterritorialisation coexist within the rhizomic system:

Every rhizome contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed, etc., as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees. There is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome.' (Deleuze and Guattari, p. 10)

As tracks intersect within the railway network, in *The Tailor of Inverness*, the linguistic weft and warp yarns are plurilingual; the Polish, German, Russian and English languages interweave, interlace and dub one another. The video device also creates some redundancy, some form of pleonasm, with the double mode of expression, the actor's verbalisation and the projected translated transcript, as the following excerpts—stage directions and dialogue—show:

*The following dialogue is in Polish. An English translation appears on the screen. This happens for all dialogue and lyrics in languages other than English (p. 2)*

[...] *He runs forward, arms up in surrender.*

- Nie jestem Niemcem! Jestem Polakiem! Wzieli mnie na sile do Wehrmachtu! Grozili, ze mnie zabija i wysla moja matke do obozu pracy!  
 - I'm not a German, I'm a Pole! They forced me into the Wehrmacht !  
 They threatened to kill me and send my mother to a labour camp! (p. 15)

[...] *(In Russian)*

Kak vas zavoot?

- What's your name?

Mateusz Zajac.

Zajac, vy sichas soldat v Armii Sovjetskovo Naroda. Vozmite c saboi komplekt cheestovo nizhnno belya, breetvu, gorshok, nozh i vilku. Narodnaya Arimiya obespyechit vsye ostalniye vashi patriebnosti. Vy sichas zaschitnik Rodiniy!

- Zajac, you are now a soldier in the Soviet People's Army. You will take one set of clean underwear, a razor, a pot, a knife and fork. The People's army will provide everything else you need. You are now a defender of the Motherland. (p. 22)

But what can the signifier 'Motherland' mean to these uprooted and transplanted — deterritorialised— men? What can 'national identity' mean to them whose territories change names and framing political systems according to conflicts, whether regional or international?

Conscripted by the Wehrmacht, then by the Soviet Army and so on and so forth, Mateusz's only root is Eastern Europe Galicia; but it has been severed. Given its situation between the Hapsburgs' and the Russian empires, the region was a melting-pot. Mateusz calls it 'mixed' and says that discrimination only started with Hitler. He remembers how happy the whole community was before it was shared between Poland and Ukraine. It now belongs to the latter. Galicia was indeed ethnically very mixed:

No country of the Austrian monarchy had such a varied ethnic mix as Galicia: Poles, Ruthenians (Ukrainians), Germans, Armenians, Jews, Hungarians, Roma peoples, Lipowaner, etc.. The Poles were mainly in the west, with the Ruthenians predominant in the eastern region.<sup>13</sup>

For centuries, history repeating itself, the whole region has known invasions and waves of migration. Deep down, some Celtic roots can be found:

The region has a turbulent history. In Roman times the region was populated by various tribes of Celto-Germanic admixture, including Celtic-based tribes – like the *Galice* or "Gaulics" and *Bolihinii* or "Volhynians" – the Lugians and Cotini of Celtic, Vandals and Goths of Germanic origins (the Przeworsk and Púchov cultures). Several ethnographers consider the local boiko people part of the Celtic tribes. Beginning with the Wandering of the nations, the great migration coincide with the fall of the Roman Empire, various groups of nomadic people invaded the area: overall, Slavs (both West and East Slavs, including Lendians as well as Rusyns) came to dominate the Celtic-German population.<sup>14</sup>

It is against this historical and ethnographic background that the events and changing identities of the play unfold. The core of the *diegesis* is Matthew's quest for origins, his search for roots. It is a multilingual rhizomic drama within which Pidgin English and Pidgin

Scots<sup>15</sup> embed their combinations:

I been here 35 year now. 1953 I come. Nice place Inverness. Beautiful. Quiet. I have the happy life here. Raised the family. Go to British Legion. Go to bingo. Good friends aye. Every year in November to Polish War Memorial in Invergordon for the Service of Remembrance. *Pause* (p. 3).

The flexible order of words in substrate Polish<sup>16</sup> and the simplification of syntagms out of sheer necessity in daily oral conversation (for example, lexical and grammatical omissions, use of tenses and aspects may account for the linguistic variations syncopating Mateusz's speech in which, the expressive word 'aye' resonates.

The playtext, then, is linguistically as 'mixed' as Galicia used to be. It reverberates all the languages heard and spoken by the traveller on his way to Scotland, including ultimately Scots. As the notion of motherland can be questioned in the case of the displaced Galicians, so is that of mother tongue. According to Deleuze and Guattari, 'Language is, in Weinreich's words, "an essentially heterogeneous reality". There is no mother tongue, only a power taken over by a dominant language within a political multiplicity' (p. 8). In *The Tailor of Inverness*, a dialectal offshoot sometimes emerges, unexpected. It is the fruit of Mateusz's new socio-geographic anchoring: 'Och, I stayed in so many places'; 'good friends, aye'. Verbalised by Matthew, the playtext contains a music of its own, born from, and by, the Scottish accent of the North. Some modulations are also brought about by the confrontation of foreign tongues. Each experience, each language and each dialect adds a new stratum to the personal territory of de/re-territorialised Mateusz: how could he find his own identity and a sense of belonging in the vast world he trod? Onstage, replacing one armband by another ironically emphasises the meaninglessness and the artificial nature of political propagandist symbols. The superimposition of national emblems amplifies the sarcastic viewpoint through some visual effect. Puzzled, he exclaims:

What am I?

*He goes to the table and opens the cigar box. He takes a blue and yellow armband from it and puts it on.*

Am I a Ukrainian?

*He adds a large blue badge with the letters OST in white on his chest.*

A Russian?

*He adds another armband, red and white with a 'P'.*

A Pole?

*He picks up a yellow Star of David. He stares at it, turning it in his hand. He returns it gently to the box. He shuts the box and lays his hand on it.*

*A photograph appears on the screen. A large group in front of the Podhajce synagogue in 1938. Slow zoom in to Mateusz at the end of the front row.*

I come from Gnillowoda.

And a hundred other places.

I come from a tailoring school in Podhajce.

I come from the Eastern front because when you are a tailor, they send you to be a soldier. I come from the Soviets and the Nazis.

I come from a farm, from the forests and fields of green Ukraine. From the resettlement camps of Germany. From the beaches of the Adriatic.

From the grimy streets of Glasgow.

And the cool air of Inverness.

*The zoom ends, but the picture remains on the screen.*

Does it matter what I am? I am all of these things and none. Now I am here. I am from here. I speak the language of here. *He takes the armbands and badge off.*

Those wolves. They never got me. (pp. 32-33)

### Back to the beginning; retracing steps?

Matthew undertook his father's return journey himself. His feet trod their ancestors' ground and the very same question kept haunting him:

I visit the cemetery and see my grandmother's grave. And Emilia's grave. My grandfather's grave can't be found. No one knows where it is or even if it's there.

My grandmother was Ukrainian. My grandfather a Pole. Then, in a mixed marriage like theirs, the sons were brought up as Poles, the daughters as Ukrainians. So my aunt Emilia was a Ukrainian. So was her husband Pavlo.

With no monumental *memento mori* is his family's track lost? What can identity signify in such complex political environments? The questions remain unanswered. Still, through writing and staging, his journey and quest take a universal twist, transcended by the art of drama and theatre. The fructification-testimony is there and so is his tribute to father and to roots.

The play starts with the memory of an escape, with a sleigh, wolves pursuing behind. Matthew's drama is framed like a legendary Slav tale, to the tune of the Polish traditional song *Hej Sokoly*<sup>17</sup>, probably written by the Polish-Ukrainian poet-songwriter Tomasz Padura.<sup>18</sup> It was popular among soldiers during the Polish-Soviet War and was also sung by the Polish Home Army guerrillas during World War II. The title roughly means 'Hey Falcons'. The lyrics are about a Ukrainian girl to whom her betrothed—either a Cossack or a Ulan—says goodbye for ever.

*A slow verse of Hej Sokoly is played.*

*The Tailor sits up high on the workbench, staring out, listening.*

*Silence. Snow. The sound of a sleigh moving slowly fades up. Slowly, he makes the sound of a distant wolf howl. [...]*

- Tato ! Czy slyszales wilka? - Dad! Did you hear the wolf?

- Nie martw sie nim. - Don't worry about it.

*He repeats the wolf howl, louder this time.*

- Jest ich wiecej, tato!

- There's more than one, dad !

- Ida za nami? - Are they following us?

*Very loud wolf howl.*

- Widze je tato! Ida tu! Wilki ida tu!

- I can see them Tato! They're coming after us! The wolves are coming after us!

*He cracks an imaginary whip. The sleigh speeds up. The horse snorts as it starts to gallop.*

- Chodz, chodz. Ruszaj! Wez lopate! - Come on! Come on! Move!

Move! Take the shovel!

*He turns towards the wolves, ready to strike at them.*

- Chodz szybciej, tato! - Go faster Tato!.

- Jedz Wojtek, jedz ! - Come on Wojtek, come on!

- Szybciej tato, szybciej! - Faster Tato! Faster!

- Jedz Wojtek, jedz!

*The wolves bark, the whip cracks, the hooves pound, reaching a pitch and gradually receding, until only the sound of the sleigh sliding over*

*the snow is heard. That, too, dies out. Silence. A distant wolf howl. Silence. He sews for a few moments. He looks up at the audience. He speaks in English.*

### Conclusion: heritage and fructification

Matthew's story emerges from the darkness of the past, with its myths covered in snow and in frightening perils, the Nazi wolves on the heels of the runaway Galicians. According to Deleuze and Guattari, "The wolves become substitutes for a single Father who turns up everywhere [...] the Wolf is the pack, in other words, the multiplicity instantaneously apprehended as such" (p. 35).

Mateusz enjoys affirming that the wolves did not get him. On his side, according to Deleuze and Guattari's thesis, Matthew encountered his father and his fathers (ancestors) in real life and within this play, in both roots and fruits or, more particularly, on rhizome and fructification. His drama gives a lesson in love and in identity. When she has to flee, since her husband is far away under conscription, Mateusz's first wife takes one thing only: his sewing machine. The symbol is powerful: it pays a tribute to the Galician tailors, 90 per cent of whom were killed during World War II. *The Tailor of Inverness* is the textual and semiotic trace of these professionals, of the rhizome defined by Deleuze as mentioned in the introduction of this analysis. As Liz Lochhead said 'My country was Woman',<sup>19</sup> Mateusz could have said 'My country was Tailor' (in French, 'mon territoire/pays était T'ailleurs'—homophone of 'Tailleur', the French word for 'tailor'—means 'my country was elsewhere'). His sewing machine anchors him here and yet there, identifying him. The parallel between Matthew's representation of his father and Liz Lochhead's practice is highlighted when one considers Margery Palmer McCulloch's observation:

Lochhead has said of her early poetry: 'My country was woman', and *Memo for Spring* is a collection distinguished by its focus on female experience.[...] Throughout Lochhead's work one is aware of the strength of the speaking voice, the interaction of orality and literary device. Many critics of the early 1970s, however, did not seem sure what to make of it and she was often described as an autobiographical poet. Yet while Lochhead might be seen as the 'poetic mother' of the girls who speak in her early poetry, in that, as in all art, her own experience feeds into her writing, this writing is that of the professional poet, not the autobiographer: 'To tell the stories was her *work*' [my italics] (*Dreaming Frankenstein*, 70). She herself has said: 'I think my drive is towards storytelling, recording voices, exploring ambivalences [...] what attracts me is the shifting point, the caught voice, anything which momentarily illumines the ways of the heart, the life of the soul.'<sup>20</sup>

These pathways—the heart, the life and the soul—Matthew Zajac explores in *The Tailor of Inverness*. He investigates his rhizomic patrimony made of traditions, songs and poems, of historical facts and figures, of strangers and relatives, of parents and myths, all included in his work which Raymond Soltyssek<sup>21</sup> in his review praising the playwright calls a drama-documentary:

We share so many common threads I'm afraid he's made my new novel redundant before it's even finished. His father was a Galician Pole, mine a *deutsche volke* Silesian, but the story of first marriages and unknown half-siblings is the same. So too are many recognisable traits (a man who believes fatherhood is about providing for the family,

the barely convincing justifications (“I couldn’t go back, I would be thrown into prison...”), the flashes of outward anger that are evidence of a decades-long inner battle) that made our fathers much, much more complex creatures than we ever believed.

Zajac has advantages, though. He obviously knows much about his extended family in Eastern Europe, which gives his drama a sense of a personal drama-documentary: with many of my trails having gone cold years ago, I’m relying on arms’ length fiction. In addition, he’s brilliant at capturing those voices that need to be heard (how often I caught a nuance of my father’s accented English) and at immersing us in the whirlwind of the time. He’s also totally comfortable in his father’s language, whereas my Polish goes no further than stumbling tourist and my German is non-existent. These give him an insight into his father that I am well aware I lack.

Matthew Zajac’s heritage, then, goes beyond linguistic gifts and historical knowledge. His dramatic writing goes beyond docu-fiction, and the procession of his true-to-life characters revisits its own universal rhizomic models summed up by Shakespeare in Prospero’s lines:

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and  
Are melted into air, into thin air:  
And like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capp’d tow’rs, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on; and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep. (*The Tempest*, IV.1, ll.148-58<sup>22</sup>)

Illusion surely dissolves at the end of the show, and yet, as Clov says in Samuel Beckett’s *Endgame*: ‘Grain by grain, one by one [...], suddenly there’s a heap’,<sup>23</sup> and this mound of combined particles remains in the mind. Zajac’s mapping and tracing combine to fructify the multi-layered dramatic evocation of the complex rhizomatic interactions of his father’s fraught life as embedded in his playtext, but, even more, the performative richness and fluidity of his enactment of that play.

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<sup>1</sup> The English playtext was kindly transmitted to me by the author. The play has been published in a Ukrainian literary magazine, in Ukrainian (Svitlana Shlipchenko, translator). *Vsesvit Magazine* 2010 Number 7-8 (979-980) [www.vsesvit-journal.com](http://www.vsesvit-journal.com) (last accessed: 8 March 2012)

<sup>2</sup> Citizens' Theatre, Dogstar Theatre Company, Matthew Zajac, *The Tailor of Inverness*, theatre review,

<http://raymondsoltyssek.wordpress.com/2010/09/19/the-tailor-of-inverness-citizens-theatre-18910/> - respond (last accessed: 8 March 2012)

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<sup>3</sup> Before the war, about 90% of tailors in Galicia were Jewish. Matthew Zajac: 'In my father's case, I don't know exactly who taught him, but I think it's safe to assume that at least some of his training would have been given by Jewish tailors. My father was not Jewish [...] His father was Roman Catholic and his mother was Greek Catholic' (Private correspondence).

<sup>4</sup> Matthew Zajac: 'But at the end of the war, the Jewish and Polish communities of West Ukraine had been destroyed. The Jewish community by mass murder, the Polish one by mass forced expulsion westward by the Soviet authorities.' (Private correspondence).

<sup>5</sup> Zinnie Harris, *Further than the Furthest Thing* (London : ff plays, 2000), 'Author's note'.

<sup>6</sup> Tracing: 1. A reproduction made by superimposing a transparent sheet and copying the lines of the original on it. / 2. A graphic record made by a recording instrument, such as a cardiograph or seismograph.

<sup>7</sup> See footnote no. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, (Brian Massumi translator), *A Thousand Plateaus* (London: Continuum, 1987)

<sup>9</sup> Matthew Zajac: 'I would say there is little sense of a "Galician community" among Poles in Scotland these days. There is probably more identification with Galicia among the Ukrainian community. The fathers of this community, nearly all of whom are now dead, all came from Galicia. They were members of a German Ukrainian division, recruited by the SS in 1943-44, which was taken prisoner by the British in Austria at the end of the war. The Poles who settled in Scotland during and after the war, were from all over Poland. I think that those Poles and Ukrainians from southern Galicia, close to the Carpathians, like my father, certainly identified strongly with the Scottish landscape. My father could have settled anywhere in Britain, but came to Scotland to be with his brother, who was in Glasgow. He had escaped Poland at the beginning of the war and was stationed in Scotland as a military policeman by the British army. So they both came to Scotland by chance really.' (Private correspondence).

<sup>10</sup> Cicely Berry, *The Actor and the Text* (London: Virgin Books, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> <http://gdl.cdlr.strath.ac.uk/haynin/haynin1012.htm> (last accessed: 8 March 2012)  
 '4. Sweating system. Fourth report from the Special Committee of the House of Lords. Proceedings, minutes of evidence and appendix, 1889. Vol. XIV pt. 1, xvi, 633p. (Sessional no. 331) Chairman: Windham Thomas Wyndham-Quin, Earl of Dunraven and Mount-Earl. "to continue to inquire into the sweating system in the United Kingdom, and to report thereon to the House." A number of tailors employed by sweaters in Glasgow and Edinburgh gave evidence before the Committee concerning their hours of labour, wages and working conditions.'

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkT1Ss4nOW8> (last accessed: 8 March 2012)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.zeitlerweb.com/galizia.htm> (last accessed: 8 March 2012)

<sup>14</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galicia\\_%28Eastern\\_Europe%29#Tribal\\_area](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galicia_%28Eastern_Europe%29#Tribal_area) (last accessed: 8 March 2012)

<sup>15</sup> Suzanne Romaine, *Language in Society, An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (Oxford: University Press, Oxford, 1994) : 'Most pidgin and creoles are based on European languages [...] The term "-based" means that the bulk of the lexicon is drawn from that language, while the grammatical structure typically shows influence from other [...] languages. These other languages are referred to as "substrate".'

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<sup>16</sup> Charles Zaremba, "Remarques sur l'ordre des mots en polonais et en français. Problèmes de traduction polonais-français" in *Revue des études slaves* (Paris : Sorbonne, 1990), vol. 62, pp. 481-495.

[http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/slave\\_0080-2557\\_1990\\_num\\_62\\_1\\_5901](http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/slave_0080-2557_1990_num_62_1_5901) (last accessed: 8 March 2012)

<sup>17</sup> Written in the first half of the nineteenth century, it is representative of what is known as the Ukrainian school of Polish literature.

<sup>18</sup> Website : <http://www.hudsonfla.com/anthems.htm> (last accessed: 8 March 2012)

<sup>19</sup> Interviewed in Colin Nicholson, *Poem, Purpose and Place: shaping identity in contemporary Scottish verse* (Edinburgh : Polygon, 1992), p.223.

<sup>20</sup> Margery Palmer McCulloch, "Women and Poetry 1972-1999. The Contemporary Scene". In: *Irish Review*, 28. Special Issue: Ireland and Scotland: Colonial Legacies and National Identities, (ed. by Cairns Craig, 2001, pp. 58-74).

<http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/corpus/search/document.php?documentid=1435> (last accessed: 8 March 2012)

<sup>21</sup> Raymond Soltyssek, Lecturer (Strathclyde University, Scotland), [raymondsoltyssek](http://raymondsoltyssek.wordpress.com/tag/the-tailor-of-inverness), on September 19, 2010 : [raymondsoltyssek.wordpress.com/tag/the-tailor-of-inverness](http://raymondsoltyssek.wordpress.com/tag/the-tailor-of-inverness) (last accessed: 8 March 2012)

<sup>22</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Frank Kermode (ed.), *The Arden Shakespeare*, (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 103-104.

<sup>23</sup> Samuel Beckett, *Endgame*, in *Samuel Beckett, Complete Dramatic Works* (London: faber & faber, 1990), p. 93.

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

***The Tailor of Inverness***  
**By Matthew Zajac**

**Awards**

**The Critics' Awards for Theatre in Scotland (CATS)  
– Best Actor 2009**  
**The Scotsman Newspaper Fringe First Award for Innovation  
& New Writing – Edinburgh Festival 2008**  
**The Stage Newspaper Award for Best Solo Performer  
– Edinburgh Festival 2008**  
**Holden Street Theatres (Adelaide) Award 2008**

**Nominations**

**Best Theatre Production Adelaide Fringe Festival 2009**  
**Best Theatre Performance Adelaide Fringe Festival 2009**

**Festivals**

**Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2008 & 2010**  
**Celtic Connections, Glasgow 2009**  
**Adelaide Fringe, Adelaide Australia 2009**  
**Skelleftea International Storytelling Festival, Sweden 2009**  
**Nairn Book & Arts Festival, Scotland 2010**  
**Golden Lion Festival, Lviv Ukraine 2010**  
**Konfrontacje Teatralne, Lublin Poland 2010**  
**Thespi Festival, Kiel Germany 2010**  
**Szene: Scotland Festival, Dresden Germany 2011**

**Tours**

**Scotland 2009 & 2010, Sweden 2009, Poland, Ukraine &  
Germany 2010, Denmark, Sweden & Ireland 2013**

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## **The Tailor of Inverness** **Production History**

*The Tailor of Inverness* opened on July 31<sup>st</sup> 2008 at the Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh as part of the 2008 Edinburgh Fringe. Within a week, it had received a Scotsman Newspaper Fringe First Award for innovation and new writing. Demand for tickets far exceeded availability for the show's 24 performances in Edinburgh. By the end of the festival, two more awards were given to the production: The Stage Newspaper Award for the Best Solo Performer on the Fringe and the new Holden Street Theatres Award, which took the production to the 2009 Adelaide Fringe.

The show commenced its first Scottish tour in January 2009 with full houses at the Tron Theatre, Glasgow as part of the annual Celtic Connections Traditional Music Festival. The Scottish tour lasted a month, with 21 performances throughout the country, most of which were sold out. As in Edinburgh, audiences responded ecstatically. The production then travelled to Adelaide for a further 24 performances there. The Australian audience in Adelaide embraced both play and production, with a number of sell-outs and a great turnout from Adelaide's eastern European community. The Adelaide Fringe recognised the production with award nominations for both the production and Matthew Zajac's performance.

A second short tour of Scotland took place in May 2009, again with most shows sold out. This was preceded by a short visit to northern Sweden, with performances at the inaugural Skelleftea Storytelling Festival and at Umea University. Audience response here showed the same consistency as elsewhere: intense concentration and tension with many people moved to tears, culminating in long and very warm applause, sometimes accompanied by a standing ovation. In June 2009, Matthew Zajac won the Best Actor Award for his performance at the annual Critics' Awards for Theatre in Scotland.

The production was revived in summer 2010 for a second Edinburgh Fringe run and additional Scottish performances in Dornoch, Nairn, Glasgow and Inverness. It then toured in Ukraine, Poland and Germany, playing in Ukraine at the Golden Lion Festival in Lviv, Kyiv-Mohyla University and Lutsk University; in Poland at the Konfrontacje Teatralne, Lublin and Zielona Gora University; and in Germany at the English Theatre Berlin and the Thespis Festival, Kiel. In 2011, it was presented in Dresden, Germany at the Szene:Scotland Festival. In 2012, the production received its US premiere at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, where it played for a week.

To date, *The Tailor of Inverness* has played to around 14, 500 people over 140 performances. Touring in Denmark, Sweden and Ireland is already scheduled for January-March 2013, with further US touring likely. The production has also been invited to Iran, Israel and Belarus.

## The Tailor of Inverness – Krawiec z Inverness

Written & Performed by	Matthew Zajac
Violin	Gavin Marwick/Jonny Hardie
Polish Voice	Magdalena Kaleta
Director	Ben Harrison
Set and Costume Design	Ali Maclaurin
Lighting Design	Kai Fischer
Video Design	Tim Reid
Sound Design	Timothy Brinkhurst
Production & Stage Manager	Laura Edwards
Technical Stage Manager	Sholto Bruce
Relighting	Sholto Bruce
Rehearsal Assistant	Hannah Reade
Translation	Magdalena Kaleta, Lucy Ash, Tom Morrison
Publicity photography	Laurence Winram
Graphic Design	Karen Sutherland
Production photography	Tim Morozzo
Producer	Matthew Zajac
Project Administrator	Angela Cran
Press & Marketing	Liz Smith mobile: 07971 417210
Dogstar Artistic Directors	Matthew Zajac & Hamish
MacDonald	

The performance lasts 75 minutes.

**Artistic Directors** Hamish MacDonald Matthew Zajac

**Board** Anne Macleod Catherine MacNeil Annie Marrs Hugh Nicol Brian Spence

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