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PERFORMING HISTORY FROM 1945 TO THE PRESENT

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PREFACE

This volume of the journal *Art History & Criticism* is focused upon an important issue for contemporary society – that of interpreting the past and writing history. The structure of the volume and the articles included in it are mostly based on the proceedings of the international conference *The Past is Still to Change: Performing History from 1945 to the Present*, organized by the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Humanities at Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania in October 2009.

The subject of the conference referred to critical historiography, proposing that history is not a stable body of fact(s) but a shifting range of meanings produced by different cultural, social and political practices (such as rituals of public memory, historical re-enactments, museums, memorials et al.) and that the general images of the past are substantially affected by art (literature, visual arts, theatre, film, performance). The conference opened a discussion concerning the performative means of (re)constructing the past, going beyond a passive interpretation of historical texts, activating a participation in the 'performing' of history. The act of performing history also describes history as an academic discipline which is involved in (re)construction and (re) interpretation of the past. Consequently the conference discussed the problems of research and evaluation of the past as it is faced by researchers of the legacy of the Cold War, especially in the countries of Eastern Europe and the Baltic region.

The scope of the interests of the conference was reflected in the three key-note presentations, delivered by Freddie Rokem from Tel Aviv University (Israel), analysing theatrical re-presentations (see the article in this volume), Svetlana Boym from Harvard University (USA), reflecting on performing history in an off-modern key, and Padraic Kenney from Indiana University (USA), presenting "the carnival of 1989" and its further developments. The discussions were carried on by presenters from Poland, Latvia, Germany, Estonia, Italy, Finland, Ukraine, Hungary, United Kingdom, Norway, Ireland and Lithuania.

One of the major aims of this volume of *Art History & Criticism* is to settle the discussion on an interdisciplinary level and thus to reveal the complex multidimensional significance of the concept of *performing history*. Contributions were invited from different fields and disciplines – history, political science, social sciences, culture studies, literary research, theatre studies and visual art studies – both concerned with the past and the forms of remembering the past in contemporary society. Suggested topics included: re-enacting the past: performance as interpretation of history; performing political action: public events and civic rituals; historical event/theatrical event: parallels, contexts, and methods; theatre of history: witnessing, spectatorship, participation; personal memory/collective identities; (re)mapping the past: site-specific practices and places of memory; mediated memory: readings of historical resources; aesthetics and theatricality of political regime(s); carnival of history: memory and mass culture. Eventually, the articles have crystallized into the four major subjects that frame the structure of this publication of *Art History & Criticism*, namely: "Performance as Interpretation of History", "(Re)Mapping the Past: Signs and Sites of Memory", "Re-enacting the Past: Witnessing, Spectatorship, Participation" and "Aesthetics and Theatricality of Political Regime(s)". We hope that this collaborative work that brought together scholars across different disciplines and thematic areas will offer comparative framework for the future cross-disciplinary interrogations of various aspects of performing history.

Linara Dovydaitytė
Edgaras Klivis
Rūta Mažeikienė
Jurgita Staniškytė

PERFORMANCE AS INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY

SPEKTAKLIS KAIP ISTORIJOS INTERPRETACIJA

Freddie ROKEM
Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv

ON URGENCY: THE VOICES OF THE DEAD AND THE "RUSTLE OF THE LEAVES"

Key words: performance, history, ghosts, voices.

> "[…] to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show Virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure".
>
> Hamlet[1]

I want to begin with a family anecdote about my maternal grandfather, Solomon Roman Jakozov Ajzikov Lazer, born 1875 in Mitau (Jelgava), south of Riga. He was usually called Roman in memory of an older brother who had died before he was born. As a young man he moved to St. Petersburg and established a modest tailor's shop on Nevsky Prospect – in a building that has become a fancy shopping center after the fall of the Soviet Union – just opposite *Hotel Europe*, a few blocks from the *Alexandrinsky* theatre. There he made fur hats for the officers of the Tsarist army.

In 1911 he married Feiga Itsakovna Vulfson from Vindau (Ventspils), 180 km west of Riga. During the World War I, in early 1916, after being cautioned by his customers that the Tsarist regime was soon going to crumble under the revolutionary energies and the general unrest, Roman left for Stockholm (in Sweden) – on the other side of the Baltic – and set up a new fur shop in the center of that city. And a little more than a year later – according to the family records, on 1 May 1917 – his wife and their two sons, who were born in St. Petersburg, arrived in Stockholm, where, after a little more than a year, my mother was born. This is also where I was born approximately thirty years later. Even if Roman died when I was about 2 ½ years old I have some very vivid memories of him. I did however never meet my maternal grandmother.

The specific anecdote I want to tell goes back to the time when Roman was a bachelor in St. Petersburg. He was a great lover of music and had a special passion for the opera. He not only went to the opera as a spectator but – as the story goes – frequently also participated actively as an extra, on-stage. He used to be a stand-in for the famous male singers after their characters had died, lying motionless on the stage, wearing the same clothes as the heroes had been wearing when they "died". Roman would lie on the stage like this until the dead character he was impersonating was carried off the stage or until the act ended. And, according to the anecdote, there were two reasons why he enjoyed the role of playing dead so much. First he became an integral part of the kind of musical event which he loved, listening to the music and the voices on the stage from beyond his fictional death (and the opera has always been fascinated by the connection between the singing voice and dying); and at the same time, from his unique perspective, lying "dead" on the stage floor he could supposedly get a much closer view of the legs of the beautiful young women in the ballet and the chorus.

The fact that he got his name from his dead brother adds an additional dimension to the image I have of my grandfather lying there on the dusty and

probably also quite chilly and draughty stage floor in a St. Petersburg opera house before the World War I, watching the events on the stage from the perspective of the dead. I even like to think of this anecdote as one of the "reasons" why I have become engaged with the theatre. It may even have influenced my research, writing the book called *Performing History*, published more than ten years ago, in 2000[2], as well as my being here today (at this conference[3]).

***

In the second act of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, Estragon (Gogo) draws Vladimir's (Didi's) attention to the fact that they are, as Gogo says "incapable of keeping silent", because then they do not have to listen to "All the dead voices". Apparently – because they do hear something – these voices have angelic qualities because Didi answers that "They make a noise like wings". To this Gogo answers that they sound "Like leaves … They rustle". And to this Didi in turn responds that the dead voices sound like sand while Gogo again insists that they sound like leaves. After a moment of silence they continue to disagree about what it is that they are hearing:

> "Vladimir: They all speak at once.
> Estragon: Each one to itself.
> *Silence*.
> Vladimir: Rather they whisper.
> Estragon: They rustle.
> Vladimir: They murmur.
> Estragon: They rustle.
> *Silence*.
> Vladimir: What do they say?
> Estragon: They talk about their lives.
> Vladimir: To have lived is not enough for them.
> Estragon: They have to talk about it.
> Vladimir: To be dead is not enough for them.
> Estragon: It is not sufficient.
> *Silence*.
> Vladimir: They make a noise like feathers.
> Estragon: Like leaves.
> Vladimir: Like ashes.
> Estragon: Like leaves.
> *Long silence*".[4]

Didi and Gogo agree that to have lived is not enough for the dead. "They have to talk about it […] To be dead is not enough for them". This is not like in Stephen Greenblatt's often quoted opening line of his *Shakespearean Negotiations*, where he says that "I began with the desire to speak with the dead".[5] It is rather we who are listening to the voices of the dead. Didi's and Gogo's first impulse is to listen to them. But with regard to what sound the dead make when they are talking about their lives, they obviously disagree. Is it like the rustle of the leaves, the noise of something like feathers or sand, or of the ashes that they hear (whatever the ashes of the dead sound like)?

A few lines further on, when they are trying to remember what they have been talking about the whole day, Gogo claims that he is "not a historian"[6], apparently meaning not in the strict, more academic sense. But just before making this claim he has already insisted that there is a liminal temporality as well as a liminal space where it not only becomes possible, but sometimes necessary and even extremely **urgent**, to listen to the voices of the dead who are communicating about the lives that they have lived. "They talk about their lives." It is this kind of **urgency**, when the present moment connects with an event in the past and when the past literally speaks again – and speaks to us – which enables us to "perform history".

***

In his posthumously published *On the Concept of History* composed in 1940, just a few months before taking his own life, Walter Benjamin formulated how such a situation is experienced. Here Benjamin – in effect addressing us from beyond his own death – says in the 6th thesis for example, that,

> "Articulating the past historically [which I also read as "performing" the past – F. R.] does not mean recognizing it "the way it really was". It means appropriating a memory as it flashes up in a moment of danger. Historical materialism wishes to hold fast to that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to the historical subject in a moment of danger. The

danger threatens both the content of the tradition and those who inherit it".[7]

In the 8th thesis Benjamin talks more explicitly about the "state of emergency" – in German the *Ausnahmezustand* – which is actually not the exception but the rule, adding that "we must attain to a conception of history that accords with this insight".[8]

According to the 6th thesis this "state of emergency", or this danger, makes images from the past emerge as unexpected and even uncontrolled memory flashes, suddenly reappearing like ghosts. Trying to understand the "sounds" and the "noises" of the dead is paradoxically an attempt to reconstruct what they remember. And according to Benjamin, to articulate this past, or in our case even to perform it, recognizing its **urgency** in the present moment is a way "to hold fast to that image", trying to master its memories. The last sentences of the 8th thesis are quite explicit in this respect: "The astonishment [amazement or horror] that the things we are experiencing are "still" possible in the 20th century is *not* philosophical. This amazement is not at the beginning of a cognition [knowledge or insight] – unless it is the cognition that the view of history that gives rise to it is untenable".[9] This perspective on the past is always, both because of that past as well as the present, governed by a sense of failure, because (as Didi says) "To have lived is not enough for them".

The sense of **urgency** that I want to introduce into our discourse regarding performances as well as other artistic forms of representing history is closely related both to the "state of emergency" as well as to the amazement or astonishment that the certain things are still possible. This expression of urgency is located at the juncture between a publicly constituted "state of emergency" and our private astonishment, creating a dialectics between a public and a private sphere; a situation at a certain point in time and our reactions to such a situation. In a performance (as well as in any form of artistic expression) the dialectics between the public and the private even challenges the truism that the only thing we learn from history is that we do not learn anything from history. When performed and aesthetically framed, history can actually teach us a lesson, even if this form of understanding cannot always be directly formulated. Therefore we first need to ask under which circumstances a performance results in such a Benjaminian perception based on amazement, and what the relationship between this amazement and the sense of urgency with which a work of art reacts to a state of emergency is.

***

To explore how this issue of **urgency** has been aesthetically framed, I will now turn to Hamlet's famous speech to the players quoted as my epigraph. It can, I believe, be interpreted as saying that at the same time as "the purpose of playing […] **was** and **is**, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature", it is also possible to get a glimpse of **history** in this mirror. Since the theatre can re-enact fateful and disastrous events from the past, Hamlet continues, it can also confront moral issues, showing "virtue her own feature, scorn her own image and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure". But what does this enigmatic formulation – to show "the very age and body of the time his form and pressure" – actually mean?

Hamlet has a keen awareness of temporality, and having previously claimed that "the time is out of joint" – a phrase which needs a separate examination – he now says that "the very age and body of the time" – which could be both now and in the past – carries **form** as well as **pressure** for the players on stage. The **form** is the specific shape or design of the images as they are reflected through the rear mirror of the performance, enabling us to get a glimpse of the past, and the **pressure** is not only the mark made through the use of some weight – like in minting a coin with an image – but also the sense of **urgency** with which these images are presented and what their significance within the public context of the theatre is. The etymology of **urgency** is the Latin verb *urgēre*, meaning to press, drive and compel.

The word "pressure" is used once more in the play, after the ghost of Hamlet's father has told his son about his death through poisoning, finally asking Hamlet to "Remember me". Hamlet's response

epitomizes the sense of **urgency** that originates from having heard the dead father speaking to him, creating a reaction that is much more forceful and panicking than Beckett's characters. Hamlet says:

> "Remember thee?
> Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
> In this distracted globe. Remember thee?
> Yea, from the table of my memory
> I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
> All saws of books, all forms, all **pressures** past
> That youth and observation copied there,
> And thy commandment all alone shall live
> Within the book and volume of my brain,
> Unmix'd with baser matter".
>
> (1.5.95-104; my emphasis – F. R.)

The meaning of "pressure" given by OED for these two instances in *Hamlet* is "A form produced by pressing; an image, impression, or stamp" but Hamlet definitely also refers to a situation of **pressing urgency** where the past invades the present moment. This is what the expression that "The time is out of joint" means; time has become dislocated through memories from the past suddenly invading the present, flashing up in a moment of present danger.

***

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is a play about how to remember and commemorate the past, enabling the dead to speak again. It even contains a disturbingly ambiguous "model" for listening to the voices of the dead who tell their story which no doubt has formed the ways in which we understand such forms of listening, like in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. Ambiguous, because just before dying, Hamlet commands Horatio "To tell my story" while the last words that "the rest is silence" seem to contradict the former plea that Horatio must go on telling his story. And just before the arrival of Fortinbras, Horatio says:

> "Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,
> And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!"

In a final gesture of mourning before the more cynical and utilitarian forces of history and politics represented by Fortinbras and his army will obviously take over, there is a short moment for the song of the angels. These are the angels that for Benjamin will eventually become the angel of history in his well-known meditation on the drawing by Klee, the *Angelus Novus*, in the 9th *Thesis on the Philosophy of History*, who sees the wreckage of history piling up in front of him. For Didi in *Waiting for Godot* only the "noise" of their wings remains.

The wars initiated by young Fortinbras have been briefly mentioned in the first act of the play and they remain a potential threat to the stability of the kingdom throughout. But Fortinbras belongs to the world of politics and his wars and conquests only serve as the backdrop for the tragedy of prince Hamlet. These wars are obviously not the tragedy itself. They are "history" and "politics" in their crudest, most cynical and most violent form. Only in the last scene of the play, after Hamlet has announced his own death as well as the silence that accompanies it, does the explicit historical/political presence embodied by Fortinbras actually cross the threshold of the stage, invading its core. And when Horatio, after Hamlet's death, says that he wants to "speak" about the things that have taken place in order to tell "th'yet unknowing world / How these things came about", Fortinbras nonchalantly responds: "Let us haste to hear it" (5.2.365), but he is neither capable of listening nor of reflecting on the events that ***we*** as well as Horatio have just witnessed. Fortinbras does not pay attention to the details of the tragedy that has just come to a close with Hamlet's death and instead he briskly commands: "Take up the bodies […] Go bid the soldiers shoot" (5.2.380/382). Horatio on the other hand has requested to put the bodies "high on a **stage**" (3.5.357, my emphasis – F. R.) in order to transform the grim spectacle we have witnessed into some form of theatre, requiring a stage.

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* presents a caesura or even a radical rupture between tragedy and history. The public world of politics represented by Fortinbras frames the play while its core, focusing on the young generation represented by Hamlet, Ofelia, Laertes and Horatio, but in particular focusing on Hamlet himself, is an expression of the introspective, private

melancholy and the metaphysical gestures of tragedy. Horatio and Fortinbras clearly have two quite different formulations of what must be done after the many deaths in the last act of the play. While Fortinbras is busy continuing his successful military campaigns, Horatio primarily sees Hamlet's private tragedy, but is not able to formulate its broader historical context, only his own personal grief.

***

The private, isolating world of tragedy, on the one hand, and the public world of politics and warfare, on the other, perceived through two almost totally separated perspectives represented by Fortinbras and Horatio. These two perspectives are fully integrated in the figure that most clearly views the world of Shakespeare's play from the perspective of the dead: the ghost of Hamlet's father. The ghost gives rise to a much more pressing **urgency** than the threats of Fortinbras to invade the borders of Denmark. The ghost, besides activating the revenge plot, constitutes a constant threat not only to Hamlet's mental strength but also to the political stability of the kingdom, or what is left of it. The ghost represents the historical forces that invade the tragic, more private core of the play.

The complex dialectics between tragedy and history, making room for both, while at the same time showing them as separate, has become a major mark of modernity, and in particular I would argue, of postmodernity. The ghost appears in a strange mixture of very private and completely public places. The closet – which is basically a private space, though not the bedroom itself – has an interesting history which today has become the site through which, by "coming out of the closet", the private becomes public. In the closet scene where Hamlet kills Polonius while Gertrude watches, the ghost is also present. The ghost signals a collapse of the private sphere while at the same time also transforming it into a site which is both public and political.

The first encounter between Hamlet and the ghost of his father ends with Hamlet begging his two companions, Horatio and Marcellus to swear, "Never make known what you have seen tonight" (1.5.144). And after the final demand from the ghost to swear, Hamlet addresses the ghost in the cellarage once more:

> "Well said, old mole! Canst work I' th' earth so fast?
> A worthy pioneer! Once more remove, good friends".

The ghost of Hamlet's father is that "worthy pioneer" representing the re-appearance of the past, demanding Hamlet to take revenge and to his companions to take an oath. But this "worthy pioneer", primarily representing the past, has also been perceived as a figure (*figura*) for a utopian future.

***

In *Specters of Marx*, based on a series of lectures from 1993, Jacques Derrida explored the complex intertextual dialogue between the *Communist Manifesto* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, asking: "How can one be late for the end of history?" And he immediately answered with the kind of enigmatic certainty that he was capable of, claiming that this is a "question for today",

> "because it obliges one to reflect again, as we have been doing since Hegel, on what happens and deserves the name of *event*, after history; it obliges one to wonder if the end of history is but the end to a *certain* concept of history".[10]

Is it utopia that comes after what Derrida termed "a certain concept of history"? What does it mean to reflect *again* as Derrida urges us to do? And is it possible after Hamlet's supplication that "the rest is silence" to "speak", as Horatio proposes? Does it still make sense to tell "th'yet unknowing world / How these things came about"? I hope it still does, and that we still care about the "cause" (to use Hamlet's own term) for his own untimely death, which he wants Horatio to "report".

The primary meaning of "pioneer" in Shakespeare's time was of a military nature, referring to someone who was a member of an infantry group going ahead of the army or the regiment to dig trenches,

repair roads, and clear the terrain for the main body of troops. But "pioneer" had at the time also received a more abstract meaning, referring to a person who goes before the others to prepare or open up the way, beginning a new enterprise or course of action. The term "avant-garde" entered the French aesthetic discourse in the mid-19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, when it became synonymous in English with innovator, particularly in the arts. The ghost of Hamlet's father is finally a pioneer in all of these senses. The military attributes of this ghost are mentioned explicitly by Horatio, emphasizing that when he saw the ghost for the first time it was wearing full military uniform, from head to foot. The notion of **urgency** must be considered as a means of accompanying an emerging utopia.

But letting the ghosts from the past enter the stage is not sufficient for this forward look into a utopian future to be realized. However, Derrida's reading of the *Communist Manifesto* from 1848, in particular of its now proverbial opening sentence: "Ein Gespenst geht um in Europa – das Gespenst des Kommunismus". ("A spectre [or ghost] is haunting Europe – the spectre of Communism.")[11], points directly at such a possibility. In *The Eighteenth Brumaire* (from 1851-1852) Marx was even more explicit, saying that

> "the revolution is thoroughgoing. It is still travelling through purgatory. It does its work methodically. By December 2, 1851, it had completed half of its preparatory work; now it is completing the other half. […] And when it has accomplished this second half of its preliminary work, Europe will leap from its seat and exult: Well burrowed [grubbed or dug; *Brav gewühlt*], old mole!"[12]

And in a speech from 1856 Marx even claimed that "the old mole that can work in the earth so fast, that worthy pioneer [is] the Revolution".[13]

At the same time as the ghost in *Hamlet* for Marx pointed towards his own utopian visions, they also echoed Hegel's explication of the ghost of Hamlet's father in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Here the ghost figures as the transformation of poetry into pure spirit, which according to Hegel is like a volcanic eruption or even like an earthquake:

> "It [the old mole/the ghost] always comes forward and to the fore, because spirit alone is progression. Often it seems to have forgotten who it is, to have gotten lost. But, internally divided, it works its way forward – as Hamlet says of his father's spirit, "Well done, old mole" – until, having gathered strength, it pushes through the crust of earth that has separated it from its sun, its concept, and the crust collapses. When the crust collapses, like a rundown, abandoned building, spirit takes on new youthful form and dons seven-league boots. This labour of spirit to know itself, find itself, this activity is spirit, the life of spirit itself. Its result is the concept that it grasps of itself; the history of spirit yields the clear insight that spirit willed all of this in its history".[14]

Margareta de Grazia has argued that in their readings of *Hamlet* Hegel and Marx "release history from an encumbering and restrictive past and set it on an advancing trajectory toward an emancipatory end. And in this process, subjects come closer to attaining the freedom Hegel identifies with self-determination and Marx with self-activity".[15] But can we still, in the 21st century, naively accept these utopian readings of the ghost? Do we still actually ask it to **speak** to us, as Hamlet does?

In our critique of such utopian visions we need to reconsider Derrida's question, after what concept of history we now find ourselves now. One way to begin such a project is to pay attention to the fact that both Hegel and Marx are misquoting Shakespeare. Instead of Hamlet's original "well **said**, old mole", Marx quoted Hamlet as saying "Brav gewühlt, alter Maulwurf" which basically means "well dug". And before him Hegel had shifted to the more abstract "Brav gearbeitet, wackerer Maulwurf" which translates as "well **done** /or/ **labored**, old mole". The shift of emphasis from **saying** to forms of **doing**, like digging or laboring, needs to be explored in a broader context than can be done here. Let me just draw attention to 20th century philosophers of language

like Austin and Searle, but also to Judith Butler, who have made important comparisons as well as distinctions between saying and doing. But among them, in particular Austin, was very hostile to the complex combination of saying and doing on which the theatre is based.

According to Austin the hypothetical modes of expression of the theatre, just like the utopian discourses, disregard the common sense criteria for sincerity, authenticity and truth, like for example that someone saying "I do" during a wedding ceremony really means what he or she says. Without these sincerity criteria, Austin argued, the performativity of uttering this phrase is void. In her book *Antigone's Claim*, however, Butler – following Hegel – has made great efforts to bridge the paradoxical gap between saying and doing within the legal contexts activated by Sophocles' play. Butler has focused on the question of what it means to make a **claim**, creating another possible juncture between the theatrical and the social, public sphere and the private sphere, where an additional form of **urgency** is formed.

***

Before concluding I want to introduce a "worthy pioneer" from the canon of Yiddish/Hebrew/Israeli theatre, appearing in Anski's play *The Dybbuk: Between Two Worlds*. Here the metaphysical and the utopian forces have fully merged and the return to the past is crucial for understanding the **urgency** of the present. A dybbuk is the unruly and restless spirit of a dead person, who because he or she has not been properly buried or has not received the proper ceremonies of mourning, continues to interfere with the affairs of the living just like the ghost of Hamlet's father does. In *The Dybbuk* – probably most known for its famous Habimah-production directed by Evgeny Vakhtangov, which premiered in Moscow in 1922 in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution – the young student Hanan dies mysteriously when he learns that Leah – his beloved – is going to marry someone else. During her wedding to this other man, Hanan returns as a dybbuk and enters her body, speaking through her mouth, declaring that her wedding with another man is null and void. Under the wedding canopy, instead of the Jewish version of "I do", affirming the act of getting married, the bride speaking with the male voice of Hanan announces that "You are not my groom!"

As a result of the aborted wedding ceremony Leah is brought to the Rabbi. He discovers that before their respective children were born the fathers of Leah and Hanan, who had studied together, had made a holy vow to marry them to each other, provided they were a boy and a girl. When this performative vow was broken the supernatural forces took over, revealing how closely related both wedding-ceremonies and vows are to the utopian imagination, as well as testing the boundaries of performative language and the theatrical potential of aborted performatives. When the breach of the vow has been discovered it is possible to exorcise the dybbuk from Leah's body by letting her step out of a circle on the floor. But instead of being freed from the dybbuk of Hanan, Leah joins him in death, and they become unified in the next world, in a utopian otherworldly realm.

The play opens with a collective incantation of the community in the synagogue:

> "For what cause, for what cause, does the soul descend?
> From the high abode to the deep abyss.
> The fall is necessary for the ascent".[16]

This mystical text points at the subtitle of Anski's play – *Between two Worlds* – reflecting the constant movement between the material world and a higher, metaphysical sphere, where the public and the private have become integrated. When Leah and Hanan are finally unified in marriage, as the vow between their fathers had stipulated, they are already in the next world, somewhat like Romeo and Juliet in Shakespeare's play.

But the incantation opening Anski's play is not only about this world and the next. It also has an allegorical Zionist subtext. The last line of the initial incantation – "The fall is necessary for the ascent" – in Hebrew: "ירידה צורך עליה היא" – where the word *Aliyah*, meaning ascent also refers to the return of the Jews to their ancient homeland. In view of the

extermination of the Jews during the World War II the allegorical dimensions of this melodramatic ending, pointing at an implicit identification between the Zionist utopian ideal and the form of ghostly afterlife with which Anski ended his play becomes both prophetic and even uncanny. After the Shoah (the Holocaust) there were six million Jewish Souls who had not been properly buried. These ghostly dybbuks continue to haunt the Jewish and Israeli imagination as well as its theatres, constantly talking to us from beyond their death. These ghostly dybbuks have become closely integrated within the ideological fabric of today's Israel and they are frequently also appearing on the political arena, where they become manipulated and misused.

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In *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, published in 1928, Benjamin opens one of his many discussions of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* by quoting Hamlet's last soliloquy, "How all occasions do inform against me", where Hamlet asks again, with an almost direct reference to Sophocles' *Antigone*:

> "What is a man,
> If his chief good and market of his time
> Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.
> Sure he that made us with such large discourse,
> Looking **before** and **after**, gave us not
> That capability and godlike reason
> To fust in us unus'd".
>
> (4.4.33-39, my emphasis – F. R.)

Here Benjamin perceived something new, which he called an "empty world" which beyond Nietzsche's introspective, personal reading of *Hamlet* in *The Birth of Tragedy* also problematized larger historical developments. For Benjamin

> "The idea of death fills it [the play and Hamlet's world] with profound terror. Mourning is the state of mind in which feeling revives the empty world in the form of a mask, and derives an enigmatic satisfaction in contemplating it. Every feeling is bound to an *a priori* object, and the representation of this object is its phenomenology. Accordingly the theory of mourning, which emerged unmistakably as a *pendant* to the theory of tragedy, can only be developed in the description of that world which is revealed under the gaze of the melancholy man".[17]

In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the unique dramatic language that Benjamin had also found in Plato's *Symposium* has disintegrated, leaving us with the "melancholy" man who

> "alone is a spectator by the grace of God; but [… who] cannot find satisfaction in what he sees enacted, only in his own fate. His life, the exemplary object of his mourning, points, before its extinction, to the Christian providence in whose bosom his mournful images are transformed into a blessed existence. Only in a princely life such as this is melancholy redeemed, by being confronted with itself. The rest is silence".[18]

For this melancholy man the redemptive dimension which Nietzsche had abandoned can still be retrieved. Or as Socrates himself says in the *Phaedo*, that "those who apply themselves in the right way to philosophy are directly and of their own accord preparing themselves for dying and death".[19]

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How can we approach the relationships between theatre and performance about an historical event, on the one hand, and a given historical reality, on the other? What are the challenges we have to confront when trying to assess the possibilities and potentials of the arts not only to in order to understand the past, but possibly even to change it, as the organizers of this conference have suggested by proposing the title *The Past is Still to Change* for this conference? Is it only the gradually growing distance to certain events that brings about such a change? Or are other factors at play when we are "performing history", reviving and recreating aspects of the past within an aesthetic context? Clearly – and this is stating the obvious – it is necessary to understand the past in order to shape the future.

In view of these general questions I have raised a cluster of issues which I believe are crucial and even urgent at this very moment not only for theatre and performance but also for the arts in general. No matter what conclusions we reach, we must no doubt still begin with Aristotle's formulations from his *Poetics*:

> "The poet and the historian differ not by writing in verse or in prose. The work of Herodotus might be put into verse, and it would still be a species of history, with meter no less than without it. The true difference is that one relates what has happened, the other what may happen. Poetry, therefore, is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular".[20]

Spoudaioteron means either "a better thing" or something "to be taken more seriously". Or perhaps even something that is more **urgent** in the senses I have pointed at here.

Trying to provide some preliminary answers to these questions, I have indicated how we relate to history when imagining and representing utopias in the theatre or on the stage as a form of listening to the dead, or the "rustle of the leaves". As Didi and Gogo agree, to have lived is not enough for the dead: "They have to talk about it". And the theatre remains a site where this can be done without the risks that Hamlet runs, having to feign madness, or perhaps even actually being insane or believing that he is. At the same time, relying on interpretations of *Hamlet* as a model, the utopias of the 20th century, including the Zionist utopia (as expressed allegorically in *The Dybbuk*), have been based on multileveled combinations and linkages between the past and the future through the reappearance of the dead. The hoped for utopian condition has, on the one hand, been perceived as a corrective or even a form of healing of the painful failures of the past. But at the same time it has also been viewed nostalgically, depicting the return to an idyllic past (in our Israeli case by returning to the "Biblical homeland") with its obvious associations of retrieving or even, some claim, re-establishing a lost (national) paradise.

The appearance of the supernatural on the stage constitutes the concrete and simultaneous link between the now of the theatrical event and the historical or mythological past, but also as a harbinger of the future. And on the stage, in stark opposition to what Hamlet claims before he dies, the rest is usually **not** silence. Instead, the dead do not only appear again, as ghosts and dybbuks, they are also constantly talking, even presenting demands and threats to the survivors. In this sense the theatre itself has become a ghost or a dybbuk, uncannily and paradoxically bridging the past and the future. The past can only change if we are willing and able to listen to those voices and to "the rustle of the leaves".

Notes

1 All the quotations from *Hamlet* are from *The New Cambridge Shakespeare edition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

2 Freddie Rokem, *Performing History: Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000. [This book is now also being published in Polish]

3 This paper was prepared as a key-note presentation at the conference *The Past is Still to Change: Performing History from 1945 to the Present*, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, 21-23 October, 2009.

4 Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, London: Faber and Faber, 1975, pp. 62-63.

5 Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988, p. 1.

6 Samuel Beckett, 1975, p. 65.

7 Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, Vol. 4, 1938-1940, Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press, 2003, p. 391.

8 Ibid., p. 392.

9 Sigrid Weigel's translation in *Body- and Image-Space: Re-Reading Walter Benjamin*. Sigrid Weigel has argued that "the amazement […] – as a boundary case, is leading to a different kind of perception." Sigrid Weigel, *Body- and Image-Space: Re-Reading Walter Benjamin*, London: Routledge, 1996, p. 159.

10 Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Dept, the Work of Mourning, the New International*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf, New York, London: Routledge, 1994, p. 15. [Bold emphasis mine – F. R.]

11 Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* (The Communist Manifesto).

12 Karl Marx, 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte', 1852, http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/ch07.htm [accessed 1 March 2008].

13 Karl Marx, 'Speech at the Anniversary of the *People's*

Paper', 1856, http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1856/04/14.htm [accessed 1 March 2008].

[14] Quoted from David Farrel Krell, 'The Mole: Philosophic Burrowings in Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche' in: *Boundary 2*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 1981, p. 173.

[15] Margareta de Grazia, *"Hamlet" without Hamlet*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 25.

[16] Anski, *The Dybbuk*, Tel Aviv: Or-Am, 1983, p. 7. [In Hebrew, my translation – F. R.]

[17] Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, London: Verso, 2003, pp. 138-139.

[18] Ibid., p. 158.

[19] Plato, *Phaedo*, trans. by Hugh Tredennik, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1987, 64a, p. 107. See also Alexander Nehamas, *The Art of Living*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2000, p. 115.

[20] Aristotle, *The Poetics*, http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/poetics.1.1.html [last accessed 23 November 2010].

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Apie būtinybę: mirusiųjų balsai ir „lapų šlamesys"

Reikšminiai žodžiai: spektaklis, istorija, vaiduokliai, balsai.

Santrauka

Yra daugybė būdų, kaip scenoje gali būti rekonstruojama istorija, ir kai kuriuos iš jų esu ištyrinėjęs savo knygoje *Istorijos rekonstrukcijos: sceninės praeities reprezentacijos šiuolaikiniame teatre* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000), kuri neseniai buvo išversta į lenkų kalbą. Šiame straipsnyje paliečiama tema, apie kurią knygoje tik užsiminiau: kai istorija yra rekonstruojama teatre, mes paprastai matome ir girdime kažką, kas kalba iš praeities, kas gyveno ir dabar vėl pasirodo scenoje, pasakodamas apie gyvenimą, kurį jis ar ji nugyveno prieš mirtį. Straipsnyje bandau įrodyti, kad toks pakartotinis pasirodymas – kaip Hamleto tėvo dvasios – kyla iš tam tikro primygtinio dabarties poreikio suprasti tam tikrą praeities laikotarpį, sugrįžti prie jo. Straipsnyje pateikiu daugybę atvejų, kai skaitytojas ar žiūrovas primygtinai raginamas klausytis mirusiųjų balsų.

Straipsnis pradedamas asmeniniu pasakojimu, susijusiu su šia tema: tai pasakojimas apie mano senelį, kuris prieš bolševikų revoliuciją „vaidindavo" mirusius personažus Sankt Peterburgo operose.

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HISTRIONIC HISTORY. THE STAGE AS A MEDIUM OF HISTORICAL DISCOURSE IN WOLFGANG HILDESHEIMER'S *MARY STUART* AND LIZ LOCHHEAD'S *MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS GOT HER HEAD CHOPPED OFF*

Key words: historical drama, performativity, subversive quotation, metatheatre, collective memory.

The biography of Mary Stuart, the Scottish Catholic queen who was beheaded by the order of Queen Elizabeth I, the head of the Anglican Church, enjoyed unflagging popularity among Romantic playwrights. This event offered a unique chance to present on stage a conflict of individuals, whose development and end decided the fate of nations. When in 1971 the German playwright Wolfgang Hildesheimer published his theatrical account of the last hours of the life of Mary Stuart[1], he decided that it was necessary to provide it with explanatory notes to present his point of view.[2] What could be the reasons for an author who openly declared himself a devotee of the philosophy and the theatre of the absurd returning to a topic which seemed entirely exploited by traditional historical drama? *Mary Stuart*, intended at the same time as a "historical" and "absurdist" play, was to convincingly demonstrate that not only human life, but also the concept of human history sanctioned by the authority of science and scholarship, is deprived of any meaning. For this reason Hildesheimer points, already at the beginning of his notes, to the ambiguity of the word "Geschichte" in the German language. It signifies not only a vision of history, but also of a single event or a given chain of events, as well as a scholarly discipline which turns the raw material of the past into a system of repeatable regularities in order to reveal their hidden meaning. Even if the methodological tools used by historians change, together with the changes of dominant narrative patterns, Hildesheimer has no doubts that "as time goes by the following model and thesis are confirmed: a causal relationship is enough to bring an event from the domain of utterly absurd to the domain of the eternal, even if it is "an eternal failure"".[3] And he boldly formulates his counter thesis: "In reality it proves that the absurd breeds and feeds the absurd".[4] After all, we have no chance to get to know the actual motifs governing the leading and supporting actors who take part in the events that only with hindsight have been deemed historical. Hildesheimer is certain that the actual meaninglessness of reality turns into a seeming and ostensible meaning of history because historians link them with causal connections according to their needs and intentions.

From today's point of view the short essay by the German playwright can be read as a lesson on the principles of performing history according to the concept of performativity put forward by Jon McKenzie.[5] In comparison to the immanent absurdity of reality, every ordering of past events turns out to be an act of performing history, in the sense that it is a production of the expected meaning in a given context. In *Mary Stuart,* Hildesheimer discloses his own performative gesture as an intentional act of the production of the meaning of history – the meaning which was assumed in advance, even before the action of the play started. He reveals his intentions when he demonstrates that the stage events are his invention and came into being as a result of the intervention of theatre machinery

which materialized a verbal account of past events. His play opens and ends with the voice of an invisible Announcer who, accompanied by the flourish of fanfares, which play slightly out of tune, provides short information in Latin about the life and death of the eponymous heroine. Very clearly the action becomes a contemporary and subjective attempt at transposing raw information into the matter of concrete actions and the intentions that caused them. The manner in which Hildesheimer discloses the principles of functioning of this performance, which in our presence creates a meaningful vision of history, can be understood the moment we compare his play with the canonical model of the historical drama that is Friedrich Schiller's *Mary Stuart,* which premiered in 1800 and was published subsequently a year after.[6]

There is no doubt that Schiller turned to events that took place over two hundred years before the premiere of his play without the intention of giving a faithful rendition of historical facts by using the authenticating medium of the theatre. Already the critics after opening night pointed out several departures from the existing accounts of the conflict between Mary and Elizabeth which Schiller had to necessarily introduce in order to fill the form of tragedy with historical material. In fact, the action on stage presents only the last three days of Mary's life and shows the final moments when the trap that fate closes behind Mary's back. However, Schiller shows that the events in the play are not determined by ancient divine forces or the will of god, but by political and historical forces which act regardless of the individual decisions of the protagonists. For this reason he borrows the form of a tragedy, reminiscent of, for example, *Antigone*, where two major figures representative of mutually exclusive political stances enter a deadlock which only the death of one of them can resolve. Acts I and II serve, in fact, as a prolonged introduction of the information necessary to put the two protagonists on a par and make clear that they both have equal right to power. This introduction paves the way to the confrontation of Mary with her archenemy Elizabeth in Act III – a confrontation which Schiller is interested in primarily because it epitomizes the dialectic model of the progress of historical forces.

It is true that Schiller portrays Mary and Elizabeth as fully-fledged individuals and does not hesitate to shed light on the personal animosities between them, especially by introducing the figure of Leicester, Elizabeth's favorite, who is also secretly in love with Mary. But this entanglement in a love triangle is introduced not for the sake of motivating Elizabeth's final decision to sign Mary's death warrant. On the contrary, it makes it clear that individual motivations have little to do with the functioning of political machinery. After all, Elizabeth postpones the execution not because of her compassion for her enemy, but because she is well aware that the manner in which Mary will be killed has a key significance for her own status and the support of her subjects. To emphasize this aspect of the political conflict acted out on stage, Schiller also introduces Lord Burleigh, Elizabeth's advisor and an embodied spirit of reason and political cunning, who at critical moments of action teaches her about the long-term consequences of her decisions. As a result, *Mary Stuart* becomes an in-depth analysis of the functioning of political systems and forces of history, which on the one hand thrives on the Romantic ideology of the earlier *Sturm und Drang* period, and on the other hand presages the Hegelian vision of history as a dialectic development driven by a constant conflict of opposing political forces. Therefore the play becomes an exemplary demonstration of how Mary, as the embodiment of the revolutionary spirit, is subjected to the laws of the rational and pragmatic power of the state, represented by Elizabeth.

Schiller selects events and figures from copious factual accounts and chronicles, in order to use them as a model of historical progress. But this model draws its explanatory power on the concealment of the fact that the events in the play are merely a historical costume for a meditation on contemporary events. Schiller uses the medium of drama as a structure that can reveal the meaning of historical events – a meaning which would otherwise remain hidden in the entangled network of historical narratives. But when looked upon from the point of view of McKenzie's theory, Schiller's historical tragedy

provides a brilliant example of using past events as material for a performance of history – a performance which should not be treated as a revelation of the deep meaning of history, but rather as a production of this meaning. What is more, in the case of this historical play, the structural pattern of tragedy effectively universalizes and naturalizes the conflict between the state and revolutionary forces, which accounts for the contemporary character of Schiller's *Mary Stuart*, written clearly as a voice in a debate on the models of governing at the turn of the 19th century.

Hildesheimer's *Mary Stuart* occupies the antipodes of this model of historical drama, in which the primary task of the author is to reveal the meaning of historical events – a meaning which comes into being "here and now", the moment the play is written, and not "there and then", at the time when the action takes place. The German playwright not only manifestly discloses the subjective nature of the image of history, which is constructed always according to the current understanding of the world and human psyche. He also uses all possible means and dramatic strategies to prevent the stage events and characters from gaining any meaning for the audience. For this reason he removes Elizabeth from his theatrical account of British history, whose meaning was conditioned by the conflict between Mary and Elizabeth, who represented two countries, two religions, two world views and two concepts of human character and fate. He leaves only Mary on stage and nobody cares to explain to the audience the reason why she has to go to the gallows. She is surrounded by a group of seemingly faithful confidants who are in fact interested only in getting the contents of her jewelry case and who simply enjoy earthly pleasures, like eating and sex. Schiller replaced the ancient Fate with ghosts of the past who haunt the Queen of Scotland. Quite against historical accounts, he shifted the day of her execution a few days ahead, so that it could take place on the anniversary of the killing, in which Mary was most probably involved, of her second husband. Hildesheimer, very skillfully quoting the structure of Beckett's most renowned play, makes endlessly prolonged waiting the only stage event. We have to wait for Mary's execution, which is to take place only the moment her maid-servants help her put her ceremonial gown on after her morning defecation. The same scene returns as a persistent leitmotif: Mary is seated on a chair with a hole and then the bowl taken from underneath it is examined.

This, however, is not enough to eliminate traditional projection and identification. For this reason Hildesheimer introduces the character of the Pharmacist who concocts medicaments for Mary, giving her in turns sedatives and stimulants. Their influence makes everything that happens on stage impermeable to any meaningful interpretation. Mary Stuart prays, mumbles or has hysterical fits under the influence of mixtures, while the motivations of her servants are so primitive that they do not need any additional explanation. As a consequence, the events on stage cannot be put into any meaningful pattern, except maybe for the simple conclusion that we watch the last moments of Mary's life before the execution.

Interestingly, Hildesheimer not only blocks the possibility of providing the action with any meaning; he also effectively prevents it on the level of the act of reading. Although he provides the dialogues with short notes about the manner and context of their speaking, he also divides each page in half. On the left he describes stage actions and on the right the dialogues which he sometimes further splits into two columns, because some conversations take place simultaneously on stage. This layout goes against the habits of average play readers and as a result forces them to make a greater effort to put the represented events and dialogues in order. And this ordering never satisfies them. Both reading and watching the play should, according to the author's intentions, produce the effect of getting in touch with a world which is materially present but has no meaning or encompassing structure. We could say it's pure matter of life, self-evident in its absurdity, which the authors of historical plays have so far tried hard to hide.

It can therefore be said that Hildesheimer writes *Mary Stuart* as a meta-historical play, because he uses the stage as a medium of revealing the

workings of historical narratives. The action of his play very clearly demonstrates that our expectations towards a historical play as a disclosure of the meaning of history, in fact hide the basic absurdity of everyday events. Liz Lochhead in her play *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* (1987)[7] also takes up a deconstruction of historical narratives, but she carries it out from a different perspective and with a different consequence for the audience's response. This basic difference can be observed in the use of the meta-theatrical frame. In Hildesheimer's play the Announcer, who delivered crucial bits of information at the beginning of the play, marked the distance towards the events on stage that enable the appearance of the comic effect. Lochhead also introduces a figure that mediates between the stage and the audience, but rather in order to achieve a greater involvement in the stage events. Scenes from the life of Mary and Elizabeth are shown played out by a procession of characters which – as the author herself suggests in the opening stage directions – should resemble animals on a circus ring. They are introduced and shown to the public by La Corbie – a *meneur du jeu*, whose name bears clear references to the country's national bird – the crow. La Corbie not only opens the play with an introductory monologue, setting the action of the play, but also significantly begins the story with the "once upon a time" phrase, clearly turning the historical narrative into a fairytale told in the theatre and by theatrical means – a fairytale told "here and now" by a figure who is on the one hand a jester who discloses the hidden motivations of the characters and the irony of their actions, but also a trickster who tells the story in order to capture the attention of the listening audience and lead them astray with every consecutive scene.

Undoubtedly, Lochhead cares little about full comprehensibility of the historical accounts, although she retains the chronological order of events from Mary's arrival in England to her beheading. But at the same time she uses a number of meta-theatrical strategies to make sure that we are watching a re-enactment of these historical events, which at the same time suggests (but never directly spells out) their possible interpretation. Although La Corbie announces that the two queens never met face to face, Lochhead writes a series of scenes in which the two protagonists play each other's maids (Marian and Lizzie), and later also two beggars (Mairn and Leezie) who admire the splendor of royalty without the slightest knowledge of politics, and thus providing another angle on the stage events. This multiplication of roles and hierarchies between the characters serves as a simple but effective means of introducing multiple perspectives on the existing historical narratives. What contributes to the fragmentary character of action on a different level is the use of Scottish dialect, which makes it more difficult to follow what is said on stage even for native English speakers (about which some critics complained right after the premiere of the play). This strategy, however, was deliberately chosen by Lochhead to demonstrate to what extent the understanding of history re-created on stage as a live interaction is crucially dependent on the language spoken by the characters – to what extent it is the language which provides a point of view on what is watched and determines its comprehension.

But there is more to Lochhead's meta-theatrical structure. The overarching metaphor of history as a circus ring turns consecutive scenes into numbers played for the amusement of the audience and reminiscent of various performative styles and aesthetics (which Lochhead clearly names in the stage directions preceding every consecutive section, suggesting also the painting styles which the stage imagery should evoke). And by changing theatrical conventions, acting styles and dialects from scene to scene she achieves a different effect from Hildesheimer, who wanted to confront the audience with the fundamental chaos hidden underneath the ordering of historical narratives. Lochhead's play is rather a meditation on the performative nature of history understood as a contemporary experience – a repetition of the past which is undertaken in order to make sense of it. In other words, she forces each spectator to find their own way in the labyrinth of mirror images and thus problematize their relationship with history as a lived, collective memory; and she understands history not so much as a story that is told or written, but as a histrionic experience

and a performative act. This is very clearly underscored by the play's finale, in which, quite against the expectations aroused by the previous action, the beheading of Mary is shown in yet another way – as a cruel game played by children who mock one of them – a scapegoat. Distinct from all previous scenes, which were stylized as historical and only sometimes featured contemporary props (like a typewriter used by Mary's secretary), this one is entirely set in the latter half of the 20th century. It is here that the historical events in their basic dramaturgical pattern find reflection in a repeated performative act that is clearly set in the present moment and shows – as Lochhead claimed in an interview – the shade cast by the past on the present.

If Hildesheimer discloses the absurdity of past life lying hidden under the ordering of historical narratives, and thus reveals the functioning of the mechanism of performing history in McKenzie's sense of the term, Lochhead seems to illustrate a different aspect of the performative character of the narratives about the past, more in line with Judith Butler's concept of performativity and subversive quotation.[8] Although Butler's theory was worked out primarily in the context of sexual identity, her analysis of a subversive quotation of an existing normative scenario can also describe the strategy chosen by Lochhead. *Mary Queen of Scots* provides an overtly theatricalized repetition of the story of Queen Mary, although she manifestly prevents the appearance of a single frame of reference which would endow the action with meaning. But she does not absolutize the absurd as the hard core of history, as Hildesheimer still did, when he wanted to disclose the chaos beneath ordering narratives. Lochhead quotes historical accounts in the theatre and at the same time emphasizes the gesture of quoting, by presenting the action from multiple perspectives and in various styles and conventions. Therefore she discloses the performative nature of any gesture of recalling past events and at the same time offers a chance to see that the meaning of each narrative that sanctions the political and social present depends on the perspective, the form and even the language in which this narrative is retold and thus re-experienced. In this sense her play discloses another dimension of the performative nature of history. In her interpretation, to perform history means to repeat the patterns of thinking and behavior that are passed down from generation to generation – to repeat with a chance of change that appears when the scenario is performed with slight variations and modifications. And it is in this sense that Lochhead perceives the function of theatre as a medium of historical discourse – as a place where the vision of the past can be re-examined by each of the spectators and perhaps re-evaluated according to present needs and expectations, thus changing the course of the future events.

Notes

1 Wolfgang Hildesheimer, 'Mary Stuart' in: *Spectaculum 14*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1971, pp. 260-328.

2 Wolfgang Hildesheimer, 'Anmerkungen zu einer historischen Szene' in: *Spectaculum 14*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1971, pp. 329-332.

3 Ibid., p. 329.

4 Ibid.

5 See Jon McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*, London, New York: Routledge, 2001.

6 Friedrich Schiller, *Maria Stuart* (*Mary Stuart*), trans. by Witold Wirpsza, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Ossolineum, 1972.

7 Liz Lochhead, 'Mary Queen of Scott Got Her Head Chopped Off' in: *Mary Queen Of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off. Dracula*, London: Penguin Books, 1989, pp. 7-68.

8 See Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution. An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory' in: Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina, Sarah Stanbury (eds.), *Writing on the Body. Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997, pp. 401-417.

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Suvaidinta istorija. Scena kaip istorinio diskurso erdvė Lizos Lochhead dramoje *Marijai, škotų karalienei, atsisveikinti su galva teko* ir Wolfgango Hildesheimerio *Marijoje Stiuart*

Reikšminiai žodžiai: istorinė drama, performatyvumas, ardomasis citavimas, metateatras, kolektyvinė atmintis.

Santrauka

Performatyvumo kategorija kultūros ir teatro tyrimuose bei pačios teatro praktikos pokyčiai, prasidėję XX a. aštuntajame dešimtmetyje, negrįžtamai pakeitė istorinės dramos konvencijas. Tiek teatrinių tekstų autoriams, tiek ir mokslininkams, tyrinėjantiems šiuolaikinės dramaturgijos tendencijas, reikšmingą įtaką padarė Haydeno Whiteo atradimas, kad nuo XVIII a. vidurio istorija buvo rašoma pagal kanoninių dramaturgijos žanrų – tragedijos ir komedijos – konvencijas. Atrodo, kad šiuolaikiniams dramaturgams rūpi metaistorinė refleksija, o istorinius įvykius ir pačius istorijos rašymo būdus jie linkę laikyti politiškai ir ideologiškai sukonstruotais.

Tokios istorijos, kaip fikcijos sampratos, pavyzdžiu straipsnyje pasirenkama ir analizuojama škotų autorės Lizos Lochhead parašyta drama *Marijai, škotų karalienei, atsisveikinti su galva teko* (1987). Metateatrinių strategijų, perimtų iš škotų žodinės pasakojamosios tradicijos, panaudojimas leidžia autorei paversti teatrą istorijos rašymo ir sklaidos modeliu. Sujungdama skirtingus pasakojimus apie škotų karalienės gyvenimą ir mirtį ir ypač apie jos konfliktą su Elžbieta I, Lochhead parodo, kaip istorinis diskursas pateisina Anglijos valdovės hegemoninę politiką. Tam, kad geriau suprastume šiuolaikinės metaistorinės dramos specifiką, straipsnyje siūloma Lochhead kūrinį palyginti su kanoniniu tekstu, kuriame vystoma ta pati tema, tik šįkart įvilkta į klasikinį tragedijos rūbą, t.y. su Friedricho Schillerio *Marija Stiuart* (1800). Lygindami šiuos du pavyzdžius – vieną parašytą tais laikais, kai formavosi moderniosios istorijos samprata, ir kitą, liudijančią post-istorines tendencijas – straipsnio autoriai parodo, kaip teatras ir dramaturgija reaguoja į paradigminius humanitarijos pokyčius, ir kaip šie lemia naujas dramaturgijos formas.

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WHAT DOES "OUR HISTORY" LOOK LIKE TODAY? POLITICAL THEATRE IN POSTWAR GERMANY PERFORMING HISTORIES OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM AND THE HOLOCAUST

Key words: political theatre, Germany, national socialism, World War II, holocaust, Carl Zuckmayer, Rolf Hochhuth, Heinar Kipphardt, Frank Castorf.

In 1964, the East-German playwright Peter Hacks wrote to his, at that time already again West-German friend and fellow playwright, Heinar Kipphardt, who during those years was deeply absorbed in writing political documentary plays about recent historical events: "[I]t is odd, that you always make plays according to documents. The only informative documents from former times are – if I at all know how to read – plays."[1] Following this remark, which, as many of Hacks' remarks in his letters, shouldn't be taken too seriously, but seriously enough, one could understand plays performing history as documents of how the past was perceived in the past and presented as history.

In modern states, a politico-historical discourse about the past's transformation into history, or histories, shapes the "collective identity" in important aspects of political self-conception and thus configures current potentials of political action. This applies not only to an entire political system, like a nation state, but also to the various political collectives active as parts forming it, different as they may be. In a politico-historical discourse, to perform history in political theatre appears as a way to understand and to retell, from a contemporary perspective, past and historic political struggles, to set them up for re-evaluation, and thus to rethink today's social order. The contingency of today's social order is stated and it is questioned why certain political conflicts of the past sedimented into exactly these social conditions and standards of today.[2] Political theatre performing history might stir a rethinking of the ways in which history is integrated into the hegemonic social order of the day and thus exerts power. The critical exploration of a collective identity's history might change the delimitations of its potential of political actions, of which political positions and means are acceptable today, in opposition to, divergence from or continuation of the past. Then, to perform history means to deal with what will be politically acceptable and socially legitimate in the future – look into the past, call its ghosts to see the future.

To understand different approaches of intervention, one might analyze how the author perceived the past and by which ideological or cultural patterns s/he interpreted the historical events when scrutinizing them, and was thus capable of representing them on stage. Which information did s/he choose to present, according to his/her conception of the historical events and their socio-political meaning? In question are the philosophical and political claims and pretensions guiding him/her and the effects of his/her method. Then again, the audience might see in what is presented on stage, first quite different features as attractive and appealing than the ones in the author's focus, so that the political play will create an interplay of always differently strong energies of critique or disruption of the hegemonic and of continuing the hegemonic, silently adapting it to an only partially changed understanding of the situation – a probably only partial critique or disruption

of hegemonic narratives. This interplay of "counteracting forces" seems inevitable. In this, the understanding of political agency appears as crucial – of who is presented as a political actor in the historical setting, and concluded from this, how political agency in contemporary society – on the play's field of intervention – is imagined and thus how prospects of change might be thought.

Among a number of German plays that immediately after World War II performed the most recent history, aiming to influence the political formation of German postwar society(s), a very influential one was *The Devil's General*[3] by Carl Zuckmayer. Zuckmayer had just returned from exile in the U.S. when he finished his play, begun already during the war, about a German air force general who "nonpolitically" starts working for the Nazis in the 1930s, during the war detects that someone in his unit sabotages the warplanes, and finally sacrifices himself to cover up for the saboteur and thus allows the clandestine resistance operations to continue. Previous to this "tragic" end, a long talk takes place between the sabotaging engineer Oderbruch, who is displayed as rather unsympathetic character as his act of resistance first includes killing his air-force friends, and general Harras, who praises Oderbruch's intent, but condemns his action. Harras chooses for himself "tragic doom" over decisive political action, thereby following a pattern of German ideology – the mythologization of "tragic doom" – that played also a part in Nazi ideology. In the course of the play, he tells that he only wanted to fly and did not think of politics, when helping the Nazis to rebuild a German army, and thus became entangled in crimes that he did not intend. Only later, at a certain point in the historic development, he clearly sees the crimes, but cannot cut himself off from the regime.

While Zuckmayer wanted to perform a political statement about shared responsibility in taking part in the realization of a war, and thus wanted to make the German audience think about their share of responsibility, the play's perception by this audience was mostly quite different.[4] Instead of engaging in thinking about how one could behave differently, about the potential of political and social resistance and change, the audience first of all enjoyed seeing German uniforms again, even though only on stage, after having missed them for two years already. Since the play was banned by the Allies for fear of its militaristic potential, it was first staged at *Schauspielhaus* Zürich in 1946, by Heinz Hilpert, who had been the artistic director of *Deutsches Theater* in Berlin in the years 1934-1944, and was a close friend of Zuckmayer. After the Western Allies lifted the ban, the first German production premiered in 1947 in Hamburg, many more followed, turning *The Devil's General* into one of the most staged German postwar plays. In the Soviet Zone, later the GDR, the ban was never lifted.

The play was perceived as an example of the German military's innocence and its "misuse" by the Nazi elites, fostering a perception of "us", the Germans, and "them", the Nazis, as two different groups of people – a perception for which the groundwork was laid already by several German intellectuals in exile in the Soviet Union and in the United States during the last years of the war.[5] The play also contributed to a narrative that the few Nazis somehow had made us do wrong things without us having had any bearing on that, just aiming for the best as we were. Unintended, *The Devil's General* created a political impact in 1947 by adapting to an already present narrative of the Germans as being different from the Nazis and thus unrelated to their crimes, and enforcing in that the component of the military as being misused.[6] This effect was produced by Zuckmayer's decision to base his play on an older part of German ideology, namely that the military is a nonpolitical institution, only doing its duty – an ideological pattern Zuckmayer himself probably believed in wholeheartedly. What was intended to work counter-hegemonic by a weak attack against the many who didn't resist, became, due to a lack of reflection regarding the ideological patterns of the hegemonic social order and a lack of engaging with them in a critical way, an integrative part of the hegemonic discourse and a vivid image of adapting the hegemonic order to changed political circumstances, in order not to question the basic constituents of this social order.

One of the basic constituents of the social order of the late 1940s was anti-Semitism. In *The Devil's General*, the persecution of the Jews appears only at the margins, in a form that plays down the extent and history of the persecution, and partly reproduces anti-Semitic stereotypes.[7] But, following a change in generation, a new interest in the Nazi crimes, and the trials on Nazi crimes, like the First Auschwitz Trial in Frankfurt am Main in 1963-1965[8], the Holocaust became more central in performing the history of National Socialism on German stages.

In 1963, *The Deputy*[9] by Rolf Hochhuth was first staged by Erwin Piscator at the *Freie Volksbühne* Berlin. The play's political agenda was to attack the Vatican, namely Pius XII, for keeping silent and thus helping in the murder of the European Jews. So far, it was very successful in stirring a debate about the pope's behavior during the Holocaust that allowed for clear positions in favor of or against Hochhuth's position, or the moral verdict on the pope the play suggests. By his chosen target and mode of representation, Hochhuth had denounced a basic narrative of the political culture of the FRG, namely the hegemonic representation of the Catholic Church as a "martyr" during fascism. It had been used to cover up the channeling of former SS-personnel to Latin America via Catholic monasteries, and served – a main component of West-German post-war political culture that Hochhuth does not approach – many middle and lower ranked Nazis to disguise themselves as ardent Catholics who thus could not have been Nazis. One of the most prominent cases of successfully applying this disguise was the national socialist philosopher of state and law Carl Schmitt[10], whose theories are influential even today in certain areas of cultural studies. Hochhuth's exposing attack on the church's conduct during National Socialism was perceived as so crucial, that several German politicians who had built their political career exactly on the Christian-petit-bourgeois disguise of the continuity in politics and the social, namely the chancellors Konrad Adenauer, Ludwig Erhard, and still Helmut Kohl in the 1980s, offered their apologies to the Vatican for the "injustice" done to it by a young German writer.[11]

One of *The Deputy*'s weaknesses can be found in the displacement of a question of political interests, formations, and actions to a moral one by appealing to an authoritative figure to whom is ascribed that he should have acted differently, but failed. Thus the play expresses a certain understanding of society during National Socialism and its political actors. It locates as political actors single authoritative figures who could have changed something, if they had just wanted to, but not powerful ideologies, interests, or collectives forming society and thus political actions – like in this case the ideological system and traditions of Catholicism. The play cannot account for the social mechanisms active during National Socialism and still active or slightly changed today, as it presents its accusation in the representational mode of the hegemonic social order and does not scrutinize the forms of representation that express the hegemonic social order. The undertaking to represent events of the Holocaust in single representational characters misses the historic truth and appears melodramatic, as has especially been criticized by Theodor W. Adorno.[12]

Furthermore, the play continues a hegemonic component of the German way of telling not only the history of the Holocaust, as Jewish characters appear only in an illustrative way on the sidelines, but are denied to be legitimate political actors of their own.[13] On the one hand, the fomenting aspect of *The Deputy* could be called "successful political theatre" because it opened up a debate about the role of the pope and the Catholic Church during National Socialism. But on the other hand, one might say, that the integrative aspect of *The Deputy* was not less successful, especially among its leftwing target audience, because it shifted the focus of the discourse on National Socialist history to a moral verdict on a figure in a way external to the German political events of National Socialism, like the pope. It offered to deal with the National Socialist past via a shallow approach, while continuing main aspects of the hegemonic German Holocaust discourse, like not focusing on the German perpetrators, or of German ideology, like denying Jews a status as equal political actors.

Regarding this continuation of major lines of the hegemonic narrative that Hochhuth's *Deputy* performs, it might be interesting to cast a look on Heinar Kipphardt's play *Joel Brand. The story of a deal*[14], first staged by August Everding at the *Münchner Kammerspiele* in 1965. *Joel Brand* differs from other German plays dealing with the Holocaust until and during the 1960s in that it puts forward several Jewish figures among the main characters, presenting them as political agents. The play tells the story of a group of bourgeois assimilated Budapest Jews, led by Joel Brand and Rescö Kastner, who try, in 1944, to negotiate with Adolf Eichmann and his SS-colleague and rival Kurt Becher a deal to save the lives of up to one million Hungarian Jews in exchange for 10,000 trucks or other goods required by Germany's war economy. Therefore, Brand travels to Istanbul and Cairo to gain support from the Western Allies, but he ultimately fails, while Kastner succeeds in the meantime in saving at least 1,000 Jews in a much smaller deal with Eichmann. Heinar Kipphardt's way of reading the historic events – and consequently his way of representing them – was informed by an economic-political model of history and society in Marxist tradition and an according interpretation of fascism. Thus he scrutinized only those traits of National Socialist politics that are common with capitalism at large.

Since Kipphardt aimed to forgo identification, which he disapproved of in theatre, and to trigger thinking about the aspects of a historic constellation, he applied in the play *Joel Brand* a matter-of-fact way of presenting the different aspects and situations of the unfolding story. Consequently, the presentation of Brand, Kastner, and the other Jewish characters avoids any cultural or religious patterns, allusions, or stereotypes to let these characters appear somehow "Jewish" – whatever that might mean. Yiddish words, remarks on Jewish customs, or anti-Semitic stereotypes are uttered by the SS-men only, and these images don't receive any positive or negative reflection in how the Jewish characters on stage are represented; they just do not apply. Nothing differentiates those assimilated Jews in their behavior, speech, and appearance on stage from non-Jews, except the historical situation of self definition and/or definition by others. They are "normal". But the negotiations about the deal touch from both sides on the anti-Semitic myth of an incredible powerful and immense rich world Jewry (*Weltjudentum*). Belief in this myth might be a cause for the SS-men to start the negotiations. The Jewish negotiators clearly play with this belief to attach to their small Hungarian committee the aura of representativeness and power, thus transforming it into an acceptable partner in negotiations with the mighty SS. The drama's course of action clearly shows all anti-Semitic beliefs to be illusions lacking any base in reality. So far, Kipphardt's drama is exceptional among its contemporaries in exposing anti-Semitic beliefs as illusions without walking into the philo-Semitic trap. But, as the theory of fascism appropriated by Kipphardt does not consider historically specific socio-cultural patterns that distinguish different experiences of any given capitalist situation and more or less influence a subject's interaction with it, he can't account for an ideology guiding the interaction with reality in such an extreme that it overrides all other political or economic considerations. Thus, in the play the SS-men have a quite distanced relationship to their own anti-Semitism, as if it had no major influence on their actions and was a mere question of practicability. Due to the reality Kipphardt was capable of seeing and presenting, he could show anti-Semitism as a bunch of illusions, but failed in showing these illusions as decisive for the actions of those who believe in them. Thus, the question of why the SS-men kill Jews is left an enigma.

Interestingly enough, the reception of the play was primarily interested in the representation of Eichmann, and in the responsibility of the Agency and the Western Allies for not saving the Jews, but a lot less in the Jewish characters or in aspects of the representation of anti-Semitism. Kipphardt himself developed in the years to come a growing interest in Eichmann, writing another play on the interrogation of Adolf Eichmann by the Israeli authorities before his trial, in which Eichmann tried to portray himself as not accountable for any of his deeds.[15] This play, called *Brother Eichmann*, was first staged a few months after Kipphardt's death,

by Dieter Giesing at the Munich *Residenztheater* in January 1983. The play appears as the product of a leveling of the historic specificity of National Socialism in Kipphardt's preoccupation with the material concerning Eichmann towards perceiving "the Eichmann conduct as the bourgeois conduct par excellence"[16], as "the ordinary conduct in our world today".[17] The play interweaves the interrogation of Eichmann with so called "scenes of analogy", some of them depicting events in Auschwitz, but most are post-war and denouncing political behavior in Western capitalist states (only) as analog to Eichmann's – prominent among them a young Israeli soldier perceiving himself in the uniform of an SS-man searching the Bialystok Ghetto, and several scenes dedicated to Ariel Sharon and the massacre in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. As if conscious of Kipphardt's view, even the Israeli main interrogator states in the middle of the play his own felt "convergence" with Eichmann.[18] The decision to display the alleged universality of the "Eichmann conduct" in the Western capitalist countries by emphasizing Jewish/Israeli examples seems to follow a trend in the German left after 1967, when parts of it exchanged traditional anti-Semitism for anti-Zionism, to cling to it until today.[19] Again, as in *Joel Brand*, the conduct of the Jewish characters is presented in *Brother Eichmann* as being "normal". But almost 20 years later, Kipphardt's political insight had degraded to a level of understanding "normal" as being like all other wrongdoers. Interestingly, this "normalcy" of capitalism is stated by casting the most prominent traditional character of otherness in German cultural discourse, "the Jew", as "being the same", "being normal". The representations of Jewish characters without a proper presentation of the historical and socio-cultural situations from which they are taken, tend to serve as means of blurring the causes and the ends of political actions, so that no understanding of these actions and thus of responsibilities, needs and ways of changes can be achieved – here theatre stops being political in a productive way.

In 1996, Frank Castorf staged *The Devil's General* at *Volksbühne* Berlin, reading the play and its reception – in particular the 1955 film version, directed by Helmut Käutner, with Curd Jürgens as lead – as documents of the postwar German history of coming to terms with the history of National Socialism. The production deconstructs not only the character of the military hero Harras[20], but also the community of Germans around him – partly Nazis, partly "only" hangers-on.

In the end of the 1940s, the sacrifice of Harras offered to the audience – similarly composed of former Nazis and, suddenly in the majority, hangers-on or opponents – the easily acceptable idea, that the intent of resistance might have been good, but that it is alright at the same time to be comfortable with having done nothing of the like, and to continue unimpaired. In the play, this position receives an interesting twist performed by Anne Eilers, who was an ardent Nazi as long as her husband, the airman Friedrich Eilers, had not crashed with his sabotaged plane. After her husband died, she accuses Harras of letting things happen – that is, the continuation of the war – though he does not believe in them. It seems, that it was either preferable, if Harras supported the war as a believer of Nazi ideology and politics, or, if he is not a follower of Nazi ideology and politics, that he should have resisted and thus saved the Nazis – here esp. Friedrich Eilers – from the consequences of their deeds. Both ways, Harras failed in the eyes of Anne Eilers, and the question of guilt is turned into an argument on belief, not on political actions. Harras is called a murderer because he did not save Eilers, though he did not believe; while Eilers is called a hero, for he died in a war he believed in.

Near the end of the *Volksbühne* production, Anne Eiler's accusation is voiced by all the actors – by a chorus of hangers-on who perceive themselves as victims of National Socialism or of Harras, against Harras. Thus, the wrongness of a people's community (*Volksgemeinschaft*) and its aggressive and whiny self-righteousness is exposed as having been, and still being, a distinctive trait of German performing the history of National Socialism, the World War II, and the Holocaust. Still, this chorus wishes the one who started to act irregular to their concepts of uniformity, Harras, to be dead. He agrees, and

only then the saboteur Oderbruch appears to give the reasons behind his deeds. The others flee, as they don't want to hear him. In Castorf's staging, Oderbruch's way of speaking sounds so much like propaganda, like state-official antifascism, that he appears unsympathetic not for what he says, but for how he says it. He ends with a report of Harras' death: "State funeral. Black."

Notes

[1] Letter by Peter Hacks to Heinar Kipphardt 14 June 1964 in: Heinar Kipphardt, *In der Sache J. Robert Oppenheimer. Ein Stück und seine Geschichte* (*In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer. A Play and Its History*), Uwe Naumann (ed.), Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1987, p. 210. [All quotes from German texts are, unless noted otherwise, translated by me.]

[2] This understanding of the social "as the realm of sedimented practices […] that conceal the originary acts of their contingent political institution," and, contrariwise, of the political as conflicting with a given, a hegemonic social order, follows Chantal Mouffe's definition of the political in: Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political*, London, New York: Routledge, 2005, p. 17.

[3] Carl Zuckmayer, 'Des Teufels General' ('The Devil's General') in: Carl Zuckmayer, *Die Deutschen Dramen* (*The German Plays*), Stockholm: Bermann-Fischer, 1947, pp. 243-397.

[4] For a more extensive study of the reviews of the first productions of *The Devil's General* and of discussions with the audience following those shows, see Katrin Weingran, *"Des Teufels General" in der Diskussion. Zur Rezeption von Carl Zuckmayers Theaterstück nach 1945* (*"The Devil's General" in Discussion. On the Reception of Carl Zuckmayer's Play after 1945*), Marburg: Tectum, 2004.

[5] E.g., the resolution by Bertolt Brecht, Heinrich Mann, Lion Feuchtwanger, Bruno Frank, Ludwig Marcuse, and Hans Reichenbach – and opposed by Thomas Mann – where they strongly emphasized that there were a difference between Hitler's regime and the "German people"; see Brecht's *Journal* 1 August 1943 in: Bertolt Brecht, *Werke* (*Complete Works*), Große kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe, Vol. 27, Berlin, Frankfurt am Main: Aufbau and Suhrkamp, pp. 161-162. Zuckmayer himself expressed the same attitude already in writings during the war, see Weingran, 2004, pp. 10-13.

[6] This includes introducing an opposition between the Wehrmacht, the military as represented by Harras, and the SS, as represented by Harras' main antagonist Schmidt-Lausitz.

[7] See Dagmar Deuring, *"… was dazu gehört, ein Mensch zu sein". Wiederholung und Zeugenschaft. Zu einem Theater-Denken "nach Auschwitz"* (*"…what it takes to be a human being". Repetition and Witnessing. On Thinking Theatre "after Auschwitz"*), München: Epodium, 2006, pp. 96-100.

[8] Based on his visits of the First Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, Peter Weiss wrote *The Investigation*, a play and theatrical event that can't be scrutinized here, though it would fit into the context, as several other plays too; cf. http://www.wollheim-memorial.de/en/ermittlung_theatertext_en and http://www.wollheim-memorial.de/en/ermittlung_inszenierungen_en_2 [accessed 25 January 2010].

[9] Rolf Hochhuth, *Der Stellvertreter* (*The Deputy*), Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1963.

[10] See Raphael Gross, *Carl Schmitt and the Jews. The "Jewish Question," the Holocaust and German Legal Theory*, Madison, WI: University of Madison Press, 2007.

[11] Klaus Wannemacher, *Erwin Piscators Theater gegen das Schweigen. Politisches Theater zwischen den Fronten des Kalten Kriegs* (*1951-1966*) (*Erwin Piscator's Theatre Against the Silence. Political Theatre Between the Frontlines of the Cold War* (*1951-1966*)), Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2004, p. 170. In light of history, it seems like an ironic twist that it's a German pope, Benedict XVI, who grew up under National Socialism and still seems influenced by that socialization, and now strives to saint Pius XII, regardless of his silence during the Holocaust and anti-Semitism.

[12] See Theodor W. Adorno, 'Offener Brief an Rolf Hochhuth' ('Open Letter to Rolf Hochhuth') in: Theodor W. Adorno, *Noten zur Literatur* (*Notes to Literature*), *Gesammelte Schriften* (*Collected Works*), Vol. 11, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997, pp. 591-598.

[13] The character offered to identify with is the young catholic priest Ricardo, not the Jewish characters; see also Andreas Huyssen, 'The Politics of Identification: "Holocaust" and West German Drama' in: *New German Critique,* Vol. 19, No. 1, 1980, p. 129.

[14] Heinar Kipphardt, 'Joel Brand. Die Geschichte eines Geschäfts' ('Joel Brand. The Story of a Deal') in: Heinar Kipphardt, *Joel Brand und andere Theaterstücke* (*Joel Brand and Other Plays*), Uwe Naumann (ed.), Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1988, pp. 7-96.

[15] Heinar Kipphardt, *Bruder Eichmann. Schauspiel und Materialien* (*Brother Eichmann. Play and Materials*), Uwe Naumann (ed.), Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1986.

[16] "Gehört die Eichmann-Haltung zu den erschreckenden Symptomen unserer Zeit?" ("Is the Eichmann Conduct One of the Appalling Symptoms of Our Time?"), interview with Heinar Kipphardt, first published in *Welt der Arbeit*, 22 December 1967 in: Heinar Kipphardt, 1986, p. 194.

[17] Introduction to the prepublication of one scene in *Theater heute*, Jahressonderheft 1982 in: Heinar Kipphardt, 1986, p. 205.

[18] Ibid., p. 80.

[19] See for that context, Martin W. Kloke, *Israel und die deutsche Linke. Zur Geschichte eines schwierigen Verhältnisses* (*Israel and the German Left. On the History of a Difficult Relationship*), Frankfurt am Main: Haag + Herchen, 1994.

[20] Harras is played in the first part by the actress Corinna Harfouch and in the second part by the actor Bernhard Schütz; as well other cross-gender castings take place.

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Kaip šiandien atrodo „mūsų istorija"? Istoriniai spektakliai apie nacionalsocializmą ir Holokaustą politiniame pokario Vokietijos teatre

Reikšminiai žodžiai: politinis teatras, Vokietija, nacionalsocializmas, Antrasis Pasaulinis karas, Holokaustas, Carlas Zuckmayeris, Rolfas Hochhuthas, Heinaras Kipphardtas, Frankas Castorfas.

Santrauka

Pjeses apie istorinius įvykius galima suvokti kaip istorijos atkūrimo pastangas, būdingas tam tikram laikmečiui, ir kaip sociopolitinio visuomenės diskurso atspindį. XX a. antrosios pusės vokiečių teatre daugelis reikšmingiausių politinių pjesių buvo susiję su atskirų nacionalsocializmo, Antrojo Pasaulinio karo ir Holokausto aspektų scenine reprezentacija. Šios pjesės siūlo teatrui scenoje vaizduoti kariškius ir SS narius, persekiojamus žydus ir nusikaltėlius, minias pakalikų ir apskritai – nacionalinę vokiečių bendruomenę. Reprezentacijoms būdingas kritinis santykis, kai politizuojamos nusistovėjusios socialinės praktikos, vertybės ir ideologiniai visuomenės modeliai, ir integruojamas santykis, kai toliau laikomasi hegemoninės socialinės santvarkos, tik iš dalies ją keičiant, o iš dalies pritaikant prie pasikeitusių istorinių aplinkybių, tačiau neabejojant giluminėmis ideologinėmis struktūromis, ar jos būtų susijusios su militarizmu, antisemitizmu ar nacionalizmu.

Straipsnyje analizuojama politinių ir integravimo aspektų sąveika istoriniuose spektakliuose, siejant su platesniu sociopolitiniu diskursu, ypač akcentuojant kariškių reprezentaciją (Carlo Zuckmayerio *Velnio generolas,* 1947); politinio tarpininkavimo klausimą (Rolfo Hochhutho *Atstovas,* 1963); žydų personažų reprezentaciją kaip „skirtingų" arba „normalių" (Heinaro Kipphardto *Džoelis Brandas: sandėrio istorija*, 1965 ir *Brolis Eichmannas,* 1983); ir, galiausiai, kaip spektaklio recepcijos istorija tampa jo pastatymų scenoje istorija (Franko Castorfo *Velnio generolas,* pastatytas 1996).

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FALSE RECOGNITION: PSEUDO-HISTORY AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN ALVIS HERMANIS' *THE SOUND OF SILENCE*

Key words: Alvis Hermanis, Simon and Garfunkel, 1968, community, recognition, *déjà vu*, mythistory.

Fergus Kilpatrick, conspirator and hero of Irish independence, dies murdered in a theatre on 6 August 1824, on the eve of a decisive battle. The circumstances of the crime were never clarified, but English police were widely suspected of being the instigators. On investigating the events, Ryan, Kilpatrick's great-grandson, finds that the oldest of the hero's companions, James Alexander Nolan, had been a theatre scholar, a translator of Shakespeare into Gaelic, and an expert on the Swiss *festspiele*, those hugely popular representations which re-enacted historical events in the places in which they had once taken place.

Particular circumstances preceding the murder cast a mysterious shadow over the case. It is known, for example, that Kilpatrick, as happened to Julius Caesar as he approached the Senate on the Ides of March, received a letter in which he was warned about the ambush. It seems, moreover, that rumours were circulating throughout the country, that the tower of Kilgarvan – the place where the hero had been born – had been burned. This could be taken as a presage similar to that which occurred to Calpurnia, Caesar's wife, who saw in a dream the destruction of a tower dedicated to him by the Senate. A beggar on this fatal day exchanged with Kilpatrick certain words that Shakespeare had attributed to Macbeth two centuries before. "That history should have imitated history was already sufficiently marvellous; that history should imitate literature is inconceivable…".[1]

In the perfect plot of Borges, some days before being murdered, Fergus Kilpatrick had suspected the presence of a traitor in the group of conspirators and had charged Nolan with the responsibility of discovering who he was. That traitor, with an Oedipus-like tailspin, was Kilpatrick himself. In accepting his death sentence, Kilpatrick had however asked that his punishment should not endanger the revolt with a public revelation of his infamy. Thus Nolan organized a plot of actions in such a way as to make it seem that the hero was being murdered by his enemies. There was no time for Nolan to invent a drama; he had to plagiarize another dramaturge by quoting passages, sentences and gestures from Shakespeare's tragedies. The hero performed his role. A theatre was the only place possible for the final scene, in which Kilpatrick was shot, citing at once the theatrical death of Julius Caesar and prefiguring the murder of Lincoln, which would occur in another theatre forty years later.

Ryan discovers the key of the enigma, the figure in the carpet, because he remembers the cues of Shakespeare, thus discovering the source of the quotations, and exposing the fictional quality of history. Ryan's final thought is about the fact that Nolan had foreseen everything, that he had disseminated many signs so that in the future someone might hit upon the truth, might discover the fiction hidden in the event, an event that belongs to history only as a deposit of an imagery elsewhere, of a theatre, of a representation.

Fig. 1. Alvis Hermanis, The Sound of Silence. Photo: © Luciano Romano/NTFI

The key theme of Borges' novel is the fact that, in this case, citation appears in two non-homogeneous fields. It's not a matter of the re-emergence of an image, a gesture, or a sentence within the perimeter of a common fact – the common fact of art, of literature, of the theatre – so as to determine a meta-language. We are confronted rather with an event in which history copies literature, in which the historical truth is besieged and collapses before theatrical fiction.

But Borges declares, at the very beginning of his *Theme of the Traitor and the Hero*, that it is the plot of a story which he shall perhaps write someday – a hypothesis, a draft; we are thus faced with a story that describes the intention of writing another story which would be about a (pseudo)-historical fact that, in its turn, is composed around the citation of elements derived from dramatic fiction.

The Sound of Silence by Alvis Hermanis works in the same way, using the same *dispositif*; the theatrical scene re-creates the interior of a sort of hippie commune or squat of the 1960s, with such precision that, at first glance, it appears philologically reconstructed. A portable record player, some pocket radios, a camera, a projector, seem to be taken from a vintage catalogue, with a precision that reaches a kind of paroxysm in the performers' dresses, wigs, and hairdos. In this, *The Sound of Silence* could appear a historical reproduction, the scene coloured by nostalgia for a possible 1968. We are thus in the same conditions described by Borges, where a fictional frame enframes the event of a plausible history. Here however, as in Borges, the prior event leaves an unsettling clue. This is the fact that in 1968 a scheduled concert by Simon and Garfunkel's never took place in Riga. What appears on stage therefore is not the reconstruction of a past time but rather, amongst the proliferation of authentic details and the galaxy of images that re-create an only ever dreamed of 1968, the capture of an essential impurity. It is thus the ambiguity of memory, its posthumous re-enactment, its (pseudo)-historical appearance, and its fictional plot, whose deceit, as in Borges, is disclosed through the obviousness of the citations. Where Nolan uses Shakespeare as a source, Hermanis re-creates entire sequences from *The Graduate*, *Hollywood Party*, and *Blow Up*. Both situations invite the spectator not towards contemplation but towards an attentive analytic state.

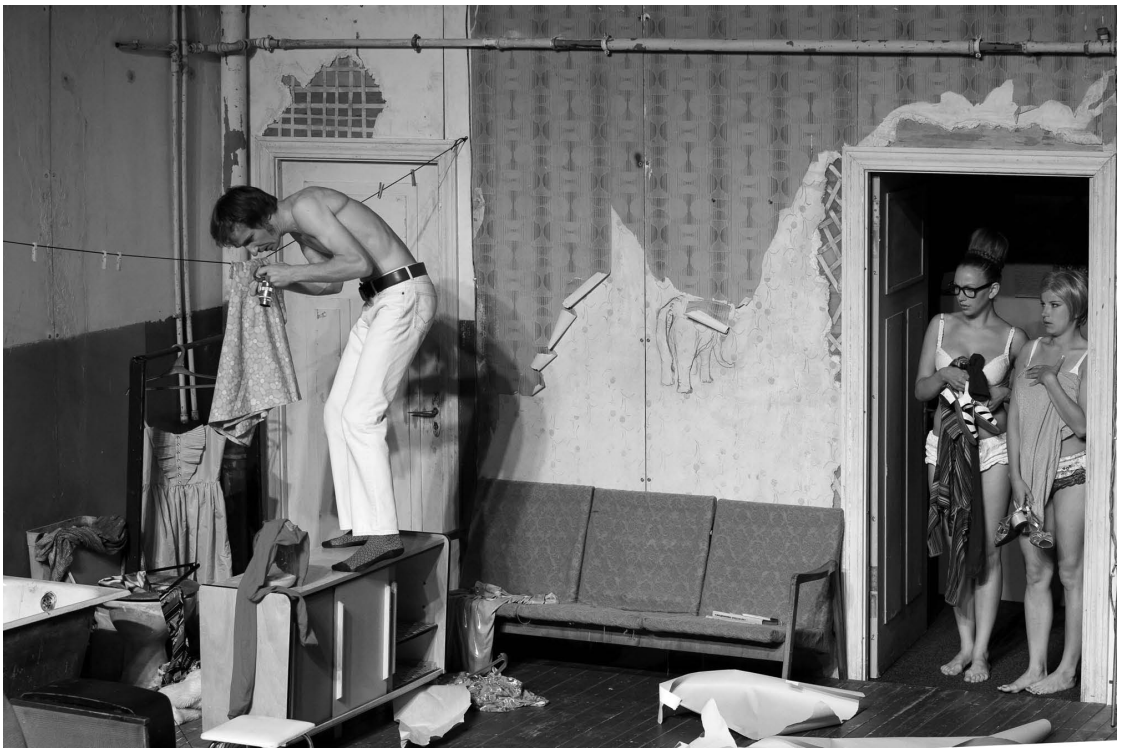

Fig. 2. Alvis Hermanis, The Sound of Silence. Photo: © Luciano Romano/NTFI

The Sound of Silence is the spectacle of a dreaming collectivity in which spectators and actors share the paradoxical memory not of the past that has been, but of a decantation of the past which constructs a communal memory through the citation of fashion, movies, and music.

Not only is it impossible to remove the phenomenological manifestation of the dreamed collectivity of 1968 (or dreaming the 1968) from remembrance, but also this dream is characterized in a way much deeper than any other period of the past, as if the 1960s had laid down the mark, as the Arcanum of every youth. We are thus faced not with a personal memory nor with a historical one, but with the scenic elaboration of a myth (a contemporary myth).

But since I suspect that many things lie under this surface, I'll try to consider the work from afar, avoiding its more obvious indicators (Utopia, sexual liberation, communal living, the search for happiness) and analyze its structure instead.

First of all, it is a totally mute work, in which the actors don't say a word, with a kind of textuality that migrates rather from Simon and Garfunkel's songs, which saturate the space, playing from old vinyl and radios, and are then heard coming also from jars and books and even from the plumbing, as if the entire scene was a resonance chamber, a centre for the capture and attraction of sonic waves.

If in its first part the spectacle emanates a kind of bliss – a youthful action that only rarely collapses into uncanny images, in the second part many painful shadows thicken over the scene, culminating finally in a death. Excluded from textuality, the Pathos doesn't coincide with the psychological motive of the action but adheres rather to images and gestures. Here Hermanis seeks an energetic field in which every situation and every occasion is intensified to the extreme, and the everyday, minimal plots to which the action gives rise reach a pathetic tension in this play as a destiny is galvanized – a destiny that the spectator knows already and is able to prefigure.

Taking these premises into account, I propose that this scene corresponds in a most surprising way with the form of tragedy, and that the scene itself tries to capture the contemporary shape of the tragic.

Firstly, through a shared visual, gestural and musical imaginary, *The Sound of Silence* becomes a place for the symbolic appropriation of collective existence, although not based on identification with the polis. Such an imaginary is therefore a mythical creation, a catalogue, and a collection of the remains of today's myths as described by Roland Barthes.[2]

The pop and nostalgic music of Simon and Garfunkel is the mirror of that mythic world, the sonar core of a vision that seeks here its manifestation. More deeply, Simon and Garfunkel are the choir of such a tragedy; they are the first element of connection between the scene and the audience – the aberrant choir of a spectacle in which not a single word is spoken, and whose heroes are mute, innocent and anonymous as in a pre-Adamic humanity, as in a time before nomination.

Finally, destiny. If today's myth, as Barthes has stressed, is an unceasing creation of the bourgeoisie, especially in its revolutionary moments, then this destiny is fully realized in the elementary spirit of levelling, in the sense of normalization.

Fig. 3. Alvis Hermanis, The Sound of Silence, 2007. Photo: © Monika Pormale

Thus in the naked, manifest existence of daily life lies a tragic destiny, which makes us feel something oppressive about such a life. Connected with the bourgeoisie, this destiny – which is not heroic, terrible, nor mournful – this tragically banal destiny is obviously one of marriage, of family, and of home.

To say that *The Sound of Silence* is composed as a contemporary tragedy, or as Romeo Castellucci has stated about his *Tragedia Endogonidia*, as a "strategy in order to support the scope of this age", implies that it recalls, *mutatis mutandis*, some of the main aspects of tragic form, which I have stressed above taking into account the classical interpretation of Aristotle. What I am particularly interested in, now, is one specific element of the Attic Tragedy analyzed in the *Poetics*: recognition (*anagnorisis*).

Anagnorisis, in Aristotle's definition, brings about a shift from ignorance to knowledge. It is the moment in which the characters understand their predicament fully for the first time – the moment that resolves a sequence of unexplained and often implausible occurrences; it makes the world and the text intelligible.

Speaking more generally, *anagnorisis* is one of two different forms of memory conceived by the Greeks, the other one being *anamnesis*.

In *anamnesis* (recollection) there is no novelty, merely the re-experiencing of the old. Its classical definition relates to the Platonic formulation of knowledge. The doctrine of anamnesis claims that we have knowledge only because we formerly knew. But that means there can be no fundamentally new knowledge. *Anamnesis* provides the reassuring evidence of complete similarity; it has an element of attenuation about it, making everything a gigantic *déjà vu*.

In *anagnorisis*, on the other hand, memory traces are reactivated in the present, but there is never a simple correspondence between past and present. Recognition is a creative shock, where an element from the past jolts consciousness out of joint and thereby contributes to the creation of novelty. Here

Fig. 4. Alvis Hermanis, The Sound of Silence, 2007. Photo: © Monika Pormale

the power of the past resides in its complicated relationship of similarity/dissimilarity to the present.

What I intend to do is to consider the memory-structure that *The Sound of Silence* produces and to describe a dialectics of remembering within this memory-structure. There is no doubt that this is a show about memory. I have no time here to analyze this, but the architectural structure of the set itself, with the five aligned doors signalling five different rooms is the same as the memory theatres of the Renaissance. No doubt also, it is a Memory theatre in itself, but a theatre of memory as recognition, not as recollection – and of recognition as an experience for the spectator but not for the character (it is useful to point out that in his massive study of *Recognition* Terence Cave[3] has found in the transference of recognition from character to spectator the key to the concept in its modern development).

The recognition experienced here by the spectator is made possible through the effect of citation. This particular form of *anagnorisis* proceeds through two steps. In the first moment, we recognize the fact of memory; in the second we recognize that this memory belongs to us, and that we are all sharing it – in terms of the communal knowledge of myth – as the instantaneous community of spectators, joined together during the event, along with the double of this community – the community of the actors.

Here, recognition is on the side of the spectator: by recognizing the source of the citations and by discovering the mythical form of 1968, s/he suddenly realizes that on stage the actors are not performing a history "about the concert that never took place". They are performing Mythistory. What, then, is mythistory?

In *The Sound of Silence* the performance materials are derived from movies, fashion, photography, and music. Together these elements concur in the elaboration of the spectacle as originating in a myth – a modern myth. In other words, the mythic is the real content of this spectacle; its content appears as a mythic shadowplay staged in the costume of 1968.

It is not a reanimation of myth, as in Jung and other modern mythologists who presumed to disclose in the great myths of our civilization the ultimate mysteries of the human condition, but rather a recognition of myth as a repository of the stories by which,

as Giambattista Vico saw, "men themselves" have made and continue to remake their histories.

This recognition doesn't mean the invalidation of performance but its re-evaluation according to another critical category, which is neither theatrical nor strictly historical but rather mythistorical: the recognition that what we experience is false in terms of what concerns history, but true if we consider the recognition of myth.

In Hermanis' work, myth does not suppress history; it only impoverishes it. It puts it at a distance and makes it usable. If one believes that history is going to die, it is a death with reprieve; history loses its value, but keeps its life, from which the form of the myth will draw its nourishment. The mythic form is not a symbol. The photographer of *Blow Up* is not the symbol of 1968; he has too much presence – he appears as a rich, fully experienced, spontaneous, innocent, *indisputable* character in the here and now of the scene. But at the same time this presence is tamed, put at a distance, and made almost transparent; it recedes a little, and it becomes fake. The dialectical relation between performing history and performing myth is essentially a relation of *deformation*. But this distortion is not an obliteration: 1968 remains here half-amputated, and deprived of reality, but not of memory.

In the kind of *anagnorisis* which *The Sound of Silence* stimulates, the spectator suddenly tastes something of the work of the historiographer, if we accept the definition of Joseph Mali, who proposes an historiography that recognises myth for what it is: a story that has passed into and become history. "The critical task of this historiography, or mythistory, is to reappraise these stories as inevitable, and ultimately valuable, histories of personal and communal identity".[4]

In this account, *The Sound of Silence* re-activates one of the essential tasks of Tragedy – the composition of a community, which here is instantaneous and disinterested: a community that shares nothing but some sort of loss – the loss of something that has never happened but that everybody knows and remembers – in a word, a community of mythistorians.

Notes

1 Jorge Luis Borges, 'Theme of the Traitor and the Hero' in: *Ficciones*, New York: Grove Press, 1962, p. 125.
2 See Roland Barthes, 'Myth Today' in: *Mythologies*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1983.
3 Terence Cave, *Recognition. A Study in Poetics*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
4 Joseph Mali, *Mythistory. The Making of a Modern Historiography*, Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003, p. xii.

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Klaidingas atpažinimas: alternatyvi istorija ir kolektyvinė atmintis Alvio Hermanio *Tylos garse*

Reikšminiai žodžiai: Alvis Hermanis, Simonas ir Garfunkelis, 1968, bendruomenė, atpažinimas, *déjà vu*, mitoistorija.

Santrauka

Alvio Hermanio *Tylos garsas* suteikia galimybę analizuoti *mitoistorinės rekonstrukcijos* idėją. Spektaklyje atkuriamas XX a. septintojo dešimtmečio hipių komunos arba pusiau legalios jaunimo bendruomenės gyvenimas. Tai daroma su savotiška filologine precizika, todėl *Tylos garsą* galima suvokti kaip istorinę reprodukciją, kaip sceninį ir nostalgišką 1968-ųjų atkūrimą, kai fikcija įrėmina istoriškai galimus įvykius. Tačiau Hermanis pateikia mus trikdančią užuo-

miną. Tai faktas, kad Simono ir Garfunkelio koncertas, kuris turėjo įvykti Rygoje 1968 metais, taip ir neįvyko. Taigi tai, ką matome scenoje, yra ne praeities rekonstrukcija, bet greičiau tarp daugybės autentiškų detalių ir vaizdinių, atkuriančių 1968-ųjų įkvėptas svajones, tarpstančią esminio grynumo netekusią alternatyvą. Hermanis iš tikrųjų atkuria ištisus epizodus iš *Absolvento*, *Holivudo pokylio* ir *Padidintos nuotraukos*. Tačiau tai, ką šios akivaizdžios citatos atskleidžia, yra apgaulė, nurodanti į atminties dviprasmiškumą: jos pomirtines rekonstrukcijas, jos (pseudo)-istorinius pavidalus ir fiktyvius siužetus.

Tylos garsas – tai spektaklis, sudarytas iš įvairios medžiagos, paimtos iš kino, mados, fotografijos ir muzikos. Scenoje šiais elementais sukuriamas šiuolaikinį mitą atspindintis reginys. Kitaip tariant, būtent mitas sudaro tikrąjį spektaklio turinį: tai tarsi mitinis šešėlių vaidinimas su 1968-ųjų kostiumais.

Tad žiūrovas pirmiausia atpažįsta atminties faktą; antra – jis atpažįsta, kad ši atmintis yra jo ar jos atmintis, ir kad tai – visų bendra atmintis, kaip bendras yra mito suvokimas. Tai žiūrovus trumpam suvienija kaip bendruomenę, spektaklio metu susibūrusią bendruomenę, kartu su kita – aktorių – bendruomene.

Atpažinimas čia būdingas žiūrovui: atpažindamas citatų šaltinius ir visą 1968-ųjų mitą, jis/ji suvokia, kad tai, ką vaidina aktoriai, nėra istorija apie „koncertą, kuris niekada neįvyko“. Tai, kas vaidinama, yra mitoistorija. Šis suvokimas nereiškia, kad spektaklis tampa bevertis, bet kad jį reikia vertinti pagal kitokią kritinę skalę, kuri nėra nei teatrinė, nei grynai istorinė, bet mitoistorinė: suvokimas, kad tai, ką matome, yra klaidinga istoriškai, bet teisinga kaip mitas.

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BETWEEN DRAMA AND EPIC: MEMORIES OF WORLD WAR II IN *GRANDFATHER* (2009) BY VILIS DAUDZIŅŠ AND ALVIS HERMANIS (THE NEW RIGA THEATRE)

Key words: theatrical epic, oral performance, construction, impersonation.

In the late 1980s, just before the fall of the Iron Curtain, the history of Latvia became an inexhaustible source of ideas and inspiration for the theatre. The recent socialist past was universally treated as a violently enforced mistake, while the pre-socialist political order obtained idealized contours. As attempts to reconstruct the conditions of the pre-socialist era began – the rebuilding of architectural monuments, the renaming of streets, and the renewal of different local cultural signs, as well as national and state symbols, such as the national flag, the national anthem, currency, army uniforms, etc., theatres also considered it their duty to confirm the regained sense of ethnic identity and to celebrate the glorious past of the nation; therefore, the attitude to history manifested by the theatre productions of that time was respectful and one-sided to a certain extent. They appealed to national self-confidence in a romantic way and revealed the insurmountable antagonism between the oppressed and the oppressors, but ignored the internal conflicts of both sides and the diversity of opinions.

At the beginning of the third millennium, the attitude to history has changed substantially. When turning to the past, theatres are no longer guided by the desire to confirm something in order to stabilize the relations of power or to reject something to protest against unacceptable conditions. The theatres are mainly guided by the desire to understand. The questions to which they try to find answers are the same. How does an individual use past events in order to stabilize the present? How is history reinterpreted? How is it manipulated and reinvented? What are the underlying causes of these processes, and how can they be communicated in the language of the theatre?

The one-man performance *Grandfather* played by Vilis Daudziņš, an actor and the author of the text, in the fully packed large hall of The New Riga Theatre since 16 January 2009 (directed by Alvis Hermanis), seems very simple at first glance. Its storyline is based on World War II – the grand historical event of the 20th century – which is presented in three stories of memories – three destinies compositionally arranged as the thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. This technique has been used countless times in order to create a stereoscopic effect in literature and art. The content of the memories does not give any startling revelations regarding the historical past either; it presents genre scenes rich in colourful detail including social symbols and mutually contradictory ideological clichés (Adolf Hitler was / was not a great man; the partisan fighters were / were not deported to Siberia; Vasily Kononov[1] is a criminal / hero; the Jews are victims / the architects of a global conspiracy, etc.).

This simplicity is misleading, though. The production is exquisite as a cloth the elegance of which does not need to be confirmed with the price tag of Hugo Boss or Valentino. At present, it is hard to imagine any other performance devoted to the

historical events of the 20th century in the Latvian theatre which could be equivalent to *Grandfather* in its artistic quality as a piece of original contemporary drama. The actor Vilis Daudziņš has prompted several important things to the writer Vilis Daudziņš, without which the impressive rhythm of the performance would be impossible: how to find a balance between comic and tragic scenes; how to use repetition in the performance; how to interchange the accelerated flow of inessential information with the decelerated grasp of significant moments; and how to use details with their enormous informative and generalizing potential. In the text, one can easily feel the skill of applying the particular ability of theatre art to express an abstract idea with a specific process and to achieve concreteness with a symbolic action. Besides, the literary material created by Vilis Daudziņš is not only skillfully constructed, but also modern as it enables us to get an insight into several histories instead of one. The three different versions highlight and comment on each other, showing both the complexity and contradictory nature of the collective past and the situational character of the truth.

Personally, I do not consider a one-man performance as the most attractive genre, as it always arouses suspicions about the shortage of the budget, filling gaps in the repertoire, or trying to escape unemployment. The gripping three-hour-long performance by Vilis Daudziņš dispels any suspicion at the very first moment. The actor shows us step by step how a personal wish and attempts to find his grandfather Augusts Savickis, unaccounted for since World War II, by accumulating information and the experience of searching, transforms into a super-personal performance with a broad panorama of the epoch and the artistic analysis of social regularities.

The artist Uģis Bērziņš has set up on the stage an ordinary room from a first-floor apartment in a block of flats, which at first sight reminds us of an improvised greenhouse belonging to an amateur gardener. There are bags of humus piled up in the middle of the room and boxes with vegetable and flower seedlings on the left and on the right. There are so many that it is hard to notice the furniture and other household objects, even though there is a desk and a chair on the left looming behind the lush leaves of an aspidistra, an old clock with a pendulum hanging on the wall next to the window, and also a wall-unit – the pride of a Soviet flat, the opening door of which makes one's gaze focus on brightly lit flowerpots. Outside, there is a grey day and the figures of passers-by behind the window partly covered by tomato plants. This is a single, unchanging space where each of the three characters in the performance will give preference to the cultivation of a certain plant and will create his own environment of memories, marking it by different objects, visual images, and sounds.

At the beginning of the performance, Vilis Daudziņš, dressed in a brown T-shirt and jeans, comes on the stage, calls out his name, switches on the projector on the forestage, and shows a couple of slides. The slides depict his grandfather, Augusts Savickis, alone and together with his grandmother – his mother at the age of two, and a car his grandfather worked on as a driver. The pictures stick to the white, slanting ceiling of the flat facing the audience. The ability of the photographs to serve as evidence is fascinating. This is a transcription of reality – an accurate registration of the real, which can take over the rights of reality. According to Susan Sontag, "Such images are indeed able to usurp reality because first of all a photograph is not only an image (as a painting is an image), an interpretation of the real; it is also a trace, something directly stenciled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask. While a painting, even one that meets photographic standards of resemblance, is never more than the stating of an interpretation, a photograph is never less than the registering of an emanation (light waves reflected by objects) – a material vestige of its subject in a way that no painting can be."[2] Making himself part of the performance and the photographs of his immediate family members as material evidence, Vilis Daudziņš makes us think, guess, and imagine what is hidden behind this visible surface.

Next come several versions of guesses. The actor meets three men whose surname is Savickis. Each of them might be Vilis Daudziņš' grandfather. But none of them actually is. There are three stories – three different experiences – the red partisan fighter

Donāts Savickis, born in the town of Balvi but now living in Ķengarags[3], who grows green onions, cucumbers, and tomatoes on his window sills; the former German legionnaire Rihards Savickis, who lives in Imanta[4] having returned from exile in the USA, who strives to force Michaelmas daisies into blossom in his wall-unit; and Pēteris Savickis, who managed to serve both in the German SS units and in the Red Army during World War II and now occupies himself by making moonshine and growing medicinal herbs. He tries to cure his body, while it is the soul that needs curing most.

The dress code of each is also characteristic and easy to read at a glance: one wearing a crude blue undershirt, the second one a checked leisure jacked, and the third one a white shirt. Each of them belongs to a certain social class and comes from a definite region, which can be judged from a slight accent and the place names mentioned in each story. The intention of Alvis Hermanis and Vilis Daudziņš is easy to understand. Within the context of the performance, the name Savickis substitutes for another name – Latvian. These three representative examples embrace the whole of Latvian society, periodically affected by changing political regimes that ruin the habitual order and confront essentially different world views.

The way the stories are organized shows that the past does not turn up itself; it is the result of construction and impersonation. The past is always determined by specific motives, expectations, hopes and goals, and it is always affected by the present as the point of reference. The person remembering something arranges the events and sees his/her role in them, partly following the facts and partly according to his/her own will and desire. Therefore, in all three stories of memories, the chronological perspective is less important than the psychological one. The chronological perspective is objective – it allows us to see more recent events and images brighter and more precisely, while more distant ones appear as faded and vague; on the other hand, from the psychological perspective, bright, detailed images correspond to those episodes in the past that are still topical and continue affecting an individual both emotionally and intellectually, while dull, generalized images refer to events with weak emotional and intellectual impact[5]. Thus, from the psychological perspective, the clarity and accuracy of memory images does not depend on the distance in time separating the actual event from the present. The length of the psychological impact of the event is much more essential, as well as the wish of an individual to forget or remember something.

All three Savickis' have engraved in their memory images related to the opposition the sky/the land. The blazing shells of the Russian *Katyushas* flying high in the air are as dear for the red partisan as is the sky cross-crossed by the round of the German V-2 missiles for the former legionnaire, while for Pēteris Savickis, having fought on both sides, it is the experience of flying in a glider. Remembering those episodes, the look of the narrator becomes rapturous; his eyes rise up, coming upon the ceiling – the white surface of the screen that can potentially take you to any space. But (not) for the three Savickises the sky has become empty.

Both concrete and symbolic activities also mark images connected with the land. The red partisan raises a box of seedlings to his ear remembering how he used to listen to the boom of the frozen land waiting for the approaching Russian army; he "digs out" his brother killed by the Germans from the same box. On returning from the USA, the former legionnaire uses a mine detector to find a wind generator he once hid in his own land. Remembering that the land turned out to be full of iron, he desperately stamps the bags of humus piled up on the floor, while Pēteris Savickis, remembering mine explosions, grabs handfuls of soil from the box and throws them up in the air.

Within the system of signs of this performance, the land transforms from the source of life into the symbol of extinction. Even the wall-unit with blossoming Michaelmas daisies begins to resemble a columbarium instead of a place aptly chosen for floricultural experiments. Associations with ashes and earth become increasingly stronger; finally, Vilis Daudziņš makes a grave mound from the bags of humus and the flower boxes at the end of the performance. This Requiem-like gesture, signifying

a society doomed to extinction, has something in common with the motives of the sinking Titanic used in the latest performance by Alvis Hermanis *Zilākalna Marta* (*Martha from Zilaiskalns*). In the present situation dominated by social and economic depression, an artistic prediction like this seems to be frightfully accurate. Still, there are not only Savickis in the performance. There is also Daudziņš (the actor's surname is derived from the word "daudz", which means *many, much, and numerous, plenty* in English.) At least from a linguistic point of view, it is a cause for optimism.

All three men are religious; they all talk with respect and reverence about their mothers and the holy words they taught them. They have all experienced both moments of elation and horror that they want to erase from their memory. The views and motivation guiding the narrators' actions are radically different, but the common organizational principles of the narrative and the common points of reference make all three life stories similar, creating an impression that these are actually three versions of one fate. The dominating psychological perspective emphasizes similarity in the structures of the narrative even more; the men do not try to make a coordinated and coherent story, as if trying to avoid depicting their life in a chronological way, following the line of purposeful progression. According to their experience, independence, planning, and predictability are nothing but appearance and illusion, which can be interrupted at any moment by events, the course of which one has no influence upon, like war and occupation. That is why the narrative is fragmented and narrator's position changes – sometimes he feels like a witness, sometimes like a victim, but hardly ever an active creator of his life. Paradoxically, this fragmentary narrative promoted by historical experience is very topical as it relates to postmodernism, which questions the idea of life as a purposefully directed progression and creates the mosaic-like composition of identity[6].

Nevertheless, it is not in the formal similarity with the post-modern view on man and life where the artistic modernity of this production should be sought. So far, the text of the article has focused on separate examination of the components of the performance. Such an approach, despite being routine and necessary for analysis, becomes artificial and even violent with regard to *Grandfather*, since the innovative character of the production lies in the fact that in Vilis Daudziņš's performance everything is linked together – authorship and performance, the language structure and meaning, and the plot and the characters. Like the authors of ancient epic poems, Vilis Daudziņš not only tells us what characters are doing; he speaks when they speak, and he cries when they cry. Both the scope of the project and the performance characteristic of the oral storytelling tradition impart epic qualities to *Grandfather*. Strictly speaking, an epic is a long, narrative poem on a serious topic narrated in a solemn, dignified style and focusing on the deeds of a hero on whom the fate of a tribe, a nation, or the whole mankind depends. Grandfather differs from this model, but the epic spirit of the production, its grand scope, as well as the deep human significance of the topic makes it related to an epic.

Notes

1 Vasily Kononov (Василий Макарович Кононов) – the former red partisan during World War II, a retired militia officer of Soviet Latvia; on 27 May 1944, his partisan brigade killed nine civilians, the inhabitants of the village Mazie Bati, as an act of revenge for their betrayal.

2 Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, London: Penguin Books, 1977, p. 154.

3 Kengarags – one of the Soviet-style residential areas in Riga.

4 Imanta – one of the Soviet-style residential areas in Riga.

5 See Наталья Брагина, *Память в языке и культуре* (*Memory in Language and Culture*), Москва: Языки славянских культур, 2007, pp. 129-135.

6 This similarity is thoroughly analysed by the scholar Baiba Bela in her study on oral history. See Baiba Bela, 'Stāsta dzīve valodā: naratīvās stratēģijas Latvijas un trimdas dzīvesstāstos' ('Narrative Strategies in Latvian Life Stories in Latvia and Exile') in: *Dzīvesstāsti: vēsture, kultūra, sabiedrība* (*Life Stories: History, Culture, Society*), Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Filozofijas un socioloģijas institūts, Nacionālā mutvārdu vēsture, pp. 15-33.

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Tarp dramos ir epo: antrojo pasaulinio karo prisiminimai Vilio Daudziņšo ir Alvio Hermanio (Naujasis Rygos teatras) spektaklyje *Senelis* (2009)

***Reikšminiai žodžiai**:* teatrinis epas, žodinis pasakojimas, konstrukcija, įkūnijimas.

Santrauka

Aristotelis epą laikė antru po tragedijos. Graikų teoretikui tragedija atrodė aukštesnė meno rūšis už epą dėl formos ekonomiškumo, koncentracijos ir vientisumo, nekalbant jau apie muziką ir reginį. Tačiau teatro istorijoje galima rasti daug pavyzdžių, kuriuose „draminė forma“ buvo užkrėsta „naratyvine“. XX a. trečiajame dešimtmetyje Bertoltas Brechtas, reaguodamas į itin emocingą ekspresionistų kūrybą, ėmė plėtoti naują sceninę formą ir sukūrė epinį teatrą, kuris rėmėsi ne tiek dramaturgine siužeto konstrukcija, kiek pasakojimu. Vokiečių dramaturgas ir režisierius siekė, kad teatras aprėptų tokį pat platų socialinį kontekstą, kaip epas.

Pirmasis XXI a. dešimtmetis taip pat pasižymėjo naujų teatro ir epo sąveikų paieškomis. Naujojo Rygos teatro spektaklis *Senelis* (2009), parašytas ir suvaidintas Vilio Daudziņšo ir režisuotas Alvio Hermanio, gali būti šių paieškų pavyzdys. Spektaklis ne tik papildo Antrojo Pasaulinio karo prisiminimų teatrinę reprezentaciją epiniais sprendimais, bet taip pat įveda žodinio pasakojimo technikas, kai rašymas ir vaidyba, kalbos struktūra ir reikšmė, siužetas ir personažai – viskas sumaišoma aktoriaus pasakojamoje istorijoje. Taigi vieninteliu žodinių pasakojimų, mitų ir prasimanymų saugotoju laikomas žmogus. *Senelis* šiuo atžvilgiu yra ne Bertolto Brechto epinio teatro, bet teatrinio epo pavyzdys.

Straipsnyje analizuojama, kaip epinės konvencijos ir žodinio pasakojimo technikos gali būti panaudojamos praeities prisiminimų inscenizacijoms.

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MEMORIES OF THE USSR IN ESTONIAN THEATRICAL REPRESENTATIONS

Key words: the USSR, Estonian drama and theatre, memories, theatrical representations.

One of the central issues in Estonian culture (especially in history books, biographies, literature, theatre and films) is the historical events and personal choices or destinies of Estonians during the World War II and shortly after. It is quite understandable, considering the tragedy, dramatism (dramatic potential) and fatality of the events: 1939 – the Soviet army invaded Estonia, 1941 – mass deportation, 1941 – the German army invaded Estonia, 1944 – the Soviet army invaded Estonia and it became a Soviet country for the next 47 years, guerilla war continued, 1949 – the second mass deportation. Thus, the events provide good historical material or background for works in the dramatic genre, offering extraordinary situations, sharp and versatile conflicts and tensions, strong emotions, etc.

These ten years, from 1939 to 1949, have been represented very differently in different discourses and at different times. The positivistic approach towards history, which was dominant in the official Soviet discourse, presented the facts and interpretations in light of the Truth – hegemonic and ideologically loaded Truth, of course. In this discourse a considerable turn towards multiplicity of voices had already appeared in the beginning of 1980s, at least in the field of arts, when some productions could tackle the abovementioned events through personal stories and subjective perspective, representing contra-interpretation to the official history. No wonder that the line became stronger and stronger in the end of the 1980s and in the beginning of 1990s in the context of *perestroika*. World War II and the following events have often been depicted by two archetypical story lines. The first shows an Estonian family with two or three sons, who are recruited to different inimical armies: Soviet, German, Finnish or to a group of irregulars. Sooner or later brothers meet on the front and face complicated ethical and practical problems. And the second storyline concerns deportation of people from their homes, a process where Estonians were actually involved in both parts. While the first plot was very popular during Soviet times and also afterwards, Stalinist mass deportations could be depicted on stage starting only from the end of the 1980s (Jaan Kruusvall's *The Parish House of Vaikuse* ("Vaikuse" in Estonian means silence) (1987) and Rein Saluri's *The Going* (1988), both staged by Mikk Mikiver). Both of these archetypical plots represent Estonians in roles of passive victims, who are manipulated by military powers and have no control over their destiny or have the possibility to choose only between bad and worse. Interestingly enough, the historical period has been a vital topic of discussions in scientific, media and art discourse up to today, as the article will also demonstrate. But this is not the main topic of current research, because here I am investigating traces of Soviet memories (i.e. what happened after 1949) in the theatre of independent Estonia (i.e. after 1991), i.e. how every-day Soviet reality is remembered, interpreted and depicted in new drama and theatre.

Ethnologist Ene Kõresaar, who has been investigating Estonian life stories and through it dynamics of social memory, has distinguished different phases in collective attitudes towards the Soviet past. From the end of the 1980s until the beginning of 1990s, revelation of hidden historical facts (so called *blank*) and the point of view of local people were dominant. Life under the Soviet occupation was interpreted as a period of disruption and abnormality, which has not inherited any valuable knowledge and experiences for new, capitalistic society. By the end of the century history had lost its importance in public discourse, thus the process of depolitisation of memory could start. Though the evaluation of the Soviet past is still open in the 21st century, public interest has moved from Soviet popular culture to everyday life and practices of that time.[1]

It is significant that in the 1990s the Soviet subject was very much at background in Estonian culture. There are at least two reasons or explanations for that. First, the Soviet environment and problems had surrounded people in life and in arts for decades, so the topic was exhausted. Second, the notion of Soviet people now carried strongly negative connotations, especially in contact and confrontation with the West. The relationship with the Soviet past can be called conscious neglecting or memory-loss. The situation started to change at the turn of the 21st century, when more and more people felt the need to express and discuss their experiences. Being scientifically strict, one notices that a "Soviet backdrop" was used here and there quite often, especially in productions about life-stories of famous cultural figures alive at that time. Some recent examples: Mart Kivastik's *Kits with a Violin and a Fishing Rod* (2006) about painter Elmar Kits, Andrus Kivirähk's *Voldemar* (2007) about director Voldemar Panso and *Emperor's Cook* (2008) about Friedebert Tuglas and other Estonian writers (all three based on diaries), Jaan Undusk's fantasy *Boulgakoff* (2008) about Mikhail Bulgakov, etc. Social background is definitely an important factor in an artist's life, especially when it concerns freedom of expression and censorship, but these mentioned features are more general and do not characterize only the Soviet system. Also, in the productions stress was laid more upon personal destinies than on society or system. But there are really only a few productions in contemporary Estonian theatre which have Soviet society and experiences at their core. And the few representations can be classified in the category of irony and mockery, or to another extreme – nostalgia and mystification. Following this argument and scale, I will analyse some recent productions of Estonian theatre.

Discussing memories of the USSR in Estonian theatre, one cannot disregard the works of Merle Karusoo (b. 1944). She has been practicing documentary or verbatim theatre since 1980. In 1999 Karusoo defended her MA thesis entitled *Not Included in the Mainstream*[2], where she interpreted her experience in documentary theatre. The title best describes her position in the Estonian theatrical and ideological fields, since Karusoo tends to tackle "uncomfortable" topics. *The Cranes Gone, Bad Weather* (1997) was based on interviews about Estonians' conception of love and sexual mores. The interviews were grouped according to the decades of the birth of speakers, thus temporal dynamics of love and sexuality among different generations was exposed. In spite of that, the material is not representative and does not allow wide generalizations. But it is easily noticeable that personal lives and lifestyles are strongly influenced by historical events and the general economic condition of society. In this respect, for many people, the collapse of the Soviet Union was emotionally almost as tragic as the World War II and following events. Also, historical distance seems to wipe away details and simplify situations, leading to an impression that society and human relations have been becoming more and more complicated. From a mnemonic perspective, life in the USSR seems poor but simple with alienated but rationalized human relations. But essentially, social context has a minor effect on love and sexuality.

Karusoo has staged several productions that represent "the silenced voices" of the negative heroes of Estonian history. *Deportation Men* (1999) was based on interviews with the persons who collaborated with Stalinist mass terror and took, sometimes voluntarily and sometimes by force, part in

the deportation, mostly as witnesses. The first act of the production is concentrated on the tragic events on the 24th and 25th of March 1949, contrasted with carefree round dances. In the second act, life during the following 50 years is described. Traumatic memory is selective and protective; the deportation men and women justify their collaborative actions in 1949 and later with the will to live and political pressure. "If you wanted to live, then you had to live […] Life had to go on."[3] Many of them joined the communist party, many of them made a career as much it was possible in given restricted conditions, where a lucky chance or a good friend was a more important factor than purposeful actions or personal talent. The most important aim was to provide a living for your family. It is significant that despite the seriousness of topics, both of Karusoo's productions were perceived as tragicomic. Partly the reception depended on presentation because Karusoo probably had the intention of lightening up some scenes in the generally depressive atmosphere. But partly the audience's *laughter* masked *embarrassment and uneasiness because characters and situations depicted created a lot of points for identification.*

Raimonds (2009), a production written and staged by Tiit Palu (b. 1970), tells the life-story of an Estonian woman Sirje, who was born on the same day as Latvian composer Raimonds Pauls, well-known all over the USSR – on the 12th of January 1936. Sirje is a generalization of the average/typical Soviet Estonian woman. As could be expected, she is also a victim of the war and mass deportation. Her life is presented by two storytellers and Sirje just fills blanks in the story, following their orders like a doll. Scenes from her relatively depressive life are combined with optimistic romantic melodies of Soviet pop songs by Raimonds Pauls. Theatre critic Andres Laasik commented on the production: "In this way the mechanism of Soviet mass culture is exposed, since many cultural products played an important role in society – to compensate for human values, which were missing in the real life of the people. [...] *Raimonds* tells a story of conformation without primitive condemnation."[4] The production also gives several insights into Soviet culture, explaining such phenomena as a literary court or communal flat. *Raimonds* can be labeled an ironic stylization of Soviet everyday life, with special interest in Soviet and national rhetoric, which are as hollow as the pop songs of Pauls. The ironic style of the production can be grasped also from some textual examples. "Sirje is still little, but she has already seen how meat jelly [central symbol of the play and Estonianess – A. S.] shows future times shivering from fright."[5] "And then Estonia became independent! Sirje felt she is completely free. All her savings were faded away."[6] In general, *Raimonds* represents Soviet society as ruthless, joyless, and even inhuman in living condition. Director Palu has admitted that the production is based on the personal experiences of his parents and grandparents. To my suspicion that the cynicism and disavowal of *Raimonds* may seriously hurt his family and the generations who lived most of their life in the USSR, Palu responded that he preferred to avoid any kind of pathos but could not find any other way of representing the Soviet experience.[7]

Probably the most important effort in summarizing Soviet experience is made by Andrus Kivirähk (b. 1970) with the play *The Sky-blue Carriage* (in print 2002, staged 2003 by Taago Tubin). The action of the play takes place at a birthday-party, where three middle-aged men (clerk, teacher and farmer) drink vodka and recall their childhood in the Soviet Union, being carried away by nostalgic memories of the lost universe. They represent the so-called winners' generation, whose identity is at least partly based on shared experiences: historical events (the death of Leonid Breznev in 1982), social rituals (workers' parades on Labor Day and the anniversary of October revolution), cultural products (Soviet cartoons and books) and dreams (about bananas and Disney-cartoons). When a retired neighbor comes to complain about the noise, they manage to convince his traumatized consciousness quite easily that Soviet times have returned and it is the middle of new deportations. There is also a representative of the younger generation – Sirts, who was already born into the free world, studied in USA and Great Britain as an exchange student, and is quite ignorant of Soviet times. Thus *The Sky-blue Carriage* analyses the influence of the socio-political and cultural changes of the 1990s upon the life-styles and

mentalities of different generations. Also the reception of the production drew a borderline between different generations, proceeding from different experiences and attitudes toward the depicted era. *The Sky-blue Carriage* freed the Soviet period from the island of oblivion and neglect, and rehabilitated it at least partly, also bringing to the fore some positive sides of the system.

One of the main characters of the play says: "We are from another century! From another, old, ended century! From another world, lost world, sank under water, from Atlantis!"[8] The phrase and the play are full of nostalgia for this lost world, but it is not so much the Soviet reality, which is missed, but childhood, which had to be spent in the USSR. It should be stressed that *The Sky-blue Carriage* is first of all a manifestation of the winners' generation, who acquired the most of advantages from collapse of the Soviet block. Their current position in society frees the nostalgia from reactionary connotations, bringing forth the search for the primary home[9] of identity. Fred Davis has stated: "Nostalgia is also a means of engendering a coherent and continuous identity as we remind ourselves in the present of who we were in the past. It is, then, one of the processes at hand for constructing, maintaining and reconstructing our identities."[10] Indrek criticises his colleague Leopold: "You are a strange person, Leopold. Actually, you are not like a person at all, you are like a UFO. Don't you have memory at all? Don't you have a brain in your head? Seems that you have there some kind of wires, some kind of computer, where you can delete fails randomly. It is old; it is not needed anymore. Push a button and – *tscahh* – deleted. Like you have not lived in the world where we did."[11] Drunk Leopold in reaction starts to tell his childhood memories and seems he really is from a strange galaxy. The play ends with Leopold flying over roofs. The ambivalent ending might just signal the delirium of the drunk, but it stresses also the element of mystification characteristic to the whole play and some other recent representations of Soviet times.[12]

The Death of a Communist (2007), written and staged by Hendrik Toompere jun. (b. 1965) is an absurdist play about Estonian guerilla fighters and communists in the end of 1940s. The poetics, subtitle of the play *1946-1949-2007* and some other motives allow the interpretation that the communists' arbitrary acts of violence have not ended yet. One of the main ideas of the action is the impossibility of killing a communist (or communism?), even though the guerilla fighters do it several times, but the communist Nikolai is revived again and again. The play ends with following phrase by Nikolai: "But to you, dear Estonian people, I suggest this. Lets make peace. Don't bear a grudge for long. Do you think when you keep all this that has been in your mind, then history will not recur. If you remember, then it recurs indeed. You must clear out your head. Then everything is new and wonderful. *Accordion music begins, everybody is dancing together.*"[13] Thus, in spite of the proclamations of Nikolai and many foreign politicians to make peace with the past, Soviet memories are like bad dreams, which keep returning like the dead communist, looking for different media and forms of appearance.

In 1987, playwright Rein Saluri confessed that Estonians lack temporal and mental distance, which allows smirking at tragic history: "It could be a time of the theatre of the absurd now, history has been proclaimed absurd. But imagine if I write an absurd farce about the year 1949, I would be killed. By both Stalinists and Estonian men."[14] Thus it took almost 60 years to affiliate the needed distance and courage – *The Death of a Communist* can be classified under the category of absurd drama because of the laconic dialog, repetitive empty phrases and dreamy surrealist atmosphere. But in spite of joyful mystification and playfulness, the production managed to awake some forgotten memories from the Soviet period and unconscious fear in audiences.

In conclusion, it must be admitted that the analysis of empirical material was quite surprising, especially the quantity of Soviet memories condensed in different plays and topics. Fifty years of history cannot be ignored easily. Still, the words "traumatic memory" in this context are not just a phrase of fashion, because there are many reasons why Soviet memories are disturbing. First, some of them reflect traumatic experiences (war, deportations, political repression, Soviet military service,

collapse of the USSR, etc.). Second, some of the memories were forbidden or repressed by ideology or self-censorship. Third, there is a lack of coherent or stable interpretation(s) of the memories. The latter has become especially evident because of the pluralism of democratic society and the emergence of post-positivist history discourse, both of which aim for representation of different social and cultural groups and their experiences in various social areas.

Some cultural theorists have doubted or neglected the possibility or reason for representing traumatic experiences in the arts, because aesthetic stylisation would transform and deform it into something coherent and tolerable. But trauma is an event that cannot be rationalized and therefore represented. Theodor W. Adorno's famous claim "After Auschwitz, it is no longer possible to write poems"[15] has become almost a proverb. Concerning the Soviet occupation, it is impossible to ignore or forget such a long period in people's lives and the country's history, therefore different ways for accepting and understanding the past should be found. The field of arts as a social playground and meeting room offers versatile forms and strategies for representation and reception, helping, through aesthetic frame and stylization, to create emotional distance, which is needed for contemplation of personal or strange experiences. We all have memories from the past which demand recycling and sharing.

Notes

1 Ene Kõresaar, *Elu ideoloogiad: kollektiivne mälu ja autobiograafiline minevikutõlgendus eestlaste elulugudes* (*Ideologies of Life*: *Collective Memory and Autobiographical Interpretation of the Past in Biographies of Estonians*), Tartu: Eesti Rahva Muuseum, 2005.

2 Merle Karusoo, *Põhisuunda mittekuuluv (Not Included in the Mainstream),* M.A. Thesis, Tallinn: Tallinna Pedagoogikaülikool, 1999.

3 Merle Karusoo, 'Küüdipoisid' ('Deportation Men') in: *Kui ruumid on täis. Eesti rahva elulood teatritekstides 1982-2005*, Tallinn: Varrak, 2008, p. 448.

4 Andres Laasik, 'Päikselised Raimondsi viisid ENSV hallis taevas' ('Sunny Melodies of Pauls in the Gray Sky of the Soviet Estonia'), in: *Eesti Päevaleht*, 10 March 2009, p. 11.

5 Tiit Palu, *Raimonds*, Manuscript, Estonian Theatre Agency, p. 9.

6 Ibid., p. 38.

7 Author's interview with Tiit Palu, 8 December 2009, Tallinn.

8 Andrus Kivirähk, 'Helesinine vagun' ('The Sky-blue Carriage') in: *Papagoide päevad*, Tallinn: Eesti Keele Sihtasutus, 2002, p. 246.

9 *Nóstos* is the Greek for "to return home", *algai* for "a painful condition", thus nostalgia means originally homesickness.

10 Fred Davis, 'Nostalgia, Identity and the Current Nostalgia Wave' in: *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1977, p. 419.

11 Andrus Kivirähk, 2002, p. 262.

12 For example Estonian documentary *Disco and Atomic war* (2009) by Jaak Kilmi ja Kiur Aarma follows the same line of nostalgia and mystification in depiction of influence of the Finnish television on Estonians in the USSR.

13 Hendrik Toompere jun., *Kommunisti surm (The Death of a Communist.) 1946-1949-2007*, Manuscript, Estonian Theatre Agency, p. 84.

14 Mikk Mikiver and Rein Saluri, 'Dialoog…' ('Dialogue…') in: *Teater. Muusika. Kino*, No. 9, 1987, p. 51.

15 Theodor W. Adorno, 'Metaphysics and Culture' in: *Negative Dialectics*, New York: Continuum, 1973, p. 362.

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SSRS atmintis Estijos teatrinėse reprezentacijose

Reikšminiai žodžiai: SSRS, Estijos drama ir teatras, prisiminimai, teatrinės reprezentacijos.

Santrauka

Antrojo Pasaulinio karo ir pirmųjų pokario metų (1939–1949) istoriniai įvykiai ir asmeninės žmonių istorijos yra itin svarbi tema Estijos kultūroje. Nesunku suprasti, kodėl šie tragiški, dramatiški, fatališki ir emocionalūs įvykiai labai mėgstami dramaturgų. Iki šiol šis istorinis laikotarpis yra svarbus mokslo, žiniasklaidos ir meno diskursų objektas.

Tačiau svarbiausias šio straipsnio tikslas yra išanalizuoti sovietmečio atminties (t.y. to, kas vyko po 1949 m.) ženklus nepriklausomybės laikų (po 1991-ųjų) Estijos teatre, t.y. ištyrinėti, kaip naujojoje dramaturgijoje ir teatre prisimenama, interpretuojama ir vaizduojama kasdienė sovietinė realybė. Reikia pažymėti, kad per paskutinį XX a. dešimtmetį sovietinė tematika Estijos kultūroje buvo tarsi antrame plane. Situacija ėmė keistis pačioje amžiaus pabaigoje, kai vis daugiau žmonių ėmė justi poreikį išreikšti ir kalbėtis apie savo patirtis. Atidžiai žvelgiant, sovietmečio fonas buvo matomas visą laiką tai vienur, tai kitur, ypač spektakliuose apie garsių to laikotarpio kultūros veikėjų gyvenimus. Tuo tarpu kūrinių, kuriuose sovietinė visuomenė ir patirtis taptų pagrindine apmąstymų tema, šiuolaikiniame Estijos teatre yra viso labo keletas. Vis dėlto net ir šiuos retus atvejus galime suklasifikuoti į dvi grupes: vieną – pasižyminčią ironija ir pašaipa, o kitą – priešingai – nostalgija ir mistifikacija. Remiantis šia perskyra, detaliau aptariami tokie pavyzdžiai: Merle Karusoo *verbatim* teatro spektakliai *Išskrido gervės, prastas oras* (1997) ir *Deportuotojai* (1999), Tiito Palu *Raimonds* (2009), Andruso Kivirähko pjesė *Žydrasis vagonas* (2003), pastatyta Taago Tubino ir Hendriko Toompereės jaunesniojo pavadinimu *Komunisto mirtis* (2007).

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RE-EVALUATING FINLAND ON TWO FINNISH STAGES

Key words: performing history, Paavo Haavikko, *Hitler's Umbrella*, Jari Juutinen, *I am Adolf Eichmann*, grotesque realism.

In this paper I will contrast two Finnish plays which "perform history". I will compare the performances of *Hitler's umbrella* and *I am Adolf Eichmann*. I evaluate the performances in terms of Freddie Rokem's concept of performing history. I try to find out how the plays create new relation to the past and how they allow the spectator to see the present in a new light.

Both plays deal with events of recent history. They use factual and documentary materials, and also draw some parallels to the present day. They also share similarities in structure and means. They were performed at relatively the same time. In addition there were many other Finnish premieres on similar historical subjects at the same time.

Neither of the plays portrays the Holocaust as such; so analysing these through the concept of the "fantastic", which Rokem uses would not be suitable. Instead, I am using the concept of the grotesque, which also has been used for analysing the experiences of war and totalitarian systems.[1]

Fantastic elements are, according to Rokem, used to address the incomprehensibility of the Shoah and also to show that such thing has taken place.[2] Also, the "upside down world" of grotesque realism functions as questioning the events and the hegemonic views.[3]

I will proceed by presenting the context of the performances and then proceed to the creation of a hyper-historian in the plays, followed by an example on the use of means of grotesque realism in the plays. Finally, I will define if and how the plays form new perspectives on the past and present.

A play by Jari Juutinen *I am Adolf Eichmann* tells the story of Eichmann and his trial. It portrays how he ended up conducting the trains to Auschwitz. The play can also be seen to act in accordance with the critique of the trial provided by Hannah Arendt in her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, questioning the banality of evil. The play's message draws more parallels to responsibility and morals in the contemporary world than merely in the past.

Hitler's umbrella is a play about the relations of Finland and Germany during the World War II. The play shows background to the intentions of the leaders and the progression of the war. The main events are meetings by Hitler and Commander-in-Chief of the Finnish army Mannerheim, who was later to become the president of Finland. The title of the play refers to an umbrella organisation, in which a larger organisation, in this case Hitler and his Germany, provides for smaller organisations. In Haavikko's play, this metaphor refers to Finland being under and provided by Hitler's umbrella.

Hitler's umbrella premiered in Helsinki City Theatre in February 2004, and with thirty performances it gained an audience of 7933.[4] The playwright Paavo Haavikko was an influential person in Finnish cultural life – a writer and a publisher of long standing. He had been granted the honorary title of

Academician. Many of Haavikko's plays cover different times and events in Finnish history. The play *Hitler's umbrella* gained a lot of interest in the media. Yet the critiques did not praise it much. They could be summarized with one of the headlines of the critiques: "Talking, talking, too much talking".[5]

I am Adolf Eichmann was performed in a small, independent, professional theatre in southern Finland. It premiered in late 2005, and with 31 performances gained an audience of 2643.[6] It was critiqued in more local and some political papers. The main Finnish newspaper *Helsinki News* wrote a pre-performance article on the 10th anniversary of the theatre.

As for its critiques, in my view, they seemed to grasp something meaningful in the themes of the play. Many of the titles played with the phrases from the play creating their own interpretations. For example, on the theme of guilt and innocence one of the titles questioned "who will throw the first stone".[7]

In the following I will study the formation of a hyper-historian in the plays. Rokem states that in performing history the actor becomes a so-called hyper-historian: a person who has witnessed an event from his own viewpoint and thus can witness and then retell the event.[8]

In *Hitler's umbrella* a hyper-historian is not created until the second act, in which Finnish characters appear. Commander-in-Chief of the Finnish army Mannerheim says that "the next scene will be a meeting with the president".[9]

His trusted man, Chief of General Staff Heinrichs, replies:

> "My position after that replique is clearer and stronger than ever. I am the first listener and interlocutor of the leader".[10]

In the creation of the hyper-historian, the actor draws the attention of the audience to the fact that theatrical representations frame events on stage. The character of Heinrichs breaks the world of the drama by mentioning the word "replique", thus making himself a hyper-historian – a witness. But I argue that the actor playing Heinrichs positions himself in relation to Mannerheim and his replique; Heinrichs is a witness of Mannerheim's words, but not so much a witness of events.

The same happens, I argue, to the audience; they are forced to take their position in relation to Mannerheim; they become more passive listeners than active witnesses of the events. This reinforces the hegemonic power structures, even if the constructed difference of the stage world and the audience world is articulated.

In *I am Adolf Eichmann*'s case, in the very beginning of the play the formation of a witness is portrayed very literally. As an actor appears on the side of the stage, he states that he is "Jussi Johnsson, a freelance actor from Helsinki". The actor tells about his own profession, and he even implicitly reveals the Brechtian alienation effect as he addresses the audience:

> "EICHMANN: This is somehow more real, isn't it… you know often in theatre when someone goes in from of others – like to that other side… then everything changes immediately into something made up and somehow terribly pretentious […]".[11]

The beginning monologue also forms a strong meta-narrative and a frame story. The script reveals that the lines are said by "EICHMANN" and not by the actor "as himself". The speaker is both a fictive Eichmann and a fictive actor Jussi Johnsson. The real actor does not only "witness" Eichmann but also himself.

This directs the story and its possible interpretations towards present time instead of staying put in an enclosed fictive past. Both time levels are very present through this hyper-historian; it enables the drawing of parallels and discovery of new sights on past events and present.

In the following I will examine scenes in both plays that contain grotesque realism. In grotesque realism, according to Bahtin, up and down mean a strict topography. Above are the faces and down below are genitalia, stomach and the behind. "Down casting" means making something part of the earth, it is something that both destroys and re-creates; the

images of eating, drinking, and genitalia are overstated, hyperbolic.[12]

In *Hitler's umbrella* the grotesque elements are related to eating and food. Hitler is portrayed as an uptight, neurotic eater with a meal of salad and sparkling water; Göring is an exuberant glutton of sausages and beer. A dinner scene between the two leading men portrays their corporeality and down casts them. Hitler and Göring are both made to look ridiculous. "Humour is in the gestures and facial expressions, especially apparent in Göring", one of the critiques asserts.[13] Hitler and Göring's carnivalistic dinner plays with the power structures, turning them upside down, revealing their constructed power for a while. But I argue that this is only to reinforce the hegemonic structures.

The performed eating habits of Hitler's character are also combined to the upper topography of grotesque realism: as he says, "I only eat green food and drink mineral water. This is why I suffer from too good a memory. Also my subordinates and generals have to suffer from my memory".[14] It is almost as if there was a connection from what he eats to his decisions and the sufferings he has caused. Similarly, the way actor presents Göring's table manners are meant to somehow explain Göring's character. Still, neither of these representations deduced to any actual cause or explanation of historical events.

As for Mannerheim, he is portrayed as a natural master of fine food, who in his knowledge looks down upon Hitler and Göring. The relation of power and food suggests here that the qualities of leadership are something intrinsically corporal – something to do with taste and digestion. The German's have bad taste and the Finnish leader has good taste. These representations do not question the hegemonic structures of power.

In comparison, I have chosen a scene in which Eichmann drinks a toast on joining the Nazi party. This gesture of a toast is to reinforce the bond between him and the national socialist. In the performance this ritual contains the elements of up and down topography, and uses them in a very grotesque manner as Eichmann is asked to drink a toast of urine.

> "EICHMANN SMELLS.
> This is urine.
> NATIONAL SOCIALIST 2:
> So it seems [...]
> EICHMANN
> You can't be serious –
> NATIONAL SOCIALIST 1:
> Well, the Freemasons have their rituals as well.
> NATIONAL SOCIALIST 2:
> Bottoms up
> EICHMANN SMELLS THE BOTTLE. STARTS TO DRINK.
> EICHMANN HAS DRUNK THE URINE. BACK PATTING. HE GETS A SWASTIKA ARM BAND."[15]

In grotesque realism, according to Bahtin, urine is both seen as down grading, and also, through the element of relief, urine turns fear into laughter.[16] The ritualistic toast of the performance becomes a corporal and earthly act. Additionally, the Nazis are playing a joke on Eichmann by making him drink urine – the scene can be seen to contain a comic element. But, as they force him to drink it, the scene is both ridiculous and filled with terror. It portrays the Nazi party in a very ambivalent light – questioning the motives of Eichmann's joining and the function of the party. In this scene the dichotomy of good/evil, decent/terror lose their hegemonic positions.

For my final point, I will contrast scenes from the very end of the performances and explain how they summarize the comparison of past and present.

In *Hitler's umbrella* the "insight" to past (and present) seems to be somewhat readymade, despite the use of some of carnivalistic and grotesque means – especially as the final scene ends with an image of a candle, the flag of Finland and, in the background, a classical piece called *Finlandia* composed Jean Sibelius playing. All of these, I would argue, are the strong nationalistic symbols of Finnish independence and nationality.

Like I already suggested, the hyper-historian in *Hitler's umbrella* is in relation to the chief of the

army. The last lines of the play reinforce this; the chief of the army says, "I begin to dictate".[17] In fact, the English translation portrays this more literally; in Finnish Mannerheim is merely "starting to verbally recount the events".

In my view, this is what they play has done all along; it has dictated a point of view on the Finnish past and Finnish present from above through Mannerheim. There are no alternative voices or views; the hegemonic idea of a strong leader is maintained, even if some means of grotesque realism are used, they may as well be for comic relief.

I am Adolf Eichmann, on the other hand, expands the views on past and present. A cacophonous ending scene does not give a conclusive view on the events.

In the scene, five actors step up and sit down at the front of the stage, lighting a candle. One of them tells of his experiences being transported to Auschwitz, another of organ robbery in South-America, the third about being a child labourer in China, the fourth of human trafficking and being forced to be a sex slave, and the fifth about the massacre of his town. Because everyone is speaking simultaneously, it is very difficult to make out the details of the testimonies; one can either hear one story or bits and pieces of all stories. This scene represents the difficulty of witnessing; each person – victim – has their own story, and it is impossible to grasp all of them.

In *I am Adolf Eichmann* the words depict the physical impossibility of witnessing, and understanding all the points of view of past events. At the same time the wall of sounds represents a formless reality which does contain all witnesses' accounts and stories. The audience member can choose his or her own interpretation of the past and present, but is at the same time faced with its constructedness. Also, as the witness accounts range from past to present, the views on guilt and innocence that have been present in the play are strongly extended to the present day.

I have aimed to show the similarities and differences between these two plays in terms of performing history. It seems to me, that *I am Adolf Eichmann* empowers the audience and gives them a possibility for diverse views, this is achieved both through use of a hyper-historian, witnesses and means of grotesque realism. Whereas, *Hitler's umbrella* leaves the audience in a more passive role of a listener, and narrows the view of the events down to one univocal story. As for my final note, I would say, that even if the plays are "performing history" on different levels, they are both part of the ongoing Finnish discourse understanding of Finnish past and present through the representation of the events of the World War II.

Notes

1 H. K. Riikonen, 'Groteskin käsitteestä Erich Auerbachilla' ('On Concept of Grotesque on Erich Auerbach') in: *Subliimi, groteski, ironia. Kirjallisuudentutkijain Seuran vuosikirja 52/1999* (*Sublime, Grotesque, Irony*), Helsinki: SKS, 2000, p. 39.

2 Freddie Rokem, *Performing History: Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000, p. 36.

3 Mihail Bahtin, *Franqois Rabelais keskiajan ja renessanssin nauru* (*Rabelais and His World*), Helsinki: Taifuuni, 1995, p. 11.

4 *Ilona teatterin esitystietokanta* (*Ilona Theatre Performance Database*), http://212.213.117.18/default_frameset.asp?CodeLanguage=fi [accessed 15 January, 2010].

5 Outi Lahtinen, 'Näköiskuvia sotahistoriasta' ('Graphic Pictures of War History'), in: *Turun Sanomat*, 6 February 2004.

6 *Ilona teatterin esitystietokanta* (*Ilona Theatre Performance Database*).

7 Ilkka Kuosmanen, 'Kuka heittää ensimmäisen kiven?' ('Who Will Throw the First Stone?'), in: *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat*, 5 November 2005.

8 Freddie Rokem, 2000, p. 9.

9 Paavo Haavikko, *Hitlerin sateenvarjo* (*Hitler's umbrella*), Helsinki: WSOY, 2004, p. 64.

10 Ibid.

11 Jari Juutinen, *I am Adolf Eichmann*, pp. 4-5.

12 Mihail Bahtin, 1995, p. 19.

13 Terhi Tarvainen, 'Salaisia keskusteluja historian varjosta' ('Secret Conversation From the Shadow of History'), in: *Uutispäivä Demari*, 4 March 2004, p. 19.

14 Paavo Haavikko, 2004, p. 48.

15 Jari Juutinen, *I am Adolf Eichmann*, p. 8.

16 Mihail Bahtin, 1995, p. 297.

17 Paavo Haavikko, 2004, p. 136.

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Naujas požiūris į Suomiją dviejuose spektakliuose

***Reikšminiai žodžiai**:* istorijos rekonstravimas, Paavo Haavikko, *Hitlerio skėtis*, Jari Juutinen, *Aš esu Adolfas Eichmannas*, groteskinis realizmas.

Santrauka

Šiame straipsnyje lyginami du suomių spektakliai, kuriuose rekonstruojama istorija – tai *Hitlerio skėtis* ir *Aš esu Adolfas Eichmannas*. Spektaklių elementai vertinami remiantis Freddie Rokemo apibrėžta sceninės istorijos rekonstrukcijos samprata ir groteskinio realizmo sąvoka, aprašyta Michailo Bachtino. Spektaklyje *Hitlerio skėtis* praeities (ir dabarties) vaizdas atrodo kiek nuvalkiotas ir hegemoniškas, išskyrus kai kurias groteskiškas detales. Tuo tarpu spektaklyje *Aš esu Adolfas Eichmannas,* kuriame panaudojami liudininkai ir grotesko elementai, gerokai išplečia praeities ir dabarties vaizdą.

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RECONSTRUCTIONS OF SACRAL HISTORY: MNEMONIC STRATEGIES IN LITHUANIAN RELIGIOUS THEATRE

Key words: sacral theatre, sacral history, theatre in monasteries, mnemonic strategies, memory metaphors, memory palace, identity.

The history of the search for God is inseparable from theatrical representations.

One of the most impressive pages of the theatrical collaboration of the Church and the secular in Lithuania is the baroque Jesuit theatre. In Lithuania, religious theatre was created by monks of different congregations; however, the conception of *Theatrum Mundi* was embodied in practice by Jesuit order. The baroque *Theatrum Mundi* revealed the world as a dramatic zone of light and darkness where man, directed by God, gets rid of primordial sin. The world of *Theatrum Mundi* required heroes, and the spirituality hardened in post-reformation conflict raised them; in baroque dramas, the heathen, warriors, antique heroes, inhabitants of Europe's peripheries, saints and martyrs were choosing the Kingdom of Heaven, and the trumpets of the Judgement Day were inspiring them.

Are these steps of religious theatre not reminiscent of stages of spiritual experience? Are theatrical manifestations to be related with meditation on God, which approaches us to His bright face? Perhaps the theatrical meditation of *Theatrum Mundi* may be perceived as spiritual practice during which aesthetic reality opens to us with beauty of an invisible world and opens a person for the contemplation of divine reality?

Another example of religious theatre uncloses when one touches the experience of sacral theatre of the second half of the twentieth century. Underground convents of the Soviet period Lithuania and Kaunas Interdiocesan Priest Seminary, which was controlled by the Soviet authorities, housed theatrical performances – a modest form of which, of course, did not measure up to the baroque Jesuit theatre; however, theatrical or theatricalised meditations on spiritual experience continued the practice of the perfection of the inner world of modern time *homo religioso*.

At the end of the twentieth century, the stage of the theatre of the Restored Independent Lithuania faced new challenges to freedom. Repressed during Soviet times, the memory of the religious theatre was rehabilitated in the theatre of religious communities and on the stage of professionals.

By surveying strategies of reconstruction and recollection, the present article introduces several examples of sacral theatre: the theatrical initiatives of Lithuanian Catholic communities in the course of creation of sacral performances in the underground theatre during the period of Soviet occupation and theatrical representations in the Kaunas Interdiocesan Priest Seminary and the post-Soviet Lithuanian Drama theatre. The aim of this presentation is to analyze mnemonic strategies in the Soviet-era Lithuanian underground religious theatre and post-Soviet-era religious performances at sacral locations. Comparisons are drawn between the mnemonic strategies of repetition and recollection.

In the present article, the reconstruction of the Soviet and post-Soviet sacral theatre is carried out

on the basis of broad contexts of theory and practice of religious theatre, which are presented while introducing impressive pages of the history of the sacral theatre in Lithuania. Interviews with the creators of performances, their participants and audiences supplement the sparse primary resources of the underground sacral theatre. The strategy of repetition and recollection is related with the experience of baroque Jesuit theatre. The tradition of continuity in the religious theatre is analysed building on the book *Art of Memory* by Frances A. Yates, whereas the concept of memory palace, which explains the strategies and intentions of the creation of sacral theatre, has been created after having gotten acquainted with the Jesuit Mattteo Ricci's idea of memory palace.[1]

THEATRUM MUNDI AS PALACE OF MEMORY

Theatrum Mundi repetition and recollection strategies were born from the theory and practice of the sacral play in Jesuit baroque theatre; they have revealed the essential *mise-en-scène* of sacral theatre – the sphere of the sacral and secular is the human who comprehends him/herself to be in the sight of God. The features of Jesuit drama and peculiarity of acting in Jesuit theatre are presented and discussed in the works researching the poetics of theatre and literature by authors like Motiejus Kazimieras Sarbievijus, Jacob Pontanus and Francis Lang.[2]

Sacral performances, with reference to these abovementioned theoreticians, had to motivate the college pupil to nurture their spirit by transforming their life into a striving for redemption and a devotional voyage to the kingdom of God and Jesus Christ.

The source of the spiritual training method is the book *Spiritual Exercises* by St. Ignatius of Loyola. In this book, published in 1583, not only the spiritual style and method appears. It also highlights the self-atoning man.[3]

The acting method applied to the baroque Jesuit theatre was based on the recollection strategy there, so the creation of the characters recalled a man rebuilding his soul during spiritual practice.

Only having cognized the manner of emoting in a performance of the actor of Jesuit theatre, as well as his strategies of performance, can we reconstruct the lost world of Jesuit baroque theatre and also touch the peculiarity of this theatre, which was intended for the cultivation of a person who lives for God's greater honour.

Are the rules of *Spiritual Exercises*, which were meant for recognition of spirits, not the rules for the ministry of a *Theatrum Mundi* participant? How would he succeed in participating in a dramatic and perfectly personified fight of good and evil, which pervaded the tempestuous world of baroque drama, if, in the course of learning, there had not been such practice of recognition of the spirits that act within a human being?

Certainly, the text of *Spiritual Exercises* is not immediately intended for an actor. However, the concept of contemplative act, which penetrates the whole text of *Exercises*, explains contradictions observed by Prof. V. Zaborskaitė between epitomizing acting, which makes an interior act an exterior one, because "[…] there is a lack of the material individualizing a drama character", and the necessity to recognize characters as well as "Gods and allegorizing figures".[4]

May it be that the participant of a theatricalised holy procession, dressed in costumes of personages of the Old and New Testaments, symbolizes the universality of *Theatrum Mundi*, although by doing this he is not an acting statist, but a manifestation of divine love?

In the text of *Exercises*, St. Ignatius frequently refers to the requirement of repetition. The latter will be applied to the whole educative Jesuit activity. It is not just experience that is being acquired through repetition. Through repetition one hardens one's soul, since there one tries out the discovered insight. Through repetition one also sharpens one's memory, volition and mind.

Let us now open the pages of the procession playbill of the God's Body feast chronicled in 1624 by the "Jesuit academicians".[5]

There we can find the strategy of restoring the "six fold shrine of God and His people". In that shrine, the visible material world gets enriched by the invisible realm: timeless and limitless (eternal and

boundless) Universal World is created – stage design for *Theatrum Mundi*.

The goal of the reconstruction of the shrine of God and man is to recreate universal, with regard to time and place, decorations of *Theatrum Mundi* – the holy place of the meeting with supernatural reality. At the recreated place, personages of the Old and New Testaments, aided by numerous allegorical figures, are engaged in action. The shrine is being created in the six parts of the processional act.

The first part of the processional programme exposes *The God's Throne* in the Sun or the earthly world.

In the course of the next part, actors and spectators learned the rules of spiritual journey and discovered the Spirit of the Ark of the Covenant.

The third part of the processional act presents the meditation of the revelation to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the meditation of God's love.

The fourth part of the procession accentuates Christ. The meditation of His sacrifice moves the participant of the processional act to *The God's Throne*. Through the Holy sacrament, in the form of bread and wine, Christ, the Saviour of the world, dwelling in a church in the sacramental form, changes the human reality into a divine one.

The fifth part of the programme is devoted to God's Love, which craves human wisdom.

In the sixth part, the participants of the procession, followed by saints, martyrs and Jesuit brothers, find their way to the New Jerusalem, "which has come down out of Heaven from God" and which was revealed to St. John in his prophetic visions. Consoled and calmed, the participants of the procession leave *Theatrum Sacrum*. The mnemonic processes are finished; the playwrights, directors, and actors of Jesuit theatre unfold the world full of God's presence.

In what way can the creation of these images of the supernatural world be explained? While searching for an answer to this question, let us refer to the English poet and philosopher Frances Yates: "[...] the object of our research is not familiar to most readers. Few know that Greeks, who are creators of the most part of arts, also created the art of memory, which was transferred to Romans and thus became a tradition of Europe. This art of memory is grounded on the technique of eternalizing of places (*loci*) and images. Most frequently this technique was qualified as a "mnemotechnique"."[6]

Images which repeat the symbols and metaphors of God's throne turn the world of *Theatrum Mundi* into the *Palace of Memory.*

THE UNDERGROUND MEMORY THEATRE

Let us open the page of the Soviet-era religious theatre. Let us create an overview the theatrical activities which took place in Lithuanian underground convents and the Kaunas Interdiocesan Seminary at that time.

The Lithuanian Catholic community had been spurred into spiritual resistance by the restrictions which the Soviet occupation government had imposed upon the Seminary – the admissions quota, the KGB-controlled selection of seminarians and teachers, the constant reduction of the number of students, and the ban on catechization and open proselytizing to the laity by the clergy, seminarians and monks.

Extant scripts from those years look very much like *samizdat* publications – typewritten texts on thin paper, which were often anonymous. It was dangerous to declare their authorship, and likewise, to photograph their performers.

The titles were *The Flight into Egypt*, *The Prodigal Son*, *The Sacrifice of Abraham*, etc., and the plays were Biblical events related in verse.[7]

One can only imagine in what an unusual way evangelic place names, events and images read in the Soviet space. In order to repeat them in a secular environment, under the conditions of repressed religious memory, one required not just one's courage, but also a deep faith. The meaning of efforts of this repetition is explained by *Frances* Yates in his book *The Art of Memory*: "The well-known role of repetition in the common process of memorization of course plays a role in the more complex techniques of the art of memory. The earliest of the references

to the art of memory, the *Dialexis*, mentioned above, makes this clear, repeat again what you hear; for by often hearing and saying the same things, what you have learned comes complete into your memory."[8] Underground performances repeated the experience of *Theatrum Mundi*; the world was being revived by reminding it of supernatural reality.

Sacral performances at Lithuanian Soviet-era clandestine monasteries mostly featured evangelical plots.

Religious festivals were held behind shaded windows in secret quarters of underground convents, and lookouts were set up on nearby streets during religious performances to shield them from KGB prosecutors. Therefore, not only outlying places, but also those especially secret ones were chosen for performances.

The Small Sisters of Providence Congregation did some creative and courageous work. In Velžis, they staged puppet shows, used elements of pantomime in their acting, performed in unexpected scenic spaces, e.g., under the vaults of a church basement or in a convent courtyard.

Their production *To Carmel* was performed outdoors, where Mount Carmel would become a hillock in a Lithuanian landscape. In their enactment of *Faith, Hope, Love*, these notions were personified, and their content was meditated upon by means of scenic action.[9]

In the seventies, in Kybartai, Onutė Šarakauskaitė and Bernadeta Mališkaitė of the Sisters of the Eucharist Jesus Congregation got some encouragement from Reverend Sigitas Tamkevičius and carried out their work among the Church youth without paying any heed to prohibitions.[10]

Their productions, initially performed in a church chapel and a convent garden, reached the Kybartai House of Culture in 1987 and the hall of the Kaunas Jesuit High School in 1992.

From 1990 to 1992, the following productions were performed in the chapel of Kybartai Church: *Irka's Tragedy* by Šatrijos Ragana, *The Underwood* by Kazys Binkis, *Birutė* by Maironis, *The Mushroom War* by Justinas Marcinkevičiaus, *The Ruler* by Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas, *The Happy Prince* by Oscar Wilde, and a few poetic performances on the love for Motherland.[11]

The homeland in these performances would become a holy place where from the earliest times one has lived and dreamt, loved and suffered. In the holy place of homeland, the eternal human being was being created, the one who would be capable of uniting past and future. As a result, in theatrical representations of the homeland as a holy place, time would turn into ritual or the sacral.

The Small Sisters of Providence Congregation in Kaunas and Vilnius staged Richard Bach's *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, while sister Birutė Širvinskaitė (OSB) mentions Thornton Wilder's *The Long Christmas Dinner*, and sister Virginija (OSF) wrote and staged her original composition based on Antanas Maceina's *The Sun Song*.[12]

During the Lithuanian Soviet-era, paratheatrical spectacles predominated at the Kaunas Interdiocesan Seminary. In a closed circle, anniversaries of the canonization of St. Casimir, St. Francis, St. Thomas, and St. Cecilia were modestly commemorated, and the festivals of the Solemnity of Christ the King and the Immaculate Conception of Holy Virgin Mary were celebrated.[13]

An exceptional event in terms of attempts at sacral theatre was the 1984 commemoration of St. Casimir's at the Interdiocesan Seminary, in the course of which a literary composition was performed and a historic page of Lithuania's life was brought back to its cultural memory.

The procession of St. Casimir's canonisation, which had taken place 10 May 1604, in Vilnius, and during which "the purple vestment and the linen cloth had rejoiced together", was re-enacted in the occupied twentieth-century Lithuania – complete with canon Grigalius Sventickas bringing from Rome the gift from Pope Clement VIII – St. Casimir's flag – and presenting it to the Grand Chancellor of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Leonas Sapiega.[14]

When deacons in dalmatics carry the flag into the Seminary Hall, a chorus of seminarians recites and re-enacts the historical procession as it is greeted at the Gates of Dawn, at St. Stephen's Church, and

at the Vilnius University with symbols of virtues (Prudence, Restraint, Fortitude, etc.) and scholarship (Theology, Philosophy, Philology).

The action culminates in a prayer addressed to St. Casimir in which "history meets the present and the Seminary's here-and-now".[15]

The participants of paratheatrical acts (such as religious performances, *tableaux vivants*, etc., staged by the initiative of various church institutions) never attempted to create professional theatrical images and characters. The performers – church youth, nuns and other parishioners rather strived to cultivate the inner experience of active and live *homo religioso*. Again and again, while performing old religious stories "that had been polished by thousands lips", they became participants of small recollections which directed them toward Divine reality.

Participants of performances make mention of a communal spirit of performances. Young people were learning to recognize Christ in surrounding people, their environment and peripeteias of history. In the most modest manifestations of sacral theatre, actors in amateur theatre productions, overcoming prohibitions and the sparseness of the means of theatrical expression, as well as their timidity and imperfection, resembled the sacrifice and the one who sacrifices, for the sacral theatre of the Soviet period induced and prepared man for the meeting with the neglected Christ. Organizers of sacral performances during Soviet times not only evangelized to the young, but also brought participants of sacral theatre back to *Theatrum Mundi*, where recollections of the repressed memory were celebrated.

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF *THEATRUM MUNDI* IN THE POST-SOVIET THEATRE

In the contemporary Lithuanian theatre the world of *Theatrum Mundi* is reconstructed in a number of performances.

The world consecrated to God (*Theatrum Mundi*) is being re-created in allegorical scenes of pilgrims in Šiluva, theatrical representations of the participants of the Eucharistic Congress in Kaunas, performances based on Biblical events and plots created by laymen in various parishes, St. Matthew school theatre in Kaunas' *Tales of the Millennium* (directed by Tomas Erbrėderis) as well as staged stories of vocations at the houses of monks.

Let us choose several stagings where a holy place is cited or performances choose premises which, according to Yeats, will be capable of accommodating recollections and, by means of the mnemotechnique and through repetition of the place and images, becoming the Palace of Memory.

The reconstruction of *Theatrum Mundi* in the contemporary Lithuanian professional theatre is based on the metaphor of the flight to God's dwelling.

The flight to a sacral locus within the space of theatrical performance is the predominant sacral motif in the following productions: *The Fire-Proof City* (directed by Kęstutis Jakštas), *Idiot's Mass* (directed by Rolandas Atkočiūnas), and *Crime and Punishment* (directed by Gintaras Varnas). In the course of researching the epistemological aspect of the process of sacralisation of theatrical space and interpreting symbols of its sacral locus, it is possible to discern a metatheatrical tendency – soul-training strategies.

Representation of the sacred locus within the space of theatrical performances is a predominant sacral motif in represented productions. A sacred locus is identified here with a temple in which performance is enacted, or with its images conjured of the space of enactment inside of a theatre building.

In the course of researching the epistemological aspect of the process of sacralisation of theatrical space and interpreting its temple symbols, it is possible to discern a metatheatrical tendency. Here performance serves as an occasion for a discourse on phenomena of soul, an invitation to a dialogue between God and human.

The performance by the director Algimantas Armonas *The Massacre of Kražiai* narrates an impressive historical drama of the confession of faith: on 24 December 1892, the Tsar's authorities closed the Benedictine convent. They also meant to close Kražiai Church of the Immaculate Conception of St. Virgin Mary and to destroy the cemetery. The congregation requested the governor-general

to make it into the parish church (instead of the wooden St. Michael Church; they also requested to allow them to transform the latter into a cemetery chapel). On 22 June 1893, Tsar Alexander III, disregarded the requests and ordered the demolition of both the church and convent. The people prevented the closure of the church and watched it constantly. In November, in the churchyard, the massacre of Kražiai happened; the deaths of believers, injuries, imprisonment and exile marked this tragedy of the confession of faith.

On the stage of the theatre, the image of an altar is chosen as a symbol of faith. The altar by Kražiai inhabitants is identified not only with a real but also with a spiritual home. An act which symbolizes the destruction of this home is imaged as the trampling of the Holy sacrament, which is beaming in the altar's glory, by tsarist Cossacks. The whole performance is accompanied by songs of mourning for the dead, which are sung in an archaic manner. This spectacle could be called the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. Upon such an unexpected juxtaposition of an evangelical and historical event, Kražiai turns into a sacred place.

The performance *Tales of the Millennium* by theatre amateurs – the theatre of the community of Kaunas School of St. Matthew – was also performed in the proximity of the altar. The performance was held in the Kaunas Jesuit Church of St. Xavier. An original scenario recreates images of the New Testament; biblical events are retold in a visual and metaphoric theatre language by choosing for their representation metaphors of memory from the history of sacral theatre. The star of Bethlehem is glistening like an oil lamp in a homestead of an archaic Lithuanian village; child murderers, sent by Herod, like antique colossuses step firmly onto the floor of the church demonstrating their force; the Virgin Mary leans towards the baby; Christ's pupils are already ambling around in waiting for their teacher; the cloth is being laid for the Last Supper; and again and again the cross of Golgotha is hammered.

In the performance, one is suggested to meditate on the phenomenon of the recurrence of sacral history. Sacral history is metaphorized here by comparing it with the shroud of Turin. The action of the performance enables one to compare in the imagination time and space and to turn them into the present day. In the hands of actors, the shroud from the manger of the Bethlehem stable in the performance will turn into the tablecloth of the Last Supper and the cross of Golgotha and Christ's cerements and the wings of the angels proclaiming the Resurrection. The director Tomas Erbrėderis, together with a group of actors, has invited his audience to reconsider the meaning of the theatrical recurrences of sacral history. By retelling sacral events and returning them again and again into new places of memory, we become creators of history as art of memory as it was then – at the dawn of Catholic theatre – and as it is now – in histories of a new millennium, in which we recognize *Theatrum Mundi*.

CONCLUSIONS

The reconstruction of *Theatrum Mundi* in Lithuanian theatre is based on the mnemonic strategy of the spiritual flight to God's dwelling.

The manifestations of the mnemonic strategy in theatre theory and theatre productions *are* emphasized as the leading aspect characteristic of the search for religious identity.

A meta-theatrical representation based on metaphors of memory is created in the re-enacted, remembered and repeated world of *Theatrum Mundi*.

In the course of the present analysis the sacral theatre is treated as *a theatre of memory*, the mnemonic strategies of which represent the transformation of repetition into recollection.

Sacral history, re-enacted as a Memory Palace, is considered to be the main narrative of the sacral theatre in terms of reconstruction of sacred images, symbols and concepts.

Notes

[1] Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, New York: Viking Penguin, 1984.

[2] Laszlo Polgar, *Bibliographie sur l'historie de la compagnie de Jesus* (*Bibliography for History of The Society of Jesus*), Rome: Institutum Historicum S. J., 1983, pp. 396-399.

[3] Ignacas Lojola, *Autobiografija. Dvasinės pratybos* (*Autobiography. Spiritual Exercises*), Vilnius: Aidai, 1998, pp. 95-107.

[4] Vanda Zaborskaitė, *Prie Lietuvos teatro ištakų* (*At the Lithuanian Theatre Sources*), Vilnius: Mokslas, 1981, p. 166.

[5] Alodia Kawecka-Gryczowa (ed.), *Dramat staropolski od początków do powstania sceny narodowej. Bibliografia. Programy drukiem wydane do r. 1765* (*Old Polish Drama from the Beginning to National Theatre. Bibliography. Playbills in Print until 1765*), Vol. 2, Wrocław: Polska Akademia Nauk, 1976, p. 29.

[6] Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory*, London: Pimlico, 2001, p. 26.

[7] Handwritten texts of plays are stored in the archives of Franciscan Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus, the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blest Virgin Mary of the Poor, the Smaller Sisters God's Providence, the Congregation of the Sisters of the Eucharist Jesus, the Sisters of Holy family monasteries.

[8] Frances A. Yates, 2001, p. 142.

[9] The Smaller Sister's God's Providence responses to the questionnaire form "The Monastic Theatrical Activity in Soviet Lithuania". The form compiled by Vitalija Truskauskaitė, 15 March 1998, Kaunas.

[10] The Sister's of the Eucharist Jesus responses to the questionnaire form "The Monastic Theatrical Activity in Soviet Lithuania". The form compiled by Vitalija Truskauskaitė, 15 March 1998, Kaunas.

[11] Author's interview with an actor Arūnas Žemaitaitis, 15 May 2005, Kaunas.

[12] The Small Sisters of Providence responses to the questionnaire form "The Monastic Theatrical Activity in Soviet Lithuania". The form compiled by Vitalija Truskauskaitė, 15 March 1998, Kaunas.

[13] Author's interview with a priest Gintaras Vitkus, 5 February 1998, Kaunas.

[14] Author's interview with a priest Vytautas Sidaras, 16 January 1998, Kaunas.

[15] The sound recording of St. Casimir's celebration is stored in personal archive of priest Algimantas Vincas Kajackas.

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Sakralinės istorijos rekonstrukcijos: mnemoninės strategijos Lietuvos religiniame teatre

Reikšminiai žodžiai: sakralinis teatras, sakralinė istorija, teatras vienuolijose, bendruomenių teatras, atminties metaforos, atminties rūmai, skrydžio metaforos, tapatybė.

Santrauka

Straipsnyje pristatomas atminties teatro fenomenas: religinis teatras interpretuojamas kaip *atminties rūmai*, kuriuose atkuriami ir pakartojami sakraliniai vaizdiniai ir siužetai, kuriamos jų teatrinio įprasminimo strategijos, atnaujinama ir atgaivinama šiuolaikinio žmogaus krikščioniška tapatybė.

Religinio teatro fenomenas pristatomas su plačiu teoriniu kontekstu. Lyginant jėzuitų baroko teatre susiformavusią *theatrum mundi* koncepciją su Franceso Yateso atminties teatro teorija, išskiriama atsiminimų teatralizacijos strategijos: atminties rūmų konceptas kuriamas pakartojant šventos vietos, evangelinio siužeto įvykius ar personažo charakterius ir išsaugant juos kaip atminties metaforas. Lyginant XVII a. jėzuitų spektaklį *Dievo ir žmonių padangtė* su šiuolaikiniais pastatymais Lietuvos sovietiniame ir posovietiniame, profesionaliame ir mėgėjų teatre, atskleidžiamos sielos skrydžio į Dievo namus metaforos.

Rekonstruojant, prisimenant, įsimenant ir pakartojant religiniame teatre Dievo surežisuotą *theatrum mundi* pasaulį kuriama metateatrinė reprezentacija, kurioje dominuoja atminties apie žmogaus ir Dievo dialogą metaforos. Todėl pakartojimo ir prisiminimų strategijų Lietuvos religiniame teatre tikslas – atkurti žmogaus ir Dievo dialogą ir reprezentuoti jį kaip *atminties rūmus*, kuriuose kuriama krikščioniška tapatybė.

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(RE)MAPPING THE PAST: SIGNS AND SITES OF MEMORY

PRAEITIES ŽYMĖJIMAS: ATMINTIS, ŽENKLAI, VIETOS

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REMEMBERING THE UNREMEMBERABLE – THE *HARBURG MONUMENT AGAINST FASCISM* (JOCHEN AND ESTHER SHALEV GERZ, 2009)

Key words: monument, memorial, fascism, racism, graffiti, public-memory.

A visitor to Harburg (a suburb of Hamburg) seeking the *Mahnmal gegen Faschismus* (Monument Against Fascism) by Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev Gerz will find no more than an informative plaque – a text explaining the project and nine small images of its realisation. The plaque is situated next to a shaft, into which the monument, a column faced with lead sheeting, was progressively sunk in eight stages during the six years of its realisation between 10th October 1986 and 10th November 1993. Above, there is an empty plaza. This is not so much an absence in place of a monument, but more an empty place as monument, corresponding to the lack of place which this history – the history of fascism – had in German post-war public discourse. The column itself is as buried in its shaft, and will remain there, to recall the burying, so to speak, of the history it sought to represent. Today, as members of the generation which participated in fascism have for the most part died, memories of that period are more admissible to public debate. Distance in time allows renewed attention, safely beyond the scope of living memory, reliant on the excavation of the few texts written of the time, or of the material contained – buried, as it were – in such archives as survive.

The explicit subject-matter of the monument is fascism, as dominated Germany from 1933 to 1945. But the context of Hamburg is of particular interest for other reasons. It is a city undergoing redevelopment today, trading on an older history as a port in the Hanseatic League; and it was, in July 1943[1], the site of area bombing, in which the old city centre was completely destroyed. Memories of fascism are inevitably inflected by this history of extreme destruction, and the ambivalence of responsibility and victim status implicit in its remembrance.

THE MONUMENT

The *Monument Against Fascism* was commissioned by the municipality of Harburg-Hamburg after lengthy debate and a public hearing at which the artists were selected.

It is sited near the *S-Bahn* station and a shopping precinct, hence in a site with a high level of public use. Such an intervention, with its uncomfortable historical references, might have been expected to arouse controversy. It takes the form of a twelve-metre high, one-metre square column, weighing seven (metric) tons, faced in lead sheeting. As well as the column, there were two styluses made in steel with which members of the public were invited to sign the monument, as endorsement of its purpose. The invitation stated:

> "We invite the citizens of Harburg, and visitors to the town, to add their names here next to ours. In doing so we commit ourselves to remain vigilant. As more and more names cover this 12-metre tall lead column, it will gradually be lowered into the ground. One day it will have disappeared completely, and the site will be empty. In the end it is only we ourselves who can stand up against injustice."[2]

As an area was filled, the monument was lowered into its shaft to allow a clear space for further endorsement.

THE PASTS REFERENCED

To be clear, this is not a memorial to the victims of fascism; it is a monument *against* fascism, located in the present (the mid 1980s onwards) and not in the past to which it relates. That past is seen through the window of the present, of the moment in which the monument appeared – arousing controversy beyond the artists' expectation. If the monument's implied meaning is that fascism should not return and that such a return is prevented by agency of the publics endorsing the monument, still vigilant, in a Europe of migrations and contested urban identities and rights to space, this proved more problematic than at first imagined. Yet in seeking vigilance against the return of fascism the monument is inevitably a reminder of that history which a generation of Germans worked so hard mentally to forget, and which was replaced by the post-war rebuilding of the city.

It seems more difficult to find appropriate signs, or to issue appropriate invitations, for present vigilance than to mark the histories of victims. The latter tends to generalising abstraction but the former requires an uncomfortable recognition that many ordinary Germans were complicit, even active in, the rise of fascism in the 1930s, and in anti-semitism. As an industrialised machine for the annihilation of difference, the fascist state required management by an elite (often given to mysticism). It also required operation at all levels and on a daily basis; this included, for example, the drafting of schedules for trains to

Fig. 1. Jochen Gerz, Monument Against Fascism, Harburg. 1986. Photo: from the artist's archive

Auschwitz, provision of crews for such trains, normal signalling arrangements, and the use of normal tracks and stations along the route eastwards (and for the empty return westwards). Mass participation in fascism is the buried history to which the buried monument alludes. It was a real history which did not immediately go away after 1945.[3] But it has little presence in German post-war literature. As W. G. Sebald writes on responses to his lectures on the bombing of German cites in the 1940s, "[…] if those born after the war were to rely solely on the testimony of writers, they would scarcely be able to form any idea of the extent, nature and consequences of the catastrophe […]".[4] Sebald references area bombing, but argues that the lack of literature on it reflects not only an absence of precise accounts from refugees who were too traumatised to give them, but also on an ambivalence in as much as to remember the bombing is to remember the war in which it occurred, and the role of the fascist state in producing it. Sebald writes, "The quasi-natural reflex, engendered by feeling of shame and a wish

to defy the victors, was to keep quiet and look the other way."[5] Or, as Hans Erich Nossack writes, "Since we no longer believe in ourselves, what are we still? Hollowed out by a night of depravity. So let's not speak of upright gait and creating!"[6] Having said all this, it should be noted in context that Harburg, as a suburb, was bombed only once while the city centre was erased.[7]

The linked histories of fascism and the war are more easily investigated today, when, for instance, a person who was 20 when Hitler came to power in 1933 would be 97 (at the time of publication) or 90 when the monument in Harburg was completed by its disappearance underground. Present-day Germans are not responsible for the actions of their grandparents, and have realised they do not need to be. But a generational shift is not the only change in the conditions in which the monument is received. Another factor acts to draw a line under the pasts of destruction, war and fascism. The Berlin Wall was dismantled three years after the monument first appeared, to mark out the years from then on as distanced from those before, casting acts of non-remembering in a new light, overtaken by a narrative of German unification which could not be voiced between 1945 and 1989. As it happens, *Deutschland* was written on the West face of the Wall, in the early period of such graffiti.

There was, too, a shift in the genre of the monument. In the 1950s and 1960s, abstract sculptures in the West represented freedom, counter to Socialist Realism in the East bloc. Graffiti, too, was co-opted to the project – even commissioned for the West side of the Wall in the mid 1980s (from New York artist Keith Haring, for example). The West face of the Wall became almost a monument by other means, appropriated in the political framework of the West. Fragments of the Wall are now displayed in New York and Austin (Texas) as trophies of the Cold War.

Like the West face of the Wall, the *Monument Against Fascism* offers a blank space, a void in which to endorse or react otherwise to its appeal for a concept of freedom. The issues, however, are more complex than could be suggested by a simple dualism of

Fig. 2. Jochen Gerz, Monument Against Fascism, Harburg. 1986. Photo: from the artist's archive

a free West and an un-free East. In 1980s Germany, for instance, the presence of guest workers raised other concerns, and an uncomfortable resonance with buried histories of the 1930s. To evoke such resonances was not the stated aim of the artists, but, as I explain below, to encompass them in the performative reality of the monument in its six-year process of realisation was unavoidable. I want to dwell now on two specific and overlapping aspects of the monument in Harburg: the element of participation in its completion (its burial); and the (to me necessary) blankness of its surface, its non-contribution to representation of the histories it cites. I deal with these aspects together rather than concurrently because they seem intertwined.

Before that, I look to another project by Jochen Gerz, in Sarrbrücken. This also references the buried history of fascism in a (literally) buried form, but its production entailed a more limited form of participation.

PARTICIPATION AND BLANKNESS

While the Harburg monument was gradually being sunk into its shaft, in 1990, Gerz and a team of students from the *Hochschule für Bildende Kunst* in Saarbrücken began work on *Steine-Mahnmal gegen Rassismus* (2146 Stones: Monument Against Racism). The work began without funding or permission to use its city-centre public site, and took around a year to complete; after a further two years of bureaucratic process it was commissioned retrospectively by the city authorities. The work occupies the paving of the square outside Saarbrücker Schloss, now the seat of the provincial parliament but previously used as an assembly point for Jewish deportations in the 1930s and 1940s. It is a monument both against racism in general and, in view of its historically loaded site, against the racism which was a prelude to annihilation in the 1930s and 1940s.

Working with Jewish organizations, Gerz and his team collected data for inscription on the under-surface of 2146 stones, one for each Jewish cemetery in Germany prior to 1933. The stones were excavated, inscribed and replaced at night. Nothing is visible of the inscriptions (but their position is recorded). In most cases, little or nothing is visible of most of the cemeteries, either. Absence, or concealed traces, are the appropriate signs for a history of erasure taken here as a history of the consequences of racism as it occurred in a previous, specific history. But in this case there was no wider public participation as in Harburg, only that of students as guerrilla monument-makers. The victims by definition cannot participate, apart from the distance of years, and the need for secrecy in the absence of permissions prevented any wider appeal for volunteers. This monument can be read as complementing the column in Harburg, in context of other projects in which Gerz has worked with specific publics on memorial projects (for example, in Biron, France in 1995-1996).[8] Following the monument's retrospective authorisation by the city, the square was renamed *Platz des unsichtbaren Mahnmal* (Square of the Invisible Monument).

Fig. 3. Jochen Gerz, Monument Against Fascism, Harburg. 1986. Photo: from the artist's archive

The project in Harburg, in contrast, required participation; for the artists, it is through the vigilance of individuals that fascism will not return – in a Europe where the far Right has had several minor resurgences and the end of state socialism has released reactionary nationalisms. This raises a question as to how monuments function, in particular whether a monument against an excess of power can use (or must instead refuse) the traditional alignment of the form of the monument with the maintenance of power, as in the depiction of ruling elites in durable materials such as stone or bronze. Power uses narratives of selective pasts to which a present regime can be made to seem a natural successor. When such narratives are represented by members of a ruling elite, or by historical characters claimed as their antecedents, on plinths, then citizens are required literally to look up to them. The use of borrowed classicism, too, and a grandiose scale, lends monuments a supposedly timeless appearance, as if the narrative in question is outside time (which is the dimension of historical change). Against such static representation and the impression of permanence, the monument in Harburg is performative and ephemeral. It declines the framework of

Fig. 4. Jochen Gerz, Monument Against Fascism, Harburg. 1986. Photo of the site in 2010. Photo: the author

a conventional public monument (or public art), to intervene instead in a realm of debate which is both public, in that it is shared, and private, in that what is shared begins in personal reflection on events. Helga Pakasaar writes, "In Gerz's interactive works, notions of the private as a place of differences and of the public as a unified, homogenous sphere of privilege get turned upside down."[9]

The vocabulary of recollection runs out in the case of a monument against fascism – a history too excessive for representation by normal means. Similarly, there is no evident way to viably represent the Holocaust. The familiar photograph of the tracks leading to the gates of Auschwitz-Birkenau has become a memorial by other means, as has the term Auschwitz itself when it stands for the whole and diverse history of annihilation. Sculptural monuments to the Holocaust, when attempted, often take the form of a blank slab of stone. The one overtly modernist attempt is the architectural practice BBPR Group's *Monument for the Victims of the Concentration Camps*[10] in Milan (1945-1955). A constructivist-style cubic grid stands on a base of stone in the shape of a Greek Cross; in the centre of the cross is an urn containing earth from the camp at Mauthausen, encircled by wire. It is a strange mix of styles and perhaps only adds to the argument that representation of the Holocaust is beyond the means of art. Yet it matters to keep memories alive lest it happen again.

Similarly, after the 1914-1918 war in Europe, described as the war to end all wars, the national monument to the dead, in Britain as in France, was defined as the tomb of an unknown soldier – a blank slab. At first a temporary commission made in wood, the *Cenotaph* designed by Edwin Lutyens for London was re-made in Portland Stone and permanently sited in Whitehall as the site of annual rites of remembrance.[11] This non-figurative tradition contrasts with, and I think shows the banality of, continuing efforts at representation such as Felix de Weldon's *US Marine Corps Memorial Monument* (1954) at Arlington Cemetery, Virginia, derived from Joe Rosenthall's photograph of marines hoisting the flag at Iwo Jima in 1945. The photograph, actually, depicted a re-staging of the event for the

photographer's benefit, its second-hand quality reiterated in the naturalistic rendering of the (two-dimensional, black-and-white) image.

The history of fascism also defies representation. This is why, in the 1980s, a number of artists adopted buried forms for monuments to that history. In 1988, for example, Horst Hoheisel designed a buried fountain in Kassel to commemorate – in an inversely reiterated form – the earlier fountain donated by the Jewish Ashcroft family, destroyed by the Nazis in 1939. The new form was built, and displayed for a week, before being sunk into the ground. Hoheisel explains, "The pyramid will be turned into a funnel into whose darkness waters run down […]".[12]

The difficulty remains that the history of German fascism is not one likely to produce an immediate or easy response when it is referenced in a public monument. To invert the form neatly alludes to a buried history, as said above, and offers an innovative way in which to seek engagement. As Gerz writes,

> "Monuments against fascism […] arouse no sense of identification among the broader public. The content […] of a memorial – even when perceived as a provocation – [does not] derive from the free choice of the commissioner or the artist, […] [but is] an echo of the human vitality of which the memorial is supposed to remind us. The inconceivability of the social developments of the twentieth century […] stands in crass contrast to the memorials that refer to them. As opposed to the idea of the achievement of permanence […] we deploy the idea of a different function […] permanence is "sacrificed" […] The population of Harburg […] cause the monument to disappear. the visible becomes invisible, the memorial turns into memory […]".[13]

Andreas Hapkemeyer writes that the monument in Harburg was Gerz' first to use dialogue – defined as exchanges between equals – to hand over the authorship of a work, in search of resolution (*rapprochement*). The lead-lined stele became "locus of an animated and sometimes aggressive discussion […] someone even fired bullets against it."[14]

To accept the artists' invitation to sign the monument in Harburg was to endorse its agency in making visible – inversely by invisibility – the need to remember fascism, thereby preventing its return. For Gerz, "Either the monument "works" – the initiative of the population renders it superfluous – or it remains a monument to its not having worked, as a meaningless ornament."[15] But an unforeseen effect was that the monument provoked racist graffiti. It worked in that its surface became obliterated. The issue, however, was not resolved in a dark reminder of the racism which was one element of German fascism. Neither the commissioners nor the artists had bargained for such an excess of participation. Gerz is cited elsewhere, "we will one day reach the point where anti-fascist memorials will no longer be necessary, when vigilance will be kept alive by the invisible pictures of remembrance."[16] Yet the monument drew out a new racism against guest workers, set within a long European tradition of distrust of foreigners and hatred of certain groups, since the first ghetto for strangers (including Jews) in Venice in the late medieval period.

For Hannah Arendt, isolation was for Jews in Germany in the 1930s preparation for their annihilation, while without the perceptions of others no mature sense of self is possible, and its lack is painful.[17] There is no vocabulary in which to state this. It is not a matter of the impossibility of poetry after Auschwitz – though Adorno's remark on the subject in his essay *Cultural Criticism and Society* refers to literary criticism[18] – but of the inability of art to convey this pain authentically. As Adorno writes of Paul Celan's poetry,

> "[His] poems want to speak of the most extreme horror through silence. Their truth content itself becomes negative. They imitate a language beneath the helpless language of human beings […] The language of the lifeless becomes the last possible comfort for a death that is deprived of all meaning."[19]

But, the *Monument Against Fascism* is not a vehicle of remembrance, but a real-time intervention which drew out racism and re-opened questions as to how a society forms and enacts its collective values, and

Fig. 5. Jochen Gerz, Monument Against Fascism, Harburg. 1986. Photo of the site in 2010. Photo: the author

the contested senses of belonging involved in that. There were signatures as the artists had requested, and lovers' names, anarchist signs, alongside the hate messages. James Young notes that the artists were initially shocked, and gives his own impression in a breathless prose:

> "illegible scribble of name scratched over names, all covered over in a spaghetti scrawl […] People had come at night to scrape over all the names, even to try to pry the lead plating off the base […] swastikas also began to appear: how better to remember what happened than by the Nazi's own sign?"[20]

It was not, however, a monument against Nazism but against fascism, a broader term. Nor was the graffiti illegible; as urban visual culture it is already coded, signifier of an underclass, or the everyday trace of bored lives, or stating a claim to visibility for groups seeing themselves as marginalised. Gerz writes:

> "The main thing about social life […] is that we cannot choose our neighbours, nor neglect the incessant flux of migration that challenges and changes us. It is not a good service to they community to argue that fear of risk and desire for security are virtues […] If we silence issues because they are difficult, we will become their prisoners. Art has always been a way to move into the space which has not yet been pacified […] Art is not only for décor […] It is itself an urgency of life."[21]

Gerz seeks to bring society's conflict into visibility. Gerz adapts the form of a stele to offer people who disagree space in which to mark their discord. It is not like the tombs of unknown soldiers "saturated with ghostly national imaginings"[22], which "[…] loom out of an immemorial past."[23] as Benedict Anderson describes them, but an undoing of the form of the monument to deny its heritage, to realise by unforeseen means an aim stated in the 1960s by Joseph Beuys:

> "My objects are to be seen as stimulants for the transformation of the idea of sculpture […] They should provoke thoughts about

what sculpture can be and how the concept of sculpting can be extended to the invisible materials used by everyone."[24]

At Harburg the concept of sculpture merges into that of the monument (*Mahnmal*), to refuse the unity and historical trajectory which are the monument's standard content. Instead, it reminds local people and visitors that fascism was produced by individuals at all social levels, and is not entirely encapsulated in the past.

Notes

1 Hans Erich Nossak, *The End*, trans. by Joel Agee, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004; Winfried Georg Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, London: Penguin, 2004. [Published in German as *Luftkreig und Literateur*, Frankfurt, Carl Hanser, 1999.]
2 http://www.gerz.fr [accessed 6 October 2009].
3 The author had a conversation in 2003 with German artist Herman Prigan, who remembered as a child in Geselnkirchen in the Ruhr seeing his parents and friends secretly dressed in Nazi uniforms, singing the old songs.
4 Winfried Georg Sebald, 2004, p. 69.
5 Ibid., p. 30; Sebald cites the Swedish journalist Stig Dagerman, who rode by train through the ruins in 1946 – a journey of fifteen minutes – that no-one else looked out of the windows, that "he was identified as a foreigner himself *because* he looked out." Ibid., p. 31.
6 Hans Erich Nossack, 2004, p. 13.
7 Winfried Georg Sebald, 2004, p. 86.
8 Jochen Gerz, *Jochen Gerz: Res Publica, The Public Works 1968-1999*, Bolzano, Museum of Modern Art, 1999, pp. 74-79.
9 Helga Pakasaar, 'Please Think On' in: Jochen Gerz, *Jochen Gerz: Res Publica*, *The Public Works 1968-1999*, Bolzano, Museum of Modern Art, 1999, p. 34.
10 Sergiusz Michalski, *Public Monuments: Art in Political Bondage 1870-1997*, London: Reaktion, 1998, p. 154 [and plate 103].
11 Ibid., pp. 77-92; Michalski notes that, in the 1920s, "hundreds of written messages" were left at the base of the *Cenotaph*, often without flowers or wreaths. He concludes, "it seems appropriate to reflect deeply on the cultic implications of nonfiguration." Ibid., p. 80.
12 Ibid., p. 178; see also James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993, p. 45.
13 Jochen Gerz, 1999, p. 34.
14 Andreas Hapkemeyer, 'On the Principle of Dialogue in Jochen Gerz's Works for Public Spaces' in: Jochen Gerz, *Jochen Gerz: Res Publica*, *The Public Works 1968-1999*, Bolzano, Museum of Modern Art, 1999, p. 22.
15 Ibid.
16 Gerz cited in James Young, 1993, p. 60.
17 Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958, pp. 22-78.
18 Theodor W. Adorno, 'Cultural Criticism and Society' in: *Prisms*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983, pp. 17-34.
19 Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, London: Athlone, 1997, p. 322.
20 James Young, 1993, p. 35.
21 Jochen Gerz, [unpublished conference paper], Coventry, Herbert Art Gallery, 2001.
22 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London: Verso, 1991, p. 9.
23 Ibid., p. 11.
24 Joseph Beuys cited in Caroline Tisdall, *Joseph Beuys* [text accompanying Joseph Beuys exhibition], London: Antony d'Offay Gallery, 1980 [front cover, source unstated].

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Neįmanomas prisiminimas – *Harburgo antifašistinis monumentas* (Jochenas ir Esther Shalev Gerzai, 2009)

Reikšminiai žodžiai: monumentas, memorialas, fašizmas, rasizmas, *graffiti*, viešoji atmintis.

Santrauka

Antifašistinis monumentas (*Mahnmal gegen Faschismus*), sukurtas Jocheno Gerzo ir Esther Shalev Gerz Harburge (Hamburgo priemiestyje, Vokietijoje) 1986–1993 metais, tai 12 metrų švinu padengta kolona, susmegusi į tuščią plyšį po aikštele. Viskas, ką dabar galime matyti, tai tekstas, kuriame aiškinamas projektas ir devyni atvaizdai, fiksuo-

jantys visą monumento išnykimo eigą. Paminklas turėjo ir du plieninius sparnus – vietiniai gyventojai ir lankytojai galėjo naudotis jais, pasirašydami ar kitaip pažymėdami paminklo paviršių, ir taip patvirtinti, kad tebėra budrūs ir seka, kad fašizmas nesugrįžtų. Monumentas yra šalia prekybos centro ir priemiestinio metro stoties, jis sukurtas savivaldybės užsakymu. Tai vienas iš daugelio panašių palaidotų paminklų, skirtų istorijai, kuri pokarinėje Vokietijoje atrodė palaidota, nepatenkanti į viešąjį akiratį. Projektas kelia klausimą, kaip įmanoma reprezentuoti tokį sudėtingą istorinį laikotarpį, jei tai iš viso įmanoma ir, platesniu mastu, koks viešųjų monumentų santykis su galios struktūromis ir valdžia (šiuo atveju – beribe valdžia). Panašūs klausimai siejami ir su Holokausto reprezentacija. Bet kokie atvaizdai tokiame kontekste atrodo banaliai, todėl dažniausiai reprezentaciją atstoja tuščia plokštė. Tačiau Harburgo monumentas yra taip pat performatyvi ir efemeriška intervencija, o ant jo pasirodę rasistiniai *graffiti* užrašai atspindi istorijos sugrįžimą, prieš kurį paminklas buvo nukreiptas.

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PERFORMING HISTORY: A CASE OF FOUR MONUMENTS

Key words: monuments, politics of memory, elite, ideology, identity.

The intensification of historical consciousness in 1988 encouraged the questioning of the remains of the Soviet epoch and the search for heroic examples in the remote history of the state. After the first memoirs were published during the first years of independence, various forms of social memory appeared: a list of memorable days and founding of new museums. In 1992 the Museum for the Victims of Genocide was founded, in 2001 the museum for Soviet monuments – Grūtas park – was opened, etc. From 1988 to 1993 the monument "boom" rose in Lithuania, which manifested itself in three major directions: 1) the rebuilding of the monuments from the times of the Lithuanian Republic, 2) the destruction of Soviet monuments, and 3) the design and construction of monuments for deportees, Soviet martyrs, and famous personalities and events in the history of Lithuania.

While the radical political and social changes were taking place, Lithuanian society became very active in making decisions upon the fate of public spaces: newspaper offices were flooded with readers' letters urging the rebuilding of pre-war monuments. Almost all of them were reconstructed trying not only to bring back their previous appearance (although often due to the lack of iconographic information, only low quality photographs were used), but also homologous symbolism – any sort of modification of meaning seemed to be inappropriate for the major part of society.

Some of the reconstructed memorials were questionable or without any artistic value, but they had an extreme significance to society: it was not the aesthetic qualities of a monument that counted but the very fact of its re-erection. The reconstruction of the monuments of the independent republic and the building of new ones witnessed the moral orientation of public space, which was determined by the nationalist discourse, revived at the beginning of the decade and established later: from the "imagined museum" of the past those examples were selected, which stimulated pride, promoted moral values, and formed the conception of the nation as a collective individual.

In the context of such a monument reconstruction "boom" it is interesting to examine a case of four monuments for the Independence of Lithuania of the pre-war period that were constructed by sculptor Robertas Antinis Sr. in the small towns Biržai, Kretinga, Rokiškis, and Širvintos from 1927 to 1931 and reconstructed by the sculptor's son – artist Robertas Antinis Jr. from 1989 to 1991.

Robertas Antinis Sr. was a famous pre-war and post-war Lithuanian sculptor. In 1921 and 1922 he took drawing courses in Kaunas, then he studied at Kaunas Art School from 1922 to 1927 and at *École nationale supérieure des arts décoratifs* in Paris from 1928 until 1933. Robertas Antinis Sr. created monuments and decorative sculptures in many Lithuanian towns. His son – Robertas Antinis Jr. – is the creator

Fig. 1. Robertas Antinis Sr., A Monument for the Decade of the Independence of Lithuania in Rokiškis, 1931. Photo: from the archive of Robertas Antinis Jr.

of many sculptures and monuments, a member of the neo-avant-garde group POST ARS, and works in the fields of object, performance, and installation.

PRE-WAR PERIOD

On August 15th, 1927 in Širvintos, at the place near the local church, one of the first monuments for Independence in Lithuania was unveiled. It was dedicated to those killed fighting for the Independence of Lithuania in the battles with the Polish army.[1] It was not only a work completed for a diploma for the young sculptor, but also a work by a participant in this battle. The monument represented a young Lithuanian woman wearing national clothes and holding in her arms a naked warrior, from whose hands a sword had fallen. This work was highly appreciated by the press of that time due to the fact that the author gave the national specific origins to the academic tradition of sculpture.[2] The artist got a state fellowship to study abroad for this work of sculpture.

Studying in Paris, the artist created one of his most significant works of monumental sculpture – a monument for the Decade of the Independence of Lithuania in Rokiškis[3] [fig. 1]. In 1931 the unveiled monument was placed at the centre of the town, in front of the massive neo-gothic church. At one side of the thirteen-meter-high obelisk a warrior and a statue of a *kanklininkas* (*kanklės player*) seated nearby are represented, and at the other side – a Lithuanian mother in national clothes with her hands raised toward the sun.

In 1930 and 1931 two more of Antinis' monuments for the Independence of Lithuania were unveiled – in Kretinga[4] and in Biržai[5]. They both had heavy and austere form and were close to the tradition of folk memorial buildings. At the same time all these monuments by Antinis, as well as other memorials of that time, continued the European tradition of the 19th century and some schemes of this tradition; the obelisk and such allegoric figures as a soldier, a Lithuanian girl, mother, and a traditional Lithuanian musical instrument – *kanklės* – player were used.

As these monuments were valued by the communities of the small towns as the signs of remembrance, their documental, propaganda content was much more important than the aesthetic one. It may be only assumed that the content of the monument was often formed not only by the artist, but also by the authorities that commissioned the monument.

The commissioners and initiators of the monuments – the social elite of the towns, such as the officers of frontier police and civil service (in Širvintos), Lithuanian Riflemen Union (in Kretinga), and the local community (in Rokiškis) – created the memorial signs of the history of the young state. Not accidentally the places of all of these monuments were representative ones: the central or the highest terrains or beside the church. For example in Kretinga the monument was built in the middle of the central square of the town, in the place of the destroyed orthodox church – as if to "liberate" the symbolic charge of the public space from the ideology of its occupants [fig. 2]. But at the same time these monuments were the instruments for the construction

of place-based identities and for the creation of the symbols of the history of the place, which were important not only to the life of the state, but also to the community. They memorialized the events of the history of towns and their localities (the battles for independence) and became a part of daily life in the towns. Their iconography allowed easy identification with the prototypes of the persona of national history. The monuments in Biržai and Širvintos, for instance, were mildly called *Birutė* by the town people, because it was believed that the young woman engraved on it was a *vaidilutė* (Priestess Birutė) – the wife of Kęstutis, Grand Duke of Lithuania [fig. 3]. National holidays were celebrated near the monuments and it was a favorite place to take family photographs.

POST-WAR PERIOD

During the Soviet period the occupying government took over the ideological reconstruction of public spaces, thus all the signs witnessing the independent state had to be destroyed, as they did not correspond to the new ideological content. In 1952 in the decision of the Executive committee of Širvintos there was written: "to liquidate the Lithuanian bourgeois-nationalistic monument as not having any significance and architectural value".[6] But the chairman of the executive committee stood against this decision and did not give his permission. In 1953 the Soviet activists tried to demolish this monument willfully. Still in 1954 when the mentioned chairman moved from Širvintos, the vice-chairman ordered the demolition of this monument. The monument was destroyed and secretly buried.[7]

After the war a cemetery for Soviet soldiers was established near the Independence monument in Kretinga. In 1948 or 1949, when the decision was made to remove the cemetery, the monument was demolished and sunk in the Akmena river.[8]

In Biržai by the order of the local government the monument was destroyed using explosives and buried in 1946. Its foundation was used to build a monument for soviet army soldiers, and its remains were buried.[9] In its place the cemetery for the soldiers of the Soviet army was established, and in the cemetery an obelisk with a pentagram. So the ideologically "cleaned up" places were filled with attributes of the new ideology.

The only monument from the four monuments of Antinis remained in Rokiškis, in a square surrounded by trees. But the dates and the sign of fire were removed from the monument. In the 1960s the author was told to plaster over the inscription and swastika. In 1971 the monument was proclaimed to be a national monument of art.[10]

Except this monument, which was neutralized by taking off the ideological attributes from it, all the monuments were destroyed and violated. Such iconoclastic phenomena as sinking, blasting, breaking and burying, which often were performed secretly at night bear witness to the metaphoric victory of the Soviet government against the "bourgeois" state of Lithuania. At the same time it may witness to the reversal of the hierarchic relationships in the town communities themselves and the institutionalization of new political elite.

THE REBUILDING OF THE MONUMENTS

But the rebuilding of the monuments of the interwar period during the years of the national rebirth was equal to the act of taking back the collective memory. It was a symbolic act[11], which made important not the artistic criteria, but the ideological ones and the sense of a "loss of history". The monuments, built by the town communities before World War II, by the effort of parents and grandparents, and dedicated to the important moments of the local history, enforced the identification of the local population with their town. Simply because they symbolized the values of special importance for the local community, the works, which did not have great artistic value, acquired their importance.[12] For example, even Antinis Jr. recognized that the monument in Kretinga was not the best work of his father, but he added straightaway that "during the rebirth period even the mistakes of the past were precious to the people". The destiny of the almost completely depredated *Birutė* in Biržai, which according to Antinis Jr. is reminiscent of a "potato", causes great passion in the townspeople even today.[13]

Fig. 2. Robertas Antinis Sr., A Monument for the Independence of Lithuania in Kretinga, 1930 (?), destroyed 1948 (?), rebuilt 1990. Photo: from the author's archive, 2009

During the national rebirth initiative groups were forming in cities and towns with a goal to look for the remains of the destroyed monuments, to gather the testimonies of the contemporaries, documents and iconographic material. But their attempts were often unfruitful, because no documents, outlines, and projects were left, and the people that had seen or participated in the acts of devastation stayed silent.

During the years of the national rebirth, one of the discussed towns – Širvintos – seemed as though it had experienced a foray of treasure hunters. However, in 1989 through the efforts of the local enthusiasts – specialists in land-reclamation and excavators – only the pedestal with the remains of inscription and one part of the sculpture (hand) were found. The rebuilding of the monument electrified the community of the town: everyone knew by whose hands the monument was demolished, but those representatives of communist party who were still alive and possible witnesses to those events did not disclose the details.[14] The questionnaires distributed by the fund for the rebuilding of the monument, asked to give all the details of the building and demolition of the monument and to comment on what kind of monument must be rebuilt. But this initiative was also disregarded by the townspeople.[15] Besides, the people donated especially heavily, thinking that the local government, which once demolished the monument, must now rebuild it.[16] As the monument could be rebuilt only from photographs, the sculptor's son offered several new alternatives for the monument.[17] But the community of the town chose the version of the copy of the monument, because in their opinion, the demolished monument was of artistic "value", so they needed "the old one, or at least the same".[18]

In Kretinga the monument of Freedom became a part of the bigger reconstruction plan for the central part of the town: during the years of the national rebirth the new social and cultural elite started to talk about the reconstruction of the central square of the town with the town hall of the 19th century and the monument of Freedom erected during interwar period. But in the late eighties, while dragging the bed of the river Akmena, the battered obelisk was found.[19] Except for the photographs, no images were found; even the precise year the monument was erected was not found. In Biržai the remains of the monument during the period of the national rebirth were dug up and taken to the yard of the administrative building of public utilities. But because in the original place the cemetery for soviet soldiers had been established and the obelisk with a pentagram stood there, the monument was reconstructed not in the old place, but nearby.[20]

Thus, the selection of the place for the reconstruction of the monument not always was an easy decision for the initiators of its reconstruction. The soviet authorities destroyed not only the symbols of the independent state, but also corrected in their own way the topography of cities and towns. But the new social elite started to revise and rewrite the local historical narratives to conform to the newly propagated national values and visions. In this way the plans for the reconstruction of the market square in Kretinga adjusted also to the very location of the

Fig. 3. Robertas Antinis Sr., A Monument Dedicated to the Lives Lost for the Independence in the Battles with Polish Army, close to Širvintos, 1927, destroyed 1954, rebuilt 1991. Photo: from the author's archive, 2009

new symbol of the square – because of the town hall, whose reconstruction was planned in the future, the monument was pushed to the side of the square. In Biržai the nationalist local ideology was forming a romanticized picture of the national history: according to the initiators of the reconstruction of the monument, its "environment must be spiritually elevating" and "a place for contemplation", and the square must be constructed as a "historical path, reminding us of our past".[21]

The initiative groups of *Sąjūdis*, the organizations of exiles, and the branches of societies of Lithuanian regional studies started to re-inscribe the site-specific histories. But in many cases the initiative was taken by the representatives of the then executive party authorities, who initiated and financed the work of the reconstruction of the monuments. In Rokiškis the monument was restored by the initiative of the department of the conservation of cultural values and local government. In Širvintos financial resources for the reconstruction were being collected from townspeople, but later the local authorities got into the work of the reconstruction. The regional committee of the Lithuanian Communist Youth Union also decided to make a financial contribution, before that disassociating from Communist Youth Union methods and subversion of the monument.

In Kretinga, besides the local deportees, the idea of the monument rebuilding was initiated also by the Lithuanian Communist Party, and the rebuilding was financed by the executive authorities of the party. The rebuilding of the monument in Biržai was publicly supported by the minister of construction and urbanism of that time – Algimantas Nasvytis.

These initiatives, according to John Czaplicka, "serve to legitimize governments and bolster particularistic political movements, which would prefer to distance themselves from the recent Soviet past to establish their own political historical heritage. These include the legitimate wishes expressed by the victims of war, deportation and exile, who would like to "recover" their hometowns and cities".[22]

The unveiling ceremonies of the monuments became one more kind of symbolic act of the constructing of collective memory, which established

history not as the reflected living past, but as its purified form, an ideal "representative" variant of history. These ceremonies became a confirmation of place-based identities and also activation of history. The histories projected through these commemorative acts related to the country's and the towns' continuous occupation and to the acts of violence committed against the local population by foreign occupiers. In Biržai and Širvintos a capsule with a letter to future generations was put inside the monuments. In Širvintos the letter retells the "magnificent" moments of the history of Lithuania from the Middle Ages until those days, remembering the aggression of Poland in this region, and references the present, which faces similar problems – the status of Vilnius region questioned by Russia and the local Polish population. This way the local historical narrative was rewritten to conform to the visions of the shared ethnic and national identity. Political instability made such acts even more symbolic: a few weeks before the monument unveiling in irvintos, the sculptor Antinis together with other constructors of the monument were considering what they should do, because then the putsch was taking place in Moscow. They had already dug out a pit and were ready to burry the monument. This way they were preparing to repeat the story of the fate of the authentic monument.[23]

Still, in one town – Biržai – the ceremony of the unveiling did not end the story of the monument. Till this day, here the passions have not settled down because of the fate of the original and the fact that the Soviet monument that took the place of the original still stands in the territory of the cemetery. Specialists of cultural heritage, taking into account the requests of Biržai citizens "to reconstruct the historical justice and to destroy the accent of Soviet ideology in the centre of Biržai", made recommendations to exhibit the parts of the burst monument in its original place – in the territory of the cemetery for soviet soldiers.[24] But the local authorities started to speak about the pressure of the embassy of Russia and offered to move the remains of the monument to the museum of the region or the hill fort.[25]

Currently, during state holidays the local government of Biržai puts flowers at the copy of the monument, while former political prisoners and exiles do the same at the depredated original which can still be found at the yard of the administrative building of public utilities.[26] So the fragmentation of society is showing up, telling that collective memory is a process of sense making through time. The role of conflict in producing collective memory is very significant. According to Jennifer Jordan "the terrain of past political eras combines with new efforts to shape landscapes of memory to create a multiple and even conflicting narrative of different elements of the past".[27]

Besides, the opposition, which showed up in making decisions upon the destinies of public spaces and prewar monuments, allows talking about the occurring friction between elites for the influence, constructing the *politics of memory* and defining its priorities, and also forming different ideological dispositions of the post-Soviet elite (different positions often coincide with different dependence on party).[28]

But at the period of the rebirth the collective memory was more consensual. The reconstructed monuments of the prewar period became the products of collective memory, the ideological content of which equally satisfied both the post-Soviet elite, aiming for the legitimization, and the nation, thirsty for freedom. At that time the monuments became the instruments of the socio-political power used to legitimize authority, to construct individual and collective memory. The signs of the public places witnessed the configuring of heritage that helped to determine the spirit and direction of the newly established nation-state. Therefore it became a meaningful part of the politics of memory.

Notes

1 In 1920 in Širvintos the thrust of Polish army to the territory of Lithuania was stopped.

2 Jonas Burba, 'Mūsų jaunas skulptorius Robertas Antinis' ('Our Young Sculptor Robertas Antinis') in: *Naujasis Žodis*, No. 14-15, 1927.

3 The artist himself was from Rokiškis locality.

4 The precise date of the monument unveiling is unidentified; supposedly the monument was built in 1928-1930.

[5] The monument in Biržai was dedicated for those, who were killed fighting for the Independence of Lithuania.

[6] Vytautas Zaremba, Dalia Mulevičienė, 'Paminklas žuvusiems už Lietuvos nepriklausomybę' ('The Monument for the Slain for the Independence of Lithuania') in: Venantas Mačiekus et al. (eds.), *Širvintos*, Vilnius: Versmė, 2000, p. 400.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Author's interview with historian Julius Kanarskas.

[9] Juozas Banionis, 'Žuvusių dėl Lietuvos laisvės paminklas' ('The Monument of the Slain for the Independence of Lithuania') in: Marija Skirmantienė, Jonas Varnauskas (eds.), *Nukentėję paminklai* (*The Injured Monuments*), Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 1994, pp. 19-20.

[10] Aldona Pivoriūnienė, 'Nepriklausomybės dešimtmečio paminklas' ('The Monument of the Decade of Independence') in: Marija Skirmantienė, Jonas Varnauskas (eds.), *Nukentėję paminklai* (*The Injured Monuments*), Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 1994, p. 153.

[11] It is symbolic that the monuments created by Antinis Sr. were being rebuilt by his son, who in his creative work attempts to deny any influence by his father, perceiving the act of rebuilding as a duty to his father and his country: "the duty to father and country does not allow to turn away [to rebuild the monument]". Genovaitė Paulikaitė, 'Atgims Nepriklausomybės paminklas Kretingoje' ('The Monument of Independence will Revive in Kretinga') in: *Švyturys*, 18 February 1989.

On the other hand, it is paradoxical that while Antinis Jr. was rebuilding the monuments, created by his father, his own sculptures built during the soviet period were being devastated, but the reasons were economical not ideological – his monuments were robbed by the thieves of copper and other metals.

[12] "[...] I think that we must to rebuilt the former monument [in Kretinga], because while loving one period of history we forget the other. And the monument dedicated to the decade of Independence is a beginning of the professional Lithuanian sculpture. Finally, history is right, and if they tried to tear it out from us by force, then the nation is taking it back at any cost [...]" Antinis Jr. said to the journalist. Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Author's interview with people of Širvintos.

[15] Gintaras Bielskis, 'Abejingumas?' ('Indifference?') in: *Širvinta*, 7 September 1989.

[16] "5000 roubles have been collected, but 35 000 are needed. People are not eager to donate, motivating that the authorities do not give. "Let those give money now, who ruined then"". Gintaras Bielskis, 'Didelis indėlis' ('Big Contribution') in: *Širvinta,* 29 September 1989.

[17] Antinis Jr. offered three variants of rebuilding: I. to continue to look for the monument and having found it to rebuild. II. To create a new sculpture, not having anything in common with the original, using the models of father's sculptures. III. To create a similar sculpture of stone, stylizing and summing up it, and freely improvising, leaving just the idea itself – a woman and a soldier; and at the same time to correct the mistakes made by father. Gintaras Bielskis, 'Ledai pajudėjo?.. Koks paminklas vėl stovės Širvintose?..' ('The Ice Has Moved?.. What Kind of Monument Will Stand in Širvintos?..') in: *Širvinta*, 16 July 1989.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Author's interview with Julius Kanarskas.

[20] Author's interview with Antinis, Jr.

[21] Zenonas Meškauskas, '"Birutės" epopėja' ('The Epopee of "Birutė"') in: *Biržiečių žodis*, 28 August 1990.

[22] John Czaplicka, 'The Palace Ruins and Putting the Lithuanian Nation into Place: Historical Stagings in Vilnius' in: Daniel J. Walkowitz, Liza Maya Knauer (eds.), *Memory and the Impact of Political Transformation in Public Space*, Durnham, London: Dake University Press, 2004, p. 168.

[23] Author's interview with Antinis, Jr.

[24] Rasa Panelienė, 'Specialistų nuomonės dėl paminklo išsiskyrė' ('The Specialists' Opinions About the Monument Were at Variance') in: *Šiaurės rytai*, 3 September 2007.

[25] Alfreda Gudienė, 'Biržų meras Rusijos taikiklyje' ('Biržai Mayor at the Sight of Rusia') in: *Šiaurės rytai*, 5 January 2008.

In April 2008 the representative of the embassy of Russian Federation came to look round the cemetery of Biržai and Soviet soldiers. Alfreda Gudienė, 'Rusijos pareigūnui Biržai labai patiko' ('Russian Official Liked Biržai Very Much') in: *Šiaurės rytai*, 5 April 2008.

[26] When region authorities put the flower bouquets at the copy of the monument, the state prisoners visited the violated original. On the 16th of February the state prisoners visited not only the last resting-places of the slain for the Independence of Lithuania, but also the original of Antinis's monument, called *Birutė*, still resting in the yard of the municipal economy. "We can't wait for the day, when the original of the monument is placed at the central place of the town", – Povilas Stakionis, the chairman of the Biržai section of Association of state prisoners, said standing at the R. Antinis's monument for the Slain for the Independence of Lithuania, resting at the "Biržai municipal economy". Kęstutis Slavinskas, 'Surengė alternatyvų Vasario 16-osios paminėjimą' ('Organised the Alternative Commemoration of the 16th of February') in: *Šiaurės rytai*, 19 February 2009.

[27] Jennifer A. Jordan, *Structures of Memory: Understanding Urban Change in Berlin and Beyond*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006, p. 25.

[28] It is important to note, that the mayor of Biržai town, who resists to the rebuilding of the monument in its original place, is a member of social democratic party, and the proponents of the rebuilding of the original monument are members of the parties and organizations of the right.

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(Re)konstruojama istorija: keturių paminklų atvejis

Reikšminiai žodžiai: paminklai, atminties politika, elitas, ideologija, tapatybė.

Santrauka

Straipsnyje analizuojamas skulptoriaus Roberto Antinio 1927–1931 m. sukurtų ir 1989–1991 m. Roberto Antinio jaunesniojo atstatytų 4 paminklų atvejis – tipiškas XX a. dešimtojo dešimtmečio pradžioje Lietuvą apėmusio paminklų atstatymo šurmulio pavyzdys.

Kaip ir daugelis kitų šiuo laikotarpiu Lietuvoje pastatytų paminklų, Antinio paminklai Širvintose, Kretingoje, Rokiškyje ir Biržuose buvo skirti Lietuvos Nepriklausomybės dešimtmečiui arba nepriklausomybės kovoms pažymėti. Iš esmės jie tęsė XIX a. Europos tradicijas ir taikė kai kurias tos tradicijos schemas, kaip antai – obeliskas ir tokios alegorinės figūros, kaip karys, lietuvaitė, motina, kanklininkas. Paminklų užsakovų – miestelių socialinio elito – pastangomis buvo kuriami jaunos valstybės istorijos atminimo ženklai, kartu ir vietos istorijos simboliai, aktualūs miestelio bendruomenei. Paminklai tapo kasdienio gyvenimo dalimi, o jų ikonografija įgalino lengvai atpažinti tautos istorijos personažų prototipus ar susitapatinti su jais.

Sovietmečiu okupacinė valdžia ėmė rūpintis viešųjų erdvių ideologiniu perkonstravimu, todėl visi nepriklausomą valstybę liudiję ženklai privalėjo būti išnaikinti, nes neatitiko naujojo ideologinio turinio. Vienintelis iš keturių Antinio paminklų išliko Rokiškyje, tačiau nuo jo buvo nukapotas ugnies ženklas ir datos, užrašas ir svastika užtinkuoti. Tokios ikonoklastinės apraiškos, kaip paminklų skandinimas, sprogdinimas, daužymas ir užkasimas (kuris dažnai vykdavo naktį, slapta), turėjo liudyti metaforišką sovietų valdžios pergalę prieš „buržuazinę“ Lietuvos valstybę. Kartu, galbūt, tai galėjo liudyti hierarchinių santykių kaitą pačiose miestelių bendruomenėse ir naujo socialinio elito įsitvirtinimą.

Atgimimo metais tarpukario paminklų atstatymas prilygo kolektyvinės atminties susigrąžinimo aktui. Tai buvo simbolinis aktas, kuriame svarbūs buvo ne meniniai, o ideologiniai kriterijai. Paminklai, pastatyti prieš karą miestelių bendruomenių ir skirti svarbiems vietos istorijos įvykiams, stiprino identifikacijos su savo kraštu pojūtį.

Vietų istorijos perrašymo ėmėsi naujasis socialinis elitas, tačiau daugeliu atvejų iniciatyvą į savo rankas perėmė tuometinės partinės vykdomosios valdžios atstovai, inicijavę ir finansavę paminklų atstatymo darbus. Nors, sprendžiant viešųjų erdvių ir prieškario paminklų likimus, dėl išryškėjusios opozicijos galima kalbėti apie užsimezgusią elitų trintį dėl įtakos, formuojant *atminties politiką* ir apibrėžiant jos prioritetus bei besiformuojančias skirtingas posovietinio elito ideologines dispozicijas, tačiau atvejo studija įrodo, kad atstatyti prieškario paminklai tapo kolektyvinės atminties produktais, kurių ideologinis turinys vienodai tenkino ir legitimacijos siekiantį posovietinį elitą, ir laisvės ištroškusią tautą.

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WHICH COMMUNISM TO BRING TO THE MUSEUM? A CASE OF MEMORY POLITICS IN LITHUANIA[1]

Key words: (post)communism, memory, identity, museums, museum visitors' experiences, new museology.

In their influential essay *The Universal Survey Museum*, Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach show that the museum as a public institution emerged along with the modern state and has since then been "the site of a symbolic transaction between the visitor and the state".[2] The museum, through its strategies of selecting, contextualising and displaying artifacts, decides which parts of the past are commemorated and how history is represented. It also functions as a site of social rituals and as a stage for political performance, delivering visual and spatial experience to its visitors and communicating certain values and beliefs through that experience. Influenced by discourse theory (Michel Foucault), cultural studies (Edward W. Said) and social liberation movements, this political notion of museum became a central concern of *the new museology* in the 1980s[3] and enabled critical re-thinking of the communicative power of museum displays, as well as the museum's function in the society.

Since 1989 the museum, alongside monuments and memorials, has played a significant role in post-communist memory culture. French historian Pierre Nora has included museums among those sites of memory that, rather than simply evoking memory, construct history by selecting images from the past.[4] The emergence of these sites of memory began in the nineteenth century and has lead to an increase that compensates for the lack of living memory that has emerged due to the acceleration of history. In his more recent writing, Nora notes that, along with general acceleration of history in modern society caused by the shift from industrial to post-industrial capitalism, the democratisation of history is yet another reason for the current upsurge in memory.[5] The democratisation of history means the emergence of the memories of recently liberated minority groups, including the resumption of national memories previously confiscated by totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe beginning in 1989. Following this logic, it could be argued that the current growth in the number of museums of history in the former Eastern bloc is connected to post-communist attempts to reaffirm national identity.

One of the challenges of constructing post-communist national identity is the problem of dealing with the communist past and its placement in post-1989 memory politics. This article discusses how the communist past has been represented in the museums of history in Lithuania after the state gained its independence in 1990. Taking into account the theoretical assumptions of the new museology and its focus on museum visitors' experiences, the article presents a reading of permanent exhibitions dedicated to the communist period and concentrates on the political meanings they communicate to visitors.

Representations of the communist past in Lithuanian history museums are quite numerous and varied. For curious museum goers or foreigners who want to learn something about Lithuania's recent past, it is easy to find at least two significant places of post-communist memory. These are the Museum of

Fig. 1. Interior of former KGB prison, Museum of Genocide Victims, Vilnius. Photo: from the author's archive, 2007

Genocide Victims in Vilnius and *Grūto parkas*, an open-air museum of Soviet sculptures established 120 km south of the Lithuanian capital. These two places are widely advertised in tourist guides and represented in the international press, as well as analyzed in international scholarship.[6] Since the 1990s, much smaller museums dedicated to the communist period have been opened in many Lithuanian cities and towns as well.[7] These usually never appear in advertisements, as the target of their small and poorly equipped exhibits, with all information in Lithuanian only, is the local audience – mostly schoolchildren. Still, Lithuania has a lot of museums of communism. However, most of them represent an anti-communist attitude to the past rather than the complex history of life under communism. My assumption is that the absence of the history of communism in museums is symptomatic of the post-communist culture of memory, at least in Lithuania. In this paper I will try to demonstrate that this absence of history manifests itself by either eliminating the communist period from museum displays, or reducing the historical narrative to a story of communist crimes and victims, or distancing oneself from the communist past by turning it into an exotic story of the "other".

The visitor to Lithuanian museums of history can easily encounter the absence of communism's history quite literally. The National Museum of Lithuania in Vilnius, which is the largest "depository" of historical heritage does not present the period of Soviet occupation at all. The museum's collections include artifacts of the period after 1940 but they are not available to visitors.[8] Other important memory institutions, like city museums, often exclude the Soviet period as well. For instance, in Kaunas City Museum, the historical narrative of the city ends in 1940 with the end of the first independent republic of Lithuania. Re-established only in 2005 and functioning in temporary premises, the museum focuses on the period between the two world wars when Kaunas was the temporary capital of Lithuania. Many museums after 1990 removed sections dedicated to the communist period from their permanent displays and have left wide empty spaces instead.[9] In most cases, the museums explain the absence of the history of the communist period in their permanent displays for economic reasons rather than ideological ones, stating that they lack the financial resources for the preparation of a new presentation of communist history. However, it seems that the absence of history depends more on memory politics, which shapes the content of public memory by pointing out what exactly we should remember according to the needs of today and according to the kind of collective identity that is created and developed today. As a matter of fact, along with memory rituals, the demolition and construction of monuments, the development of education programmes and so on, museums are one of the major institutions in modern society to form and perform the national identity.

Museum exhibitions change along with each generation and depend on current social and political requirements. According to American sociologist Barry Schwartz, during years of national political crises, collective memory is constructed from "safe" events of the past on which public opinion is agreed. During periods of national political stability, however, more varied forms of memory are explored and they represent different aspects of the past.[10]

Fig. 2. Guided tour led by the former deportee, Museum of Resistance and Deportation, Kaunas. Photo: from the author's archive, 2009

After 1989, the "safe" heritage of the past in Eastern Europe was, first of all, the history of the resistance against the communist regime. The story of the resistance movements allowed not only the commemoration of the victims of communism, but also shaped a heroic historical narrative which helped to mobilize society and created support for a new collective identity based on the idea of nationalism.

The selective nature of memory politics is especially evident in dealing with three types of heritage from the Soviet era: the heritage of official communist culture, the heritage of anti-communist resistance, and the heritage of daily life under communism.[11] Of all these three types, the heritage of resistance has been the focus of attention in Lithuanian post-communist memory. Lithuania was the first of the three Baltic States to establish a museum devoted to communism's crimes. The Museum of Genocide Victims in Vilnius was founded in 1992 (while the Occupation museum in Latvia opened in 1993 and the Museum of Occupations in Tallinn only in 2003). As its title claims, the Museum of Genocide Victims is dedicated to the "physical and spiritual genocide of the Lithuanian people" committed by the communist regime.[12]

The museum is located in a historical building in the very centre of Vilnius; in the period of the first Soviet occupation from 1940 to 1941 this building was a political prison of the NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) and the NKGB (People's Commissariat for State Security), while from 1944 to 1991 it served as a KGB (Committee for State Security) prison. The modernly equipped museum exhibition is made up of authentic pieces of historical evidence – personal belongings, documents and photos, along with audio/video displays and context-providing computer presentations. The variety of exhibits and different ways of presenting them gives the museum visitor an opportunity for both emotional insight and critical reflection. However, the museum suggests its own version of history, encoding it into the performative act of walking through the museum space.

The permanent exhibition of the museum starts in the basement of the building, where the visitor can see authentic KGB prison cells, including an

execution cell. It then continues to the first floor, where the guerilla war in Lithuania after World War II is presented.[13] The second floor reveals the history of massive deportations of Lithuanian people to Siberia[14], as well as the history of the underground anti-Soviet movement and the history of the KGB in Lithuania. Finally, the exhibition ends with victorious images of *Sąjūdis* – the Lithuanian national revival movement in the late 1980s. Thus, a visit to the museum resembles a performance telling about the confrontation between the criminal and the victim in various periods of the communist regime. The museum has shaped its exhibition in accordance with a theological structure of suffering and resurrection and represents the image of the oppressed Lithuania, while the fifty years of the Soviet period are presented as a heroic struggle of an occupied nation against communism and its liberation from the regime. The representation of the communist past as a story about crimes and victims is also supported by the fact that there is only one criminal – communism, leaving aside Nazism. The museum is located in a former political prison that was used both by the KGB and by the Gestapo between 1941 and 1944. But the museum deals only with the crimes of the communist period.

Just like the Museum of Genocide Victims in Vilnius, all other museums of communism in the larger and smaller towns in Lithuania that I mentioned in the beginning also present a sole heritage of resistance – a story of communist crimes and the anti-communist struggle of the Lithuanian people. Most of these museums were established in the 1990s by the Union of Lithuanian Political Prisoners and Deportees, which was created as a public organization in 1988. These museums have been building their collections in quite a specific manner: the collections almost entirely consist of the personal belongings of former deportees and participants in the resistance movement.[15] This kind of collecting is significant in two respects: first, the museum as a representation of the past involves not only "writers" of history but also participants of history (witnesses to the past who donate their personal belongings to the museum as presents, and inheritors of the past who give the museum items from their family archives). Second, the museum collection includes artifacts that have emotional, rather than so-called historical, value to their former owners.

Fig. 3. Exhibits including a miniature book made of tree bark and a chess board made of bread, Museum of Resistance and Deportation, Kaunas. Photo: from the author's archive, 2009

A museum built on the basis of these collections often looks like a curiosity cabinet.[16] Like in the curiosity cabinets that have been known since Renaissance times and which displayed a wide variety of natural and man-made objects, in these museums a visitor can see some truly curious objects: for instance, an extremely small book made of tree bark or a chess set made of bread. Like curiosity cabinets, these museums are small and often located in just one room. Their opening hours are short; sometimes one can visit this kind of museum only by arrangement. The audience in this museum would usually be guided by the "owner" of history, and, in most cases, their employees are members of the Union of Lithuanian Political Prisoners and Deportees. A necessary condition for a visit is listening to the engaging stories alongside looking at displayed objects. Every day, these museums hold a performance of history, which, as one may presume, due to regular repetitions, fulfils a therapeutic function to the storyteller him/herself[17], while giving the visitor a version of history seen through the eyes of a victim. The museum visitor, taking part in this performance, has nearly no opportunity to question or critically think about the ambiguous events of the past (for instance, the situation of Lithuania after World War II and the guerrilla war that caused antagonism in Lithuanian society[18]). There is only one choice left for the visitor: to take either the criminal's or the victim's side. This kind of museum shows the history of the communist past through the images of terror and horror, reinforced by images of daily life in Siberia or in Lithuanian forests. So, the museums dealing with the heritage of resistance do not narrate the story of communism, but rather, and first of all, tell an anti-communist story.

In contrast to the "safe" heritage of anti-communist resistance, the heritage of official communist culture causes much more problems in post-communist memory politics. The major part of official communist material culture consists of public art from Soviet times. Fifty years of Soviet occupation gave Lithuania a lot of propaganda monuments that "decorated" public space in all the cities and towns. From 1989 to 1991, all of them (except just a few) were taken down and stored in the storehouses and backyards of local municipalities. For nearly a decade, while the authorities were deciding what to do with this heritage, some of the sculptures were damaged. For quite a long time, all of the state initiatives to establish a special museum for them failed. Finally, in 1998, a competition for exhibiting the monuments was organized. The competition was won by a businessman from Southern Lithuania who eventually built an open-air museum of Soviet sculptures on his private land of twenty hectares.[19]

The museum, known as *Grūto parkas,* offers the visitor a long journey into the past: the exhibition is two kilometres long. The museum has nearly 100 Soviet sculptures placed among trees, along with a reconstructed Soviet house of culture, a rural club/reading room, an open-air stage and an amusement park typical of Soviet times. The park also has some cafes and even a zoo. The museum displays ideological elements (or, to be more precise, a concentrate of these elements) characteristic of the visual environment of Soviet Lithuania, but the exhibition imitates a concentration camp in Siberia: at the entrance, visitors can see railway wagons that were used to deport people to Siberia; the sculptures are surrounded by watch towers; while the fence surrounding the park is made of barbed wire. The concept of the exhibition is supposed to be didactic: it aims "to reveal the negative essence of Soviet ideology" and "to demonstrate the genocide of the Lithuanian people".[20] However, most of the didactics just do not work here. As Malcolm Miles has observed, "the dark green of the forest seems, in a way, to be the de-contextualising equivalent of the white walls of a typical museum of modern art".[21] I would like to add that placing the relics of Soviet propaganda in the forest (culture in nature) and concentrating many of them in one place made the signs of the past appear anti-historical and even absurd; it preserves a distance from the past that one cannot identify with anymore. *Grūto parkas* functions as a theme park where the visitor encounters the exotic past of "the other". The audience may get involved in various performances here: taking photos next to the exotic monuments of Stalin and Lenin, tasting exotic Soviet food from a "nostalgia" menu in the restaurant, or playing with children at the amusement park to the sounds of propaganda music of those times. A curious thing is that this tourist attraction

Fig. 4. Fragment of the exhibition in the Grūtas Park. Photo: from the author's archive, 2007

creates the colonial "other" not just for tourists from the West, but also for those from the East, who are made to see the communist past as something alien, imposed and absurd.

One may argue that for visitors from post-communist countries, *Grūto parkas* works as a place of memory. The museum is very popular among tourists indeed, but it is also popular among Lithuanians, who like to spend their spare time there. Local visitors enjoy the images (as well as sounds, smells and flavours) that remind them of their own childhood or youth. Ideological signs – for instance, clothes (a school uniform) or a statue that used to stand at their native town square – awake their personal memories. Nevertheless, here their personal memory is separated from social history. Instead of a didactic lesson on a complicated communist past, what dominates in the park is a joyful re-discovery of images and stories related to one's own personal past. The history of communism displayed in an amusing shape and detached from its social meanings remains distant and incomprehensible.

The type of communist heritage that memory politics ignores most of all is the third type: the heritage of daily life under communism. Lithuania does not have a special museum that would widely introduce public daily life under communism. It is shown in a fragmentary manner at museums that focus on other subjects, such as the history of technology and industry[22] or the history of the education system[23]. The point is that the newest exhibitions of this type, arranged in the last several years, present the history of the communist period as a part of the larger Lithuanian history, while the main showpieces at those exhibitions – be it products made at Soviet factories or Soviet school stationery – are presented in the context of social and political life. These exhibitions do not demonize the communist past and do not show it as exotic. Moreover, they reflect it in a wider context: in one case, of industrial modernism, in the other, in the context of conflicting Cold War ideologies. However, the building of this type of museum exhibition is just starting in Lithuania, and they mostly only attract the attention of specialists, remaining at the margins of the route of those who are looking for historical representations of the communist past.

To summarize, one may say that the situation of post-communist memory politics in Lithuania is paradoxical. On the one hand, the remains of communist culture are still carefully collected and displayed. On the other hand, the subjects of the

communist past – the narratives and images that do not fit into the simple scheme of victim and criminal or of resistance and oppression – remain unrepresented. The questions about what the daily environment or the lifestyle of common Soviet citizens looked like or about the effect of Soviet propaganda, modernist ideology and utopias on these people remain unanswered. In short, the communist past, as a complex and contradictory history of modernity, remains untold in Lithuanian museums of history. According to French philosopher Paul Ricoeur, the political narrative of history or memory politics is essentially selective; it "remembers" certain events of the past and "forgets" others. "Seeing one thing is not seeing another. Recounting one drama is forgetting another."[24] Yet, according to the laws of psychology, "forgotten" or "blocked" memories never disappear, but are deposited in the collective unconscious, thus becoming a threat to society's health.

Notes

[1] The question used in the title of this article is a reference to the slogan "Bring communism to the museum" from the advertisement poster by the Socland Foundation, which in 2005 invited citizens of Warsaw to donate exhibits for the future Museum of Communism. See Konstantin Akinsha, 'Bringing Communism to the Museum' in: Katrin Klingan, Ines Kappert (eds.), *Leap into the City: Chisinau, Sofia, Pristina, Sarajevo, Warsaw, Zagreb, Ljubljana: Cultural Positions, Political Conditions: Seven Scenes from Europe*, Cologne: DuMont Literatur und Kunst Verlag, 2006.

[2] Carol Duncan, Alan Wallach, 'The Universal Survey Museum' in: Bettina Messias Carbonell (ed.), *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*, Malden, Oxford: Blackwell, 2004, p. 59.

[3] See Peter Vergo (ed.), *The New Museology*, London: Reaktion Books, 1989.

[4] Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*' in: *Representations*, No. 26, 1989, p. 7.

[5] Pierre Nora, 'Reasons for the Current Upsurge in Memory', in: *Eurozine*, 19 April 2002, http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2002-04-19-nora-en.html [last accessed 14 April 2010].

[6] In the international press *Grūto parkas* is often listed among places of so called fright tourism in the Baltic region. See for example Marine Dumeurger, 'Pays baltes: le frisson du totalitarisme' ('Baltic Countries: A Fear of Totalitarianism'), in: *Le Monde*, 27 September 2008, p. 27. To name a recent few research papers on the Museum of Genocide Victims in Vilnius and the *Grūto parkas*: James Mark, 'Containing Fascism: History in Post-Communist Baltic Occupation and Genocide Museums' in: Oksana Sarkisova, Péter Apor (eds.), *Past for the Eyes: East European Representations of Communism in Cinema and Museums after 1989*, Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2008, pp. 335-369; Malcolm Miles, 'Appropriating the Ex-Cold War' in: Mel Jordan, Malcolm Miles (eds.), *Art and Theory After Socialism*, Bristol, Chicago: Intellect, 2008, pp. 55-66.

[7] Museums of genocide, resistance and deportations operate in Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Panevėžys, Marijampolė, Alytus, Palanga, Druskininkai, Lazdijai, Merkinė.

[8] See website of the National Museum of Lithuania: http://www.lnm.lt.

[9] For instance, the War Museum or the Museum of the History of Lithuanian Medicine and Pharmacy in Kaunas.

[10] Barry Schwartz, 'The Social Context of Commemoration: A Study in Collective Memory' in: *Social Forces*, Vol. 61, No. 2, 1982, pp. 374-402.

[11] For the typology of Soviet heritage see Rasa Čepaitienė, *Laikas ir akmenys. Kultūros paveldo sampratos moderniojoje Lietuvoje* (*Time and Stones. The Notions of Cultural Heritage in Modern Lithuania*), Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos instituto leidykla, 2005, pp. 302-308.

[12] http://www.genocid.lt/muziejus/en/.

[13] The guerilla war in occupied Lithuania continued for almost ten years.

[14] Massive deportations of Lithuanian people went on from 1940 to 1941 and again from 1945 to 1953 and involved more than 130,000 people in total.

[15] The data about collecting and functioning principles of the museums established by the Union of Lithuanian Political Prisoners and Deportees was gathered during field research conducted at the Museum of Resistance and Deportation in Kaunas in autumn 2009.

[16] More about phenomenon of curiosity cabinets and their visits' features see Susan A. Crane, 'Curious Cabinets and Imaginary Museums' in: Susan A. Crane (ed.), *Museums and Memory*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 60-80.

[17] More about performing an act of memory and healing see Mieke Bal, 'Introduction' in: Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, Leo Spitzer (eds.), *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*, Hanover, London: University Press of New England, 1999, pp. vii-xvii.

[18] For the discussion about the heroic and criminal sides of guerrilla war in Lithuania see recent scholarship which is critical about one-sided heroic representation of the events between 1944 and 1953: Mindaugas Pocius, *Kita mėnulio pusė. Lietuvos partizanų kova su kolaboravimu 1944-1953 metais* (*The Other Side of the Moon. The Struggle of Lithuanian Guerrillas with Collaboration 1944-1953*), Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos instituto leidykla, 2009.

[19] A strong argument for choosing this undertaking was that its manager, Viliumas Malinauskas, planned to establish the exhibition using private funds earned from his family's mushroom and berry business without asking for financial support from the state. Cf. with memory politics in post-communist Hungary. Here, after famous conference *Monuments in Hungary* held in Debrecen in 1990, the state assigned responsibility to local governing bodies for preservation of communist monuments as documents of a certain period of history. Following this rule the municipality of Budapest established Budapest's statue park museum which holds removed public monuments of the communist period. Beverly A. James, *Imagining Post-*

communism: Visual Narratives of Hungary's 1956 Revolution, Texas: A&M University Press, 2005, pp. 29-30.

[20] See a description of the idea of the museum at: http://www.grutoparkas.lt [last accessed 14 April 2010].

[21] Malcolm Miles, 'Appropriating the Ex-Cold War' in: *Art History & Criticism. Art and Politics: Case-Studies from Eastern Europe*, Vol. 3, 2007, p. 173.

[22] A permanent exhibition including information on the communist period was opened in 2008 in the Lithuanian Energy and Technology Museum in Vilnius. See http://www.emuziejus.lt.

[23] For example, the Pedagogical Museum in Kaunas with its newly prepared interactive exhibition presents the development of education in Lithuania from the 14th to 21st century including the fifty years of the Soviet educational system. See http://www.pedagoginismuziejus.lt.

[24] Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, London, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004, p. 452.

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Kokį komunizmą atiduoti muziejui? Apie atminimo politiką Lietuvoje

Reikšminiai žodžiai: (post)komunizmas, atmintis, tapatybė, muziejai, muziejų lankymo patirtis, naujoji muziejininkystė.

Santrauka

Straipsnyje pristatomam tyrimui yra aktuali politinė muziejaus kaip galios institucijos samprata, kurią iš diskurso teorijos (M. Foucault), kultūros studijų (E. Said) ir kultūrinio aktyvizmo judėjimų XX a. devintajame dešimtmetyje perėmė *naujosios muziejininkystės* studijos, siekusios kritiškai permąstyti praeities artefaktų kolekcionavimo, kontekstualizavimo ir eksponavimo praktikas. Neilgai trukus, po 1989-ųjų, muziejaus kaip „atminimo vietos" (P. Nora), kurioje formuojamas kolektyvinis tapatumas, samprata tapo ypač aktuali buvusio Rytų bloko šalyse, susidūrusiose su komunistinio paveldo išsaugojimo klausimu. Remiantis šiomis teorinėmis muziejų tyrimo perspektyvomis straipsnyje nagrinėjama, kaip komunistinė praeitis yra reprezentuojama istorijos muziejuose Lietuvoje ir kokius pokomunistinės atminimo politikos bruožus šios reprezentacijos atskleidžia.

Siekiant išsiaiškinti, kokias idėjas ir vertybes perteikia įvairios komunistiniam laikotarpiui skirtos istorinės ekspozicijos, straipsnyje analizuojami tokių ekspozicijų vizualiniai ir erdviniai naratyvai bei performatyvūs muziejaus lankymo aspektai. Tekste apžvelgiama, ar istorijos muziejuose atsispindi ir kaip yra pristatomi trys komunistinio paveldo tipai – oficialusis, rezistencinis ir kasdienybės palikimai (R. Čepaitienės pasiūlyta tipologija). Atlikus tyrimą, paaiškėjo, kad Lietuvoje yra gausu didesnių ir mažesnių komunistiniam laikotarpiui skirtų istorijos muziejų. Tačiau didžioji jų dalis reprezentuoja ne sudėtingą komunistinės praeities istoriją, o antikomunistinį požiūrį į šią praeitį. Istorijos nebuvimas Lietuvos istorijos muziejuose pasireiškia arba visišku komunistinio periodo *eliminavimu* iš naujausių laikų istorijos ekspozicijų, arba komunistinės praeities *redukavimu* į pasakojimą apie komunizmo nusikaltimus ir aukas, arba *atsiribojimu* nuo komunistinės praeities paverčiant ją egzotiška „kito" istorija.

Tad pokomunistinės atminimo politikos situacija Lietuvoje yra paradoksali. Viena vertus, komunistinio laikotarpio paveldas yra kolekcionuojamas, saugomas ir eksponuojamas. Kita vertus, tie komunistinės istorijos subjektai, pasakojimai ir vaizdai, kurie netelpa į paprastas schemas „auka vs. nusikaltėlis", „rezistencija vs. represija", lieka pokomunistinės atminimo politikos užribyje. Klausimai apie tai, kokia buvo paprasto sovietinio žmogaus kasdienybės aplinka ir gyvenimo stilius, kaip jį veikė ne tik komunistinė propaganda, bet ir industrinio modernizmo ideologija bei utopijos, lieka neatsakyti. Prancūzų filosofas Paulas Ricoeuras yra rašęs, kad politinis istorijos naratyvas iš esmės yra selektyvus, „prisimindamas" vienus ir „užmiršdamas" kitus praeities įvykius, tačiau pagal psichologijos dėsnius, „pamiršti" arba „užblokuoti" prisiminimai ne dingsta, o nusėda kolektyvinėje pasąmonėje, nešdami grėsmę visuomenės sveikatai.

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ANIMATING *GENIUS LOCI*: HISTORICAL MEMORY AND SITE-SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE

Key words: theatre, site-specific performance, performance-as-research, environmental theatre, *genius loci*, memory of Jewish culture.

INTRODUCTION

When we think of the possibilities of theatre to participate in the processes of interpreting the past, constructing and reconstructing history and animating historical memory, it is impossible to avoid the issue of the contemporary performance practices characterized as *site-specific*. For site-specific theatre is considered to be central among the forms of contemporary performing arts, seeking (and succeeding) in evoking the historical and cultural memory of a particular place, restoring local histories and narratives, and wakening authentic *genius loci*.

The aim of this article is to analyse site-specific theatre productions as the performative practice of writing and rewriting history, encouraging the creative and active relation of the performers and spectators towards the legacy of the past inscribed into the social and cultural landscape of a place. Although contemporary theatre researchers get increasingly involved in the phenomenon of site-specific theatre and there is a number of excellent studies on the subject[1], in Lithuania the research on theory and practice of site-specificity is scarce. Some Lithuanian publications focus on the general relations between theatre and space[2], while others inquire into some specific facets of performance place[3], though the possibilities of site-specific theatre to participate in the work of interpreting the past and history still lack thorough investigation. The article refers to theoretical definitions of site-specific theatre and focuses on the production of the theatre company *Miraklis* called *Pro Memoria Šv. Stepono 7* (Pro Memoria Saint Stephen's Street, Number 7) (1995), which is a case revealing artistic strategies that can be defined as performance-as-research, collaboration and participation.

SITE-SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE

One has to admit though, that the notion of "site-specific" originating in the discourse of visual arts and subsequently adopted by theatre artists and critics is often used to describe very different theatrical and paratheatrical practices, starting with conventional productions of a traditional kind of drama theatre, staged in non-traditional spaces and all the way to re-enactments of military battles in the historical locations or, say, street pageants based on medieval traditions. However, all of those quite remote artistic practices rest on the same key disposition, namely to remove the performance from the traditional theatre building and to validate the new place as a central component of the performance. According to probably the most laconic and yet precise definition of the site-specific performance, it is a "performance occurring in non-theatre venues and in which the site is a vital element, instrumental in developing the theme or form of the work".[4]

To make it even more explicit, one should add that when the non-traditional space used in the production determines the form (or aesthetic choices),

rather than the content, the production is characterized as "space-specific". Whereas the cases when the choice of space influences the thematic aspects of the content and relates to the local sociocultural historical landscape are referred to as "place-specific".[5] With the increase of interest of contemporary performance artists in non-traditional spaces, it becomes important for a critical reflection to position the productions adequately between the categories of site-specific, space-specific or place-specific.

I remember my recent conversation with stage director Ain Mäeots from Tartu's *Vanemuine* theatre at the Baltic theatre festival and his remark that the taste for specific, non-traditional theatrical spaces in contemporary Estonian theatre has recently increased to such a degree that the directors almost compete among themselves to find the most unexpected place for their performance, as it seems obvious that in order to attract the public's attention one has to choose the fanciest, most inconvenient and difficult place to approach (like for example, deep in the forest in the middle of the night). However, one has to admit that the majority of such site-specific theatre productions, in Estonia as well as in the other countries (including Lithuania), are made exclusive only by the fact that they are performed not on the traditional proscenium stage, but in a setting unusual (and thus – exotic) for the performers and the spectators. The setting, in other words, can trigger the sensations of the public or provoke a somewhat different reading of the signs of the performance, however in many cases it does not interact closely with the thematic field and the meaning of the production.

PERFORMANCE AS HISTORICAL RESEARCH

However, when we speak about site-specific performance as a means of (re)constructing historical memory and as the possibility of reviving the peculiar local atmosphere, we have to focus on the productions that use the alternative theatrical space so as to turn it into the most important factor in determining the aesthetic form and the meaningful content of the production. In other words, we should discuss the examples of the productions where the sociocultural past and present of the chosen place stimulates the creative vision of the authors, delineates the thematic outlines of future productions and, eventually, is turned into an integral condition of the "here and now" of the performance. In cases like these, the authors of the production see the performance space as a discourse containing multiple cultural, social and historical layers and open to manifold artistic (re)readings and (re)writings. So what can probably be described as the basic point for the author of the site-specific performance is to listen carefully to this suggestive polyphonic text and to find a way to convey the collective experiences and memories contained in it, using theatrical language.

On the other hand, following researcher on site-specific performance Fiona Wilkie, one might propose that "in order to deal with the *contained* memories of site" an artist has not only to "find some way of *telling* them", but also "in doing so the choice must be made between what to tell, what to leave buried or perhaps to erase, and what other memories to import into the space".[6] An artist, therefore, involved in the production of site-specific performance inevitably has to turn himself into a historian, collecting authentic data, analyzing the material and immaterial heritage of the sociocultural landscape and, eventually, constructing his own version of history inscribed into the local space. The production in turn becomes a performance-as-research and an artistic practice participating immediately in the process of writing, rewriting and interpreting history.

CASE STUDY – *PRO MEMORIA ŠV. STEPONO 7*

At this point I would like to focus on a particular example, namely, the production of *Pro Memoria Šv. Stepono 7* (Pro Memoria Saint Stephen's Street, Number 7) which is a case revealing the different manners of performative (re)constructions and (re) interpretations of history and the artistic strategies for awaking of *genius loci*.

The 1995 performance of *Pro Memoria Šv. Stepono 7* was directed by stage designer Vega Vaičiūnaitė. The group of performers who came together for this production (they called themselves *Vilnius musical*

street show company Miraklis and later became environmental theatre *Miraklis*) existed until 2002 and produced 9 performances. It was the very first (and so far – the only) theatre company of this kind in Lithuania. The history of the production of this performance points out a particular mode of production characteristic to site-specific theatre and proves that artistic productions can be turned into a certain medium to restore collective reminiscences and make it possible for history to have a voice in the present.

In 1995, as the festival *Vilnius Days* drew closer, the stage designer Vega Vaičiūnaitė was planning to make an installation in a derelict house under number 7 Saint Stephen Street, located in the old city of Vilnius. The house with a unique historical memory was once among the most impressive buildings in this part of the old city.[7] However, according to the director herself, when she took a look through the gates of the house in 1995, she saw what was "probably the most dreadful yard in Vilnius", which appeared to her as "a symbol of a devastated city" and a dreadful metaphor of the historical memory of the city.[8] Having learned about the fact that this disintegrating, abandoned house, located on the edge of the old Jewish quarter of Vilnius, was once inhabited by Jews, Vaičiūnaitė intended to make (as she put it) a "temporary museum of genocide": an installation displaced all over the building, composed of giant figures of "bird people", old photographs, books, sheet music and inscriptions.[9] However, as the work on that memorial project progressed, the artist discovered not only the special, living past of this house, but also the unique present of this multicultural space.

As Vaičiūnaitė put it: "the house has attracted many different and amazing personalities"[10], meaning, artists from different disciplines (a painter, a puppet artist, a sculptress, musicians from the rock band *Skylė*, and artists of light and pyrotechnics) as well as members of the multinational community of this city quarter (including the older people of the neighborhood, who still remembering the history of the house, as well as passers-by, children spending most of their day in the street, etc.). As the artist was researching the history of the house, collecting old pictures and books, listening to the recollections and stories of the local people and watching the games of the local children, Vaičiūnaitė gradually developed the idea of a large scale artistic performance. Thus what was to have been an installation made by one artist turned into a unique, site-specific performance, based on the principles of artistic collaboration and community participation; the performance, which was described by theatre critics as a "phantasmagoric dream, dedicated to the memory of life that once took place in this quarter".[11]

Initially, Vega Vaičiūnaitė intended to focus on the aspects of house number 7 in Saint Stephen's Street that had a direct relation to the tragic destiny of the Jews of Vilnius, once known as the Jerusalem of the North. The stage designer knew that this quarter of the old city of Vilnius, famous at the time for the ruined buildings and slums, during the period from the end of the 19th century to the World War II had been the centre of the cultural, religious, economic and social life of *Litvaks*. Different parts of Saint Stephen's Street (Šv. Stepono Didžioji and Šv. Stepono Mažoji) were full of small stores and workshops and a publishing house; the Talmud Torah school was here and houses 5 and 7, according to art and city historians, were "the most impressive in the whole quarter".[12] World War II and the Soviet period erased this page of Vilnius history, while the buildings of enchanting beauty turned into ruins.

However, as work on the project proceeded it turned out that the street of Saint Stephen had a great history long before the 19th century; according to old legends it was once the site of the holy city for Pagan high priests (and the centre of pre-Christian Lithuania) burned down by the Teutonic Order. Later it became the main street of the Rūdininkai – the quarter located on the outskirts of the city – with a huge horse and grain market, noisy lodging houses and inns. After a fire in the 18th century, the newly built stone buildings shaped the quarter's architectural character, which is retained today, and turned it into the setting for the complex and painful lessons of history of 20th century Vilnius (wars, occupations, genocides and mass deportations). The earliest facts of the history of Saint Stephen Street were learned by the authors of the performance

from historical research[13], though a significant part of it was still alive in the memories of the inhabitants of the neighborhood. The local people, for example, told of the teachers and the pupils of the local Jewish school shot down in the yard of house number 7 Saint Stephen's Street, about the atrocious Soviet repressions of the post-war years, about the habits and customs of the local population and about the young girl that once lived here and on her wedding day she had a long white dress which got smudged as she was walking down the street. The local stories and legends told by the people of different nationalities (Lithuanians, Russians, Poles and Jews) might have been considered quite unimportant if they were not used as the basis for the performance of *Pro Memoria Šv. Stepono 7*. Thus, according to Vega Vaičiūnaitė, the place itself provoked a narrative that was completely unexpected for the authors of the production.[14] The narrative that had no coherent plot, yet offered suggestive images of certain moments in the history of house number 7.

The performance is constructed as if it was a "Pagan urban ritual" intended to "disenchant"[15] the stiff and frozen space of the house and consists of different episodes: the lesson, the wedding, the children's game, the war, the funeral, and the sacrifice. All these episodes were, as theatre critics noticed, "observed and attended by angels, the apostles of the ruins".[16] The central element of the structure of the performance is, however, not the fragmented plot line, but rather the very space and its audiovisual organization.[17]

With the help of imagery and sound the authors inhabit and thus animate every part of the architectural structure of the building: the ritual-like action in the abandoned inner yard is filled with deindividualized characters (people, bird-people and angels played by non-professional actors (artists, musicians and children)); empty window openings covered with pages from old books, sheet music and notes are filled with mysterious shadows (that evoke fragments of the events that took place in the house, like the killing of the Jewish teachers and pupils); the huge figures of the masked "bird-people" with wings appear above the roofs of the houses; lighting effects help in withdrawing the inner spaces of the house from the dark ruins and in spotlighting the Jewish inscriptions on the broken walls; the intense soundscape that fills the space consists of live music, combining Jewish and Lithuanian folk music played by the rock band *Skylė* and the chamber music group *Libra*; texts and fragments of poetry are uttered in Lithuanian, Polish, Russian and Yiddish; the patter of the children's game; the sounds and noises coming from historical memory (for example the neigh of horses and the clack of their hoofs revive the atmosphere of the horse market once situated there). All these intense images and sounds help to create a total theatrical event ending with the final scene of the ritual burning of the huge white figure of an angel, which is a symbolic act of sacrifice dedicated to the animation of the dying space.

CONCLUSION

Although the performance *Pro Memoria Šv. Stepono 7* is deeply rooted in the environment of a particular quarter of Vilnius, the authors, by touching upon the themes of historical past, memory and identity of place relate it to the much broader issues of writing and interpreting history. In a broader context this abandoned and ruined house became a meaningful metaphor of our historical and cultural past and memory, which was deliberately subverted and deformed during the Soviet years. By choosing the path of artistic collaboration and dialogic relationship with the sociocultural milieu and local community, the authors of the *Pro Memoria Šv. Stepono 7* succeeded in giving voice to the space and making the city itself the "playwright, the director and the actor"[18] of the performance. The multilayered, simultaneous, non-linear and non-narrative character of the performance was conditioned not so much by the aesthetic quest, but by the specific nature of the place itself and by the unique input of the local community. Such an artistic form was not so much a reflection of the history of the place, but of multiple histories; it did not revive just the local memory, but the variety of memories; it did not define a single identity of the place, but rather discovered plentiful identities. In other words, it released multiple voices inscribed into the sociocultural landscape of this quarter of Vilnius and thus animated *genius loci*.

Notes

[1] Among others, see Nick Kaye, *Site-Specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation*, London, New York: Routledge, 2000 or Fiona Wilkie, *Out of Place. The Negotiation of Space in Site-Specific Performance*, Ph. D. Thesis, University of Surrey, 2004.

[2] See, e.g., Ramunė Marcinkevičiūtė, 'Netradicinėse erdvėse. Šiuolaikinio teatro nerimas ir naujų vietų trauka' ('The Non-Traditional Space. Anxiety in Contemporary Theatre and the Appeal of New Places') in: *Darbai ir dienos*, No. 39, 2004, pp. 7-20.

[3] See Edgaras Klivis, 'Perrašomos vietos: topografija, identitetas ir politika šiuolaikiniame Lietuvos teatre' ('Rewriting Places: Topography, Identity and Politics in Contemporary Lithuanian Theatre') in: *Meno istorija ir kritika*, No. 4, 2008, pp. 171-184.

[4] Fiona Wilkie, 2004, p. 2.

[5] As defined by members of the working group *Site-Specific Performance* of association *Performance Studies International*, see http://psi-web.org/organization/groups-and-committees/site-specific-performance/.

[6] Fiona Wilkie, 2004, p. 107.

[7] See, e.g., 'Šv. Stepono gatvės istorija' ('History of St. Stephen's Street') in: http://www.dominija.lt/senamiescio/istorija.html.

[8] Quoted in Dainius Gasparavičius, 'Naujų raiškos priemonių ieškojimo kryptys šiuolaikiniame Lietuvos teatre. Aplinkos teatro trupė "Miraklis"' ('Searching for New Means of Expression in Contemporary Lithuanian Theatre. Environmental Theatre "Miraklis"') in: Bronius Vaškelis et al. (eds.), *Teatrologiniai eskizai*, Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto leidykla, 2000, p. 53.

[9] Vega Vaičiūnaitė, 'Aristokratiškasis "Miraklio" menas griuvėsiuose. Kalbėjosi Vaidas Jauniškis' ('The Aristocratic Art of "Miraklis" Amongst the Ruins: an Interview with Vaidas Jauniškis'), in: *Lietuvos rytas*, 22 October 1996, p. 43.

[10] Quoted in Dainius Gasparavičius, 2000, p. 49.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ingrida Jonušienė, 'Stotis.tranzitas.lt' ('Station.transit.lt'), in: *Šiaurės Atėnai*, 10 October 2008, p. 6.

[13] Such as the historical study *Lost Vilnius* (Vladas Drėma, *Dingęs Vilnius* (*Lost Vilnius*), Vilnius: Vaga, 1991.).

[14] Quoted in Dainius Gasparavičius, 2000, p. 59.

[15] Vega Vaičiūnaitė, 1996, p. 43.

[16] Vaidas Jauniškis, 'Dabar: anuometinio miesto ilgesys' ('Now: Nostalgia for the Lost City') in: *Teatras*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1998, p. 59.

[17] Vaičiūnaitė once said that she prefers theatre based not on the dramatic plot, but rather on "the musical act or visuality". Quoted in Dainius Gasparavičius, 2000, p. 65.

[18] Vaidas Jauniškis, 1998, p. 59.

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Pažadinant *genius loci*: istorinė atmintis ir specifinės vietos teatras

Reikšminiai žodžiai: teatras, specifinės vietos teatras, spektaklis kaip tyrimas, aplinkos teatras, *genius loci*, žydų kultūros atmintis.

Santrauka

Analizuojant tai, kaip teatras gali dalyvauti praeities interpretavimo, istorijos konstravimo ir rekonstravimo bei istorinės atminties atgaivinimo procesuose, mūsų žvilgsnis neišvengiamai krypsta į tas šiuolaikinio teatro praktikas, kurios žymimos specifinės vietos teatro (*site-specific performance*) vardu. Nes būtent specifinės vietos teatras yra laikomas viena svarbiausių šiandienos teatro formų, siekiančių (ir gebančių) prikelti istorinę, kultūrinę tam tikros vietos atmintį, atgaivinti lokalias istorijas ir pasakojimus, pažadinti autentišką vietos dvasią (*genius loci*).

Specifinės vietos teatro terminas šiuolaikiniame teatrologiniame diskurse vartojamas itin skirtingų teatrinių ir parateatrinių veiklų (nuo konvencionalių, tradicinio pobūdžio dramos teatro spektaklių netradicinėse erdvėse iki karinių mūšių rekonstrukcijų istorinėse vietovėse ar viduramžišką tradiciją tęsiančių teatralizuotų eitynių miesto gatvėmis) apibūdinimui. Tačiau skirtingus specifinės vietos teatro pavyzdžius vienija esminė nuostata – iškeldinti spektaklį iš tradicinio teatro pastato ir įteisinti pasirinktą vaidinimo erdvę kaip lemiamą teatrinio veiksmo komponentą. Šiuolaikinio teatro praktika rodo, kad geriausiuose specifinės vietos teatro pavyzdžiuose netradicinės, neteatrinės erdvės pasirinkimas ir panaudojimas tampa svarbiausiu spektaklio estetinę formą bei prasminį turinį lemiančiu veiksniu.

Straipsnyje teigiama, kad, įsitraukdami į praeities interpretavimo ir istorijos (per)rašymo procesus, specifinės vietos

teatro kūrėjai traktuoja pasirinktą erdvę kaip daugialypį skirtingų kultūrinių, socialinių, istorinių sluoksnių diskursą, atvirą įvairiopiems meniniams (per)skaitymams ir (per)rašymams. Tokiu būdu menininkai neišvengiamai tampa savotiškais istorikais, renkančiais autentišką medžiagą, tyrinėjančiais materialų ir nematerialų sociokultūrinio landšafto palikimą ir, galiausiai, komponuojančiais savąją lokalioje erdvėje įrašytos istorijos versiją. Savo ruožtu specifinės vietos teatro spektakliai tampa meniniais artefaktais, tiesiogiai dalyvaujančiais istorijos rašymo, perrašymo ir interpretavimo praktikose. Šiame straipsnyje, remiantis teorinėmis specifinės vietos teatro apibrėžtimis, analizuojamas aplinkos teatro trupės *Miraklis* spektaklis *Pro Memoria Šv. Stepono 7* (1995), atskleidžiantis ne tik performatyvius istorijos (re)konstravimo bei (re)interpretavimo būdus, bet ir tokias menines strategijas, kurias galima charakterizuoti spektaklio kaip tyrimo (*performance-as-research*), bendradarbiavimo (*collaboration*) bei dalyvavimo (*participation*) terminais.

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ALONGSIDE STRUVE'S MERIDIAN ARC: SYMBOLIC REFLECTIONS OF MEMORIES

Key words: dialogic space, geodetic measurement, Meridian Arc Monument in Hammerfest (Fuglenes), Nomadism, the vernacular, the spiritual, the political, *Verdensteatret*, Norway, *Houkka Brothers* (Kristian Smeds), *Vilna Scena*, Kiev.

The German-Russian astronomer Friedrich Georg Wilhelm Struve (1793-1864) took 39 years, from 1816 to 1855, to accomplish the project of measuring the meridian arc named after him from the Black Sea to the Barents Sea. The monument to this endeavor in Hammerfest, Finnmark, is one of the few memorials to have survived the destruction of the World War II in this the northernmost city of the world. Struve's meridian reflected Norway's entry into international cooperation, and from a geo-cultural perspective this meridian symbolized the border in Europe between East and West, extending from The Black Sea, through Ukraine, White Russia and Lithuania, and connecting with Finland and the Nordic Countries, ending up in the polar region.

The figure of the triangle is in trigonometric land measuring based on triangular points, with the meridian arc as a middle line in relation to the measurement points in the landscape. If we inscribe a triangle in a circle, it will relate to a space which can bee seen metaphorically as dialogic space, by the way triangular lines intersect with each other and thus "network" like in a web. I would also propose to speak about the basic triangular lines reflecting spiritual, vernacular and political dimensions in the dialogic space.

The middle line of the triangles in the making of Struve's meridian intersects with the geographical space from the Black Sea Area up to the Arctic Sea and regions of the pole. In this area there is a long range of linguistic and political contrasts and reflections of history and cultural interaction in a space largely coinciding with the post Soviet area or closely bordering this area.

Lithuanian philosopher Grigorij Pomerants has spoken about the truth of the dialogue (*dialogens sannhet*).[1] Pomerants worked as a librarian in the early post-Stalin period, by the 1950s gaining access to the secret books on spiritual philosophy in Moscow. I would like to see some kind of parallel between Struve's meridian and Pomerants sense of dialogue in a cultural space. Pomerants worked on the religious dimension towards the Oriental and Shamanistic, which may connect us to biosophy and ecology as ways of understanding the esthetics in addition to the religious and ethical. One could even speak of some kind of transgression from the esthetic to the ethical and ecological, relating to spiritual tendencies that already had come to expression in European philosophical thought. There is a long tradition of spiritual thinking in Western philosophy, opposing materialistic understanding in the Aristotelian and Hegelian tradition leading up to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Gottfried Leibniz and Ernst Cassirer belong to different periods, but are still simultaneous to each other in a synchronic sense in opposition to the diachronic understanding of History as a linear idea to be fulfilled by a final political solution.

Metaphysics has always been there in the

background of the German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), who tried to define our metaphysical reality by describing it as individual substances that, through their mutual relations, create an abstract universe touching on conceptions of absolute space and absolute time. Leibniz did not see these as absolute space and separate quantities, but rather as dimension with mutual relations. From this point of view time and space form a system where they are determined by each other and expressed by various events. An artist may get into touch with these events and perhaps also express them in his art.

We know these artistic expressions from the descriptions of events of the mythical world, where the legends speak for instance of creatures of fantasy and mythical figures. This is a social and physical space beyond our sense of reality, but it reaches us through symbols and figurative expressions that apparently live their own lives. In our time it is the artists who describe metaphysical events and create symbolic pictures. This space has no fixed structure and only gets meaning when we look at the event and the artwork in relation to each other.

According to the German philosopher Ernst Cassirer (1874-1945), the significance of these events and symbols change as the space goes from being mythical to being aesthetic. Nevertheless, art must relate to the mystical space and its distinctive atmosphere, while consciousness of form arises through the artistic process. The artist's main priority is form – a form that in this context does not have to relate to certain concepts of reality. Such an imaginary reality may be as real as the empirical or concrete reality. The artist has no duty to legitimize himself like the scientist must. He may be en route in a never-ending process that continues by its own virtue.[2]

In the visual arts, the concept of landscapes and interiors reflects the individual's gaze and standpoint. Such landscapes and interiors can be metaphoric expressions and depictions for transferal in the abstract and figurative senses. The metaphoric gaze can be used in art and science as a means to apprehend both cultural and personal identities as expressions of personal context and experience. The theatrical gaze is a gaze from the outside, which looks and conceptualizes from a personal vantage point. The normative construction of meaning has proved insufficient for comprehension in both the artistic and the scientific senses. This experience finds recurrent expression in the visual arts and scenography, according to a tradition since symbolism of the 20th century re-ritualized art in the light of the same symbolism and of the mysticism movement in art for its own sake – or for the sake of the spiritual.

I would claim that it is against the background of this tradition that we recognize that the viewer or audience member has to adopt a personal stance to an artist's picture or a scenographic installation in the theatre. The gaze has, so to speak, been absolved from having to master meaning in a normative sense, on the basis of hierarchically administered systems committed to established criteria for judgments of taste. Landscapes and interiors, through the memories that are attached to them, are expressions of open structures that can only be given meaning by the spectator. Metaphors are the tools by means of which the gaze defines what is perceived of by the gaze. Thus new paradigms in art can also be conceived of. The diversity of the landscapes and interiors create complex structures. They have to be viewed in connection with the insight that meaning can no longer be inferred from conventional notions of what artistic expression should or should not convey. Comparable to the philosopher, the artist can work with dynamic and plastic concepts of metaphorical origin. As the gaze recognizes the artistic context, it is motivated to seek the aesthetic of perception and experience.

Contextual factors influence the development of art and theatre in a way that transforms the marginalized into an expression of a decentralized and nomadic comprehension. The various elements in such processes can be reused as a kind of recirculation. In other words, concepts, icons and plastic elements tend to be redeployed or duplicated, thereby acquiring a character of their own independent of human presence. The great innovator of modern theatre and scenography, Edward Gordon Craig, envisioned a form of theatre in which living actors

would be replaced by a kind of super-marionette (*Übermarionette*). Forms expressed through the effects of light and shadow would convey spirituality unachievable by means of material, physical presence. Thus Craig represents a spiritual and meditative approach to art that accorded considerable freedom to the use of varied styles and forms of expression.

Visual art is a matter of various personal approaches creating a break with what we could call mainstream thought or the mainstream orientation. This kind of break can result in what I have dubbed an artistic *post-mainstream*.[3] This is in turn an expression of liberation from centralized thinking and meaning construction capable of accommodating marginality. The dissolution of centralized thinking is thereby an outcome that allows the gaze to wander freely through the metaphoric landscape, almost like in a virtual world, where one door after another is opened at every touch of the computer keyboard. Personal and cultural premises underlie art's culture of the experience, which is relentlessly gaining greater ground. In this connection, works of art that assume a closed aesthetic are becoming steadily more obsolete.

Hybrids that merge various artistic genres or various historically distinct artistic periods contribute to an experience of art that is more open than we could hitherto have imagined. Landscapes and interiors become meaningful as loci of exposed materiality, free of human individuals.

The materiality of human life, in the sense of a materiality cultivated for its own sake, has been criticized by the tradition we associate with symbolism and mysticism. Landscapes and interiors can reveal an awareness of a method for investigating emptiness as such. In much the same way as Craig dispenses with human presence through his notion of the *Übermarionette*, and it would appear that he is motivated in this by the notion of a zero point, comparable to certain ideas in Buddhist and Hindu philosophy. One place where this notion of a zero point finds expression in art theory is in Roland Barthes' famous essay on the "zero degree of writing".[4] One can view this resetting to zero as a meditative process – a way of breaking with and opposing human materiality. The Polish theatre artist Jerzy Grotowski achieved the same by claiming that theatre should be poor, i.e. it should renounce outward, technical effects. Antonin Artaud sought to place theatre's visual and aural means of expression on an equal footing with the dramatic text, and in the 1950s and 1960s, influenced by meditation and esoteric systems of philosophy, awareness developed for what is called the actor's third eye. This was the notion of an intuition that corrects and overrides the eyes with which we usually look on the world, and that through meditation we can attain an awareness of the third way.

To my understanding, the third way lies between what we call deconstruction and reconstruction, and in a postmodern perspective it provides the possibility of reconstructing and assembling new images from the fragments that remain after the devastating critique of materiality and conventional truths. A new consciousness of context, identity and difference has entered art through the way postmodernity plays with established standards. At the same time a desire has arisen to reintroduce a metaphysical seriousness to replace the collapse of values brought about by religious and social powers during the 20th century's chaos of wars and upheavals. In order to arrive at that, the gaze that sees has had to redefine itself in the light of the critique of materiality as a goal of human existence.

Jerzy Grotowski claimed a zero point position by emphasizing the poverty of theatre, through the will to dispense with exteriority and spectacular technical means of expressions. This way theatre should remain poor. Antonin Artaud had already asked for a theatre less based in language or speech, but more in physical expression and situation. A certain influence also came about from the Russian purveyor of mystical thinking, Georg Ivanovitsj Gurdjieff, indicting even a fourth way. In the 1960s one even spoke about the actor's third eye, which I have come upon in conversations with actors educated at this time. Maybe we can speak about a third way in between deconstruction and reconstruction, and giving the pathway to seeing new images composed by the fragments of deconstructing the fake truth

of established hierarchic landscapes and interiors. Thus a new consciousness about context and identities would come about, leading to a wish to reconstruct the fragments and the bits and pieces after the moral collapse of political systems and established religion. The gaze is thus redefined and purged.

What is the situation for a more spiritual way of understanding in the arts and science in the area of the former Soviet Union? To what extent would the spiritual be visible in the communist society after materialist thinking had vanished? I already mentioned Grigorij Pomerants who was appointed "librarian of the secret books", the books that were not meant to be read for a greater public – books on spiritual philosophy, Zen Buddhism, Yoga and so on... books on spiritual movements that also had been widely researched and studied by earlier Soviet Russian anthropologists and folklorists as well as historians of religion. I can only mention Michail Bachtin and Wladimir Propp, alongside, for instance, the theatre and film director Sergej Eisenstein who undertook a trip to Mexico to film the landscapes of snakes and mescaline before Artaud went there.

In the following I will touch upon some examples from the area more or less touched by Struve's meridian. First of all by reminding myself of a meeting with Ukrainian philosopher Michael Blumenkrants together with the Norwegian theatre company *Verdensteatret* in Odessa. We organized a debate in a hotel room. The debate had as its focus how the bits and pieces of an exploded postmodern world could be put together again – like a mosaic. *Verdensteatret* was about collecting visual and auditive materials for their production of *Tsalal,* collected during a trip from Kiev to Odessa, and from Odessa to Istanbul.

It was also clear to me that Turkish dervish dances and SUFI culture had been a strong source of inspiration for the Soviet Russian theatre and film creators of the 1920s and 1930s, in a period when many Turkish theatre people went to Russia to study. That was also the case with the mentor of Turkish theatre director Ulusoy, whom French theatre researchers have researched to find some common roots in the area of the Black Sea, like Béatrice Picon-Vallin in her research work on the Turkish theatre director Mehemet Ulusoy.[5]

The Wanderer was a production by the Finnish performance group *Houkka Brothers*, directed Finnish Kristian Smeds in cooperation with the performance artist Juha Valkeapää and the visual artist Tero Nauha. This production was based in a 19th century story taken from holy books, and quoted from the production it says: "Thanks to the grace of the lord I am a Christian man, through my proper actions I am a great sinner, and by my vocation I am a homeless person carrying my goods around in a knapsack. That is everything". This spiritual wanderer was a Russian pilgrim from the classical Russian-Orthodox stories of humbleness and searching for final salvation. The spiritual wanderer was also passing by the famous Valamo Monastary at the Ladoga Sea towards Karelia. The story goes on telling how the spiritual man had to pray thousand of times in one day, and how this goal would be difficult to achieve.

Kristian Smeds is well known for his spiritual orientation in his artistic work. He wanted to use theatre for research into spiritual realism, also staging well known dramatists like Anton Chekov in a spiritual way, which in fact corresponds to Russian symbolism. The old pump station in Helsinki were he staged *Uncle Vanja* with his *Teattri Takomo* gave an architectonical experience by virtually being transferred into a cathedral with tall and slim windows, as said the Finnish critic Harru Hanju.[6]

Later on Kristian Smeds worked as an artistic director at the Municipal theatre in Kajani, close to the landscape of Karelia on the Russian side of the borderline. Here he staged a production about the Swedish priest and religious person Lars Levi Læstadius, who lived and worked in Northern Finland and Northern Norway in the 19th century. The production's title was *The Voice of One Crying from the Wilderness* about religiosity and the wilderness. With this production from 2001, Smeds became a name in Western European continental theatre, after this production had visited Brussels and Düsseldorf.

In a Lithuanian context I would say the performance artist Benas Šarka is a kind of shaman in

productions connected to strong physical efforts and risky experimentation. His work is very concrete and more or less advocating a one-to-one relation between man and nature. Some of the re-enactments of historical events in the Baltic countries seem to be going in direction of similar stagings of a ritualistic kind.

In September 2009 the SEAS festival was organized in Tromsø, focusing on the Black Sea to the Arctic Sea in perspective of cultural exchange. *Vilna Scena* from Kiev in the Ukraine visited Tromsø at this upper end of Struve's meridian, in the polar regions with their production based on William Shakespeare's *Richard III* directed by Dmytro Bogomazov under the title *Sweet Dreams*. It was a multimedia dramatization which created the effect of dream like situations, and it was staged in a green light atmosphere. Figures were projected and the atmosphere was very dense with sound images to conjure forth a tormented Richard III.[7]

I am advocating a circular perspective in understanding art in its landscapes and interiors, or even in dialogical spaces, referring to discovering and working on cultural memory. It indicates that relations between countries and landscapes be based upon finding the physical visual spaces that correspond with the mental and intellectual spaces, leaving behind the former dominant way of thinking that presumes centers of dominant ideological motives. The artistic work needs to find a new context of marginality and transgression of the political versus the vernacular and the spiritual, which correspond to the three sidelines of the geodetical triangle of Struve's meridian.

Notes

1 Grigorij Pomerants, 'Dialogens sannhet' in: *Utgang fra trancen*, Oslo: Cappelen, 2000, pp. 151-161.
2 Ernst Cassirer, *Symbol, Technik, Sprache. Aufsätze aus den Jahren 1927-1933*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1985.
3 Knut Ove Arntzen, 'Post-Mainstream as a Geocultural Dimension for Theatre', in: *Trans, Internet-Zeitschrift für Kulutrwissenschaft*, 1998. http://www.inst.at`/trans/5Nr/arntzen.htm.
4 Roland Barthes, *Le Degré zéro de l'écriture*, Paris: Seuil, 1953.
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Palei Struve'ės dienovidinį lanką: simboliniai atminties atspindžiai

Reikšminiai žodžiai: dialoginė erdvė, geodeziniai matavimai, meridiano lanko monumentas Hamerfeste, nomadizmas, lokalumas, dvasingumas, politiškumas, *Verdensteatret* (Norvegija), *Houkka Brothers* (Kristian Smeds), *Vilna Scena* (Kijevas).

Santrauka

Metaforiškai nurodydamas į Rusijos vokiečio astronomo Struve'ės atliktus geodezinius dienovidinio lanko, einančio nuo Juodosios jūros iki Barenco jūros, matavimus ir jo atminčiai skirtą memorialinę arką, pastatytą Hamerfeste, Šiaurės Norvegijoje, šis straipsnis atskleidžia kai kurias perspektyvas, susijusias su geografiniais ir kultūriniais sutapimais tarp Rytų ir Vakarų. Įvairūs kontekstai lemia meno ir teatro vystymąsi nuo centralizacijos prie decentralizuoto kultūrinio modelio. Struve'ės geodeziniai matavimai yra pagrįsti trianguliacijos grandine, sudaryta iš trikam-

pių. Metaforiškai trikampį galima suvokti kaip vietinio, arba liaudiško, dvasinio ir politinio elementų sąryšį. Tokiu pagrindu galima apibrėžti dialoginę kultūrinių mainų erdvę, kurią reflektuoja tokie meno projektai, kaip norvegų *Verdensteatret* projektas *Tsalal*, sukurtas remiantis patirtimi, sukaupta Juodosios jūros regione, suomių *Houkka Brothers* projektas *Klajūnas*, pasakojantis apie Suomijos-Rusijos sieną Karelijoje, ir Ukrainos teatro trupės *Vilna Scena* spektaklis *Sweet Dreams*, pagrįstas Williamo Shakespeare'o *Ričardu III*, parodytas SEAS festivalyje Tromse, pasienio mieste Šiaurės Skandinavijoje. Visi šie kūriniai reflektuoja dialoginę erdvę ir trikampį tarp lokalumo, dvasingumo ir politiškumo.

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RECOLLECTION: THE WORK OF COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN CONTEMPORARY LITHUANIAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Key words: memory, photography, history, identity, recollection.

In his final book *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes contradicts the widespread attitude towards photography as a "tool of memory" by claiming that the photograph "actually blocks memory, quickly becomes a counter-memory".[1] Indeed, every theoretical inquiry into this question comes to the same conclusion: photography is an inadequate tool of memory.[2] This discrepancy between the notion of photographs as a "memory images" and "counter-memory" acquires almost political significance when they are used to construct collective identity.

This issue is particularly relevant in Lithuania, because twenty years after the restoration of independence, many political, social, academic and artistic initiatives focus on rethinking and reconstructing national identity. In her recent book dedicated to this question, Nerija Putinaitė observes that Lithuanian identity "has never been completely realised; it has manifested as something lacking and constantly sought. There is a tendency to define the history of Lithuania as a ceaseless effort to realise our own identity."[3] The critical note conspicuous in this statement could be played down, however, in the context of current understanding of identity, not as a stable, empirical entity, but as a process. According to Alberto Melucci, identity is constantly produced and performed and no longer given by something standing outside society and culture – for example, the "God like History".[4] Although when perceived this way, collective identity can never be "completely realised" in principle, and it becomes even more problematic; how can something endure over time in a constant flux of performativity?

This is where memory becomes part of identity, according to Paul Ricoeur: "As the primary cause of the fragility of identity we must cite its difficult relation to time; this is a primary difficulty that, precisely, justifies the recourse to memory as the temporal component of identity, in conjunction with the evaluation of the present and the progression to the future."[5] In the constant reconstruction of collective identity, memory is rather a recollection of history, i.e. memory performs and creates the historical past. When the narrative of history is traumatic, the work of memory is needed in order to recover – to cure collective identity, and, according to Ricoeur, ideology becomes "the guardian of identity, offering a symbolic response to the causes affecting the fragility of this identity."[6] During the final years of Soviet occupation, the work of memory took the form of the restoration of "true" memory, which brought photography to the foreground; archives were opened, and many previously forbidden images appeared in the public domain. This process gained particular resonance at the international exhibition of Baltic photography *The Memory of Images* in 1993. For example, Juozas Kazlauskas showed photographic documentation of an expedition to Siberia to dig up the remains of deportees and bring them back for reburial in Lithuania in 1989. As Knut Nievers put it, Kazlauskas showed how memory was literally unearthed in front of everybody's eyes.[7] Thus, photography both acted

Fig. 1. Arturas Valiauga, from series I Dropped in on Stepas, We Talked about Life, 2, 2002, c-print, 73.5 x 80 cm. Courtesy: the artist

as a "recourse to memory" that informed the present about the past and represented the act of recollection, thus addressing the causes of lost collective identity.

Therefore, in the early 1990s, photography was used as a reliable, unproblematic medium to restore collective memory. How does the discrepancy between the belief in the truth of photographic memory and the knowledge that it is incomplete, imaginary and can be easily manipulated affect the discourse on identity in contemporary art photography? Through case studies of the latest work by three Lithuanian photographers – Arturas Valiauga, Ugnius Gelguda and Gintautas Trimakas, I will discuss how the understanding of photography as a tool of memory changed in twenty years.

ELUSIVE MEMORY

Collective memory as a source for constant recollection and construction of the self is the subject of the series *I Dropped in on Stepas, We Talked about Life* (2002) by Arturas Valiauga (b. 1967) [fig. 1]. By focusing on the most intimate domestic environment, Valiauga explores the process of change in Lithuanian identity.[8] In his study on the performative approach to identity in contemporary Lithuanian photography, Tomas Pabedinskas has observed that this strategy exposes identity as complex and dissolving among many social and cultural icons.[9] Yet how does still photography register the fluctuation of identity?

First, the photographs represent a traditional Lithuanian country house with its typical inhabitants: an old couple. Everybody can recognise here the characteristic architecture and things normally used in the country. Thus, the photographs firmly establish the feeling of belonging to the same collective identity, through memory. Yet this house is also very odd; its walls have been decorated with newspaper and magazine cuttings as well as with some other trivial visual material that had circulated in Lithuania for

Fig. 2. Ugnius Gelguda, Žalgiris, 2006, audio-visual installation, projection of 3 photographic slides, sound, 3 x 14 m. Courtesy: the artist

the last decade. Perhaps this extraordinary environment has been created out of poverty. Alternatively, it represents a way to use the environment as a constant reminder of how things have developed into the present. After the initial shock in front of this clash of diverse images and colours, the spectator will start to notice that they make, in fact, a very carefully structured and aesthetically pleasing composition.

The cuttings represent an astonishingly wide array of issues: from highly influential political and media figures, such as Mikhail Gorbachev, to reminders of the Soviet past, such as the cover of the magazine *Komunistas* (*Communist*); from timeless landscapes to packets of seeds sown by these people sometime ago; and from commercial photos to snapshots. The real things in the house – a rosary, a rug or the humble apples from the garden – merge into this colourful display, thus creating a two-way transition from the past to the present, and back from life to memory. The perception of movement is also generated by using a cinematic approach: shifting the point of view, zooming in and out, taking the same objects in a slightly different frame and, as a result, prolonging the time of observation, which creates the impression for the spectator of actually being there and participating – the impression of lived experience.[10] These strategies for showing movement in still photography help construct photographically the impression of memory as a process of recollection – the "talking about life" mentioned in the title of the series.

This recollection involves three layers of memory. The first is the memory of the past as common history that we all share as a nation. Yet when they are compiled in this small space of home, the painful and dramatic aspects of history have lost their edge and become rather cosy mementoes domesticated by trivial everyday existence. This space shows how intensive memories of the past are diluted by the passing time, which pastes new experiences on top of each other.

The second layer points to the fact that our private lives are far from immune to influences from the public sphere. This is achieved by both visually merging private objects and people with images from the media and by contrasting the temporal stability of the house with the incessant flow of visual material from outside. Even though the house has stayed recognisably the same over the century, it has been visibly changed by the imprints of current events. On the other hand, the latter have been absorbed by the "rural" mentality – a two-way movement again.

The third layer is, perhaps, the least palpable. In the imaginary conversation about life, memory appears as a (re)collection of bits from the huge amalgamation of both collective and personal past, helping,

through photography, to regain the sense of the self here and now. But the self is not something clearly delineated (the blurred outlines of people's figures emphasise that), and collective identity merges with personal identity. The images that were once significant enough to be published have now lost their initial meaning in the context of other images and things. Valiauga shows that photography as a record of collective memory is a weak keeper of identity that cannot be trusted. Therefore, the identity it helps to preserve stays in constant flux – always changing and becoming.

ILLUSIVE MEMORY

In his photo-audio-visual installation *Žalgiris* (2006) [fig. 2], Ugnius Gelguda (b. 1977) explores the role of collective memory in reinforcing a cultural myth as part of collective identity. When this installation was first shown, the audience recognised immediately the references to two historical events marked by the same "brand name" – "Žalgiris": the Battle of Grunwald of 1410 and the competition between the Lithuanian basketball club *Žalgiris* and the Moscow club CSKA in the 1980s. Art critic Laima Kreivytė has noted how this installation deconstructs collective identity, which is created through the opposition to the other, by accepting and then absorbing the viewer's shadow.[11] Yet Gelguda also presents an interesting case of the deceptive power of photography in simulating visual memory and thus imposing connotations that are in no way related to the actual event that is photographed. As such, it uncovers the operation of signification systems that are used in contemporary society to create myths that hide all references to the process of signification and political context, i.e. become "naturalised", as Roland Barthes showed in his *Mythologies*.[12]

Žalgiris, although based on an actual historical event when joint Polish, Lithuanian, Byelorussian and other forces defeated the Teutonic Order, refers to a cultural construct and different traditions of commemoration. According to historian Rimvydas Petrauskas, for Lithuanian national revival the Battle of Grunwald was the most suitable event to represent the highest point of the "golden age" in the nation's history.[13] Yet ironically, the real cult of the battle was created during the Soviet period, because it supported two important narratives of Soviet ideology: the joint effort of many nations in building communism and the historical opposition to Germany (i.e. the Nazis). As part of the cult, the name of Žalgiris was given to various entities, including the aforementioned basketball club in Kaunas.[14] Consequently, every game between *Žalgiris* and the Moscow basketball club CSKA became a symbolic battle against the enemy of Lithuania – Russia. The collective memory of unequal, but heroic, struggle – both in the historical battle and in basketball – has turned into a historical folklore deeply ingrained in every Lithuanian mind, and Gelguda's installation addresses this part of national identity.

The rampaging young people photographed by Gelguda could be easily identified with a celebration of a sports victory. Yet there are no signs, no brand names, and no flags here, as Kreivytė observed in her short article, noting that the installation is thus a comment on youth in general.[15] The absence of identifying signs, which makes it possible that the raving could be taking place in a night club, poses a question: what if the photographed reality has nothing to do with Žalgiris, and only the title and the sound of clanking swords make the connection with collective memory?

The connection is even more powerful because of another pictorial icon of Žalgiris – a painting by the Polish artist Jan Matejko entitled *Battle of Grunwald* (1874). During the Soviet Period, Lithuanians could only see reproductions of this painting, which decorated many homes[16] and thus the painting became a symbol of the nation's great historical past. An opportunity to see the original finally arose in 1999, when the Lithuanian Art Museum borrowed it from the Warsaw National Museum. The heightened interest of the media and the long queues of those willing to see it only confirmed the painting's status. It was exhibited very much like this installation by Gelguda: lit brightly in surrounding darkness, a grandiose panorama of the battle (426 × 987 cm), in which it takes time to distinguish figures and places in the mass of fighting people. The act of going to see the painting amounted to religious veneration

and once more reinforced the collective memory of a glorious victory as part of national identity.

Gelguda's photograph mimics the visual impact of the painting as well as its presentation in Lithuania and thus creates a link between the memory of the grand historical event and everyday life. Thus, the image is replete with connotations, which blunt perception, thus obliterating the reality of what is photographed, forcing it into clichés of understanding that are forged and reiterated by cultural or mythical narratives. Yet more importantly, there is also the question of an image – a photograph mimicking a romantic painting, which makes historical events cross the boundaries of time and adapt to the changing visual mentality.

ABSENT MEMORY

With his series *City. A Different Angle* (2006), Gintautas Trimakas (b. 1958) [fig. 3] reveals a conceptual gap in the photographic constructions of collective memory. Although he photographs the city, which is a site of collective memory, its commonly remembered shapes and signs disappear in the subjective process; the very creation of the series is imbedded in the photographer's daily routine. Trimakas just goes everywhere on his bike; on the back he usually carries a pinhole camera. When he arrives at his destination – to have a cup of coffee, to talk to his friends, to buy groceries – his bike stays parked, and the camera, while left on its own, photographs like an independent eye with its own point of view. Therefore, the prints result from "absolutely meaningless activities", as Jonas Valatkevičius has pointed out.[17] The pinhole camera, which is any simple lightproof box with a tiny hole, brings the photographer back to the very basics of "taking" a picture. Light carries whatever happens to be in front of the hole into the box; the process can take from several minutes to hours. This strategy means that the photographer does not look and does not compose; he deletes himself. Then the bike and the camera, both inanimate objects, acquire a life of their own, collecting memories peculiar to them as alien "individuals", strangers to us – the self-conscious inhabitants of the city.[18]

Photographs taken from the position of the bicycle also deny any visual recognition of the city because they escape the conventional focus of photography on iconic objects and panoramic views. According to Michel de Certeau, panoramic vision represents the "totalizing eye" – the "all-seeing power"[19] – and, we may conclude, is most suitable for constructing ideologically appropriate memories. Trimakas moving around the city and his bike are de Certeau's "ordinary practitioners of the city" who live "below the thresholds at which visibility begins" and their movements write an "urban "text"" which they cannot read.[20] This is why photographs taken by the bike represent invisibility and illegibility; this point of view is not legitimated, and what is seen from there has not been named by language. Perhaps this leads Valatkevičius to the conclusion that the photographs are meaningless and that this is their "greatest power".[21] Yet the images are also striking in the absence of recognisable memories. On the other hand, if what we see is real (this is the *noeme* of photography, according to Barthes), then we can say that the photographs are evidence of the endless undercurrent of memories that are never accounted for – that are never even recognised as such. This undercurrent is part of everyday life, lived without registering what reaches the senses every moment. By capturing this bit of life – by creating an awareness of the place, Trimakas brings the urgency of the present moment to the focus and reveals the existential significance of the humblest experiences.

The most confusing effect of these photographs, however, lies in the impossibility of determining the traditional geography of images: the bottom, the top, the right and the left.[22] The pinhole camera "held" by the bike does not "think" and does not construct hierarchies; thus, it cannot be used for political purposes, which includes using collective memory to construct national identity. The unusual exposition – photographs hanging on the level of the bike's carrier and "mirroring" the sky[23] – enhances this effect, which would be destroyed by hanging them conventionally on the wall. These images are empty of memory and appear as if out of nothingness, creating the first imprints of memory or, like the "unintentional monuments"

Fig. 3. Gintautas Trimakas, City. A Different Angle, 2006, silver print on paper, laminated, 48 x 40 cm. Courtesy: the artist

of Alois Riegl, denying commemoration by witnessing "physical and human frailty, aging and the unpredictability of change".[24] Thus, through his conceptual strategy of a purposeless wanderer and by giving the power of vision to an inanimate object, Trimakas undermines any attempt to create a stable memory of something significant that endures in time.

So what conclusions can we draw from this discussion of three very different approaches to collective memory in contemporary Lithuanian photography? First, I notice a break with the work of memory at the beginning of the 1990s. At that time photography was a means to show the "true" past, which appeared to be easily definable and was shared by the majority of the nation. Now photography brings the past into the present as something unreliable that no longer has a clear and universally accepted meaning. Second, the identity that those collective memories should help to preserve or construct is uncertain. Photography shows how it is based on visual mistakes (Gelguda), how it dissolves among a multitude of heterogeneous signs littering the present (Valiauga) or how it cannot find a footing in urban places marked by the absence of memory (Trimakas). Third, contemporary photographic practice suggests a critical perspective on photography as a tool of memory. Photographers emphasise ambiguities and the pliability of the medium to manipulation and the dependence of the mnemonic value of the visual material on the context and on the peculiarities of subjective vision. Above all, while photography functioned as a counter-memory engaged in restoring collective identity in the early 1990s, now it works as a counter-memory again, but by questioning the basis of the same collective identity and creating alternative memories.

Notes

[1] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. by Richard Howard, London: Vintage, 1993, p. 91.
[2] Stephen Bull, *Photography*, London: Routledge, 2010, p. 92.
[3] Nerija Putinaitė, *Šiaurės Atėnų tremtiniai: Lietuviškosios tapatybės paieškos ir Europos vizijos XX a.* (*The Deportees of Northern Athens: The Search for Lithuanian Identity and Visions of Europe in the 20th C.*), Vilnius: Aidai, 2004, p. 7. [my translation – A. N.]
[4] Alberto Melucci, 'The Process of Collective Identity' in: Hank Johnston, Bert Klandermans (eds.), *Social Movements and Culture*, London: Routledge, 2003, p. 50.
[5] Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. by Kathleen Blamey, David Pellauer, London: University of Chicago Press, 2004, p. 81.
[6] Ibid., p. 83.
[7] Knut Nievers, 'Evacuated Memory, or the Rebellion of Images: A Reflection on the Title of the Exhibition' / 'Die ausgelagerte Erinnerung oder der Aufstand der Bilder: Eine Reflexion über den Titel der Ausstellung' in: Barbara Straka, Knut Nievers (eds.), *The Memory of Images: Baltic Photo Art Today / Das Gedächtnis der Bilder: Baltische Photokunst heute*, Kiel: Nieswand Verlag, 1993, p. 17.
[8] Eglė Deltuvaitė, 'Dar kartą menas, dar kartą tautinis identitetas. Pokalbis su fotografu Arturu Valiauga' ('Art Again, National Identity Again. Interview with Photographer Arturas Valiauga') in: *7 meno dienos*, 12 October 2007, http://www.culture.lt/7md/?leid_id=772&kas=straipsnis&st_id=76139 [accessed 11 August 2010].
[9] Tomas Pabedinskas, *Contemporary Lithuanian Photography. Relationship between the Image and the Identity of a Person*, Lambert Academic Publishing, 2010, pp. 100-107.
[10] I have written on this aspect in Agnė Narušytė, 'Kameriškumas Lietuvos fotografijoje: objektyve – kambarys' ('The Chamber Aesthetics in Lithuanian Photography: A Room in the Lens') in: *Kameriškumo raiška ir kriterijai*, Vilnius: Lietuvos muzikos ir teatro akademija, 2005, p. 25.
[11] Laima Kreivytė, 'Žalgirietiškos tapatybės dekonstrukcija. VDA diplomantų darbai' ('Deconstruction of Žalgiris Identity. Works by VDA Graduates') in: *7 meno dienos*, 23 June 2006, http://www.culture.lt/7md/?leid_id=714&st_id=6069&txt=%C5%BDalgiris [accessed 11 August 2010].
[12] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Annette Lavers (ed.), London: Paladin, 1973.
[13] Rimvydas Petrauskas, 'Žalgirio mūšis ir lietuvių istorinė tradicija' ('The Grunwald Battle and Lithuanian Historical Tradition') in: *Naujasis Židinys-Aidai*, Vol. 7-8, 2010, p. 225.
[14] Ibid., pp. 227-229.
[15] Laima Kreivytė, 2006.
[16] Rimvydas Petrauskas, 2010, p. 229.
[17] Jonas Valatkevičius, 'Trimakas. There and Here. Now and Sometime', trans. by Jūratė Juškienė, in: Margarita Matulytė (ed.), *Gintautas Trimakas, Miestas kitaip / City. A Different Angle*, Vilnius: Kitos knygos, 2009.
[18] According to Mindaugas Peleckis, the bicycle has its own worldview, even "politics" and "philosophy", see: Mindaugas Peleckis, 'Kitoks miestas' ('A Different City') in: *Šiaurės Atėnai*, 4 July 2009, http://www.culture.lt/satenai/?leid_id=949&kas=straipsnis&st_id=16933 [accessed 12 August 2010].
[19] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall, London: University of California Press, 1988, p. 92.
[20] Ibid., p. 93.
[21] Jonas Valatkevičius, 2009.
[22] Alfonsas Andriuškevičius listed this among the essential components of the conceptual framework of this series, see Alfonsas Andriuškevičius, 'Gintauto Trimako konceptualumas' ('The Conceptualism of Gintautas Trimakas') in: *Šiaurės Atėnai*, 17 February 2007, http://www.culture.lt/satenai/?st_id=4954 [accessed 11 August 2010].
[23] Gintautas Trimakas, 'Gintautas Trimakas apie "Miestą kitaip"' ('Gintautas Trimakas about "City. A Different Angle"') in: Margarita Matulytė (ed.), *Gintautas Trimakas, Miestas kitaip / City. A Different Angle*, Vilnius: Kitos knygos, 2009.
[24] Alois Riegl, 'The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origins', trans. by Kurt Forster, Diane Ghirardo, in: *Oppositions*, Vol. 25, 1982, p. 78.

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Kolektyvinė atmintis Lietuvos šiuolaikinėje fotografijoje

Reikšminiai žodžiai: atmintis, fotografija, istorija, tapatybė, prisiminimas.

Santrauka

Straipsnyje nagrinėjamas fotografijos, kaip „atminties įrankio", naudojimas, konstruojant kolektyvinę tapatybę dabartinėje Lietuvoje. Tapatybė čia suvokiama ne kaip stabili ir empiriškai patikrinama duotybė, bet kaip procesas, kaip tai, kas nuolat kuriama ir vaidinama. Tokios tapatybės sampratos problema yra ta, kad ji negali išlikti laike. Taigi atmintis suvokiama kaip esminis tapatybės elementas – atmintis kaip prisiminimas, aktyviai dalyvaujantis, rekons-

truojant tapatybę dabartyje. Nepriklausomoje Lietuvoje atminties darbas buvo reikalingas gydant istorijos traumas ir perkuriant kolektyvinę tapatybę. Sovietinės okupacijos pabaigoje prasidėjus „tikrosios“ atminties atkūrimo procesui, fotografija atsidūrė pirmame plane, nes buvo atverti archyvai, ir anksčiau drausti vaizdai pateko į viešumą. Taigi fotografija ir veikė kaip atminties įrankis, informuojantis dabartį apie praeitį, ir pati tapo prisiminimo aktu. Straipsnyje tiriama, kaip šis fotografijos vaidmuo pasikeitė per dvidešimt metų nuo nepriklausomybės atkūrimo.

Pasitelkiant tris atvejo tyrimus – naujausius Lietuvos fotografų Arturo Valiaugos, Ugniaus Gelgudos ir Gintauto Trimako darbų ciklus parodoma, kaip fotografija atskleidžia praeities nepatikimumą ir jos reikšmės nestabilumą. Šiuolaikinė fotografijos praktika siūlo kritinį požiūrį į fotografiją kaip atminties įrankį, nes ją pasitelkus konstruojamos kolektyvinės tapatybės pagrindas gali būti vizualinė klaida (Gelguda), tapatybė ištirpsta daugybės įvairiausio pobūdžio ženklų sraute (Valiauga) arba ji praranda pagrindą kolektyvinės atminties diskurse nedalyvaujančiose miesto erdvėse (Trimakas). Fotografai pabrėžia medijai būdingą prasmės neapibrėžtumą ir tendenciją pasiduoti manipuliacijoms, taip pat – vizualinės atminties priklausomybę nuo konteksto ir subjektyvaus matymo.

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OUTLINING THE SOVIET GENERATIONS IN LATVIAN POST-COMMUNIST AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

Key words: Latvian post-communist autobiographies, generations, birth cohorts.

"Generation" has become a buzzword for many sociologists and political scientists who have explored the changes in post-communist societies. With the generational issue some explain the presence of the communist *habitus*; others, in turn, talk about generational changes as a panacea for coping with the legacy of the past in post-communist societies. Rarely, however, do scholars consider the role of generational identity; namely, what is (if there is) the self-image of a particular generation, and how does this imagined group represent the communist era today.

Karl Mannheim, one of the first scholars who dealt with generations sociologically, has argued that neither a biological factor nor a common experience is the decisive variable in forming a generation. Yet, the fundamental integrative attitudes and formative principles of generations are very important conditions, which "alone are really capable of becoming the basis of continuing practices".[1] These attitudes are articulated, for example, by poets and thinkers as well as those who influence public discourse and whose social network inspires them to express the spirit of their age, thus turning a generation from potentiality to actuality. Korsten has suggested that generations as collectives identify and locate themselves in the historical process by self-thematization, by identifying their patterns of interpretation and by validation of collective experience in discourses.[2] Thereby, generations may be defined as *cultural circles* formed in the period of adolescence and early adulthood and which "maintain comparable standpoints and perspectives in the discursive practices in which they are involved".[3]

Coming back to the post-communist societies, the previously described perspective on generations means to inquire how the communist-time generations are incessantly being constructed in public discourse rather than to accept "generation" as taken-for-granted. Thus, the aim of this article is to explore merely a single but crucial domain of where the *formative forces* dwell – that is to say, the autobiographies of the Soviet period published in Latvia since 1991.

THE PRINCIPLES OF ANALYSIS

Formally, Latvian autobiographers have been grouped into four particular birth cohorts in order to understand inner relations of possible generations. Such a grouping is employed as a purely analytical tool to elucidate a potentiality of generational identity. The two prevailing cohorts are those born in the 1920s and 1930s. Autobiographers born in the 1940s and 1950s make up the other two smaller cohorts. The 1920 and 1930 autobiographers have dominated the field of memoirs throughout the 1990s, whereas the *autobiographical boom* of those born in the 1940s and 1950s began fairly recently and perhaps will prevail in subsequent decades. Although the age when the autobiographers wrote their individual histories is lacking on an aggregate

level, we may assume most of them did so in their late 50s or 60s. A closer look at post-communist autobiographies also shows the majority of them were written by males who represent the former Soviet *intelligentsia:* highly qualified, usually well-educated people whose social mission was to promote the ideas of communism through art, science and culture. Besides the intelligentsia, one may delineate two more groups: former Soviet public officials, and deportees (those who were exiled to Siberia). Although deportees have been publishing their life stories during the last twenty years, both as individual autobiographers and as contributors to voluminous public collections of memories, the former public officials have only become active relatively recently, in the last decade. The rest of the autobiographers may be read as individual cases (priests, teachers, sportsmen and the like) rather than as a social group.

In line with the concept of a formative period, the autobiographers from dominant cohorts might be associated with different generational identities. In the following analysis I shall, however, examine whether such speculation is justified and what kind of common/divergent discursive repertoires are employed across the cohorts of autobiographers. None of the birth cohorts, thereby, are presumed equal to a generation. For the sake of clarity, "birth cohort" will be used as the marker, for example, the autobiographers of the 1920s or 1930s; likewise, for analytical reasons the autobiographers' cohorts will be divided into older (the 1920s and 1930s) and younger (the 1940s and 1950s).

Forty five Latvian autobiographies have been analysed as representative of the whole body of texts which have qualified as post-communist autobiographies publicly issued in the period from 1991 to 2008 (roughly 200 autobiographies).[4] The autobiographers of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s have the largest representation in this sample (14, 12, and 10 autobiographies, respectively), and the rest of the cohorts have a remarkably smaller representation. To capture the explicit and implicit attributes of generational identity, analysis has been carried out on two levels. Firstly, by examining the autobiographers' explicit characterizations of his/her generation, the self-thematization of a particular *cultural circle* shall be explored. Secondly, the links are estimated between the autobiographers and the vivid public events they recall from Soviet times.

SELF-THEMATIZATION

Overall, the autobiographers, who have written explicitly either about their own or another generation, represent the former Soviet intelligentsia. In some respect, that goes in line with the Mannheimian thesis that representatives of this group have a significant role in the creation of generational identity. Therefore, the intelligentsia's explicit self-thematization, which revolves around the construction of a positive, negative or victimized generational identity, is of prime concern here.

Admittedly, aspiring to achieve a positive identity is the most salient theme. Usually it appears in admiring assessments of the generation: the autobiographers accentuate certain pleasant characteristics that they think are common to their generation. Among such common attributes are idealism and romanticism, which are assumed to be major reasons why older autobiographers or their contemporaries have succeeded in accomplishing socially significant and historical goals. Reflecting upon generational belonging, many of these autobiographers also emphasize the extremely intellectual and dynamic daily life they led during their formative period. Moreover, this portrayal is linked to a strong feeling of the truth and to the ability to bear difficulties in order to reach ambitious goals for the public good. Thus the autobiographers of the 1920s and 1930s highlight self-denial and their constant coping with Soviet restrictions as emblematic practices of their generation.[5] Frequently they attribute their impassioned lifestyle to the feeling of awakening after World War II, especially after Stalin's death. The poet Imants Auziņš goes even further, linking the positive features of his generation with the pre-communist experience:

> "Romanticism in life and a vigorous expression of romanticism in poetry at the beginning might be called almost the "specific indication" of the first post-Stalinist generation…

> It is not hard to understand why it was like that. We, nonetheless, managed to inhale the first swigs of freedom in our youth".[6]

The autobiographers of two prevailing cohorts thus highlight self-denying work and constant coping with poverty as the emblematic practices of their generation. Unlike these generational manifestations, the younger autobiographers of the 1940s and 1950s more often stress their fearless resistance to communist ideology and avoidance of illusions about the communist regime. For example, this theme quite constantly emerges in the memoirs of Dainis Īvāns, who was the leader of the National Awakening in the 1980s.[7]

Although the various descriptions of positive identity have a common discursive origin, there are, however, certain tensions in terms of different cohorts, and these tensions are double-sided. On the one hand, one may talk about the criticism of succeeding generations, which is a characteristic feature of the autobiographers who are born in the 1920s or earlier. Namely, they are inclined to admit that younger generations are willing to undermine the accomplishments of the autobiographer's generation, calling them a *lost generation*. Such an inclination may be observed in the autobiographies of the Soviet-period actors Harijs Liepiņš, Vija Artmane or Ērika Ferda, who in different ways argue that the younger generation cannot understand their genuine contribution to Latvia's cultural legacy.[8] Implicitly though, the *younger generation* is mainly associated with so called *last Soviet generation*[9], which is sometimes also labeled the generation of *perestroika* or of National Awakening and whose members were born in the end of the 1950s and in the 1960s (Dainis Ivāns, mentioned earlier in this article, is an evident representative of this generation).

On the other hand, we may notice an opposite view as well, when some of the preceding generations are criticized by the younger autobiographers. For instance, convincing evidence exists that the autobiographers of the 1940s believed their generation was less tolerant of the malfunctioning communist regime. They put extra effort into differentiating themselves from the previous generation, once again stressing their rebellious nature. Such an attitude emerges from the memories of everyday contexts as well as from non-biographical commentaries. The famous Soviet-era singer Larisa Mondrusa points out that she always complained when she was given a dirty fork at a Soviet restaurant, comparing herself with her parents, who would remain silent in such situations. Mondrusa considers that the behavioral differences were primarily caused by dissimilar generational backgrounds.[10] On a more generalized level, the violinist Gidons Kremers voices the same idea: "Unlike our fathers, who were aware of the meaninglessness and dangerousness of resistance, my generation repeatedly questioned cooperation with the regime. They [our fathers] had been instructed to obey them".[11] The *generation of fathers* here and elsewhere, is principally associated with those born in the 1920s or a bit earlier.[12]

On the whole, the abovementioned practices of social comparison reveal certain strategies of how a positive generational identity is constructed. The autobiographers of the 1920s tend to protect their identity from present accusations, whereas the younger autobiographers outline their positive identity through criticism of preceding generations.

The *victimization theme* is another thematic line that interweaves the discourse on generational identity. It often appears through the attempts to frame a generation as the victim of the Soviet repressive system, and it is basically carried out by means of the autobiographers' memories of suffering (deprivation of human rights, lack of choice, prohibitions on travel, etc.). The poet Olafs Gūtmanis, for instance, claims that, "The destiny of my generation, who lived in the friendship of nations, was subjected to a violent power and a lack of any human rights. That was also my destiny".[13] Here, nevertheless, one should take into account that the majority of autobiographers, whose utterances were qualified as containing the victimization theme, represent the birth cohort of the 1920s, i.e. people who in their formative period witnessed the Stalinist repression. In addition, continuous humiliation in the post-Soviet era also becomes

the context of victimization for these autobiographers. An example is Uldis Lasmanis, who worked in the Soviet trade system:

> "Alongside the positive and flourishing things, today's reality causes many unexpected injustices and poverty, which enables us, especially the older generation, to remember not merely the disadvantages but also advantages of the Soviet years. No one today talks about the advantages, but if someone does, it is as if unwillingly".[14]

The social comparison with regard to the victimization (say, *we* were more victimized than *you*) is not as widespread of a practice in generational discourse, and usually it is undertaken to conclude resignedly that there are many embarrassing experiential episodes from the Soviet period which today's youngsters are simply not able to understand.

Finally, the construction of the *negative identity* is a third thematic line that emerges in the post-communist autobiographies. The negative identity of the generation is being invoked when naïveté, hypocrisy, and double standards appear in the foreground of the generational self-representation. For example, the journalist Rihards Kalvāns estimates that,

> "My generation… They consisted of people who had two or even three natures. We thought about one, but talked about another "truth", and we were happy if succeeded in enacting our third option, which was in the middle of what we wanted and what was allowed. And now, waking up in the night, we remember how it was THEN and what we would do and say now. These memories of conscience are the time bombs. Life would be much easier if such memories didn't appear before the alarm clock wakens us".[15]

The negative identity is also outlined by the strategy of social comparison, which is largely used by the autobiographers of the 1940s. They either criticize the older generations as Gidons Kremers does or, in comparison to other generations (especially, to pre-occupation generations) they stress the negative qualities inherent in his/her generation.

RECALLING VIVID PUBLIC EVENTS

Another direction of my analysis leads to the exploration of how public events are remembered by the autobiographers. Normally we can talk about direct and indirect, or mediated, experience. It has been argued that a direct experience is usually very individual, whereas the carriers of an indirect experience emphasize the political and social implications of the recalled event. Furthermore, a direct experience is characteristic to the *formative period*, but an indirect one is related to objectified knowledge.[16] I believe that the analyses of the public events of the Soviet period that appear in the autobiographical accounts constitute a publicly accessible cognitive realm, which facilitates the complex process of delineating a particular generation. That is to say, by mapping the shared events on a timeline, it is possible to determine the most crucial events for every birth cohort.

When reading the Latvian autobiographies, there is a high probability that you will face the deportation experience. In total, around sixty thousand Latvians were exiled to Siberia during the two biggest Stalinist deportations, which occurred in 1941 and 1949. Hence, the exile as a traumatic episode appears practically in all autobiographical narratives. However, the real *owners* of this tragic experience seem to be the autobiographers of the 1920s. Of course, the deportation episodes emerge in the stories of the younger autobiographers as well; however, this experience is not as widespread and vivid. Furthermore, unlike the younger autobiographers, the older ones have either been exiled to Siberia or have experienced the deportation of his/her friends and relatives and, therefore, they have such striking recollections. Alongside the deportations, the wartime experience is part and parcel of the memories of this cohort. Of course, World War II is a less salient episode for those who were deported to Siberia and actually did not experience the war. Stalin's death is another important event for this cohort, and that to

some extent correlates with the deportation experience, i.e. Stalin's death is a decisive element in the stories of suffering.

Stalin's death is an equally significant episode for the autobiographers of the 1930s. They, nevertheless, mostly have *appropriated* the events from the post-Stalinist period in the 1950s, e.g. the Hungarian revolution in 1956 or the 20th congress of Communist Party, wherein the general secretary Nikita Khruschov condemned Stalin's reign; consequently, this generation is sometimes called the generation of the 20th congress or the generation of the *thaw*. One may notice that this cohort also more often remembers the Prague Spring in 1968, which is declared an important turning point for a number of autobiographers. Along with Stalin's death and the *thaw*, the autobiographers of the 1940s remember many important events from the period of the revival in the end of the 1980s, inter alia, the Baltic Way, the attack of Soviet soldiers on unarmed civilians in 1991 in Vilnius, etc. The autobiographers of the 1950s, who are but a few, hitherto, in their turn, express a strong generational attachment to the period of National Awakening.

One must acknowledge that there are many public events which are mainly recalled by a particular social group rather than by the whole birth cohort; for that reason it is not appropriate to estimate them as the relevant collective attributes in terms of generational identity. Recognizing such kind of limitations, I, however, believe that the depiction of vivid public events in the autobiographies strongly corresponds to the hypothesis of a *formative period*, i.e. the autobiographers most often remember the public events which occurred in their 20s. Interesting, though, is the linking event – Stalin's death, which is common to the autobiographers of different cohorts. Perhaps it illustrates the strength of so-called flashbulb memory, the concept which accounts for a vivid mediated experience which structures the autobiographical memory.[17]

DISCUSSION

In this article I have attempted to illustrate the complexity of the Soviet generations. The main challenge, as was shown, is to identify the cultural circle in rapidly changing conditions. The social changes in the 1940s (World War II, deportations), 1950s (Stalin's death, the *thaw*), and 1960s (dismissal of Kruschov, the Prague Spring) are, indeed, very striking variables that makes generational identity an ambiguous topic. Therefore, more questions than answers are provided by the previous exploration.

The findings of self-thematization suggest that the majority of Latvian autobiographers who reflect on the Soviet period might discursively form a common generational identity. There are, nevertheless, some crucial limitations which have to be taken into consideration. First of all, the strongest generational identity can apparently be assigned to the autobiographers of the 1930s. They have a coherent self-representation and clear demarcation lines. As this cohort formed the core of the generation of the Sixties, it goes in line with what has been said by Russian sociologist Victor Voronkov, i.e. the Soviet generation of the Sixties had an unprecedented generational self-consciousness.[18]

The group of the 1920s has experienced extremely rapid social changes in their formative period, and, for the autobiographers of this cohort, the turning point was Stalin's death, hence it, perhaps, explains why the defining moments of the generation of the Sixties do not appear in their life stories so constantly. Borrowing the label provided by the Latvian actress Vija Artmane, we may call this group "a threshold generation"; that is to say they were situated on the threshold of epoch, as Artmane describes in her autobiography.[19]

Another "threshold generation" is represented by the autobiographers of the 1940s. They are inclined, however, to differentiate themselves from the birth cohort of the 1920s. But they presumably share the ground with the generation of the Sixties. Yet evaluating remembered public events, they are emotionally closer to the revival in the late 1980s; thus they approach the late Soviet generation, never reaching them. Up to now, there are some indications from the autobiographies of the last Soviet generation which suggest they might have

a strong basis for the generation as actuality. This basis is made up of the positive (victors') experience of National Awakening. The *autobiographical boom* though, has evidently not started yet for this group; hence, the current assumption is highly speculative.

With this analysis I do not advocate any strict delineation of generations: it is empirically impossible to have clear borderlines when one describes generations. Unlike a *definitive concept*, a generation first and foremost is a *sensitized concept*, which, as the sociologist Herbert Blumer has argued, merely suggests directions along which to look.[20] Nonetheless, my contention is that the effects of the "threshold generations" I have described here should be taken into account very seriously when considering the social representation of the Soviet period in post-Soviet Latvia and elsewhere.

Notes

[1] Karl Mannheim, 'The Problem of Generations' in: Robert Miller (ed.), *Biographical Research Methods*, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, Vol. 1, 2005, p. 175.

[2] Michael Corsten, 'The Time of Generations' in: *Time & Society*, Vol. 8, 1999, p. 261.

[3] Ibid., p. 262.

[4] The following criteria in the selection of the autobiographies were taken into account: 1) they were issued in 1991 onwards; 2) no intratextual or para-textual information indicates that the autobiography was written before 1991; 3) the Soviet period dominates the narrative's timeframe; 4) the autobiographer is not someone who emigrated to the West during World War II and stayed there, 5) the autobiography might have been written with someone else's assistance (int. al. ghost writings), 6) the bulk of the narrative is not in diary form, the autobiography was written in the third person, or it is autobiographical fiction, 7) the autobiographer was alive at least three years before the autobiography was published.

[5] Cf. Imants Auziņš, *Piecdesmit gadi bez televizora* (*Fifty Years Without Telly*), Rīga: Sol Vita, Vol. 2, 2003, p. 146; Vija Artmane, *Ziemcieši. Mirkļi no manas dzīves* (*Perennial Plants. The Moments from My Life*), Rīga: Pētergailis, 2004, p. 16; Viktors Līvzemnieks, *Ceļagājumi* (*Road-Walks*), Rīga: Sol Vita, 2005, p. 164.

[6] Imants Auziņš, 2003, p. 62. [Hereinafter all excerpts from the Latvian autobiographies are translated by me.]

[7] Cf. Dainis Īvāns, *Gadījuma karakalps* (*An Incidental Warrior*), Rīga: Vieda, 1995, pp. 19, 23, 36, 289.

[8] Cf. Ērika Ferda, *Kā sendienās...* (*Like in the Bygone Days…*), Rīga: Likteņstāsti, 1995, pp. 199-200; Harijs Liepiņš. *Pēr, tu melo!* (*Peer, You're Lying!*), Rīga: Preses nams, 1997, pp. 67, 144; Vija Artmane, 2004, p. 12.

[9] See Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More*, Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006.

[10] Iveta Meimane, *No manis neaizej... Larisa Mondrusa* (*Don't Leave Me... Larisa Mondrusa*), Rīga: Atēna, 2004, pp. 122-123.

[11] Gidons Krēmers, *Ceļā* (*On the Road*), Rīga: Neputns, 2007, p. 207.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Olafs Gūtmanis, *No klaidoņa par svētceļnieku* (*From the Hobo to the Pilgrim*), Liepāja: LPA LiePA, 2005, p. 158.

[14] Uldis Lasmanis, *Dēla gadsimts* (*The Century of Son*), Rīga: published by the author, 2006, p. 468.

[15] Rihards Kalvāns, *Atklusējumi* (*The Unconcealings*), Rīga: Nordik, 2006, p. 43.

[16] See Howard Schuman, Amy D. Corning, 'Collective Knowledge of Public Events: The Soviet Era from the Great Purge to Glastnost' in: *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 105, No. 4, 2000, p. 951; Howard Schuman, Jacqueline Scott, 'Generation and Collective Memory' in: *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 54, No. 3, 1989, pp. 359-381.

[17] See Catrin Finkenauer, Lydia Gisle, Olivier Luminet, 'When Individual Memories Are Socially Shaped: Flashbulb Memories of Sociopolitical Events' in: James W. Pennebaker, Dario Paez, Beranrd Rimé (eds.), *Collective Memory of Political Events*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997, pp. 191-207.

[18] Виктор М. Воронков, 'Проект «шестидесяников»: движение протеста в СССР' ('A Study of the "1960th Generations" as Protest Movement Within USSR') in: Теодор Шанин, Юрий Левада (eds.), *Поколенческий анализ современной России* (*A Generational Analysis of Contemporary Russia*), Москва: Новое литературное обозрение, 2005, p. 180.

[19] Vija Artmane, 2004, p. 11.

[20] Herbert Blumer, 'What Is Wrong with Social Theory' in: Norman K. Denzin (ed.), *Sociological Methods: A Sourcebook*, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2006, p. 91.

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Sovietmečio generacijų bruožai pokomunistinio laikotarpio Latvijos autobiografijose

Reikšminiai žodžiai: Latvijos pokomunistinės autobiografijos, generacijos, gimimo kohortos.

Santrauka

Straipsnyje analizuojami Latvijos pokomunistinio laikotarpio autobiografijose matomi sovietmečio kartų ženklai, atspindintys šio istorinio laikotarpio patirtį. Autobiografiniai tekstai tyrinėjami siekiant suprasti, ar jų autorius sieja generacinė savivoka. Ypatingas dėmesys skiriamas savęs įvardijimui ir ryškiausiems viešiems įvykiams, kurie, mano įsitikinimu, yra itin svarbūs kartos identitetui. Analizė atskleidė, kad autobiografijų autoriai, atstovaujantys skirtingoms gimimo kohortoms (pvz. kartos, gimusios per XX a. trečiąjį arba ketvirtąjį dešimtmetį) turi bendras diskursyvines ištakas, susijusias su aistringu ir altruistišku gyvenimo būdu. Kita vertus, sprendžiant iš autobiografijų, kiekviena kohorta turėjo ypatingą savo laikotarpio sampratą, laikotarpio, kurį lėmė staigūs socialiniai pokyčiai (pvz. Antrasis Pasaulinis karas, trėmimai, Stalino mirtis, Atlydys) ir kuris savo ruožtu nulėmė tam tikrą generacinės savivokos nenuoseklumą. Straipsnio dalyje, skirtoje diskusijai, siūloma *slenksčio kartos* sąvoka, leidžianti tiksliau charakterizuoti XX a. septintojo dešimtmečio generaciją tiek sovietinėje Latvijoje, tiek, tikriausiai, ir kitur.

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THE ANTHOLOGIZING OF TRADITION: LVIV AS THE IMAGINED UKRAINIAN LITERARY CITY OF THE 1930s

Key words: *Twelve*, Bohdan Nyzhankivskyi, Zenon Tarnavskyi, urban literature, city text, Lviv, anthology, compiler, memory, remembrance, nostalgia, invention of tradition.

***Twelve*: the mode of appearance.** In 2006 the anthology *Twelve* compiled by Vasyl Gabor and designed by Andriy Kis came out in Lviv (Ukraine).[1] The edition represents a literary group formed in the 30s of the 20th century in Lviv, the members of which were Bohdan Nyzhankivskyi, Zenon Tarnavskyi, Anatol and Yaroslav Kurdydyk, Vasyl Hirnyi, Ivan Chernyava, Vasyl Tkachuk, Volodyslav Kovalchuk, Roman Antonovych, Karlo Mulkevych, Hannussya Paventska and Bohdan Tsisyk. Some of the young authors even then already had separate publications, while others had no individual books published. Until recently in the history of literature the group *Twelve* was not even mentioned by those authors who analyzed Western Ukrainian writings, periodicals or the history of the interwar period. The young writers started their meetings in 1934, and in 1935 they published the first (and the last) joint edition – a separate issue of *The Chervona Kalyna Annals* (*The Red Cranberry Annals*).

When it appeared, the *Twelve* did not belong to the literary mainstream. The main advantage of the authors was their youth and also their creativity. It never came to separate publications, mainly for financial reasons, and, later, for reasons irrevocably historical. As Bohdan Nyzhankivskyi mentioned, the first response to the work of this group was a caricature by Edvard Kozak (Eko) published in the magazine *Komar* (*Mosquito*) edited by Eko: "Edvard Kozak... published a caricature *Twelve* – twelve Kurdydyks. And it was an advertisement!"[2] Several ironical notes in different issues followed this publication, and the tone was changed only after the joint publication in 1935. In any event the *Twelve* had been associated with meetings in cafes and tango dancing, with poetry readings, discussion of literary topics, and funny nicknames used in publications also.

After World War II no one in the group seemed to have stayed in Lviv. Some of them continued to write in emigration and became known primarily for their ironic writings: satirical articles, epigrams and parodies.

***Twelve*: the mode of return.** Today *Twelve* returned to its readership in the form of an anthology – a separate genre with its peculiarities. Anthology is a collective edition that asserts or claims a certain phenomenon. It has a thorough structure; it reflects the phenomenon in its entirety: national literature, genre, period, theme, generation, style, etc. Anthology has by default a selective character, which means it is conceptual. Anthology testifies to the return not only of individual writers, but also of a separate *phenomenon* of literary and near literary life in Lviv in the interwar periods.

The format of the book, which is almost albumlike, determines the format of the reading. And while *Twelve* passed unnoticed in the literary routine of the 1930s, at the beginning of the 21st century it deserves a separate place in literature. Detailed

narrations about each of the writers, saturated with citations and dates, add to the book an academically serious character. Hundreds of pictures of interwar Lviv create the effect of presence and authenticity.

As Roger Chartier in the monograph *Culture écrite et société* said, "the periodization depends of the differences between writing forms or the mode of text reproduction".[3] While their contemporaries with irony perceived the *Twelve*, and the caricature by EKO was the only picture of the entire group, today they return completely different. Two subtitles, – "the youngest Lviv literary Bohemia of the 30s of the 20th century" and "anthology of urban prose" – are both very promising to the readers: Bohemian life of Lviv in the interwar period and its reflection in urban text (or discourse).

Lviv: interwar and inter-world. In modern discussions about Lviv, the interwar period is seen as a being in-between.[4] This period still falls within the span of memory, but at the same time it is starting to disappear from memory: we relive it as a family biography, but not as personal one. Lviv, as represented in the anthology, is very special. In 1930s Lviv was not a Ukrainian city, even though it was a Ukrainian centre; what was occurring was important for the Ukrainian culture as a whole.

Ostap Tarnavskyi in his book of memoirs *Literary Lviv: 1939-1944* writes, "at that time in Lviv there lived about 350 thousand people – by national criterion half of them were Poles. Jews represented one third of the population, and only about 50 thousand were Ukrainians. Despite the fact that a considerably small number of Ukrainians lived in Lviv, Lviv was the centre of Ukrainian life".[5]

City portrait. Most profoundly and in the best way the life of the city is portrayed in the collection by Bohdan Nyzhankivskyi *Street*. These long short stories depict a special Lviv type, who speaks colourful Ukrainian "Lviv" language and who is ready to fight for the city and for his presence in it. Nyzhankivskyi portrays "the rudiment of street life" and "the children of the streets", whose childhood, and that is very notable, passed in the village or in the suburbs. Here city dwellings are hardly ever portrayed, with the exception of rooms where the characters stay the night without leaving any of their things there. The place of work of the characters is also mainly in the streets; they build and repair the city streets, construct canals and water pipelines.

The space of the street is outlined by pavements, lanterns, stone buildings, walls of stone, gates, chimneys and roofs, *shynoks* (Ukrainian traditional bars), markets, shop windows, individual memorials as meeting places, squares and cross-roads, railway bridges, and commissariats and prisons. Proper names are rarely used.

The city has not yet been rendered habitable – it revolts, it checks each and every newcomer to the city for two seemingly incompatible qualities – strength and humanity. Strength is needed to survive, while humanity is necessary for life to make sense. The city for the literary characters becomes a test – a challenge – both moral and ethical. To the same extent it becomes a test for the very literature.

Lviv as a scene and a theme. According to Michel Butor, "city as a literary genre can easily be compared to novel".[6] It seems that the anthology *Twelve* is an attempt to create a "collective" novel, where twelve writers of the interwar Lviv turn into characters of an entire urban text.

Among the members of the *Twelve*, not all writers chose Lviv as the place of action, or Lvivites for characters, or Lviv vernacular (so called *balak*) for the language of their works. It is also worth mentioning that among the participants of *Twelve* only Ivan Chernyava and Volodyslav Kovalchuk were born in Lviv, and only the latter died there. The majority of the participants spent no more than a decade or two in Lviv when they came from villages or towns to Lviv to study or work.

Four authors in the anthology are supplied with only biographical data: Roman Antonovych, Karlo Mulkevych, Hannussya Paventska and Bohdan Tsisyk. Among others, it is only Vasyl Hirnyi who portrays the artistic literary atmosphere of the

Twelve in short parodies; while the character of the long short story *Maecenas* by Anatol Kurdydyk is a young and hungry, but talented Lviv wood carver.

Urban life is depicted only in the works by Bohdan Nyzhankivskyi and Zenon Tarnavskyi. All three of works were written by Tarnavskyi in emigration, as was *I Returned to My City* by Nyzhankivskyi.

City appropriation. City appropriation in the works by Nyzhankivskyi and Tarnavskyi occurs on both *existential and lingual* levels. It is not only about creation of special "Lviv language", it is also about the names of streets, squares, districts and houses – the collection of what Michel Butor referred to as "urban text". The action in long short stories by Bohdan Nyzhankivskyi is developed, as a rule, within one *street* (the name of the book is not fortuitous), while narratives are usually about traveling around the native *city*. There is something unnamed here.

Zenon Tarnavskyi also shows this inner struggle for the city in his *On the Way to Vysokyi Zamok* (Vysokyi Zamok – the High Castle). The main character – court official Yuriy Kolodrubets – in his daily walk, all the time re-reads the city anew, like the book known by heart: house number 7 in Krasitskykh Street, the court house in Krasitskykh Street, Seim, cinema *Muse*, Bank *Krayevyi*, Households, The Hetman Hills, Videnka, Kapitul square, Rynok square, Ruska Street, *Dnister*, the Black Hills, the high school, police barracks, Teatynska Street, park around the Vysokyi Zamok, the Casle, The Hill of the Ljublin Union. He walks to the pillar of the triangular tower from where the Voloska church can be seen, St. George's Cathedral, Yaniv and Lychakiv cemeteries. On his way home he passes the Jesuit district and the university. The change of powers almost does not influence the daily route of Kolodrubets, or his daily routine. There is only one thing he just cannot forgive the Poles, the Nazi, or the Bolsheviks – renaming the streets.

With his daily walks Yuriy Kolodrubets always reaffirms and reprints the Lviv topography, for years wanting to rename it: "In his project all the best streets and squares in Lviv were preserved to be named after the greatest heroes, political figures and writers. He knew exactly where the square named after hetman Mazeppa was to be, and where the street named after hetman Khmelnytskyi. He chose Akademichna Street to be named after Taras Shevchenko. He was only dubious about which street to name after Ivan Franko, whom he knew personally. Pototskykh Street was good for that purpose, so was Sapihy Street... In his head he was brooding over the complete and precise plan of the new Lviv".[7]

Task of memory. Tarnavskyi himself in his short story *The Wind Above the Yanivska Street* exhibits actions similar to his character. The struggle for the city is also struggle for its "text", even if it seems strange and utopian. The story combines the memories of the author with the description of the Ukrainian clandestine struggle in the pre-war Lviv. It may seem that the task of the memory is to reproduce in most detail the place of action – in particular, the lost place. Instead, the author admits: "In this story I make the names of Lviv streets and squares sound more Ukrainian, despite the fact that I grew up in the interwar period when Lviv was "polished" with Polish names that were to exhibit the Polish character of Lviv, like the shiny buttons of firemen show their bravery in fighting the fires".[8]

Repetition of the names of streets and squares is a certain ritual performed in a foreign land. And this ritual maintains the readiness of the emigrants to return home.

With Zenon Tarnavskyi even the winds blowing from Yanivska and Horodotska Streets have their own routes. Imaginary trips are no less important for the author than the description of the struggle for liberation that makes the plot of the story: "literary critics and even regular readers when reading this place will have the right to smirk and to remark that a very detailed list of streets would rather be a part of the municipal guide or official register of roads and streets than a story. However, everything is in a network of causes and results".[9]

Memory that keeps in its nooks the smallest details

unique to their homeland – is the only refuge of emigrants ("unhappy people, who travel a lot and have no history", – Walter Benjamin[10]).

The loss of every name is irreversible and inadmissible. This is treason to refuse to return. And this is why, as the author admits, "I want to register in writing all those details that I still remember about Lviv when I keep turning them over and over in my mind".[11] The space for remembrances is not endless, it is limited by several routes, repeated actions and recognizable places. Lviv is cut off from the rest of the world as it is a world in itself.

Writing as sign making. This lost but dreamed about city becomes the meeting venue for all migrants. Personal view, expressed through language, turns into a collective memory. Memories, expressed through language, are the signs that society places in its own past, while actually the real idea of the trip through the past is present.

According to Halbwachs, "Any historical character or fact that penetrated into this memory immediately turns there into a kind of lecture, concept or symbol; it acquires the new sense; it becomes the element of the system of social ideas".[12] In the case of emigration prose by Nyzhankivskyi and Tarnavskyi it is the idea of Ukrainian Lviv; in the case of anthology it is the idea of Lviv urban prose of the interwar period.

Memory tends to connect events to the place, but not to the time; remembrance of a place revokes corresponding events. What happened once and was fixed (in memory or in writing), will never disappear and can be re-visited. It happened, for example, in the story *On the Way to Vysokyi Zamok*: "I tried to persuade my friends and acquaintances to join me in my trip to Lviv. All of them refused. All of them did. That's why I went by myself... So, I did visit Lviv. Nothing changed there. Only everything was covered with golden dust".[13]

Golden dust of *nostalgia*. Golden dust stands for the golden charm of *nostalgia*, that allows you to return again and again, but never for good. The dust covers you with golden powder and soothing power. We can also see it in the narrative *I Returned to My City* by Bohdan Nyzhankivskyi; everything is scattered with the pink powder, soft and calm, and what remains is just blurred silhouettes. The perspective is lost in this "mist". The city, in the same way as with Tarnavskyi, develops as a route; it exists in the spot of presence, in a tight space that evoked in the memory of the narrator. The author in detail describes the trip of the character from the railway downtown. Nyzhankivskyi's route is surreal, parts of the space are disconnected topographically, and they are more of symbols. Memory is fragmentary and thoughts are born by a wish. It is opposed to death (the carrier that lures the character to get on his carriage and takes him to the cemetery) and oblivion. Like in Tarnavskyi's memoirs, a return to a certain place means a return to events connected with it. Those who come to the meeting are called on by memory. And only one meeting is impossible – the meeting with your own self. The character can hear his mother's words – "I was waiting for you", but they are separated by the unbridgeable abyss of the pink dust. That abyss separates *today* from *yesterday*, an idea from reality.

Invention of tradition. The city of remembrance, lost and imaginary, takes much more place in the literature of *Twelve* than the real Lviv of the 1930s. Absence gives birth to the text; it weaves the tissue of remembrance and desire. Text-remembrances are born by *nostalgia* – "creative sorrow", according to Michelle Mason.[14] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries nostalgia was recognized as a physical sickness that could be healed.[15] But nostalgia does not bring peace – it is insatiable, it is "repetition that mourns the artificial character of any repetition".[16]

What attracts the person is not a place as such; it is the concept of this place, some past project, idealized and unattainable. Memory is selective; it highlights one aspect but overlooks the other and shows the details it needs and hides back those parts of the historic scene that do not match the "nostalgia project".

In the 1930s the appearance of *Twelve* was a search for one's own *place* in the literary environment in

Lviv. The return of the *Twelve* today is the return to what was lost (in narrative memoirs) to the non-existent place that the interwar Lviv was.

In the 1930s the group *Twelve* lost its future (with the advent of the Soviet and Nazi forces); at the beginning of the 21st century anthology *Twelve* is seeking the lost past, Ukrainian Lviv – the city that expresses itself through urban prose in a full-fledged manner. The result of the creative nostalgia is the invention of tradition (by Eric Hobsbawm[17]), or even re-invention – turning to the past, that re-creates it and re-lives it in accordance with the needs and wishes of the present.

It is not fortuitous that in one of the reviews Vasyl Gabor was called a creator of the books.

Angels of history. Project *Twelve* is much more (and in some respects something different) than the collected works of twelve authors from Lviv, written in the 30s of the 20th century. Characters of the anthology are representatives of Bohemia themselves, who by their lifestyle and by the process of creation testified to the existence of Ukrainian interwar Lviv and to the urban dimension of the Ukrainian literature of the interwar period.

Characters of the narratives and stories of the 1930s are very distant from the classical European "sample" of modern European literature; let us recall *flaneur* of Walter Benjamin, the typical representative of the then Bohemia. At the same time, philosophy and aesthetics of memory, generated by the disastrous circumstances of the 20th century and the vision of one's own past as a ruin that needs a systematic effort of memory, are partly similar. The angel of history that is gone with the wind from paradise (maybe it's the same wind that blows along Yanivska and Horodotska Streets in Tarnavskyi's stories) can get a glimpse of only individual fragments. He cannot be opposed to time, but he can tell what he saw and get it back to life in a new and changed way and in a new *mode* of perception.

Compiler: between reader and writer. Collecting and arrangement is not only accumulation of certain things (memories in the case of Nyzhankivskyi and Tarnavskyi and works in the case of Vasyl Gabor), but is also an intellectual action that shows the value of the world as selected by the Compiler.

Authors and compiler – each of them on his/her level and in their own way – mention the Lviv of the interwar period both as space for life and space for literature. Literature, according to Benjamin, is an attempt "to build the picture of your own self" and "to come to possess your own experience". Memory withstands history, it conducts dialogue with the past as based on the interests of the present; not only does anthology show, it also completes the creation of the Ukrainian urban literary tradition that was only beginning in the 30s of the 20th century in Lviv.

Notes

1 See '*«Дванадцятка»: Наймолодша львівська літературна богема 30-х років XX століття*' ('*"Twelve": The Youngest Lviv Literary Bohemia of the 30s of the 20th Century*') in: Василь Габор (ed.), *Антологія урбаністичної прози* (*An Anthology of Urban Prose*), Львів: ЛА «Піраміда», 2006.

2 Богдан Нижанківський, '«Дванадцятка». Наймолодша львівська богема 30-х років' ('The Youngest Lviv Bohemia of the 1930s') in: *Сучасність: Література, мистецтво, суспільне життя* (*Suchasnist: Literature, Arts, Social Life*), No. 1, Мюнхен, 1986, p. 16.

3 Роже Шартье, *Письменная культура и общество* (*Writing Culture and Society*), trans. by Ирина Стаф, Москва: Новое издательство, 2006, p. 18.

4 See *Leopolis Multiplex*, Київ: Грані-Т, 2008, p. 480.

5 Остап Тарнавський, *Літературний Львів, 1939-1944: Спомини* (*Literary Lviv, 1939-1944: Memoirs*), Львів: Просвіта, 1995, pp. 13-14.

6 Мишель Бютор, *Роман как исследование* (*A Novel as a Research*), Москва: Издательство Московського университета, 2000, p. 160.

7 '*«Дванадцятка»*' ('*"Twelve"*'), 2006, p. 197.

8 Ibid., p. 166.

9 Ibid., p. 174.

10 Вальтер Беньямин, 'Шарль Бодлер. Поэт в эпоху зрелого капитализма' ('Charles Baudelaire. A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism') in: Вальтер Беньямин, *Маски времени* (*Masks of the Time*), Санкт-Петербург: Symposium, 2004, p. 201.

11 '*«Дванадцятка»*' ('*"Twelve"*'), p. 175.

12 Морис Хальбвакс, *Социальные рамки памяти* (*The Social Frames of Memory*), Москва: Новое издательство, 2007, p. 343.

13 '*«Дванадцятка»*' ('*"Twelve"*'), 2006, p. 192.

14 Michael M. Mason, 'The Cultivation of the Senses for Creative Nostalgia in the Essays of W. H. Hudson' in:

Ariel, No. 20.1, 1989, p. 28.

[15] See Лінда Гатчеон, 'Іронія, ностальгія і постмодерн' ('Irony, Nostalgia and Postmodern') in: Олена Галета, Євген Гулевич, Зоряна Рибчинська (eds.), *Іронія: Збірник статей* (*Irony: Collected Essays*), Львів: Літопис, Київ: Смолоскип, 2006, p. 174.

[16] Susan Steward, *On Longing: Narrative of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984, p. 23.

[17] See Ерік Гобсбаум, 'Вступ: винаходження традицій' ('Introduction: Inventing Traditions') in: Ерік Гобсбаум, Теренс Рейнджер (eds.), *Винайдення традиції* (*The Invention of Tradition*), Київ: Ніка-Центр, 2005, pp. 12-28.

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Tradicijos antologizavimas: Lvovas kaip įsivaizduotas XX a. ketvirtojo dešimtmečio ukrainiečių literatūrinis miestas

Reikšminiai žodžiai*: Dvylika*, Bohdan Nyzhankivskyi, Zenon Tarnavskyi, miesto literatūra, miesto tekstas, Lvovas, antologija, sudarytojas, atmintis, prisiminimai, nostalgija, tradicijos išradimas.

Santrauka

Šiame straipsnyje analizuojamas antologinis projektas *Dvylika*, sudarytas Vasylio Gaboro ir publikuotas Lvove (Ukraina), 2006 metais bei pripažintas geriausia metų knyga. Paliečiamas istorinis kontekstas, kuriame XX a. ketvirtajame dešimtmetyje susibūrė literatūrinė grupė *Dvylika*, ir šios grupės supratimas bei vertinimas šiuolaikinėje spaudoje.

Projektas *Dvylika* – tai kur kas daugiau (ir tam tikra prasme kažkas visiškai kita) nei dvylikos autorių iš Lvovo kūrybos rinktinė, parengta XX a. ketvirtajame dešimtmetyje. Antologijos dalyviai yra bohemos žmonės, savo gyvenimo būdu ir kūrybos formomis šio laikotarpio Ukrainos literatūroje liudiję tarpukario Lvovo ukrainišką tapatumą ir urbanistinę dimensiją.

Gauta 2010-05-15
Parengta spaudai 2010-09-15

RE-ENACTING THE PAST: WITNESSING, SPECTATORSHIP, PARTICIPATION

INSCENIZUOTA PRAEITIS: LIUDYTI, STEBĖTI, DALYVAUTI

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STAGING DISSENSUS: THE BALTIC WAY AS A PERFORMATIVE ACT TO REFRAME THE GEO-POLITICAL SPHERE

Key words: Baltic Way, Jacques Rancière, Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, Vytautas Landsbergis, Dainis Ivans, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia.

On 23 August 1989, a 600 km human chain linked Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius, to condemn the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact on its 50th anniversary. It was a symbolic performance uniting three republics of the Soviet Union in an extraordinary act to denounce the Soviet occupation of these three independent nation-states in 1939 and to demand restitution of their sovereign rights. As an embodied performance of national as well as transnational solidarity, it challenged the Soviet interpretation of history, countering the assertion that the Baltic countries entered willingly into the Soviet Union, and demonstrated, through the participation of approximately 2 million people, the popular opposition to Soviet domination. More particularly, it redrew the political geographical map, highlighting national borders between the Baltic countries, which had become only administrative rather than political units, as well as forming a living physical connection between the three Baltic States. By disputing the geo-political frame, the Baltic Way asserted the rights of national citizenship and sovereignty, which had been denied for fifty years, and heralded the demise of the Soviet Union and the Iron Curtain. In this essay I want to apply Jacques Rancière's notion of political dissensus in order to reconsider the performativity of this political event.

The Baltic Way was a symbolic event staged by the popular fronts of the three Baltic republics to denounce the secret arrangements made by Hitler and Stalin when they agreed to divide up Europe in 1939. Under the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact that was signed prior to the commencement of the World War II, Latvia and Estonia were to become part of the Soviet sphere of influence, while Lithuania would fall under Germany's area.[1] During the negotiations of this agreement, there was a dispute between Stalin and Hitler over the division of the Baltic States. Hitler at first claimed Latvia and Lithuania, but Stalin insisted on taking Latvia. Following the signing of this pact in August 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union invaded Poland from opposite sides.[2] After German forces quickly advanced on Warsaw, Stalin then proposed that in return for giving a greater share of Poland to the Germans, Germany should cede Lithuania to the Soviet Union.[3] This revision of the 23rd of August pact was ratified on the 28th of September.[4] Soviet troops then occupied all three Baltic countries on the pretext of protecting them from German aggression and placed puppet regimes in power, forcing them to agree to become republics of the Soviet Union. The process of occupation and annexation was hidden from public view under a mask of voluntary acquiescence by announcing that the governments of the independent Baltic countries wished to become part of the Soviet empire. When the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact dissolved as a result of Hitler's decision to attack the Soviet Union in 1941, the Baltic countries were invaded by German forces who were eventually defeated by Soviet forces in 1944. The Soviet government could then represent the result as the liberation of the Baltic countries and

the restoration of their status as Soviet republics.

Forty years later, Gorbachev introduced a policy of *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring) allowing more discussion of the past as well as more political mobilization and dissent. Under this new spirit of liberalism, national movements emerged in the Baltic States and established the Baltic Council consisting of representatives from the Popular Front of Estonia *Rahvarinne*, the Popular Front of Latvia and the Lithuanian Reform Movement *Sąjūdis*. They began to agitate for more autonomy and to enquire into the circumstances leading to the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and the secret protocols that had been signed. The leaders of the popular fronts argued that the annexation of their countries by the Soviet Union had been illegal, and they demanded to see the secret protocols. While negotiations between the leaders of the popular fronts and the Soviet government progressed, the leaders of the popular fronts of the three Baltic States decided to organise a mass and unique demonstration. What was unusual about this event was that it was not a single demonstration in a particular city but a continuous mass demonstration over the territory of three separate states. On a fine summer day on 23 August 1989 at 7 pm, over 2 million people of all ages and walks of life from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania formed a human chain, holding hands for fifteen minutes, from Tallinn to Vilnius in a peaceful act of solidarity and defiance.

Despite the policy of *glasnost*, the action entailed considerable risks. The first of these risks was the high chance that the populations of the three states would be reluctant to take part in the event. Previous events such as *Embrace the Baltic Sea* and *Embracement of Ignalina* had been failures because of low participation. To combat this risk, many local groups were engaged to help organise the event with precise distribution of the entire distance to be covered by the specific groups of participants. The Estonian government declared the day as a national holiday. Also a radio programme was dedicated to the occasion so that people travelling by car could keep in touch with the organization. Main events were scheduled on the borders between the states, where the leaders would give speeches that would be broadcast on radio. Moreover, a major Declaration by the *Sąjūdis* Seimas Council was published calling for the restoration of Lithuanian independence.[5]

The main anxiety over popular participation came from the risk of a negative reaction from the Soviet authorities. It was difficult to predict how the Soviet government and the Soviet military would act, and whether they might disrupt the event with military aggression (as later occurred when Soviet tanks attacked strategic sites in Vilnius in January 1991 and killed sixteen people). Erich Honecker, the leader of the GDR, and Nicolae Ceauşescu, President of Romania, for example, offered to provide military support to the Soviet Union to break up the demonstration.[6] To overcome this risk, the plans were developed in great secrecy. It was also made clear that it would be a peaceful manifestation. Nevertheless, there were efforts to interfere with its success. For example, the Latvian radio was prevented at the last minute from transmitting the speech of Dainis Ivans, the head of the Latvian Popular Front. However, he had taken the precaution of pre-recording it so that it could be transmitted on alternative wavelengths.[7]

In the end it was a much more successful event than had been anticipated. The participation by an estimated 2.2 million (700,000 Estonians, 500,000 Latvians, and one million Lithuanians) far exceeded the predictions of the Baltic Council of 1.5 million, with the singing of traditional and national songs, and many colourful and theatrical events happening along the way. In addition, a one hundred kilometre traffic jam formed on the Kaunas to Vilnius highway that lasted for two hours, with people struggling to participate in the event.[8] On the Latvian-Estonian border 20,000 people gathered, and there was such a large crowd that the Estonian leader Edgar Savisaar, who arrived by helicopter from an earlier demonstration in Tallinn, had to land far away and walk a long distance to get to the border where the podium had been erected for his speech. The Latvian and Estonian leaders held a symbolic funeral ceremony in which a large black cross symbolising the Hitler-Stalin pact was lit on fire, and much dancing and singing took place. Despite using different languages on the podium with the resultant cacophony, Dainis

Ivans recalls this as a utopian moment when the Baltic people spoke with a single voice.[9]

In reviewing the Baltic Way event, it is useful to consider the demonstration as both a symbolic performance and as a performative act. The uniting of hands and singing traditional songs across the three states was not just a symbolic act of celebrating ethnic and national identities. It was a more profound performative act, renaming and redefining the status of the Baltic Soviet Republics through the physical action of uniting the peoples of the three states, and reasserting the borders between them.

Thus the event represented a new way of marking the limits of the Soviet Union. The Baltic Way was an act of remapping and reconfiguring the Baltic States that challenged the Soviet version of history as well as the territory of the Soviet Union. In considering the Baltic Way as an act of remapping, one might recall Richard Schechner's comment that "the authors of the new maps have scenarios of their own which their maps enact. Interpreting maps this way is to examine map-making "as" performance. Every map not only represents the Earth in a specific way, but also enacts power relationships".[10] In 1939 the Soviet Union mapped out the Baltic States as part of their territory. In the performance of the Baltic Way, the boundaries of the Baltic States were being redrawn by the popular fronts of each state, and the human chain linking the three states redefined the borders and the links between them. During the manifestation, the borders between the three states were staged as important focal points, charging the borders with a certain energy that defined the political power and authority of the nation as a separate state and at the same time linking the three states together in a new configuration. For example, the leaders of the popular fronts made important declarations at the border between Latvia and Estonia that enacted a new relationship between the two future independent states, while Vytautas Landsbergis, the leader of the Lithuanian Popular Front, announced the demand for Lithuanian independence in Vilnius.

Under the Soviet constitution, Soviet republics had the right to leave the Soviet Union, while in practice they had been coerced into acquiescence. However, late in 1988 Gorbachev announced that he intended to revise the constitution to redefine this right. The Baltic Council then found itself having to step up the momentum, and, in what seemed to many like a crazy thing to do at the time, given the history of Soviet aggression in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland, the Lithuanian government declared independence after the successful staging of the Baltic Way. As the citizens erected barricades to protect the parliament and other strategic sites, the Soviet tanks were sent in to Vilnius. The Lithuanian government later erected border controls on the main roads at the national border and this led to the Soviet authorities repeatedly dismantling them and arresting or killing the border guards.

By renaming and remapping themselves as separate entities and united in a common bond, the Baltic popular movements ushered in a new reality. In this sense we can see the Baltic Way as an act of empowering the population as political subjects. According to Jacques Rancière, "Political subjects […] put the power of political names – that is, their extension and comprehension – to the test. Not only do they bring the inscription of rights to bear against situations in which those rights are denied, but they construct the world in which those rights are valid, together with the world in which they are not."[11] As part of the process, the popular fronts of the Baltic States began to register the citizens of the new states, which did not legally exist in terms of the Soviet Union, but existed in historic terms. In so doing, they were calling attention to their rights and the denial of those rights. According to Vytautas Landsbergis, the Baltic Way was "a move towards freedom. A demand to give back what is ours. Freedom is ours. It was taken away illegally."[12] Applying Rancière's theories to the Baltic Way, we can see that the participants were acting "as subjects of the Rights of Man in the precise sense that […] they acted as subjects that did not have the rights that they had and that had the rights that they had not."[13]

In their process of subjectivization, the Baltic people were manifesting their right to become citizens of individual independent Baltic States. In the

Lithuanian case, the action was more extreme. They were claiming that the Lithuanian people had never legally agreed to Soviet occupation and annexation, and that legally they should be a separate and independent state. Both actions can be seen as forms of political dissensus. Rancière discusses this as "a division inserted in "common sense"; a dispute over what is given and about the frame within which we see something as given."[14] By disputing the geopolitical frame and "putting of two worlds in one and the same world"[15] (Soviet and Baltic), the Baltic Way created a visible dissensus, converting the population into political subjects, renaming themselves as citizens of the Baltic States, and remapping the territory. Rancière argues, "A political subject is a capacity for staging scenes of dissensus […] The very difference between man and citizen is not a sign of disjunction, proving that rights are either void or tautological. It is the opening of an interval for political subjectivation. Political names are litigious names, whose extension and comprehension are uncertain and which for that reason open up the space of a test or verification."[16] In addition to seeing it as a performative act, one can also view the Baltic Way in terms of Alain Badiou's notion of an "event", which gains resonance when it is juxtaposed with another event. By staging the demonstration on the anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, the event gained further significance by contrasting it with the historical moment that had deprived the states of the autonomy that they were declaring. The Baltic Way was a political moment that signalled a change in the society. As Badiou argues, events enable new truths to emerge because of the process of decision making that each person witnessing and participating in the event must undergo in determining how to receive or place it: "an event is what decides about a zone of encyclopaedic indiscernibility"[17], for example, whether to be a Soviet citizen or a citizen of a Baltic country. The truth that is produced in this decision-making event forms their subject status. Like Badiou's example of St. Paul's experience on the road to Damascus, the truth of the event on the road from Vilnius to Tallinn made the Baltic peoples choose to become political subjects of their own countries rather than of the Soviet Union. "Subjectivization is that through which a truth is possible."[18] Thus the Baltic Way through its dialectical relationship with the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact (as an "interval (*écart*) of two events"[19]) exposed the historic remapping of the Baltic territory and heralded the reversal of that process. It further signalled that the reformist movement in the Baltic republics under *perestroika* and *glasnost* had transformed into a collective independence movement. The Baltic Way was not simply a political demonstration but a physical performance, remapping the territory and expressing new collective subjectivities.

Today there is a feeling amongst many disgruntled people in the Baltic countries that the evils of communism have been supplanted by the evils of capitalism and that there wasn't much to celebrate on the twentieth anniversary of the Baltic Way. Ironically, at the beginning of 2009, Latvians and Lithuanians, rather than barricading their parliaments against Soviet tanks, were attacking their parliaments with bricks and stones to complain about the current economic mess. Likewise, women in the Baltic countries today might question whether their status has improved or become more restricted under western and nationalist cultural values. Furthermore, the Baltic countries today appear to be competing with each other rather than cooperating harmoniously. Regardless of these and other pressing issues, one can look back on the Baltic Way as a moment of great significance when the Baltic peoples took their destiny into their own hands and became political subjects in a defining moment of history that had repercussions throughout the world.

Notes

[1] The first two articles of the secret protocols read: "Article I. In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement in the areas belonging to the Baltic States (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the northern boundary of Lithuania shall represent the boundary of the spheres of influence of Germany and USSR. In this connection the interest of Lithuania in the Vilna area is recognized by each party.

Article II. In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement of the areas belonging to the Polish state, the spheres of influence of Germany and the USSR shall

be bounded approximately by the line of the rivers Narev, Vistula and San." See http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1939pact.html.

[2] On 19 September 1939 German, Lithuanian and Soviet forces attacked Vilnius, which had been seized by Poland in 1920 leading to the establishment of a provisional capital in Kaunas. The Lithuanian forces entered Vilnius on 20 September 1939, and, after occupying it, the German government allowed Lithuania to annex the Vilnius region. See, for example, http://althistory.wikia.com/wiki/Lithuanian_invasion_of_Poland_(1939).

[3] Telegram from German Ambassador in Moscow to German Foreign Office, 25 September 1939, http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/nsr/nsr-03.html#27.

[4] See "secret supplementary protocol" signed by Molotov and Ribbentrop, 28 September 1939, http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/nsr/nsr-03.html#27.

[5] See http://www.balticway.net/index.php?page=documents&hl=en for the text of this declaration in English and Lithuanian.

[6] See Alexandra Ashbourne, *Lithuania: The Rebirth of a Nation, 1991-1994*, Maryland: Lexington Books, 1999, p. 24.

[7] Interview with Dainis Ivans, 16 December 2008, Riga.

[8] Landsbergis announced on the radio that those who were stuck in the traffic jam should just get out of their cars wherever they were and join hands with others. Interview with Vytautas Landsbergis, 19 December 2008, Vilnius.

[9] Interview with Dainis Ivans, 16 December 2008.

[10] Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, New York, London: Routledge, 2006, p. 42.

[11] Jacques Rancière, 'Who is the Subject of the Rights of Man' in: *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, London: Continuum, 2010, p. 69.

[12] Interview with Vytautas Landsbergis, 19 December 2008, Vilnius.

[13] Jacques Rancière, 2006, p.69.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Alain Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, London: Continuum, 2006, p. 147.

[18] Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, London: Continuum, 2007, p. 393.

[19] Ibid., p. 232.

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Nepritarimo scenos: Baltijos kelias kaip performatyvus aktas už geopolitinius pokyčius

Reikšminiai žodžiai: Baltijos kelias, Jacques Rancière, Molotovo–Ribbentropo paktas, Vytautas Landsbergis, Dainis Ivans, Lietuva, Latvija, Estija.

Santrauka

Jacques'as Rancière'as aptaria nepritarimą (*dissensus*) kaip „nuomonių skirtumą „sveiko proto" ribose: diskusiją apie tai, kas yra duotybė, apie tą sistemą, kurioje kažką suprantame kaip duotybę". Straipsnyje analizuojamas 1989 m. rugpjūčio Baltijos kelias kaip politinio nepritarimo pavyzdys, kai „du pasauliai atsiduria viename ir tame pačiame pasaulyje". 1989 metų rugpjūčio 23 dieną 600 km ilgio žmonių grandinė sujungė Taliną, Rygą ir Vilnių, siekiant pasmerkti Molotovo–Ribbentropo paktą per jo penkiasdešimtąsias metines. Tai buvo simbolinis įvykis, sujungęs tris Sovietų Sąjungos respublikas, ir politinis protesto aktas prieš trijų nepriklausomų nacionalinių valstybių okupaciją 1939 metais ir už nepriklausomybės atstatymo teisę. Kaip nacionalinio, o kartu ir transnacionalinio solidarumo išraiška, Baltijos kelias metė iššūkį sovietinei istorijos interpretacijai, nes prieštaravo tvirtinimui, esą Baltijos valstybės į Sovietų Sąjungą įstojo savo noru – beveik 2 milijonai šios akcijos dalyvių aiškiai parodė masinio pasipriešinimo sovietų valdžiai realumą. Dar daugiau, šis įvykis iš naujo perbraižė politinį geografinį žemėlapį, pabrėždamas nacionalines sienas tarp Baltijos valstybių, kurios sovietmečiu buvo suprantamos kaip administraciniai, o ne politiniai vienetai, o kartu sukūrė gyvą fizinį ryšį, susiejantį tris Baltijos valstybes. Užginčydamas geopolitinę sistemą, Baltijos kelias aiškiai pademonstravo nepritarimą, iškeldamas nacionalinės pilietybės ir nepriklausomybės teisę, kuri buvo neigiama penkiasdešimt metų, ir pranašaudamas Sovietų Sąjungos ir Geležinės uždangos griūtį.

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HISTORICAL RE-ENACTMENT AS A VEHICLE FOR PUBLIC MEMORY: A LITHUANIAN CASE STUDY[1]

Key words: commemorations, cultural performances, identity, memory, public rituals, re-enactment.

On a hot day in August of 2009 in one of the busiest streets in the Lithuanian town Palanga a wall made of foam rubber and guarded by two young men wearing Russian soldiers uniforms appeared. Palanga is a Lithuanian seaside resort and August is the peak of the holiday season, so at this time of year J. Basanavičius Street, named after one of the founding fathers of the Lithuanian nation state, is always full of people rushing to and from the beach. Palanga in August is a place where you go to forget, where holidays and oblivion rule. This was exactly the place chosen to serve as a site for the performative commemoration titled *20 Years Without Borders*, meant to celebrate the 48th anniversary of the construction and the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, sponsored by the Delegation of the European Commission in Lithuania and the German Embassy and organized by the private agency *Happyendless*.[2]

The reason behind the choice of this particular place was clearly articulated by the organizers of the event – the main criterion was conspicuousness. To gain as much visibility as possible, the performance had to succeed in making the ordinary appear conspicuous, or to create a situation that Arthur Danto calls the "transfiguration of the commonplace" – that is, the transformation of what has been ordinary into components of a quite different experience, be it aesthetic, communal or historical (as in this case).[3]

The re-enactment began early in the morning when the wall was built and ended in the evening of the same day when, at 9 pm, accompanied by a dramatic soundtrack, the wall was torn down. These two events were followed by a variety of different smaller scale projects: an information fair on the EU, collecting of the EU map out of pasta, the exhibition of houses made of *papier-machè* and decorated with detailed information about the financial support received by Lithuania from the EU, pop quiz shows and pop concerts. J. Basanavičius Street was divided into two clearly demarcated spaces physically separated by the wall – an empty grey zone guarded by Russian soldiers that symbolically revived the mental space of Communist Bloc countries and a lively, colorful and creative space of opportunities located on the other side of the wall, symbolically recreating the realities of free Europe or the Europe without walls.

The strategies of personification of historical experience were actively employed in the commemorative event: passers-by were invited to participate in the decoration of the wall – to leave their hand prints on it, to sign it, to endorse it. Later in the evening, the audience was asked to share their own memories of the historical events that took place 20 years ago and finally they were encouraged to take part in the demolition of the wall.

The Fall of the Wall scheduled to occur at 9 pm was the central loudly advertised event of all the commemorative festivities. The performance or the

Fig. 1. 20 years without borders, commemoration of the 48th anniversary of the construction and the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, J. Basanavičius street, Palanga, Lithuania, 2009 08 13. Photo: Delegation of the European Commission in Lithuania, http://www.facebook.com/Europos?v=photos

re-enactment was designed in such a way as to mimic the structure of popular forms of entertainment: borrowing its syntax from live pop shows, moderated by the master of ceremonies and patterned in a consistent, intensifying cycle of anticipation, exhortation, engagement and climax. The spectators desire for the climactic end was fueled using the extended period in which spectacle was promised but not yet performed. It was clearly calculated to evoke a certain degree of suspense in much the same way as a circus ringleader teases the spectators with the idea that they will soon be treated to the sight of a man putting his head in a lion's mouth. The presenter constantly encouraged audience members to applaud and cheer loudly, because, as he reminded them loudly, that was exactly what Germans did 20 years ago. The wall in Palanga fell with the support of three audience members and a moderately cheering crowd, leaving no wreckage or debris to collect. The crowd was directed away from the fallen wall in the opposite direction (symbolically further to the West) to be entertained by pop singers, while young men dressed like Russian soldiers cleaned the territory and gathered the remaining foam rubber blocks.

The public performance in Palanga that I am describing in such detail can be seen as a cultural practice that attempts to establish continuity with the historical past, at the same time arousing emotions of communality, as well as generating a sense of victory. Commemorations according to John Gillis are the practices of representation that enact and give social substance to the discourse of collective memory.[4] As we are constantly revisiting our memories to suit our current identities, commemorations reinscribe or reinvent the historical events or figures that shape contemporary social life. Therefore, content and genres, as well as functions of commemorative events, constantly transform over the course of history.

Patrice M. Dabrowski, while analysing the memory rituals and nation-building in Poland of the 19th century, declared the final decades of the nineteenth century the age of commemorations, because at that time across Europe much attention was being paid to national rituals and traditions, many of which were being invented during that period.[5] Therefore, the age of commemorations coincided with the development of so-called "official nationalisms" or

the processes of nation building across Europe and the height of imperialism.[6]

Commemorations played an important role in the making of nations, and at the same time they served, to cite Patrice M. Dabrowski, as miniature history lessons.[7] To make it even more specific, commemorative events were the means of communicating an interpretation (or multiple interpretations) of the historical event via a variety of media (performance, fine arts, applied arts and narratives) and to a broad and diverse constituency. If executed effectively, these state celebrations were able to represent stability; their "carefully scripted rituals" – to borrow Dabrowski's terms – were designed to foster or create a certain image of continuity or celebration of new beginnings.

Nevertheless, these public displays of social memory were contested events. As John Gills has stated in his research, commemorative activity is by definition social and political, for it involves the coordination of individual and group memories, whose results may appear consensual when they are in fact the product of processes of intense contest, struggle and in some cases annihilation.[8] According to Ernest Renan, being a nation requires some kind of collective forgetting.[9] These events are employed as representations or symbols, according to John Bodnar, that "coerce" the discordant interests of diverse social groups and unite them into a "unitary conceptual framework" which connects *the ideal* societal structure with *the real* order of things.[10] State or dominant groups employ them as a powerful weapon in order to establish continuity with a favorable historical past and at the same time to galvanize ideals of social stability, national unity and civic loyalty. However, these expressions almost always contain a certain amount of the fantastic, as they demonstrate what social reality should be like rather than what it really is. Therefore, they serve as the acts of "social magic", applying the famous notion of Pierre Bourdieu. Commemorations in this sense are performances of history and usually possess the same constituents as theatrical performances. According to theatre scholar Freddie Rokem, who defined the term "performing history" in his seminal book with the same title, performances of history always involve a simultaneous mixture of at least three different genres or modes of representation: the testimonial, the documentary, and the fantastic.[11] These three components of theatrical performances of history usually are all present in commemorative rituals of societal unity.

Fig. 2. 20 years without borders, commemoration of the 48th anniversary of the construction and the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, J. Basanavičius street, Palanga, Lithuania, 2009 08 13. Photo: Delegation of the European Commission in Lithuania, http://www.facebook.com/Europos?v=photos

Current works on the 19th century suggest that instead of "magically" unifying and cementing collective identities, commemorations often deepened divisions within societies.[12] As Jonathan Sperber declared, the one thing that the symbolic discourse of national unity could not express was the unity of the nation.[13] Numerous historical examples demonstrate that quite often the very object of commemorative practices – the historical script or, in other words, the memory – is the object of conflicting visions and ideological positions that struggle

Fig. 3. 20 years without borders, commemoration of the 48th anniversary of the construction and the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, J. Basanavičius street, Palanga, Lithuania, 2009 08 13. Photo: Delegation of the European Commission in Lithuania, http://www.facebook.com/Europos?v=photos

to dominate.[14] Quite often the official "commemoration" metamorphosed into "contestation", when dissenting voices and alternative narratives broke through the dominant patterns of "vehicles of social memory".

It is obvious that commemorations always involve the "memory work" that is embedded in complex power relations that determine what is remembered or forgotten by whom and for what end. However, even if contemporary public memory emphasizes dislocation, paradox and irony in contrast with older, traditional forms, nostalgia for the old models of commemorations survives. The potential of commemorative performances (or commemorations in general) to produce a unitary effect for otherwise inoperative communities (that "act of social magic") has too long a history to be forgotten. This nostalgia was exactly the sentiment behind the commemorative event in Palanga, where a historical event was appropriated in order to stage, celebrate and promote new transnational identity – namely the EU identity.

At the moment when the concept of common European identity is a contested terrain but at the same time an "ultimate concern", formation of identity is a very urgent task to perform. This is exactly the dilemma that some European states faced at the end of 19th century, so, to rephrase the famous saying, "we have made the European Union, now we must make Europeans". What are the conditions for a Europe to act as a "unity"? How to make the EU the object of love for the Europeans?[15] These questions are being address by various prominent scholars, searching for ways for the EU to become the founding ground for the European political nation. As Evert van der Zweerde has suggested in his essay *Fear, Love, Hope – European Political Passions*, the cool, calm and collected commitment of citizens to their "constitution" or legal frame of the union, is a positive force in line with the concept of civil society, but it is precisely too cool and too rational to found a *dèmos* or the sense of a political nation and therefore must be supplemented by a relatively "warm" form of emotional and passionate commitment that should act in accordance with the notion of *patriotism*, maybe as he suggests, transformed into *matrionism* – a notion that would refer to Europe as "matrie", instead of *patrie* or nation.[16]

The question, however, is what can be the basis for the Love of Europe? Van der Zweerde answers that question with great certainty – the same options as for love of one's country – ethnic, religious,

linguistic, historical and political identities. Since ethnic, religious or linguistic factors seem to be the least relevant here, historical and political identity appears to be the most suitable building blocks for the image of the EU as *matrie*. As Van der Zweerde points out,

> "It is against the background of a shared history that Europeans can unite around a set of political ideas that take into account the ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural diversity of the continent".[17]

Precisely this need to demonstrate the common history and to link the history of the nation with the history of Europe stood at the heart of the commemorative impulse in Palanga. The slogans written on the Wall stating *Bunda jau Baltija* (The Baltics are Rising), *Baltijos kelias jėga* (The Baltic Way Rules) were meant to appeal to local audiences, and to reanimate Lithuanian "realms of memory". The theatrical use of the personifications or "performing history" – strategies of witnessing and participation – were employed to work on the effect of the common history. The message of common good that all citizens can recognize, such as safety, property, financial aid and security was displayed with the help of specific structuring of the space and various complementary events.

However, in order to awaken the desired "warm" effect of feeling towards the common experience, the event itself had to be entertaining and popular. The community was being called into being following the formulas of commercialized mass entertainment rather than the logic of the critical public sphere. To rephrase Zygmund Bauman – history in Palanga was presented as a giant theme park, where the tasks of preaching, entertaining and selling were all intertwined. It demonstrated that collective understanding of the past must be absorbed by all senses, and worked upon in the popular imagination. Moreover the performance repeatedly drew attention to how spectators perceive it by creating shifts between the order of presence and representation. The experience or the effect of being unable to command processes and events entirely – of instead being determined by them to a degree – was created. Together with the re-animation of the historical sense of shared experience of Europeans, the event also helped the realization – in the double sense of "becoming aware" and "making real" – not only of a common historical and political space as well as, but also of the sense of inevitability. In this way, the use of public memory as a means of constructing a spectacle of identity was exactly the operation of the invisible theatre, staged in order to appear natural.

Notes

[1] This research was funded by a grant (No. MIP-05/2010) from the Research Council of Lithuania. This research was performed in cooperation with Vytautas Magnus University.

[2] For more detailed information on this event see http://www.youtube.com/EUtube.

[3] Arthur C. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981; more on transfiguration of the commonplace in performance practices see Erika Fischer-Lichte, 'The Performance as Event' in: *The Transformative Power of Performance. A New Aesthetics*, London, New York: Routledge, 2008, pp. 161-181.

[4] John R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

[5] Patrice M. Dabrowski, *Commemorations and the Shaping of Modern Poland*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004, p. 3. The concept of *invented traditions* is thoroughly described in Eric Hobsbawm, Terrence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

[6] Patrice M. Dabrowski, 2004, p. 3.

[7] Ibid., p. 5.

[8] John R. Gillis, 1994, p. 5.

[9] Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation? (What is a Nation?)*, trans. by Romer Taylor, Toronto: Tapir Press, 1996.

[10] John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992, p. 16.

[11] Freddie Rokem, *Performing History: Theatrical Representation of the Past in Contemporary Theatre*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000, p. 33.

[12] Patrice M. Dabrowski, 2004, pp. 6-10; Jonathan Sperber, 'Festivals of National Unity in the German Revolution of 1848/49' in: *Past and Present*, No. 136, 1992, p. 138.

[13] Ibid.

[14] One recent example is analyzed in Stefan Berger, Paul Holtom, 'Locating Kaliningrad and Königsberg in Russian and German Collective Identity Discourses and Political Symbolism in the 750th Anniversary Celebrations of 2005' in: *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 1,

2008, pp. 15-37. The article analyses the power struggles between two notions of collective identity (Russian and German) of Kaliningrad / Königsberg region and their reflection in the public debates surrounding the celebration of the 750th anniversary of the city. Many such examples are presented in the study of John Bodnar. See John Bodnar, 1992.

[15] Evert Van Der Zweerde, 'Fear, Love, Hope – European Political Passions' in: *Filosofija. Sociologija*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 2008, p. 4.

[16] Ibid., p. 10.

[17] Ibid., p. 11.

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Praeities inscenizacija kaip atminties politikos įrankis: Lietuvos atvejo studija

Reikšminiai žodžiai: atmintis, atminties politika, minėjimai, istorijos vaidinimai, tapatybė, viešieji ritualai.

Santrauka

Visuomenės ar bendruomenės savo požiūrį į istoriją ir praeitį įprasmina bei įkūnija įvairiais kultūros vaidinimais arba viešaisiais ritualais: proginiais minėjimais, jubiliejais, suvažiavimais, paradais. Jeigu autoritariniams režimams būdingus viešuosius ritualus galima nagrinėti remiantis tradicinėmis teatro formomis, tai šiuolaikinėse demokratinėse visuomenėse vykstantys minėjimai ar pilietiniai ritualai gali būti interpretuojami kaip modernaus ar avangardinio teatro žanrai: partizaninis teatras, gatvės teatras (R. Schechner), nematomas teatras (A. Boal). Šiame straipsnyje analizuojama, kaip proginis istorinio įvykio minėjimas (2009 08 14 Palangoje vykusi Berlyno sienos griūties rekonstrukcija) gali būti naudojamas naujų transnacionalinių tapatybių bei bendruomenių kūrimui ir propagavimui. Straipsnyje taip pat nagrinėjama, kokie inscenizacijos modeliai bei teatro poveikio priemonės pasitelkiamos formuojant tam tikras žiūrovo pozicijas, atsparos taškus, reguliuojančius šventinio įvykio / istorijos įvykio interpretaciją bei kuriant bendros istorinės praeities efektą.

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"AUTHENTIC BUT MODERN": PERFORMING TRADITIONAL TECHNOLOGIES IN PRESENT-DAY ESTONIA

Key words: Estonia, traditional technologies, performance, representation, tourism.

INTRODUCTION

During the years of regained independence, a new interest in traditional technologies has emerged in Estonia. We are witnessing a growing amount of practices that the participants define as "traditional" or that use elements of tradition for present-day purposes. The scale of heritage representations varies widely, from large folklore festivals that introduce top-class professionals from all over the world to small-scale and amateurish events like local neighbourhood days.

In the present article[1], I am focusing on performing traditional technologies in present-day Estonia. Among the implementers of traditional technologies, there is a clear-cut group of craftsmen who aim to make a living with their activity. In other cases, traditional technologies are carried out in the form of exhibition and have been harnessed to service tourism and entertainment. These are often performances – rehearsed, sometimes theatrical practices[2] that are demonstrated to an audience at a certain time and in a certain place. This is the type of event I aim to treat today. I intend to compare two displays: first, a traditional farm labour day called *Rehepapi seitse ametit* (Rehepapp's[3] Seven Professions) arranged by a South-Estonian tourist farm; and second, training sessions for traditional construction, held in a South-Estonian national park, the Karula National Park, and arranged by a local NGO. Both cases demonstrate the "perspective from below", by being activities that have been undertaken in the form of a citizens' initiative.

The article is based on ethnological fieldwork carried out by myself as a curator of the Estonian National Museum from 2003 to 2006. In addition to the analysis of the aforementioned events I support my work with more extensive fieldwork experience from the years 2004 to 2008, when I also documented heritage representations, undertaken by civic initiative in other formats.[4] The material is available in the archive of the ENM and in the author's possession.

Heritage representation marks both the process of cultural creation, which uses the past as a resource, as well as its result. The structure of the representation is characterized by an informed choice of single elements, and in this process, on the basis of existing cultural resources, a new cultural phenomenon is created, which is meaningful in the moment of creation and in the context it takes place. The heritage should acquire a modern meaning, because this is the only way it can be relevant and viable. Because the present is ever changing, also the construction of the past is always varying and a never-ending project.[5] The present article addresses the questions what kind of values of the participants are pursued and what are the interpretative meanings attributed to heritage representations while performing traditional technologies. The performances are conceptualized as instruments for adding value – the interface between "traditions" and tourism[6] – that connect heritage production to the present.

Cultural theorist Aleida Assmann has differentiated between the two forms of cultural memory – recording and functional cultural memory. According to her, functional cultural memory legitimates or delegitimates the memories of social groups and distinguishes them from one another. Recording cultural memory refers to representations of the past, which societies with written culture preserve in archives, libraries and museums. Recording memory also functions as a resource for renewing and changing cultural knowledge, creating contexts for different functional memories – offers alternative points of view and the so-called parallel memory. In oral memory cultures functional memory and recording memory coincide due to lack of external memory media (archives, museums, etc.).[7] For creating heritage representations, cultural memory is used situationally, so that the past acquires its purposeful value.

THE EVENTS: THE TRADITIONAL FARM LABOUR DAY *REHEPAPI SEITSE AMETIT* (REHEPAPP'S SEVEN PROFESSIONS) AND TRAINING SESSIONS FOR TRADITIONAL CONSTRUCTION

Both the tourist farm and the national park are situated in a periphery of Estonia both geographically as well as economically. In the regions, there are no major industrial undertakings. Most people work in the bigger local centers of Antsla, Kanepi, Võru and Valga. The main areas of activity of the inhabitants of the region are agriculture, forestry and woodworking, and tourism. As folklorist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has pointed out, tourism and heritage are collaborative industries, with heritage converting locations to destinations and tourism making them economically viable as exhibits of themselves.[8] Due to the decrease in agricultural production in the 1990s, all rural areas of Estonia have faced a considerable rise in unemployment. Many working-age people have moved to cities and left behind mainly pensioners, who are generally elderly people with small incomes. Heritage is seen as means to lure tourists and, together with them, money to one's home area. At the same time, however, for both observed events, organisers expressed their wish to involve local people as audience.

The local social event, *Rehepapi seitse ametit* (Rehepapp's Seven Professions) has been held annually since 2004. During the first half of 20th century, the farm was run as a regular agricultural farm of that time that grew crops, bred dairy cattle, etc. At present, the farm has different fields of activity: forestry, beef cattle breeding, beekeeping, and tourist accommodation. Also horses, dogs, cats, rabbits, hens and geese are kept on the farm. However, these are kept as pets, not bred for production.

The farm machinery from the first half of 20th century has well survived. The event aims at demonstrating old farm labour and, by that, also the old machinery in action. The owner of the farm, Helju[9] (b. 1953) feels that it is her mission to pass on knowledge about the life of farmers in the old days and old farm labour to younger generations.

> "[The aim of the farm work day is] to show how things were done in the farms in the old days. […] The purpose is to introduce farming and a sustainable environment of living, show farm jobs like threshing, extracting honey... Well, everything that there is. […] So that for the children, it would be educational, too".[10]

The Karula National Park is situated in Southeast Estonia. The target of the National Park's activities is preserving both local natural landscapes and cultural heritage.[11] The priority is given to the conservation of natural landscapes. As these have for the most part come into being by deeds of men, such as herding and mowing during hundreds of years before the mechanization of agricultural production, the Karula National Park aims at protecting such actions as well. Conservation of cultural heritage has so far mainly rendered value to the log buildings with wood shake roofs and quarry-stone outbuildings, intrinsic of the first decades of the 20th century.

In the Karula National Park, the training sessions of traditional construction have been held since the year 2000. These sessions are carried out annually by a local non-governmental organization that aims at preserving the local cultural heritage. During the

sessions, old ethnographic construction techniques such as building log houses, breaking stones, wattle fencing, roofing and several others are shown and taught to participants. The target group of these training sessions is local people. The organizers hope that locals will put these techniques more commonly into use. However, there is also a large group of "green" people among the participants who also takes an active part in other similar events all over Estonia.

The occasion, *Rehepapi seitse ametit* (Rehepapp's Seven Professions) is an explicit tourist enterprise. It is advertised via national media and every year hundreds of people take part in the event. The training of traditional construction is also connected to tourism, although in a more indirect way. On its homepage Karula National Park is regarded as a trademark directed to tourists and derived from the reputation of the local area. The local culture is described as follows:

> "[the park's] inhabitants are united by the Võru dialect, everyday habits and customs from old times, centuries-old kinship ties, and a common lifestyle arising from the local environment. Some farm buildings and fields here are centuries old. People still tell ancient folk tales, know the sites of ancient barrows, and maintain the graves of their forebears in the old cemeteries of Lüllemäe and Kaikamäe. The people of Karula have a sedentary lifestyle and they honour traditions".[12]

Under the name of preserving the local landscape picture, a systematic implementation of a uniform heritage representation is indeed carried out in the interests of creating this trademark. Training sessions aim at shaping the taste preferences of local inhabitants and by that facilitate the "proper" heritage representation.

THE PERFORMANCES

In connection with the observed events, one could speak of themed environments[13] as constructed spaces with symbolic meaning that convey that meaning to inhabitants and users through symbolic motifs. Thus, a themed environment could be understood as a space that is a "practiced place".[14] The properties of the space allow viewers to think about the possibilities of action and contribute to the understanding of what might conceivably transpire there.

Both analyzed events targeted knowledge transmittance in an experience-centered way. The topic of the events was narrating the story of ancestors, because in reality the local community does not follow this kind of lifestyle nor is it studied at schools. Among the teachers, there were both professionals with special training as well as locals with specific work experience. However, as the knowledge of the implementers themselves about a technology was considered too fragmentary and uneven, the comprehension about the ethnographic was attained by the help of recording cultural memory, to use Assmann's term. Nevertheless, the archival material did not prove to be enough for reconstructing either the whole technology or the historic milieu. To create themed environments, also other means and methods were employed.

Both events, *Rehepapi seitse ametit* (Rehepapp's Seven Professions) and the training session of traditional construction, could be described as performances encompassing "practices that involve theatrical, rehearsed and conventional/event-appropriate behaviours".[15] For analyzing performances, Diana Taylor, a scholar of performance studies, has suggested the concept of scenario. She understands scenario as "a sketch or outline of the plot of a play, giving particulars of the scenes, situations etc."[16] It consists of material which has already been worked on. The scenario includes the narrative and the plot, but demands that we also pay attention to milieu and corporeal behaviours such as gestures, attitudes, and tones not reducible to language. To recall, recount, or reactivate a scenario, a physical location (the scene as physical environment) should be evoked. The scene denotes intentionality and signals conscious strategies of display. The word appropriately suggests both the material stage as well as the highly codified environment that gives viewers pertinent information. The furnishings, clothing, sounds, and style contribute to the viewer's understanding of

what might conceivably transpire there.[17]

The event, *Rehepapi seitse ametit* (Rehepapp's Seven Professions) started about 11 o'clock in the morning and lasted the whole day. At first, everybody was asked to the front yard of the farm where Helju, the lady of the house, welcomed everybody and the special flag of the occasion was hoisted. When all the work had been done, everybody was asked to the front yard again, Helju thanked all the participants and the visitors, the flag was taken down and the "village party" began. Folk musicians, entertainers and folk dancers showed their art and later also all the visitors could go on dancing themselves. Also, throughout the day there were some local musicians playing accordion to keep spirits high.

The event was carried out in different spots in the farmyard. During the event, several traditional farm jobs, such as threshing with a machine, forging, roofing, making butter, extracting honey, shoeing a horse, and some others were shown to visitors. Each job started at a certain time, so that everybody could see everything.

The occasion was characterized by theatricality, spectacle and the creation of historic milieu. For the implementers it was important to act the performance out in a proper environment or to set the scene. Usually, the scene for a technology was set on that spot where the displayed work was historically implemented. For example, the shoeing of the horse took place in front of an old stable and honey was extracted in a granary where the necessary tools were also kept. Logically, roofing took place where there was an unfinished roof, and so on. Visitors could walk freely from one spot to another and watch different tasks completed by the performers. The front yard of the farm was set up like a fair or a marketplace. Food and drink was sold throughout the day in the farmyard. Some of the food had been prepared in a special way – for example, lamb baked in a hole in the ground and handmade bread of local origin. Also, home-brewed beer was a great hit among locals.[18] Later on, the same spot was used as the stage for entertainers and a dance floor.

The performers were dressed in costumes. These resembled the old everyday working outfits of old Estonians – the linen shirt. On one hand, it was practical to wear special work attire to prevent one's everyday clothing from getting dirty or damaged. However, another important aspect of wearing costumes was the creation of a historical milieu for the event. Although the shirts used during the performance were neither necessarily made of linen nor were they fashioned as primitively as in the old days, the things that seemed to count was visual resemblance: the natural-looking colour and the overall style of the clothing. Also, visitors could borrow costumes and dress appropriately for the occasion. Additionally, for extra fees guests could ride on a horseback or in a carriage, get a honey-massage or have their pictures taken in historical costumes. The two latter activities have never been a part of traditional Estonian peasant life but turned out to be the most popular activities in the history of the event.

The training sessions arranged by the NGO also proceeded according to a premeditated scenario. The sessions began with a theoretical seminar while the instructors held introductory lectures. Then everybody gathered at the workplace(s). In the course of my fieldwork I had the opportunity to observe and participate in the implementation of wattle fencing, stone-breaking and renovating a stone wall with lime mortar. The fencing materials were collected together from the woods of the Karula National Park with the help of the instructors. Quarry-stones and materials for lime mortar had been prepared beforehand by the NGO. The outer form of the training sessions brought to mind the ancient tradition of collaboration of Estonian peasants – the bee. In pre-industrial village society, it was common to accomplish big tasks with the help of neighbours. Usually, a bee lasted for several days – one day, the work was implemented in one farm, the next day in another, etc. The bee was always accompanied by abundant meals and merry dance parties in the evenings. In the training sessions of the NGO the participants were offered common lunches and dinners that had been prepared by local (tourism) farmers out of local food. In the evenings, there were dance parties during which today's electronic music was deliberately avoided. Instead, a well-known local folk musician was asked to play in the parties. Also,

old folk games were played and folk dances were danced. Since these were unfamiliar to many participants and needed to be learned, the workshops actually continued during the evening parties as well. However, there was always present a bunch of "green" people and fans of traditional construction, who had taken part in the events before and were able to pass the "tradition" of the parties (e.g., the songs, dances and games) on to the newcomers.

The NGO strove for naturalness, functionality and professional implementation of traditional technologies. The experiences and training of the instructors as well as the quality of materials were rendered very important. Many of the instructors were distinguished master craftsmen. Much attention was paid to construction materials, which had to be traditional and natural. In cases where local construction material was abundant (e.g., logs, bands, or birch bark) or it would have been too inconvenient to bring it from elsewhere (e.g., quarry-stones), local materials were preferred. However, in some cases when the quality of local natural materials (e.g., lime, clay) was considered poor, the materials were bought from industrial producers (e.g., lime mix). This principle is rather characteristic to environmentally sustainable production that does not tacitly presuppose relying on local tradition but also accepts contemporary ecologically sustainable materials.[19] The outside form of the events also accentuated functionality; mostly modern tools (e.g., tractors, drills) were used and theatricality was deliberately avoided.

In both of the events observed attention was paid to creating an authentic experience through the senses; the visitors were allowed to participate in the work process, feel the weight of an axe, the smell of smoke, the smell of tar, the softness of wool, the taste of honey, etc. The central role was played by the space where the activity took place. In both cases, the scene and the surrounding physical environment were not mutually exclusive, but rather took each other for granted. Local landscape, houses, domestic animals, farm activities and other kinds of naturally occurring elements were encompassed within the display in a supportive way. By the sameness of the location a supra-epochal connection with the natural and cultural resources of the past was created. The performance venues and the surrounding physical environment were organically merged.

VALUES EXPRESSED BY THE PERFORMANCES

According to Swedish ethnologist Jonas Frykman, nowadays, cultural heritage means a collection of stories and objects, but how these are constantly recreated and reshaped and given meanings escapes attention.[20] Studying the creators of heritage performances, it attracted my attention how they dealt with the phenomenon that was described as the mediation of an authentic experience.

In their attempts to define authenticity different scholars have picked out different aspects. Philosopher Jacob Golomb has argued that authenticity "calls for no particular contents or consequences, but, rather, focuses on the origins and the intensity of one's emotional-existential commitments"[21] and points out that self is at the centre of authenticity. Folklorist Regina Bendix calls it "the facade vs. the real thing" – dichotomy and emphasizes that "at heart, authenticity is a way of experiencing or being. However, it is hard for us humans to grasp something merely mental or experiential as a value, and thus we search for symbols or objectifications of the authentic. But as soon as we create material representations of authenticity, they are subject to the principles of the market, demanding scales of lesser and higher value".[22] The authors agree that authenticity is a dispute over possible truths. Since authenticity is socially constructed, also its social connotations are disputable.

In my fieldwork material, the notion "authenticity" was highlighted as a marker of quality by the creators of performances themselves. However, the authenticity of experience was created in slightly different ways. In the rhetoric of the NGO, the notions of "authentic"-"non-authentic" were used as a critical-appreciative terms.[23] While determining "the authentic", the NGO relied on history and presumed that some kind of reference to a phenomenon seen as cultural heritage would exist in the local environment: any observable traces or that someone would

really remember.[24] Hybridity and mixing phenomena of different styles and ages was not approved. This understanding expresses the principle of *musealizing*[25], a modern process in the course of which the non-modern world is relativized and preserved as museum items.

Yet, in the course of staging the performance, the question of authenticity remained contested. On one of my video recordings about the training sessions, an ideological viewpoint is expressed by an implementer and member of the NGO. He says that, "today, we shall not construct with roaring, instead we shall do it by knocking"[26] – meaning that electric saws were not to be used and everything had to be made by hand-saws and axes. At the same time, for example, the construction material for the fences was brought from the woods by a tractor, not by horse, and, like mentioned before, the usage of modern tools was usually not considered reproachful. What seemed to count was the ability of present-day contents to mould into a traditional form.

For the tourist farm, "authenticity" clearly denoted an emotional condition. When I asked Helju about how she chose new activities and elements to her event, she didn't reflect but said that she just put together whatever seemed to suit, if only the elements were close to nature. For her, "authenticity" seemed to denote a nostalgic feeling of the "simple and pure" rural life of the past. On one occasion she expressed her enthusiasm towards a local singing and dancing group whom she had asked to perform on the farm labour day. She characterized it thus: *Rural people doing their own thing – that was authentic*.[27] On another occasion she showed me a picture taken during the event *Rehepapi seitse ametit* (Rehepapp's Seven Professions). The photograph presented a little girl dressed in a linen shirt that had been borrowed from the tourist farm, petting a rabbit. Helju said that for her, that situation expressed the core of authenticity. She also associated authenticity with farm food and food production: she stressed that local food was "more organic", i.e. contained less pesticide residue and preservatives than food imported from other countries, and did not cause allergies.

> "I do not have the [eco-farm] title, that is the document certifying it, but principally we live for ourselves, we live for our visitors, we live for our children – so why the hell should I use chemicals there. Because we don't have a shortage of anything. And for ourselves, because there are so many allergies and all. […] And the chicken are free outside with us, and the eggs are large and yellow".[28]

The event *Rehepapi seitse ametit* (Rehepapp's Seven Professions) was characterized by hybridity and openness. Playing and mixing the styles and knowledge of different historical periods was approved in the creation of this ideal "historical" space. Perhaps that was also the strategic decision of the people who organized the farm labour day to let in certain elements that did not correspond to the traditional idea of a certain culture as a way of convincing people who otherwise would not have gone there. Perhaps, also the fun of role-playing was important for the performers.

Although the elements constituting "the authentic" were different, the meanings associated with them were similar. Both performances stressed the intimate connection to both the history of the place as well as to the local environment. Ecological thinking was an important component of the performances, as by demonstrating the pre-industrial technologies it was hoped to introduce to viewers the possibilities of nature-friendly management. The performances communicated the message that our forefathers were skilful and industrious people who lived in accordance with the rhythms of nature and that in the countryside this kind of life was possible even today, because one could still find pure and uncontaminated nature there.

Notes

[1] This article is based on the paper *Performing Traditional Technologies: Manifestation of Values* delivered at the international conference *The Past is Still to Change: Performing History from 1945 to the Present* held on 21-23 October 2009 in Vytautas Magnus University, Kau-

nas. The article was supported by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence of Cultural Theory) and the Estonian Science Foundation grant No. 6687.

[2] Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2003, p. 3.

[3] The event is named after a character from Estonian folklore – *rehepapp* or the stoker-caretaker of the manor threshing barn. The name also refers to the main character of a well-known novel in Estonia, *Rehepapp ehk november* (2000). Andrus Kivirähk, *Rehepapp ehk November*, Tallinn: Varrak, 2000.

[4] The fieldwork organised at the Estonian National Museum was supported by the national programme *Language and Culture in South Estonia* (project *Karula National Park. Heritage and the Present Day*) and the Estonian Cultural Endowment, the Estonian Fund for Nature (project *Traditional Technologies on the Internet*) and the Estonian Science Foundation grant No. 6687. See Kristel Rattus, Jääts Liisi, 'As in the Old Days: Aspects Regarding the Ways of Using Tradition(ality) in Today's Estonia' in: *Pro Ethnologia*, Vol. 18, 2004, pp. 115-129.

[5] Astrid Erll, *Kollektives Gedächtnis und Erinnerungskulturen*, Stuttgart, Weimar: Verlag J. B Metzler, 2005, p. 124; Owe Rönström, 'Introduction' in: Owe Rönström, Ulf Palmenfelt (eds.), *Memories and Vision. Studies in Folk Culture*, Vol. 4, Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2005, pp. 12-13; Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'Theorizing Heritage' in: *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 39, No. 3, 1995, pp. 367-380; Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture. Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*, Berkley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1998; David Lowenthal, 'Fabricating Heritage' in: *History and Memory*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 1998, pp. 5-24. http://iupjournals.org/history/ham10-1.html [accessed 25 August 2008]; Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire' in: *Representations*, Vol. 26, 1989. Special Issue: *Memory and Counter-Memory*, p. 17; Richard Handler, Jocelyn Linnekin, 'Tradition, Genuine or Spurious' in: *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 97, 1984, p. 287.

[6] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'Theorizing Heritage' in: *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 39, No. 3, 1995, p. 374.

[7] Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses*, München: Beck, 1999, pp. 130-142.

[8] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1995, p. 373.

[9] The name of the informant has been changed by the author of the article.

[10] Interview with Helju in February 2006.

[11] See http://www.karularahvuspark.ee/?nodeid=95&lang=et.

[12] http://www.karularahvuspark.ee/?nodeid=4&lang=en.

[13] The term was coined by geographer Mark Gottdiener who conceptualized themed environments mainly as characteristic to Western consumer societies (e.g., theme parks, theme restaurants, etc.). Mark Gottdiener, *The Theming of America. American Dreams, Media Fantasies, and Themed Environments*, Oxford: Westview Press, 2001, p. 5.

[14] Michel De Certeau, *Igapäevased praktikad. I Tegemiskunstid*, Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2005, p. 179.

[15] Diana Taylor, 2003, p. 3.

[16] Ibid., p. 28.

[17] Ibid., pp. 28-29.

[18] Although Estonians, especially the rural ones, are notorious for their taste for alcohol, that, to my mind, is not necessarily the reason why tasting home-brewed beer has been so popular. Rather, I believe, it reminded people of the old days when beer was brewed in many households – a kind of nostalgia for the disappearing tradition.

[19] Kristel Rattus, Jääts Liisi, 2004, p. 123.

[20] Jonas Frykman, 'Between History and Material Culture' in: Jonas Frykman, Nils Gilje (eds), *Being There. New Perspectives on Phenomenology and the Analysis of Culture*, Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2003, p. 170.

[21] Jacob Golomb, *In Search of Authenticity. From Kierkegaard to Camus*, London, New York: Routledge, 1995, p. 9.

[22] Regina Bendix, 'The Quest for Authenticity in Tourism and Folklife Studies' in: *Pennsylvania Folklife*, Vol. 43, No. 2, 1994, pp. 67-68.

[23] See Theodor W. Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, London, New York: Routledge, 2003.

[24] This striving after ethnographic purity has leaded them to a disagreement with a local tourist entrepreneur who also uses heritage while selling her "product". In the eyes of the NGO, she has been too imaginative and therefore harmful to the "real/authentic" local heritage. See Kristel Rattus, 2007.

[25] *Musealisierung*, a notion coined by Hermann Lübbe is a process which takes place in contemporary culture. "Musealizing" means the rapid growth of the number of "relics", "museum items"; it means the accumulation of our past into our present as a result of the rapid progress brought about by modernity. Pre-modern societies used to have shrines, with the aura of authenticity and rootedness in place. Modern societies have museums as a result of a deliberate effort to evoke a sense of the past, and to cultivate a sense of place. This type of historical consciousness as expanded to nature as well. See Hermann Lübbe, *Fortschritts-Reaktionen. Über konservative und destruktive Modernität*, Graz: Styria, 1987, p. 157; Daniela Koleva, 'Narrating Nature. Perceptions of the Environment and Attitudes Towards it in Life Stories' in: Stephen Hussey, Paul Thompson (eds.), *The Roots of a New Political Agenda: Environmental Consciousness*, New Brunswick, London: Transactions Publishers, pp. 71-72.

[26] Taraehitus Karula rahvuspargis. Fence building in Karula National Park, ERM V 436, 2005.

[27] Interview with Helju in February 2006.

[28] Ibid.

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„Autentiškas, nors ir modernus“: tradicinių amatų rekonstrukcija šiandieninėje Estijoje

Reikšminiai žodžiai: Estija, tradiciniai amatai, inscenizacija, reprezentacija, turizmas.

Santrauka

Šiandieninėje Estijoje tradicinių amatų inscenizacijos dažniausiai siejamos su socialiniais arba turistiniais renginiais. Straipsnyje aptariamos dvi inscenizacijos, sukurtos miestiečių iniciatyva ir pagrįstos tradicinių amatų technologijų rekonstravimu. Šiuose renginiuose susitiko tradicija ir turizmas, jie išreiškė troškimą sukurti alternatyvą šiuolaikinei masinei kultūrai, sustiprinti vietinį identitetą. Kartu šie renginiai tiek kūrėjams, tiek ir žiūrovams priminė apie kultūros paveldo vertę. Renginiuose juntamas ir žmonių domėjimasis savo kultūra, ir noras perteikti ją kitiems.

Paveldo reprezentacijos pasižymi sąmoninga tam tikrų elementų atranka ir akcentavimu. Norint sukurti inscenizaciją, reikėjo išrinkti atskirus kultūros elementus ir susieti juos į prasmingą visumą. Įsigilinus į tai, kaip renginių organizatoriai pasirinkdavo vieną ar kitą elementą, kai situacija reikalaudavo subjektyvaus pasirinkimo, pasirodė, kad pats svarbiausias kriterijus buvo autentiškumas. Tačiau „autentiškumo“ samprata tarp organizatorių skyrėsi ir jo buvo siekiama skirtingais būdais: pirmiausia, buvo remiamasi muziejiniu principu, kuris pabrėžia istoriją ir apčiuopiamus ženklus, leidžiančius priskirti pasirinktą elementą kultūriniam paveldui. Antra, buvo akcentuojamas autentiškumas kaip emocinė būsena, perteikianti praeities epochos aplinką ir suteikianti renginiui unikalią atmosferą.

Šiaip ar taip abu požiūriai akcentavo panašias vertybes, t.y. nostalgišką prarasto harmoningo gyvenimo išvien su gamta viziją. „Paprasto ir autentiško“ kaimo gyvenimo idėja akcentuoja švarą, sveikatą, ekologinę pusiausvyrą ir ramybę. Abu renginiai žiūrovus ir dalyvius vertė pripažinti, kad gyvenimo kaime sąlygos yra puikios ir daugeliu požiūrių geresnės nei mieste. Toks pozityvus kaimiškumo vertinimas atspindi socialines kaimiško gyvenimo reprezentacijas, kurios pradėjo kisti per paskutinį XX a. dešimtmetį.

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PLAY(ING) IT AGAIN: RECYCLING AS THEATRES, HISTORIES, MEMORIES

Key words: dialectic, empathy, estrangement, habitual, habitus, heteroglossia/hetroglossia, in the beginning, inheritances, lookings, mimesis, nomadic, postproduction, (re)presentation, spect-actor/knowing spectator.

A PROLOGUE

I talk as one returning to Kaunas and Vytautas Magnus University after being a visiting professor here in 1996 and 1997.

I talk as a citizen of the Europe that is both factually and conceptually "Europes": the extended geophysical land mass between the Atlantic and the Urals, the political Europes of unions and communities, the historical and historically impacted Europes, the diasporic and cultural Europes, the imaginary and bordered Europes, the mythical Europa, the diachronic-synchronic overlaps and collisions of these.

I talk as one who is a receiver of the benefits and privileges of such a Western European citizen, but who has not been subject to the traumas of occupation and on-going travails of post-occupation independence, indeed, as one who comes from a nation that turned much of the world into its empire for a short time and is still suffering the symptoms and effects of withdrawal – delusions and false consciousness of a post-imperial power – and is confronting and being confronted by its past as this continually re-arrives.

I talk as one with awareness of the currents and recyclings and returns of those European histories within the long waves of world histories.

AN INTRODUCTION

In 2008, Knut Ove Arntzen, myself, and colleagues at the Norwegian Theatre Academy launched a project on the concept of "recycling" in the theatre and the academy.[1] Here, reworking certain dialectical principles, I suggest there are deep human tropes of cultural, social, embodied recycling and the habitual that inform all histories, all actions, all mimesis, and the spectatorial presence.

The argument is predicated on two ideas; the first contesting Baudrillard:

> "What the acculturated receive is not culture, but *cultural recycling*… They get to be "in the know", to "know what's going on"… on a monthly or yearly basis… that low-intensity constraint which is perpetually shifting like fashion and which is the absolute opposite of culture conceived as:
> 1) an inherited legacy of works, thought and tradition;
> 2) a continuous dimension of theoretical and critical reflection-critical transcendence and symbolic function."[2]

Despite – with some justification – his anxiety to condemn mass culture, conspicuous consumption, and the consequent commodification of culture, Baudrillard uses the term "recycling" in a too narrow sense and derogatory tone. Rather, I wish to suggest that our culture is itself both the ephemera and the regarded legacy – an outcome of continuous recycling and concomitant "critical reflection" in perpetuating, mediating and remaking the inherited.

Secondly, the resonances and implications of "re" itself: from the Latin, a prefix meaning "back" or "again". For my themes here, the questions and consequences arising from our "doing" something with some "thing" – signs, ideas, themes, objects, the body – in our theatres and histories. Too often, this "doing" is merely a re-using or repeating or re-iterating (sometimes offering a nominal claim to or patina of "newness"). Or such "doing" may become a re-working, a re-thinking, a re-interrogating or re-constituting that allows some "different" artefact or "thing" or understanding to be seen, to emerge.

But at a deep level and drawing on these practices, the unavoidable recycling of the familiar, the known, the habitual as processes of understanding. To borrow de Certeau's notion of "the nomadic" (1984), those "[…] concrete connections which ever-changing, fluid subjects forge between ideological fragments, discourses, and practices".[3]

The question then becomes the more urgent one of what is done with the "re-things"? That is, the position and relationship of the "thing" or "re-thing" to the status quo? Is the "re-doing/re-thinging" a process of perpetuating and re-affirming, or one that is transgressive and a breaking open? Or, more uncomfortably for us, an uneasy and messy combination of these?

To adopt Brecht: does the familiar remain familiar and the strange remain strange or become a critical recycling; the familiar made strange and the strange made familiar, such that we re-look at what we think and feel we know? A dynamic, dialectic relationship resting on the theatre's necessary impulse to recycle mimesis and the spectator's necessary impulse to recycle memories, knowledge and experiences in the reading of those mimetic offerings.

To reposition this invoking of Brecht with its ethical implications, and borrowing from Keynes (the only moral end of economic purpose is the make the world a better place), so the only moral end of theatres and histories is to work toward making the world a better place; or, at least, to a better understanding of this end and how it may be achieved. We must also acknowledge the messy realities, the contrariness of the audiences, the paradoxical presences of theatre – the fickle and pragmatic demands of fashion, ego, celebrity, business and commercial interests that infect and affect our theatres and historiographies.

But the same principles of conflicts and tensions of ideologies, of ideas, of emotional, cognitive and psychological responses – the *agon* – remain under all our theatres and histories.

THE KNOWING SPECTATOR (OF THEATRES AND HISTORIES)

To illuminate this let me offer some provocations towards the problematic; "what is theatre", "what is history"?

> "[…] (we are invited) to think of the practice of theatre itself as a constant returning to some very old problems – how to put human beings on stage and have them imitate human beings and their actions".[4]

Why is such "putting on stage" a problem? The issue is not the principle of mimesis itself (mimesis: to imitate, to represent, to present imitative figures in a recycling of any and all styles of theatres) but to what end, what purpose the putting on of the imitation? Likewise the practice of theatre is not such imitation in itself but imitation enacted in front of an audience, the spectator. Thus "Spectator- is an onlooker, wholly related to viewing and observation".[5]

Whilst acknowledging the "being" of the spectator, this implicitly (and explicitly elsewhere in the volume) makes the spectator passive, a mere "onlooker". Rather, she/he is always an agent, the engaged participant (Boal's always present "spect-actor") necessary for all theatres to be theatre.

In contrast I would suggest:

> "[…] theatre is one group of people playing at being another group of people in front of a separate group of people gathered with expectations and pre-conceptions for the express purpose of presenting or watching, never forgetting what they are doing. Theatre is always estranged and estranging".[6]

In retrospect, I would now add "listening" to the

spectator's role – that is, watching and listening to what is being presented. Or in semiotic terms, "Theatre is a complex network of interactive, autonomous, and specific sign systems in a dialectical relationship to each other and which together comprise a performance text itself in a dialectical relationship with the spectator-audience".[7]

These latter formulations capture the category "theatre", the variety and constructed nature of "theatres", the symbiotic, dialectical roles of the actor and spectator in making that construction, the engaged nature of the knowing spectator's role as "spect-actor", and the embodied nature of both mimesis and spectating. In this, both the act of making and the act of spectating are processes resting on the axiomatic trope of recycling, the "forgings" that informs and drives our theatres. And likewise histories, where the outcomes are of the actions and forgings of people living in differing circumstances but who are not so very different, one to another. Here, the substance of presentations is not of fictions (an imitation) but of what has happened, however well or ill understood, however clear or blurred. The discovery and understanding of the evidence that has survived by which we seek to interpret and explain the events represented by that evidence.

History becomes a complex study of the recycling and presentation of human activities across space and time. Hence, my bemusement at the confusing of the fictional and the historical, whether of the far or near past, or the present past.

> "(Alvis Hermanis wrote of) the usurpation of the actor's monopoly (as exercised largely in cinema and theatre) on the production of imitations of reality, by the expansion of television "reality shows" […] (that) has totally changed the level of credibility which a spectator is ready to accept or – using Stanislavsky terminology – believe".[8]

Rather, "reality shows" merely draw on the metaphors of theatre as with all social performance. A strident, vulgar participant on such a show is not imitating but merely exaggerating a reality with a particular level of artifice, of persona. My level of credulity is not challenged by such performance, just as my level of credulity is not deluded by the mimetics of theatre.

> "[…] representational theatre is not illusionistic. In illusions we have mistaken beliefs about what we are seeing… We know we are watching people representing something else; we are aware of this, never forget it, and rarely get confused".[9]

I would not restrict this to conventional "representational" theatre. What Rebellato is doing is recasting the phenomenon we call "psychical distance" whereby we know we are watching acting (a mimetic imitation) in the theatre or a performance in a circus, the Big Brother house or on the Trafalgar Square plinth. There is no change in credibility or belief, Stanislavskian or otherwise. As I have said already, we are (re)presenting or watching and listening, never forgetting what we are doing.

The common note here is constructed metaphor: the acting metaphor of the theatrical mimesis as it playfully imitates reality; the performed metaphor of heightened or exaggerated presentation of life itself; of history as forms of metaphor, as we seek to understand that which is past and to which we cannot return except metaphorically or presentationally. In this sense, the past is not only still to change but is also still to come.

Our memories, the histories and mythologies of our narratives, our pasts and presents have the same origins. By this I mean that the genesis of our mimetic fictions and our re-presented histories is the same:

> In the beginning…
> Once upon a time…
> To begin at the beginning…
> The ur- or archetypes.

We are confronted by such metaphors in similar ways as spectators and players. We are always willing and knowing suspenders of disbelief. Without such a willing suspension and knowing imagination, there can be no theatre of any kind; it is with such knowing incredulity that I watch the antics of the "reality show-offs", or admire the skills of the aerialist on her trapeze.

As such, we are agents; always "spect-actors" in that we are always engaged, to varying degrees of commitment and intensity, with the playing, the mimetics, the performing; the recyclings of the worlds being imitated or (re)presented to us.

We have a seductive engagement with the fictions or metaphors of the "other" or alterity: our desire to be the "other", our relationship of difference and opposition to the "other". But also our recognition of our-self in the "other" and hence the imperative to imitate – that is, mimesis and presentation as a compulsion to become or understand the "other". This is the simple, axiomatic truth behind Aristotle's observations that "imitation is natural to man" and that from such mimetics we find our "greatest human pleasure of learning".

Thus are the many layers of "otherness" that we are confronted with: the character as the "other" of the actor, the actor-character as the "other" of the spectator, the stage persona as the "other" of the performer – the dark "other" to be feared. For example, Levinas works from a theory of inter-subjectivity predicated on an interpretation of the self in relation to "l'autre"-"autrui", the "other"-"other persons". But because of his commitment to a deistic Other, so Levinas' notion of "other" at all levels remains one of being against, of "unknowing", that which cannot be directly experienced and thus feared.

In contrast to this is the existential "other" of agency, reciprocity and knowing necessary to our being in the world. "Soon after we can see, we are aware that we can also be seen. The eye of the other combines with our own eye to make it fully credible that we are part of the visible world".[10]

Or what we may characterise as "among-others", "[…] that the among-others, like the for-itself and the for-others, is indistinguishable, in its root nature, from the bodily being of persons. The space I live in is the space created, however indirectly, by such bodily being-with".[11]

But such necessary "being-with" is also in dialectical tension with "being against".

When faced with the "other", whether fictional or real, we work with and from our preferences and prejudices, we revert to and re-work the familiar and habitual. That is, we "recycle" what we know to try to understand what we don't know, the new or unfamiliar.

> "[…] whenever we receive a visual impression, we react by docketing it, filing it, grouping it in one way or another… the postulate of an unbiased eye demands the impossible".[12]

> "A story is not simply a story… It acts to create, sustain, or alter worlds of social relationships".[13]

We make sense of things as agents by "forging" and re-working what we know; we shape our stories and histories as we are shaped by these in mediating processes of recycling.

THE NECESSITY OF RECYCLING

For Bourriaud, this is "postproduction" – the ontology of objects already informed by other objects, the reconfiguring and recourse to existing works. The principle of postproduction as the before mediating the now, "It's simple, people produce works, and we do what we can with them, we use them for ourselves".[14]

In this way we mitigate the shock of the new by using them for ourselves, by recourse to the known and familiar, recycling these to create routes of access from what we know already. The new is already compromised at the time of it's making and the time of it's reception. Pioneers take their own pasts – their inescapable autobiography – into new routes. Hence the inherent difficulty and paradox of Brecht's attempts to keep us distanced or estranged, as we engage with the transgressive, the normative, and the reaffirming aspects of any and all work as these impact on, and collide with each other.

Why the difficulty and paradox? Because of the roots and routes of such engagements in inheritances and memories, in our embodied and enculturated agency of quite specific kinds. That is, agency as enlightened self-interest within structures of recognised mutuality and reciprocity. The interpretive choices, actions and responses located in the material self that comes from my various inheritances and memories.

The first are those material, cognitive, psychological and neurological inheritances that emerge as empathy – the "emotion induction sites"[15], the work on "mirror neurons"[16], the inate moral faculty or disposition to not intend harm[17], or the locating of volition[18] and emotional processing[19] in the prefrontal and parietal cortex. The second are those material and enculturated dispositions we may understand as the "habitus" of Mauss[20] or Bourdieu[21], the "structures of feelings" of Williams[22], and the "Hyle" of Husserl[23]. These act together in the recycling of such inheritances in the messy moral-political-cultural maze and dialectical network of human-centred relations that find mimetic representation in our theatres and re-presentation in our histories. Such inheritances become the memories that inform and deform our reception and understanding of all inherited legacies whether of the theatres or of histories.

To set-up a metaphoric model; re-cycling being not simply a rotating on a fixed, static axis but as a dynamic point or marker on a spiral or elliptical or moving axis. If "re-" is to be read as "back or again" then our memories and inheritances are both fixed and dynamic, working along various axes. In this sense the analogy of the bicycle wheel raised during the panel session is misleading and a misunderstanding; the wheel does not remain in the same place or simply go round and round. Any point on that wheel may be fixed but the revolution round the axle takes the wheel and that point forward. It travels, as we do through history.

Here the paradox is that of the conference itself; we revisit events of recent, changing history whilst this moves inexorably forward, shaping and being (re) shaped by the revisiting.

SOME KINDS OF CONCLUSIONS (IN THE FORM OF EVOCATIONS AND IMAGES)

A word picture: an elephant chained by the leg in a barred wagon; a child elephant brought to the wagon by a friend; two trunks strain and stretch until the tips touch and entwine. We work through and under the saccharine sentimentality as an animated series of coloured cels touch us, re-memorise us with the pathos and poignancy of the mother-child archetype and the first time we saw the film. We re-live these as we re-watch.

A theatre example: I have seen or know eleven productions of *A Midsummer Nights Dream* including one of my own. The play remains: the theme and fact of return – from Athens to wood to Athens as same but different; Oberon always tells us "I am invisible and will overhear their conference"; Bottom is "translated" and we enjoy our own particular dreams. But every (post)production is inscribed by its "befores", is one of a series of production palimpsests as it reworks these "befores" (no production is ignorant of its predecessors). Every (post)production is experienced as one of a series of spectatorial palimpsests inscribed and reworked by my knowledge and imagination (no production is ignorant of its predecessors). We are confronted, but also comforted, by a series of *mise-en-scène* as recycled vanishings and reappearances. Reworking this idea "nomadically", we are practitioners of heteroglossia or "borrowed terms" whereby we use cultural lexicons of words and images already containing or inscribed with previous associations and meanings.[24]

We continually return – dramaturgically – to Hamlet's mirror.

A news item: in July 2009, a treasure hoard of Mercian gold and silver is unearthed in Staffordshire, England. The past – through its objects-as- signifiers – is still arriving, is still changing, reaching us as what we know is both amended and enlarged by such arrivals.

An item of research: in the *London Review of Books* for 7th January 2010, four books about the events of 1989 were reviewed. What more can be said about the same event(s), except our views and understandings of those events from our perspectives now; the past is still changing.

A personal memory: in 1996, I visited The Ninth Fort in Kaunas. I read the museum information; I walked around the site and its very particular spaces. I could only understand the place and its histories as visceral response, as an "other" opened up and

mediated by many years of images of camps and prisons, films and theatres about such places that unavoidably inform and allow me routes into what I am seeing and reading and feeling and thinking – necessary, remindful memorials to the offensive, to re-cycled amnesias and our propensity to look away, to re-cycled memories themselves.

A question: what is history? Action taken now for the future as informed by the past? Maps of where we have been, mirrors for the now, guides for what happens next? Latitudes and longitudes of the cultural traces that return to us?

In all cases, the present (our inheritances, preferences, phobias, 'isms, lessons, enculturated memories, embodied habits, choices) and the past are a thin blanket, an opaque gauze, a shroud, an aegis laid over each other.

A CODA

I am inevitably recycling – working nomadically by choice and by default – materials in this paper. I acknowledge these. So, as a closing coda, two further images from my own nomadic "befores":

> …a dramaturgical carousel turning very slowly, now recycling the same issues and concerns into a blurred focus every decade.
> …on this carousel ghosts and dreams from our histories that haunt our rhetoric, our practices, our anxieties, our desires, our renewals.[25]

These ghosts become the frames and lens that shape our present dramaturgies, mimetics, narratives, and histories. Ghosts that haunt and inform our innovations and explorations, our re-cyclings and re-definings and "re-thingings".

So perhaps the past is always changing, is always here but not yet reached us rather than still to come. Perhaps the carousel is always taking us back to our presents and futures.

AFTER-WORDS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is a revised and expanded version of the paper given at *The Past is Still to Change* conference, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, 2009. As such, it benefits from the papers and discussions running across the days and evenings of the event, for which I express my acknowledgement. The essay purposely retains some of the performative flavour of the paper. In both I endeavour to talk as one who respects the spectrum of histories and experiences represented at the conference, but noting these presentations are themselves manifestations of my theme of "recycling".

Notes

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Pakartokime dar kartą: perdirbimas kaip vaidinimas, istorija ir atmintis

***Reikšminiai žodžiai**:* dialektika, empatija, atsiribojimas, *habitus*, heteroglosija / hetroglosija, paveldėjimai, mimezė, nomadiškas, post-produkcija, (re)prezentacija, spekt-aktorius.

Santrauka

2008 metais Knutas Ove Arntzenas, aš ir mūsų kolegos iš Norvegijos teatro akademijos įgyvendinome projektą, skirtą perdirbimo (*recycling*) sąvokai teatriniame ir akademiniame kontekste. Tekste toliau plėtojama ši sąvoka, ji siejama su žiūrovo paveldėjimų ir žinių perdirbimu teatre ir istorijoje.

Perfrazuojant Brechtą, ar tai, kas pažįstama, ir turi likti pažįstama, o tai, kas keista – likti keista ar atvirkščiai, tai, kas pažįstama, turi tapti keista, o tai, kas keista – pažįstama, kad mes būtume priversti iš naujo pažvelgti į tai, ką, atrodytų, jau seniai žinome?

Mano nuomone, kultūrinis perdirbimas yra neatsiejamas nuo mūsų aktyvios veiklos socialinėje ir kultūrinėje aplinkoje, nes čia mes esame paveldėtojai, o kartu ir tie, kurie keičia, perkonstruoja, pervadina. Perdirbimas nurodo būdą ir procesus, kurių metu mes – asmeniškai ir kolektyviai – kuriame ir perkuriame pasaulį, tvarkome jį ir pertvarkome, ir tokiu būdu jame gyvename ir jį keičiame.

Siekiu parodyti, kad perdirbimas remiasi dinamiškais paveldėjimais, tuo, ką perimame genetine, materialine, socialine ir kultūrine prasme. Siekiu parodyti, kad mūsų teatras ir istorija yra palimpsestas, kur sutinkame tuos, kurie buvo prieš mus, ir tuos, kurie dar ateis, kuriuos žymi neaiškūs šešėliai, vos įžiūrimos šmėklos, prisiminimai ir žinios, kuriuos palieka kiekviena patirtis.

Žiūrovo veiksmo suvokimas yra visuomet įtarpintas to, ką jis matė anksčiau, kuo jis gali remtis, kas jam nuolat primenama. Spektaklio tekstas yra formuojamas, deformuojamas ir reformuojamas. Mes negalime atsikratyti savo pačių vaiduoklių – asmeninių, kultūrinių, socialinių – kai ką nors žiūrime ar patiriame pasaulyje, kuriame gyvename kartu. Manau, šie vaiduokliai yra prizmės ar lęšiai, kurie suteikia pavidalą mūsų nuolat kintančioms praeitims ir dabartims.

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IDEOLOGY VS. HISTORY: *THE NIGHT AFTER THE LAST ONE*

Key words: theatre historiography, drama and performance, reception, Hungarian drama, Finnish theatre, history on stage.

> "Do you know what fascinates me about the sciences? I can discover the most sublime poetry in them: the dizzying thrill of numbers in mathematics, the mysterious whisper of the universe in astronomy. But please, have mercy on me, do not talk to me about truth!"[1]

Az utolsó utáni éjszaka (*The Night After the Last One*), written by Hungarian playwright Lájos Marót, was produced at the Finnish National Theatre in 1976[2], a few years after its successful premiere at the Hungarian National Theatre. The play is about a man called Giordano Bruno. I started thinking about this play, having recently met the actor who played the part of Bruno in the Finnish production. He remembered what was – according to the play – running through the mind of the character, whom he was interpreting, the night before his death; for example, Einstein and his theory of relativity (not known by the historical Bruno). I saw the play in 1976 with my son, who was drawn to the play especially because of its exciting historical story. These two ways of remembering a performance inspired me to examine the quality of historicity in a historical play and the way a theatre production can either convey a historical story or dispel the story and bring topical themes to the forefront.

When Lájos Maróti sends his main character Giordano Bruno to talk to Einstein about the theory of relativity, it is obvious that the ultimate goal of the story is not to give a truthful portrayal of that particular theory. We are fascinated by the mystery, the metaphor – searching for solutions to it. However, we cannot avoid historical references no matter how contradictory they are. Bruno is a historical figure, whose passion was to search for the truth across the universe, but he also violates the laws of history by dreaming about a conversation with a mathematician of the future. Maróti gave his play the subtitle "An Absolutely Unhistorical Play in Two Acts", and in a certain sense, he was right of course. The relationship between the theatre and history is ambivalent. In this production, the 16th century Bruno was created by artists of the 1970s, for whom Einstein symbolized the relativity of experiencing life. Surely it is not a coincidence that Bruno, who studied the secrets of astronomy and the universe the same way as the better-known Galileo Galilei, has attracted the interest of authors and theatre makers. Echoing Maalouf's text, these two "talk about truth" without believing in one absolute truth, and they represent the particular time when they lived. Their history includes both dramatic turns and open questions relating to human existence.

The theatre is constructing history in the literal sense of the word – as a story, and the relationship between the theatrical event and reality is special; what is performed is "true" only in the form it is experienced, as itself. In a concrete theatre performance, history is in the service of the moment of performance. In this case study, I will be analyzing these dynamics, which are activated in this particular play.

In his discussion on the act of performing history, Freddie Rokem argues that the theatre constructs a secondary elaboration on a past event – an aesthetic adaptation or a new version of what we more or less intuitively know has happened. The concept of "performing history" is a hybrid notion creating a bridge between performance and history.[3] Theatre makers present their own version of what has happened and what is considered to be important.[4] When we look at Maróti's play, what actually happened is already a hybrid – a combination of different histories. It also seems that more important than the question of what exactly happened is what is considered to be important, which leads us to the question of the degree of historicity in the play and the performance, if performing history in this case is the central goal or not. In fact, the hybrid of the history becomes a grand metaphor with different options in choosing the importance.

What is important is how we experience time, and experience can disintegrate all categories. Similar dependence on experience can be found in relation to place; a performance is a site where different physical and mental spaces meet, activated through the will of the person who experiences them. What is interesting is the way Finnish spectators located the production at the end of the 1970s – and it also in the light of what we know today. We may also ask, what are the conditions that justify the use of the term "historical play"?

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After its greatly successful premiere in 1972, *The Night After the Last One* ran at the Hungarian National Theatre for several years and toured in neighbouring countries. At the Finnish National Theatre, it became part of a series of Hungarian contemporary plays. In previous years, the National Theatre had produced absurd dramas by Örkeny and Zákony. The play was a success also in Finland.

The story behind the title of the play is that the protagonist, who was created on the basis of the historical figure by the name of Giordano Bruno, has to spend one more night in prison before his death, because his *auto-da-fé* was delayed by one day. The first act, which is set in Venice, depicts a short series of events during which Bruno decides to throw himself on the mercy of Rome, conscious of his probable destiny. "Historical", i.e. linear, scenes alternate with Bruno's fantasies, such as a meeting with Socrates. The second act is set in Rome, on the night before his death, depicting "real" and imagined events – discussions with the Pope and Einstein. Bruno died in 1600.[5] The form of the play, with its anomalies in the historical story, invited an open interpretation. Texts were displayed on the secondary curtain at the end of Act One and the beginning of Act Two, and the scenes that happened in the real time of the play were alternating with scenes in which dead and still unborn people appeared. In addition to the characters already mentioned, the play features lesser members of the clergy, one of them being a significant childhood friend of Bruno's, Cardinal Bellarmini, who turns out to be an informer and inquisitor. The play includes plenty of intertextual citations, such as excerpts from Plato's dialogues and Copernicus' writings.

Comicality and popular expressions were used in the play to transgress against the sublimity of history. These means relate the performance to Brechtian theatre on one hand, and Hungarian absurdism on the other. In both cases, we can talk about *the alienation effect*. The characters of the play carry ideological meanings. The relationship between Bruno and Bellarmini highlights the tension between freedom and belief in authorities, whereas the relationship between Bruno and the Pope reveals the need to sustain the system, regardless of new information that has already been acknowledged as being true. Socrates, perhaps as someone who shared the destiny of Bruno and as some kind of an internal voice, catalyzes Bruno's voluntary surrender to Rome, which is justified by the faith in the possibility to defend what is good and truthful. The debate with Einstein, however, has special significance, because it puts Bruno's destiny into a broader perspective than that of an individual and also reflects the structure of the play.

The background of the playwright is interesting. Lájos Maróti, who was born in 1930, went to school

at a Hungarian monastery and joined the Order of St. Benedict but was later expelled from the Order. In early 1950s Maróti started studying physics and worked as a researching physicist in radiation physics, and also started writing non-academic texts. He gave up his career as a physicist and started working in a publishing house that published popular literature, where he edited, for example, books on the fundamentals of new physics, and later he became the managing director of the publishing house. Before 1972, Maróti had published collections of poetry and essays, novels, as well as radio plays. As for our study of the play *The Night After the Last One*, it is significant that the dramatist was also capable of writing non-fiction about his characters. The historical anomalies were not an accident. And, "[t]he author himself had gone through a Bruno-like development from a monk into a physicist and proclaimer."[6] According to Maróti, the play had great personal significance for him, because there were analogies between the play and "the recent developments in [Hungarian] history, when Marxism had culminated in strong dogmatism".[7]

In his interview, the playwright thus mentioned the connection between the play and the recent past of Hungary – the times of Stalinism. In the Hungary of the early 1970s, Maróti probably did not think it would be wise to declare that he had written about his own time, and therefore he referred to the Stalinist era – "the recent past". The translation of a Hungarian review, published in the programme of the Finnish production, supports the assumption of the play being experienced as having topical relevance. The review, which is headlined *Frontier Station*, compares the Earth to a frontier station, where the rail tracks end. "Over the centuries and millennia there have been many kinds of means to get rid of those who dare to guess that outside the system there are things, order and even progress worth knowing about."[8] This argument was hardly only about a planet at the edge of the universe. Great success in Hungary does imply that making a connection between the play and the current situation was a factor in the reception of the play among spectators who were used to interpreting political metaphors.

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All the Finnish reviews considered the play to be an ideological drama. The ways in which the ideological aspects were commented on and interpreted become interesting when we consider the time when the play was produced. The contents of the reception and press coverage reflect not only the experience itself but also the 1970s way of writing about experiences. In both cases it appears obvious that something was also written between the lines.

On a more general level, it was thought that Maróti posed general philosophical questions about truth and its relativity without placing these ideas into a concrete setting. The programme quoting the words of Bruno states: "They talk to us in the name of authority and tradition, but in the present day and in the future, truth equals much more than in the past. Let us be doubtful, as long as something is still obscure – let us be doubtful until we comprehend everything clearly. Real authority lies inside us, not outside us."[9] The same idea can be found in the press: "Thus they got rid of Bruno's earthly being [by burning him], but his philosophy and destiny have left a mark on history, inspiring supporters of freedom of religion, cosmologists, playwrights, film makers and other free thinkers around the world."[10] In the reviews, focusing the ideas on the church represented the next step towards a more concrete approach. A newspaper which represented the Lutheran Church feared that many spectators would believe that Maróti was "preaching exclusively against the church". The reviewers found it difficult to break away from the historical context, because the play "obviously [matched] science against religion, free research against dogmas."[11]

Finnish people did not think that the social themes of the play were directly relevant to them; they thought the play was dealing with matters and connotations which had a connection to the present time, but they were not able to relate to them personally.[12] The reviews also asked directly, if Maróti's play has a chance to "become alive in our country". The answer was negative; "The sounding board in Finland is completely different from the Catholic Hungary."[13] Surprisingly, the socialist Hungary was categorised

as being Roman Catholic (perhaps it was confused with Poland?). Symbolism was seen to be necessary in Hungary; "It can't stop us Finns the same way, because over here we would not need to resort to hidden symbolism to the same extent, but we could still say things bluntly, if we only knew how to and if we had enough momentum behind our words."[14] In fact, this claim about the strong foothold of fruitful doubt in 1970s Finland seems also to me to be too optimistic a view of the state of things.

It is also interesting how evasively the Finnish press wrote about the social situation in Hungary; the reviews which brought religion to the forefront did not mention a concrete target, although they claimed that it was not "only about the doctrine the Roman Catholic Church has declared to be the right one, but all the systems the human beings are forced to adopt, even though their common sense may prove them wrong."[15] The only direct reference was found in commercial *Kauppalehti*; "Maybe the author did not want that his propagation would be interpreted too seriously and the meaning for his motives to be found in the destiny of Hungary and the current situation." Success in Hungary proved "that his countrymen discern plenty of current and important issues in his play".[16]

All in all, the play's relation to history attracted little attention. Ideology won; "It is a play about the victory of uncommitted thinking, disinterested passion for gaining an insight into the world, and the free spirit and the fact that – in the words of the main character – whoever has free spirit has no fear in their heart whatever they are facing."[17] History was not seen to have changed human nature; "This play has quite a lot to say to our time, strangely enough. Still, the human being is always wretched – even now, not only during the Inquisition. […] And that's why this Hungarian has paid attention to the matter. Hatred, envy and demeaning of other people are still the driving forces in the world – sadly."[18]

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Maróti's play and its reception in Finland[19] show that experiencing a "historical" play as being historical and a story relating real events can be disrupted in many ways. Spectators are looking for explanations based on their own reality, and disrupting the storyline forces them to search for meanings in the forms of disruption. Reflecting the performance against the spectator's own social context is connected to the values and norms of that particular context. This case study shows how the form and structure of the play and of the performance are entangled with their contents.

From today's point of view it is understandable that Maróti did not underline the analogy between contemporary Hungary and the play. However, I find it interesting that the Finnish newspapers had so few references to this connection, and that the scarce references were mainly implicit. For the Finns of the 1970s, Hungary had a special position among the SEV countries. Finns related to Hungarians as our ethnic relatives and wanted to understand Hungarians rather than highlight their problems. However, the Finnish National Theatre did not produce only Hungarian drama, but also, for example, plays by the Czech Václav Havel. The National Theatre's objectives as a critic of political systems can be seen as being a more conscious choice than the general stand of the newspapers. In my own experience, my son, unaware of the political situations or norms set by the community, may experience a performance primarily as being historical. For someone who knows the norms, both emphasizing the historical story and abstract ideology may be a conscious or subconscious political act – a way to avoid accurate daily politics.

Manipulation of time is not exclusively a special technique of contemporary drama. Already in Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* Dromio's clock is ticking backwards; "It was two ere I left him, and now the clock strikes one. […] Time is very bankrupt, and owns more than he's worth to season / Nay, he's a thief too; have you not heard men say / That time comes stealing on by night and day."[20] This passage has proved to be quite challenging for scholars trying to interpret it, but I claim that it enables a detachment from the story, similar to *the alienation effect*. The most concrete examples of this in Maróti's play can be found in the scenes with Einstein; the character represents a different historical time and

our present time, but he also evokes an image of someone who transgresses the usual idea of time. A riddle is presented to the spectator. We might say that Bruno of Maróti's play suggests a framework for the answer to the riddle through the way the playwright uses Einstein in the play – "an expanding but closed universe". The dreams had a good foundation, but their concrete limitations were also present.

The reception of the Finnish production of 1976 in the historical continuum was, from today's viewpoint, conveyed in the spirit of its own time; metaphorical reading was vague, ideology was highlighted and overly historicized, and political meanings that were ill-fitted for the spirit of the time were avoided. I am examining the Finnish National Theatre production several decades afterwards, in other words, from a point in time which from the perspective of the original production would have been the future. The way I relate to Bruno and Einstein is the same as in the 1970s, but since over the years my views of Hungary and 1970s Finland have changed due to the time perspective and later events, I assume that if the play were produced now, the historicity (instead of ideology) would be easily highlighted, but on a metaphorical level – as critique of Socialist Hungary, which would suit today's attitudes very well.

The question of ideology or current politics vs. history has not disappeared. Surveying the contexts makes us see that avoiding politics often becomes a political gesture, but we also see the many levels of the pasts and the present in our historical constructions and reception and how inclined we are towards easy interpretations which may hide implicit and difficult but timely problems.

Translated to English by Sarka Hantula

Notes

[1] Amin Maalouf, *Samarkand*, trans. by Annikki Suni, Jyväskylä: Gummerus 2009, p. 44.

[2] Premiere at the National Theatre's Small Stage 21 April 1976. Director: Esko Elstelä, Bruno: Antti Litja, The Pope: Hannes Häyrinen, Bellarmini: Pekka Autiovuori, Einstein: Kosti Klemelä in: *Lajos Maróti, Viimeistä seuraava yö* (*Programme*), 1976.

[3] Freddie Rokem, *Performning History: Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000, p. 7.

[4] Ibid., pp. 6-8.

[5] Lajos Maróti, *Viimeistä seuraava yö. Ehdottomasti epähistoriallinen näytelmä kahdessa osassa* (*Manuscript, The National Theatre, Archive*), trans. by Esko Elstelä.

[6] Harri Sundqvist, 'Unkarilainen näytelmä Helsingissä. Usko, tieto ja totuus' ('Hungarian Play in Helsinki. Faith, Knowledge and Truth'), in: *Aamulehti*, 23 April 1976.

[7] 'Unkarista Kansalliseen. Fyysikon näytelmä dogmeista ja tieteestä' ('From Hungary to the National Theatre. A Physicist's Play About Dogmas and Science'), in: *Helsingin Sanomat*, 21 April 1976.

[8] Béla Mátrai-Betegh, Magyar Nemzet 6 November 1972. Cited in '"Raja-asema"' in: *Lajos Maróti, Viimeistä seuraava yö* (*Programme*), 1976.

[9] *Lajos Maróti*, *Viimeistä seuraava yö* (*Programme*), 1976.

[10] Pekka Hartola, 'Brunon viimeistä seuraava yö' ('Bruno's Night After the Last One') in: *Ultra*, No. 5, 1978.

[11] Pentti Ritolahti, 'Vain vapaa henki vie elämää eteenpäin' ('Only a Free Spirit Can Take Life Forward'), in: *Kotimaa*, 27 April 1976.

[12] Leo Ståhlhammar, 'Ääretön ajattelu vaarallista' ('Infinite Thinking Is Dangerous'), in: *Suomenmaa*, 24 April 1976.

[13] Harri Sundqvist, 23 April 1976.

[14] Annikki Vartia, 'Aatteita ja leikittelyä' ('Ideas and Flirtation'), in: *Kauppalehti*, 28 April 1976.

[15] Harri Sundqvist, 23 April 1976.

[16] Annikki Vartia, 28 April 1976.

[17] Sole Uexküll, 'Hieno näytelmälöytö. Vapaa henki ei säiky mitään' ('A Great Find for a Play. Nothing Can Startle a Free Spirit'), in: *Helsingin Sanomat*, 23 April 1976.

[18] Matti Nokela, 'Viimeistä seuraava yö. Kansallisteatterin kansaa yötään viettämässä' ('The Night After the Last One. People of the National Theatre Spending the Night') in: *Jousi*, No. 11-12, 1976, p. 40.

[19] See Dan Gordon, 'Älyllinen näytelmä' ('Intellectual Play'), in: *Palkkatyöläinen*, 10 May 1976; Marja-Leena Kuronen, 'Viimeisinkin yö päättyy päivään' ('Even the Last Night Ends with the Day'), in: *Kansan uutiset*, 25 April 1976; K[atri] V[elthei]m, 'Ensi-illan kirjailija. Maroti nykypäivästä ja maailmankaikkeudesta' ('Author of the Premiere. Maróti on the Present Day and the Universe'), in: *Uusi Suomi*, 21 April 1976; Aarne Laurila, 'Tiede, totuus ja ihmisluonto' ('Science, Truth and the Human Nature'), in: *Demari*, 1 May 1976; Katri Veltheim, 'Unkarilainen näytelmä ajatuksen vapaudesta' ('Hungarian Play About Freedom of Thought'), in: *Uusi Suomi* 23 April 1976.

[20] William Shakespeare, *The Comedy of Errors*, Reg A. Foakes (ed.), London, New York: Methuen 1980, pp. 71-72.

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Ideologija vs. istorija: *Naktis po vakarykštės*

Reikšminiai žodžiai: teatro istoriografija, drama ir spektaklis, suvokimas, Vengrijos dramos teatras, Suomijos teatras, istorija scenoje.

Santrauka

Pjesė *Naktis po vakarykštės* (*Az utolsó utáni éjszaka*), parašyta vengrų dramaturgo Lájoso Maróti, buvo pastatyta Suomijos nacionaliniame teatre 1976 m., praėjus keliems metams po jos sėkmingos premjeros Vengrijos nacionaliniame teatre. Pjesėje kalbama apie vyrą vardu Giordano Bruno, istorinę asmenybę, kuri dramoje, pažeisdama istorijos dėsnius, sapnuoja savo pašnekesį su ateities matematiku Einsteinu. XVI amžiuje gyvenusį Bruno spektaklyje įkūnija XX a. aštuntojo dešimtmečio menininkai, kuriems Einsteinas simbolizuoja gyvenimo patirties reliatyvumą.

Sprendžiant iš to, kokio pasisekimo spektaklis sulaukė Vengrijoje, manytina, kad žiūrovai, įpratę visur matyti politines metaforas, siejo pjesės temą su savo pačių tuometine situacija. Suomių teatro kritikai laikėsi pozicijos, kad pjesė yra ideologinė drama. Tai, kaip ideologiniai aspektai buvo komentuojami ir interpretuojami, tampa įdomiu tyrimo objektu, ypač jei atsižvelgiame į laikotarpį, kai spektaklis buvo sukurtas. Kritikų refleksija ir atsiliepimai spaudoje ne tik atspindi spektaklio patirtis, bet ir XX a. aštuntajam dešimtmečiui charakteringus rašymo apie savo patirtis būdus, bandymus kalbėti tarp eilučių.

Maróti pjesės kritinė refleksija Suomijoje parodė, kad „istorinės“ dramos, kaip istorijos, susiejančios realius įvykius, patirtis gali būti suardyta įvairiais būdais. Nuoseklaus pasakojimo suardymas verčia žiūrovus ieškoti reikšmių ardomose formose. Konteksto apžvalga įrodo, kad bandymas išvengti politikos pats tampa politiniu gestu, o kartu leidžia pamatyti daugybę praeities ir dabarties lygmenų mūsų istorinėse konstrukcijose ir sampratose. Galiausiai – kaip mes linkę į interpretacijas, po kuriomis slypi sudėtingos, bet aktualios problemos.

Gauta 2010-07-21
Parengta spaudai 2010-09-21

AESTHETICS AND THEATRICALITY OF POLITICAL REGIME(S)

POLITINIŲ REŽIMŲ ESTETIKA IR TEATRALIŠKUMAS

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THE PERFORMANCE OF HISTORY AS "TECHNIQUE": ACTOR TRAINING IN GERMANY AFTER 1945 AND AFTER 1989[1]

Key words: actor training, acting theory, Bertolt Brecht, cultural transmission, German Democratic Republic (GDR), Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), performing history, realism, re-unification (of Germany), Soviet Occupation Zone (Germany), Constantin Sergeyevich Stanislavski.

The following quotation is taken from an interview that was published in the German theatre periodical *Theater der Zeit* in 1994:

> "Through my own observation and from reports by actors I have noticed that not only are "our" actors often regarded as ideologically biased in the West, but often also as cold. Terms that are self-understood with us, such as "gestus", "social attitude", etc. are lesser known there. Instead one may discover a certain "emotionality", something hard to define and blurry. Would you be able to affirm these observations?"[2]

This question is addressed to the East-German actress Cornelia Schmauss by the East-German theatre critic Ingeborg Pietzsch. Pietzsch is seeking a confirmation from a practitioner that her "own observations" are correct, that, indeed, after the fall of the Berlin Wall East-German actors are regarded as "cold" in comparison to their West-German colleagues, that they are well-versed in technical terms, whereas West-German actors, says Pietzsch, are "blurry", "undefined" and "emotional" in their mode of acting. These stereotypes of a cold, technically trained East-German actor and an emotional, feeling, warm West-German actor were used in an inflationary manner in theatre reviews, interviews and talk shows in print and audio-visual media in Germany in the early 1990s.[3]

The discussion about different modes of acting revolves around the assumption that the differences between Eastern and Western actors were grounded in their training. In a 1991 article, the West-German theatre critic Günther Rühle describes the "high, confident, almost cool craftsmanship in performing (and in training)" as one of the designating factors of GDR-theatre, in contrast to "a mode of acting (and training) that is oriented at improvisation, association and empathy" in the West.[4] By 1994, it seems, these stereotypes have become naturalized in critical discourse: In the interview, the critic Pietzsch is seeking their confirmation by Cornelia Schmauss, an actress trained at the *Hochschule für Schauspielkunst "Ernst Busch"* in East-Berlin, who changed from the repertory theatre in Dresden (East) to the repertory theatre in Frankfurt/Main (West) in 1991. With this trajectory, Schmauss seems authorized to compare East and West German theatre cultures in general and acting in particular. The stereotypes have become naturalized, because they are not being marked as discursive formations that are linked to much larger socio-political processes, but they are used as if they were naturally the critic's "own observations". Phrases like "our actors", "us" and "there" suggest a community between Pietzsch and Schmauss, their communal dissociation from the West as a place, and an absolute dichotomy between the two modes of acting under discussion.

In the course of the interview, however, Schmauss eludes these normalizing linguistic strategies. Instead of affirming the stereotypes, she voices her discontent with them. Regarding her experiences in Frankfurt, she points to "the pressure exerted by the city council" at that time and to "the artistic director's not quite correct politics".[5] She points, hence, to the political and economic field in which the experience of difference might become a trigger of aesthetic conflict. The actress's discontent with the critic's generalizations about East and West German actors makes visible their inadequacy for describing actual experiences of difference or the socio-political complexity of acting processes.

It is not difficult to notice that the opposite types of a cold and a warm actor used in post-1989 Germany echo the historical controversy over different approaches to acting (feeling vs. thinking) that can be traced back to the discourses on acting in the 18th century. This historical binary had its first post-1945 hype in Germany in the early 1950s with the formalism debate concerning the theatre of Bertolt Brecht, whose actors were sometimes derogatively called "cold" actors by the Stalinist propaganda in the GDR.[6] In the context of the 1990s in Germany, the binary animates with the help of the actors the history of the competitive co-existence of two German states between 1945 and 1990. It naturalizes the inner German border long after its dissolution, thereby symbolizing the collective history and identity that was always already thought of as dichotomous after the formation of two separate German states – the GDR and the FRG, in 1949. Problematic as the concept of two opposite types of acting might be in terms of analytical categories, in the context of Germany after the re-unification in 1990, it points to the phenomenon that professionally trained actors might be performing something else besides their roles and besides certain internalized aesthetic values; that is, they might be performing the political, ideological and economic structures of normalcy inscribed into actor training as a practice of cultural transmission that always happens in a specific site in a specific historical moment.[7] The heated discussion about different modes of acting after 1989 indicates, that – long after the re-unification – German actors trained in public actor training programs after 1945 might continue to perform some aspects of German post-war history in terms of how a certain technique is played out on their bodies (or not).

I am using here a concept of performing history that is at the same time leaning on and different from Freddie Rokem's concept of "performing history" as developed in his publication from the year 2000.[8] I am trying to take into another direction his valid insight that:

> "Collective identities, whether they are cultural/ethnic, national, or even transnational, grow from a sense of the past; […]".[9]

In Rokem's concept of performing history, the actor is "performing a historical figure on the stage", it is a concrete historical event (the French Revolution, the Shoah) that is at stake, an event that is represented and re-enacted on stage: "historical figures reappear on the stage through the work of the actors on the basis of a dramatic text".[10]

With my use of the notion of an actor or actress performing history, however, I am trying to point to the possibility of an actor performing something beyond the role or character of a play – something internalized, his or her own personal history, which, however, as Rokem rightly points out, can never be separated from collective history and collective identities and which is, as the actress Cornelia Schmauss reminds us, much more complex than the reduction to a binary of two opposite types.

The actor's body/memory is a site *par excellence,* where culture and a specific kind of community, where aesthetics and (body) politics interlock in the form of various specifiable discourses, physical regulations, personal and public experiences of space, private memories and written histories. The trained actor is not simply a product of a specific school of acting; he or she is potentially a (re)producer and transformer of a specific philosophy or ideology of being on stage that has consequences for and is interrelated with a specific concept of everyday life. This insight is, so I argue, the unspoken driving motor of the controversy on acting after 1989, much as it was the driving force behind the

inflationary re-openings and new foundations of acting schools in Germany after 1945. Among the acting schools founded or re-opened almost immediately after the end of the war were, to mention a few: the acting program at the German Theatre Institute in the Soviet Occupation Zone in Weimar (opened 1945 and institutionalized in 1947; parts of this program continue today at the University of Music and Theatre Leipzig), the Falckenberg-School in the American Zone in Munich (opened in 1946 and named after Otto Falckenberg in 1948; it still exists as a public program in conjunction with the Theatre *Kammerspiele* in Munich today), the Hannover School in the British occupation zone (founded by Hans-Günther von Klöden in 1945 and later institutionalized in today's University of Music and Theatre Hannover), the Hebbel-Theatre School in the American Sector in Berlin (opened 1946 and later transferred to a separate institution called Max-Reinhardt-School, and today known as the acting program at the University of the Arts in Berlin) and the school associated with the *Deutsches Theater* in the Soviet sector in Berlin (re-opened 1946 and later transferred to a separate institution today known as *Staatliche Hochschule für Schauspielkunst "Ernst Busch"*).

Both historical moments (1989/1945) are driven by the questions of how a new beginning, a reconstruction or a continuity of German culture and society would be possible. In these moments of crisis, the actor moves into the center of aesthetic discourse as an idealized model human being for a cultural identity yet to come or as the keeper and transmitter of modes of being from the past.

One possibility of tracing such interrelationships among political-ideological systems and actor training in Germany after 1945 is to look at the immediate post-war years. Starting with the founding myths and actual training parameters of acting programs within the four occupation zones or Berlin sectors might indirectly lead to the differences between East-German and West-German actor training as they were experienced and described after 1989. Yet such an investigation might provide an answer to the question whether any differences in the approaches to actor training might be discerned depending on the location of a program within a specific cultural-political paradigm. In the case of Germany between 1945 and 1949, each of the four occupation zones (U.S.-American, Soviet, British, and French) could be regarded as one such cultural-political paradigm. Given the restrictions of this article, I will focus on one school in one occupation zone and provide some general observations on the others. This limited approach means that the comparative aspect, which is key to this research, cannot be fully accounted for.

In the Soviet Occupation Zone, actor training became a central issue for the so-called "methodological renewal of German theatre", which was prepared by German communist emigrant artists in the Soviet Union many months before the actual end of World War II.[11] On the 25th of September 1944, several specialists presented position papers on topics such as film, literature, radio and theatre in the *Hotel Lux* in Moscow. Among them was Maxim Vallentin, who presented a paper on the anti-fascist renewal of German theatre.[12] Vallentin had worked with Max Reinhardt and Leopold Jessner in the 1920s and was persecuted by the Fascists due to his communist theatre group *Das rote Sprachrohr* (*The Red Megaphone*). He emigrated to the Soviet Union in 1933. In his 1944 paper, Vallentin emphasizes the importance of "Stanislavski's Method" and calls for the "Education of the actor as a socially responsible human being, as a citizen and conscious vehicle of progress, as a teacher of the people with the pedagogical means of art."[13] After the end of the war, he became a key-figure in actor training in the Soviet Occupation Zone of Germany; he initiated the re-opening of the acting class at the Weimar Music Academy in 1945 and became head of the consecutive *Deutsches Theater-Institut* (DTI, German Theatre Institute) in 1947. The transformation of the Academy's acting class into an independent theatre institute was commanded by order No. 230 of the "Chief of the Administration of the Soviet Military Administration of Thuringia" on 28th October 1947 in the name of "Marshall of the Soviet Union Sokolovski".[14] Actor training in the Soviet occupation zone was considered matter for the political leader. It was programmatically

oriented at the writings of Stanislavski as prescribed by Vallentin in 1944. Vallentin assumes two pillars of "Stanislavski's Method": the "truth of sensation" (i.e. the experiencing of the actor with his or her senses, which is supposed to be "truthful" to itself), and the "truth of the stage" (the truthful playing with props, space and partners in a fictive theatrical situation). To these he adds a third pillar, the "societal truth":

> "Let's get down to it and go all out: For the re-humanization of the German
> theatre! Let us create the stage of truth from three truths:
> from the truth of sensation,
> from the truth of the stage,
> from the social truth."[15]

Thus Vallentin formulates the pedagogical goal of the school at the foundation of the DTI. Not unlike the schools in the other occupation zones, the Weimar program aimed at humanizing society with the help of a newly trained actor.[16] However, the definitions of "truth", and the specific reading and appropriation of Stanislavski's concepts differed according to the location of a school in a specific occupation zone. In Weimar, the addition of a societal truth has consequences for how Stanislavski's concept of ensemble is being redefined. This becomes clear in a course book published by Ottofritz Gaillard, one of Vallentin's colleagues, in 1946. Whereas Stanislavski emphasizes a focus on the acting ensemble in order to counteract the star-system in Russian theatre at the end of the 19th century and to, thereby, reject the entire structure of productions and the repertory of the theatres in his times[17], Gaillard uses the notion in order to project the inner life of his acting students as a renewing force into the societal and cultural debris left by the war and by the National Socialist regime. Stanislavski's "method" is being appropriated as a remedy for the immediate German past, for the "inhumanity" that "on the one hand lead to irresponsible acting void of relationships and on the other hand it lead to violence and barbarian atrocities".[18] At the same time the notion of "societal truth" serves the founders of the DTI to pay homage to the Soviet occupiers and bind acting as a practice to the aesthetic conventions of realism:

> "Russia decided to dissociate itself from the "Proletkult" and from an intellectual director's theatre. The human realism of Stanislavski was acknowledged as a great cultural achievement […]".[19]

In this acting theory, the actor serves society by realistically imitating or bettering it on stage. He or she is expected to craft according to observations of everyday life from a working-class perspective, resulting in a horizontal alignment of his or her expressive means that leaves untouched questions of irrationality and spirituality and that dissociates itself from the aesthetic forms of the historical avant-garde before 1933. Vallentin's concept of a "stage of truth" camouflages normative aesthetic, social, and political strategies.

These ideological parameters crystallize most obviously around how the concept of an ensemble was put into practice. The training aimed at forming "professionally qualified ensembles" out of each year of students.[20] After three to four years of study these collectives were supposed to leave the school together with their main teacher to carry the methodological-ideological principles of their training to other places. Through this imperialist strategy the "methodological renewal of German theatre" was to be systematically achieved. In 1948 the curriculum entailed eight semesters of studies with a consecutive four-year bind of graduates to an ensemble leaving the school.[21] The only ensemble that left the school in this way was the *Junges Ensemble* under the direction of Maxim Vallentin. It went to Berlin in 1951, settling there permanently as the Maxim Gorki Theatre, which still operates today.

Actor training programs in all four occupation zones or Berlin sectors tried to break with the declamatory acting-style conditioned by the national-socialist cultural propaganda and strove for a continuity of "theatre arts that were not endangered by having been influenced by the National Socialist side."[22] At the same time all of them rejected the experimentations of the historical avant-garde in the 1910s

and 1920s. They were oriented at Stanislavski's early writings on actor training (first published in German in 1940) and the practices transmitted by his actors who stayed in Germany in the 1920s.[23] Despite this general focus on the inner life of the actor as derived from Stanislavski, an analysis of the different training programmes after 1945 reveals one general difference between schools located in the Western occupation zones and the schools under Soviet influence; the schools in the Western occupation zones were embedding Stanislavski's notion of truthfulness and the actor's work on introspection in a Christian value system. A diary kept by students and teachers at the Hebbel-Theatre-School in the American Sector of Berlin contains quotations from the bible, calls the actor a "tight-rope walker between drive and prayer" and demands from the actor to "find the hidden entrance leading back to Paradise in order to give us a shimmer of innocence of Man before the Fall".[24] The longing for a state of innocence inherent in Christian belief is projected onto the post-World War II German actor. The labor of working-through a collective National Socialist history and cultural memory is projected into the individual's inner life and its vertical orientation in terms of personal spirituality, healing and self-realization. Not surprisingly, breathing and breath-flow were given special attention in the curriculum at the Hebbel-Theatre-School. The assumption of a generally humane and good core in every human being is key to all Western training programs between 1945 and 1949 that I have investigated so far. In 1948, the conceptual initiators of the Otto-Falckenberg-School in Munich, Hans Gebhardt and Otto Falckenberg, write:

> "For our present and future existence, it is crucial that we order our terms of value, – in the way that "evil" will be addressed and judged as evil without hesitation, and that "good" is bound to mean good in all cases; that "ugly" is simply ugly and nothing else and "beautiful" will be honestly perceived as beautiful; that God and man will not be mistaken for each other and neither nature for art; that children are children and parents; that through no malicious art injustice may be passed as justice or lies as truth. This is what it means: "To start anew"".[25]

Here, too, abstract notions of good and evil are grounded ethically within a Christian belief system. However, in comparing the acting programs in the Western occupation zones, this vertical orientation leads to a variety of different readings and appropriations of Stanislavski's concepts; acting is variously defined not only as a service to God and a better Christian society, but also as a service to the author, to dramatic literature, to Social Psychology, to rationality and *Aufklärung* and, especially since the 1960s, acting becomes the individual actor's continuous work on a state of "freedom" that, however, is never to be fully achieved.

To the teachers in the Weimar program, the actor's inner life and sense experience is important as well. However, the vertical service to an abstract notion and authority of truth, here, is curbed toward a service to community – to the ensemble as well as to society at large. The actor's work is horizontally oriented toward observable, objectifiable social phenomena.

This major difference between the actor training programs in the Soviet occupation zone and in the French, British and U.S.-American occupation zones cannot directly explain the polarizing stereotypes of a warm West-German and a cold East-German actor, nor do they provide categories to be used in the analysis of performances after 1989. However, I hope to have explained why a discussion of different modes of acting in Germany after 1989 needs to take into account a complicated diachronic dimension. It needs to take into account the specific relation to and performance of history in different actor training programs in Germany after 1945.

Notes

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at the *Schauspielinstitut Hans Otto, Hochschule für Musik und Theater Leipzig*.

[2] Cornelia Schmauss, 'Theaterarbeit zwischen Ost und West 1992/1994' ('Theatre-work Between East and West 1992/1994') in: *Theater der Zeit*, No. 3, 1994, p. 28.

[3] C.f. Anja Klöck, *Heisse West-und kalte Ost-Schauspieler? Diskurse, Praxen, Geschichte(n) zur Schauspielausbildung in Deutschland nach 1945* (*Hot West-and Cold East-German Actors? Discourses, Praxes, Histories on Actor Training in Germany After 1945*), Berlin: Theater der Zeit (Recherchen 62), 2008, pp. 15-30.

[4] Günther Rühle, 'Die neue Gemeinsamkeit. Über das Theater in Deutschland' ('The New Communality. On Theatre in Germany') in: *Theater der Zeit*, No. 1, 1991, p. 63.

[5] Cornelia Schmauss, 1994, p. 30.

[6] C.f. Anja Klöck, 'Diderot *Revisited*' in: *Heisse West-und kalte Ost-Schauspieler? Diskurse, Praxen, Geschichte(n) zur Schauspielausbildung in Deutschland nach 1945* (*Hot West-and Cold East-German Actors? Discourses, Praxes, Histories on Actor Training in Germany After 1945*), Berlin: Theater der Zeit (Recherchen 62), 2008, pp. 31-48.

[7] However, some recent publications indicate a shift within the field of theatre studies: a shift away from a focus on the actor as a communicating factor in the performance situation to the actor as a cultural factor situated in long-term artistic, cultural and political processes and to acting theories as interrelated with discourses in medicine, natural and social sciences, education and economics. C.f. Mark Evans, *Movement Training for the Modern Actor*, London, New York: Routledge, 2009; Jonathan Pitches, *Science and the Stanislavsky Tradition of Acting*, London, New York: Routledge, 2006. Interestingly, these publications pick up an approach to acting and acting theories already opened up by Joseph Roach in 1985. C.f. Joseph R. Roach, *The Players Passion. Studies in the Science of Acting*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004.

[8] Freddie Rokem, *Performing History: Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000.

[9] Ibid., p. 3.

[10] Ibid., p. 6.

[11] *Institute for the Methodological Renewal of German Theatre* was the programmatic title of the *Deutsches Theater-Institut* (German Theatre-Institute) founded in Weimar in 1947.

[12] Maxim Vallentin, 'Einleitende Bemerkungen zur Ausarbeitung von Richtlinien (Theater)' ('Introductory Remarks on the Elaboration of Guidelines (Theatre)') in: Petra Stuber, *Spielräume und Grenzen. Studien zum DDR-Theater*, Berlin: Links, 2000, pp. 257-261.

[13] Ibid., p. 261.

[14] C.f. the German translation of the order No. 230 of the SMA-Thuringia of 28 October 1947 (original in Russian), Archiv der Hochschule für Musik und Theater Leipzig (Archive of the University of Music and Theatre Leipzig, hereafter AHMTL), C (DTI), T 302.

[15] Lasst uns fest zupacken und aufs Ganze gehen: Für die Wiedervermenschlichung des deutschen
Theaters! Lasst uns mit drei Wahrheiten,
mit der Wahrheit der Empfindung,
mit der Wahrheit der Bühne,
mit der gesellschaftlichen Wahrheit,
die Bühne der Wahrheit schaffen.
'Vorläufige Arbeitsrichtlinien für das Deutsche Theater-Institut Weimar', p. 1 (no Date, but on the corresponding transcript of the draft there is a note of official approval dated 30 October 1947), AHMTL, C (DTI), T87/2.

[16] C.f. Anja Klöck, 'Historiographie der Körper(ver)formungen: Institutionen, (Körper)Politik und Schauspielkunst in Deutschland nach 1945' ('Historiography of Bodily (de) formations: Institutions, (body)politics and Acting in Germany after 1945') in: Friedemann Kreuder, Stefan Hulfeld, Andreas Kotte (eds.), *Theaterhistoriographie. Kontinuitäten und Brüche in Diskurs und Praxis* (*Theatrehistoriography: Continuities and Ruptures in Discourse and Praxis*), Tübingen: Francke, 2007, pp. 235-257.

[17] C.f. Konstantin Stanislawski, *Mein Leben in der Kunst* (*My Life in Art*), Berlin: Henschel, 1987, p. 233.

[18] Ottofritz Gaillard, *Das deutsche Stanislawski-Buch: Lehrbuch der Schauspielkunst nach dem Stanislawski-System* (*The German Stanislavski-Book: Coursebook on Acting according to the Stanislavski-System*), Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1946, p. 20.

[19] Ibid., p. 19. Rußland ist sehr entschieden von diesem "proletkultischen" und vom intellektuellen Regisseurtheater abgerückt. Der menschliche Realismus Stanislawskijs wurde als eine große kulturelle Leistung des bürgerlichen Theaters anerkannt, und das Theater der Sowjetunion knüpfte an seine fortschrittlichen Traditionen an.

[20] C.f. the documents under AHMTL, C (DTI), T302/2 (1945-47), p. 3.

[21] See the brochure 'Deutsches Theater-Institut Weimar Schloss-Belvedere. Institut zur methodischen Erneuerung des deutschen Theaters. Aufnahmebedingungen, Lehrplan und Methode, Studiengebühren, Institutsordnung (Wintersemester 1948)' ('German Theatre-Institute Weimar Castle Belvedere. Institute for the Methodological Renewal of the German Theatre. Admissions Requirements, Curriculum and Method, Fees, Statutes of the Institute (Wintersemester 1948)'), p. 4, AHMTL, C (DTI), T302/5.

[22] From Otto Falckenberg's "report of activities" presented to the US-American Military Administration. Birgit Pargner, *Otto Falckenberg – Regiepoet der Münchner Kammerspiele* (*Otto Falckenberg – Poet-director of the Munich Kammerspiele*), Berlin: Henschel Verlag, 2005, p. 208.
See also Ernst Schröder's diary as head of the Hebbel Theater School in Berlin, 1946:
Der Mensch heute muss sich auf der Bühne anders äußern als der etwa von 1939. Auch in der Darstellung eines Klassikers ertragen wir nicht mehr den kleinsten Druck auf die Stimme, nicht mehr den Ansatz einer zufälligen Gebärde. Die Schiller und Kleist gemäße Überhöhung ist heute nur dann zu erreichen, wenn sich der Schauspieler *als Mensch* aufdeckt. Er darf nichts mehr verstecken, er kann sich nicht mehr verbergen. Kein übersteigerter Ausdruck vermag standzuhalten vor der Erschütterung durch unsere tatsächlichen Erlebnisse.
Ernst Schröder, *Die Arbeit des Schauspielers* (*The Actor's Work*), Zürich: Atlantis, 1966, pp. 51-52.

[23] Konstantin S. Stanislavskij, *Das Geheimnis des schauspielerischen Erfolges* (*The Secret of the Actor's Success*), Zürich: Scientia AG, 1940.

[24] Ernst Schröder, *Die Besessenen. Tagebuch einer Berliner Theaterschule* (*The Possessed. Diary of a Berlin Theatre School*), Berlin: Cornelsen, 1948, pp. 25, 30.

[25] "Es ist von äußerster Erheblichkeit in unserm jetzigen und künftigen Dasein, beispielsweise unsere Wertbegriffe zu ordnen, – so etwa, daß "böse" einwandfrei und ohne Schwanken als böse angesprochen und eingeordnet wird, und daß "gut" in jedem Sinn verbindlich als gut gilt; daß "häßlich" einfach häßlich und nichts weiter ist und "schön" ehrlich empfunden schön; daß Gott und Mensch nicht verwechselt werden und nicht Natur und Kunst; daß Kinder Kinder sind und Eltern Eltern; daß Unrecht durch keine Kunst der Bosheit für Recht ausgegeben werden kann und Lüge für Wahrheit. Das heißt ungefähr: "Von vorne anfangen"".
Hans Gebhart, *Über die Kunst des Schauspielers – Gespräche mit Otto Falckenberg* (*On the Art of the Actor – in Conversation with Otto Falckenberg*), Munich: Kurt Desch, p. 18.

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Istorija kaip vaidybos „technika“: aktorių rengimas Vokietijoje po 1945 ir po 1989 m.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: aktorių rengimas, vaidybos teorijos, Bertoldas Brechtas, kultūrinė transmisija, Vokietijos Federacinė Respublika (VFR), Vokietijos Demokratinė Respublika (VDR), istorijos rekonstrukcija, realizmas, susivienijimas (Vokietijos), Sovietų okupacinė zona, Konstantinas Stanislavskis.

Santrauka

Po Sienos Vokietijoje griuvimo 1989 metais buvo mėgstama kalbėti apie šiltą ir jaučiantį aktorių ar šaltą ir mąstantį aktorių, siejant šias sampratas su dviem politinėmis sistemomis, kurios keturiasdešimt metų Europoje gyvavo viena greta kitos. Buvo manoma, kad aktoriai, parengti valstybinėse teatrinėse mokyklose VFR, yra linkę emociškai tapatintis su fiktyviais personažais, kuriuos jie įkūnija scenoje, o aktoriai, išugdyti VDR, yra techniškesni ir labiau atsiribojė nuo vaidinamų personažų. XX a. dešimtajame dešimtmetyje šie stereotipai labai aiškiai atsispindėjo teatrinėse recenzijose, interviu su aktoriais ir režisieriais spaudoje ir kitoje žiniasklaidoje. Tai stereotipai, paremti prielaida, kad politinė sistema lėmė mokymo programos pobūdį, paveikė tai, kaip aktorius ar aktorė naudojasi savo kūnu, balsu, kaip supranta vaidybą, ir kad jis ar ji yra istorijos atlikėjai, nes tam tikra technika buvo ideologiškai įdiegta (arba ne) į jų kūną. Šios dualistinės sąvokos reiškia, kad vaidybos technikos lemia skirtingą aktoriaus, kaip individo kasdieniame gyvenime ir jo buvimo scenoje, santykio ir skirtumo sampratą, priklausomą nuo kultūrinės ir politinės aplinkos. Analizuojant šią binarinę konstrukciją, atskiriančią šiltą Vakarų Vokietijos ir šaltą Rytų Vokietijos aktorių (kaip jis/ji aprašomi dviejuose reikšmingiausiuose Vokietijos teatriniuose žurnaluose *Theater heute* ir *Theater der Zeit* po 1989-ųjų), straipsnyje siūloma pažvelgti į šią sampratą kaip šiuolaikinę teorinę konstrukciją ir kartu įžvelgti jos istoriografinę gelmę, remiantis specifiniais pavyzdžiais iš teatrinio diskurso ir aktorių rengimo praktikos Vokietijoje po 1945 metų.

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BALLROOM DANCE – THE SPECTRE OF BOURGEOIS IN COMMUNIST SOCIETY

Key words: bourgeois, modern ballroom dance, history of the Soviet Union, history of modern ballroom dance in the Soviet Union, Vincas Mintaučkis.

> "A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: Pope and Tsar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies...".[1]
>
> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

> "In no other place, however, the new post-war bourgeois world discloses itself so clearly as in contemporary dancing rooms".[2]
>
> Anatoly Lunacharsky

INTRODUCTION

During the years of the Iron Curtain separating Europe, the authorities in communist countries exercised ideological and practical support for representations of staged folk dance.[3] In contrast, modern theatrical dance, which is strongly based on free individual expression, was not favoured by communist regimes.[4] Very few modern dance studios were able to survive under the hard hand of the regime.[5] It is quite obvious that some dance genres fitted into the ideological perspective of socialism, while others did not. These value settings in communist countries, as briefly described above, are systematically predictable. What seems less predictable is the fact that development of modern ballroom dance (DanceSport) was tolerated and to some extent even supported by the communist authorities. How is it possible to explain this fact, if we accept the claim that the dance genre is "rooted as it appears to be in class divisions and in the promotion of bourgeois conventionalities"?[6] The communist ideology was clearly opposed to any bourgeois imagologies, but it embraced the style of dance, which was obvious "promotion of bourgeois" imagery and philosophy. Eventually, this ambiguity in the Soviet regime enabled the later boom of ballroom dance in (post)Soviet bloc countries and the current domination of the arena of DanceSport by Eastern European dancers. This domination was recently deplored by American scholars.[7]

My question is: how is it possible to explain such counter-intuitive and ambiguous historical development? In order to answer this question, I will look into the history of ballroom dance in Lithuania (and to some extent in the Soviet Union). My hypothesis in this article is that the rise of a considerable amount of new urban middle-class people with technical professions and unable to identify with folk dance from peasant culture or with theatrical dance from aristocratic (elite) culture, strongly influenced the boom of modern ballroom dance in the Soviet Union.

To summarize, history turned the other way around. There was a time in the mid-nineteenth century when Marx and Engels invoked the spectre of communism haunting Europe, and approximately one

hundred years later the spectre of bourgeois invaded the communist society of the Soviet Union. The most obvious signal of this invasion was a performance of modern ballroom dance in the Kremlin in 1957.[8]

THE OLD-FASHIONED DANCE TEACHER IN SOVIET LITHUANIA

I will start my article by presenting Lithuanian dance professor Vincas Mintaučkis (1888-1972) and his manuscript *Pramoginių šokių abėcėlė* (*The ABC of Ballroom Dance*). The author claims to have created the manuscript *The ABC of Ballroom Dance* as a dedication to the celebration of the fifty year anniversary of the Great October revolution.[9] A short calculation helps determine that the manuscript was claimed to be written (or compiled) around 1967. It means that the author was around 79 years old when he finished that manuscript. Five years later Mintaučkis died, and his manuscript remains unpublished so far. Mintaučkis' niece Laimutė Mintaučkytė-Rekašienė donated it as a gift to Jūratė and Česlovas Norvaiša many years ago. Now the manuscript is a part of their personal archive and is in the process of digitalization.

The dedication of the manuscript to the Great October revolution is not the only *révérence* of the author to the Soviet regime. The dance master also claims to have created new dance choreographies for that occasion – *Forward*, *Kolchozman*, *Whirl*, *Sowing*, *Freedom* and others. The choreographies of the dances *Forward* and *Kolchozman* are included in the manuscript. As he was probably very strongly concerned about the possibility of publication of the manuscript, Mintaučkis includes a bunch of quotations from the volumes of Marx and Engels, Lenin and other Soviet ideological gurus. For example, in order to connect his work to the ideological climate of Soviet Lithuania, Mintaučkis writes, "The decree of the party points to the need to mobilise all our efforts in order not to lag behind other educated nations, moreover, to keep up with them and to overrun them. As yet, we do not pay enough attention to the education of the art of modern ballroom dance."[10]

It is important that Mintaučkis discloses himself as a quite-updated dance master. It is extremely important and interesting that in his manuscript

Fig. 1. Vincas Mintaučkis (in the middle of the first row) with his dance students. 1935. Courtesy: Jūratė and Česlovas Norvaiša

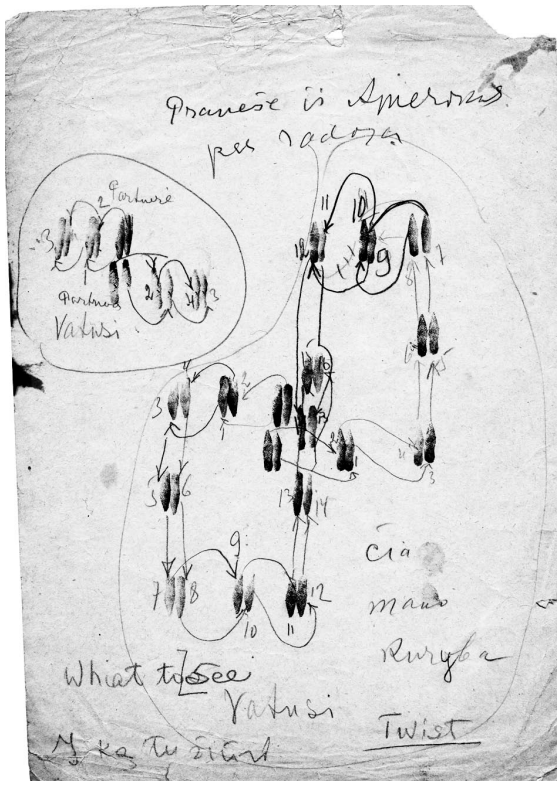

Fig. 2. A page from Vincas Mintaučkis' manuscript notes. Courtesy: Jūratė and Česlovas Norvaiša

Mintaučkis includes a description of the Twist – the dance that became a craze in 1960s. This is an obvious sign that Mintaučkis was well informed about the fashion of social dancing, in spite of his otherwise "old-fashioned" concepts about ballroom dance. How could Mintaučkis get this information and how could he remain updated in the Soviet iron cage? There is one sheet of paper which discloses "the other identity" of Mintaučkis [see fig. 2]. In the right bottom corner Mintaučkis has written Twist (underlined in the manuscript). In the middle he suggests his own choreography of Twist (there is the note – "my own creation" on the sheet). On the top of the sheet Mintaučkis writes: "Pranešė iš Amerikos per radiją" ("It was announced from America by radio"). One could suppose that Mintaučkis found about the Twist from *The Voice of America* radio program, which was broadcast in Lithuanian for half an hour each week. *The Voice of America* was a very strong factor in supporting the social awareness of resistance to the Soviet regime in Lithuanian people during the long years of occupation. Mintaučkis was most probably following the weekly broadcasts of *The Voice of America*, and they had helped him get immediate news about the latest developments in the social dance scene in the West. As separate chapters of the manuscript, Mintaučkis also includes other fashionable dances from 1960s – *Letkiss* (a dance of Finnish origin popularized in 1965 by Roberto Delgado) and Shake. In the abovementioned separate sheet one could also distinguish another fashionable dance – the *Watusi,* which Mintaučkis wrongly deciphers as the English phrase *What to see*.

In spite of the references to Marx, Lenin and the party and in spite of the updated and professional approach to social dance, Mintaučkis was, in a sense, a spectre in Soviet Lithuania. His old-fashioned education and approach to dance deriving from the 19th century are obvious in the manuscript. For example, Mintaučkis promotes individuality and urban locality in dance style, in contrast to unification or globalization.[11] His concepts were quite far from the historical development of modern ballroom dance in the Soviet Union at the time Mintaučkis was writing or later editing his manuscript. They were closer to the decline of social couple dance than to the rise of organized DanceSport. Despite efforts of some Soviet bureaucrats to adapt modern ballroom dances to the ideology of the Soviet culture (the next chapter), modern ballroom dances attracted people from the Soviet Union, first of all, as competitive standardized dances. Standardization in DanceSport allows global or transnational competitions. To the representatives of the Soviet Union it meant mastering the dominant Western ballroom dance tradition, travelling abroad and competing with the best European couples in the same program. Mintaučkis was not so keen on the competitive aspect of ballroom dance and preferred teaching "softer" and older versions of ballroom dances based on a humanistic rather than a technical approach. As a contrast, the "hard" version of ballroom dance could be represented by the way the ballroom dance performance of Harry Smith-Hampshire (in Kremlin, 1957) was described: "With his wife, the late Doreen Casey, he became the world master on the Viennese waltz. Their speciality in this dance was a dizziness-inducing finale of 64 bars of continuous fleckerls, or 360-degree

spins on the spot, at speeds rising to 84 rotations per minute."[12] The latter could easily be the description of a motor rather than that of a human movement. Another example of contrast is the story of Estonian ballroom dance teacher Arseni Poolgas (1908-1972), who participated in competitions before World War II – quite successfully, in fact.[13] Although Poolgas and Mintaučkis died in the same year (1972), the latter was much older. Mintaučkis started his career as a dance teacher when Poolgas was two years old (1910). Probably because of his respectable age in Khrushchev's era, Mintaučkis could not find direct contact with enthusiasts of modern ballroom dance during the Soviet years. In contrast, Poolgas, after his return from Siberia (1942-1952), taught the first Estonian competitors of the Soviet years how to dance ballroom dance: Ants and Male Tael – the couple which inspired ballroom dance enthusiasts in Kaunas[14] and Aare and Piia Orb – the first informal champions of the Soviet Union and the winners of the first Amber Couples.[15]

THE SOVIET IDEOLOGY OF DANCE IN ACTION

> "We have young forces that won many victories and will even more, and why shouldn't they dance? This is the question – what kind of dances should they dance? Why should dancing necessarily be only the foxtrot? I don't see any potential in it and I appreciate the attempt to create our own proletarian dance".[16]

But how should Soviet ballroom dances look? First, they should be massive. Second, they should be controlled by choreographers who should be controlled by the Ministry of Culture. Decree No. 171 of 6 April 1970, signed by the Minister of Culture of the Soviet Union, prescribed "taking all means for active implementation of the Soviet culture of dance into the daily life of youth: for the wide propagation of the best examples of new Soviet and foreign ballroom dances; to strengthen the control of programmes and repertoire of music at dance balls, evenings, etc.; for constant care of the creation of popular Soviet dances, corresponding to high ideological-artistic criteria and aesthetic norms; to attract outstanding choreographers, ballroom dance teachers, amateur artists and national dance organisations to create contemporary ballroom dances; and for systematic commissioning and booking of new dances."[17] The prescriptions were put into action. Hundreds of choreographies of so called national dances such as *Sudarushka*, *Russian Lyric Dance*, *Varu-varu* (Latvian), *Rylio* (Lithuanian) and many others were created for the first (1972, Moscow), and the second (1975, Kiev) official competition of modern ballroom dance in the Soviet Union. Choreographed in such style, ballroom mass-dances were an important part of Lithuanian Song and Dance festivals until 1990 (when participation of ballroom dance choreographers was prohibited). Besides choreographed mass-sambas, waltzes and tangos, one could find such optimistic dances as *Summer* (choreographer L. Tautkuvienė, music M. Tamošiūnas) and *Good Mood* (choreographer S. Idzelevičienė, music G. Miller).[18] It was meant that ballroom dance potential and its enthusiasts would become integrated into the massive stylized Soviet dance culture. In fact, this culture was an amalgamation of several established dance traditions such as folk, ballet and ballroom. Subsequently it became a separate dance tradition with different aims. Similar transformations took place in many other countries, but they were mainly based on folk dance representations.[19] In the Soviet Union the situation was quite unique: ballroom dance choreographers were encouraged by the large prizes in the competitions; for first prize a choreographer and a composer got 600 roubles each (second prize – 400 roubles and third – 250 roubles).[20] On the other hand, dancers who participated in informal ten dances competitions taking place according to the global format were not allowed to dance in the official events.[21] Especially strong pressure came from the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation[22], while the ministry of Culture of the Soviet Union was more tolerant, especially to the furthest Western part – the Baltic States.[23] These redirecting actions had ambiguous results: they empowered the massification of ballroom dance, but at the same time they didn't manage to reform modern ballroom dance in the Soviet Union. Finally, modern ballroom dance

enthusiasts from the Soviet Union integrated into the worldwide DanceSport network.

In those years it was very important for ballroom dance that it was conceived as a part of cultural and artistic life in the Soviet Union[24], in contrast to the strong wish of Benelux countries to make it a sport.[25] The photos of dancers were presented on the first pages or inside newspapers among publications on cultural life. The articles were never published on the last pages where traditionally sport events were reviewed. National Ministries of Culture and the Ministry of Culture of the Soviet Union as well were sure that they should take care of the development of ballroom dance – not the Committee of Sport. Despite some resonant efforts of taking over and control of pro-bourgeois activities from the early 1970s (as described above), as a phenomenon of cultural life, ballroom dance avoided the fortune of other similar phenomena of late Soviet years: yoga, bodybuilding and karate. These practices were forced to move underground. In 1972 the Committee of Sport of the Soviet Union issued the decree on the prohibition of bridge, karate, bodybuilding, and sambo (martial art) for women.[26] Then on 24 January 1973 the Committee of Sport of the Soviet Union issued the decree on "Some facts of the wrong development of some kind of physical exercises in sport."[27]

In fact, all efforts to control ballroom dance and to change its direction were in reaction to the chain of events that started from the Sixth World Youth Festival in Moscow in 1957. During the event, participants danced a social waltz in (possibly) the Central Soviet Army Club.[28] A ballroom dance competition was included into the framework of the program. Many leading Western couples were invited to the competition, including one of the best World couples at that time – Harry Smith-Hampshire and Doreen Casey. The couple performed modern ballroom dance in the Kremlin, where all members of Politburo, including Nikita Khrushchev, participated.[29] The event provided momentum, which later resulted in the establishment of numerous clubs all over the Soviet Union – from Kaunas to Siberia. Česlovas Norvaiša in his article *Parketas ir gintaras* (*Parquet and Amber*) remembers the story told by Anatoly and Larisa Chamritelev, the couple from Leningrad. The Chamritelevs "got an invitation from the Leningrad Committee of Komsomol to present ballroom dances in Irkutsk [Siberia]. It was winter. The temperature was below fifty degrees Celsius. However, the sport hall designed for 6.000 people was overcrowded. This lasted for two days. But there were no competition, no world champions, and no famous names. There was only one couple of enthusiasts from Leningrad and dance which found its way to the hearts people immediately."[30] When the genie was let out of the bottle, nothing could stop the rising enthusiasm of ballroom dance communities and their fast growing network. In contrast to dissidents, many of whom were modernist artists, there were no contradictory statements against the ruling regime from ballroom dance communities. It was only an enthusiastic wish to practice the quickly developing art/sport, which also promised victories against Western countries – the Soviet Union's enemies during the cold war. The authorities had to admit the potential in this development: to conquer the enemy using its own weapons. Soon after, the unofficial champions of the Soviet Union Jūratė and Česlovas Norvaiša, in exchange for a couple of ballet professionals from England, were allowed to go to London and take classes from the founder of the genre Alex Moore.[31] A bit later the Norvaišos officially became the champions of the Soviet Union, despite the fact that the program of competition consisted of five dances, among which only two were international, another two were Soviet, and the latter was a historical ballroom dance.[32] Finally, Lithuanians took the lead in representing the Soviet Union in multiple international competitions.[33]

RELOADING BALLROOM IN THE SOVIET UNION?

The Republic of Lithuania from 1918 to 1940 was an unfinished project in terms of the establishment of bourgeois values and norms. It was interrupted by World War II and the Soviet occupation. Nevertheless, because the processes of modernization, urbanization and establishment of the middle class continued, the project, the same in its form, but different in its content, was implemented

further. A good sign that the tendency toward establishing global urban values persisted were the efforts of challenging the establishment. For example, the hippie movement in Lithuania during the 1960s and 1970s has been widely represented in publications.[34] The most symbolic event in the history of Kaunas during those years was the week in May 1972 when thousands of people went into the streets to celebrate the funeral (18 May 1972) of the young man Romas Kalanta who burned himself shouting "freedom to Lithuania!" (16 May 1972) as a sign of protest against the regime. The protests of the alternative culture in Western countries, as well as in the Soviet Union is quite logical and rides on the back of a long tradition, starting from the Romantic philosophy. It seems quite natural that there should be some (young) people protesting against the mainstream of technocracy such as the Green movement, Ethnocultural movement, Performance in Politics movement, etc. in contemporary society. It was important during the Soviet years[35] and it is still important now.[36]

Lithuanian philosopher Arūnas Sverdiolas notes:

> "Thus, the romantic bohemian's intent of shocking the bourgeois is ever present. However, the dimension of norm and value is so week and inconspicuous that nobody is shocked, and in Lithuania one should look for a bourgeois, a representative of the middle class with a set of its characteristic values, in the Diogenian way: on a bright day with a torch. The *nouveau riche* are not *bourgeois*; they already have power but do not yet have corresponding values. The *Lumpenproletariat*, the domestic cynics, are not shocked either; they only giggle: "This is cool!""[37]

According to Sverdiolas, a member of the bourgeoisie as a middle class representative with a set of characteristic values (for example – dances) is so rare in contemporary Lithuania. Was it also rare in late Soviet years? It is a sociological question. The quotation from Sverdiolas is important to me in quite another aspect. It is not the marginal or the alternative, but the normal, the mainstream, which has become an enigma for us. Therefore, the aim of this article is to pinpoint some common features of what had been going on in the so-called mainstream of Soviet Lithuania – the "normal", middle part of society. In modern times this middle part of society inhabits the world of bureaucracy and technocracy. The opposing culture in Soviet years was focused on modern arts, on one hand, and deep ethnicity, on the other.[38] But the world of engineers and technocracy involves other elements. In the sphere of dance it was ballroom style. Ligija Tautkuvienė writes that she interviewed ballroom dance teachers in one of the official competitions in Panevėžys in 1982. The results were as follows: "there were thirty coaches who prepared dancers for the competition. Among them seven people had a special higher choreographic education, seventeen had a higher and unfinished higher technical education, two had special technical education, and four had a secondary education. The situation didn't change in 1988."[39] In short, these observations make clear that during the Soviet years the scene of ballroom dance

Fig. 3. Jūratė and Česlovas Norvaiša. Courtesy: Česlovas Norvaiša

was dominated by engineers.[40] It could be supposed that there was another point of attraction generating resistance to the dominant Soviet ideology. And it was distinct from dissident activity. This point of attraction, roughly said, included such activities as yoga, martial arts, bodybuilding, and ballroom dance, to mention just some of them. It is quite an unexpected cluster of underground activities in the first view. But the cluster could be easily detected in the prohibitive efforts of the Committee of Sport of the Soviet Union.[41] After some reflections it becomes obvious that there were common features in these and similar activities.[42] First, they were based on enthusiasm **about the exotic**. The sources and legitimating forces of these exotic activities in the Soviet Union were abroad. There was no formal education which could legitimize agents inside of the Iron Curtain and no possibilities of top-down support from the State. For example, many of those who received a formal education in folk dancing later started teaching ballroom dance.[43] Second, as a consequence, they were organized in the associative and/or competitive **"free market"**. There was no top-down control in such activities for a very long time, although people were quite well organized in the networks of clubs. The "free market" implied that the only proof of successful activity was its sustainability: the quantity of students and enthusiasts, the support offered by parents of students or students themselves and the success of competitors representing separate clubs in the competitions. And third, the key issue in these activities was **self-*Bildung*** – they implied huge efforts to build one's embodied individuality according to an exotic standard. This extra-curricular bodily *Bildung* filled the gaps in the curriculum, but also filled the gaps in the ideological framework. The curriculum of physical education was focused on team sports (basketball, football etc.) and military fitness (organized around PDG norms – the norms of Readiness for Work and Defence).[44] On the one hand, the philosophy of *Bildung* in ballroom dance, like that of yoga, Eastern martial arts or bodybuilding was different from the dominating physical education, because it was focused on individual rather than community gains. On the other hand, in spite of strong cultural backgrounds, these practices implied more technical rather than artistic challenges (at least in the first stages of practice) and therefore naturally attracted more people from technical professions, as has been shown above in the case of ballroom dance. One could still speculate to what extent this is valid for other kinds of similar activities of self-*Bildung* – but it is beyond the limits of this article.[45] In summary, this enthusiasm about exotic bodily self-*Bildung* realized in free-market conditions, was not open opposition against the Soviet establishment. It was construction of the new underground establishment and preparation of the conditions under which the former philosophy of the building of Soviet life was challenged by the new philosophy of self-building. The latter philosophy appeared to be much more suitable for surviving in the free-market of post-Soviet society.

CONCLUSION

After considering the development of ballroom dance and similar phenomena in the epoch of late socialism in the Soviet Union, one could return back to the thesis of the formation of the technocratic middle class in the Soviet Union (which could be formally defined as the potential subject of bourgeois values) and its involvement in self-formative activities such as ballroom dance, martial arts, yoga, fitness, bodybuilding and others. Folk dance, continuing the rural tradition which had been left behind in the near past, could not work for a longer time as the performative identity of the new urban people, because (strangely corresponding to the dominant Soviet ideology!) these new urban people of technical professions were much less focused on nostalgic past than on the construction of their social and personal happy future. Nor could artistic dance work for these new urban people of technical professions, because artistic/theatrical dance was too much inscribed in the framework of the humanistic tradition and education and was hardly understandable to the new people of technical professions. Therefore the social logic of late Soviet life created the conditions that enabled reloading ballroom dance in Lithuania, which soon became an obvious locomotive for the whole train of communities of ballroom dance in the Soviet Union.

Notes

[1] *Manifesto of the Communist Party* in: http://www.marxists.org [accessed 26 February 2010].

[2] My translation from Анатолий Васильевич Луначарский, «Косматая обезьяна» в камерном театре ("Hairy Ape" in the Chamber Theatre) in: *О массовых празднествах, эстраде, цирке* (*About Mass Festivals, Variety, Circus*), Москва: Искусство, 1981, p. 296. [English phrase *dancing rooms* stands in original – G. K.]

[3] Anca Giurchescu, 'The Power of Dance and Its Social and Political Uses' in: *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, Vol. 33, 2001, pp. 109-121.

[4] Valeria I. Uralskaya et al., 'Russia' in: Selma Jean Cohen (ed.), *The International Encyclopedia of Dance*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, 2005. E-reference edition, http://www.oxford-dance.com [accessed 3 February 2009].

[5] The journalist of *Jaunimo gretos*, for example, claims that *Sonata* – the modern dance company established by Kira Daujotaitė and functioning without interruption throughout all Soviet years – was the only such company in Lithuania and the Soviet Union. The title of the article in which this statement is made *The Girls Dance Internationale* speaks for itself: the references to Isadora Duncan and the Revolution are meant to legitimize the dance genre which was otherwise far from the expectations of the regime. See Audronė Guigaitė, 'Merginos šoka internacionalą' ('The Girls Dance Internationale') in: *Jaunimo gretos*, Vol. 1, 1979, pp. 14-15.

[6] George Russell Uba, 'International Ballroom Dance and the Choreographies of Transnationalism' in: *Journal of Asian American Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2007, p. 141.

[7] Juliet E. McMains, *Glamour Addiction: Inside the American Ballroom Dance Industry*, Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2006.

[8] See the video *The Sixth World Youth Festival – Moscow 1957*, http://www.britishpathe.com [accessed 26 February 2010].

[9] Vincas Mintaučkis, *Pramoginių šokių abėcėlė* (*The ABC of Ballroom Dance*) in: Unpublished manuscript, from Jūratė and Česlovas Norvaišos personal archive, p. 12.

[10] Ibid., p. 53.

[11] See Ibid., p. 84 on developing of individual style of dancing in: Ibid., pp. 204-238, for example, one could find descriptions of local Berlin, London, Paris and Kaunas styles of dancing.

[12] 'Harry Smith-Hampshire', in: *The Times Obituary,* 29 November 2004, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/obituaries/article396740.ece [accessed 1 March 2010].

[13] Arseni Poolgas, http://kultuur.elu.ee/ke492_poolgas.htm [accessed 1 March 2010].

[14] 'Pramoginių šokių sūkury' ('In the Whirl of Ballroom Dance') in: *Kauno tiesa*, 2 December 1964, p. 6.

[15] R. Nemunaitis, 'Gintaro prizas – Sūkuriui' ('Amber Prize Goes to Sukurys') in: *Kauno tiesa*, 13 November 1966, p. 4.

[16] Анатолий Васильевич Луначарский, 'Социальные истоки музыкального искусства' ('Social Sources of the Art of Music') in: *О массовых празднествах, эстраде, цирке* (*About Mass Festivals, Variety, Circus*), Москва: Искусство, 1981, p. 301.

[17] Quoted in Елена Укусова, 'Румба, танец трудящихся' ('Rumba – the Dance for Proletariat'), http://whitegenre.ru/content/view/37/9/ [published online 22 March 2009; accessed 26 February 2010] [My translation from Russian – G. K.].

[18] Ligija Tautkuvienė, *Pramoginiai-sportiniai šokiai* (*DanceSport*), Vilnius: Lietuvos liaudies kultūros centras, 1990, p. 20.

[19] Anthony Shay, *Choreographic Politics – State Folk Dance Companies, Representation and Power*, Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2002.

[20] Елена Укусова, 2009.

[21] Ibid.

[22] According to Angelina Degtiarenko, Vasilij Striganov the vice-minister of the Ministry of Culture of Russian Federation, personally checked the appropriateness of dances to public space requiring, for example, dancers not to move the hips in Cha-cha and not to shake the head in Tango. See Елена Укусова, 2009.

[23] С. В. Акуленок, 'История развития бальных танцев в СССР и России' ('The History of Development of Ballroom Dance in the Soviet Union and Russia'), http://www.rdu.ru/goldfundrus [accessed 26 February 2010].

[24] Author's interview with Jūratė and Česlovas Norvaišos, 20 October 2009.

[25] Werner J. Braun, 'History Of International Organized DanceSport', http://www.idsf.net/documents/history_of_idsf.pdf [accessed 1 March 2010].

[26] See, for example, the official webpage of Federation of Karate in Voronezh, http://fsk-vrn.ru/?do=karate [accessed 01 March 2010].

[27] The decree says, "Recently various kinds of physical exercises and activities that do not have anything to do with the Soviet system of physical education and sport have become ubiquitous. These activities bring about the danger of dissemination of ideas in the field of physical culture and sport that are alien to Soviet society and imply the damaging social orientation. There are teams of women's football, sections of bridge, groups practicing Yoga, fighting in karate etc. in many cities of the country." http://ruyoga.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=34:2009-03-19-21-41-52&catid=14:2009-03-10-08-19-39&Itemid=10 [accessed 1 March 2010]. On some features of this story in Lithuania see Romanas Kalinauskas et al., 'Kultūrizmas Lietuvoje' in: Henrikas Šadžius (ed.), *Istorinė patirtis – sporto ateičiai* (*Historical Experience – for the Future of Lithuania*), Vilnius: Kūno kultūros ir sporto departamentas, 1993, p. 197. See also 'Феномен Евгения Колтуна' ('Fenomen Evgenia Koltuna'), http://www.ironworld.ru/articles/athletes/29703/ [accessed 01 March 2010].

[28] It is quite interesting that the President of the Russian Federation of DanceSport Павел Павлович Дорохов (Pavel Dorochov) in the interview says that "the only place [in Moscow] where ballroom dance culture was still remaining [from earlier years] was the Military School of Suvorov" and Pavel Dorochov had finished this school himself before encountering other enthusiasts of ballroom dance such as the leader of the ballroom club at the House of Teachers in Moscow and the founder of Moscow ballroom dancing community in 1960s Александр Тимофеевич Дегтяренко (Aleksandr Degtiarenko). http://www.favor-pro.info/p115/index.html [accessed 26 February 2010].

[29] С. В. Акуленок, 'История развития бальных танцев в СССР и России' ('The History of Development of Ballroom Dance in the Soviet Union and Russia'), http://www.rdu.ru/goldfundrus [accessed 26 February 2010].

[30] Česlovas Norvaiša, 'Parketas ir gintaras' ('Parquet and Amber') in: *Nemunas*, 1969, Vol. 10, p. 37.

[31] P. Dabulevičius, 'Kauniečiai laimi pirmą prizą Anglijoje' ('A Team from Kaunas Wins the First Prize in England') in: *Tiesa*, 22 September 1968, p. 1.

[32] 'Trigubi laureatai' ('Triple Laureates') in: *Kauno tiesa*, 5 July 1972, p. 1.

[33] С. В. Акуленок, 'История развития бальных танцев в СССР и России' ('The History of Development of Ballroom Dance in the Soviet Union and Russia'), http://www.rdu.ru/goldfundrus [accessed 26 February 2010]. See also 'Šokėjų turnyras olimpiniame mieste' ('Dance Competition in the Olympic City') in: *Tiesa*, 25 February, p. 3.

[34] Rimantė Tamoliūnienė (ed.), *Laisvės proveržiai sovietiniame Kaune* (*The Breakthroughs of Freedom in Soviet Kaunas*), Kaunas: Kauno apskrities viešoji biblioteka, 2007.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Gintautas Mažeikis, 'Revoliucijos idėja Lietuvoje dar neišsilaisvino' ('The Idea of Revolution is Not Yet Liberated in Lithuania'), http://www.bernardinai.lt [published online 3 September 2009; accessed 1 March 2010].

[37] Arūnas Sverdiolas, 'Cynicism: A Lithuanian version' in: *ATHENA*, No. 3, 2006, p. 93.

[38] Rimantė Tamoliūnienė, 2007, p. 3.

[39] Ligija Tautkuvienė, 1990, p. 24.

[40] The thesis was also confirmed in author's interview with Jūratė and Česlovas Norvaišos, 20 October 2009.

[41] See references No. 31 and 32.

[42] "There were "Three Cups" and "Two Cups" competitions in Kaunas in 1979-1981. Besides bodybuilders, karate and dancesport representatives showed themselves." Gintaras Šiuparys, 'We Were Forced to Grow Our Muscles Underground' in: Arūnas Petraitis (ed.), *40 metų Lietuvos kultūrizmui: 1965-2005: istorija, asmenybės, čempionatų statistika, varžybos* (*40 years to Lithuanian Bodybuilding*), Kaunas: Lithuanian Bodybuilding and Fitness Federation, 2006, p. 12.

[43] Tautkuvienė found 7 professional choreographers among thirty ballroom dance teachers in 1982, but she also mentions the first six people who graduated from Klaipėda faculty of Conservatorium in 1985 as professional ballroom dance choreographers. Therefore, it could be supposed, that these seven people mentioned in 1982 account were professional choreographers of either ballet or, most probably, folk dance. See Ligija Tautkuvienė, 1990, p. 24.

[44] 'Laikykite "Pasiruošęs darbui ir TSRS gynybai" ženklelio normas! [Grafika]' ('Keep Up to the Norms of Readiness for Work and USSR Defence badge! [Graphics]'), Kūno kultūros ir sporto komitetas prie Lietuvos TSR Ministrų Tarybos, Vilnius: Vaizdas, 1948. http://www.eplakatas.lt/eplakatas/plakatas/laikykite-pasiruoses-darbui-ir-tsrs-gynybai-zenklelio-normas [accessed 1 March 2010].

[45] For example, Ramutis Kairaitis, current President of the Lithuanian bodybuilding and fitness federation – doctor of technical sciences. The Lithuanian title of his dissertation could be found here: http://www.mokslas.mii.lt/mokslas/SRITYS/duom00.php?pav=K&sritis=T [accessed 1 March 2010].

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Pramoginiai šokiai – buržuazijos šmėkla komunistinėje visuomenėje

Reikšminiai žodžiai: buržuazinis, modernieji pramoginiai šokiai, Sovietų Sąjungos istorija, pramoginių šokių istorija Sovietų Sąjungoje, Vincas Mintaučkis.

Santrauka

Istorija vertėsi aukštyn kojom: devyniolikto šimtmečio viduryje Marksas perspėjo buržuaziją apie komunizmo šmėklą, klaidžiojančią Europoje; užtruko ilgai, bet pusė Europos nuėjo paskui komunizmo šmėklą; kol galų gale – apytiksliai po šimto metų – šį kartą jau komunistiniuose kraštuose ėmė klaidžioti buržuazijos šmėkla. Straipsnyje apžvelgiama viena iš šios šmėklos klaidžiojimo išraiškų – pramoginių šokių atgimimas Sovietų Sąjungoje. Straipsnyje apžvelgiamas dar niekur nenagrinėtas žymiausio tarpukario Lietuvos šokių mokytojo, Vinco Mintaučkio, rankraštis. Rankraštis buvo baigtas jau sovietiniais laikais – septintojo dešimtmečio viduryje – tuo pat metu kai kurie Lietuvos liaudies šokių choreografai ir aktyvistai iš mūsų kaimynų latvių ir estų intensyviai mokėsi modernių pramoginių šokių meno, vyko pirmieji tarptautiniai konkursai. Straipsnyje siekiama parodyti, kad nors šiame vyksme dalyvavo kai kurie persikvalifikuojantys liaudies šokių choreografai arba kitų humanistinių profesijų atstovai, tačiau pramoginių

šokių entuziastų daugiausia buvo iš technologijų sričių. Tai bent iš dalies atsako į klausimą: kodėl pramoginiai šokiai, kaip akivaizdi vidurinės klasės buržuazinio žmogaus išraiška, taip sėkmingai prigijo Sovietų Lietuvoje ir visoje Sovietų Sąjungoje. Dirvą tam paruošė sparti miestų raida ir viduriniajame sovietinės visuomenės sluoksnyje vyraujantys interesai: egzotiškos kūno kultūros plitimas, pogrindinių rinkos santykių formavimas ir asmeninė savikūra. Šiai dažniausiai technines specialybes įgijusių žmonių grupei neberūpėjo valstietijos plėtotė ir dirbtinai sovietmečiu palaikoma liaudies šokių tradicija, taip pat jai nerūpėjo ir sunkiai be gilesnio humanitarinio išsilavinimo suvokiamas teatrinis šokis. Pramoginiai šokiai buvo natūraliausias pasirinkimas.

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THE PROJECTION OF THE "BLOSSOMING OF THE NATION" AMONG THE LITHUANIAN CULTURAL ELITE DURING THE SOVIET PERIOD

Key words: soviet internationalism, national ideology, modernisation, cultural elite, bureaucratical practice.

Questions of the nation's role in the Soviet system were tied with Leninist national policy, which emphasized the ideas of internationalism and the benefits of socialism to national development. Although Soviet discourse produced stories of the progress of nations, the Western totalitarian perspective on Soviet studies looked at it skeptically, and this skepticism became even stronger in post-Soviet Lithuanian historiography, blaming the Soviet regime for occupation and the trampling of the honor and interest of the Lithuanian nation.

In this article I will not judge either the arguments for Leninist policy or their critiques, but try to look at the multiform of Soviet national policy grounded in the everyday level and to raise a point for broader insight into current Lithuanian historiography, exploring the issues of the national policy of the USSR.

The article mainly discusses ideological/symbolic areas of the local cultural elite in the sense of cultural production and showing the attitudes on Soviet national and cultural policies. The dominant context-shaping Soviet national policy was related with the ideas of internationalism and "blossoming of the nation", with "blossoming" in this text becoming a powerful metaphor, eliciting several competing meanings, national aspirations and the strategies of local cultural elite.

Research materials for the study cover archives, interviews with respondents who belonged to the cultural elite, and some biographical descriptions. The chronological boundaries embrace the 1970-1988 period, including two epochs of the Soviet system, namely the period of Brezhnev's stagnation and the period of Gorbachev's *perestroika*, launched in 1985.

PROJECTION OF BLOSSOMING

Before the revolution of October 17th, 1917, Lenin argued that nationalism went against working-class solidarity.[1] After he succeeded in coming to power, he revised his position by integrating the question of the nation into the soviet theoretical agenda, putting national policy under the scope of internationalism. In his approach the most rational way to support national values and interests would be by deepening co-operation between nations, creating and sharing common values based on communist ideology, and using the benefits of socialism. Lenin proclaimed the terms *rascvet nacii* (*blossoming of nations*), *sblizhenije* (*rapprochement between nations*) and *sliyanie* (*merging nations*). Though those concepts had a different value in different Soviet periods, the terms mostly used were the *blossoming* and *rapprochement* (*merge* becomes also valid again as a concept in late socialism under the rule of Brezhnev[2], when Russian language policy was pushed in the education system[3]).

Here I would mostly emphasize the concept of *blossoming,* which as a central projection was addressed to all nations living in USSR, and expressed the benefits of living in a friendly community of another

15 republics with different nationalities. Those benefits cover socio-economic and cultural advantages. Such a projection of *blossoming*, which widely invaded public discourse and was used by cultural elites in their activities, leads to a discussion consisting of different questions: 1) what influences it had on national identities, and 2) how it affected the mobilization of national identity in contemporary Lithuania.

Before going into the analysis, it is important to emphasize that all Soviet agendas planned and spoke about the progress which was presented as valid for all levels – state, individual and ethnic. "Blossoming" as a metaphor for progress covered industrialization and other development, making life more comfortable and secure, and all this was presented as meaningful Soviet achievements.[4] Soviet modernization made obvious innovations in Lithuania as well. Not counting the political consequences of Soviet occupation, but looking more at the impact on everyday life, some dimensions of Soviet socio-cultural progress must be mentioned: 1) access to educational and health care systems for everyone; 2) preservation and promotion of high culture – *"kultura"* (assigning it to the property of *"narod"*) – theatres, art galleries, ballroom dances, museums; and 3) development of mass culture (*"dom kultury"*, amateur art (*"kolektyvi"*) in factories and other establishments (new lifestyle for working class). In local propaganda all these facts were presented as the achievements of *"litovskij narod"* living on Soviet system and seeking to build socialism.

SOVIETIZATION AS THE SUPPORT OF ETHNO-NATIONAL INTERESTS: THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

In Lithuanian, the dominating historiographical attitude to the Soviet past is mostly related with a totalitarian paradigm of Soviet studies. The victimization aspects, covering the harm of occupation and sovietization, repression and lack of free speech, are the main directions in exploring the Soviet system. The Lithuanian Soviet elite is mainly represented as collaborator or conformists and vassals of Moscow. Local nomenclature has been shown to have been an instrument of the system that employed all resources in achieving implementation of the ideological goals and agendas. They talk about the Soviet system as abnormal phenomena lacking rationality.

This perspective contrasted with other observations that see enormous efforts of modernization and orientation to progress. Firstly, in a radical way this attitude can be met in official Soviet ideology and public discourse: 1) national culture was presented as the winner 2) previous national cultures were tied with a pre-modern style of life; 3) Soviet modernization was presented as a new stage in their development; and 4) internationalism was presented as a premise for their natural friendship and convergence.

Though latter perspectives came from the attempts to legitimize Soviet national policy, at a certain level it had support among the revisionist or post-revisionist scholars of Soviet studies. The support comes from the intention of hearing the voice of participants in the Soviet system and understanding the logic of their performance, while looking at everyday reality, which has the features of a performative shift.[5] Here, "blossoming of the nation" could be understandable also as a local strategy reinterpreted from its original meaning.

There are some theoretical ideas deepening this perspective and bringing the ideas of national communism. Y. Slezkine acknowledged that the official policies fostered ethno-national identity in the Soviet Union, which was combined with the Soviet modernization process.[6] According to him the national policy of the Soviet Union allowed the strengthening of national identity as well as provided additional opportunities for local candidates to promote ethno-national values and the ethno-national languages.[7] R. Suny provided his contribution by arguing that ethno-national identities were strengthened by the Soviet state and related with Soviet republics. This helped dominated nations in fifteen republics to mobilize their national identity and to diminish the influence of central policy.[8] Anthropologist K. Verdery, who studied Soviet Romania, also saw a possible response of the heads of peripheral regions to strategies of the center.[9] The case of Romania indicated that N. Ceausescu's regime, following policy of autonomy from Moscow, was more focused on the idea of a socialist state rather than a socialist

society as an expression of working class. Socialist nationalism was perceived as a means to unite society for progress and industrialization. An analysis of Soviet federalism has been completed by P. Roeder. He noted that the central government in the Soviet system provided opportunities to shape the ethnofederalism, which allowed the formation of ethnic elites in Soviet republics, who, by remaining loyal to the official policies, at the same time ensured the socioeconomic welfare of their own country, and such a model is particularly suitable to describe the case of the Baltic and Caucasus republics.[10] W. Kemp noticed the incompatibility between the ideologies of *nationalism* and *communism*, but claimed that in domestic policies the communist *realpolitik* was often more significant than social theory. He showed that in practice the *communist* and *nationalist* position frequently coincided.[11] G. Smith, analyzing the case of Baltic States, put a similar approach as in the case of W. Kemp and noted that the central authorities, through the terror apparatus, tended to restrict national manifestations, which could cause more serious demands of an autonomous nature.[12]

NARRATIVES AND ATTITUDES UPON "BLOSSOMING OF THE NATION"

The narratives of different experiences acting in the Soviet system illustrate various roles of the cultural elites in Soviet Lithuania. They are represented by three persons from the Soviet cultural elite who had different relations with the system. One of them belongs to the former Soviet Lithuanian Minister of Culture, who later became a party secretary responsible for ideology. The second case is related with a famous writer, who during soviet time held a position in the union of writers, and the last example is related with a well-known critic and scholar of literature, who during Soviet times had very ambiguous relations with the system. Those narratives on Soviet cultural development are constructed by their own experiences expressed in their autobiographies, diaries or interviews.

In his book Lionginas Šepetys talks about the conditions for cultural development and emphasizes only positive processes (sometimes competing with the technical elite for resources).[13]

> "The halls of theatres, cinemas and exhibitions were crowded. There were the longest queues in bookstores. Much longer than queues for Czech beer. People believed in culture and art more than their environment and everyday life.
>
> After I started the duties of minister, I first tended to represent the interests of culture, and only afterwards I would represent the interests of government in the cultural sphere. When I explained this position in the cultural ministry in Moscow, I got a lesson: governmental policy goes first.
>
> I guess that from my long-term experience I could define what was the cultural policy of government. It is belief in the power and duty of culture: education, nurture, propaganda, being prestigious, etc. In the cultural policies regarding national Soviet republics, a large role is designated to the national self-conscious and strengthening their memories."

Deputy chairman of the Union of writers in the 1980s and 1990s Vytautas Bubnys, during an interview remembered recognition of his working area, but simultaneously pointed out a pressure for flexibility and adoption to the informal rules.[14] He described that rational strategy as to accept the formal and informal rules and then to reach goals. He also recognized that the planning system helped to promote the authors who were officially loyal to the system, and to put culture on the public stage.

> "Our prose was spread widely, not only in the Soviet republic, but also in other Soviet republics and other foreign countries. [...] My book was published in 1959 and was warmly welcomed in the press. There were panegyrics concerning the style, sentences and so on. I felt that these compliments were organized specially as a response to previous pressure. As other writers I also was broken, but when my spine became stronger, I knew how to survive and deal with such pressure."

Literary reviewer Vytautas Kubilius, who was recognized by his talent and adherence to the field of

literature, but inauspicious in his incomplete adoption of the establishment, in his diary described his continuously ambivalent relation with the system. Describing the situation when his article in the magazine *Nemunas* was published and after this fact he was widely assaulted in party structures for his critical position regarding famous poet and the trends of contemporary literature, he wondered that his colleagues actively opposed him, supporting the position of party officials. His activities were suspended for some time and his notes reveal the fear and despair of the administration of culture.[15]

> "I see clearly that I am finishing my career. Finishing not because of old age, weariness or creative emptiness, but in struggle. It's accordingly my style. The cruelty of those communist-writers goes so far, that nobody doubts that it's normal to throw stones at me. It happened after I tried to be the advocate of their creative uncertainty and searches in the eyes of government. There is gossip that the Union of Writers even asked to halt publication of my book."

These stories cover three competing lines among the cultural elite, naming that 1) "blossoming" was intensive and directly influenced by ideology, official planning and resources; 2) "blossoming" was intensive, but mainly influenced by assigned resources, the strategies of the members and *know how* to reach the goals; and 3) "blossoming" was more harmful than useful, there were too many restrictions and too little room for creativity in the Soviet field of "culture". The differences between the lines lead to an examination of the structure of the cultural elite in Soviet Lithuania.

The cultural elite could be described as recognized agents in the cultural-scientific space, who disseminate knowledge, competence and cultural values and maintain a privileged position in shaping and publicizing various ideological discourses. A typical group of them would be the line of executives of the non-production sphere covering heads working at the Ministries of Education, Culture or specialized committees, and party officials who directly worked with this sphere. *Culturalists* include the intellectuals and cultural administrators acting in the governing structures. Not surprisingly they emerge between political interest and creative ideas, which did not always coincide. Looking at the relations with the Soviet system, there could be identified different groups of *culturalists*[16] similar to three attitudes mentioned in the narratives, and having different authority in the system.[17]

Ideologists. They were close to Moscow policy and the propaganda mechanism; they were the supervisors of Soviet Panoptikon. Ideologists were people who taught ideological disciplines (Marxism, political economy, etc.), people responsible for propaganda, and people holding party positions or managerial positions at the republican press, television editorial offices, artists associations or publishing houses. In the late 1960s and 1970s such figures played a substantial role in restricting activities of other *culturalists*, who wanted to move away from the communist ideology. They were intended to boost the authority of the Soviet culture by demonstrating achievements, mostly targeted at support of the mass culture and complying with the established socialist standards.

Conservatists, those who were mainly involved in local affairs, indifferent to central projection, and especially attach themselves to "native land, ethnohistory and nature", but knew the rules. They were the most dominant group among the cultural elite. During real socialism their role grew. The core of them was a group of recognized *authorities*. They were the persons distinguished in a field of science or culture and awarded for their activities, who at the same time held top positions at scientific or cultural institutions (e.g., academicians A. Žukauskas and K. Meškauskas, rector J. Kubilius, writers A. Maldonis, V. Bubnys, etc.). Creating their value by knowledge they were characterized by a "reserved" position, i.e. managing to get along with the party authorities, participating in production decisions, but also supporting interest in the *native country,* promoting dissemination of national symbols and activities which fostered the national identity (e.g., the 400th jubilee of Vilnius State University, historical dramas by J. Marcinkevičius). Many of them played a significant role during the national revival in 1988-1989.

Voices of protest – people who were secretly or openly

against the values of the system, producing the ideas of human rights (*contra elite*). Some of them were part of the establishment, but later suspended for some reasons (Tomas Venclova and Vytautas Kubilius). They had symbolic support in different social groups, but were strictly controlled and excluded from decision-making and privileged status in the sense of consumption and official promotion.

BUREAUCRATIC CONTAINMENT AND LOCAL INTEREST IN "CULTURE"

The Soviet system could be presented as a bureaucratic Leviathan[18], covering all spheres from the management of Soviet industries to sport and culture. The analysis of planning and implementation performance in Soviet Lithuania illustrates that alongside the multitude of formal rules there were informal rules, depending on social networks and existing daily practices. I would call them the bureaucratic routines. They had a metaphorical feature such as "*to find a form*"; "*paper must lie on the table a little bit*"; "*blat*", and pointed to the ability of bureaucrats to pursue personal or group strategies, to change or develop the primary idea of planning intention, and, sometimes, to put more local affairs into the central projections. All this reveals the ability of experienced *homo sovieticus*, and as V. Bubnys mentioned in his story, a need to know how to maneuver in the system.

For instance, "*to find a form*" meant the voluntary ability to implement and formalize the actions, even if they did not fit the official requirement. Playing with the rules and interpreting them show the ingenuity of some bureaucrats to diminish the risk that external controllers could find legal violations. "*Paper must lie*" is another routine showing that in the process of document flow (planning, reporting, etc.) it was important and timely to send, stop or sign the document flow. By knowing all the circumstances in the institutions, social networks and issued projects, there were opportunities to make rational choices or avoid threats. Other routines were also similar and revealed the culture of Soviet bureaucracy. There were private interests and the routines not only diminished the impact of central plans, but also created room for local interests. I would call this "bureaucratic containment", which helps to filter the impact of the center. By looking at the 1970s and 1980s and analyzing the case of the cultural field in Soviet Lithuania, we observe that some situations of "bureaucratic containment" illustrated that sovietization projects: 1) were not always implemented in the way the central institution projected them; 2) were negotiated in daily life; and 3) bureaucratic performance in Soviet Lithuanian created the filters protecting local interests.

The first case is related with language policy in the USSR. When Russian language strengthening policy (*sblizhenya* of Soviet nations) was proclaimed during the Tashkent conferences in 1975 and 1979, and the USSR Education Ministry launched the activities of its implementation, native Soviet officials in Lithuania rapidly adopted the central policy into the republic's law and decisions level. Activities supporting Russian language learning in the education system were issued by the USSR Education Ministry, but analogical means were approved at the institutional level in Soviet Lithuania. During the period from 1983 to 1988 the main means of strengthening Russian language learning were spread in the Lithuanian education system; for instance, new course books and handbooks were prepared, the quantity of language lessons per week were prolonged, etc. Nevertheless, looking at bureaucratic performance shows that this policy did not have as high a priority in the educational establishments of the republic as was announced in official documents. Firstly, there was strong support for the Lithuanian language, and this protection helped the Lithuanian language retain a dominant position in the teaching process even during the strengthening policy of Russian language. Support for Lithuanian lessons and teaching programs were expressed not only by native bureaucrats, but also by permanent negotiation about it with central officials. Secondly, implementation of Russian language policy was bound by control and the shortage of motivation to learn, teach and control strengthening of Russian language, and this was the result of bureaucratic resistance to language policy. However, evaluating the huge demand from the centre to enhance the role of Russian language in Soviet society and the amount of this policy's activities, it must be concluded that such

containment could slacken Russification processes, but not stop them.

Another case of bureaucratic containment is related with the routines establishing order among writers, whose activities had to strictly fit into the frames of social realism. The restrictions increased again in the early 1970s, when during Brezhnev's period the ideology was tightened again. Writers whose position was more liberal were subjected to sanctions thereby indicating clear boundaries of creative administration. Such a situation differed from the *cultural warming* initiated during Khrushchev's era. However, even with the tightened conditions in the writers' circles the leaders of *conservatist* writers were not only along with ideologists and the party authorities, but also more dominant than *ideological* writers. Their behavior was not intended to oppose the regime openly but rather to support the spread of national values. They supported the principle of autonomy – to be semi-independent, but always to observe the tightened ideological frames defined in the central model. Under such circumstances the creative area was marked by tendencies of Aesop's language that allowed, through symbols and hidden meaning[19], implication of more than officially permitted. Socially shared *know how* helped to understand such texts and, in some segments of writers and readers, to extend the boundaries of social realism, and to put some input into mobilizing national ideology (J. Marcinkevičius), but not the principles of internationalism.

Although people who did not comply with the requirements were subject to sanctions, their social relations partially buffered the requirements and slackened the tensions. Some transgressions, if they were not openly ideological in nature and did not clearly threaten the interest of officials from the centre, were quietly swallowed, especially if the "culprit" had influential relations or had accumulated symbolic capital.

CONCLUSION: MULTI-EDGE ATTITUDE LOOKING AT THE "BLOSSOMING OF THE NATION"

Cultural policy in the USSR was clearly related with the national ideology. By using the idea of internationalism and a planning system, the national issue was at the stage of party rhetoric. Tied with the projection of the "blossoming of nations" it had to show the advantages of the system for national development. All context of Soviet modernization was conducive for this projection. In the cultural sphere there was plenty of evidence: development of education, spread of "collectives of *kultur*" in different establishments, huge state support for writers and other artists, etc.

Otherwise, by looking at the everyday level and analyzing networks of culturalists and their bureaucratic practices, there could be seen a performative shift supporting local interests who did not always comply with the central projection and mobilized national identity. All this illustrates the multi-edge perspective of "blossoming" by understanding the central attempts and the context of industrialization, and also naming the bureaucratic/social ability to maneuver and overpass the principles of Soviet policies by filling their content with local affairs (it clearly constructed different ideas of Lithuania), which symbolically become very important in the late 1980s as the input of intellectuals initiated a national revival.

Notes

[1] Jeff Richards, 'Old Wine in New Bottles: the Resurgence of Nationalism in the New Europe' in: Christopher Williams, Thanasis D. Sfikas (eds.), *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Russia, the CIS and the Baltic States*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999, p. 29.

[2] Vilius Ivanauskas, 'Rusų kalbos vaidmuo stiprinant sovietinį tapatumą ir nacionalinė politika sovietinėje sistemoje 8-9 dešimtmečiuose' ('The Role of Russian Language Strengthening Soviet Identity and Soviet National Policy in 70-80s') in: Egidijus Aleksandravičius et al. (eds.), *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis*, No. 2, Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos instituto leidykla, 2007.

[3] Speech of the vice-president academician P. Fedosov of USSR Science academy in Tashkent conference in 1979, Rusijos federacijos valstybinis archyvas (State Archive of Russian Federation), F.R9563, O-1, E-3660, L-54-58.

[4] Manys of these achievements were presented not only during Soviet times, but also in the biographies of former Soviet officials, who had made decisions on them.

[5] Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

[6] Yuri Slezkine, 'The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism' in: *Slavic Review*, Vol. 53, No. 2, 1994, pp. 414-452.

[7] Ibid.
[8] Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993.
[9] Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology Under Socialism. Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu's Romania*, Berkeley: University of California, 1991, pp. 74-77.
[10] Pfilip G. Roeder, 'Soviet Federalism and Ethnic Mobilization' in: *World Politics*, Vol. 23, No. 2, 1991, pp. 196-233.
[11] Walter A. Kemp, *Nationalism and Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union: A Basic Contradiction?*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.
[12] Graham Smith, 'The Resurgence of Nationalism' in: Graham Smith (ed.), *The Baltic States: the National Self-Determination of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania*, London: Macmillan, 1996.
[13] Lionginas Šepetys, *Neprarastoji karta. Siluetai ir spalvos* (*Not-lost Generation. Silhouettes and Colors*), Vilnius: Lietuvos rašytojų sąjungos leidykla, 2005.
[14] Interview with Lithuanian writer V. Bubnys, October 2007.
[15] Vytautas Kubilius, *Dienoraščiai 1945-1977* (*Diaries 1945-1977*), Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2006.
[16] This regimentation was first made by identifying similar attributes, then by using interview methods evaluating "us" and "them" self-identification and observing participation in different social networks.
[17] Vilius Ivanauskas, *Lithuanian Nomenclatura. Between Stagnation and Dynamics (1970-1988)*, Doctoral dissertation, Vilnius, 2008.
[18] Maria Hirszowicz, *The Bureaucratic Leviathan. A Study in the Sociology of Communism*, Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1980, p. 208.
[19] It was also based on the logic "to find a form".

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Sovietinių metų lietuvių kultūrinio elito samprata apie tautų klestėjimo projekciją

Reikšminiai žodžiai: sovietinis internacionalizmas, nacionalinė ideologija, modernizacija, kultūrinis elitas, biurokratinė praktika.

Santrauka

Nacionalinis klausimas visuomet buvo aktualus oficialiajame TSRS kultūros politikos kontekste. Skleidžiant internacionalizmo ir *tautų draugystės* idėjas, tautinis (ar nacionalinis) aspektas tapo neatsiejama partinės retorikos dalimi, nuolatos pabrėžiant didėjančias TSRS tautų galimybes. Ši projekcija pirmiausiai buvo susieta su *tautų suartėjimo* ir *tautų klestėjimo* vaizdiniais, parodant tiek TSRS gyvenančių tautų panašėjimą, tiek komunistinės santvarkos pranašumus tautos vystymuisi. Dauguma sovietinės modernizacijos projektų, socialinės ekonomikos sferos (socialinė apsauga, bedarbystė, švietimas ir pan.) vystymas oficialiojoje retorikoje pirmiausiai liudijo apie šią sovietinio progreso sėkmę. Sistema buvo pristatoma kaip ypač palanki kultūrinei sferai, tai liudijo parama įvairiems meno kolektyvams, didelis dėmesys menininkų sąjungoms ir jos narių veiklai, mokslo reikšmingumo iškėlimui. Vertinant tautiniu aspektu, sistema derėjo su *liaudiniu patriotizmu*, kuris kultūrinėje veikloje turėjo atitikti sovietinės indoktrinacijos tikslus, tačiau kurio pagrindu kai kurie kultūros veikėjai savo veikloje sukurdavo įvairesnes prasmes nei komunistinė ideologija skelbė.

Sovietinės kasdienybės požiūriu vertinant sovietinės Lietuvos kultūrininkų tinklus ir jų biurokratinę praktiką, galima pastebėti didėjančią paramą vietiniams interesams, kuri ne visada sutapo su centro Maskvoje tikslais ir padėjo mobilizuoti nacionalinį identitetą. Visa tai atskleidžia daugialypį „tautos klestėjimo" vaizdinį sovietiniais metais. Net oficialiai pripažintiems kultūros veikėjams tai padėdavo plėtoti ne vien formalią paramą sovietinei politikai, tačiau per biurokratinį manevravimą ir neformalumą (pvz. ezopinė kalba) stiprinti paramą *lietuviškumo palaikymo* klausimams, juolab ši kryptis devintojo dešimtmečio antroje pusėje įgijo kylančio nacionalinio atgimimo simbolinę reikšmę.

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THE FUTURE IS TO STAY THE SAME: NOSTALGIA IN THE SOVIET REGIME[1]

Key words: nostalgia, Soviet Union, soviet imperialism, folklore, song and dance festivals.

INTRODUCTION

Although popular representations often depict the Soviet Union as a revolutionary country of social experimentation, immense industrial projects and progressivist belief in the future, the society of this country was unexpectedly inclined to a nostalgic yearning for the past. Contrary to clear-cut and oversimplified readings of Soviet culture relating it to socialist utopia, a grand communist mythology or the political narrative of a "Bright Future"[2], the high revolutionary phraseology of the Khrushchev or Brezhnev years was accompanied by multiple representations of the pre-industrial past and ardent mass identification with the romantic images of rural community and ethnic culture. No matter how radical were the changes made by urbanization, collectivization and industrialization in the social structure of the country, Soviet culture remained conservatively oriented towards the past. The new ways of life and new social roles proposed by socialist modernization[3] were paradoxically intertwined with nostalgia for those forms of culture that were supposed to have vanished many years before with the victory of the new social order. The importance of celebrating one's ethnic roots and the degree of supportive attitude of the Soviet authorities towards traditional, conservative, local, rustic and popular self-expression in the late Soviet period can be best illustrated by the proliferation of folklore. As Frank J. Miller put it in 1989:

> "All major ethnic groups in the USSR, including the Russians, are familiar with their own folklore. Children study representative works of Russian folklore and those of other nationalities in grade school and middle school. The radio listener and the television viewer are constantly barraged with folk performances. […] Every year in the USSR, approximately eleven thousand professional folklore collectives give over four million performances, attended by more than five hundred million people".[4]

This article addresses the issue of nostalgia – signs indicating yearning for the lost world and/or attempts to re-construct and perform it repeatedly – in the public events (including artistic performances) of the late Soviet period as experienced in colonized countries like Lithuania. The problem of the complex attitude of the central Communist Party power towards ethnicity as well as local, rural and folk identity (both Russian and non-Russian) has been covered extensively (especially the early period before World War II)[5]. Less has been said, however, of the later development of imperial Soviet culture after Stalin's death when nostalgia turned into a complex and ambivalent element of the official aesthetics of the regime.

Nostalgic ethnic sentiments, encouraged by both local and central Party elite, penetrated the very aesthetics of the regime. Official performative events

Fig. 1. Juozas Baltušis, Early in the Morning, 1953, directed by Kazimiera Kymantaitė, Vilnius Academic State Drama Theatre. Courtesy: The archive of Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Film Museum

like public rituals, mass celebrations, popular leisure activities and, eventually, artistic performances of socialist realism often represented a curious combination of new Soviet social order and traditionalist pre-industrial décor. Figure No. 1 is a picture from a socialist realist performance staged in 1953 in the Lithuanian Academic State Drama theatre and based on the play by prominent playwright of the period, Juozas Baltušis, called *Early in the Morning*, depicting the life of the Soviet *kolkhoz*. The narrative of the play is centered on the conflict between generations of kolkhoz workers concerning the new, industrial and highly efficient agricultural techniques introduced by the newly-educated youth and rejected by the elders as menacing and controversial. A typical production of the so-called "industrial play", it might be surprising in that both the everyday hassle and the eventual reconciliation (which also meant an ultimate break in the life of the *kolkhoz* workers away from the remains of the patriarchal order) is so insistently decorated with the elements of traditional ethnic culture, including clothing, architecture and songs. My aim here is to address this ambivalence of nostalgic references included and thriving in the midst of representations of New Life.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Nostalgic nationalist narratives, taking one back to the historical "roots" of the nation, found in the spirit of the folk, rural community and traditional way of life did not lose their significance in the communist state as was predicted by Lenin[6]. On the contrary, nostalgic nationalist sentiments were maintained and even encouraged by the representatives of the state and Party elite in, for example, events like public rituals, mass celebrations, popular leisure activities and art. The popular culture officially maintained and supported by the regime was the culture of nostalgia, even if we agree that for the most part the representations of the (national) past were remodeled, adapted, harmonized or simply created by the artists of the Soviet period.

However, in the first decade after the revolution,

representatives of the Russian avant-garde art opposed to the romantic and nostalgic understanding of national culture saw rustic folk art and the old village with its mores and its way of life as a reflection of the ideology of vanishing class society of the past. In this respect artists shared the same attitude as the leaders of the Bolshevik revolution, showing distrust in peasants as they seemed tied to the capitalist economy and possession and subject to fanaticism, prejudice, servility to authority and humiliation of women.[7] In the circles of revolutionary art, folklore was seen as the remains of patriarchal society, so *Proletcult* encouraged the annihilation of all folklore – even fairy tales for children.[8] The old village was seen as a hotbed of the instincts of private property, ignorance, prejudice, alcoholism and moral degradation.[9]

However, Maxim Gorky had already declared by 1934 that Soviet art should be as simple and understandable as folk art, and elements of folklore, references to the ethnic roots and popular forms of premodern, pre-industrial and pre-revolutionary culture have been one of the most essential and apparent characteristics of the aesthetics of the Soviet regime and official Soviet art ever since. The 1940s saw a sudden increase in interest in ethnic rural heritage and the traditional domestic way of life of the villagers, as well as a renaissance of folkloristics, expansion of regional ethnographic organizations and active involvement of the students and intelligentsia in collecting the artifacts of folk art, publishing anthologies of folk literature and propagating folklore via radio and press.

The new wave of glorification of folk art and the nostalgic attitude towards the pre-modern ways of life and traditions inspired by Soviet cultural critics was related to the growing isolation of Soviet society due to the Cold War at the end of the 1940s.[10] For example, nationalist nostalgia was apparent in the prose of the post-Stalinist generation of Russian writers known as *derevenshchiki*.[11] And it reached its peak during the Brezhnevite re-Stalinization, which is described by Mark Sandle as an attempt to synthesize the stress on science and technology with nostalgia and conservatism.[12] Both Russian and non-Russian nationalist nostalgia, according to Sandle was "an attempt to fill the spiritual void left by the decline in religious faith, and the retreat from

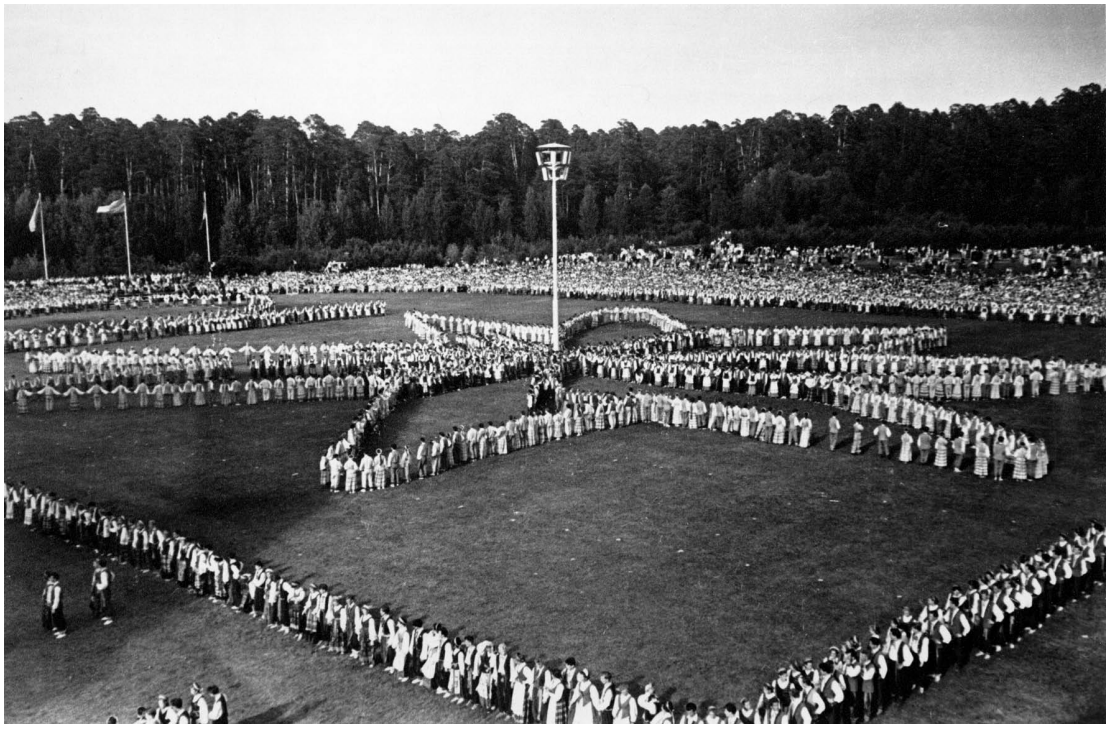

Fig. 2. The song and dance festival, 1960, Vilnius. Courtesy: The archive of Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Film Museum

the utopianism inherent in Khrushchev's imminent transition to communism".[13] Since the 1960s there had been an obvious increase in interest and nostalgic discourse related to the preservation and appreciation of the past. In 1964 the Russian Ministry of Culture published instructions for registering and collecting the art of the old Russia.[14] Youth clubs for preservation of national monuments of the past as well as "All-Russian Society for the preservation of the historical and cultural monuments" were founded in 1966.[15] Accordingly, in local republics like Lithuania, the Central Committees of the Party expressed a concern about monuments of culture "witnessing the inexhaustible creative powers, culture and artistic taste of the people". A series of albums, such as *Lithuanian Folk Art*, were published alongside the activities of the local "clubs of regional studies" that, according to Vytis Čiubrinskas, resulted in nothing less than a second national revival movement.[16]

Fig. 3. Juozas Baltušis, Early in the Morning, 1953, directed by Kazimiera Kymantaitė, Vilnius Academic State Drama Theatre. Actors: Dalia – Lidija Kupstaitė, Ona Giedrienė, Galina Jackevičiūtė. Courtesy: The archive of Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Film Museum

SONG AND DANCE FESTIVALS

The best representation of this mass nostalgia supported by the regime in the Baltic States were the song and dance festivals held on the regional and the national scale since 1946 and involving thousands of people. They became extremely important at the end of 1950s when we see an increase in initiative and support from the centralized authorities for organizing such events, first in the regions on the local scale and most often in the open air and in the localities that have a very high symbolic and sentimental value for Lithuanian nationalists and eventually developing into the final event taking place in the capital of Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic, Vilnius.

For many local people the festival was first and foremost a continuation of celebrating and performing nationhood in similar events that took place in the independent interwar Lithuanian nation-state, with the first such event organized in 1924 in Kaunas. However, it proved to be extremely important also for subsequent generations in the following decades, and the festival saw an increase in the numbers of participants every year on local and every four years on a national scale. Eventually, the festival, including by then "The day of folklore", "The exhibition of folk art" and other similar events proved to be no less important after the 1990s and in 2003 it was acknowledged by UNESCO as a masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity. The Soviet years of the event are now being represented as a secret weapon aimed at maintaining national identity and guarding the struggle for independence.

From the point of view of the local people of Soviet Lithuania involved in the mass activities of folk performances, the festival can be seen as an emotional reaction to the extent and speed of socialist modernization and the shock of urgent industrialization and urbanization. Urban quilt, idealization of the organic community of the village and longing for authentic bonds with agricultural existence was a sentimental reaction to the rapid economic and social transformations initiated by the Soviet regime. Brutal dimensions of industrialization and urbanization accompanying the political violence

triggered the fantasies of a lost idyllic home. The festival in this sense can be seen as standing along with other phenomena of Soviet culture, such as the movement of "regional studies", which was extremely important in Russia as well as the republics from the end of 1960s.

However, what should be considered here is the scale to which this sentiment was produced by the regime itself. Archival documents from the Central Committee of the Party and the Ministry of Culture of the Soviet Republic of Lithuania indicate the extent and precision of the involvement of the Soviet authorities in activating and encouraging nationalist sentiments and decorative adoration of pre-modern forms of communal existence. In 1958, for example, the Central Committee and the Ministry of Culture declared a resolution that all the best professional and amateur choirs, folk dance circles, orchestras of folk instruments, song and dance ensembles, as well as amateur theatre companies and state theatres should be involved in the festival. The resolution also established that the whole event should be controlled and organized by a team of chief-consultants and private auditions to ensure "an appropriate preparatory work and consistent and systematic labour".[17] Accordingly, all possible measures were to be taken to promote the celebration of traditional festivals (like Midsummer's Day) and to revive "the most beautiful folk customs and rituals" in *kolkhozes*. Eventually, the Economic Council was obliged to produce a proper amount of cotton, silk, half-silk and woolen fabric for manufacturing folk costumes based on certified design.[18]

The production of nostalgia by the official Soviet culture was a reflection of the same need that Terry Martin, in his *The Affirmative Action Empire* refers to as "a strategy aimed at disarming nationalism by granting what were called the "forms" of nationhood".[19] Although a number of publications on folklore and ethnic performance in the USSR claimed that the rustic and traditional local art is the "core of unique individuality of different cultures and theatres"[20], they also pointed out that traditional folk art needs thorough selection, processing and adaptation.[21] The centralized demand for ethnic and folklore performances, restoration of traditional festivals and initiation of local popular entertainment was a result of the political need for "registration and allowance (in Russian *uchiot*) for ethnic multiplicity" as, since the Twentieth Party Congress, in spite of the ideology of "Friendship of nations", the "regulation of interethnic relations remained a constant problem".[22]

However, there is also something ambivalent, one might even say schizophrenic, in the way these nostalgic performances eventually always had to be related to the progressivist ideology. Nostalgic representations initiated by the Soviet authorities were then interpreted in local contexts and thus threatened to expose asymmetric power relations between the different nations and peoples of the empire, referring not only to some safe fantasies of the past but also to the loss of the nation-state, enforcement of foreign power and russification, experiences of emigration and exile, the gap between the centre and periphery, isolation and the Cold War – in short, the *imperial territorial present* lurking beneath the sentimental attachment to the *national historical past*. Which is why the official discourse had to turn back again to progressivist belief in a common future. It can be seen in this fragment from a text by one of the most eminent representatives of official Soviet Lithuanian culture – writer Juozas Baltušis, reflecting on the song and dance festival:

> "Lithuania is undergoing times of great growth and development. The cities are growing at a pace that was unthinkable to our grandparents and great-grandparents and has no precedent in the history of our nation. Out of the squalor of thatch huts, the bitterness of shacks, out of the twilight of kerosene lamps the new village is breaking through with irrepressible power and the pathway of its new life is marked by white settlements, blossoming gardens and constellations of electricity. New traditions, new mores, new relationships and eventually new ways of thinking are being worked out. Yet at the same time everything that has been created by our nation for decades and ages,

Fig. 4. The song and dance festival, 1960, Vilnius. Courtesy: The archive of Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Film Museum

> everything that the ploughman, exhausted by the endless works and worries, had been dreaming about, everything that the Lithuanian girl had been musing on in front of her flowerbed after a long and tiresome day, that our grandmothers had woven into their clothes of untold beauty, everything is now emerging out of the mists of oblivion, sparkling with beauty of youth and flows into the stream of new life".[23]

IMPERIALIST NOSTALGIA

As opposed to the industrial societies of the West, where the nostalgic attitude to the past is most often represented by the right and radical political groups such as conservatives, agrarians, traditionalists, greens etc. speaking against reckless rationalization of the means of production[24], in the Soviet Union the sentimental folk rituals of the past were gladly used by the representatives of the socialist regime, while folklore and ethnic elements were reproduced on mass scale. A possible way to understand it is to look at the nostalgic images from the point of view of imperialist rather than socialist or communist politics. Although the Soviet regime operated in the name of *history* and *class*, in reality, it had to exercise its authority in geographical terms and deal with nations, ethnic groups and territories. This gave birth to the ambivalent economy of difference between the international ideals or radical vision of history on the one hand and the multiethnic geographical reality of empire on the other.

Far from being monolithic and invulnerable, Russo-Soviet imperialism was facing an ambivalent situation; proclaiming the spirit of liberalization, emancipation and internationalism, it had to take into account the possibility that the societies liberated from religious prejudice or patriarchal traditions might continue to strive for liberal political values and that internationalism in its true sense would mean the end of oneness and dominance of one nation over the others. The ambiguity of colonial

discourse in this case unfolds between attempts to preserve the *status quo* of territorial domination, or even to continue to expand it, and, on the other hand, radical historical progress and the ideal of modernity, development and change.

Preaching progressive internationalism and yet safeguarding the stasis of the imperial structures of domination and subordination, Russo-Soviet imperialism was forced to look for a compromise between the two courses – that of the idea and that of the desire. With a reference to Homi K. Bhabha's characterization of mimicry as an "ironic compromise" between the two conflicting parts of colonial discourse – the synchronic panoptical vision of domination (supposing stable identity) and the counter-pressure of the diachrony of history (supposing change and difference)[25], Soviet nostalgia can be defined as a *sentimental* compromise.

Cherishing of local ethnic sentiments was not so much a return back to tradition, but rather a justification of the entrenched hierarchical territorial and cultural relations. Sentiments for the past had to obscure the modern, conflicting territoriality. In spite of the fact that Soviet power was always represented by the radical interruption in time, revolution, progress, liberation and historical teleology, the hierarchical territorial relations in the Soviet state had to remain unchanged, with one dominant nation and one imperial centre. Therefore, nostalgia was nothing else but the naturalization of this explicit inadequacy between static of power and the dynamics of history. The Soviet aesthetics of nostalgia was not so much an adherence to the pre-socialist forms of culture but first and foremost fidelity to one's place in the hierarchy of the imperial geography. As a compromise between two contradictions – political ideal and imperialist desire – nostalgia had to ensure that the future of the Soviet state remained the same.

The use of folk and ethnic elements in official representations, mass celebrations, such as the song and dance festival, as well as in Soviet art was an encouragement of nationalist nostalgia and a way of keeping the limits of ethnic sentiments under control. Mass nostalgia was a tool to fortify what was unstable, ambivalent and equivocal within the imperial discourse itself, namely the discrepancy between the liberating historical vision and constraining imperial geography.

Notes

[1] This research was funded by a grant (No. MIP-05/2010) from the Research Council of Lithuania. This research was performed in cooperation with Vytautas Magnus University.

[2] See for example Vladimir Tismaneanu, who describes Soviet Marxism as "the last grandiose historical narrative", the end of which brought about emptiness into Eastern European societies, filled gradually with new mythologies comming from nationalism (Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Fantasies of Salvation: Democracy, Nationalism and Myth in Post-Communist Europe*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998, p. 40).

[3] I refer here to the publications by Vylius Leonavičius: "Assuming that there is, with respect to systems of political and socioeconomic relations, a radical difference between systems peculiar to state socialist societies and those peculiar to capitalist societies, Soviet society, from the standpoint of its technological and institutional organization, exeplified a specific variation of the modern, industrial, urbanized, bureaucratized society, embracing all levels of education. In this sense we can talk of the modernization of society during the Soviet period, the development of the essential features of primary modernity, according to Ulrich Beck" (Vylius Leonavičius, 'Sovietinė modernizacija: socialinės sistemos ir socialinio veikėjo sąveika' ('The Soviet Modernization: Interface of Social System and Social Agent') in: *Darbai ir dienos*, No. 49, 2008, p. 233.

[4] Frank J. Miller, *Folklore for Stalin: Russian Folklore and Pseudofloklore of the Stalin Era*, Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1990.

[5] See Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations. Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005; Ronald Grigor Suny, Terry Martin (eds.), *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001; Yuri Slezkine, 'The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism' in: *Slavic Review*, Vol. 53, No. 2, 1994.

[6] As it is clear from his *The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, written in 1916.

[7] Laura J. Olson, *Performing Russia: Folk Revival and Russian Identity*, London, New York: Routledge, 2004, p. 35. On the harsh political attitude of the regime towards village in the first decades after the revolution see Николас Верт, *История советского государства* (*History of the Soviet State*), Москва: ИНФРА-М, Издатеъьство «Весь Мир», 2003.

[8] Frank J. Miller, *Folklore for Stalin: Russian Folklore and Pseudofolklore of the Stalin Era*, Armonk, New York:

M. E. Sharpe, 1990, p. 6.

[9] Валерий Дементьев, 'Хождение за три волока' ('Over the Three Portages') in: *Москва*, No. 9, 1970, p. 195. Anti-nostalgic attitude of the avant-garde artists towards the past can be also illustrated by their relation to museums, see Boris Groys, 'The Struggle Against the Museum, or the Display of Art in Totalitarian Space' in: Daniel J. Sherman, Irit Rogoff (eds.), *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, London: Routledge, 1994, pp. 144-162.

[10] Laura J. Olson, 2004, p. 64.

[11] See Philippa Lewis, 'Peasant Nostalgia in Contemporary Russian Literature' in: *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4, 1976, pp. 548-569.

[12] Mark Sandle, *A Short History of Soviet Socialism*, London: UCL Press, 1999, p. 355.

[13] Ibid.

[14] *Комунист*, No. 11, 1978, p. 64.

[15] See Peter J. S. Duncan, *Russian Messianism: Third Rome, Revolution, Communism and After*, London, New York: Routledge, 2000.

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Nekintanti ateitis: nostalgija sovietiniame režime

Reikšminiai žodžiai: nostalgija, Sovietų Sąjunga, sovietinis imperializmas, folkloras, Dainų ir šokių šventė.

Santrauka

Nors oficialiosiose reprezentacijose Sovietų Sąjunga buvo vaizduojama kaip revoliucinė socialinio eksperimento, milžiniškų industrinių projektų ir entuziastingai savo ateitimi tikinčio proletariato šalis, šioje šalyje gyvenusi visuomenė per visą savo gyvavimo laikotarpį buvo linkusi (kur kas dažniau nei paprastai manoma) idealizuotai ilgėtis praeities. Viešojoje erdvėje režimo skelbtą marksistinę „šviesios ateities" utopiją lydėjo ne mažiau pastebimas žmonių prisirišimas prie ikiindustrinės praeities „likučių" ir emocinga masinė identifikacija su romantizuotais kaimo bendruomenės ir etninės kultūros vaizdiniais. Įdomu tai, kad Sovietų Sąjungoje sentimentalius „liaudiškus" praeities ritualus mielai išnaudojo socialistinio režimo valdžios atstovai, pavyzdžiui viešuosiuose ritualuose, masinėse šventėse, laisvalaikio veikloje ir mene, o folkloras ir etniniai elementai buvo tiražuojami masiniu mastu (pvz. tokiuose renginiuose, kaip Dainų ir šokių šventės).

Straipsnyje siekiama išsiaiškinti, kokia buvo nostalgiškų vaizdinių funkcija oficialiojoje Sovietų Sąjungos kultūroje?

Kodėl revoliucinės komunistų šalies režimas skatino nacionalistinius sentimentus? Norėdami suprasti sovietinės nostalgijos prigimtį, turėtume šios šalies kultūrą analizuoti ne iš socializmo ar komunizmo, o iš imperializmo politinės perspektyvos. Nors sovietinis režimas veikė istorijos ir klasės vardu, jis buvo priverstas savo valdžią skleisti geografinėje erdvėje ir nukreipti ją į tautas, etnines grupes ir teritorijas. Tai nulėmė ambivalentišką santykį tarp internacionalinių idealų, radikalios istorijos vizijos ir multietninės geografinės imperijos realybės. Nostalgija, kaip kompromisas tarp politinio idealo ir imperialistinio geismo, turėjo garantuoti, kad sovietų valstybė ateityje nesikeistų.

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