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Volume XV (XXIV)

CROSSING  
BORDERS:  
IMAGINING  
EUROPE,  
REPRESENTING  
PERIPHERY



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## ART INQUIRY

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Volume XV (XXIV)

**Crossing Borders: Imagining Europe, Representing Periphery**

ŁÓDZKIE TOWARZYSTWO NAUKOWE

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## PREFACE

### **Crossing borders: imagining Europe, representing periphery**

Europe is a complex space, a space always morphing and never static; a space of constant change of ethnic, national, cultural and political realities. The newly forming socio-cultural order in Europe is founded on the experience associated with movement, relocation and dislocation, and the personal experience of the physical, cognitive, and symbolic crossing of borders.

The complex paradigm of European identity is an object of artistic observation and interpretation. This observation, analysis, and critique leads to the emergence of multiple art discourses questioning the geo-politics of Europe and addressing the issues of identity.

However, today the notion of identity, both individual and collective, arouses many doubts, if one considers the processes of globalization, migration and other forms of mobility, diasporas, exclusion, the merging of cultures, hybridization of traditions. The question of what it means to be European seems not to be regarded as important even among the EU citizens. Instead, various alternative forms of identification prevail. People identify themselves most often by their nationality, gender, profession, religion, sub-culture, but not as being European. The processes of mediatization and medialization contribute to the complexity of the issue. In such realities, we can only try to develop a socially attractive concept of 'Europeaness', or, following the theory of Giorgio Agamben, to reconsider the concept of 'community without identity', whose members do not necessarily share the essential attributes, but play the roles of different instantiations of the category.

The *United States of Europe* exhibition, which visited a number of European cities in 2011-2013, grappled with the issues of representing Europe and aimed to analyse and discuss the problems associated with the construction of Europeaness. The exhibition was produced by Johanna Suo, and curated by Anna Bitkina, Ryszard W. Kluszczyński and Sinziana Ravini. In spite of the declared intention of searching for the possibility of European cultural integration and common identity, the curators invited the artists who cast some doubt upon this very possibility. Luchezar Boyadjiev, for instance, examined the historical components of national identities. Anna Konik drew our attention to the consequences of poverty, homelessness, and marginalization. Gerda

Lampalzer addressed the problem of power relations among the European nation-states. Maria Lusitano-Santos analysed the notion of a homeland and asked what makes a place feel like a home. Indeed, the subject of a home and its role in the process of identity formation was at the very heart of the works of both Konik and Lusitano-Santos. Anu Pennanen extended the field, taking up the issues of ethnicity and migration. The artists did not provide us with any immediate solutions or answers. Instead, by asking difficult questions, and pointing out the problems, they simply made us aware of the complexities and the scope of the construction of European space and European identity.

The concept of Europe itself is also quite complex. First, we might consider its spatial dimension. From this perspective, Europe is a hybrid space: a socio-political geographical space with strong internal economic ties (or less strong, considering the current Euro-zone crisis) that can be demarcated on the map, and an amalgamate of culturally plural and diverse spaces. Cultural plurality and linguistic polyphony make Europe unique. They are a rich cultural resource. Cultural plurality can be envisaged as the potential for a sustainable future, or as a threat to cohesiveness and autonomy. Secondly, we might consider the temporal dimension, with Europe continually reshaping, assuming a new form. We need to think about the beginnings of Europe, its historical reincarnations, and its recent acquisitions, forming the Europe of today; we should also imagine the Europe of the future.

One important dimension of contemporary Europe is its mobility. Yet, mobility across the national borders remains a privilege rather than the norm. It is being on the 'right' side of the wall that determines the versions of sovereignty, the citizenship-related entitlements, including the economy of the human rights. On the one hand, the policy on migration has evolved to ease off the border control. On the other, there is a proliferation of the walls that continue to divide the spaces of Europe, 'us' and 'them'. We witness a proliferation of symbolic walls and the less visible walls reminiscent of the Berlin Wall now transformed into the East Side Gallery of murals. A section of the Wall reminds us about the political, socio-economic and cultural divide between the West and the East Germany, the latter a former member of the Soviet bloc, now a 'new' European space.

Symbolic walls are stronger than their physical manifestations. They prevail and continue to exist in our cognitive spaces and the systemic structures across the geo-political map of Europe despite their so-called material disappearance. Embodied experience and personal account can provide frames for wall crossing, border crossing, migration routes and various diasporas in the search for an imagined Europe and its represented periphery. The papers presented in this volume contribute to this reflection.

***Katarzyna Kosmala  
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## **TRANSCULTURAL CONGO AS THE PERIPHERY OF EUROPE OR A HYBRID AND NETWORKED ARCHIPELAGO: TRANSCULTURALITY WITHIN THE VISUAL CULTURE STUDIES**

**Abstract:** The article takes up the issue of imagining and representing the periphery of Europe in the context of colonial and post-colonial reflection. The analyzed examples are art works that can be treated as transcultural representations. The main concept that has been scrutinized is transculturality as proposed by Wolfgang Welsch, who criticizes the existing concepts of individual cultures, as well as the ideas of multiculturalism and interculturalism. The starting point is the belief of Nicholas Mirzoeff that all cultures are transcultures. Within the field of Visual Culture Studies, the concept of transculturality has been replaced by transculturation and transculture, which are involved in the process of constructing networked cultural identities with a hybrid structure. The notions of transculturation and transculture can also be applied to the works of José Bedia. The evolution of Mirzoeff's thinking about transculturality proceeds from the affirmation of the position of the Cuban anthropologist Alfonso Ortiz to the transformation of Welsch's concept. The photographs of Herbert Lang are juxtaposed with the concept of "imperial transculture", which refers to the scopic regimes of Martin Jay. These connotations also direct us toward the understanding of the concept of "imperialism" of Edward W. Said, who treats the Orient as an artificial construct. In this sense, one example of the operation of the visual regime of colonialization can be provided by the *nkisi* figures that appear in the works *Fetish No. 2* (1988) by Renée Stout and *Ta Tele* (1988) by Trigo Piula, which can be interpreted in relation to Marcel Mauss's magic fetishism and Karl Marx's commodity fetishism. Another example of the operation of the visual regime of colonialization is the necropolitics of the civil war in Rwanda between the Hutu and Tutsi tribes and two more works – *Scramble for Africa* (2003) by Yinka Shonibare and *The Chief: he who sold Africa to the colonists* (1997) by Samuel Fosso. The concept of constructing an image of the Kongo peoples presented here is based on the assumption that it is the result of the operation of the discourse created by the European colonizers. This point of view can be also found in the book *The Right to Look*, where Mirzoeff constructs the definitions of visuality and countervisuality.

**Keywords:** transculturality, Congo, imagining Europe, representing periphery, hybridity, networked archipelago, Visual Culture Studies.

## INTRODUCTION

The issues of imagining and representing the periphery of Europe are inextricably connected with the concepts of transculturality and hybridization. Currently, the continent is an ethnic and social space which has been constantly transforming and expanding its boundaries, thus leading to their erasure. In today's transcultural world the provinces or peripheries of Europe are located outside the European continent and the European Union.

The purpose of my article is to analyze the concept of transculturality in the context set by the Visual Culture and Postcolonial Studies. As an example, I have chosen the Congo – a country located in Central Africa on the Atlantic Ocean. Kongo was a crucial part of the so-called “Black Atlantic”, and the current spelling of the name of the country, “Congo”, reflects the colonial use of English. In the post-colonial world, Congo is like a periphery of Europe. This is particularly visible on the maps created by the Europeans showing Congo as a “European” country divided into provinces. Terry Smith describes a similar process in his study of the colonial representations of Australia which resembled the landscapes of England.<sup>1</sup>

The postcolonial perspective reveals that cultural identity is formed during the process of othering (transculturation),<sup>2</sup> adopting a hybrid structure of cultural networks. Nicholas Mirzoeff argues that the colonized peoples of the Congo are represented as a product of European colonial discourse. This is not a processed (transformed) image of “savages”, but an artificial construct, socially shaped just like gender. The Europeans destroyed the indigenous people to create transcultural versions of cultures.<sup>3</sup> The resulting cultural hybrid resembles a network of cultural references in which the Congo is not an “island”, but part of a cultural archipelago. These transcultural tendencies can be seen in the works of both European and African art, which clearly shows the social changes currently taking place.

The notion of transculturality was introduced into the field of Cultural Studies by Wolfgang Iser, who argued that it is connected with the concept of the transversal mind (*transversale Vernunft*). Iser stresses the

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<sup>1</sup> T. Smith, 2002, ‘Visual Regimes of Colonization: Aboriginal Seeing and European Vision in Australia’, in: N. Mirzoeff (ed.), *The Visual Culture Reader*, Second Edition, Routledge, London and New York, p. 419.

<sup>2</sup> See H.K. Bhabha, 1994, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, London and New York, p. 175.

<sup>3</sup> N. Mirzoeff, 1999, *An Introduction to Visual Culture*, First Edition, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 131-132.

importance of three aspects of the mind: subjectivity, pluralism and transversality.<sup>4</sup> The concept of the transversal mind directs us towards the issues of identity, which can also be linked to transculturality in the field of the psychology of culture, which understands the prefix “trans-” as meaning “between.”<sup>5</sup> Transculturality is also symptomatic of post-modernism and the various processes of globalization, which relate particularly to social processes, an example of which can also be the aesthetization of reality, which leads to its hybridization.

In the essay “Transculturality: A Puzzling Form of Cultures Today”, Wolfgang Welsch criticizes the existing concepts of individual cultures, as well as the more contemporary ideas of multiculturalism and interculturalism:

If cultures were in fact still – as these concepts suggest – constituted in the form of islands or spheres, then one could neither rid oneself of, nor solve the problem of their coexistence and cooperation. However, the description of today’s cultures as islands or spheres is factually incorrect and normatively deceptive. Cultures *de facto* no longer have the insinuated form of homogeneity and separateness. They have instead assumed a new form, which is to be called *transcultural* insofar that it *passes through* classical cultural boundaries.<sup>6</sup>

Welsch’s concept of transculturality is an expression of a particular structure of culture, which includes several levels. The first of these levels is building a network, which Welsch explains as follows:

Cultures today are extremely interconnected and entangled with each other. Lifestyles no longer end at the borders of national cultures, but go beyond these, are found in the same way in other cultures. The way of life for an economist, an academic or a journalist is no longer German or French, but rather European or global in tone.<sup>7</sup>

These connections can be found in the understanding of transculturality in Visual Culture Studies, in which the concept has been adapted with many changes that have led to the transformation of its original meaning.

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<sup>4</sup> W. Welsch, 2005, *Vernunft. Die zeitgenössische Vernunftkritik und das Konzept der transversalen Vernunft*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, pp. 830, 843.

<sup>5</sup> Z.W. Dudek, A. Pankalla, 2008, *Psychologia kultury. Doświadczenia graniczne i transkulturowe*, „Eneteia”, Wydawnictwo Psychologii Kultury, Warszawa, p. 248.

<sup>6</sup> W. Welsch, 1999, ‘Transculturality: the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today’, in: M. Featherstone and S. Lash (eds.), *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, Sage, London, p. 197.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 197–198.

## TRANSCULTURE AND TRANSCULTURATION WITHIN VISUAL CULTURE STUDIES

The starting point for Mirzoeff's reflection on the concept of transculture is the assumption that "Culture is never a pure object but always the hybrid product of networks. Or to be brief all culture is transculture."<sup>8</sup> Mirzoeff uses the term "culture", but in a dynamic, fluid way. He adopts the meaning of transculture in accordance with the ideas of the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, who insisted it did not mean

merely acquiring another culture, which is what the English word *acculturation* really implies, but the process also necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of a previous culture, which could be defined as deculturation. In addition, it carries the idea of the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena, which could be called neo-culturation.<sup>9</sup>

The notion combining Welsch's concept of transculturality with the idea of transculture is hybridization, which characterizes contemporary cultural transformations. Welsch advocates the assumption that we now have to deal with the construction of hybrid "transcultural identity networks"<sup>10</sup>, which can be explained as follows: "For every single culture, all other cultures have tendentially come to be internal elements or satellites. This applies on the levels of population, merchandise and information."<sup>11</sup> We can also read that "Cultural conditions today are characterized everywhere by mixing and permeations."<sup>12</sup> Welsch claims that the transformations of social life are the source of many ethnic and cultural hybrids and constitute one of the levels of transculturality.

Hybridization also gains a new meaning in the face of globalization, which has changed communication in a very important way. According to Ryszard W. Kluszczyński,

The globalization of culture is a process that appeared due to the development and spread of communication technologies. Media and multimedia

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<sup>8</sup> N. Mirzoeff, 2009, *An Introduction to Visual Culture*, Second Edition, Routledge, London and New York, p. 41.

<sup>9</sup> F. Ortiz (1947) 1995, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, trans. H. de Onis, Duke University Press, Durham and London, p. 103.

<sup>10</sup> W. Welsch, 2002, 'Rethinking Identity in the Age of Globalization – a Transcultural Perspective', in: Taiwan Association of Aesthetics and Art Science (eds.), *Aesthetics & Art Science*, No. 1, pp. 85-94.

<sup>11</sup> W. Welsch, 1997, *Undoing Aesthetics*, Sage, London, p. 140.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*.

art is one of the forms of the use of those technologies. Inevitably, therefore, it is (multi)media art that becomes the expression of the globalization of culture and the basic space of the discourses on globalization.<sup>13</sup>

Contemporary (multi)media art seems to confirm this thesis. Examples can be found in many art works by Douglas Davis, Nam June Paik, Kinga Aray and Vera Frenkel.<sup>14</sup>

In place of “transculturality”, Mirzoeff uses the term “transculturation”, which is defined as a three-stage process: of expansion, or acquisition of certain elements of a new culture; the loss of others, taking place under duress; and the selection and transformation of the transferred or borrowed formulas into a consistent whole.<sup>15</sup> The concept of transculturation can mean both trans-culture or the process leading to its creation, depending on whether the emphasis is placed on the structure or the process. Although transculturation resembles the postmodern projects of transculturality, Ortiz does not engage these contexts. We may say that the process of transculturation as understood by Mirzoeff creates the effect of transculture as formulated by Ortiz.<sup>16</sup>

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the places previously thought to be the focal points of culture experienced transculturation. As noted by Antonio Benítez-Rojo, transculture “takes us to what lies at the heart of postmodern (...) analysis: a questioning of the concept of ‘unity’ and a dismantling, or rather unmasking, of the mechanism we know as ‘binary opposition’.”<sup>17</sup> Continuing these considerations within the framework of the modernist opposition between culture and civilization, one may conclude that transculture proposes a method of analyzing the hybrid, syncretic, global diaspora in which we live.

The notions of transculturation and transculture appear in relation to the work of the artists who use visual media. Mirzoeff gives the example of the Cuban artist José Bedia, who worked in Cuba, Mexico and the United States, thereby confirming his transcultural identity. Bedia claims that the trans-

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<sup>13</sup> R. W. Kluszczyński, 2004, ‘Historie hybrydyzacji. Sztuka (multi)mediów wobec procesów globalizacji’, in: *Kultura w czasach globalizacji*, M. Jacyno, A. Jawłowska, M. Kempny (eds.), Wydawnictwo Instytutu Filozofii i Socjologii Państwowej Akademii Nauk, Warszawa, p. 279.

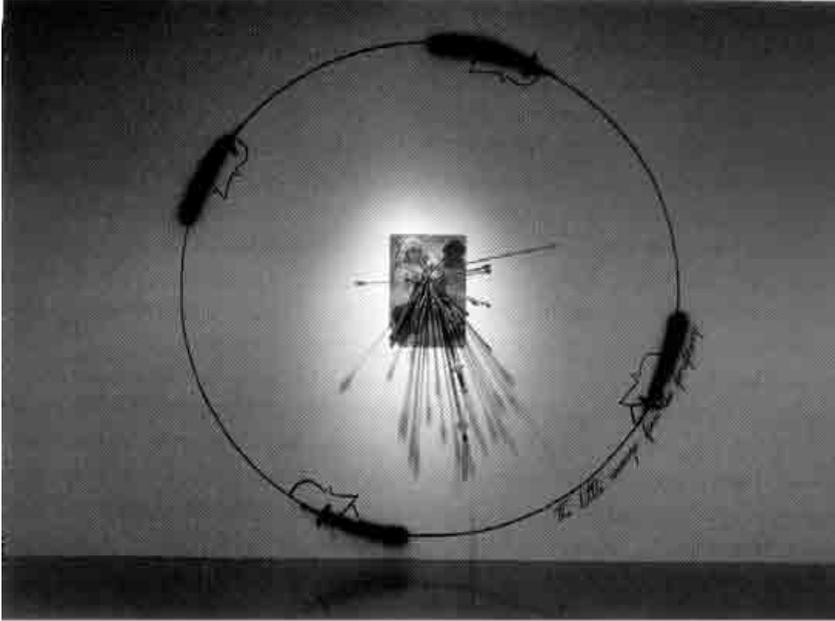
<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 279-286.

<sup>15</sup> N. Mirzoeff, 2009, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>17</sup> A. Benítez-Rojo, 1996, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, trans. J.E. Maraniss, Duke University Press, Durham and London, p. 154. Quoted in: N. Mirzoeff, 1999, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

cultural process is taking place in the field of indigenous cultures. He speaks of himself as a person with roots in Western Europe, who aims to bring together and establish a transcultural dialogue with the various cultures he has experienced.<sup>18</sup>



José Bedia: *The Little Revenge From the Periphery* (1993),  
The George Adams Gallery, New York

In the piece *The Little Revenge From the Periphery* (1993), Bedia addresses the problems of racism. He recognizes the importance of air travel in constructing the global world. The faces of the people placed in the symbolic circle represent the four races (black, yellow, red and white), arranged according to the 19<sup>th</sup>-century classification of races, which shows an Indian, an Asian, an African and a monkey orbiting around the white man. The eponymous “little revenge” comes from the fact that numerous arrows and a stone axe pierce the white figure placed in the centre of the image – the tools that cause tension between the modern “city” and its antonym – the primitive periphery. His strategy is based on creating a new cultural map in space and time, which does not circulate around the white man. In this sense,

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 131-132.

transculture is the experience of the periphery, which offers a new understanding of “culture” as something which is always subject to transformation. However, the inscriptions indicating the races in Bedia’s work are in English, just as the title of the work. The artist is trying in this way to emphasize the role and popularity of English in the transcultural world.<sup>19</sup> Ivo Mesquita, writing about Bedia, recounts how the work of transculture “resembles that of a traveler who, traversing different landscapes, describes routes, points out passages, establishes landmarks, fixes the boundaries of a specific territory.”<sup>20</sup> This description resembles the colonial narratives from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which represent the colonized territories as “empty spaces” awaiting the arrival of the Europeans – the colonizers, who only then make them true “locations of culture”. The key question seems to be the role of visual culture in redefining culture as a constantly changing experience of transculture, devoid of any boundaries.

Writing about transculturation, Mirzoeff draws attention to the fact that it does not stop after one occurrence, and it recurs periodically, as long as this is allowed by the newly created cultural conditions, which are also subject to transculturation. In Ortiz’s concept of transculture, the myth of an “original” or “singular” culture is dismissed, because all cultures are transcultures. For this reason Mirzoeff emphasizes that “the repetition of transculturation means that there is no singular transculture, that all transculture is plural.”<sup>21</sup> Ortiz’s understanding of transculture refers to the local situation in the Caribbean, whereas, according to Mirzoeff, the phenomenon is rooted in visual culture and can be understood as a feature of “networked globalization.” In this case, the patterns of neoculturation and deculturation are constantly repeated. In order to describe transculture, Mirzoeff uses Edouard Glissant’s metaphor of “the archipelago” as “a series of connected islands” forming a network.<sup>22</sup> At this point it is worth recalling the approach which understands the archipelago as an effect of travelling and the creation of new network connections and pathways in the age of globalization.

For Mirzoeff the importance of transculture lies in its criticism of the concept of a “singular or original” culture. This is particularly evident in globalization. Today’s world is a place of dramatic divisions between European values and those that come from orthodox Islam. However, even Europe, pro-

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 132.

<sup>20</sup> I. Mesquita, 1993, *Cartographies*, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, p. 19. Quoted in: N. Mirzoeff, 1999, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

<sup>21</sup> N. Mirzoeff, 2009, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*.

claiming the idea of unity within the European Union, seems to be increasingly divided. For example, in Belgium, there is a clear division between the users of Flemish and French. The division of social interests was also to be observed in the UK, where Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the Labour Party called for the unity of the Kingdom, while the Labour leader in Scotland supported the independence referendum there.<sup>23</sup>

Taking into account the evolution of Mirzoeff's position on transculturation, it must be noted that he comes to identify with the concepts discussed by Welsch. Mirzoeff talks about the network connections and cultural hybridization. For this reason, his concept of transculturation approaches the meaning of the term "transculturality". This situation also results from the fact that although Mirzoeff borrows the concept of transculture from Ortiz, he comes closer semantically to Welsch's notion. Transculturation can therefore be understood as transculturality. But when Mirzoeff says that "transculture is plural", he refers to the concept of transculturation as a process which involves many cultures.

### **TRANSCULTURAL CONGO WITHIN THE PERSPECTIVE OF COLONIALISM AND POSTCOLONIALISM**

The appearance in the 1980s of Postcolonial Studies and the postcolonial turn sparked the development of new theoretical perspectives in many disciplines of the humanities. Within the Visual Culture Studies, particularly important are the changes in the history of art and the formation of so-called "post-colonial aesthetics", which takes as its starting point the concept of non-European art and the transcultural circulation of artefacts.<sup>24</sup> From this perspective, the concept of transculturality is an essential tool of theoretical reflection.

Mirzoeff follows this approach in analyzing the case of the Congo in reference to the concept of "imperial transcultures."<sup>25</sup> His main point is that the Europeans had a large amount of knowledge about the Congo and "seemed wilfully to forget all that they had learned about Africa since the fifteenth century – in Ortiz's terms, they deculturated Kongo in order to

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>24</sup> V. Schmidt-Linsenhoff, 2003, 'Postkolonialismus' in: U. Pfisterer (ed.), *Metzler Lexikon Kunstwissenschaft. Ideen, Methoden, Begriffe*, Metzler, Stuttgart and Weimar, pp. 278-282.

<sup>25</sup> N. Mirzoeff, 2009, *op. cit.* p. 129.

acculturate themselves and Africans to the new entity they had created named the Congo."<sup>26</sup> This fact is confirmed by the French philosopher Ernest Renan in his lecture *What is a nation?*, where he says that the key thing in the creation of a nation is to forget what had previously been in the public consciousness.<sup>27</sup>

The process of cultural forgetting (deculturation) can be confirmed visually by what Mirzoeff finds in early modern maps showing specific and detailed knowledge of African geography and containing the local names. On the other hand, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this knowledge was largely ignored. The Europeans tried to create a new image of the “Dark Continent”, while there was no real “wilderness”, except in the imagination of the colonizers. The map of the Congo River showed areas at the focus of European colonization surrounded by large blank spaces. In this sense we can speak of a post-colonial interpretation, in which the map showing the river Congo provides virtually nothing to see except the empty space to be colonized. However, that space in fact hosted a civilization, which the Europeans destroyed. The kingdoms which existed there in the Middle Ages were demoted to the level of warring tribes by the intervention of the Europeans, who created “wilderness” where there had once been culture (through a process of deculturation).<sup>28</sup>

By the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, King Afonso I Mvemba Nzinga (1456–1542) learned Portuguese and established diplomatic relations with the Portuguese king. However, this fact was totally erased from the collective consciousness. In this way, the colonial discourse erased the knowledge of the situation in the region, creating instead an illusion that can be deconstructed by postcolonial discourse. Mirzoeff notes that “The process of deculturation here took the most violent form imaginable, forcing the peoples of Kongo to acculturate to new political realities and create new cultural practices from religion to art and medicine.”<sup>29</sup> The notion of Africa is a product of Western colonial discourse, which introduced the image of the division of the African continent between different colonial powers.

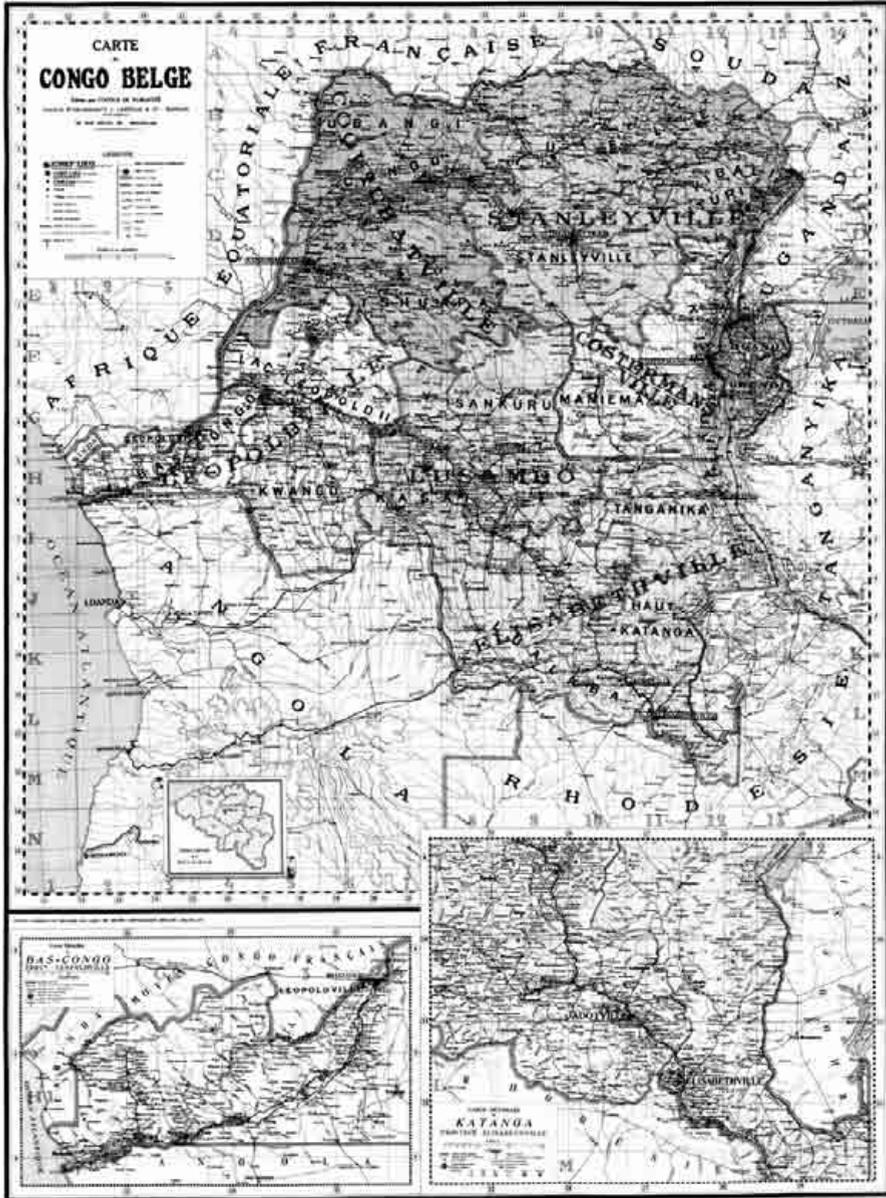
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<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*.

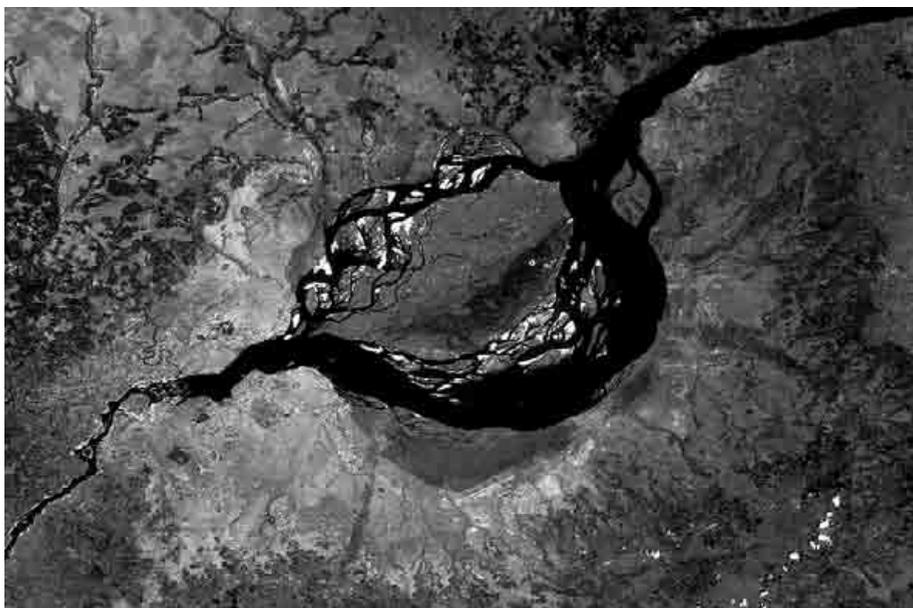
<sup>27</sup> E. Renan, 1990, *What is a Nation?*, in: H. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration*, Routledge, London and New York, p. 11.

<sup>28</sup> N. Mirzoeff, 2009, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-130. The same chapter can be found in the first edition of Mirzoeff's 1999, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-161.

<sup>29</sup> N. Mirzoeff, 2009, *op. cit.*, p. 133.



The map of the Belgian Congo in the colonial period



Satellite picture of Brazzaville, Kinshasa and the Malebo Pool of the Congo River

By the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, King Afonso I Mvemba Nzinga (1456–1542) learned Portuguese and established diplomatic relations with the Portuguese king. However, this fact was totally erased from the collective consciousness. In this way, the colonial discourse erased the knowledge of the situation in the region, creating instead an illusion that can be deconstructed by post-colonial discourse. Mirzoeff notes that “The process of deculturation here took the most violent form imaginable, forcing the peoples of Kongo to acculturate to new political realities and create new cultural practices from religion to art and medicine.”<sup>30</sup> The notion of Africa is a product of Western colonial discourse, which introduced the image of the division of the African continent between different colonial powers.

Mirzoeff provides examples of photographs by Herbert Lang supposedly showing the “authentic” customs of the local peoples, but in fact presenting an image of the colonial order. For example, in one of the photos showing a tribal chief and his subjects, the former is seen wearing some items given to him by the Belgians, who, according to Mirzoeff, instituted his power over the tribe as part of their colonial expansion. What betrays the artifice of the

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<sup>30</sup> N. Mirzoeff, 2009, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

composition is a figure in the background wearing European clothes. There is also the photograph by M. French-Sheldon showing a black man grinning and baring his teeth, which was used instrumentally in supporting the discourse of cannibalism, allegedly vying with the European civilization. The Belgian government organized a series of stops along the Congo river for the European travellers to provide them with opportunities to take pictures in civilized conditions. In this way the photographs which were to render local cultures presented a hybrid reality shaped by colonialism.<sup>31</sup>



Herbert Lang, *Grand Chief Mangbetu Okodongwe*,  
Belgian Congo, 1915

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 135-136.

In the area of visual culture the procedures of photographing the natives may be viewed as part of the so-called visual regime which is a “way of seeing” and a set of cultural practices imposed by colonialism and the exercise of power. In his essay “Visual Regimes of Colonization. Aboriginal Seeing and European Vision in Australia”, Terry Smith identifies three visual regimes of colonization that were practised in the Australian colonies, and in North and South America. They are calibration, obliteration and symbolization (aesthetization).<sup>32</sup> It is within aesthetization that one may place the practices of photographing the natives described above. They are about processing the world of experience, treating its selected parts or certain relationships within it as representations of abstract ideas (beauty) or ideological tendencies. Aesthetization was “an open form of visual journeying – a technique for stringing otherwise incompatible sights and sites together.”<sup>33</sup> Jane Kromm approaches the issue of travelling in a similar way, writing that

Travelers, merchants, military operatives, and explorers produced or commissioned depictions of people and scenery that helped to establish the colonizers’ visual control over the colonized for consumption by the Western spectators. This imagery in its cumulative effect comprised a style and formal system that was able to pass for a kind of political reality, identified with a visual regime as oppressive as any other type of rule. The main components of this style or regime were the antithesis of Modernism in the West, repeatedly underscoring the passive and inchoate, the damagingly emotional, the nonrational, and the barbaric. These qualities reinforced the truth claims of European colonizing efforts as they presented isolated, exotic cultural phenomenon as exemplary for entire cultures and countries.<sup>34</sup>

This lengthy passage about creating the “ways of seeing” of colonialism is an introduction to the issues described by Mirzoeff. It seems important that they are placed among the problems of imperialism. On the one hand, we are dealing with the problems of transculture and transculturation, while on the other hand Mirzoeff brings in the term “empire” by speaking of “imperial transcultures”, which can be applied to the scopic regimes of Martin Jay.<sup>35</sup> In this concept, the images represented by the stereotypical depictions constitute

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<sup>32</sup> T. Smith, 2002, *op. cit.*, p. 483.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 484.

<sup>34</sup> J. Kromm 2010, *Introduction*, in: J. Kromm, S.B. Bakewell (eds.) *A History of Visual Culture: Western Civilization From the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Berg, Oxford and New York, pp. 238–239.

<sup>35</sup> See M. Jay, 1988, ‘Scopic Regimes of Modernity’, in: H. Foster (ed.), *Dia Art Foundation Discussions in Contemporary Culture Number 2: ‘Vision and. Visuality’*, Bay Press, Seattle, pp. 3–23.

transcultural “empires of the visual”. Paul S. Landau claims that the ways of representing the Africans were established in the Victorian era. He compares Jay’s scopic regimes to the results of “synechdochic connections” between stereotypical images and ideological connotations arising out of the exercise of power, which give rise to the “empires’ of visualization”<sup>36</sup>. This comparison is particularly relevant in reference to the photographs of Herbert Lang, which were used for solidifying certain types of images of the Congolese people in the minds of the Europeans, giving rise to these conceptual “empires”.

In this case, the understanding of the notion of “imperialism” relates to the conclusions of Edward W. Said, who recognizes the Orient to be an “artificial” construct. It is, in fact, the result of the operation of the colonial discourse created by the European travellers, populating this realm with exotic creatures and placing there love affairs, adventures and dangerous events.<sup>37</sup> According to Paul S. Landau, the ways of constructing the image of Africa (“image-Africa”) derive from the European conceptualizations of the Orient.<sup>38</sup> The term “imperialism” is controversial in the context of the contemporary discussions of its meaning.<sup>39</sup> One may thus consider its place in the field of reflection within the Visual Culture Studies. This problem was addressed by Paul S. Landau in his essay *Empires of the Visual: Photography and Colonial Administration in Africa*, in which he uses the phrase “empires of visualization.”<sup>40</sup>

Examples of the operations of the visual regimes of colonialization include the *minkisi* figures used by the African witch-doctors, who drove nails into them to curse their enemies. In accordance with the proposal by Marcel Mauss, the name *nkisi* (singular of *minkisi*) and its analogues have replaced the notion of “fetishism”. In this sense, the meaning of the word “fetish” moves into the area of magic, which becomes a field of action and the exercise of power, which means the ability to animate someone or something against their own will.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>36</sup> P.S. Landau, 2002, ‘Empires of the Visual: Photography and Colonial Administration in Africa’, in: P.S. Landau and D.D. Kaspin (eds.), *Images & Empires. Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, p. 144.

<sup>37</sup> E.W. Said, 1977, *Orientalism*, Penguin Books, London, p. 221.

<sup>38</sup> P.S. Landau, 2002, ‘Introduction. An Amazing Distance: Pictures and People in Africa’, in: P.S. Landau and D.D. Kaspin (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> E.W. Said, 1994, *Culture and Imperialism*, Vintage Books, New York, p. 5.

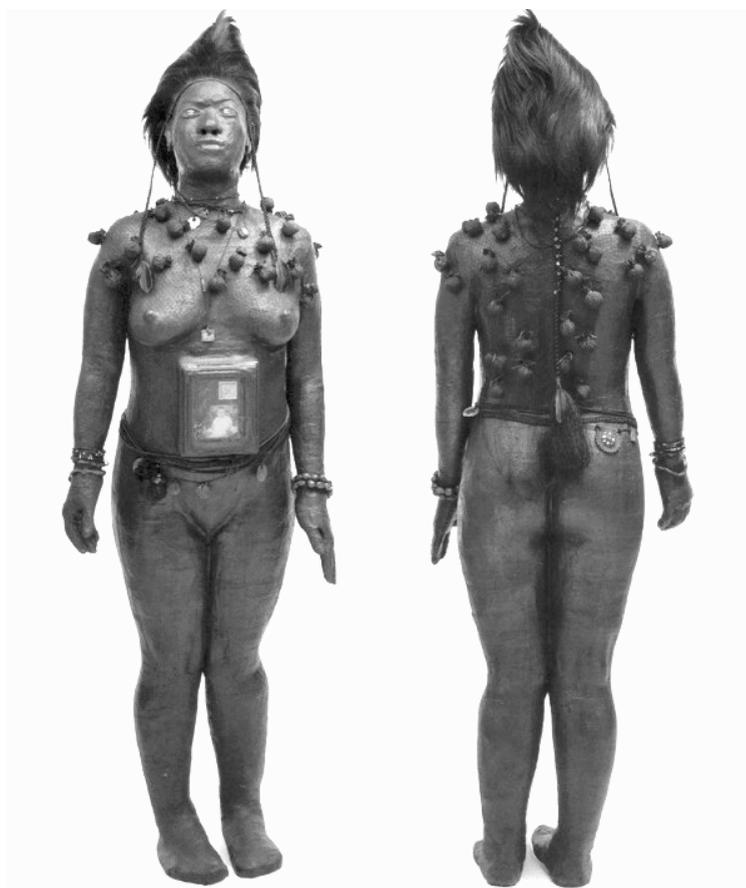
<sup>40</sup> P.S. Landau, 2002, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

<sup>41</sup> H. Böhme, 2012, *Fetyzjizm i kultura: inna teoria nowoczesności*, trans. M. Falkowski, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa, p. 208.



*Nkisi Power Figure from Congo*

*Nkisi* figures appear in the works of European and American artists. One example of such a work is the sculpture *Fetish No. 2* (1988) by Renée Stout, which represents the body of the artist. The title, however, comes from the term “fetish” created within the Western culture. Mirzoeff believes that this figure shows the strength of African-American feminism and the difficult plight of the women in the Congo during the colonial era. The abdominal area of the *nkisi* figures contains a space in which people place herbs, and in this case what one finds there is a postage stamp from Niger, an old photo of



Renée Stout: *Fetish No. 2* (1988),  
Collection of the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas

a baby and some dry flowers. It is particularly interesting that the picture of the baby resembles the “hybrid children” (of mixed race), born in the Congo during the colonial era. The postage stamp from Niger alludes to the African diaspora, but also to the European practice of sending home postcards showing the life of the locals. The flowers, in turn, refer to the practice of activating the magical figures to counter the colonial powers. Black female body has always evoked fear and desire in the Western culture. The author does not repress the sexuality of the figure, nor does she emphasize it, focusing rather on the use of the body as a source of power.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> N. Mirzoeff 2009, *op. cit.*, p. 201.



Trigo Piula: *Ta Tele* (1988), collection of the artist

Another piece, *Ta Tele* (1988) by Trigo Piula, shows the audience facing a *nkisi* figure with a TV set located in its abdomen, displaying its face. In the background are two rows of TV screens showing, among other things: talk shows, a football match, beer commercials, Paris with the Eiffel Tower, a white couple kissing, a table with food, and a view of the Earth from space, all of which represent the desires of the audience shown in the foreground as an outline of heads, bearing the symbols (e.g. a knife and fork) of what they desire. This artwork suggests that the Western European need to possess consumer goods is the fetishism that has contributed to the present condition of Africa. This commodity fetishism has a much greater impact on people than the magical fetishism of the *minkisi* figures.<sup>43</sup> However, both kinds of

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 202.

fetishism mentioned here have a recognizable common source: commodity fetishism was also based on the magical exchange of gifts. Karl Marx's use of the term "fetish" was based on the semantic ambiguity of the Portuguese word *feitiço* and the Latin *factitius*, which mean both "magical" and "artificially produced". Objects become fetishes when their artificiality and their belonging to the realm of the profane is effaced.<sup>44</sup>

One more example of the visual regime of colonization is the necropolitics during the civil war in Rwanda between the Hutu and the Tutsi tribes. Achille Mbembe contrasts biopolitics with necropolitics and explains that "the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and capacity to dictate who may live and who must die, power over who should live and who should die. Hence, to kill or to allow to live constitutes the limits of sovereignty, its fundamental attributes."<sup>45</sup> The European countries that colonized Africa practise biopolitics, as opposed to the colonized countries, where necropolitics prevails. Genocide in the war was a form of mediated representation, that is one tribe thought of the other as collaborating with the colonizers. The war began when the Hutu attacked the Tutsi, because they treated them as "scapegoats" and identified with the colonizers. For the murderers this particular "revenge for colonization" was not an outbreak of violence, but a "symbolic act." That is why killing was referred to as "work", and machetes and guns as "tools." The identification of the Tutsi with the colonizers was a form of including the problematic of power in the postcolonial discourse. For this reason, the attack of the Hutu on the Tutsi tribe was an act of taking over power, similar to the actions of the colonizers.<sup>46</sup>

As part of the issue of "visualizing the postcolonial", Mirzoeff describes the installation *Scramble for Africa* (2003) by Yinka Shonibare, which shows mannequins without heads at a table with a map of Africa. The characters from the installation are dividing the African mainland in a similar way as the colonizers at nineteenth-century political conferences. However, back then it was the "heads of state" that divided Africa, whereas the mannequins in Shonibare's installation have no heads.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> H. Böhme, 2012, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

<sup>45</sup> A. Mbembe, 2008, 'Necropolitics', in: S. Morton and S. Bygrave (eds.), *Foucault in an Age of Terror: Essays on Biopolitics and the Defence of Society*, Palgrave-Macmillan, New York, p. 152.

<sup>46</sup> N. Mirzoeff, 2009, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 211.



Yinka Shonibare: *Scramble for Africa* (2003),  
The Museum of African Art, New York

Another particularly interesting art work seems to be the photograph *The Chief: he who sold Africa to the colonists* (1997) by Samuel Fosso, which shows a dark-skinned character – a leader wearing a hybrid attire with elements of both Western and African culture. In this piece the artist uses his own “visual identity,” because the work is also a self-portrait.<sup>48</sup> This hybrid identity is a strategy based on cultural purity, but directed towards drawing on the patterns of Western European culture by combining them with African values.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 214.

<sup>49</sup> A. Loomba, 2000, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 173-174.



Samuel Fosso: *The Chief: he who sold Africa to the colonists* (1997),  
JM Patras, Paris

## CONCLUSION

In this essay I have attempted to present the transcultural Congo as a periphery of Europe, where the issues of hybrid and networked cultures can be seen in the context of colonial and post-colonial discourse. The construction of the images of the peoples of the Congo has been shown to be an effect of the operations of the discourse produced by the European colonizers. The images in question can be compared to the concept of discourse as understood by Michel Foucault. In his writings the notion refers to the level of spoken language, or to linguistic practices.<sup>50</sup> The discourse is thus any form of the

<sup>50</sup> M. Foucault, 1972, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith, Pantheon Books, New York, p. 80.

use of language in which it is manifest, but it is not language itself or a statement.<sup>51</sup> The same also applies to images, which can function like textual discourse, but are not discourse themselves.

Such an understanding of Foucault's concept in the context of creating mental imagery can lead to the conclusion that the image is an "artificial" artefact of (colonial and postcolonial) discourse. In this sense, Foucault's discursive "archaeology of knowledge" can be understood as the "archaeology of knowledge about the image", because it puts visibility in the context of discursive practices.<sup>52</sup> This point of view can be also found in the book *The Right to Look*, where Mirzoeff constructs the definitions of "imperial visibility and countervisibility" by referring to the notion of "imperial discourse." According to Foucault, the operations of discourse result in the production of a certain order: "in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed as a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to avoid its ponderous, formidable materiality."<sup>53</sup> As a result of the exercise of power, the discourse of visibility/countervisibility is imposed on those who are colonized.<sup>54</sup> Such was the situation in the Congo, colonized by the Belgians.

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<sup>51</sup> In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Michel Foucault approached this issue in the following manner: "For it is obvious that statements do not exist in the same sense in which a language (langue) exists, and, with that language, a collection of signs defined by their contrasting characteristics and their rules of use; a language in fact is never given in itself, in its totality; it could only be so in a secondary way, in the oblique form of a description that would take it as its object; the signs that make up its elements are forms that are imposed upon statements and control them from within. If there were no statements, the language (langue) would not exist; but no statement is indispensable for a language to exist (and one can always posit, in place of any statement, another statement that would in no way modify the language). The language exists only as a system for constructing possible statements; but in another respect, it exists only as a (...) description obtained from a collection of real statements. Language (langue) and statement are not at the same level of existence; and one cannot say that there are statements in the same way as one says that there are languages (langues)". *Ibidem*, p. 85.

<sup>52</sup> A. Leśniak, 2010, *Obraz płynny. Geoges Didi-Huberman i dyskurs historii sztuki*, Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych Universitas, Kraków, pp. 23-25.

<sup>53</sup> M. Foucault, 1981, 'The Order of Discourse', trans. I. McLeod, in: *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, Boston and London, p. 52.

<sup>54</sup> N. Mirzoeff, 2011, *The Right to Look. A Counterhistory of Visibility*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, p. 196.

**TRANSKULTUROWE KONGO JAKO PERYFERIE EUROPY ALBO HYBRYDOWY I USIECIOWIONY „ARCHIPELAG”: TRANSKULTUROWOŚĆ W BADANIACH NAD KULTURĄ WIZUALNĄ  
(streszczenie)**

Artykuł podejmuje problematykę wyobrażeń i reprezentacji peryferii Europy w kontekście refleksji kolonialnej i postkolonialnej. Analizowanymi przykładami są prace artystyczne, które mogą być traktowane jako reprezentacje transkulturowe. Głównym pojęciem, które zostało poddane rewizji jest transkulturowość w ujęciu proponowanym przez Wolfganga Welscha, który krytykuje istniejące koncepcje izolowanych kultur, a także idee wielokulturowości i interkulturowości. Punktem wyjścia jest przekonanie Nicholasa Mirzoeffa, że wszystkie kultury są transkulturowymi. W obszarze badań nad kulturą wizualną pojęcie transkulturowości zostaje zastąpione przez transkulturowość i transkulturowość, które uczestniczą w procesach konstruowania sieci tożsamości kulturowych o charakterze hybrydowym. Pojęcia transkulturowości i transkultury można również odnieść do prac artystycznych José Bedii. Ewolucja myśli Mirzoeffa na temat transkulturowości przebiega od afirmacji stanowiska kubańskiego antropologa Alfonso Ortiza do transformacji koncepcji Welscha. Prace fotograficzne Herberta Langa są zestawione z koncepcją „imperialnej transkultury”, która odnosi się do reżimów skopicznych Martina Jaya. Przywołane konotacje kierują nas również w stronę rozumienia „imperializmu” Edwarda W. Saida, traktującego Orient jako „sztuczny” wytwór dyskursu kolonialnego. W tym sensie przykładem funkcjonowania reżimu skopicznego kolonializmu mogą być figurki *nkisi*, pojawiające się w pracach *Fetish No. 2* (1988) Renée Stout i *Ta Tele* (1988) Trigo Piula, które mogą być interpretowane w kontekście fetyszyzmu magicznego Marcela Maussa i fetyszyzmu towarowego Karola Marksa. Kolejnym przykładem działania wizualnego reżimu kolonializmu jest nekropolityka podczas wojny domowej w Ruandzie między plemionami Hutu i Tutsi i dwie następne prace, *Scramble for Africa* (2003) Yinka Shonibare i *The Chief: he who sold Africa to the colonists* (1997) Samuela Fosso. Zaprezentowana koncepcja konstruowania obrazu ludów Kongo opierała się na założeniu, że jest on efektem funkcjonowania dyskursu wytworzonego przez europejskich kolonizatorów. Ten punkt widzenia daje się również odnaleźć w książce *The Right to Look*, w której Mirzoeff buduje definicje wizualności i kontrwizualności.

**Słowa kluczowe:** transkulturowość, Kongo, wyobrażenie Europy, reprezentacja peryferii, hybrydowość, usieciowiony „archipelag”, studia kultury wizualnej.

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## **EXPERIENCE – MEMORY – IDENTITY. MEDIA EXPERIENCES AS THE FOUNDATIONS OF HYBRID IDENTITY**

**Abstract:** The paper focuses on the nexus of experience – memory – identity, to discuss the ways in which mediatisation and medialisation of experiences transform the status, structures and roles of memory and to develop the concept of hybrid identity. The author analyses several theories dealing with this issue in order to demonstrate that despite developing some useful terms and concepts, and providing an outlook on recent social changes, they did not notice the consequences of the processes of transformation of contemporary culture from media culture to cyberculture based on interactive virtual practices.

**Keywords:** cyberculture, experience, hybrid identity, media, memory, prosthetic memory.

Andreas Kitzmann, Conny Mithander and John Sundholm, editors of the 2005 book *Memory Work. The Theory and Practice of Memory*<sup>1</sup>, summing up the first stage of research of their team at the University of Karlstad and dealing with cultural memory, wrote in their introduction that memory may be perceived as a crucial issue of the 1990s. Following the linguistic turn that marked the 1960s and the cultural one that subsequently developed as part of the post-modernist reflection of the 1980s, the 1990s were the time of yet another transformation, involving the emergence of the broadly understood subject of memory<sup>2</sup>. According to the editors of *Memory Work*, individual and collective, private and social, institutional, cultural, and communicative memory, relations between memory and history, the role of technology and the media in exteriorization, archiving and distribution of memory, became

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<sup>1</sup> *Memory Work. The Theory and Practice of Memory*, ed. A. Kitzmann, C. Mithander, J. Sundholm, Peter Lang GmbH: Frankfurt am Main 2005.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 9-10.

the main themes of contemporary humanistic and social reflection, adding new horizons to earlier research and developing new research programmes. This expansion was doubtlessly inspired by the monumental seven-volume work by Pierre Nora *Les lieux de mémoire*, published in French between 1984 and 1992, and in an abbreviated three-volume English version in 1996. Complemented by the publications of such researchers as Reinhart Koselleck, Jan Assmann, Richard Terdiman, James Young or Bernard Stiegler<sup>3</sup>, and by the many reprints of the previous works in this area, for instance those of Maurice Halbwachs, Nora's work outlined some extremely broad perspectives for further research and provided an immense research impetus, provoking numerous debates and controversies.

In this paper, despite the initial emphasis placed on the significance of the problem of memory in contemporary human studies and social research, I am not going to focus on any of the autonomous and central issues that compose the field of reflection specified above. It is not memory itself but its mediating function, i.e. its relations with media-shaped experience and the meaning of these processes in forming our identity which I am going to examine here. The nexus of experience – memory – identity will appear in this examination as a unique scheme or perhaps a script – a structure showing the place of each component in the general order and at the same time determining the methods of research. Incidentally, such relations may be also seen as one of the major reasons for the increased interest in the subject of memory described above. For it is not only memory as such, but its role in the research carried out in all related fields that makes it an important object of contemporary academic inquiry. I would describe the significance of this research into memory as slightly polemical towards Kitzmann, Mithander and Sundholm (although it could also be treated as a non-polemical correction) – as a derivative of the interest in the whole nexus. I have mentioned *Les lieux de mémoire* not because of the importance of the concepts formulated there, concerning the socio-cultural dimensions of memory, or because of the work's supposed impact of the revival and increase of interest in memory. I have done it primarily because of Nora's suggestion in this work of a clear distinction between individually shaped memory, founded on direct

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<sup>3</sup> R. Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, MIT Press: Cambridge 1985; J. Assmann, 'Kollektives Gedächtnis und kulturelle Identität', in: *Kultur und Gedächtnis*, eds. J. Assmann, T. Hölscher, Suhrkamp Verlag: Frankfurt am Main 1986, pp. 9-19; R. Terdiman, *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis*, Cornell University Press: Ithaca 1993; J. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, Yale University Press: New Haven 1993; B. Stiegler, *La technique et le temps*, vol. 1-3, Éditions Galilée: Paris 1994-2001.

experience, and external, mediated and objectified history (the kind he saw as represented by the work of Halbwachs). Juxtaposing memory and history seems misguided and that is how it is perceived by the majority of researchers. Yet the distinction hidden in this juxtaposition of two types of experience: direct and mediating experience, together with the opposition of the two types of memory that may be drawn from it, turns out to be a very influential concept, rich in consequences, emerging in contemporary research in numerous and differentiated incarnations. Usually, this concept becomes entangled, in one way or another, in the issue of representation.

We encounter such a set of concepts in John B. Thompson's book *The Media and Modernity*<sup>4</sup>. He introduces the notion of *lived experience*, identifying it with *Erlebnis* in Dilthey's terminology<sup>5</sup>, so as to contrast it with *mediated experience*, which has completely different character. The former kind of experience is characterised by Thompson as 'immediate, continuous and, to some extent, pre-reflexive'.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, it is experience that is gained in the practical contexts of everyday life, in face-to-face interactions. Mediated experience, however, in the view of Thompson, is made accessible to the subject through media. Within Thompson's theory this means that they originate in mediated interactions and in indirect quasi-interactions<sup>7</sup>.

Thompson's characterization of the polarised types of experience shows that he does not relate directly to the issue of language mediation. Both the lived and the mediated experience (the latter presumably considered by Thompson as 'not lived') could appear in both forms: as language-mediated and as primary, non-linguistic experience. Other elements of Thompson's argument allow us to conclude that he regards every type of experience as a linguistically-conditioned phenomenon.

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<sup>4</sup> J.B. Thompson, *The Media and Modernity. A Social Theory of the Media*, Polity Press: Cambridge – Oxford 1995.

<sup>5</sup> Thompson's reference to Dilthey does not mean his adoption of Dilthey's ideas, including his life philosophy. It is only the way in which Thompson defines the concept of *lived experience*, by emphasising its pre-reflective character, individualism and being deep-rooted in life that brings it closer to Dilthey. It seems, however, that he only reaches to those elements in the theories of the German philosopher that allow him to consolidate his concept of identity, as a reflective design of a project built on the foundations of a stream of experiences in the context of social relations. Besides the references to Dilthey, one may also note certain connections with Gadamer's concepts.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 227.

<sup>7</sup> See Thompson, *The Media and Modernity*, pp. 82-87 for types of interactions.

Mediated experience has a number of properties that distinguish it from lived experience. The experience rooted in media quasi-interactions stands out immensely here and it is precisely on its differences with the lived experience that Thompson concentrates<sup>8</sup>, thus declining to analyse all other kinds. Let us then follow some of his reasoning and have a look at the theses that he puts forward.

Firstly, he argues that the events to which access is granted through media, are usually spatially (and presumably temporally) removed from the sphere of everyday life. As a result of this distance, the experiencing individuals have no influence over them. These events do not directly participate in the life of an individual, and neither are they so perceived. Certain casual connections with the experiences of an individual may occur, but they are repeatedly mediated and because of that, immensely stretched, dispersed and – as a result – not perceived.

Secondly, mediated experience is always re-contextualised: it appears in the environment different from the one in which it normally takes place (and where it may have the status of lived experience). This leads to constant contextual collisions, the confrontations of various worlds. In contemporary reality, de-contextualisation of experiences resulting from their mediation also frequently triggers off the processes of mutual interaction between the global perspective and numerous local perspectives. These processes lead to the emergence of multiple glocal structures. This leads to the constant collision of contexts, and confrontation of various worlds. The consequences of these collisions and influences may take various forms and cause different effects, depending on the circumstances; their broad spectre extends from the pleasant experience of being different to the dramatic experience of a shock.

Thirdly, media experience plays a special role in the process of shaping identity. Its reference structure for the priorities adopted in this process differs from that of the lived experience. Media experience is used there in a significantly different way and with quite different consequences. Yet it could seem<sup>9</sup> that lived experience plays a central role in the process of constructing individual identity, whereas media experience has only an auxiliary and supporting function. However, today such judgement cannot be sustained, as we cannot, generally, give the media experience a marginal role

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<sup>8</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-232. In the further part, I shall return to the consequences of limitations in the range of media experience suggested by Thompson and having impact on the shape of final conclusions that this researcher proposes.

<sup>9</sup> At least that's what the researchers into that issue generally claim.

within every individual identity project. It plays different functions in different individual cases, sometimes even central ones. We should also note that the privileged position given to lived experience by many researchers seems to grow out of its former exclusiveness in the domain of experience. In reality, however, as claimed by Thompson, currently the relations between the lived and mediated experience involve different hierarchies in the process of the reflective shaping of individual identities. What is more, media experience plays an increasingly serious role in these processes, occasionally leading to paradoxical combinations of reflectivity and dependence within the constructed self<sup>10</sup> or, as Ulrich Beck puts it, to a conflict between individualisation and institutionalization<sup>11</sup>. In extreme cases, uncompromising domination of media experience leads to the absorption of the self into some indirect form of quasi-interaction<sup>12</sup>.

And fourthly, finally, the development of media communication technologies transforms the patterns of contacts between people, significantly alters the web of dependencies between individuals and as a result, it also alters their collective identities, their lived sense of belonging to a group. In the opinion of many researchers, mediated experience weakens or even undermines the importance and position of the community rooted in spatial closeness (or it reveals its fictional character that stems from the faulty recognition of the actual sources of that closeness). It is replaced with the relationships based on totally different forms of connection. Thompson emphasizes that effect of the impact of media experience by talking about a de-spaced community. Recalling the research of Barry Wellman<sup>13</sup>, Manuel Castells refers here to more specifically defined social bonds, such as families of choice or net individualism<sup>14</sup>.

Thompson is reluctant to adopt the conceptions that are all too popular among the researchers dealing with the problem of identity in the context of media, according to whom mediated experience leads to the loss of coherence by the Self, to its total confusion, blurring, dispersion or even absorption by the world of media. While acknowledging possible occurrence of such

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<sup>10</sup> See Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-215.

<sup>11</sup> Compare U. Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, Sage Publications, London 1992; Chapter Five in particular: *Individualization, Institutionalization and Standardization: Life Situations and Biographical Patterns*.

<sup>12</sup> See Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

<sup>13</sup> B. Wellman, 'Physical place and cyberspace: the rise of networked individualism', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, No. 1, 2001.

<sup>14</sup> M. Castells, *Internet Galaxy: Reflections on the Internet, Business and Society*, Oxford University Press, Oxford – New York 2001.

processes in individual cases, Thompson firmly rejects the thesis that suggests their inevitability. From the perspective of the researchers looking at modernity in the manner made 'archetypical' (as Thompson points out) by Jean Baudrillard, the Self undergoes alienation: "in this era of media saturation, multiple moving images become the Self"<sup>15</sup>. Thompson himself is of the opinion, contrary to the stand characterised above, that even if the Self does undergo transformation in the environment conditioned by media and the conditions of its formation are significantly altered, we may only talk about the dynamization of the Self, about its being opened by media messages to influences from distant places and to new forms of experiences. Identity perceived as a reflexively organised symbolic project is no longer formed only in its relationship with its direct environment. The experience conditioned by the media is systematically included into the frame of this project, which – as I have mentioned above – transforms both its characteristics and parameters and the possibility of its formation by individuals.

The structure of the experience itself is also significantly altered. Even though the lived experience seems – as Thompson claimed in 1995 – to invariably dominate in the structure of people's experiences, life in the media-shaped world increasingly favours mediated experience that complements the lived experience and often even replaces it, thus slowly shaping a new structure of reality where media experience becomes the basic factor in the process of constructing individual and collective identities.

Thompson's reflections concerning media experience, despite his reasonable avoidance of catastrophic visions of disabled or dispersed media identity, remaining under unlimited exterior control, arouse certain doubts and lead us to form several stipulations.

Looking at the construction of media communication that functions in his theory as the basis of media experience, we see that Thompson clearly treated it as a representation of an event that takes place in another dimension (or space-time). This led him to conclude that the subject of this experience is totally unable to interfere in the structure of the experienced events as they happen, because these events are not present in his or her direct environment. He added yet another dimension to the opposition between the lived and the media experience by contrasting an object/event that is present in the space of the subject of the lived experience with the experience whose object is only of representative nature (mediated experience). It must be noted, however,

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<sup>15</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

that the thesis of the representational character of media experience necessarily involves preliminary limitation of his field of consideration solely to media-conditioned, indirect quasi-interactions without mediated interactions. If Thompson's remarks may be considered reasonable when they refer to quasi-interactions<sup>16</sup>, e.g. the experience of television (in particular that connected with paleo-television<sup>17</sup>), they cannot be applied to the sphere of mediated interaction, e.g. to the experience grounded in telephone conversations. The mediated experience of interaction, due to its performative nature, is in many ways closer to lived experience than to the media experience founded on quasi-interaction. I would say that the world of mediated experience conditioned by indirect interactions is located between the lived experience and the experience of media quasi-interactions, without identifying itself with neither of them. The decision to exclude media experience grounded in indirect interaction from the field of research turned out to be wrong, producing a situation in which the conclusions derived from a partial analysis function as the description of the total impact of the media on the sphere of experience. As a result of this decision made by Thompson, the experience grounded in quasi-interaction, somewhat neglected even by himself, began to represent all media experience.

I cannot accept Thompson's claim of the representational nature of media experience when this experience is created by interactive digital media. This type of experience also undermines Thompson's theory by assuming the existence of structures that do not have the status of representations. At this point Thompson's theory evidences a basic flaw: such experience, and the type of interaction corresponding to it, is simply absent from his analysis. And yet today, as Lev Manovich quite reasonably points out, screens are not always just trays with performances, they are also instruments of action, interfaces that enable us to conduct various operations<sup>18</sup>.

Moreover, the list of objects of media experience disregarded by Thompson also includes digital simulacra that do not offer the subjects a possibility of interaction, but – as in the previous case – neither do they refer them to other

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<sup>16</sup> However, also in this respect, Thompson's concept comes up against criticism; see, e.g. the media equation theory formed by Byron Reeves and Clifford Nass that is referred to further.

<sup>17</sup> See F. Casseti, R. Odin, 'De la paléo- a la néo-télévison. Approche sémio-pragmatique', *Communications*, No. 51, 1990.

<sup>18</sup> See L. Manovich, *Towards an Archaeology of the Computer Screen*, in: *Cinema Futures: Cain, Abel or Cable? The Screen Arts in the Digital Age*, eds. T. Elsaesser, K. Hoffman, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 1998.

locations than those established by themselves, which suggests they are experienced as quasi-autonomous entities and must be analysed as phenomena of presentational rather than representational nature, and so present within the space of the experiencing subject.

The worlds in which those experienced events occur gain the status of visited worlds, tele-present as in the case of forms of virtual reality, or become extensions of the world of the experiencing subject, as in the case of mixed reality, most often experienced as expanded reality. In both cases we are faced with the kind of experience which Thompson's thesis claiming the absence of the object from the direct environment of the experiencing subject does not provide for. On the contrary, we should rather conclude that in both cases the objects of media experience is present in the world of the experiencing subject. What may differentiate those cases, however, is the status of the object's activity: interactive forms are susceptible to the influence of the experiencing subject, whereas the simulacra, even though they do not refer to another space-time, remain part of the expanded world and are not subject to any influence<sup>19</sup>.

Byron Reeves and Clifford Nass also reject the concept of media experience as inevitably connected with representational structure<sup>20</sup>. They claim that there is no reason to contrast media experience with other forms of human experience. They argue that people's interactions with computers, television and the new media are social and natural by definition, just like the interactions in real life. Their conception of media equation postulates that the receivers identify each media broadcast with reality. Such a stand inevitably leads to another conclusion: that the concept of identifying the media with reality also undermines the assumption that words and images are symbolic representations of actually absent objects. In Reeves and Nass's approach, no media experience has any grounds in the representational structure.

I must however reject the media equation theory, even though its objection to the conviction of the representational nature of media experience is close to

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<sup>19</sup> Unless just the possibility of removing the subject from the field of experience is understood as influencing the simulacric subject. Turning off the TV has no influence on the events that are presented on its screen, whereas turning off a computer while it generates audio-visual forms in real time may, under certain circumstances, be treated as an activity influencing the course of event being experienced.

<sup>20</sup> B. Reeves, C. Nass, *Media Equation. How People Treat Computers, Television, and New Media Like Real People and Places*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1996.

me, for the reasons analogical to the critique of this theory presented by Mark Poster. Acknowledging the value of Reeves and Nass's conception, he also points out its limitations and shows the inaptness of equating mediated life with the real one. Poster claims that "the new media and people create relations different to those that bind people with natural objects and mechanical machines, and to relationships between people"<sup>21</sup>. Sherry Turkle takes a similar stand in this matter<sup>22</sup>. I would like to add here that the forms of the relations between people and media are often (although not always) different from the forms of inter-human relations; this world is also internally differentiated, and this variety does not allow us to make too many generalisations concerning all the phenomena involved here. This restriction also concerns the relations determining the status of the experiences conditioned by the media that cannot be framed by one general form of interpretation.

The same can be said of another feature of media experience postulated by Thompson, i.e. the inevitable re-contextualisation of a medially represented event. In Thompson's theory, the concept of re-contextualisation is also grounded in the assumption that media experience is of a representational nature, and it must be rejected together with this assumption. If one would nevertheless wish to preserve the postulate that re-contextualisation is a component of media experience, one would have to seek other justifications for this concept.

On the other hand, the third and fourth property of media experience as suggested by Thompson, i.e. the new frames of shaping individual and collective identity, raise no doubt when we talk about them in conclusions, but provoke discussion and suggest corrections where we are discussing their sources and motivation.

By failing to supplement the conclusions resulting from the analysis of experience based on indirect media quasi-interaction with those stemming from the structure of the experience grounded in mediated interaction, and by overlooking the emergence of new forms of media interaction resulting from the advances in digital technologies, Thompson constructed a theory that cannot be fully accepted, despite including numerous very accurate claims. It is lacking due to his mistaken identification of media experience with mediated experience. These two phenomena are not identical. Not every

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<sup>21</sup> M. Poster, *The Culture of Underdetermination*, in: *Idem, What's the Matter with the Internet*, The University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 2001, p. 12.

<sup>22</sup> See S. Turkle, *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*, Simon and Schuster: New York 1995.

media experience is indirect, i.e. an experience whose object is located in a different space or space-time than the one containing the experiencing subject. I believe that the kind of hybrid identity quite appropriately diagnosed by Thompson, grounded in the complex of mediated experiences that are bound together and – I should say provisionally – media-lived, results in this case not so much from the spatial or spatio-temporal distance between objects, but is primarily rooted in the ontological variety of access modes, constantly re-contextualised by the experiencing subject.

Some of the mediated experiences are, however, contrary to Thompson's claims, truly present in the environment of the experiencing subject. As noted by Allucquere Rosanne Stone, cyberspace is full of direct meetings, of face-to-face contacts. We must only think over and redefine both concepts: those of a meeting and of direct (face-to-face) presence<sup>23</sup>. Another kind of hybrid generated by media, besides the ontological one, is obviously the cultural dimension connected with the global nature of their activities. From this perspective, the analyzed media may be defined as a trans-cultural interface, a generator of cultural hybridization.

The variety of media experiences, obviously underrated by Thompson, is made very clear in the definition of the post-biological world put forward by Roy Ascott. According to him, the post-biological world is a reality in which the experienced objects are mediated, transformed or created by media technologies<sup>24</sup>. It is obvious that the different aspects of the post-biological world involve different kinds of experience. Thompson's diagnosis seems right only in reference to experiencing technological events that are merely mediated. As regards the experience of technologically modified events, Thompson's theory, should it be implemented, would have to be significantly refined. In the case of technology creating the experienced events, Thompson's theory reveals its incompatibility with the conception of the post-biological world. It diverges from it even more if this world is considered in its full complexity, including both the variety of sources and forms of media experiences, and their mutual influence and entanglement in the nexus of relations in the complex of experiences that is no less varied, and in which the media do not partake.

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<sup>23</sup> A.R. Stone, *Will the Real Body Please Stand Up? Boundry Stories About Virtual Cultures*, in: *The Cybercultures Reader*, ed. D. Bell, B.M. Kennedy, Routledge: London & New York 2000, p. 506.

<sup>24</sup> R. Ascott, 'Digital museum. Telematic culture and artificial life', *Art Magazine*, No. 2-3, 1995; see also J. Scott, 'The Body as Interface', in: *Reframing Consciousness: Art, Mind and Technology*, ed. R. Ascott, Intellect Books: Exeter 2001.

Media experience entangles us inevitably in a game in which the notions of representation, traces, and presence, as well as their numerous derivatives, play equally important roles. Any attempt to analyse the whole of this area while excluding any of them would lead to simplification and false generalisations.

Meanwhile, however, many conceptions taking up the issue of memory grounded in media experiences, memory endowing us, as a consequence, with media – conditioned identity structures, invariably remain under the influence of the assumption of the representational nature of media experience.

The conception of post-memory put forward by Marianne Hirsch<sup>25</sup>, the conception of tertiary memory by Bernard Stiegler<sup>26</sup>, and the theory of prosthetic memory by Celia Lury<sup>27</sup> all refer to the technologically-conditioned experience – and consequently memory and identity – in terms of the links between the media experience and the events taking place (or having already taken place) elsewhere, thus perceiving the object of that experience as representational in nature. The cognitive usefulness and explanatory power of those claims are usually founded on their authors' limiting their field of research and consequently of the application of their conclusions and the theories constructed on their basis. However, when the authors do not fully outline their frameworks themselves, the necessity to do so passes onto their recipients.

The theory of prosthetic memory by Celia Lury seems to be a model example here (a similar concept was worked out by Alison Landsberg<sup>28</sup> and related conclusions concerning prosthetic structures may also be found in the third volume of Stiegler's work already mentioned here). Lury founds her proposal on a specific type of experience that she defines as photographic seeing. It is related to the experience described by Thompson; in this case, however, Lury gives priority to photography as its technological source. In her view, it is photography that introduces completely new quality into the human life: photography appeared to give a new shape to what we now understand as an

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<sup>25</sup> M. Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*, Harvard University Press: Cambridge Mass. 1997.

<sup>26</sup> See B. Stiegler, *op. cit.*

<sup>27</sup> C. Lury, *Prosthetic Culture: Photography, Memory and Identity*, Routledge: London 1998.

<sup>28</sup> A. Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: the Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture*, Columbia University Press, New York 2004; *Idem*, *Prosthetic Memory: Total Recall and Blade Runner*, in: *The Cybercultures Reader*, eds. D. Bell, B.M. Kennedy, Routledge, London and New York 2000.

individual and his or her relationship with awareness, memory and embodiment<sup>29</sup>. In Lury's approach, photography is both a way of knowing and a mnemonic tool<sup>30</sup>; it represents absent objects, and at the same time it is a form of mediation between awareness and techno-cultural context, able to transform them both<sup>31</sup>.

Lury points out that photography frames its objects, then freezes and records them<sup>32</sup>. These actions endow the photographed objects with other properties. Similarly to Thompson, Lury claims that these objects are freed from the determination of their matrix environment – that they undergo outcontextualization. The objects which are experienced in this way within the cognitive activities of a subject, provide the subject with memory whose character is analogical to their own (photography being both a technique of knowing and a mnemonic tool). Being context-free becomes an omnipresent principle of the social world. The spatial dimensions of memory undergo dispersion; they become unstable and blurred. Not only are memories disconnected from space, but they also become disembodied. As a result, the subject is also no longer anchored in the context, similarly to the objects of its mediated perceptions. According to Lury, because of photography, both subject and object undergo the process of indifferenciation that eradicates the traditional borders. Such distinctions as cause – result, interior – exterior, will – reflex, choice – coercion also become blurred<sup>33</sup>.

In Lury's view, photography gains the status of prosthesis of the experience of seeing. Analogically prosthetic character is invested on the memory grounded in photographic seeing and identity built on the basis of prosthetic memory. All of these processes inevitably lead to the hybridization of identity that Lury believes is expressed through the aestheticization of the Self, aestheticization that follows the logic of fashion. She sees the hybrid, prosthetic identity as a product of never-ending process of evaluation and speculation, remodelling and renovation. Her notion of technologically supported experimental individualism<sup>34</sup> combines in one hybrid whole all of the processes of culture prosthesis described above, also noticing (or so it seems), the side effect of the impact of cultural consumerism. In her search

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<sup>29</sup> C. Lury, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 148.

<sup>31</sup> See J. Pence, 'Machine Memory: Image Technology and Identity', *Film-Philosophy*, vol. 3, No 21, May 1999, <http://www.film-philosophy.com/vol3-1999/n21pence>.

<sup>32</sup> C. Lury, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

<sup>33</sup> J. Pence, *op. cit.*

<sup>34</sup> C. Lury, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

for answers to the question of what is happening to identity in the era of digital images, Lury sees its evolving shape not only as a result of self-determination, but also as a drive for self-possession. This evolution leads, according to her, to a new, post-pluralistic social order.

Barry King similarly regards the Self as a product of the media consumerist culture when he presents his concept of the modular Self<sup>35</sup>. The medialisation of the world leads, in King's opinion, to two important consequences. Firstly, to the saturation of the social sphere with the media that privilege performative structures. Secondly, in a medialised society, it is impossible to draw a border between the real and the virtual, which in turn makes it impossible to perceive the linear causalism. It is thus replaced by metonymic demeanour (an element present in one discourse returns in the discourses belonging to other practices). Such a situation paves the way for modular order and the power of perfect images to create a media ecosystem.

Following John B. Blair and Robert Kroes<sup>36</sup>, King lists several characteristics of cultural modularity:

1. Each whole is only a sum of components. They may be combined in various ways, as they are functional equivalents allowing substitution, contribution and recombination.
2. Functional equivalence provides all cultural practices with equal value. New configurations are desired and searched for.
3. No specific combination is seen as integral for cultural organisation. Every order or content has only temporary value, as new configurations are not only desired but also inevitable.
4. The basic aim of every individual configuration is ephemeral coherence.
5. Modularity is a cultural reaction that accompanies the saturation of the public sphere with various forms of techno-disembodied presence, such as photography, electronic images or computer-graphic simulations. Their perfection evokes the desire for imitation. In this way modularity takes over the sphere of human behaviour and becomes a new form of self-organization.

In the light of King's claims, modularity of identity is presented as a process in which an individual attempts to exceed his or her own limitations by

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<sup>35</sup> B. King, 'Being Virtual: Modularity as a Cultural Condition', *Afterimage*, September 2000.

<sup>36</sup> J.B. Blair, *Modular America*, Greenwood Press: New York 1988; R. Kroes, *If You've Seen the Mall: Europeans and American Mass Culture*, University of Illinois Press: Urbana 1996.

following the scenarios of self-design that he or she encounters in the media – which can not only control the sphere of appearances, but also offer the protocols of the transformations.

Modularity as an ideological practice is, as King puts it, not falsifying but producing reality. In his view, particularly the development of the interactive media has made modularity a contemporary state of being. Its consequence is an inevitable and constantly deepening process of hybridization of all aspects of individual and collective identity.

The theories analysed here – the ones of medialisatation by John B. Thompson, of prosthetisation by Celia Lury, and of modularity by Barry King – share not only the idea that the development of media technology has greatly transformed the forms of experience, the structures of memory and the character of the identities grounded in them. They also share the conviction of their authors that all of these processes and phenomena involve media structures of representational nature. The hybrid character of the analysed phenomena diagnosed by these theories does not raise any doubt. However, the one-sidedness of the approach that reduces media objects to a form of representation leads to a gross underestimation of both the scale of the experience and its range, and the variety of the memory structures they condition. It also negatively influences the interpretation of the identities shaped in the dialogue with the media. These theories revolve around the media experiences typical for mass culture and the cultural media industry, which brings them closer to the critique of the consumerist society. The experiences most characteristic for recent cybercultures, connected with surfing the net, immersion in the virtual worlds of computer games, not to mention the interactive experiences offered by the art of the new media are considered to a much lesser degree. This lack makes the analysed theories rather inadequate for the research on the contemporary web community and its participation in cyberculture. However, the support from the conception of non-conditioning argued by Mark Poster and, most of all, the inspiration that can be found in the idea of post-biological world put forward by Roy Ascott, may open much more interesting perspectives to the theory of media experience, to the research into the forms of memory and the structures of hybrid identity.

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**DOŚWIADCZENIE – PAMIĘĆ – TOŻSAMOŚĆ.  
DOŚWIADCZENIA MEDIALNE JAKO FUNDAMENT HYBRYDYCZNEJ  
TOŻSAMOŚCI  
(streszczenie)**

Autor artykułu poddaje analizie splot doświadczenia, pamięci i tożsamości, by podjąć dyskusję na temat procesów, w ramach których mediatyzacja i medializacja doświadczeń przekształcają status, struktury i funkcje pamięci, oraz aby rozważyć koncepcję hybrydycznej tożsamości. Autor omawia szereg teorii podejmujących tę problematykę i wykazuje, że mimo iż wykształciły one niezbędne kategorie i koncepcje badawcze, jak również zbudowały interesujące wizje współczesnych społeczeństw, to nie zdołały uchwycić, a tym bardziej wykorzystać w swych rozważaniach procesów, które przekształcają współczesne kultury, przeprowadzając je ze stanu kultury medialnej do formy cyberkultury ufundowanej na interaktywnych praktykach wirtualnych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** cyberkultura, doświadczenie, hybrydyczność, tożsamość, media, pamięć.



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## **AN ALLEGORY OF LABOUR: LIFE AND THE SELF IN THE ART OF TATZU NISHI. CULTURAL HIJACK IN LONDON**

*All great deeds and all great thoughts have a ridiculous beginning. Great works are often born on a street-corner or in a restaurant's revolving door. So it is with absurdity.*

Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** This essay is a critical review of the work of the Japanese artist Tatzu Nishi, part of the international exhibition *Cultural Hijack* at the Architectural Association School of Architecture (AA), London 2013, curated by the artists Ben Parry and Peter McCaughey. The project opened a debate around our rights to the city, the significance of creative acts of resistance and a critical examination of the role of art and the artist in an interventionist urbanism.

**Keywords:** art, activism, urbanism, public, intervention, documentation.

### **THIS IS NO ORDINARY HOLE!**

It is a Friday afternoon in May. On the south western corner of Bedford Square in Bloomsbury, London, a large hole around five metres in diameter is being dug from the wide asphalt path surrounding the private gardens. Behind temporary fencing workers continue to dig the hole, loading conveyor belts to carry soil away. A large generator powering the plant machinery hums and the conveyors rumble. It appears as a regular everyday service hole for some sort of infrastructural maintenance. From their peripheral vision a casual passerby takes in these basic observations, aided by a cautionary

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<sup>1</sup> A. Camus, 2005, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, trans. J. O'Brien (1955), Penguin Books, London, p. 11.

sideways glance to ensure the obstacle will not force diversion. People are coming and going from all sides of the square. In the facing Georgian terrace, a man in a suit exits, another enters two doors down. A student locks up her bicycle outside the School of Architecture, a courier van pulls up with a delivery; two pensioners are seated on a bench eating sandwiches. It is an ordinary day on an ordinary street. These typical sights and sounds of a familiar street scene recede efficiently into the background of a cognitive foreground of preoccupied thoughts living in the future, reflecting on the past; *what am I going to have for lunch? The dragging anxiety of a late meeting and the self-reminder of supermarket run on the way home; reflections on an encounter the night before or the longing for a well deserved summer break.* Today the sky is radiant blue without clouds and the sun's warmth on the face is uninterrupted in the wide expanse of the square. This seasonal dimension slows up the pace to indulge.

Despite such pleasant distractions, some seconds later the passerby performs a double-take as the seemingly latent background receptors of the brain detect an anomaly in the urban anatomy that turns the head to reconsider the scene – of the hole and the digger. The eye follows the conveyor that leads from the hole. At the fall it joins another and rises again, then another conveyor mirroring the right angle turn drops and rises. At the final fall from the fourth conveyor the earth ends in the same hole from which it came, in a perfect daisy chain. The absurd nature of the information now being received commands the full attention of the onlooker. The onlooker, caught off guard is now a spectator undergoing a brief episode of cognitive dissonance.

Cognitive dissonance is when the brain receives information that conflicts with established ideas, emotions and cognitions. When the consonance between expectations and reality are effectively hijacked and another world of apparent dissonance is presented, the brain works hard to return to its preferred state of equilibrium. In other words it must try to resolve the conflict standing before it.

The passerby is now a spectator. The first step in resolving this conflict is the necessary confirmation that *something isn't right*. Once again, follow the dirt from the spade onto the conveyor ascending to the top dropping from considerable height onto a second conveyor repeating the same ascent and descent onto the third, and at the fourth the very same dirt falls back into the hole. The pedestrian spectator is now firmly in the moment of the present, the real-time of the conveyor, the man digging each spade of earth. The absurdity appears genuine: *this is no ordinary hole!*

The affirmation that *something isn't right* (dissonance) precipitates the search for confirmation from others (consonance) that they too notice this anomaly. The duration of dissonance, extended here by a lack of any logical explanation or useful clues as to what is going on, gives sufficient time to engage meaningfully with the questions posed by the man digging the hole. Indeed, how does the pedestrian spectator now draw conclusions from this encounter with a city construction worker undertaking an absurd and pointless task? The labourer seems unperturbed by his predicament and appears to dig with appropriate vigour necessary to achieve such a hole. The two pensioners sitting on the bench eating their sandwiches appear not to notice, other pedestrians walk on by. *Is this an elaborate hoax?* Support finally arrives as a black cab stops in the road, the cabbie leans out the window staring intently. *What is it that they are looking at exactly?* Could it be some perverse humour of reverse psychology in a clever marketing campaign, and just around the corner out of view, some young men with sharp haircuts are giving out deodorant samples, or maybe its an endurance thing instead and young women in branded outfits are giving out free cans of energy drink. The only other explanation of something so pointless would be that it must be art. Without the necessary answer this detail is suspended and a more focussed engagement takes place. The distillation of one man trapped in a hole neither burying himself nor digging himself out precipitates profound reflection.

## ALL THINGS FALL AND ARE BUILT AGAIN

What we are actually looking at is a temporary art intervention titled *Ascending Descending* from the playful mind of the renowned Japanese artist Tatzu Nishi, best known for site-specific works that create domestic rooms, sometimes hotel rooms around public monuments and statues. In *Ascending Descending* the artist was inspired by the 1980s Japanese game show *Za Gamen* (*Endurance*), popularised in the UK by *Clive James on Television* in which he showed clips from unusual and cult TV shows from around the world. Nishi's vivacious ode to humorous acts of endurance is balanced by a more exacting reference to M.C. Escher's 1960 work, *Ascending and Descending* from which it borrows its title. Nishi's geometric form achieves Escher's optical illusion of a never-ending stairway by the infinite rise and fall and the impossibility of emptying or filling the hole. The careful arrangement of the conveyors creates an infinite cycle whose repetition follows a square that viewed from a certain angle does indeed make one think of Escher's infinity stairs and the figures marching down passing those on their way up...

Only a limited number of people were able to approach the work with such references to hand. What comes more readily to mind is the story of Sisyphus punished by the Gods for his trickery and deceit, condemned to the underworld for eternity. There, he must push a giant boulder up a steep hill, only to watch it roll down and repeat the task over. The wasted effort of a man digging a hole he cannot empty, is altogether more complicated. As high levels of unemployment persist in the aftermath of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s, we may be reminded of Keynes' famous dictum "The government should pay people to dig holes and fill them back in again."<sup>2</sup> – intended to provoke the government into stimulating the economy by creating jobs to counter growing unemployment. The Keynesian logic of intervening in a recession to stimulate growth by paying people to 'dig holes and fill them in again' or better still schools and homes, links the debate about policymakers' handling of the consequences of 2008's financial crisis. In its West End location, on a street corner yards from massive commercial developments, in particular the monumental excavations of the Tottenham Court Road section of the £25bn CrossRail project, the particular use of construction vernacular might refer to the cycles of urban development and the rise and fall of civilizations with the appropriate adage; *All things fall and are built again*.<sup>3</sup>

Of equal pertinence is our subservient relationship as consumers, trapped in the cycles of insatiable appetites for commodities and the illusion of satisfaction. Or perhaps a more empathetic response to life's seemingly impossible tasks, as one blogger put it: 'We've all felt a little like this guy in the past... 24 hours of constant digging while his hole is filled back in.' Whether the sensation – of the dead-end job, the treadmill of life, or a person unable to free themselves from the circumstance repeating and recreating their scornful reality, the work functions very well as an existential allegory for the human condition under global capitalism.

*Ascending Descending* opens up in a multiplicity of narrative interpretations, literary references and lines of flight, and in doing so it creates a space for self-reflexivity. The work involves a remarkable condensation as the lone worker pits himself against the machine. His separation, isolation and singularity holds forth an empty vessel, into which we may enter, project ourselves and fill it with subjectivity. By putting the self in place of the worker,

<sup>2</sup> <http://modeledbehavior.com/2011/10/31/digging-holes-just-to-fill-them-back-up-again/>.

<sup>3</sup> W.B. Yeats, *Last Poems & Plays*, Macmillan Press, 1940, 4. – 'All Things Fall and Are Built Again' from the poem *Lapis Lazuli*.

manual labour is a substitution and metaphor for all and any forms of labour in *servitude of the machine*. This distillation of capitalist relations enabled a large number of observers to come to the same conclusion; that what they were witnessing was labour in its purest form. Not labour abstracted, rather labour in its nudity, stripped of its pretence and illusion, to reveal our individual relationship to labour under the neoliberal economic regime. *Ascending Descending* is an *allegory of labour* that demands further analysis.

### **CULTURAL HIJACK**

*Ascending Descending* was a 48 hour durational performance that appeared on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2013 and vanished at midnight on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> May. The work was part of the project *Cultural Hijack*, at the Architectural Association School of Architecture, London. *Cultural Hijack* was a survey exhibition of recent trends in art interventionism crossing-over into cultural activism, accompanied by a live-programme of interventions across the capital and an international conference held at the Royal Institute for British Architects. An active archive [[www.culturalhijack.org](http://www.culturalhijack.org)] was in operation within the exhibition, updated daily to reflect the transition from live work to documentation. When *Ascending Descending* ended, a short video of the work entered the exhibition, featured on the website and was circulated on social-media platforms.

The encounter and reading of this work falls into two distinct categories that are important to art intervention in the public realm; the direct and embodied experience of the live work, and the documentation of the live event presented in exhibition. The first iteration, an undetermined audience who experience the work *live* at first hand has two categories; those that have come to see the work (with some prior knowledge as to what it is) and those that haven't, who happen upon the work by chance. We might simply define these differences as the *rendezvous*, and the *unforeseen encounter*. The next category is another public who experience the second iteration of the work as *documentation* of live intervention experienced in the gallery – in the context of a themed group exhibition with thirty other international artists. Lastly, it can viewed (semi-decontextualised) on the likes of Vimeo or You Tube.

In the original and live iteration of *Ascending Descending* the construction site on Bedford Square contained no signage or explanatory text, neither stewards or external security to explain what was going on. The work was

unnamed, anonymous and the only available explanation was in the hole itself. The unmediated nature of this intervention means the artist had no possibility of controlling how and by whom the work would be experienced and interpreted. The desire of the artist and the curators that the work's identity and intention remain in doubt was to extend the possibilities of encounter and self-interpretation. The second mediated iteration belongs more conventionally to the realm of art-exhibition and the pedagogic institution in the form of an international school of architecture.

Nishi's work also plays out in a further set of social relations with those of Camden Council's Highways Department and the sub-contractors who carried out the work on/in the hole. The writer takes an equal interest in all of these spheres of encounter and engagement along with their specific contexts, as *forms of engagement*. And in this project specifically, the audience's relationship to systems of labour exploitation and domination and the power-relations inherent to cultural production. These are reflected in the following analysis.

## FROM CONCRETE TO IMMATERIAL LABOUR

At first, *Ascending Descending* may appear distant from recent debates on the transformation of everyday life in an information economy. The changing role and subjugation of labour under neoliberal globalisation and the pervasive commodification of *everything under capitalism* has brought with it the rise of social movements and network resistance linking local experiences with global struggles. These economic, political and cultural transformations have spawned a plethora of theorisations and terms such as *knowledge economy*, *information society*, *liquid modernity*, *cognitive capitalism*, *network society*, *post-modernization*, *post-Fordism*, *debt economy*, *precarisation* and *casualisation*. Instead of mirroring this trend, the manual labourer in *Ascending Descending* would seem to typify the traditional division of labour in industry and manufacture whereby such labour practices have changed little with the introduction of technology into the construction trade.

And yet, it is precisely because the work does not contain an overt critique of new forms and changes in labour practices under neoliberal globalisation, that it is able to focus its debate upon economic exploitation, alienation, and the subjugation of the body and mind. Under this lens, *Ascending and Descending* becomes a political work that, perhaps inadvertently, enters recent debates in art discourse around precarious labour. This is situated in relation

to the autonomist theorization of *immaterial* and *affective* cultural labour (with a focus on refusal) and political activism (with a focus on resistance.)

The transformation from a Fordist to post-Fordist economy, from traditional modes of production within industry and manufacture to a service and knowledge based economy can be read as implicit to *Ascending and Descending*. Hardt and Negri refer to this migration from industry to service jobs as *informatisation* and *post-modernisation* in which ‘all production tends toward the production of services, toward becoming informationalised.’<sup>4</sup> These services in the post-Fordist economy are referred to as *immaterial labour*, defined by Michael Hardt as ‘labour that produces an immaterial good such as service, knowledge, communication,’<sup>5</sup> and cultural products. He goes on to suggest that immaterial labour has become the dominant sector of the economy and its dominance over other labour practices cause radical changes in society.

Just as agriculture and society itself underwent *industrialization* under the domination of industry and manufacture, *informatisation* now performs its domination to transform industry and manufacturing through information technologies and *demand-driven manufacturing*. In this latest paradigm the tendency is to ‘treat manufacturing as a service.’<sup>6</sup> For Hardt, each form of labour practice may ‘produce collective subjectivities, produce sociality, and ultimately produce society itself,’ since ‘humanity and its soul are produced in the very processes of economic production.’<sup>7</sup> Just as the alienated digger alone in the hole might signify a diminishing proletariat and the impossibility of organized solidarity it also proclaims new forms of resistance to emerge through a reconceptualisation of refusal. The technological efficiency in demand driven manufacturing of a ‘zero-stock’ is mirrored in Nishi’s image of the labourer and conveyor belt. There is no waste in this infinite reproduction loop, if the digger stops nothing enters the hole, and the level remains the same. Like the *ouroboros* - the serpent that eats its own tail – the symbiosis between production and consumption realises its ultimate perfection. Even Nishi’s hole is a beautiful executed circle, a perfect zero.

At the point in which concrete labour (digging a hole) resists commodification and is subverted and transformed towards the service of art it becomes a complex form of immaterial labour. More accurately it corresponds the

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<sup>4</sup> M. Hardt & A. Negri, 2001, *Empire*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 285.

<sup>5</sup> M. Hardt, 1999, *Affective Labor*, boundary 2, Duke University Press.

<sup>6</sup> M. Hardt, A. Negri, 2001, p. 285.

<sup>7</sup> M. Hardt, 1999, p. 91.

particular form of *immaterial labour* referred to as *affective labour*, concerned with the affects it produces. *Affective labour* that focuses on the *creation and manipulation of affects*, producing and modifying feelings, relations and creating emotional experiences is the main staple of the entertainment, advertising and creative industries. The consumption of these affects is a significant factor in identity formation. It also establishes new social practices, forms of community and social networks associated ‘with the communicative action of human relations.’<sup>8</sup> Here then we see the transformation of concrete [material] labour into affective [immaterial] labour, producing knowledge, creating emotional and relational experiences and manipulating social affects.

## A PRECARIOUS EXISTENCE

The role of art practice in debates surrounding immaterial labour has been less the concern over impacts of *informatisation* and more towards the negative affects of the *precarisation* of existence. Creative and cultural workers bear the brunt of almost all the defining characteristics of precariousness in a life without security – of any kind – demanding continuous flexibility and mobility. Irregular hours, uneven pay, information technologies and mobile devices blurring work-time into leisure time mean that work and insecurity accompany us everywhere. The social and material insecurity of moving from house to house, one temporary job to the next is no longer just the concern of low paid workers in the factory, fast-food chains, cleaners or black-economy workers, it is a reality of the so-called ‘creative class.’ And as Bourdieu points out, even those apparently spared are affected, as the ‘awareness of it never goes away; it is present at every moment in everyone’s mind.’<sup>9</sup> This ever-present state of anxiety and insecurity defines our relationship to the capitalist system, never more so in an economy of debt. The lone digger caught in the mechanisms of exploitation and domination in *Ascending Descending* imagines the debtor-creditor relationship in the subjective figure of Lazzarato’s ‘indebted man.’ With the neoliberal transformation to an indebted population new forms of struggle are imagined and emerge. ‘The figure of the indebted man cuts across the whole of society and calls for new solidarities and new cooperation.’<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> M. Hardt & A. Negri, 2001.

<sup>9</sup> P. Bourdieu, 1988, *Acts of Resistance*, Polity Press, Cambridge, p. 82.

<sup>10</sup> M. Lazzarato, 2012, *The Making of the Indebted Man*, trans. J. David Jordan, semiotext(e), Los Angeles, 2012, p. 162.

Since precarity is not merely a social and economic condition of immaterial labour but the very conditions by which capitalism exacts its domination, theorists have come to reconceptualise precariousness as a political concept.<sup>11</sup> As Chantal Mouffe points out, the political consequences of the transition from Fordism to Post-Fordism bring forth the introduction of new practices of resistance, new political struggles and solidarity.<sup>12</sup> These debates, acknowledging the cultural and creative industries as an instrumental part of the service and knowledge economy, have, until recently, largely neglected their role in political action and resistance. Critical art and art activist practices have instead taken a more central role in the debate on precarious labour, as Isabell Lorey writes: ‘knowledge of the precarious, and a search for *commons* (in order to constitute the political), has conspicuously taken place more often in art institutions than in social, political, or even academic contexts.’<sup>13</sup> In this picture, as Gill and Pratt put it, artists and cultural labourers have been identified as ‘the poster boys and girls of the new ‘precariat’ – a neologism that brings together the meanings of precariousness and proletariat to signify both an experience and exploitation and a (potential) new political subjectivity.’<sup>14</sup>

Gill & Pratt go on to explain how precarity politics inherited from autonomists have expanded from analysis of precarious labour conditions to include a range of global struggles including migration, citizenship, LGBT and feminist movements – all of which are exigent themes in contemporary art. Thus, art has been instrumental in linking a discourse of precarisation to social movements, political struggles and new forms of resistance. In this case, new forms of self-organization by individuals, collectives, community groups and social movements are attempting to turn the intellect, creativity, communication and diverse skill sets of their affective labour against the system that exploits them. In growing numbers, artists and cultural workers are taking up the mantle of resistant practices, sometimes as mere ‘aestheticization of protest’ and in others, activist tendencies as experimental forms of anti-capitalist struggle that use the affective weapons in a subversion of affective labour. As exemplars of affective labour they are well positioned and well versed in the art of subversion, disobedience, ‘the manipulation of affects’ and garnering of public attention. And yet this turn towards the

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<sup>11</sup> I. Lorey, 2010, *Becoming Common: Precarisation as Political Constituting*, e-flux \*17 – June-August.

<sup>12</sup> Ch. Mouffe, in J. Seijdel, 2009, *The Art Biennial as a Global Phenomenon*, NAI Publishers, SKOR, No.16, pp. 32-40.

<sup>13</sup> I. Lorey, 2010, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> R. Gill, A. Pratt, in *The precarious Labour in the Field of Art*, ONCurating 026: Issue 16/13, p. 26.

political in art, as in other forms of institutionalised critique, has its own problems not least in the art world recuperation resistance to itself. Instead, we explore Nishi's intervention not as a form of critique of social and economic labour under capitalism, but a lucid and poetic image of its very condition: An aesthetic thesis on the concept of work.

### **REPRODUCTIVE LABOUR**

As an allegory of labour, *Ascending Descending* may play out to all manner of political subjectivities. Nishi's emphasis of the 'classical' image of the heroic (male) labourer as a substitute for humanity can be seen as an amusing critique on the gender hierarchies, wage-divisions and power relations that are missing in Hardt & Negri's 'gender neutral' theory of immaterial labour. In *Ascending Descending's* strange image of labour producing and reproducing itself, we cannot fail to recognize women's *unpaid* reproductive labour, understood as the ultimate labour power in the cycle of reproduction of the workforce (of human beings as labour-power, as future workers). Silvia Federici explains that these important political insights of feminist analysis uncovered new crucial areas of women's exploitation in a redefinition of work that established the significance of women's unpaid domestic labour for reproduction of the workforce – as a premise and key source of much capitalist accumulation. And that Marxist and much autonomist theory has brushed aside women's reproductive labour, shadowing their importance in understanding economic and social organization of capitalist production.<sup>15</sup> These insights provoked a rethinking of forms of anti-capitalist struggle that put the reproduction of movements themselves into the labour-power equation. Writes Federici; 'by recognizing that what we call "reproductive labor" is a terrain of accumulation and therefore a terrain of exploitation, we were able to also see reproduction as a terrain of struggle, and, very important, conceive of an anti-capitalist struggle against reproductive labor that would not destroy ourselves or our communities... "We need to build a movement that puts on its agenda its own reproduction."<sup>16</sup>

And so by ignoring the significance of women's reproductive labour Virno, Hardt and Negri also miss within it the notion of women's refusal that 'erases

<sup>15</sup> S. Federici, 2008, *Precarious Labour: A Feminist Viewpoint*, From: In the Middle of the Whirlwind: Convention Protest, Movement & Movements. Publisher: The Journal of Aesthetics and Protest, [http://www.variant.org.uk/37\\_38texts/9PrecLab.html](http://www.variant.org.uk/37_38texts/9PrecLab.html).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*.

the subversive potential of the concept of reproductive work.’ As Federici explains, the potential to stop reproducing labour power entered broader areas of work and relations that extended from women to their children. ‘Actually our refusal opened the way of their refusal and the process of their liberation.’<sup>17</sup>

### **STOP MAKING CAPITALISM**

Nishi’s image of labourers caught in an endless cycle of work which they themselves reproduce, presents limited possibility for emancipation: refusal, exodus or sabotage. The first of these would be a logical continuation of the art and political avant-garde’s successive ‘refusal to work,’ exemplified by Debord’s situationist slogan, *NE TRAVAILLEZ JAMAIS*.<sup>18</sup> However, as Hardt and Negri suggest in *Empire*, refusal is not to ‘never work,’ but to construct new modes of life in what is a *refusal of voluntary servitude*. Precarisation then, as both a mode of capitalist exploitation and domination relies upon the voluntary servitude of the consumer. The illusion of the *ouroboros* in Nishi’s endless digger in which continuous destruction leads to continuous renewal and vice-versa subverts the metaphor of unity in an all out refusal to consume; a refusal to create the conditions to which we are subjugated. Or in the words of John Holloway, not to think of revolution as ‘destroying capitalism, but as ceasing to create capitalism.’<sup>19</sup> This remains a challenge for most artists who grapple with the paradox of wanting to critique the destructive forces of capital, its alienating tendencies and the ecological and environmental degradation caused by rampant consumerism, whilst producing the most expensive and rarefied commodities on the planet. *Stop making art* remains an important proposition, perhaps the first in an effort to *Stop making capitalism*.

In his recent book *Factories of Knowledge, Industries of Creativity*,<sup>20</sup> a critical review of ideas of the university as the new factory and a bastion from which social resistance and political activism are possible, art critic and philosopher

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>18</sup> Guy Debord scrawled the situationist slogan ‘Ne Travaillez Jamais’ on a wall in rue de la Seine, Paris, in 1953.

<sup>19</sup> J. Holloway, 2011, *Stop making Capitalism*, <http://www.johnholloway.com.mx/2011/07/30/stop-making-capitalism/>.

<sup>20</sup> G. Raunig, 2013, *Factories of Knowledge, Industries of Creativity*, (trans. Aileen Derieg), Semio-text(e), Los Angeles.

Gerald Raunig makes use of an earlier example of a workers' strike entering the field of art. In the 1974 exhibition, *Art into Society – Society into Art* at the ICA, London, the artist Gustav Metzger refused to show work and in place of an exhibit wrote only a contribution to the catalogue in which he proclaimed: 'The refusal to labour is the chief weapon of workers fighting the system; artists can use the same weapon. To bring down the art system it is necessary to call for years without art...'<sup>21</sup> Metzger proceeded to carry this out (alone) from 1977 to 1980 in which he made no art, nor had any dealing with the art world. *Stop Making Capitalism* therefore bates the artist and the art world – as the ultimate commodity producers – to stop making art and therefore to stop selling art.

The second possibility for action from Nishi's aesthetic vision follows the notion of exodus. The version of exodus put forward by Italian political thinker Paolo Virno involves an exodus 'away from the state and its machinery' towards alternative social forms and the necessary creation of new public spaces in which they may find purchase.<sup>22</sup> He explains: 'all the features of human nature that post-Fordism put to work and converted to cash can be reclaimed and reassigned to the production of 'a new public space' that makes use of the general intellect and general knowledge,' and 'instead of its power producing profit and surplus it becomes a political institution.'<sup>23</sup> This notion of creating new modes of life, and alternative public institutions, follows the growing patterns of user-generated-cities defined as bottom up, self built and self-organised with the specific characteristics of collaboration, dialogue, experimentation, creativity and self commitment. This is done not 'outside' capitalism but by the reassignment of labour, or redefining the value-systems reproduced by labour within it.

The final option for exodus from the labour machine in Nishi's *Ascending Descending* could be of course be *sabotage*, breaking the machine and putting an end to its rule. In the theories around various forms of counter-hegemonic intervention, social movements and new political subjectivities associated with the terms that opened this analysis, all are in agreement that breaking capitalism or attempting to take power is no longer a viable option. This is not a negation of sabotage, but a question of where acts of civil disobedience and sabotage locate themselves within a broader global struggle in the search for new forms of governance and new kinds of social relations.

<sup>21</sup> G. Metzgar, cited by G. Raunig, 2013, p. 138.

<sup>22</sup> P. Virno, in J. Seijdel, 2009, *A Precarious Existence*, NAi Publishers, SKOR, No. 17, pp. 72-85.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 80.

### ***INSECURITY INDUCING STRATEGIES***

Under the analysis of immaterial labour generally, and precarious labour more specifically within the creative and cultural industries, the enduring image of *Ascending Descending* is one of total immersion and the struggle for emancipation. Nishi's 'labour as spectacle' or 'spectacle of labour' reminds us that the systemic advance of the *society of the spectacle*, since it was first theorised by Guy Debord over fifty years ago, has found no limits. In Baudrillard's post-mortem of Debord's spectacular society he concludes that reality and image are no longer inverted or interchangeable but are one and the same. 'We're threatened not by separation or alienation, but by total immersion.'<sup>24</sup> This inter-changeability and non-differentiation, collapsing distinct spheres of everyday life into a total immersion extends from work into leisure, private into public, social into economic, political into cultural and so on.

This blurring of the operational and existential aspects of human life, the inability to distinguish between spectator and spectacle, consumer and producer, between acting and being acted upon is what allows capitalism to turn every aspect of human nature to the logic of the market. Writes Lieven De Caeter; 'Work becomes directly social and begins to blur the lines between economy, politics and culture. However this blurring does not represent a chance of ending, subverting or even changing the rule of capitalism. On the contrary, it is in a sense the most advanced stage of exploitation, expropriation and hegemony.'<sup>25</sup> The labour force inside the information economy to which this statement is aimed is manipulated by what Bourdieu terms *insecurity inducing strategies*, in which precarization becomes a form of capitalist control and exploitation.<sup>26</sup> As Mouffe asserts, if people are not as passive as before it is because they have now become active actors of their own precarization.<sup>27</sup> *Ascending Descending* describes this perfectly in its creation of a precise vision of our role in the maintenance of this socio-economic order. Under the illusion of consumer logic, capitalism's subjugating powers and society's subservience result in the self-production of our own instability and anxiety.

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<sup>24</sup> J. Baudrillard, 2004, *Fragments: Conversations with François L'Yvonnet* (trans. Ch. Turner), Routledge, London, p. 19.

<sup>25</sup> Lieven De Caeter, in De Caeter, De Roo, Vanhaesebrouck, *Art and Activism in the Age of Globalisation*, Nai Publishers, Rotterdam 2011, p. 14.

<sup>26</sup> P. Bourdieu, 1988, *Acts of Resistance*, Polity Press, Cambridge, p. 82.

<sup>27</sup> C. Mouffe, 2009, pp. 32-40.

Rather than see *Ascending Descending* as simply a playful reflection on our human condition under neoliberal globalization, it should be acknowledged as a surreptitious act of resistance in the following terms: Instead of *Ascending Descending* being complicit in the total commoditization of social/cultural relations, Nishi's intervention turns this commoditization on its head. The labourers in what was 'just another' highways contract were assigned and employed to dig the hole by the Council. It is only the product of their labour that is subverted by the artist, from the official economy of commodity relations to a form a 'gift economy.' In this scenario the labourers play themselves but their labour has now become the form and medium of art, creating new social relations. Not unsurprisingly the widespread acknowledgement of the economic value of the creative industries means the Council except, even celebrate this alternative use of civic resources. At the same time the labourer is content to be paid for digging precisely nothing, a real-false hole: everyone – fully remunerated – is happy to *fake it to make it real*. This kind of economic *detournement* redirects its labour-power towards a gift economy in the form of a *misdirection* where something appearing to follow its normal trajectory wanders slightly off-piste in search of another path. Whilst refusal, exodus and sabotage are necessary in the creation of as many alternative worlds and new forms as is possible. The *misdirection* here is the clever subversion of the time of capitalist labour reassigned to an affective labour of resistance. This can be read as significant step towards a refusal of voluntary servitude. In the end, however, Nishi's motivation in conceptualizing the work is indeed more interesting than the screeds of explanation put forward here. The artist actually has 'nothing to say' about the work, his position is a refusal of interpretation that hands over to a non-determined audience.

On a street corner the feeling of absurdity strikes the passer-by unawares; a nobody labourer who is everybody employs their futile and hopeless labour in servitude of the machine. 'But one day' (perhaps this day), writes Camus, 'the 'why' arises and everything begins in that weariness tinged with amazement... Weariness comes at the end of the acts of a mechanical life, but at the same time it inaugurates the impulse of consciousness. It awakens consciousness and provokes what follows. What follows is the gradual return into the chain, or it is the definitive awakening.'<sup>28</sup>

We leave the labourer at rest in the hole, leaning against his spade, catching his breath just as Camus leaves the story of Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain. 'One always finds ones burden again.' And so too we must leave the passer-by gazing at the hole with the possibility of awakening.

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<sup>28</sup> A. Camus, 2005, p. 119.



Ascending Descending by Tatzu Nishi, Bedford Square, Bloomsbury, London, 25-27<sup>th</sup> May, 2013. Temporary intervention for Cultural Hijack exhibition at Architectural Association School of Architecture (AA).  
Commissioned by Jump Ship Rat and AA. Image: TATZU NISHI



The emergent Service Workers Party by Space Hijackers, May Day street Party outside Google HQ, London, 2013, image: Space Hijackers



Marx at Twilight, Peter McCaughey & Ben Parry, knitted balaclava on monument and grave of Karl Marx, Highgate Cemetery, London, 2013



BGL, *Domaine de l'angle II*, 2008, Canada, photo: Toni Hafkenscheid



Pansy Project, Paul Harfleet. At 8pm on Thursday 25th May,  
Paul Harfleet plants pansy at the site of the murder of Fathi Bouchareb,  
Bedford Square, London

**ALEGORIA PRACY: ŻYCIE I JAŻŃ W SZTUCE TATZU NISHI.  
WYSTAWA CULTURAL HIJACK W LONDYNIE  
(streszczenie)**

Artykuł jest krytyczną analizą pracy japońskiego artysty Tatzu Nishi, będącej częścią międzynarodowej wystawy *Cultural Hijack* [Uprowadzenie kultury] zorganizowanej w Architectural Association School of Architecture [Szkole Architektury i Zrzeszenia Architektów] w Londynie w 2013 r. Kuratorami wystawy byli artyści Ben Parry i Peter McCaughey. Projekt ten zainspirował dyskusję na temat praw mieszkańców do przestrzeni miejskiej, znaczenia kreatywnych aktów oporu oraz roli sztuki i artysty w interwencjach urbanistycznych.

**Słowa klucze:** sztuka, aktywizm, urbanistyka, społeczność, interwencja, dokumentacja.

**Katarzyna Kosmala**  
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## **CONSTRUCTED STORIES OF (NON)BELONGING TO EUROPE: PERFORMATIVE VIDEOS OF MARINA GRŽINIĆ AND AINA ŠMID**

**Abstract:** In the video and new media art of Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid, the abstract quality of a technologically generated image and the mediated world becomes an expressive and politically informed means of a communication strategy across the region of post-Socialist Europe also called the former East. Working collaboratively for over thirty years now, and using mostly the medium of video, the artists juxtapose the memories of the Communist past and its symbolism with the paradoxes of the post-Socialist condition, and in doing so, engage in a critique of Western hegemony and global capitalism. Gržinić and Šmid's performative practice can be also viewed as a sort of leeway for the enacting of identities. For gender articulation, this artistic strategy also includes female masquerade and performance of sexuality. Their ambivalent performance of identities, at times contradicting one another, is realised through deconstruction, appropriation and narrative critique. Gržinić and Šmid have always been working with a critique of ideologies portrayed as fluid, changing systems, revealing their rhetorical functions in the production of culture. Ideology is represented and manifested in their works in the body, history, and culture. This paper will examine some examples of their most recent works, discussing the opportunities for resistance tactics in contemporary art.

**Keywords:** video, media, politics, gender, resistance, body, performance.

### **THE MORPHING OF EUROPE: INTRODUCTION**

In the beginning of the 1990s, the post-Communist rebirth of patriarchy across the Socialist Europe stimulated, and even arguably enhanced, gender tensions in the region. Tensions of such nature are particularly visible today in the socially and culturally conditioned reality associated with the political transformation and perpetual negotiation of 'our European' space. The Communist paradigms of Socialism and its accompanying rhetoric of

'equality' have been replaced with the 'new' return of the traditional female signifier. The female body which was once appropriated by the Communist Party as a symbol of ideological struggle has re-entered conservative and increasingly nationalistic political discourse envisaged as integral to the construction of the nuclear family. This historical appropriation and its importance in sustaining the productivity of the nation continue today across the region once called Eastern Europe.

Addressing the ever-changing European geo-political map, it is worth reflecting upon the notion of Europe itself. Let us consider its two main axes: those of space and of time. First, we might consider the spatial dimension. Looking through such a lens, Europe can be envisaged as a hybrid space; it is a socio-political and geographic space with strong economic ties (or less strong, provided the current Euro-zone crisis) that can be demarcated on the map, and an amalgamation of pluricultural and diverse places. Cultural plurality and linguistic polyphony make Europe unique. It is a rich cultural resource. Cultural plurality can be envisaged as a strength and a potential for a sustainable future. It can be also envisaged as a threat to cohesiveness and autonomy. Second, we might consider the time axis, or the temporal dimension. Europe is constantly changing. We need to think about the historic beginnings of Europe, then its various alterations, through the recent European acquisitions, to the Europe of today, and also the Europe-still-to-become. One important dimension of today's Europe is the experience associated with movement and the socio-political alteration of space.

Immersed for years in the reality of these socio-political and cultural changes, Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid play out the decentred position of the subject in the representations of being European, Balkan, Slovenian, ex-Yugoslavian, female artists working within the queer paradigm. The post-Communist legal and political systems have become increasingly masculinized, the gender relations are now more dichotomous through consumption and the culture of the spectacle, and the alternative social and cultural movements have become more stifled.

This has been a living and working reality for the artists. It seems that the deconstruction of the cultural and visual identities has become even more important for them not only in communicating the need for dismantling the patriarchal mechanism behind nationalism, but also in reflecting on the processes of undoing inequalities and exclusion by the dominant systems and their accompanying discourse.

The concepts of the nation, heritage, religion, family and state that hold significant positions in the processes of refashioning the national discourse of post-Socialist Europe have been put under scrutiny. What becomes evident through such concepts is the legitimization of patriarchy as a socio-economic, political and symbolic order. The consequences of the renewed patriarchy are often taken for granted, in particular the existence of social exclusion and gender inequality. On a parallel level, the socio-economic 'progress' and the status associated with EU membership are seen as 'wanting' in the Central and Eastern European region, where a significant proportion of the population experience a worsening living standard, largely as a result of the fast pace of the changes<sup>1</sup>.

The specificity of post-Socialist Europe today is marked by the conceptual void that seemed to have grown over time, first after World War II as a gap between the Western Europe and the Communist Europe, until 1989, and second, between the Western Europe, the new EU acquisitions, and the rest of Europe, from 1989 onwards. Reflecting upon the histories and memories associated with the accelerated political changes of the former East, I have curated a video screening programme surveying the thirty years of Gržinić and Šmid's practice that was showcased at the Centre of Contemporary Arts in Glasgow and at the Laznia Centre for Contemporary Arts in Gdansk in September 2012. This paper will examine the examples of the most recent works by Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid, while offering some reflections on the tactics of dissent and the possibilities of resistance through contemporary art practice.

## THE BODY AND THE POLITICS

Gržinić and Šmid are Slovenian video artists who started working together in 1982<sup>2</sup>. They had begun their collaboration on the underground music scene of

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<sup>1</sup> There is still a large area across the region occupied by rural communities, many living on a sustainable economy, at times deficient with regard to the modern contemporary living standards and education. R. Iveković, *The Fiction of Gender Constructing the Fiction of Nation: On How Fictions are Normative, and Norms Produce Exceptions*, in: J. Blagojević, K. Kolozova and S. Slapsak eds., *Gender and Identity: Theories from and/or on South-Eastern Europe*, Athena, KaktusPrint, Belgrade 2006.

<sup>2</sup> **Marina Gržinić** is an artist and professor at The Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. She also works at the Institute of Philosophy ZRC SAZU at the Slovenian Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana, Slovenia. **Aina Šmid** is an artist and former-editor of the Slovenian design magazine *Ambient*. She studied art history in Ljubljana, Slovenia. **Marina Gržinić**

the former Yugoslavia, combining the punk movement with performance art. Since then, they have collaborated on more than forty video art projects; they have produced films, animations and media installations; directed several video documentaries; and worked with television productions. The ironic gesture of their acting enhances the critically informed performances of different forms of subjection. This ambivalent performance of identities, at times contradicting one another, is realised through deconstruction, appropriation and narrative critique.

Gržinić and Šmid have adopted performativity as their working strategy. Employing the video and the new media, they turn the abstract quality of a technologically generated and mediated world into an expressive means of communication about the inequalities across the region of the former East, in particular the inequalities that are gendered.



Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid with Zvonka Simčič  
*Relations: 25 Years of the Lesbian Group ŠKUC-LL* (2012), Documentary film, 84 min. Video still. Image © Gržinić and Aina Šmid

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**and Aina Šmid** have presented and exhibited their works in more than 100 video festivals and events across the globe and have received several major awards for their video productions. From 2010, Gržinić and Šmid started to work in collaboration with Zvonka Simčič, multimedia artists and producer. Simčič is a founder of the CCC Institute, Slovenia, established in 2001.

In 2012, Gržinić and Šmid produced, together with Zvonka Simčič, an 84-minute documentary film entitled *Relations: 25 Years of the Lesbian Group ŠKUC-LL*, which surveyed the processes of marginalization of the LGBT groups and the struggle for their rights in Slovenia and in the wider ex-Yugoslavia. The work comments on the artistic and cultural potential of ŠKUC-LL, its critical discourse, and its emancipatory politics, however marginally visible. It features a series of interviews, various art projects, political appearances and insights into its members' socializing and networking. The film positions the queer-related movements of ex-Yugoslavia within a wider context of Europe today and comments on the topical problems of the increasing institutionalization of protest and the mainstreaming of dissent. The extract below hints on the position of ŠKUC-LL in Europe:

Tatjana Greif (archaeologist and activist): 'I think that when we talk about the lesbian movement, or about such a group as the lesbian group ŠKUC-LL, then we can go into alliances primarily with those groups and movements that are similar to us... we all share the same mentality and [have to grapple with culture that reflects] the same patriarchal and traditional patterns, at least in this region, and therefore we understand each other very well. A lesbian group from Slovenia or a lesbian group from Serbia, we are immediately on the same line, as opposed to when we connect with some groups in the West. This is one thing. Of course, we connect with other movements, the gay movement, the queer movement, the movement of disabled people, the Roma minority, etc. We connect with all those that like lesbian initiatives are pushed to the edge, and they try to keep us there. This is performed systematically. We also cooperate with international organizations, with European networks, such as ILGA Europe, and the like. This type of connection is again different, as Europe is essentially characterized by a bureaucratic European touch. The priorities held by ILGA Europe, etc. differ from the priorities of ŠKUC-LL, or some other lesbian and gay groups in our space. Simply because ILGA Europe and others are part of the European system of institutions and operate not by their priorities, but according to the priorities given to them from the outside. This would also be, in a way, a critique of international activism, or of the Western type of activism that is slowly falling into a mainstream conservative flow, as it tries at all costs to be integrated and included, and therefore assimilated' (*Relations*, 2012, courtesy of the artists).

The constructed narratives of the screened stories can be envisaged here as a sort of leeway for enacting identities, their memories and histories, including the comments on the American author Kate Bornstein, influential in queer theory, and her fluid identification. Kate Bornstein's new collection (edited with S. Bear Bergman) *Gender Outlaws: The Next Generation* reveals a spectrum of possible gender-based identities, embracing identities that

combine both genders or are not based on gender, even dismissing the construct of gender as irrelevant. In the video, in the discussion on the appropriateness of LGBT terminology, we hear comments concerning Bornstein's own identification:

Suzana Tratnik (writer and activist): 'The movement is today called LGBT... For me, it was a moment of awakening when I was translating the book by Kate Bornstein, *Gender Outlaws*. Bornstein is an American activist, writer, transgender activist, who spent most of her life as a man and then changed sex. After being operated on, she is now a woman and a lesbian. The comments she received were something like "if you like women why did you undergo the operation, you could have remained a man who was with women" – as in the past she was a heterosexual man. She said, "no, I am a lesbian and I had to traverse this path". This testifies, on the one hand to an openness of these new gender definitions. On the other hand, she says, "I still have many skins. I had a male skin and I took it off. I had a heterosexual skin and I took it off. Now I am a lesbian. I don't know what follows.'" (*Relations*, 2012, courtesy of the artists)



Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid with Zvonka Simčič  
*Relations: 25 Years of the Lesbian Group ŠKUC-LL* (2012),  
Documentary film, 84 min. Video still. Image © Gržinić and Aina Šmid

Such a working strategy includes representing as well as posing or even staging of identities and their forms, advocated by media deconstruction. For gender identification, this strategy also includes tactics of female masquerade, performativity of a sexual nature, and the use of the body as well as role play.



Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid with Zvonka Simčič  
*Relations: 25 Years of the Lesbian Group ŠKUC-LL* (2012),  
Documentary film, 84 min. Video still. Image © Gržinić and Aina Šmid

The video surveys incidents of marginalization and opposition to LGBT movements. Most importantly in my view, *Relations* puts an issue of intolerance in a historical perspective. The excerpts of recordings featuring homophobic behaviour during Pride Parades from across ex-Yugoslavia over the last decade are intermingled with a historical analysis. Here is an example of the accounts:

Lepa Mladenović (feminist activist from Belgrade, responding to the recordings): ‘I always insisted that I did not create a political analysis of what was actually happening. As a member of the team that organized the Pride Parade in 2001 [in Belgrade], I did not realize what would happen. We did not take seriously the threats of the ultra-fascists from the organization *Obraz* (Face). When they said “We will beat you up” we thought it was just threats. We had experience with *Žene u crnom* (Women in Black). I myself had this experience. They hit us once, maybe twice, but never to death.

I thought when we had demonstrated as Women in Black against Milošević, saying NO to the regime, as antifascists and for all victims of the war that this was a major political statement, bigger than lesbians and gays who want to publicly express their love, a celebration of love. We did not understand that this was a much bigger blow to patriarchy than saying NO to fascism. This was quite a surprise. But what was important was to see that this represented the continuation of Yugoslavia. In 2001 when we organized Pride, there were with us also feminists and lesbians from Zagreb and Ljubljana. They were with us in the parade. They came to be with us. In the end there were nearly a thousand of those who came to beat us up and twenty of us. We had not yet managed to gather when they already began to beat us up. Then it became really clear for the first time what kind of society we lived in.

We were wrong; we thought that with Djindjić we got democracy and that we had done with Milošević. We thought we could do what was to be done in a democracy. But we ignored, especially me, the fact that in those ten years, Milošević had created fascism, and we were not at all aware of it. And they were kids who hadn’t experienced war. Those who had beaten us were not ex-soldiers, maybe only some of them. Actually, this is fascism which derives from that time and reproduces itself constantly. Its source is militarism and hatred of the other. So it is a constant production of hate’ (*Relations*, 2012, courtesy of the artists).

*Relations* not only comments on such disturbing issues as rising nationalism or the manifestations of intolerance for difference, but most importantly, it offers answers, and a historical perspective on why we are now witnessing an

increase of homophobic behaviour across the region. However, there may be a problem with the reception of such politically informed works as *Relations*; the video relies primarily on a narrative and a rather dense text. It also takes 84 minutes to get the message across.



Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid with Zvonka Simčič  
*Naked Freedom* (2010), Video, 19 min 50 sec. Video still. Image © Gržinić and Aina Šmid

Gržinić and Šmid often allude in their collaborative practice to the role of art-making and comment on the limits of art. In *Naked Freedom* (2010), the video realised in collaboration with Zvonka Simčič, the artists conceptualize the possibility of social change under the conditions of financial capitalism and commercialisation processes that permeate today's art production, as well as engaging with social, political and critical discourses. The collective process is represented as being about simultaneous enactment of social, political, and performative practices: it is a collective undertaking, a performance created for the screen that aims "to resonate with performers off screen". The work connects three cities: Ljubljana, Belgrade, and Durham in

the USA and presents a conceptual political space of engagement that allows for rethinking the meaning of 'the local' and the conditions of membership in the contemporary communities of practice. The artists ask who is to be left out of the opportunities for social engagement.

Seven young activists, musicians, poets, and youth workers, members of the Youth Centre Medvode, have met in a village (Medvode) near Ljubljana in order to discuss the key political terms such as capitalism, colonialism, education, and the power of art as a possibility for a political intervention. What the work exposes are the utopian illusions of the possibility for radicalization and change in search for a 'proper life'. Young activists from Medvode cite the work of Jonathan Beller, Achille Mbembe, Gilles Deleuze and others, and their discourse appears overly academic. Mbembe is quoted as saying that 'What connects terror, death, and freedom is an ecstatic notion of temporality and politics'. One of the performers cites Jonathan Beller: 'It is cinema, as culmination of industrial technologies that uses the visual to reorganize the sensory world for the State and market'.



Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid with Zvonka Simčič  
*Naked Freedom* (2010), Video, 19 min 50 sec. Video still. Image © Gržinić and Aina Šmid

The work attends to the questions associated with social change and idealism vis-à-vis the power of youth, and it comments on the possibilities of initiating a participatory practice through the making of the video. The process potentially consolidates social relations, revealing a collective agency seeking new possibilities.

The Belgrade-based artist and performer Siniša Ilić deconstructs violence through his drawings, commenting on the shift from what can be referred to as hetero-normative violence to nationalistic forms of violence. His performative drawings presented in the video connect different spaces within the realm of culture, art and activism. The drawings depict violence in a rather grotesque manner, disclosing brutality as a result of nationalist homophobic tendencies that are common today in post-Socialist spaces, including aggression against different sexual orientation or lifestyle, or against transgender persons. Instances of violence, as well as aggressive parental authority or gender-based victimisation are all grafted onto poverty and low living standards<sup>3</sup>. This can be further extended and reflected in the problems associated with mass migratory movements of cheap labour and in the boom of sex trafficking from East to West in our Fortress Europe.

Current EU border policies and practices epitomise the position of a developed capitalist society that enforces the mechanism of exclusion through its migration laws. Manuela Bojadzije, drawing on Nirmal Puwar's work on global politics, argues that in contemporary theorising the migrant is repeatedly portrayed as an agency and migration as a movement, symbolising the 'other' of democracy. She cites Puwar's argument that it is the black subject, the subaltern (fe)male, the migrant, and the exile that are in the spotlight today<sup>4</sup>. On the one hand, such representation seems to result from the fascination with the subversive forces that are ascribed to the migration movement, the social struggle and the production of cultures. On the other, it also reflects the superficiality of media representation and the production of still images of migration politics and migrants through the prism of victimisation and oppression discourse, and subsequently, such fascinations are paraphrased and narrated through visual culture and research.

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> M. Bojadzije, *Migration. Still Speaking about Autonomy*, in: M. Grzinić and T. Ostojić, eds., *Integration Impossible? The Politics of Migration in the Artwork of Tanja Ostojić*, Argobooks, Berlin 2009.

Some artists have started to address more directly the hierarchy of human rights and its gendered nature as well as the citizenship-related privileges in the border crossing-related issues in today's Europe and beyond. The Berlin-based, Serbian born artist Tanja Ostojić's photograph *Untitled/After Courbet (L'orgine du monde)* (2004) is a re-make of Gustav Courbet's painting *L'orgine du monde* (1866); it is a close-up of a female crotch in EU flag panties that epitomises the Fortress Europe, the EU-Europe, envisaged as a body, a gendered body, a sexualised body and a symbol of the EU citizen's rights. The flag censors and provokes. The yellow starry circumference of the Union's symbol against the blue background acts as a signifier – the multiple intersections of the border control and sexuality in Europe today. Ostojić's reference to Courbet is not only to a visual representation, but also to his position as a politically concerned artist, engaged with the class struggle during the Paris Commune. The male gaze of the 19<sup>th</sup> century artist reflects clearly the gender power of the master in control of the way of seeing and representing the woman's body. Perhaps, as Grzinić argues, Ostojić points at another origin in re-enacting Courbet's piece, i.e. at "the origin of the EU that resides in libidinal organizations and differentiations that hegemonise, sort and regulate the social, economic and administrative body of Europe"<sup>5</sup>, in other words emphasising the political discourse of the 'Fortress' Europe. Indeed, one of the key issues in Europe today is the question of restrictive migration and asylum laws across all the EU states. That problem reflects other borders too. Bojadzijevev (2009) also points out that the idea of the autonomy of migration is associated with various concepts, including 'the right to escape', 'the socio-economic struggle of migration', wage labour, slavery, and the dynamics of post-colonialism<sup>6</sup>. The autonomy of migration is also gendered.

The last section of the video *Naked Freedom* addresses the question of border control and comments on the status of those seen as non-EU, and even more so, as non-citizens in Europe. More specifically, the status of the citizens from African nations in 'Fortress Europe' is addressed through several references made to the migrant workers who are trying to live and survive in the European Union of today. In parallel, a historical analysis is offered of the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion and prevention of the work and life in the EU, based on a debate-exchange between Marina Gržinić and Ghana-born and Amsterdam-based Kwame Nimako that took place at the 'Workshop on Education, Development, Freedom', at Duke University, Durham, USA, in

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<sup>5</sup> M. Grzinić, *De-Coloniality of Knowledge* in: *Integration Impossible*, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

<sup>6</sup> M. Bojadzijevev, *op. cit.*

February 2010. The workshop was organised by the Centre for Global Studies and the Humanities director, Argentinean literary theorist, Walter Dignolo, and it aimed to explore such political concepts as global colonialism and the geopolitics of knowledge production.



Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid with Zvonka Simčič  
*Naked Freedom* (2010), Video, 19 min 50 sec. Video still. Image © Gržinić and Aina Šmid

Kwame Nimako runs the National Institute for the Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacy in Amsterdam. Here, the video becomes a kind of docu-fiction, or a *dispositif* for a film, addressing the wider context of global capitalism and labour migration with the aim of confronting the working and living conditions of non-EU residents, in particular from the African continent. A history of these relations vis-à-vis the new geopolitical reality of Europe is narrated. It is the history based on the established hegemonic mechanisms of division that are the outcome of post-colonialism. These stories are ‘forgotten’ today, but are steadily lived and reproduced through Western European food policies’ divisions of the world.

When we think about Europe, we reflect upon geo-politics on the one hand and on embodied experience and cognitive dimension on the other, always in relation to change and transformation. Change is inherent in the current situation and linked to the development of new technologies, globalisation, and the movement of people and ideas. Transformation is associated with the processes of the relocation of labour, educational experience, the change of lifestyle. It manifests itself through migration and various diasporas. The number of people crossing the borders is greater than ever before. On the one hand, we can observe a facilitation of migration policy, and an easing of border controls. On the other, we see a proliferation of the walls that continue to divide the spaces of Europe into us and them. These are symbolic walls and less visible walls reminiscent of the Berlin wall now transformed into an East Side gallery showcasing the murals. The gallery reminds us about the political, socio-economic and cultural divide between the West and the East, once the Eastern Bloc, now a new European space. However, the symbolic walls are stronger than their physical manifestations. They prevail and continue to exist in the cognitive space and the systemic structures across the geo-political map of Europe, despite their material disappearance. The mobility across the national borders remains a privilege rather than a norm. When we consider the questions of migration and diaspora-related experience, it is being on the 'right' side of the wall that determines the versions of sovereignty, the citizenship-related entitlements, including the economic rights. The embodied experience and personal accounts can be seen as the signifiers of crossing the wall, border crossing, migration routes and various diasporas.

In *Naked Freedom* it is the video itself, the process of its production, that opens up possibilities for dissent. The tactics of resistance, which introduce the concept of emancipation and alternative voices in artistic practice, give rise to political alliances with others, in particular with those seen as 'outsiders'. The structure of *Naked Freedom* constructs what Gržinić has called a revolutionary *dispositif* – that is a project for a possible change, for a different society, different politics and different place of art in the realms of neoliberal global capitalism.

In an interview with Ana Vujanović, Gržinić explained: "Our videos are so condensed, almost viscid and heavy, since each frame in the video relates to the production of life and to politics, and only then to art. What we are primarily researching and seeking to express is bio-politics, that hybrid of the biological and the political, the power that organizes not only bodies in contemporary societies but also, to an extreme degree, the conditions of life

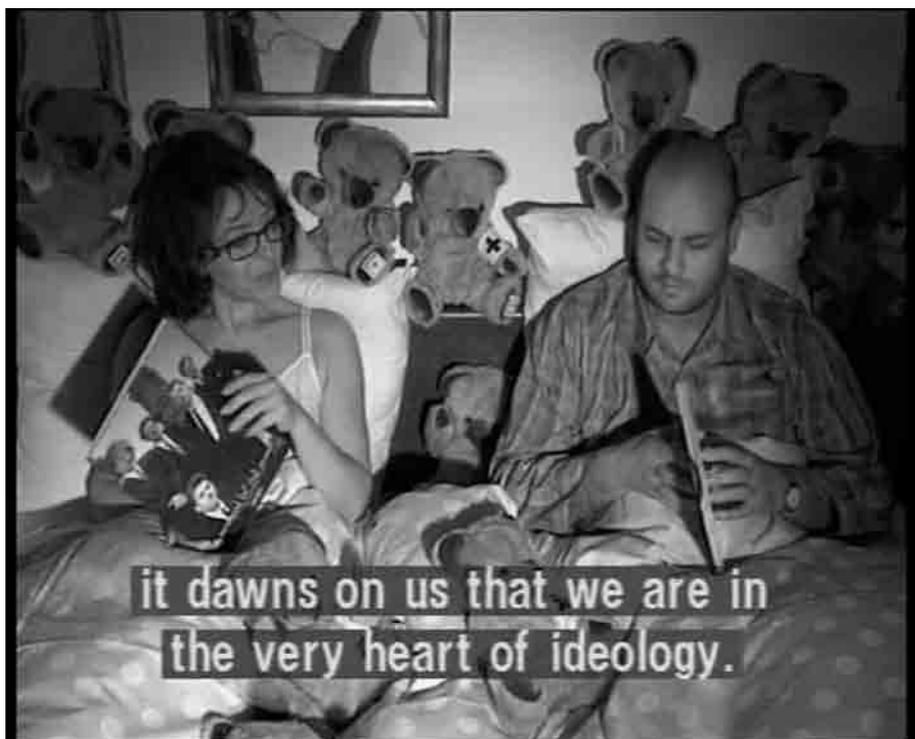
and politics”<sup>7</sup>. Indeed, Gržinić’s message is that one (here the fe/male artist from the East) exists or is made possible solely on the basis of the subversive performance of various identity-roles and its misrepresentation: “There is no difference between my writing, my video, my lectures at the art academy in Vienna: they are all part of the same painstaking, almost bureaucratic work of insisting on constant differentiation and contamination. Everything I do is a patiently constructed genealogy of power and dirty relations, the bloody situations of art and politics... There will never be an end to art because too much money is invested in contemporary art production and also because art today has signed a clear and visibly normalized contract with capital”<sup>8</sup>.



Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid,  
*Post-Socialism + Retro Avant-Garde + Irwin* (1997), Video, 22 min 05 sec. Video still.  
Image © Gržinić and Aina Šmid

<sup>7</sup> M. Gržinić in conversation with Ana Vujanović, in: M. Gržinić and T. Velagić eds., *New Media Technology, Science and Politics: The Video Art of Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid*, Locker, Vienna, 2008.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*



Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid,  
*Post-Socialism + Retro Avant-Garde + Irwin* (1997), Video, 22 min 05 sec. Video still.  
 Image © Gržinić and Aina Šmid

The ambiguous position of belonging to and existing on the periphery of Europe (a position associated with marginal influence in global cultural discourse) further complicates the construction of identity. Gržinić is very aware of the periphery of art production emerging from post-Socialist contexts. She employed Lacan's notion of lamella, the field between two deaths – the symbolic and the real, to explain how to visualize the position of post-Socialist Europe in the European Community today: "The ultimate object of horror is this life beyond death, an immortal or indestructible object, the life that is void, emptied from the symbolic structure. EE is represented as a surplus of Europe, as if before the fall of the Berlin Wall it wasn't European enough. 'I am a piece of shit' may be the first condition required for EE to

take upon itself all the characteristics of a modern subjectivity”.<sup>9</sup> In a sense, what we can learn from the positioning of post-Socialist Europe today is a kind of traumatic reality, evident through the surface of the emerging works. And these works are still waiting to be reintegrated into the global art scene and the dominant art discourse.

Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid have been offering a critique of different ideologies portrayed always as fluid, changing systems, attempting to reveal their rhetorical functions particularly in the appropriation of cultural production. Ideology for them is manifested in the body, history, and culture. Their collaborative practice points at a visible trend of resistance tactics in contemporary art. Yet, they seem to imply that emancipatory and alternative voices in artistic practice can only emerge collectively, parallel with the processes of reflecting upon the ‘outsiders’ in the context of post-Socialist mapping of the non-Capitalist world. The work *Postsocialism + Retroavantgarda + IRWIN* (1997), in which the video itself becomes a medium for philosophical reflection about the cultural, artistic and political spaces in the current conditions of post-Socialism in the territories of former Yugoslavia in the 1980s and 1990s. The video features the IRWIN group, Mladen Stilinović and Kasimir Malevich. Their artistic projects with their relation to the Socialist and post-Socialist ideology code in a specific way the geographical space of former Yugoslavia. The result of this coding is *Retroavantgarda* – an attempt to frame newly constructed art-retro-formation through technology. Slavoj Žižek and Peter Weibel are also being heard. The utopian alternative mapping of the non-Capitalist world, as Gržinić and Šmid showed in *Postsocialism + Retroavantgarda + IRWIN*, does not seem to be all-inclusive either. Not all artists can be included in such post-Socialist mapping, especially those artists who are purposefully a-theoretical or anti-academic and are involved in more philistine movements. Also, there is a problem of inclusion with regard to more emerging artists. Thus, it seems that different forms of hierarchies may occur in this utopian mapping and fictional unity as presented by Gržinić and Šmid. The term ‘retro-avant-garde’ refers to an artistic movement that was positioned in the context of the post-Socialist reality and supposed to represent ‘the soft revolution’ in post-Socialist art and culture.

Gržinić and Šmid pointed out in *Retroavantgarda* that the East has not provided the West with the relevant theoretical and interpretative tools to understand the uniqueness and diversity of the artistic projects that originate

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<sup>9</sup> M. Gržinić, *Fiction Reconstructed: Eastern Europe, Post-Socialism and the Retro-Avant-garde*, ed. Selene Springerin, Vienna 2000, pp. 35-36.

in the former East. Yet, we could also argue that the cultural and theoretical domains in the former East are often incapable of offering critique, interpretations, or self-reflection on the artistic projects and the cultural phenomena originating in post-Socialist spaces.

What are the options for dissent through art practice? For Gržinić and Šmid, the solution is to work through a “contaminating strategy”, merging spaces, institutions, the inside and the outside, and thinking in terms of different economies and using different institutional *dispositifs* in which one is situated, works and lives; to question ownership, for instance the ownership of histories, including feminist histories. I am loosely drawing on Bell Hooks’ notion of a feminist movement, advanced in *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics* (2000), constructing a narrative around the visual representations embedded in action and proposing to merge a kind of restless criticality with social consciousness. Such a method incorporates an element of self-criticality, including a reflection on positioning, on class, race, gender, sexuality and so on. In addition to giving a more inclusive approach to gender representation and its geographies, this is a self-reflexive way of de-centering, an attempt at contesting and problematising the ongoing ideological constructions of global subjectivity more generally.

Nancy Frazer’s ‘Feminism, Capitalism and the Cunning of History’ (2009), published in the *New Left Review*, situates the second-wave feminist movement (“not this or that geographical slice of the movement”) within the larger political context and its historical moment. She points out that feminist demands for equality have been largely accepted, yet, at the same time, considering the process of feminism’s mutation in the evolving realms of neo-liberalism, this acceptance has resulted in a decoupling of feminism’s emancipatory potential. I would add that geographical differentiation and versions of neo-liberalism and nationalism further complicate the reference to *the* feminist movement. As such, I would argue for fragmentary and spatial fluidity and temporal manifestations of multiple feminisms. Fraser also contemplates the possibility of reorientation of feminism in the present context of the global capitalist crises, which could lead to a new form of social organization. She states: “With the fragmentation of the feminist critique comes the selective incorporation and partial recuperation of some of its stands”<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> N. Frazer, *Feminism, Capitalism and the Cunning of History*, “New Left Review”, March-April 2009, no. 56, p. 99.

I would argue that the performative practice offered by Gržinić and Šmid could be seen as a platform for the reflection on critical art or as a comment or intervention in the politics of the everyday, through the formation of a resisting agency. However, such artistic strategies are possible when the artists can openly acknowledge their position as marginal and ‘defeated’ in the dominant system, when they are able and ready to admit a sense of non-belonging. Such cultural strategies require, as Chris Townsend (2007) argues, an awareness of marginal positioning that professional Western artists do not accept and, I would add, of which they are not always aware<sup>11</sup>. Such practices that are not Capitalist-driven can become a means and a metaphor, however utopian or real, for social and political change in the post-Socialist reality of the everyday. Yet, such artistic utopias found at this intersection and their resisting identities remain invisible in the global discourse of art.



Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid, *HI-RES* (2006), Video, 20 min 57 sec. Video still.  
Image © Gržinić and Aina Šmid

<sup>11</sup> Ch. Townsend, *Protest Art*, “Art Monthly”, February 2007.

Gržinić and Šmid's video *HI-RES* (2006) critiques the power of the market that dominates the art world. The dominant art market position determines the written texts, the production of critical works, and also the international curatorial practices. The dominant market also determines the language of the cultural production. In the video, a contemporary dance performance serves as a metaphorical background for a dense narrative analysis of the global capitalist system and its 'performative' politics. A debate is conducted in the garden of a typical middle-class house on the outskirts of Ljubljana. Questions are asked about the significance of geo-political location for the limits of intervention through art production and its representation in the new European spaces. As the narration unfolds, the art in post-Soviet countries becomes amalgamated with a monster; becomes part of the capitalist machinery.

Although post-Socialist art practice is becoming increasingly integrated into global neo-liberal Capitalism, post-Socialist artistic perspectives have something different to communicate. Their creativity has less to do with a specific repertoire of particular art forms, and more with a series of idiosyncratic aesthetic strategies and local applications of already familiar forms. These forms include echoes of transgressive gestures, the utopian promise of the avant-garde, playing with the subversive techniques of performance, and the appropriation of technology. The processes of constructing socio-economic and cultural identity are constituted by an interesting hybrid of ideological domination, resistance, and socio-economic and cultural change initiated in the 1990s, a decade which saw the artistic status of the former East redefined in a globalised (arts) market while nevertheless appealing to what constitutes 'our reality'. The discourse of belonging to the 'new Europe' now forms a more powerful locus of a management of meanings by which national culture is maintained and transmitted, and the exploitative nature of capitalism is nevertheless criticised, while local politics and the rise of nationalism is both praised and challenged. Such a position can result in a certain way of seeing, drawing on Ingmar Bergman's *Through a Glass Darkly*, a way of seeing that challenges the reduction of the core values that make us<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> K. Kosmala, *Through A Glass Darkly: Performative Practice... Without Border, Without Name*, "Variant Magazine" 41, Spring 2011.



Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid, HI-RES (2006), Video, 20 min 57 sec. Video still.  
Image © Gržinić and Aina Šmid



Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid, HI-RES (2006), Video, 20 min 57 sec. Video still.  
Image © Gržinić and Aina Šmid

## ON POLITICAL RE-FRAMINGS: CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, we could argue that the processes of identification are bound with their regions, represented through historical issues and the framing of political events. These processes can be expanded to culturally conditioned, socio-political practices and their geographies. Gržinić and Šmid's narrations of both belonging and non-belonging to post-Socialist spaces, manifested as a sense of fragmented, resisting, ambivalent and performative micro-hi/stories, reveal the dynamics of both political criticism and subversive positions. The intersecting histories and cultures, shared traumas, and recent geo-political conditions within post-Socialist Europe are all embedded in the artists' collaborative practice.

Gržinić and Šmid's narrations are based on a technical constitution of temporality. Today, in the new media world, digitalization and the condensation of the intervals of exposure whether in photographic, film-based, or digitally produced works, and an increasing speed of image circulation, we experience the radical emptying out of visual work, a process that involves an image evacuation. This process of emptying out of an image and also ways of reorganizing an image has a significant impact upon the conception of history, memory and of the body. Gržinić commented on the aesthetic process of image sterilization: "Mistakes in the images, once reminders of the reality and temporality of existence, are lost. The image undergoes the process of 'emptying out', this process mediates between time and space and the human experience of time and space".<sup>13</sup>

The artists comment on the evolving discourse of a nation, heritage, religion, family and state and reframe cultural values that stem from such terms. Yet, in the videos of Gržinić and Šmid, the real images, including images of war or representation of political protest (for instance in the video *Luna 10*) are purposefully abstracted, merged with the visualization of the body, and hence made less direct. It is in my view an indirect attempt to criticize the media's central role in re-shaping the reception of an ever-expanding mass media-generated political discourse and the culture of today.

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<sup>13</sup> M. Gržinić, *Fiction Reconstructed*, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-214.



Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid, Luna 10 (1994) Video 10 min 35 sec. Video still.  
Image © Gržinić and Aina Šmid

**KONSTRUOWANIE OPOWIEŚCI O (NIE)PRZYNALEŻNOŚCI DO EUROPY:  
WIDEO PERFORMANCE MARINY GRŽINIĆ I AINY ŠMID  
(streszczenie)**

W sztuce wideo oraz nowych mediów Mariny Gržinić i Ainy Šmid abstrakcyjność świata przedstawianego i poznawanego przy pomocy nowoczesnej techniki staje się dzisiaj środkiem ekspresji w strategiach komunikowania całego regionu post-socjalistycznej Europy, obszaru tak zwanej dawniej Europy Wschodniej. Pracując razem przeszło trzydzieści lat w obszarze sztuki wideo, Marina Gržinić i Aina Šmid zestawiają wspomnienia o komunistycznej przeszłości i jej symbolice ze sprzecznościami rzeczywistości post-socjalistycznej, angażując się przy tym w krytykę hegemonii Zachodu i globalnego kapitalizmu. Ironia gry sztuką pogłębia ich krytyczne sposoby przedstawiania uprzedmiotowienia i różnych form zależności. Pozowanie można tutaj postrzegać jako swobodną przestrzeń dla odtwarzanych tożsamości. Przy identyfikacji genderowej oznacza to także formę maskarady oraz performatywność tożsamości seksualnych. Ta ambiwalentna gra tożsamości, niekiedy sprzecznych ze sobą wartości, realizuje się przez dekonstrukcję, przywłaszczanie materiałów kultury masowej i mediów, oraz krytykę narratywną. Performatywność odnosi się tutaj do działań w obrębie kultury i praktyk

artystycznych, polegających na strategiach udawania i przyjmowania tożsamości oraz ich form. Gržinić i Šmid zajmują się krytyką ideologii przedstawionych jako płynne, zmienne systemy, przez co ukazują ich retoryczne funkcje w wytwarzaniu kultury. Ideologia w ich pracach manifestuje się w ciele, historii i kulturze. Artykuł analizuje ich nowsze prace, nawiązując jednocześnie do tematu oporu i protestu we współczesnej sztuce.

**Słowa klucze:** wideo, media, polityka, gender, opór, ciało, performance.

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## ON FORECLOSURE AND *FRESH CHERRIES*\*

*To see one must take a position.*  
Georges Didi-Huberman

**Abstract:** This is an attempt to put a video artwork – *Świeże wiśnie* [Fresh cherries] by Anna Baumgart to a critical test proposed by the film critic Serge Daney<sup>1</sup>. Daney formulated it while discussing a number of films that emerged in Europe as a result of the Holocaust experience. He claims that first, an author creating a film dealing with such a theme should not place beauty before the just; second, the author should honestly acknowledge the impossibility of telling the story – the stopping point in the course of history, when storytelling freezes or runs idle, and finally, such a film should not be talking about amnesia or repression, but rather about foreclosure, that is a hallucinatory return to the reality of something upon which it was impossible to place a 'judgment of reality'.

**Keywords:** Anna Baumgart, Polish Contemporary Art, Video art, Serge Daney, Women's Rights, Film Theory, Jean-Luc Godard, French New Wave Cinema, Jacques Rivette.

It is not an exaggeration to claim that among the researchers working in the field of cultural studies there is a new wave of interest in the history of World War II, of its immediate consequences for culture in the broad sense and in the ways the after-war generations relate to these experiences. In Poland the echo of WWII is probably still one of the most pervasive topics in the mainstream public discourse. The number of articles published per year in the

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\* Paper from the Conference "Current Issues in European Cultural Studies", organised by the Advanced CulturalStudies Institute of Sweden (ACSIS) in Norrköping 15-17 June 2011. Conference Proceedings published by Linköping University Electronic Press: [http://www.ep.liu.se/ecp\\_home/index.en.aspx?issue=062](http://www.ep.liu.se/ecp_home/index.en.aspx?issue=062). © The Author.

<sup>1</sup> In this paper I cite extensively from *Postcards from the cinema*, Serge Daney talks with Paul Grant. 2007. Berg Publishers.

Polish mainstream newspapers on the topic can be counted in thousands. Perhaps, with the passage of time, the events related to WWII gain certain exotic appeal, as was suggested by Claire Alexander<sup>2</sup>, or perhaps this has more to do with “bringing back the nonpresence”, to cite the title of a commemorative discussion on the 69<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liquidation of the Jewish ghetto in Falenica, Poland, during which *Fresh Cherries* – the video artwork that I am going to concentrate on in this paper was also screened.

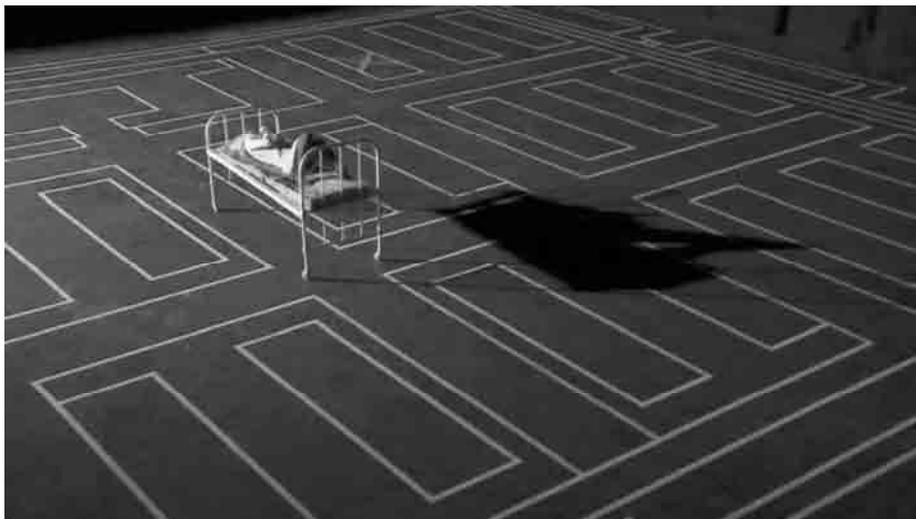
Found footage, archival film, document and false document, theatrical or even para-theatrical staging – this is how Agnieszka Rayzacher described Baumgart’s 18 minute long video during one of the many open public debates that her Warsaw-based art gallery, Lokal 30, organized to promote this film<sup>3</sup>. It is a piece rather easy to watch, even though the editing is fairly frisky. The author mixes film genres, adding popular musical fragments easily associated with the cultures of the countries involved in WWII, and edits in rapid sequence with clashing discourses<sup>4</sup>. For example, a scene set at a concentration camp brothel, where something emerges that can be described as a fragile feeling of love (prohibited in the camps, but known to preserve one’s humanity) is followed by the verbal description of a violent group rape from the point of view of a victim. The viewers usually tend to like the video-work

<sup>2</sup> During one of the plenary sessions of “Current Issues in European Cultural Studies” conference, organised by the Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden, in Norrköping, Sweden, 15-17 June 2011.

<sup>3</sup> obieg.pl/rozmowy/20441; See also Tomasz Kozak, 2010, *Old Sores Must/not/ be re-opened?* Lokal\_30, London; and Tomasz Kozak, 2010, *Wytępić te wszystkie bestie?* Ed. 40000 malarzy, Warsaw. A number of other artists connected to lokal\_30 approach in their art the question of traumatic memories and the banality of evil. To mention just a few works: the video *The Hospital of Transfiguration* by Zuzanna Janin deals with the sublimation of an omnipresent will to kill – a work in homage to Prof. Antoni Kepiński – a former Miranda camp prisoner, known for his groundbreaking research and therapeutic work with the survivors of Nazi concentration camps – and to Prof. Józef Bednarz, a psychiatrist killed by the Nazis in 1939 together with his patients. Another work by Janin, the installation *Memory (1992-2001)*, although a very personal piece, it was misinterpreted by some as a comment on Auschwitz, probably because of the free associations that the materials she used brought to mind – a room with printed names on the walls filled with fog. See also the multimedia works of Tomasz Kozak, many of which have been inspired by the texts of the Auschwitz survivor, the poet Tadeusz Borowski.

<sup>4</sup> The *Fresh Cherries*’ credits font with the upside-down letter B in it is, of course, not an attempt to embellish the film, but a homage to Auschwitz victims, and especially to the welders’ team headed by Jan Liwacz, which manufactured the infamous inscription above the entrance of that Nazi concentration camp, viewed by many as an act of sabotage through art of the camp regime, but also it is a message from Baumgart herself: this work of art is (also) an act of sabotage of the viewer’s consciousness.

and praise the protagonists and the author<sup>5</sup>.



Anna Baumgart, *Fresh Cherries*, film, 2010, courtesy Anna Baumgart



Anna Baumgart, *Fresh Cherries*, film, 2010, courtesy Anna Baumgart

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<sup>5</sup> With the only exception know to me: Jaruga R. *KURWY koncentracyjne*, Nie, 42/2010. <http://www.nie.com.pl/art23916.htm>.

*Fresh Cherries* shows a session of *Systemic constellation* (family) therapy, which, according to its founder Bert Hellinger<sup>6</sup>, offers an almost literal possibility to travel back in time. The participants try to solve their psychological conflicts by positioning themselves in certain ways (that is – *take a position*) forming so called “constellations”. They seldom talk. The main character – Klara Bielawka, is playing herself, a contemporary actress who is trying to get into a new, difficult role. She is supposed to play a concentration camp prostitute (and later a Polish woman raped by the Soviet liberators/occupants). There is a male and a female Hellingerian therapist and three female assistants – ‘representatives’, as they are called, who more or less actively contribute to the therapeutic session. An important role is played by the extravagant and fairly famous Polish film operator/ director – Marcin Koszałka, playing himself; the academic researcher Joanna Ostrowska discusses the hierarchization of the victims in the Nazi concentration camps; one can also hear the artist herself, directing behind the camera. Fragments from an archival film might appear somewhat stylistically discontinuous with the rest of the original filming<sup>7</sup>. These come from the only documentary film in Poland showing the hair-cutting punishment inflicted after WWII on the women who were known to maintain intimate relationships with the enemy. However, the story of the characters documented in these archival shots is not very different from that of the women impersonated by Klara. The soundtrack and the title *Fresh Cherries* are based on a song about unrequited love interpreted by one of the most popular pre-war Polish singers, Tadeusz Faliszewski.<sup>8</sup>

During the film’s premiere at *Muranów*, one of Warsaw’s main art cinemas, Baumgart’s work sporadically provoked bursts of laughter in some of the viewers. With the declared theme of the movie – the taboos, the stigmas and the hierarchization of the victims of the WWII, as well as the processes of shaping the representation of war in the eyes of the younger generation – this

<sup>6</sup> Who seems to have been displaying sympathy and compassion towards dictatorships such as Adolf Hitler’s regime and national-socialist movement: Herman Nimis, *Bert Hellinger’s controversial therapy* [http://afa.home.xs4all.nl/alert/engels/hellinger\\_e.html](http://afa.home.xs4all.nl/alert/engels/hellinger_e.html).

<sup>7</sup> Didi Hubermans mentions in *Images in spite of all*, the fact that there is a certain going back in time in Godard’s way through his film-editing in his *Histoire(s) du cinema*, originally described by Jacques Aumont. In addition to that Aumont mentions that the insertion of the archival shooting in the tempo of the film doesn’t diminish in any way the photographic recording of its nature. The film editing is together with the declared effects of *Constellation Therapy* another way in which Baumgart is trying to take us back in time.

<sup>8</sup> Written by Walery Jarzębiec, music by Zygmunt Białostocki: <http://teksty.org/tadeusz-faliszewski,szczescie-trzeba-rwac-jak-swieze-wisnie>.

was to me quite troubling. Viewers seldom laugh when the film is shown in smaller groups. During the premiere the laughter was triggered by the appearance of two characters who assume a rather comical posture: the operator-actor Koszałka and the grotesque hellingerian female therapist. One might think that the humour is not appropriate, or even obscene, in a film that attempts to deal seriously with the fate of concentration camp inmates.

In order to understand the use of humor in the context of a Holocaust-related art production I suggest we look at a number of works known for their inherent comedy. Benigni's *La vita è bella*, for instance, was criticized on countless occasions for its comedy<sup>9</sup>. However, the humor in Benigni's film is only there for the sake of a character, a young boy, whose life his father (played by Benigni himself) is trying to save. The humor is there because it seems to ensure the boy's survival<sup>10</sup>. The viewer is just a passerby, witnessing by pure chance the almost too exemplary relationship between the father and the son.<sup>11</sup> Humour can also be used as a tool in trying to spell out the facts which are usually traumatic and very difficult to cope with, for instance, in *Maus*, the visual novel by Art Spiegelman.

There is also a significant number of episodes of the animated comedy series *South Park* that touch upon the Holocaust-related issues<sup>12</sup>. Among the four boys, the main characters of the series, are Kyle Broflovski – a Jewish boy, and Eric Cartman, who is explicitly anti-Jewish; nevertheless they have kept hanging out together for 16 seasons already. In this case the use of humor frequently mixed with toilet-jokes is even more controversial<sup>13</sup>. On the other

<sup>9</sup> See among others: Kobi Niv *Life is Beautiful, But Not for Jews: Another View of the Film by Benigni*, The Scarecrow Press, Inc | 2003-10.

<sup>10</sup> Krystyna Chiger, the author of the *The Girl in the Green Sweater* and the real person behind one of Agnieszka Holland's characters in her film *The Darkness*, describes her father in an interview to the Polish issue of *Newsweek* (29/2011) as "a person with a great sense of humor, which helped to pull everybody from the deep blackness". The film and Chiger's book is based on the story of survival of a Jewish family in the city's sewage system after the liquidation of a Jewish ghetto.

<sup>11</sup> One can't fail to recollect here Tadeusz Borowski's story in which a member of Sonderkommando is telling how he escorted his own father to the gas chamber.

<sup>12</sup> See the episodes *The passion of the Jew* Season 8 or *Cartman's List* Season 12, of course these episodes and many more from SP, could also be interpreted just as fancy movie reviews. southparkstudious.com.

<sup>13</sup> Despite its 43 uncensored uses of the racial slur 'nigger', the season 11 episode *With Apologies to Jesse Jackson* generated relatively little controversy, as most in the black community praised the episode for its context and its comedic way of conveying other races' perceptions of how black people must feel when hearing the word. For more: Vanessa E. Jones (January 29, 2008). *No offense, but...* The Boston Globe.

hand, Larry David, in one of the episodes of his *Curb Your Enthusiasm* show offers a job to a person just because he has numbers written on his arm; but they turn out to be the numbers of a lottery ticket and not a Nazi camp tattoo. In another episode he puts together at a table two survivors: one of the Holocaust, and the other one an actor from the series *Survival*, who seems to be oblivious of WWII history. This ends in a fight between those two. Perhaps, comedy creators like Larry David, Trey Parker and Matt Stone are perceived by the mainstream of American culture to be beyond good or evil. Their vogue grants them the right to spell out attempts to bring back the non-presence, and to produce artistic and critical discourse through the channel of the US entertainment industry. Humor is what opens the door to the past. Besides, unlike the bold Larry David, who always seems to get himself into trouble for voicing what he thinks, in *South Park*, Cartman, one of the four main characters, the chubby boy, is usually the one who is punished most of all and usually quite roughly, from the very first episode, Kyle, on the other hand, remains unscathed, and turns out to be right at the end of each episode, which probably settles the account<sup>14</sup>.

Another Holocaust-related fantasy is *Trenul Vieții* [The train of life] by Radu Mihaileanu, in which the Jews from an Eastern European village build themselves a train on which they happily escape from the Nazis. Only by the end of the film does the viewer learn that the whole story is only the imagination of a concentration camp inmate. Here the humor is addressed to the inmate himself. His imagination might be what keeps him alive and, perhaps, increases his chances of survival<sup>15</sup>.

In her film Baumgart uses similar scenery as Lars Von Trier in his film *Dogville* (black floor on which nonexistent buildings are painted with thin white lines, with very few props – a set perceived as a set). It has been suggested that she intentionally cites Von Trier, a director who constantly brings into the cinematic discourse examples of vulnerable and distressed women<sup>16</sup>. Some

<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, the eight and nine-year-old British children voted Cartman as their favorite personality in a 1999 poll. *Entertainment Cartman top with kids*, news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/430977.stm.

<sup>15</sup> For example, as Mauthausen and Gusen camps' survivor Stanisław Grzebiuk argues in his memoir *Five years in Kazet*. Apparently it could also be the cause of one's imprisonment, as it happened to the drama professor in Puipa's *Forest of the Gods*, arrested for his ironic remarks that he uttered during his lectures. The character and the film were based on a memoir with the same title by Balys Sruoga.

<sup>16</sup> This particular film is one of the best stories about human exploitation and pay back. From Claudio Carvahlo review on imdb.com.

suggested that Baumgart attempted a homage to Von Trier. There were also voices murmuring that Lars von Trier's name was used by Baumgart as an advertising tool to promote her work. Others on the contrary claimed that it is a feminist critique of Von Trier's position – if Von Trier is in fact a misogynist (and with his repeated use of female exploitation in his films he could be interpreted as such).

Slavoj Žižek claims in his *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema*, that all modern films are ultimately about the possibility or impossibility of making a film. *Dogville* is a film that deals allegorically with the belief in Cinema itself: with the question of how to make a film today which the viewer will fully believe<sup>17</sup>. The mystery of film consists in the fact that even though the viewer knows it is an illusion, it fascinates him and it does not prevent his identification<sup>18</sup>. If anything, it makes him get deeper into the tensions of his inner life. In a way, the naïve belief is undermined, deconstructed through irony, but Von Trier wants to be serious with the magic. Irony (humor yet again<sup>19</sup>) is used with the set to make us believe. There is something in the illusion that is more real than the reality behind it. Interestingly, unlike many of the *Dogville* reviewers, Žižek<sup>20</sup> is one of the few that are actually acutely aware of the structure of the set and can put it into words. For many critics the set is even more abstract/invisible than it really is in *Dogville*.

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<sup>17</sup> Of course you're not obliged to believe what you see – it can even be dangerous – but you're not obliged to hold on to cinema either. There has to be some risk and some virtue, that is, some value, in the act of showing something to someone who is capable of seeing it. Learning how to “read” the visual and “decode” messages would be useless if there wasn't still the minimal, but deep seeded conviction that *seeing* is superior to not seeing, and that what isn't seen “in time” will never really be seen. Cinema is an art of the present. /S. Daney/.

<sup>18</sup> In *Fresh Cherries* this alienation is taken to even a higher level: the actors are not real actors and the real actors only play actors.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Rothberg writes in his *Traumatic realism* \*(2000, University of Minesota Press) about *Patrimony. A true story* by Philip Roth. A friend of the author's father is asking the author to help him in publishing his memoir. The man claims he survived the war by hiding in the beds of various arian women. The text contains graphic depictions of his sexual exploits with the women who hide him, which is quite a twist to the unusual anguish of Holocaust testimonies. The episode suggests, argues Rothberg, that there might be something pornographic about making images and ultimately commodities out of Holocaust. It is as if the fundamental obscenity of the events themselves cannot be represented without a pornographic contamination of the person doing the representing. Yet still, one could replace it with farce.

<sup>20</sup> Similarly, the protagonist of Algimantas Puipa' *Forest of the Gods* states: No props or property on the scene! Let's refuse the cliches! Let in some fresh air! Let's not eviscerate the subject! Property on the stage is like a live mouse in the teeth of a painted cat. See also Gene A. Plumka, *Holocaust Drama, The Theater of Atrocity*, 2009, Cambridge Univ. Press.

Secondly, the two films bring into light similar issues. Grace's arrival in *Dogville*, her imprisonment and later her helplessness is the catalyst that, step by step, tempts the apparently decent people of *Dogville* to inflict upon her greater and greater humiliations to feed their now unrestrained desires. She becomes the city's whore. There is a scene in which Grace confronts the people of *Dogville* with a critique of their immoral behavior. Their response is to either deny the truth of what she has said or to blame Grace herself for tempting them, which resembles the statements in Baumgart's *Fresh Cherries*.

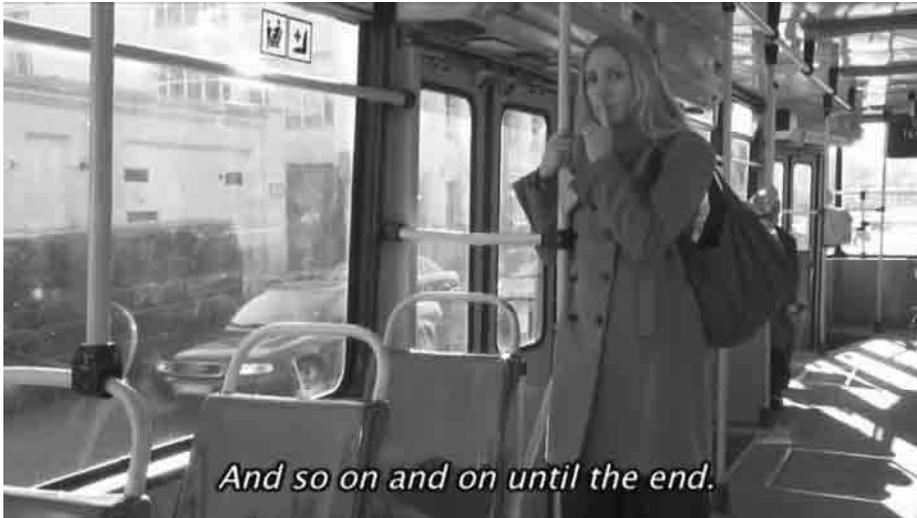
Lastly, one might claim that Baumgart used the visual methodology developed by Von Trier as well as the *Systemic Constellation* therapy routine in order to approach a difficult, perhaps an untellable story. This is somewhat similar to what is attempted in this essay, where Baumgart's film is discussed through the perspective of an already existing methodology, i.e. the critical test developed by Serge Daney.

Although it can be applied to any film, the context in which Daney presents his scale is similar to the one that Baumgart focuses on in her work. Daney describes two films that in his opinion are situated at the two opposite ends of his test. Its negative end is occupied by such films as *Kapo*, directed in 1960 by Gillo Pontecorvo. Daney discusses it along the lines of Jacques Rivette's *On Abjection*<sup>21</sup>, in which the author denounced Pontecorvo's film. When Daney read the article for the first time, it provoked in him both an aesthetic and a moral shock, and it would determine his decision to become a critic. Daney claims that he has never seen the obscure *Kapo*. Yet at the same time he has seen it. Rivette showed it to him with words. Rivette did not recount the film's narrative in his article. Instead he was content to describe one shot in a single sentence. The sentence, engraved in Daney's memory, read: "Just look at the shot in *Kapo* where Riva commits suicide by throwing herself on electric barbed wire: the man who decides at this moment to track forward and reframe the dead body in a low-angle shot – carefully positioning the raised hand in the corner of the final frame – deserves only the most profound contempt." Therefore a simple camera movement could be the one movement not to make. The one movement one must – obviously – be abject to make. Over the years, "the tracking shot in *Kapo* would become Daney's portable dogma, the axiom that was not up for discussion, the breaking point of any debate. No tracking shots in Baumgart's film either. I also see in the author's indecisiveness whether to qualify her work as a piece of visual art or cinema, a step towards renouncing beauty for the sake of the just. In fact, Baumgart

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<sup>21</sup> In *Cahiers du cinéma*, June, 1961.

addresses this question directly during one of the dialogues between Klara and Marcin Koszałka (famous for his extrovert, painfully sincere documentaries about his own family). Klara says that the film they will be working on is going to be about sex and death. Unexpectedly, Marcin answers that for him the most important thing is the beauty of the film.



Anna Baumgart, *Fresh Cherries*, film, 2010, courtesy Anna Baumgart

At the other end, the just end of his scale, Daney places *Nuit et brouillard* [Night and Fog], directed by Alain Resnais in 1955. Daney became well acquainted with the famous scenes of piles of dead bodies, hair, glasses, and teeth and listened to Jean Cayrol's despondent commentary recited by Michel Bouquet along with Hanns Eisler's music, which seemed ashamed of itself for existing. A strange baptism of images – to comprehend at the same time that the camps were real and that the film was just. It seemed that the cinema (alone?) was capable of approaching the limits of distorted humanity. The distances set by Resnais between the subject filmed, the subject filming, and the subject spectator were the only ones possible. Although Godard would probably say that in *Fresh Cherries* the image lacks violence<sup>22</sup>, this film can

<sup>22</sup> Why not shock the viewer with a scene of group raping like in Elem Klimov's *Come and see*? Even though in *Fresh Cherries* there is a scene, which seem to trigger powerful emotions: The viewer sees a closeup of Klara's tensed face. She is laying on the bed with her face down looking at the floor, talking mechanically about the brothel's routine. Her

be doubtlessly watched again and again. In fact, I came to watch *Night and Fog* because of *Fresh Cherries*.

The movies Daney places on the ends of his scale touch upon the fate of the people that Anna Baumgart is focusing on in *Fresh Cherries* – the women who were forced to prostitute in order to survive in the concentration camp brothels – known also as *puffs* or *Sonderbau*<sup>23</sup>, or *joy divisions*, as they are known to the English speaker. In *Night and Fog*, the camp brothels are mentioned in passing. In *Kapo*, they are more explicitly noted, and with the focus on a character. Unlike Daney, I had to watch *Kapo* in order to understand his and Rivette's stances and to be able to subscribe to a point of view. To understand what he meant when he was asked if *Nuit et brouillard* was a "beautiful" film, and he answered "No, it was a *just* film". It is *Kapo* that wanted to be a beautiful film and was not. Daney would never quite see the difference between the just and the beautiful – hence his rather "workaday" boredom in front of solely beautiful images.

Rivette's verdict bore the question of the tracking shot as well as that of *framing*. The exacerbated, erotic consciousness of the inside and outside, of what enters, what leaves, and finally the very original status of this "outside," the *out of frame* of cinema, which would eventually provoke the critics at the *Cahiers du Cinema* to engage in theoretical orgies. But Daney was less at ease with the filmmakers who did not appear to draw their effects from this eroticization of the frame.

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body is shaken catatonically by somebody the viewer doesn't see. The rest is behind the frame.

<sup>23</sup> Already in 1968 Jean-Luc Godard showed totalitarian images together with pornography: in the *Sympathy for the Devil*: covers of porn magazines were shown while somebody read fragments from Hitler; In *Histoire(s) du cinema*, a dead KZ victim is shown after a fragment of a pornographic film – an opportunity for Godard, in his *off* comment to differentiate between the aggression of the image from the point of view of 'any creative act', and real brutality, which a totalitarian system stretches on the whole life: 'each creative act contains an actual threat for the one who dares to conduct it, and it's through this that the work of art affects the viewer or reader. If the mind refuses the aggravation and the inflicting violence on the consciousness, then it runs the risk of an unfruitful experience of the whole brutality, liberated by its absence. If death is shown together with sex, this is not for debasing death, and neither to necrophiliate sex, quite the opposite. As it happens, in the Nazi camps, the same neutral adjective "sonder" (special) described both death ("Sonderehandlung" a word that can be translated as "special treatment" but in fact it meant – gasing) and sex (in the word "Sonderbau" – special building, in fact, a brothel). Film editing wants to pinpoint exactly this unity. /G. Didi-Huberman, *Images in spite of all*, author's translation./ In the same text one can find a discussion of the debate that emerged between Claude Lanzman and Godard on the relationship that exists between film editing and the non-assimilation of the ideas that are being shown by the artist/director.



Extract from archival footage, Anna Baumgart, *Fresh Cherries*, film, 2010, courtesy Anna Baumgart

Daney claims that for him the space [of film criticism] was not so much a vast field, but a narrow door. On the noble side was the *jouissance* of the just distance and its reverse, the sublime or sublimated necrophilia. On the not so noble side was the possibility of a completely different *jouissance*, impossible to sublimate. It was Godard who, showing him videotapes of 'concentration camp porn' tucked away in his video collection at Rolle, was surprised that nothing had been said about those films and that no interdiction had been pronounced. As if their creators' cowardly intentions and their viewers' trivial fantasies somehow 'protected' them from censorship and indignation. Evidence perhaps of the persistence in the domain of sub-culture of the silent claim of an obligatory interlacing of the executioners and the victims. Daney was never really upset about the existence of 'concentration camp porn'. He had for these films – just as for any openly pornographic films – the almost polite tolerance one has for the expression of a fantasy that, so naked, claims only the sad monotony of its necessary repetition. It is a different pornography that always revolted him: the 'artistic' pornography of *Kapo*, or a little later, of Liliana Cavani's *The Night Porter*, and other retro films of the 1970s. To this after-the-fact aestheticization, Daney would prefer the

obstinate return of the non-images in *Night and Fog*, or the unfurling drives of *Ilsa, She Wolfe of the S.S.*, which he would not want to see. At least these films had the honesty to acknowledge the impossibility of telling a story, the stopping point in the course of history, when storytelling freezes or runs idle.

Thus we should not be talking about amnesia or repression but rather about *foreclosure*, not meant as a deprivation of a certain right of buying back the mortgaged goods – a legal proceeding that bars or extinguishes a mortgagor's equity of redemption in the mortgaged property, but in its Lacanian definition: as a hallucinatory return to the real of something upon which it was impossible to place a "judgment of reality." The test of foreclosure is the ultimate and most important sub-scale of Daney's axiom. Paradoxically, *Ilsa...* is much closer to *Night and Fog* on Daney's scale because of its inherent feature of bluntness. For Daney, *Nuit et brouillard* is unlike any other film. It gives a positive answer to the rather brutal question 'Does this watch you?'. The spectator that Daney was before *Nuit et brouillard* and the filmmaker who tried to show the un-representable with this film, were linked by a complicit symmetry. It is either the spectator who is suddenly 'missing from his place' and is stilled while the film continues, or the film which, instead of "continuing", folds back onto itself and onto a temporarily definitive 'image' that allows the spectator to continue believing in cinema and the subject-citizen to live his life. Spectator-stilled, image-stilled: cinema entered adulthood. The corpses in *Nuit et brouillard* and then two years later those in the opening shots of *Hiroshima mon amour* are among those 'things' that watched Daney more than he watched them. Hitchcock was also one of those who succeeded in producing these kind of images. Was it perhaps because Hitchcock caught with his own eyes, with his own camera the reality of the camps<sup>24</sup>? The documentary that he helped to film in 1945 was commissioned by the British Government but it was deemed too grisly for

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<sup>24</sup> Facing the camps, was there any other possible justness besides the anti-spectacular *Nuit et brouillard*? Yes, George Stevens' documentary made at the end of the war, the first movie to record the opening of the camps in color. The colors transform it – without any abjection – into art. What's amazing in Stevens' film is that it's the story of a journey: the daily progression of a small group of soldiers and filmmakers wandering across a destroyed Europe that totally overwhelms the entire crew. Daney believed that the beauty of Stevens' film is due less to the justness of the distance than to the innocence of the gaze. Justness is the burden of the one who comes 'after', innocence, the terrible grace accorded to the first to arrive, to the first one who simply makes the cinematic gesture. One had to be American – that is to say, to believe in the fundamental innocence of the spectacle – to make the German population walk by the open tombs, to show them what they were living next to, so well and so badly.



Anna Baumgart, *Fresh Cherries*, film, 2010,  
courtesy Anna Baumgart



*Dachau girl*, Hitchcock documentary, 1945,  
courtesy public domain

release after WWII<sup>25</sup>. There seem to be no film shots of the women who were working in the puffs. However, in the documentary Hitchcock helped to film, made during the camp's liberation, there is a mention of the brothels from

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<sup>25</sup> Recently it was loaded on the internet: <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-6076323184217355958>.

Dachau concentration camps – when the women died, they were replaced by a fresh contingent from Ravensbrück. At this moment (min. 34) in the film the viewer is faced with a close-up of a young woman's face, whose features are shockingly similar to Klara's. The woman in Hitchcock's documentary is a mystery. Nothing is known about her. It could be just a coincidence, a young woman from the crowd that came to see the Americans filming, or it could be one of the girls who actually worked in the brothel. They are the only moving images that exist. This similarity was even more astounding that Baumgart had not seen Hitchcock's film before she made *Fresh Cherries*.

The sphere of the visible had ceased to be wholly available: there were gaps and holes, necessary hollows and superfluous plenitude, forever missing images and always defective gazes. 'There are things,' wrote Rivette 'that must be approached with fear and trembling. Death is undoubtedly such a thing, and how does one, at the moment of filming such a mysterious thing, avoid feeling like an impostor?' Since there are only a few films in which nobody dies, there were many occasions to fear and tremble. Indeed certain filmmakers were not impostors.

Daney was sure that most of the time cinema oscillated between *Night and Fog* and *Kapo*. He often stumbled onto this smuggler's way of adding extra parasitic beauty or complicit information to the scenes that did not need it. Yet this is not always easy to determine, as is the case of Rossellini's films. Where does the event finish? Where is the cruelty? Where does obscenity begin and where does pornography end? Those were the questions constitutive of 'post-camp' cinema. This cinema had one characteristic: it was 'cruel'; the viewers of the time had another: they accepted this cruelty. Cruelty was on the 'good side'. It was cruelty that objected to academic 'illustration' and destroyed the counterfeit sentimentalism of wordy humanism, and in an archaic sense; cruelty was as old as cinema itself. The frame is the cruelty, the obligation not to flee, and not to shy away from what *is*, and cinema alone was able to tame it. But today this cruelty does not seem all that terrible. However, there is no cruelty in Baumgart's film. No scenes of rape or violation/aggression. Yet everything is there, present outside the frames. According to Anna Baumgart, the reproduction of a straight act of cruelty is pornographic.

As for Daney, he remembers the exact moment when he knew that the axiom regarding the tracking shot in *Kapo* should be revisited and the homemade concept of modern cinema revised. In 1979, French television broadcast *Holocaust*, the American mini-series by Marvin Chomsky. In 1945 the

Americans allowed George Stevens to make his astonishing documentary, which they did not broadcast because of the Cold War. Unable to deal with that history, which after all is not theirs, the American entrepreneurs of entertainment had temporarily abandoned it to European artists. But they retained a right to buy that history, like any other story, and sooner or later Hollywood and the television machine would dare to tell 'our' story. It would tell it very carefully, but it would sell it to us as another American story. So *Holocaust* would become a story about the misfortunes that tear apart and destroy a Jewish family: there would be extras looking a little too fat, good performances, generic humanism, action, and melodrama. And we would sympathize. It would be therefore only in the form of the American docu-drama that this history could escape the cine-clubs and could, via television, concern the servile version of the 'whole of mankind' that is the global TV audience. The simulation – *Holocaust* was certainly no longer confronting the strangeness of the humanity capable of a crime against itself, but it remained obstinately incapable of bringing back the singular beings – each with a story, a face, and a name – who made up this history, who were the exterminated Jews. Rather it would be drawing – Spiegelman's *Maus*<sup>26</sup> – that later dared to make this salutary act of re-singularisation. Drawing and not cinema, as it is true that American cinema hates singularity. With *Holocaust*, Marvin Chomsky brought back, modestly and triumphantly, our perennial aesthetic enemy: the good old sociological program with its well-studied cast of suffering specimens and its light show of animated police sketches. We had come full circle and we had truly lost.

In the case of *Kapo*, it was still possible to be upset with Pontecorvo for inconsiderately abolishing the distance he should have maintained. The tracking shot was immoral for the simple reason that it was putting us – he as a filmmaker and Daney as a spectator – where they/we did not belong. Where Daney anyway could not and did not want to be, because he was 'deported' from his real situation as a spectator-witness forced to be part of the picture. What was the meaning of Godard's formula if not that one should never put oneself where one is not nor should one speak for others? Imagining Pontecorvo's gestures deciding upon and mimicking the tracking shot with his hands, Daney was even more upset with him because in 1961 a tracking shot still meant rails, a crew and physical effort. Now it is just a click on the mouse or the touch pad.

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<sup>26</sup> On the presence of *Maus* in Baumgart's work see *Wszyscy rozmawiają o pogodzie. My nie.* <http://www.krytykapolityczna.pl/Serwiskulturalny/BaumgartWszyscyrozmawiajaopogodzieMynie/menuid-305.html>.

The cinema of terror that European cinephiles knew and supported, produced what needed to be produced. That must have ended around 1975, with the death of Pasolini. The cinema of terror is behind us. Contemporary cinema – with its many good films – is more a meticulous exploration of the mental case. Still, Daney did not see any return to the ludic values of yesterday. Today the wager of images passes by the violence of media and advertising, a violence which from now on cinema seems to be exempt from<sup>27</sup>. The strategy of Benetton, reality shows, the Gulf War without images, those are the serious things today.

The present was for Daney a sort of absolute resistance, a defiance of the necessity of planning, programming, and previewing, and above all of working personally to obtain one's pleasures: that which exasperated and horrified him. It is the pride of those who possess nothing, and it is already the tracking shot in *Kapo*: you cannot have both the action of the scene *and* the camera movement, you have to choose.

It is the absence of Vichy, the absence of the images of collaboration which, over the course of many years, revealed itself to Daney as unacceptable. In this last interview, from a mystic and intransigent point of view, Daney claimed that if cinema is the art of the present (in the widest sense, not only that of reporting, but also the present of calling in to memory, of evocation: for example Straubs' films) then when it does not take place, it does not take place. This allows us to understand one thing: cinema only exists to make what has already been seen once return: well seen, poorly seen, and unseen. Ten years later *Nuit et brouillard* returned what was not seen, as the images of the camps filmed by George Stevens, or those assembled by Hitchcock, had been stashed away by the Americans and the British. In this capacity as an art of the present, or an art of vigilance, cinema was already suffering from severe schizophrenia, since the people who ordered the images were the same ones who had put them aside due to the Cold War. Even though they are just archival films, the only ones made at the time of the discovery, they have an enormous effect on us when we now watch them for the first time. The film that marked Daney, *Nuit et brouillard*, was made almost fifteen years after the discovery of the camps. The film inscribes itself in this delay as a work of art of extraordinary precision and taste. But it is possible that this rhetoric resembles the rhetoric of the tracking shot in *Kapo*. Accordingly many important things concerning the fate of the individuals, the nations and the

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<sup>27</sup> Not entirely, Lars von Trier, whose work inspired the making of *Fresh Cherries*, pursues an unusually violent approach in his filmmaking.

masses were strictly not seen, in order to be able to return. Daney was afraid that this was not definitive. He remembered meeting Chris Marker in Hong Kong. Marker was excited to learn that the Red Army had also filmed. They always wondered what they could have filmed. Today it remains an anecdotal question: it is not important. There was a time when things took time to exist, in slow, difficult and painful processes: they took time to build up, and this time had value. Today the benefits have to be seen immediately. Maybe cinema had the capacity to make synchronous or histological cuts, seizing the work of time – not just death at work, but humans at work. The history of the century, with all its horrors, is also the history of those who did not see, who did not trust what they saw or heard, and that was paid for with millions of deaths. That is insufficient, that does not prevent us from being mistaken or deluded, but it is good to go back to the argument of the sorrowful Godard when he asks in *Histoire(s) du Cinema*: can we not watch one last time what the people were not able to or did not want to see, and what resulted from their refusal to see?

In *On Photography*, Susan Sontag does not describe her experience of seeing the pictures taken in the concentration camps as a revelation of absolute knowledge. She does not write that these photographs gave her the complete understanding of the Shoah. For her these photographs were just an opening of the gates of knowledge through the moment of seeing – a negative epiphany, an instance of contemporary revelation. Therefore these images were crucial for the knowledge itself. As was Resnais's film for Daney: "I learned that the human condition and industrial butchery were not incompatible and that the worst had just happened"<sup>28</sup> For those who want to know, and for those who want to know how, knowledge offers neither a miracle nor a pause. It is the knowledge with no end, an endless coming-closer to an event, not a single capturing into some frames of the revealed certainty. There is no yes or no, knowing everything or nothing. There is a heavy veil because of the destruction itself, and the destruction of the archives by the Nazis – but the veil wrinkles, lifting itself slightly and shaking us, every time when a testimony is heard in the way it has been uttered in the midst of one's own concealment, every time when a document is discovered. For me, *Fresh cherries* had the effect of lifting the curtain. Certainly, Baumgart's film imposes on the viewer a hallucinatory return to the reality of something upon which it was impossible to place a 'judgment of reality.'

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<sup>28</sup> To give another example, Ronald Harwood's theater, or more precisely the drama *Taking sides* discussed in Gene A. Plumka's *Holocaust Drama, The Theater of Atrocity*, 2009, Cambridge Univ. Press.

## CONCLUSION

The motto for this paper was taken from George Didi-Huberman's *Eye of History*. I will paraphrase here a fragment from another of his books, *The images above all*: Each creation of an image is torn out from the impossibility to describe reality. Especially by the artists who do not want to surrender to un-imaginability, which is obviously experienced when anyone comes into contact with the destruction of a person by another person. They produce a series of images, an editing above all – they know well that disasters are multiplied into infinity... Artists have reworked un-imaginability in all possible ways in order to extract from it anything outside the silence. The world of history becomes in their works an obsession, the plague of the imagination, the proliferation of characters – the similarities and differences – in the same vortex of time. Baumgart's *Fresh Cherries* is an example of such a work.

### O WYKLUCZENIU I ŚWIEŻYCH WIŚNIACH (streszczenie)

Artykuł stanowi próbę poddania pracy wideo, zatytułowanej *Świeże wiśnie* autorstwa Anny Baumgart, krytycznemu testowi zaproponowanemu przez krytyka filmowego Serge'a Daney'a. Daney sformułował go w czasie omawiania szeregu filmów, które powstały w Europie w wyniku doświadczeń Holocaustu. Twierdzi on, że po pierwsze, autor/ka tworząc film o takim temacie nie powinien/na stawiać piękna nad słusnością, po drugie, powinien/na nadać filmowi szczerłość, która uniemożliwiłaby opowiadanie fabuły. Jest to moment, w którym opowiadanie toczy się na jałowym biegu lub ulega zawieszeniu. Film taki nie powinien mówić w związku z tym o amnezji lub represji, lecz raczej o wykluczeniu, o halucynacyjnym powrocie do prawdziwości czegoś, czego nie można było osądzić „orzeczeniem rzeczywistości”.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Anna Baumgart, współczesna sztuka polska, video art, Serge Daney, prawa kobiet, teoria filmu, Jean-Luc Godard, francuska Nowa Fala w filmie, Jacques Rivette.

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## **THE STONE FLOWER IN PANNONIA: COLLECTIVE TRAUMA, MEMORY, AND WAR**

**Abstract:** This paper is an attempt to analyse the relationship between commemorative celebrations and problems of social remembrance, taking as examples the Stone Flower monument of Bogdan Bogdanović and the Memorial Museum permanent exhibition, both situated in Jasenovac Memorial site in Croatia, on the Bosnian border. Jasenovac Concentration Camp was organized in 1941 by the Fascist government of The Independent State of Croatia. It was open until 1945, and in accordance with racist regulations, it operated as a place of killing and torturing Serbs, Roma people, Jews and anti-fascist Croats. The data gathered show numbers of more than 80,000 victims, predominantly Serbs. After liberation and the establishment of The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the question of a memorial centre at the camp location stimulated debate on traumatic historical relations between the two largest nations in Yugoslavia, Serbia and Croatia. Bogdan Bogdanović's monument was erected in 1966 and the Jasenovac Memorial Museum was opened in 1968. Very soon after, the monument became a symbol of reconciliation, not just for the camp victims but for their descendants, as well as for advocates of the former Quisling state. The Memorial Museum exhibition was changed several times, under the pressure and influence of the ruling political ideologies. Today's exhibition, opened in 2006 created controversy especially for its multimedia representation form. During my research on various forms of remembering and symbolic perception of the place itself I have conducted several interviews with Leonida Kovač, the art historian and author of the Memorial Museum's permanent exhibition, as well as with members of the Anti-Fascist movement and members of Serbian and Jewish communities. I have also used Lelow's Jewish community centre in Poland as a reference point in my comparative fieldwork. This community was wiped out during the Holocaust and the post-war Socialist period. Its history and culture can be compared to that of the Serbian community in Croatia. Both communities shared a complex space, impossible to define by national or generalized historical narrative.

**Keywords:** Jasenovac, memory, remembrance, monument, ideology.



Jasenovac Memorial Site, Croatia  
Photo courtesy of Josip Zanki



Stone flower, Jasenovac Monument, Jasenovac, Croatia. Bogdan Bogdanović, 1966  
Photo courtesy of Josip Zanki

## INTRODUCTION

To travel the road leading from the industrial suburbs of Sisak through Lonja Field to the City of Jasenovac is to become reconciled with the horizon. You find yourself in a landscape in which you can define the distance neither by the blue contours of mountain peaks nor by the width of the open sea. The space is endless and monotonous, a plain multiplying all of its elements. The remains of wooden Posavina houses line the road to the city of Jasenovac, some simply rotting and decaying, while others assuming a Bavarian ambience. This horizontal line and a matrix-like repetition stop in Jasenovac Memorial Site, announcing the Bosnian Mountains. There, amidst the plain, rises a concrete vertical structure, representing a stone flower. Bud-shaped, it consists of six large petals that open to the sky in the Golden Ratio<sup>1</sup>. It is hard to say why the author of the Jasenovac monument, Bogdan Bogdanović chose six petals rising above the octagonal base of the monument. According to some, the six flower petals symbolize the six Yugoslav Socialist republics. The answer is shrouded in the fog of history, and the story of Jasenovac is the story of the people, politics and ideology.

## THE MONUMENT, THE AUTHOR AND THE SYMBOLS

I have used a variety of sources for my research on Jasenovac, not only as a symbol of great evil driven by Nazi ideology, but also as a place of memory. In addition to the cited references and Internet sources, I have also conducted many interviews with the art historian Leonida Kovač, the author of the exhibition at the Jasenovac Memorial Site Museum. But most important was definitely my fieldwork, which consisted of interviews with the members of the anti-fascist movement, members of the Serbian minority and, especially, with the residents of the Polish towns of Lelow and Żarki. That area was one of the centres of the Jewish community in Poland, which was exterminated during the Holocaust, and completely disappeared during post-war Socialism. Its history and culture can be compared with that of the Serbian community in Croatia. Both communities existed in a complex space, which cannot be defined through a national or universal historical narrative. One of the most important sources for my work was the film *Circle of Memory*, which analyses the memorial sites in the former state<sup>2</sup>. In the movie,

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<sup>1</sup> B. Bogdanović, *Zaludna mistrija*. GZH, Zagreb 1984.

<sup>2</sup> A. Rosini, *Il cerchio del ricordo*. Observatorio sui Balcani, 2007.

Bogdan Bogdanović talks about the establishment of the Jasenovac Memorial Site and points out that the construction of the centre was long awaited. According to his theory, the construction of the memorial site was a sensitive issue for inter-ethnic relations in Yugoslavia. He also adds that the problem with constructing the memorial site “was that it was a reminder of the crimes of the Croatian fascists, which could have resulted in equating the fascists with the entire Croatian nation, and that was something the Communist Party did not want”<sup>3</sup>. Obviously, the idea of the Party was to construct a memorial site that would not provoke inter-ethnic tensions, but evoke sympathy in the visitors and awaken hope for new life. The archival information about the establishment of the monument, the memorial site and the entire complex of the Jasenovac Memorial Site shows that the first steps to mark the area of the concentration camp were taken in the 1950s. In September 1960 the Central Committee of the Federation of Veterans Associations of the People’s Liberation War of Yugoslavia invited the architects Zdenko Kolacije and Bogdan Bogdanović to present their proposals for commemorating the Jasenovac concentration camp. It was clear from the invitation itself that, as always, the national question was taken into account: one of the architects was of Croatian and the other of Serbian nationality. However, the veterans accepted the proposal of the architect Bogdan Bogdanović. In Bogdanović’s words, “The Serbs were not very sympathetic towards the fact that a Serb was creating a monument to Ustasha crimes. However, after the monument was accepted, the Serbs were proud of the fact that the author of the monument was a Serb”<sup>4</sup>. Similarly, the Soviet military cemetery in Treptower Park in Berlin was opened in 1949, designed by the architect Yakov Belopolsky, to commemorate 5000 Soviet soldiers who fell in the Battle of Berlin. Treptower Park is still exclusively Russian territory in Berlin. It is the place where Russian delegations glorify the victory in World War II. Such a situation was unimaginable in the former Yugoslavia for two reasons; a large number of the Croatians were members of partisan units, fighting against the Ustasha regime. Many Croatian leftists were among the victims of the concentration camps, so the monument in Jasenovac needed to be dedicated to them as well. Bogdanović’s solution was a flower-shaped monument, meant to symbolize eternal renewal. In his statement on the Concentration Site’s website, the author states that the flower is an edifice that, as a superstructure facing two ways, should represent the duality of light and darkness. The locations of former camp buildings are marked by earth mounds, and the graves and torture sites by shallow hollows. The path which the camp visitors

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<sup>3</sup> Rossini, *op. cit.*

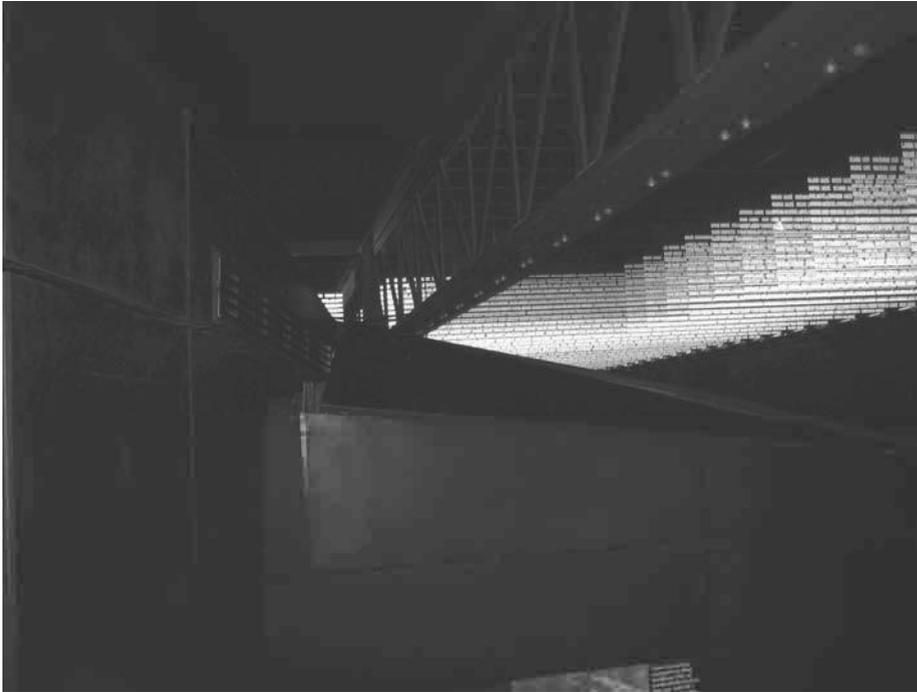
<sup>4</sup> Rossini, *op. cit.*

follow, leads to the Flower Memorial and is paved with railway sleepers, a symbolic reminder of the railway track by which prisoners were transported to the camp. The monument was officially unveiled on 4 July 1966. The north side of the crypt bears a bronze relief with a fragment of “Jama” [The Pit], a poem by Ivan Goran Kovačić, a Croatian poet and anti-fascist, killed during World War II by the Serbian fascists, the Chetnici. The fragment describes the dreams of people facing tortures and the proximity of death: “That simple happiness, the window’s glint; a swallow and its young; or windborne garden sweet – where? – The unhurried cradle’s drowsy tilt? Or, by the threshold, sunshine at my feet?”<sup>5</sup>. The stone flower and the poem brought the inter-ethnic relations between Croats and Serbs into apparent harmony.



Jasenovac Memorial Site Museum, Jasenovac, Croatia  
Photo courtesy of Josip Zanki

<sup>5</sup> I.G. Kovačić, *The Pit*. National and University Library, Zagreb 2001.



Jasenovac Memorial Site Museum, Jasenovac, Croatia  
Photo courtesy of Josip Zanki

## THE MUSEUM EXHIBITION

In 1986 the Jasenovac Memorial Site Memorial Museum was opened near the original site of the former Concentration Camp III, Brickworks, Jasenovac. The museum exhibition was renewed and changed in 1988, just before the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of history<sup>6</sup>. During the Homeland War, part of the museum collection was transferred from occupied Jasenovac to the Archives of the Republic of Serbia in Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Immediately after the end of the war, the Ministry of Culture and Jasenovac Memorial Site sought the assistance of international institutions in urging the return of the missing museum inventory. Following the agreement between the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia, part of the museum and archive inventory belong-

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<sup>6</sup> F. Fukuyama, *Kraj povijesti i posljednji čovjek*, Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, Zagreb 1994.

ing to Jasenovac Memorial Site, which was then being kept in the archives in Banja Luka, was sent to the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. The museum and archive inventory was returned to Jasenovac Memorial Site in 2001. Before the old inventory was returned to Croatia, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia appointed a Commission in 1998 to prepare a provisional museum exhibition. The final proposal for a museological concept for a new permanent exhibition in Jasenovac Memorial Museum was submitted to the Ministry of Culture on 3 December, 1999. The Jasenovac Memorial Site Memorial Museum with the new exhibition was formally opened in November 2006. The author of the exhibition's concept and scenario was Nataša Mataušić, the author of its design was art historian Leonida Kovač, and the architectural design of the exhibition was prepared by Helena Paver Njirić. Since it was impossible to display all the museum and archive material stored in the Jasenovac Memorial Site in the space of only 350 m<sup>2</sup>, the authors of the exhibition decided to adopt a multimedia approach. The exhibition contains prints of photographs and documents, glass cabinet displays, digital presentations on screens and audio-visual presentations of testimonials and memories of the prisoners who survived. This method of presentation, using the new media, was meant to enable the visitors to the Jasenovac Memorial Site Memorial Museum to gain access to more information and it allowed for the presentation of considerably more museum items than would have been possible using traditional museum displays. Along with this a database was created in which various topics were chronologically and thematically compiled in detail. An integral part of the Internet database and the new permanent exhibition of the Memorial Museum is a list of the individual victims of the Jasenovac concentration camp, killed and deceased during the camp's operation between 1941 and 1945. The list was compiled using various sources, including books, documents, photographs, statements from relatives and friends of Jasenovac victims, field researches, and it currently contains 80914 people. This number of victims was questioned in various political manipulations. While the Croatian nationalists and revisionists played it down to several thousands and exaggerated the number of people killed in Bleiberg, the Serbian nationalists exaggerated that number to a million of executed Serbs. Neither of them took as a starting point Osho's allegory that a human life is unrepeatable, and that "it can make the whole earth green just like one seed"<sup>7</sup>. The author of the exhibition, Leonida Kovač explains that "The concept of the exhibition is based on the meaning of the term *memorial site*, where the emphasis shifts from the memory of the crimes, the concept of the earlier exhibitions in

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<sup>7</sup> O. Rajneesh, *Jedno zrno zazeleni zemlju*, Lokot, Zagreb 1997.

Jasenovac, to the memory of the specific victims of those crimes”<sup>8</sup>. The author makes it clear that the victims are personalized because in the face of torture and death, religion, ethnicity and caste disappear. The victims are individuals with their own stories and names, and not, as the author writes, “an anonymous mass under the common denominator of ‘the dead ones’”. In one of our interviews, Kovač said that the main reason for this multimedia approach was due to the lack of museum space and the perception of museums and history today, along with the fact that today’s cyber-generation is capable of processing much more content and information than the previous generation before the arrival of the Internet. What the visitor can perceive in this exhibition are the materials selected by the artist: glass and rubber. The author gives the following explanation for the use of glass in the concept: “It symbolizes both fragility (of human life) and potential danger (if a person hits a glass pane or if it falls on him, the consequences may be fatal)”<sup>9</sup>.



Jasenovac Monument, Jasenovac, Croatia. Bogdan Bogdanović, 1966  
Photo courtesy of Josip Zanki

<sup>8</sup> L. Kovač, *Skica koncepcije likovnog postava stalne izložbe u spomen području Jasenovac*, Zagreb 2005; ‘Spomen područje Jasenovac’, Website visited on August 4, 2012; <http://www.jusp-jasenovac.hr>.

<sup>9</sup> L. Kovač, *op. cit.*



Flower petals, Jasenovac Monument, Jasenovac, Croatia. Bogdan Bogdanović, 1966  
Photo courtesy of Josip Zanki

The names of all the victims of the concentration camp were written on glass plates and put up on the ceiling of the museum, like guillotines. In the same interview Kovač told me that rubber is one of those materials that, with its smell and colour, and its tactile experience, can evoke disgust and fear in most people. We can see that such allegories are justified because rubber padding is used for the walls in solitary confinements, in psychiatric hospitals and for the venues of fetishist orgies. Rubber used as a flooring also symbolizes totalitarian hygiene; it is easy to wash human blood off it after torture. As the visitor, following the railway line to the Flower, relives the experience of a newly arrived camp inmate, in the exhibition hall s/he experiences the pain of torture and fear before the execution. This procedure is best described in Paul Connerton's book when, describing commemorative ceremonies, he writes of their distinctive characteristic: "We may describe this feature as that of ritual re-enactment, and it is a quality of cardinal importance in the shaping of communal memory"<sup>10</sup>. Indeed, such ceremonies

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<sup>10</sup> P. Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, Cambridge University Press 1989, p. 61.

go back to archetypal images and events, such as the evil that took place in Jasenovac. In shaping the memory of the Serbian community, Jasenovac certainly plays an important role, precisely due to the fact that the majority of the victims were Serbs. Although the second place in the number of victims belongs to the Roma people, one cannot say that the Jasenovac concentration camp played a similarly important role in shaping their memory as it did with the Serbian community. The reason for that is very simple: the information about the Serbian victims and their commemoration are often placed within the ideological and mythological context. It is because of this process that the Croatian people were often characterized as genocidal in nature, when this was needed for everyday politics. The Serbs emphasized the *mythological image* of the Croatian genocidal nature before the breakup of Yugoslavia and during the Homeland War. Smilja Tišma, president of the Organization of Survivors and Descendants of the Genocide Concentration Camp Inmates in the Independent State of Croatia 1941-1945, answered the question of whether the exhibition contained the weapons that the Ustasha used to kill people, such as knives, with the following words: "The physical tools the Ustasha used to murder people are nowhere to be seen. I was at the Croatian Government's earlier exhibitions. Those exhibitions were the same as this latest exhibition. They never display the artefacts the Ustasha used to murder people, this evidence was never presented"<sup>11</sup>. To show the genocidal nature of the Croatian people it was necessary to show that the Croats had different methods of killing than their German models, and that they improved on the industry of death in their own way. This is why the original aesthetics of the Croatian method of killing was insisted on. It was to show their genocidal nature, but also to get justification for the Serbian crimes; in her interview the president of the organization did not mention the Srebrenica genocide. Similarly a typical Croatian nationalist will not mention Jasenovac in an interview about Bleiburg. This is the only way to turn the circle of memory into a circle of revenge. The history of human civilization is also the history of specialized torture. The only thing the victims can hope for is not revenge after their death, but liberation from that evil. This is described in the famous novel by Edgar Allan Poe *The Pit and the Pendulum*. When the swinging pendulum was about to cut open a heretic's stomach, it suddenly stopped, and only then did the heretic hear the cries that the Inquisition was over<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> J. Skendžić, 'Far more than shameless', 2007, Website visited on August 3, 2012; <http://emperors-clothes.com/sc/s-bezobrazluk.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> E.A.Poe, *Maska crvene smrti i druge strašne priče*, Europapress holding, Zagreb 2008.



Jewish Cemetery, Czestohowa, Poland  
Photo courtesy of Josip Zanki



Jewish Cemetery, Zarki, Poland  
Photo courtesy of Josip Zanki

Totalitarianism was also aware of that; therefore it first eradicated those who saw the futility of the repression. Otto Dix painted the images of starving soldiers in muddy trenches. He was the first artist whom the Nazis banished from the public life. The negative reactions to the exhibition at the Jasenovac Memorial Museum took various forms. Thus, Efraim Zuroff of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Jerusalem expressed his disappointment and described the concept of the exhibition as 'postmodernist trash'. The former member of the Governing Council of the Memorial Site Jasenovac, Julija Koš, stated in her letter published on the website of the Margel Institute that the permanent exhibition blurs the historical truth about the crimes committed in Jasenovac, which is reflected in the systematic avoidance of the clear presentation of the basic information about the Ustasha regime as the organizer and enforcer of the crimes and stated the amazing fact that "At the same time, the museum exhibition shows the organizers and executors of the crimes in a neutral way, even with respect"<sup>13</sup>. As we can see, the common feature of all criticism is inadequate representation of the crimes based on the racial laws of the Independent State of Croatia and the Ustasha methods of execution. The representatives of the communities that were the victims of the concentration camp talk about it and emphasize remembrance, so that the crime would not be repeated. However, in the example of the last homeland war we saw that ethnic crime can not only be repeated, but also technically improved. Therefore, we should ask ourselves: does emphasizing the crimes ensure they will not be repeated?

## RITUAL, SPACE, AND TIME

In the beginning of July 2012 I visited the old Jewish cemetery in Zarki, a place near Czestochowa in Poland. The cemetery was completely unkempt, partly overgrown with trees, and partly destroyed. It spreads over the huge area of a slightly hilly and sandy terrain. The tombstones are varied: some contain only names and prayers, and others have beautiful reliefs. Later, talking to a person of Jewish origin, I learned the story of the Jewish community in the city. Zarki was once inhabited exclusively by Jews. The few ones that survived the Holocaust moved to Israel in the 1960s. While listening to this sad story and looking at the destroyed cemetery, I was thinking about the mythical *Land of Urlo*, as it was called by the Polish poet

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<sup>13</sup> J. Koš, 'Pismo Julije Koš veleposlanicama u Hrvatskoj', 2010, Website visited on August 3, 2012; <http://margelovinstitut.blog.hr/2010/11/1627035528/otvoreno-pismo-julije-kos.html>.

Czeslaw Milosz. This land unites the territories of Poland, Ukraine, Slovakia, Belarus, the Czech Republic and Lithuania, gathering within itself the domicile cultures of those countries mixed with Judaism and Hasidism<sup>14</sup>. Together with my interlocutor we concluded it was a shame that the Polish government has not restored this cemetery, as it was an integral part of Polish culture and history. However, the reason is rather obvious. It is more important for the Polish government to take care of Auschwitz as it is the place of pilgrimage for the deceased and a monument to historical memory. It is a place of a mass disappearance and departure, something that all the Jews coming to the monument at Auschwitz 're-live'. Zarki is a place of individual deaths and only the descendants of the people buried there visit them. It is not a place shaping the collective memory of a community. The community has completely disappeared and we can only follow the traces of its memory. When, in the town of Lelow, we were looking for the grave of the Hasidic master Tajik David Biderman (David from Lelow, as Hasids call him), to which people still pilgrimage on the anniversary of his death, we did not manage to find it. It turned out that during socialism a supermarket was built on the location of his grave, so today, the grave is located in a very strange space, apparently the remains of the former store. Although we saw the Star of David on the building, there was no way we could conclude that it was a grave. Something similar happened in the Serbian community in Croatia. The state will certainly take care of Jasenovac, but one may wonder whether it will take care of the ruins in Smoković or Žegar, of a couple of old people living in the villages in Lika or of the overgrown cemeteries in western Slavonia. Unfortunately, the Croats banished from Bosnia have also moved into the bigger cities inhabited by Serbs, and the ethnic makeup of Knin, Gračac, Benkovac and Obrovac has irrevocably changed, in the same way as the ethnic makeup of Rovinj, Pula, Umag and other cities on the Istrian coast changed after World War II. Therefore, the fate of a small Orthodox church in Bukovica will be similar to that of the cemetery in Zarki. The survivors and descendants of the refugees are left with the right to remember and to assemble in associations. To raise the awareness of the symbolism of Jasenovac in Croatia it is important to recount the processes that took place in the 1990s. As Nevena Škrbić Alempijević writes in the collection *Tito as Myth*: "In the nineties the Homeland War in Croatia was conducted not only against the former heroic Yugoslav People's Army; it was aimed against a certain kind of political imagery, and against the icons of popular culture"<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Cz. Miłosz, *Zemlja Ulro*, Dečje novine, Gornji Milanovac 1986.

<sup>15</sup> N. Škrbić; Mathiesen Hjemdahal, Kristi, 'O Titu kao mitu', Filozofski fakultet, Srednja Europa, Zagreb 2006, p. 179.

And indeed, a large part of the popular culture of the Socialist era, as the author states, fell silent overnight. In her text, Nevena Škrbić Alempijević draws an interesting analogy with the burning of a puppet on the last day of the carnival in Bol, in order to kill, in a ritual way, an entire historical period in the life of a nation, in this case the Croatian nation. That analogy is not innocent at all, because rituals open up the processes of remembering and emphasize certain processes in the society. Let us only remember the period before the war in the former Yugoslavia, when the clergy of the Serbian Orthodox Church carried the relics of Grand Duke Lazar around the territory of the former state, from Knin and Vukovar to Sarajevo and Podgorica. This ritual did not only strengthen the national feeling in the Serbs, but it also prepared the ground for a new sacrifice, which took the form of the Serbian exodus from Croatia. In the same way, in the Republic of Croatia, photographs of the Jazovka pit were published and commemoration ceremonies in Bleiburg were emphasized, precisely to change the state of peace into the state of war. Unfortunately, despite its traumatic war experience, Croatia is still not ready to see the period of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as part of its national culture. This in no way excludes the right to identity or the right to remember all the bad things that happened during that community of states, not only to Croats, but to every man with his past, his name, and his story. This is the only way to break the circle of memory that keeps producing the same mistakes. Berlin is one of the places where some memories have been preserved and new ones have been added. If you approach the Reichstag from former West Berlin, you will see a sculpture of a woman shouting something. It is a symbol of a divided city and a cry to the ones on the other side of the Berlin Wall. A few metres away there is a monument to the Soviet Soldier – liberator. Near the Reichstag you will see some remains of the former wall. There is the historical Brandenburg Gate which Adolf Hitler triumphantly passed through celebrating the beginning of his reign, but also the monument to the Holocaust – the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, designed by the artist Peter Eisenman. The monument consists of a field with 2711 monoliths of different heights. According to the author, it was meant to produce an uneasy, confusing atmosphere and to represent an ordered system, like the Nazi one, that has lost touch with the human reason (the monument caused controversy among both the Germans and the Jews). This story about history and memory is completed by the Reichstag dome designed by the famous British architect Norman Foster. The glass dome is meant to symbolize the transparency of the new Germany after its unification. From the dome the visitors can see the work of the parliament. In this way Germany had closed one and opened another, completely new chapter in its history. In 1995, the American artist of Bulgarian origin,

Christo V. Javacheff, wrapped the whole building of the then unreconstructed Reichstag in a silver fabric. Nobody was burned, there were no relics, and nobody was damned.



Soviet military cemetery, Treptower Park, Berlin. Yakov Belopolsky, 1949  
Photo courtesy of Josip Zanki



Soviet military cemetery, Treptower Park, Berlin. Yakov Belopolsky, 1949  
Photo courtesy of Josip Zanki

## MEMORY AND BREAKING THE CIRCLE

In his prophetic book *Black Skin White Masks*, Frantz Fanon writes about the attitude of the ‘blacks’ towards history, and claims that the ‘blacks’ prefer to talk and think about the present. Talking with black working-class people in Paris, he tried to ask them about their Negro past, however their answers were rather indifferent. Frantz Fanon ironically states: “They knew they were black, but, they told me, that made no difference in anything, in which they were absolutely right”<sup>16</sup>. The position of the present moment, which for the blacks sublimated devastating historical and exploitative experiences, would be restorative for the memories and symbolism of the communities in Croatia and in the wider Balkans. To think in the present means to wrap the Reichstag in silk fabric. That annuls everything the parliament was and could have

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<sup>16</sup> F. Fanon, *Black skin white masks*, Pluto Press, London 2008.

been. The future has thousands of possible beginnings, which are not defined by the religious concepts of fate or by the economic determinism of banks and the economies that generate hate and conflicts in order to sell weapons and humanitarian aid. I have discussed this issue with the sociologist Vjieran Katunarić. He claims that there is the economy of war and the economy of peace. When preparing for war, the economy needs war; everything goes in that direction and this is why war is inevitable. When entering a period of peace, everything leads to that inevitability through the economy of peace. Sociologists must have their reasons for this kind of analysis, but this does not take away the right of the others to think idealistically of a better society. Regardless of the inevitability of conflict, it is up to us to believe in the golden age of humanity and a flower emerging from an execution site.

#### **KAMIENNY KWIAT W PANONII: ZBIOROWA TRAUMA, PAMIĘĆ I WOJNA (streszczenie)**

Artykuł jest próbą zanalizowania zależności między upamiętnianiem traumatycznych wydarzeń a czczeniem pamięci narodowej; analizowane przykłady to projekt pomnika Bogdana Bogdanovica *Kamienny Kwiat* i stała ekspozycja wystawiennicza w Muzeum Pamięci w Jasenovac w Chorwacji, graniczącym z Bośnią. Obóz zagłady w Jasenovac został założony w 1941 roku przez zdominowany wówczas przez faszystów rząd niezależnej Chorwacji. Do roku 1945 było to miejsce zagłady i tortur Serbów, Żydów, Chorwatów oraz innych mniejszości sprzeciwiających się faszystowskiemu reżimowi. Według danych obozu, w Jasenovac zginęło ponad 80 000 osób, w tym głównie Serbów. Po wojnie, w powstałej na tych terenach Socjalistycznej Federalnej Republice Jugosławii, w związku z próbą utworzenia centrum miejsca pamięci narodowej na terenie obozu, wybuchła debata dotycząca problemu traumatycznych stosunków między Serbią i Chorwacją. Pomnik Bogdana Bogdanovica został wzniesiony w 1966 roku a Muzeum Pamięci w Jasenovac otwarto w 1968. Wkrótce miejsce to stało się symbolem rekuncylacji nie tylko dla ofiar obozu, ale również ich rodzin. Wystawa w muzeum była wielokrotnie zmieniana pod presją i wpływami zmieniających się rządów i ustrojów politycznych. Obecna ekspozycja od jej otwarcia w 2006 roku wciąż wzbudza kontrowersje dotyczące prezentacji czy reprezentacji multimedialnej. Podczas moich badań dotyczących form upamiętniania i symboliki miejsc pamięci, przeprowadziłem wywiady z Leonidą Kovač, historykiem sztuki i autorką wystawy stałej w Muzeum Pamięci w Jasenovac, członkami zgrupowania antyfaszystowskiego, oraz z przedstawicielami społeczności Serbów i Żydów. W celach porównawczych nawiązuję również do przykładu nekropoli żydowskiej w Lelowie w Polsce. Lokalna wspólnota z Lelowa w większości wywieziona lub wymordowana w czasie wojny była celem prześladowań również w okresie powojennym. Trudnej do zdefiniowania przestrzeni społeczności żydowskiej w Polsce czy Chorwacji nie da się zaprezentować próbami uogólniania historii i budowania na jej podstawie monolitycznych narracji.

**Słowa klucze:** Jasenovac, pamięć, czczenie pamięci, pomnik, ideologia.



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## **THE EUROPE OF MINORITIES: CULTURAL LANDSCAPES AND ETHNIC BOUNDARIES<sup>1</sup>**

**Abstract:** The paper deals with the creation of cultural landscapes by European minorities. Looking at the map of European linguistic minorities we observe strong assimilation processes (connected with globalization, new media, a uniformity of lifestyles) resulting in the diffusion of minorities into the dominant culture. It also seems that the presence of minorities in Europe has become increasingly expressive. It is not concealed within the private lives of individuals, but has a strong influence on the creation of cultural landscapes, delimits their space and uses its influence for the promotion of the minority cultures. One can see an increasing number of visual indicators of bilingualism, such as street signs, names of institutions, inscriptions on billboards, etc. Events organized by the minorities, such as picnics, festivals, fairs, etc. are also more noticeable. There is a debate on the actions of civil disobedience (in Wales and in Brittany) and their consequences leading to the implementation of visual bilingualism. The circumstances and results of the introduction in Poland of bilingual signs in the areas inhabited by linguistic minorities – the Kashubs and the Lemkos – are publicly discussed. Finally, the actions taken up by the Kashubs are presented in the media. These actions serve the cultural management of their space and the strengthening of their identity through the invented traditions and cultural engagement. The visual presence of minority languages and cultures in a specific territory create sharper ethnic boundaries.

**Keywords:** linguistic landscape, minority cultures, invented traditions, bilingualism, ethnic borders.

In my article I will concentrate on the way the autochthonous linguistic and cultural minorities in Europe impact the visual shape of the spaces they inhabit and on the significance of this influence on creating new forms of the cultural identity of their communities and on entrenching ethnic boundaries. The topic is very broad; I will therefore focus only on some aspects of this phenomenon. I will outline the changes undergone by the minorities in the

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20<sup>th</sup> century and their meaning for the functioning and the status of European minorities. Following this I will present the non-violent actions of civil disobedience (especially those conducted in the 1960s-1980s, as well as some modern examples of similar movements), whose aim was to establish clear visual bilingualism in the areas inhabited by the minorities. To present the influence of the construction and creation of the bilingual and bicultural landscape on consolidating the ethnic borders, I will describe the tensions resulting from the gradual introduction of bilingual road signs in the areas populated by the linguistic minorities of Poland (the Kashubs and the Lemkos) and also the significance of the cultural (touristic, promotional) endeavors to accentuate the cultural diversity of a certain locality. The majority of my examples comes from the field research on minority cultures I have been conducting for the last few years with the Kashubs, the Bretons and the Welsh, although I am also going to refer to the research conducted in the territories inhabited by other groups.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century the situation of the autochthonous, stateless minorities has changed on a significant scale. The most important of the many contributing factors should be enumerated here. They include industrialization, which imposed a change of lifestyle; the introduction of the railways, which facilitated early emigration on a greater scale and the increase in the number of visitors to previously rather isolated regions inhabited by the minorities. This was followed by the urbanization and the progressive breakdown of territorial communities; the two world wars and the post-war politics involving the minorities, with their demographic effects; and finally the advent of the mass media, broadcasting only in the dominant language. This has not only imposed this language on the sphere previously reserved for the ethnic language, showing it as a language of progress and modernity, but it has also strongly influenced changes in lifestyle promoting acculturation. All these processes have led to gradual, and more or less conscious and voluntary cultural and linguistic assimilation of the minorities.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the intergenerational transmission of minority languages was seriously extenuated (in some places, for example in Brittany, it has almost ended) and the members of the minority stopped being differentiated in any significant way from the representatives of the majority. They began to do the same jobs, dress in the same way, listen to and watch the same radio and TV programs, and speak the same language (at least in public life). The ethnic boundaries separating the minorities and the dominant cultures seemed to be progressively effaced.

The minorities started to settle into the dominant cultures and were threatened by extinction. The politics of most European states was favorable to this process. These states – if they admitted the existence of minorities on their territory at all – tried to minimize their importance, using primarily the strategy of folklorization. As noted by Gupta and Ferguson, “a policy of alliance and acceptance increases the risk of inexorable loss of cultural identity; a policy of self-assertion may simply lead toward trivialization and folklorization of the peripheral population”<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, folklorization is based on the simplification of the aesthetic and semantic meanings of the complicated cultural totality, separating and reconfiguring them into new wholes. By putting an equation sign between the minority culture and folklore this strategy confirms the superiority of the dominant culture, because the minority culture is reduced to a relic of the past. Folklore thus indicates the folk/popular character of the minority culture which cannot achieve the level of modernization and create a high, elite culture to show its development. This kind of attitude may be illustrated with the “ethnographic maps” presenting couples most often dressed in folk costumes within the territory of a state. Those maps “purported to display the spatial distribution of peoples, tribes, and cultures”<sup>3</sup>.

The strength of the policy conducted towards a minority depended naturally on the country. In the People’s Republic of Poland, for example, the cultural diversity of the state was hidden under uniformed street names and relegating the symptoms of the existence of ‘local’ cultures to ethnographic parks, museums, or CEPELIA (the Co-operatives of Folk Handicraft and Artistic Industry). No alternatives to folkloristic visual indicators of cultural variety in the public sphere were permitted (there were no minority flags, monuments dedicated to them, signs in the minority language) so the minorities could not create their cultural landscapes.

However, at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s the social movements in Western Europe (anti-capitalist, ecological, hippie, etc.)<sup>4</sup> led to the development of ‘ethnic revival’.<sup>5</sup> Those events precipitated the revaluation of minority languages and cultures by motivating them to act and supplying them with

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<sup>2</sup> J. Edwards, *Minority Languages and Group Identity. Cases and Categories*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 2010, p. 95.

<sup>3</sup> A. Gupta, J. Ferguson, Beyond “Culture”: Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference, *Cultural Anthropology* 1992, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> In the Eastern Europe the changes appeared after the collapse of the communism.

<sup>5</sup> A.D. Smith, *The Ethnic Revival in the Modern World*, Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, Cambridge – New York – Melbourne 1981.

adequate tools of pressure and political support.<sup>6</sup> As a result, the minorities began to re-establish or to construct from scratch their cultural identity in the territories they inhabited. The appropriation of space by the minorities was extended to those areas that only had a vicarious connection with those groups. On the one hand, the activities embraced those territories populated by the minorities in the distant past which were symbolically re-connected with them (through the construction of monuments, commemorative plaques, organization of cultural events)<sup>7</sup>. On the other hand, the minorities began to mark their presence in the areas which they had not historically inhabited: the big cities, which became the leading centers for the protection and development of minority languages and cultures, with minority institutions and organizations placed close to the centers of political pressure. Of course, claims for the recognition of minority rights and of the languages they used were made at the same time and in many domains, at the political, economic, cultural and social levels. The minorities taking advantage of the new strategies had to adjust to the requirements of the new world and to the procedures required by the dominant cultures.

The changes in the lifestyle and in the functioning of the minorities in the modern world causing group reorganization were described by Ferdinand Tönnies as involving a passage from community ties to society ties<sup>8</sup>. Today belonging to a minority is no longer based only on objective, 'natural' indicators or primordial ties resulting from the place of birth, of residence, blood ties, participation in rites and common cultural practices. One's sense of cultural belonging and one's identification with a minority is now the result of individual choice. It involves a declaration of minority identity, a willingness to take part in the activities on behalf of the group and a more or less ardent manifestation of this belonging. Ethnic ties can be thus understood as instrumental, created and used as a way to mobilize the group to achieve various political or economic aims<sup>9</sup>. If we consider Fredrik Barth's classic theory of ethnic boundaries, we will notice that it is not possible to notice those boundaries on the basis of a group possessing some particular

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<sup>6</sup> Z. Bokszański, *Tożsamości zbiorowe*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 2006, pp. 81-82.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. L.M. Nijakowski, *Domeny symboliczne: konflikty narodowe i etniczne w wymiarze symbolicznym*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. F. Tönnies, *Community and civil society*, ed. by Jose Harris, transl. by M. Hollis, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. W. Burszta, *Konteksty etniczności, Sprawy Narodowościowe – Seria nowa 1997*, Vol. 1, pp. 155-157.

traits of their culture<sup>10</sup>. Ethnic borders cannot be defined any more exclusively by strong cultural and linguistic differences, but they have to be created from scratch on the basis of small cultural and social distinctions, or they have to be created in a completely arbitrary way.<sup>11</sup> One of the strategies for the creation of ethnic borders by minorities is the appropriation of a territory and the creation of a new cultural landscape.

The basic type of landscapes created by the European minorities are linguistic landscapes, thanks to which the presence of a minority and the “visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region”<sup>12</sup> is asserted. The term ‘linguistic landscape’ is now very popular in sociolinguistics. Researchers study how the languages of different ethnic groups function in their relevant territories, how they are used in multilingual societies and what emotions they generate. All the manifestations of the language in public spaces are taken into consideration, starting with the official ones, such as its presence of road signs, buildings, institutions, town names, street names, billboards and advertisements, visiting cards and shops, and the unofficial ones created by the inhabitants: graffiti, wall inscriptions, etc. The linguistic landscape of a region functions as “an informational and symbolic marker of the relative power and status of the linguistic communities inhabiting the territory”<sup>13</sup>. The visual presence of the minority language can be understood as a sign of the recognition of its equal status in a specific area, but is frequently reduced to a symbolic function. In this case “the presence of a minority language in the linguistic landscape might be used as an alibi by the majority in rejecting future measures with the line of reasoning that the state of the minority language cannot be too bad if it is visible here and there”.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. F. Barth, *Ethnic groups and boundaries: The social organization of culture difference*, Universitetsforlaget, Oslo 1969.

<sup>11</sup> L.M. Nijakowski, Tworzenie, odtwarzanie, niszczenie i zanikanie granic między grupami etnicznymi, in: *Etniczność, pamięć, asymilacja: wokół problemów zachowania tożsamości mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych*, ed. L.M. Nijakowski, Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, Warszawa 2009, p. 61.

<sup>12</sup> L. Rodrigue, R.Y. Bourhis, *Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality An Empirical Study*, „Journal of Language and Social Psychology” 1997, nr 16(1), p. 23.

<sup>13</sup> E. Shohamy, *Language Policy. Hidden agendas and new approaches*, London – New York, Routledge 2006, p. 112.

<sup>14</sup> D. Gorter, H.F. Marten, L. Van Mensel, *Studying Minority Languages in the Linguistic Landscape*, in: *Minority Languages in the Linguistic Landscape*, ed. D. Gorter, H.F. Marten and L. Van Mensel, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2012, p. 7.

The co-existence in one territory of a minority and a dominant language is always connected with the political, social, historical and economic context. It is important to consider why the existence of visual bilingualism has such significance for the minority that it is often the first postulate put forward in the long process of the gaining of rights. There are several reasons for this situation. Firstly, the visual change in a landscape from monolingual to bilingual is in its own way a kind of statement. It rejects the existing monolingualism accompanying the ideology of the one-language nation state which guarantees social unity and internal coherence. It objects to the idea of 'internal colonialism'. This protest gives the minorities the justification and power to demand recognition. And importantly, it is certainly the easiest and most effective way – in legal and practical terms – for the minorities to mark their presence and to change the status of their language, sometimes even the status of the minority itself. It is also a challenge for the minority. Striving for the introduction of bilingualism is a form of struggle for the minority's rights, for its identity and the recognition of its existence. Engaging oneself in a struggle to bolster and consolidate the collective identity gives the minority more power to assert their position.

A good example of the struggle for the implementation of visual bilingualism is provided by Wales. There, in the 1960s the pressure group Cymdeithas Yr Iaith Gymraeg [The Welsh Language Society] was established. The fundamental achievement of this organization of civil disobedience was to draw peoples' attention to the absence of the Welsh language in public life and public spaces through the destruction of monolingual, English only, street signs or plaques, and covering English-only inscriptions with stickers in both English and Welsh.<sup>15</sup> At the beginning of the 1970s, the group had so many supporters and active adherents that the authorities could no longer ignore its demands. The activities of this association led to a gradual installation of bilingual signs, acts recognizing the Welsh language, the introduction of bilingual and Welsh-language education, and finally the recognition of the Welsh language which joined English as the second official language of Wales, and recently the creation of the Welsh National Assembly. Of course, all these changes were not the result of the activities of one organization. However, one should not underestimate the significance of the emergence of visual bilingualism achieved by the determined Welsh people. It instigated the awareness of the Welsh population, still under the influence of the British

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<sup>15</sup> More about Cymdeithas Yr Iaith actions can be found in: D. Phillips, *The History of the Welsh Language Society 1962-1998*, in: „*Let's Do Our Best for the Ancient Tongue*”. *The Welsh language in the twentieth century*, ed. G.H. Jenkins, M.A. Williams, University of Wales Press, Cardiff 2000.

patriotic slogans of World War II, and their willingness to assert the distinct Welsh and British identities. Their increasingly determined actions strengthened those re-created ethnic boundaries and led to the development of the collective consciousness. These processes can be observed in the results of surveys (and in the political choices), in which more people identified themselves as ‘Welsh’ and not ‘British’<sup>16</sup>. The nationalist party Plaid Cymru, the only Welsh party in Great Britain, is gaining more political support. As Graham Day observed, “The politicization of the language issues in Wales made the future of the Welsh language into the central question of national or ‘ethnic’ politics”<sup>17</sup> for many decades.

A few years ago, similar actions were undertaken in Brittany by the group Ai’ta, calling itself a pacifist group of civil disobedience. Ai’ta organizes demonstrations, spontaneous, so-called ‘savage’ fest-noz<sup>18</sup> in public places, with acts of civil disobedience performed by young people who remove French-only signs and demand the introduction of the Breton language into public offices.

Its purpose is to draw peoples’ attention to the problem of the nonexistence of the Breton language in public life. In its approach Ai’ta not only refers to the Welsh Cymdeithas Yr Iaith, but to the group Stourm ar Brezhoneg [Fight for the Breton language] from the 1980s functioning in Brittany which from the start took radical steps to force the French government to make some changes. Stourm ar Brezhoneg managed the campaign of destroying and spraying monolingual signs and information plaques in Brittany.<sup>19</sup> In 1984, the year

<sup>16</sup> It is confirmed by the results of the 2011 census. Almost 60% of the Wales inhabitants stated to have a Welsh identity, while only 26% declared to be ‘British’. (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-for-unitary-authorities-in-wales/stb-2011-census-key-statistics-for-wales.html> accessed 24.10.2013).

<sup>17</sup> G. Day, *Making sense of Wales. A Sociological Perspective*, University of Wales Press, Cardiff 2002, p. 218.

<sup>18</sup> *Fest-noz* is a party invoking to the traditional Breton community festivities, during which people accompanied with alcohol and music are dancing in chains. In 70’s of XX century *fest-noz* have become a symbol of the fight for the ethnic and linguistic revival in Brittany. Cf. N. Dolowy-Rybińska, *The Fest-noz: A Way to Live Breton Culture*, “Colloquia Humanistica” 2013, 2, pp. 233-254.

<sup>19</sup> Association did not limited itself to the postulates of introducing bilingual road signs, similarly to the Welsh Cymdeithas Yr Iaith. They have claim an officialization of the Breton language, creating the Breton language radio and television channel, introduction of the bilingual education system etc. The most often used slogan was: “Brezhoneg, yezh ofisiel”, which means “Breton, the official language”. Cf.: M. Nicolas, *Bretagne, un destin européen ou la Bretagne et le fédéralisme en Europe*, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, Rennes 2001, p. 108.

they were founded, they destroyed ten thousand signs. Many Breton and Welsh activists were fined for this kind of activity, for the destruction of public property; some even spent time in prison.

In Brittany the changes did not occur as fast as in Wales, nevertheless the first bilingual signs in France were eventually put up in Brittany. Today, Ai'ta is still waiting to achieve the same goals because despite some improvement in the situation of the Breton language in the last thirty years, Brittany is still far from being a bilingual region. It is interesting that the measures undertaken by the activists on behalf of the Breton language encompass the whole of Brittany, although historically Upper Brittany was not a Breton-language region, but one whose inhabitants spoke French and Gallo. This is today of little importance, because the struggle for the Breton language is not only the struggle for maintaining this Celtic language and its revitalization where it has ceased to be used. It is most of all a struggle for ethnic boundaries, for the creation, re-creation and strengthening of the collective identity which would connect the people wishing to call themselves Bretons, regardless of their parentage and language use.

Such activity has a double significance. It influences the perception of the minority population as a coherent, distinct community, separated by an ethnic border. This is because the minority takes possession of the territory by marking it in a visible way through its language and signs. The presence of ethnic symbols influence people by enhancing their sense of relationship with the others who create this 'invented community'.<sup>20</sup>

Making the ethnic boundaries effective can, however, evoke anxiety in the neighboring groups. A good example and illustration of this observation is the story of the establishment of the first bilingual signs in Poland. The Act of National and Ethnic Minorities and the Regional Language from 2005 gives the right of existence to bilingual signs where the National Census has confirmed that more than twenty per cent of the population declare themselves as belonging to a minority. If there is less than twenty per cent minority participation, it is possible to introduce bilingual place names after social consultations.

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<sup>20</sup> B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London 1983.

Although many bilingual signs in Kashubia were put up before the Act of National and Ethnic Minorities and the Regional Language<sup>21</sup> came into force, when the opportunity was given officially, the idea encountered much opposition. Organizational and financial problems were cited, and it was claimed that bilingual signs with place names were not necessary because the Kashubs knew the names of their villages nonetheless. It is interesting to note that the objections against the installation of bilingual signs did not come from those inhabitants of Kashubia who did not identify themselves with the Kashubian culture, but from the Kashubs themselves, who were afraid that the presence of the signs could provoke a negative reaction against them. The emergence of these anxieties on the part of the Kashubs testifies to the existence of deeply-rooted fear of exclusion and of being treated as someone 'other', different or 'alien', rather than showing an effective cultural assimilation of this group. The Kashubs had encountered a similar problem during the work on the 'Act of National and Ethnic Minorities and the Regional Language' in the 1990s when the status of this group was discussed. The Kashubs then did not want to be recognized as a 'minority'. They preferred the neutral position of a 'group using a regional language'. Nevertheless, the active involvement of the Kashubian elite led to the appearance of bilingual signs in the Kashubian territorial communities. Not only did they not provoke any problems, but they became the trademark of the Kashubian villages, and a tourist attraction. The real problem appeared, however, when the signs with the inscription 'Gduńsk stolëca Kaszëb witô' [Gdańsk, the capital of Kashubia welcomes you] were installed at the entry to Gdańsk. The presence of those signs provoked a very strong reaction from the inhabitants of this city, who accused the Kashubs of lording over and appropriating someone else's territory. As a result, this sign was regularly sprayed and destroyed.

Agnieszka Pasiëka has analyzed the opposition provoked by the social consultations carried out before the installation of the bilingual Polish-Lemko signs<sup>22</sup>. Her ethnographic research has shown how the debate before the putting up of the signs produced a division of the community into 'the Poles' and 'the Lemkos'. The village population who had called themselves 'neighbors' or 'inhabitants' began to define themselves in ethnic or ethnic-religion terms. We can see that the consultations brought back the ethnic boundaries which had been treated as nonexistent for many decades. The possibility of

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<sup>21</sup> E. Pryczkowski, *Język kaszubski w działalności publicznej i obrocie prawnym, a zwłaszcza w reklamie, prasie, radiu i telewizji oraz administracji*, *Biuletyn Rady Języka Kaszubskiego* 2007.

<sup>22</sup> A. Pasiëka, *Wielokulturowość po polsku. O polityce wielokulturowości jako mechanizmie umacniania polskości*, [in Press].

introducing visual bilingualism was interpreted as a disruption of the social order, based on the silent consensus that the Lemko population could function as a folkloric tourist attraction of the region which boasts of their cultural heritage but does not grant the Lemkos real political and social subjectivity.

The introduction of visual bilingualism is only one of the ways of creating and strengthening the community spirit of a given group through influencing the cultural landscape of the region it inhabits. Another way of marking the landscape is based on different types of cultural and commercial events, most of all those connected with tourism. These kinds of activities are directed both at those inside and outside the community, at the same time giving it a strong symbolic ethnic character. An excellent example of this can be found in contemporary Kashubia, where it is becoming increasingly fashionable to identify oneself as Kashubian. In recent years many campaigns were conducted on behalf of Kashubia and the Kashubian culture and language. Thanks to the 'protection' guaranteed by the Polish state in the Act of National and Ethnic Minorities and the Regional Language of 2005, the Kashubian language has entered schools, churches, the media (unfortunately in this last case only in a limited measure). It is also visually present in the region: on bilingual signs, plaques, names of objects, restaurants, shops, and on every possible souvenir made for tourists. Kashubia has become an attractive region for tourists not only because of the beauty of its landscape (the coast, lakes, hills and forests ...) but also because of its own cultural specificity which is emphasized at every opportunity. The recent years saw an increasing number of Kashubian events: picnics, regional meetings, open days in the villages and towns with the presence of Kashubian flags, costumes, music and food.<sup>23</sup> All the events and objects produced there are described as Kashubian. This is how Kashubianness is not only more visible in the cultural landscape of Pomerania, but is becoming a fashionable trend. This fashion is sometimes severely criticized as 'identity for sale'<sup>24</sup>. However, when we view it as the strengthening of the Kashubian awareness, it is difficult to challenge its important influence. The Kashubs who are engaged in the activities connected with the promotion of the culture and language (regardless of their motivation) become at the same time the recipients of this culture and consolidate their relationship with it. As John and Jean Comaroff have written,

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<sup>23</sup> On significance of those symbols for the collective identity see: M. Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, Sage Publications, London 1995.

<sup>24</sup> E. Nowicka, Etniczność na sprzedaż i/lub etniczność domowa, in: *Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce w świetle Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego z 2002 roku*, ed. L. Adamczuk, S. Łodziński, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 2006.

“the producers of culture are *also* its consumers, seeing and sensing and listening to themselves enact their identity – and, in the process, objectifying their own subjectivity, thus to (re)cognize its existence, to grasp it, to domesticate it, to act on with it”.<sup>25</sup>

On the one hand the new dimension of Kashubianness has entered the everyday life of the people, and on the other, the Kashubian elite has been undertaking initiatives and actions orientated at reinforcing the ‘imagined’ Kashubian ties, on creating a supralocal Kashubian community. Over the last 15 years, they have organized Kashubian Congresses, and initiated the celebration, since 2004, of the Day of Kashubian Unity, and since 2012, the Day of the Kashubian Flag. These type of activities can be called ‘invented traditions’, which launch a continuity through their symbolism and repetitiveness, and which serve to “establish or symbolize social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities”<sup>26</sup>. Those celebrations organized every year, whose symbolism is strengthened by the use of such Kashubian symbols as flags, gryphons, car stickers with the inscription ‘Kaszëbë’, black and yellow T-shirts, Kashubian embroidery, the presence of the people dressed in traditional folk costumes, Kashubian folk music played by folk groups, or modern music sung in the Kashubian language, Kashubian-speaking masters of ceremonies at picnics and celebrations etc., affect the people’s imagination. This reinforces the feeling that their culture ‘really’ exists, that it is interesting and important, and most of all it creates a sense of affiliation with other, not directly known, Kashubs. Thus they create Kashubian ethnic boundaries in a new way. It is also a means of constructing a symbolic landscape, which “communicates social and political meanings through specific public images, physical objects, and other expressive representations. It includes public spaces and especially sacred (but not necessarily religious) sites and other emotionally important and visible venues, as well as representations associated with a group’s identity found in mass media, theater, school textbooks, music, literature, and public art”<sup>27</sup>. The symbolic landscapes demonstrate how people construct and present their world to other people and how they perceive their place in this world as well as the position of other populations.

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<sup>25</sup> J.L. Comaroff, J. Comaroff, *Ethnicity, Inc.*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago-London 2009, p. 26.

<sup>26</sup> E. Hobsbawm, *Introduction: Inventing Traditions*, in: *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger, Cambridge 1983, p. 9.

<sup>27</sup> M.H. Ross, *Cultural Contestation and the Symbolic Landscape. Politics by Other Means?*, in: *Culture and belonging in Divided Societies. Contestation and Symbolic Landscapes*, ed. M.H. Ross, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia 2009, p. 6.

In this article I have attempted to show that the creation of cultural and linguistic landscapes by contemporary European minorities is essential not only for the perception of their presence, but also for the consolidation and sometimes even the creation from scratch of ethnic boundaries. As Akhil Gupta and James Fergusson have written: “The irony of these times, however, is that as actual places and localities become ever more blurred and indeterminate, *ideas* of culturally and ethnically distinct places become perhaps even more salient. It is here that it becomes most visible how imagined communities come to be attached to imagined places”<sup>28</sup>. Marking a visual presence by the minorities, both at the level of signs, symbols, organized events and on the level of introducing visual bilingualism, has a significant influence on their sense of community and collective identity. The measures taken by the minorities, manifesting their presence, marking the areas they inhabit, strengthen the internal relations of those groups and their impact on ethnically indifferent individuals, and compels them to reflect on their identity. This sometimes leads to their decision to identify with the group, which then itself grows stronger. With this ‘authority’, those measures influence the people surrounding the minority. In their eyes the community which presents its culture and shows that its language can function in public life on an equal level with the dominant language, becomes more distinct from the society around it. Anthony Cohen has written that “The boundary represents the mask presented by the community to the outside world; it is the community’s public face. But the conceptualization and symbolization of the boundary from within is much more complex. To put this another way, the boundary as the community’s public face is symbolically simple but as the object of internal discourse it is symbolically complex”<sup>29</sup>. The ethnic boundary is perceived differently by the outsiders – in a simplified, schematic or even stereotypical way – and by the people belonging to the minority. Every person today can choose his/her identity and the way he/she perceives it. However, many factors influence this choice. Among the most important ones is the impact of the different activities of the community with the creation of its cultural landscapes at the forefront.

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<sup>28</sup> A. Gupta, J. Ferguson, *Beyond “Culture”: Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference*, *Cultural Anthropology* 1992, Vol. 7, No. 1, p.

<sup>29</sup> A.P. Cohen, *The symbolic construction of community*, Ellis Horwood Limited, New York 1985, p. 74.

## **EUROPA MNIEJSZOŚCI. OBRAZY KULTUROWE I GRANICE ETNICZNE (streszczenie)**

Artykuł dotyczy konstruowania krajobrazów kulturowych przez autochtoniczne mniejszości w dzisiejszej Europie. Przyglądając się mapie europejskich mniejszości językowych, obserwować możemy z jednej strony silne procesy asymilacyjne (związane m.in. z globalizacją, nowymi mediami, ujednoczeniem sposobu życia), w związku z czym przedstawiciele mniejszości wtapiają się w kulturę dominującą. Z drugiej strony wydaje się, że obecność mniejszości w Europie jest coraz bardziej wyrazista. Nie zamyka się bowiem w prywatnym świecie jednostek, ale silnie wpływa na kształtowanie obrazów kulturowych, naznaczając przestrzeń i wykorzystując ją do promocji kultury. Pojawiają się coraz liczniejsze wizualne oznaki dwujęzyczności, takie jak tablice, nazwy instytucji, organizacji. Coraz bardziej widoczne są również działania mniejszości przejawiające się m.in. poprzez organizowane jarmarki, festiwale, imprezy. W tekście analizowane są działania i konsekwencje działań społecznego nieposłuszeństwa (w Walii i Bretanii) prowadzące do wprowadzenia wizualnej dwujęzyczności. Pokazane zostały okoliczności i rezultaty wprowadzania w Polsce dwujęzycznych tablic w miejscach zamieszkiwanych przez mniejszości językowe – Kaszubów i Łemków. Na końcu przedstawiam działania Kaszubów służące kulturowemu zagospodarowaniu przestrzeni i umacnianiu tożsamości poprzez wynalezione tradycje oraz działania kulturalne. Wizualna obecność języków i przejawów kultur mniejszościowych wpływa silnie na wyostrzenie granic etnicznych mniejszości.

**Słowa kluczowe:** krajobraz kulturowy, kultury mniejszościowe, tradycje wynalezione, dwujęzyczność, granice etniczne.



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## **THE CATALOGUE OF WALLS: A COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF THE EUROPEANS<sup>1</sup>**

**Abstract:** Why do the citizens of Europe build walls? What is so solid in a wall to endow it with the power of division? The Berlin Wall is just one example of the enactment of political power. This paper is an attempt to catalog the most prominent walls, including The Long Walls (450-404 B.C.) from Athens to Piraeus, the Walls of Servius (378 B. C.), the Wall of Hadrian (121 A.D.), the Walls of Antonius (282 A.D), The Wall of Constantine (324 A.D.), the Wall of Theodosius II (408 A.D.), the Wall of the Warsaw ghetto (1941), and the Berlin Wall (1961-1989). Together they make up a broad horizon of barriers, differences, ethnicity and economic embargo, they comment on a historical condition such as the Cold War, and finally they prefigure a new world order. The aim of the paper is to outline some of the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the walls. I will then explore them as forms of division based largely on religion and economy. Lastly, I will give special attention to the Berlin Wall.

**Keywords:** walls, citizens, culture, society, collective memory, exclusion, Berlin Wall.

Walls are a temporary solution, similar to temporary autonomous zones. What is the prize in the game played by the people on both sides? Walls create dichotomies as structural operators for the deduction of rules. These rules are unwillingly obeyed by the societies contained within the walls.

Our behavior is an index of those no longer existing walls. They have arisen in us because we had so long construed the barbarians, pagans, or other civilizations as opponents. Despite the disappearance of the material walls, we continue to treat others as such, and we have lost the ability to mediate

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<sup>1</sup> Paper from the Conference “Current Issues in European Cultural Studies”, organised by the Advanced CulturalStudies Institute of Sweden (ACSIS) in Norrköping 15-17 June 2011. Conference Proceedings published by Linköping University Electronic Press: [http://www.ep.liu.se/ecp\\_home/index.en.aspx?issue=062](http://www.ep.liu.se/ecp_home/index.en.aspx?issue=062). © The Author.

with the opposite side. Is it possible to reach beyond the other side of the wall?

It is commonly agreed that the fall of the Berlin Wall marked the end of the Cold War<sup>2</sup>. After the fall of the Wall, one system has dominated the other; there is no expectation of a revival of Socialism or Communism. Because of the different hierarchy of values and other social relations, it is not possible to turn back history to the period before 1989. If we wish to go back to the other side of the Wall, the only way is through memory. It is collective memory that preserves all barriers and their removals.

Name	Time of construction	Location	Length, width, height	Aim	Material and architecture
The Long Walls	Built in 5 <sup>th</sup> century BC by inspiration of Kimon during the reign of Pericles, and rebuilt after the Peloponnesian War (404 BC) by Komon in 394-391 BC; Ultimately destroyed by Sulla, Roman commander, in 86 BC	From Athens to Piraeus and Faleron	L ~ 3km	Protection of trade, especially of exchange between the city and the Aegean Sea	stones
The Servian Walls (misnamed if the date of completion is correct)	After invasion of the Gauls in 390 BC	Around Rome	L – 11 km; W – 3.5 m; H – 7 m;	Protection against the Gauls (tribal people) and barbarians	stones
The Wall of Hadrian (76 – 138 AD)	From 121 to 129 AD	Northern Britain, from Bowness village to Wallsend	L – 117 km; W – 3 m; H – 5.6 m;	Against Picts, the indigenous people of Scotland	Stones, turf, towers every 500 m and 19 forts every 1.5 km

<sup>2</sup> E. Wright (ed.), *A dictionary of world history*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2007.

Name	Time of construction	Location	Length, width, height	Aim	Material and architecture
The Wall of Antonius (86 – 161 AD)	Construction began in 142 AD	160 km north of the Hadrian Wall	L – 58 km; W – 4.5 m; H – 3 m;	Same as above	Additional moat 4 m wide and 12 m deep with forts every 3 km
The Wall of Constantine	324 AC started	Around Constantinople	L – 2.8 km;		
The Wall of Theodosius II (408-450AD)	During the reign of Theodosius	1.5 km north of the Wall of Constantine	L – 3 km; H – 7.5 m; ditch – 18 m second wall – 12 – 18 m	Against barbarians (Slavs, Avars and Persians), Christians (crusades) and Arabs (Muslims);	Towers and keeps, gates
The Wall of the Warsaw Ghetto	1940-1943	Around 2.4 square kilometers in Warsaw	L – 3.5 km	Extermination; robbery; eugenics;	Two interior gates and two exterior gates
Berlin Wall	1961-1989	Around West Berlin, in the former German Democratic Republic	L – 156 km;	Against migration, emigration, political and economic differences	Concrete, wire fences, gravel, landmines, towers, gates

Table 1. Catalog of walls in Europe

The table catalogs the eight most important walls in Europe. We can shorten this list by treating two pairs of walls as single elements. The wall of Hadrian and the wall of Antonius may be treated as one Roman investment which we can call British Walls. Similarly, in the case of the walls of Constantine and of Theodosius we can use one term: The Walls of Constantinople (or Byzantine Walls). The catalog allows us to compare these different manifestations of European strategies, economies, religions, and idiosyncrasies. None of these walls still exists. All were temporary structures, but their impact on European cultural evolution is important, and it is crucial that those changes

are irreversible and decisive. Looking back to the origin of Europe, we are not able to repeat or turn back any of the evolutionary choices. This is similar to the workings of natural selection<sup>3</sup> and the life of a particular organism: adaptation is a process of selection over time. Altogether the walls are an embodiment of the ‘purification’ of Europe.

Today, because of the renewed interest in our origins, we can observe a tendency for re-tribalisation, which is a process of negotiation with older forms of religion and economic development. It is as if we wished a tree to grow back again across time. When we read about the neo-pagans or enteogenic religion, we expect that some archaic elements would be restored in a contemporary context.

In biology and physics, most processes are irreversible because of entropy, but culture is different: here reversing natural selection is partially possible. In nature we are not able to revive dinosaurs, but in culture we can pray to the oldest Gods. Cultural reversal, like reverse engineering, is part of a whole. It is a space for the negotiation of borders, peripheries and the remembrance of ‘the others’ who were precluded, excluded, and/or even traumatically forgotten. In culture the restitution of what had been lost is partially possible. Where can we find a proper measure of this partiality? I have no doubt that the reverse engineering of cultural evolution is potentially enriching. However, the margins, peripheries, oddities, the precluded and excluded others can survive only as a minority.

This minority can be contrasted not with the majority, but with two other conflicting minorities; ultra-modernism and postmodernism. Contemporary culture has no majority and at the highest level of analysis there are three competitive minorities, one of which aims to represent the peripheries – the oldest part of cultural evolution. Here is our chance to negotiate with the archaic religion, ritual, economy, exchange and some elements of politics.

Walls continue to restrict us despite their disappearance. They are inscribed into our past. Looking at the chronology of the walls in the table, we can see three fundamental breaks. This shows the cyclical nature of history, with each cycle a turn in the conscience of man. I believe this observation gives us an opportunity to think about human memetic memory. Memes are essential in human activity, such as games, communication acts, etc. We enact them every day because we inherit memory; the collective memory of the

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<sup>3</sup> R. Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1989.

Europeans has been sustained during the process of our evolution from animal to human, from animal to a rational being, a homo symbolicus. Memetic memory thus preserves the memes from our history of being human. Some of the memes have become extinct, but new ones are being constantly created. Memetics – the study of memes – is trying to discredit as malicious such memes as religion; malicious or not, however, such memes give us the strength to overcome the rigor of the strict rules of division.

The great walls of Greece prevented contacts with other republics of the Mediterranean. Plato's dialogues record the memory of philosophers strolling near the Greek walls. During the stroll, they talk about the political system envisioned by Plato. They discuss the theory of being, of the soul, and of politics. Although Plato has been a well-known philosopher since ancient times, there are many forgotten and uncompleted works of philosophers outside the Long Walls. On one side were the Athenian Academia and the Lyceum, and on the other the Parmenidians and Heraklitians of Colon and Miletus. There were also the colonies of Cyrenaica and Abdera with their own schools of philosophers<sup>4</sup> (Reale, 1994). Altogether, the schools outside Athens are inscribed into what is thrown back, lost in the unconscious. Aristotle speeded up this process when he started to clarify the notion of substance, and the walls around Greece are what we can call our past horizon of events. However, in the case of Greece there was a strong current of trade, between the islands integrated on the basis of common mythology. The walls from Athens to Falenor facilitated investment, which is the basis of Western European civilization. Wealth began to be accumulated and inherited.

The Servian Walls are the first example of fortification against the barbarians. It was not an expensive undertaking, because the Romans used slaves to build them. When we compare this structure with the walls of the young cities in Creta such as Cortina, we see the difference of width and the similarity of fear of 'the others' who are dangerous and destructive. While in the past humans saw other humans as 'the others', in postmodernity all humankind is constructed as indivisible, interconnected, imploded. There are no new large-scale barriers such as e.g. the Chinese Wall. People of all kinds are in communication via the Internet, through travel, migration and by other means, creating an international global net of information, energy and human resources.

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<sup>4</sup> G. Reale, *Historia filozofii starożytnej*, t. 1: *Od początków do Sokratesa*, transl. E.I. Zieliński, Redakcja Wydawnictw Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1994.

For the remainder of this paper I will discuss the following points:

1. Collective memory functions analogous to genetic memory.
2. The Europeans have inherited patterns of behaviors resulting from adaptation and exclusions.
3. Walls represent exclusions, especially of the barbarians – people of different ethnicity, religion, and economic or political systems (pagans, Jews, Moslems, Communists, Socialists, etc).
4. The evolution of culture is through division, separation, improvement and selection, which irreversibly narrows down the number of possibilities.
5. Exclusions leave traces in the collective unconscious.

We can make the collective unconscious visible and open through the restoration of our memory of exclusions. As can be seen from my table of walls, the first wall at Greece was erected against the Spartans construed as the others, in a competitive colonialist endeavor throughout the Mediterranean. The establishment of Athens' domination was strengthened by Patroclus's military occupation and the defense against other settlements such as Phoenicia and other Greek cities.

The Greeks and Phoenicians spread throughout the Mediterranean with the Greeks to the north with the exception of Cyrenaica in eastern Libya and Naukratis near Giza. The Phoenicians expanded to the south around the sea with the exception of the Balearic Islands, Sardinia, western Sicily, and Malta. The Greeks had much more autonomous, separated lands located in many cases at the estuary of a river. The location and the size of the colonies on the Black Sea show us clearly that the Greek expansion had its own motivation and logic. The new polis infrastructure in many cases served the purpose of storing and supplying food resources. This was certainly the case of Athens, but Greek expansion was dictated by the diminishing of local resources and in consequence the city lost its autonomy. In a sense we see here how the polis lost its ability to be a polis. Another factor important for understanding the Greek migration is their skill of sailing and navigation. We can say that this practical knowledge enabled them to manage the wars against Persia. Even with their navigation skills and their naval domination, there was a risk of being assimilated or exterminated in isolation.

The Greek domination was the result of Athens' temporary victory over the other colonies in the Peloponnesian War, which shows how diminishing territory pushes its inhabitants to fight in bipolar trade wars. We can see how European trade was not established through a complete occupation of a territory, but through the division of the occupied lands. Persia was ideo-

logically different from all its surrounding countries, but the Europeans used assimilation and manipulated division in relation to others. The Greeks' system of economy and culture made them feel strong and they developed tolerance. The polyphony of the colonies gave them the power of assimilation and introduced diversity in religion, philosophy and the arts. For evidence we can consider the Ionian and Doric origins of two different orders of building, especially in the sacral and devotional functions. Abdera, Cyrenaica, Croton, Sinope – all contributed to the plurality of Greek philosophy, though only Plato and Aristotle were chosen to be translated into Latin.

The Athenian walls were copied by Rome, mainly due to the rising tensions elsewhere in the Roman empire. We need to remember that the Romans did assimilate Greek philosophy, education, politics, art and culture, but mainly due to the demand for fashionable vase design. They perceived Greece as divided into Sparta and Athens and further contrasted with the other colonies of the Western Mediterranean. This became a complex re-writing of history and the first representation of events before Christianity.

The Roman walls are better known than their original. The walls which we can find in Rome today come from two sources and were built at two different periods of time – the fourth century B.C. and the third century A.D. The former period embraced the establishment of the Roman republic and the time when the Roman Empire expanded far into Europe, Africa and Asia. The second period began with Rome's conflict with the tribes who lived near the rivers Elbe, Rhine and the Danube and eventually moved the border further with Hadrian's Wall in Britain. However, there were many lands which had not been conquered. Poland and Sweden were still not discovered. Aurelius was defeated in Dacia<sup>5</sup> and was forced to retreat.

Every city that can be found on the map of the Roman territories had its walls which defended it, guaranteeing the freedom of its inhabitants. The separation from the other inhabited lands became semantically evident in the adjective 'barbarian' (Lat. *barbaria* = 'foreign country') This word can be found in the writings of Aristotle and Plato, where they discuss the politics of governing. In the second period of Roman wall construction during the rule of Aurelian, the walls were intended as anti-barbarian; this can be seen as a symbol of the decay of the Roman Empire. The walls of Constantinople were constructed to defend Roman Christianity. The original walls had existed since Greek colonization, until Constantine moved his capital from Rome to the East.

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<sup>5</sup> A. Krawczuk, *Poczet cesarzy rzymskich*, Iskry, Warszawa 1991.

After the relocation of the capital, Constantine and after him Theodosius and Justine ruled over the territories in North Africa, Palestine, Syria and Turkey. This rule could not last forever and the main factor in the process of the demise of Constantinople was the schism within the Church. With the two Churches in theological quarrel, this enabled the crusaders to organize and to conquer the Eastern capital.

In the eighth century A.D., the fourth Crusade came to Constantinople and temporarily defeated the Orthodox Church, but shortly after that, Constantinople was restored. This period saw an abundance of art, such as iconostases. The politics of Constantine is admired because after the siege of Odoacer and Valeric he started to promote his faith rather than military service. It is interesting why the leaders of the barbarians easily changed their customs, habits and beliefs. We are not so naive to believe that they converted because of miracles and clairvoyance. They knew clearly that religion would be a great instrument to safeguard their power.

Sacred power is more powerful than civil law. Sacred power is the law which can both sin and absolve sins. It is obvious that monotheism is a strong and conditional factor in medieval politics. The East and West of the post-Roman Empire resulted from a rupture which divided the followers of two versions of monotheism, and their successors inhabiting the Russian lands on the right and the Germanic lands on the left.

In contemporary Europe it is easier to talk about business and sharing knowledge with the Americans, the Japanese, the Germans, the Spanish etc. than with the Russians. On this side of the imaginary wall we see Russia as a former aggressor, fully equipped with secret services and rich in energy resources. Europe had lost its resources in North Africa, Palestine, Syria, Anatolia, and on the Black Sea because of interior diversification resulting from the religious dogmas concerning the nature of Christ and the Holy Spirit, the position of Mary, the importance of the sacraments, and the authority of the Pope. This diversification created hate and for Western Europe it was better to expand towards the New World.

As I have said above, walls are an investment in freedom, but there is a limited extent to which people inside can stand confinement. Walls are neutral, but people on both sides are in confrontation. Sometimes this conflict is described in terms of the barbarians and the nobles, or Christians and pagans. The walls of the Warsaw Ghetto and a similar one in Łódź both witnessed Nazi eugenics, robbery, and terror. Eugenics is an intellectual basis

for the purification of the human race. In the Nazi visions of the future human race, there was no place for the genes of the psychopaths, alcoholics, cripples, homosexuals and Jews. They rejected all kind of otherness, enclosing 'the others' within walls, rather than keeping them out, as it had been done before. After World War II, Berlin was divided into French, American, British and Soviet zones. Three national governments ruled over West Berlin and the Soviet Union with its satellites from the Warsaw Pact governed the rest of the city with the largest number of borders in the world. The Berlin Wall was an embodiment of the division between Communism and capitalism, and the opposition between the East and the West. The economic differences in the period of the Wall's existence are well known. The Berlin Wall divided the city and people could not pass between its two parts. The Germans with the same cultural roots and speaking the same language found themselves in opposing camps. This situation is partly comparable to the geopolitical situation of the two countries of South and North Korea.

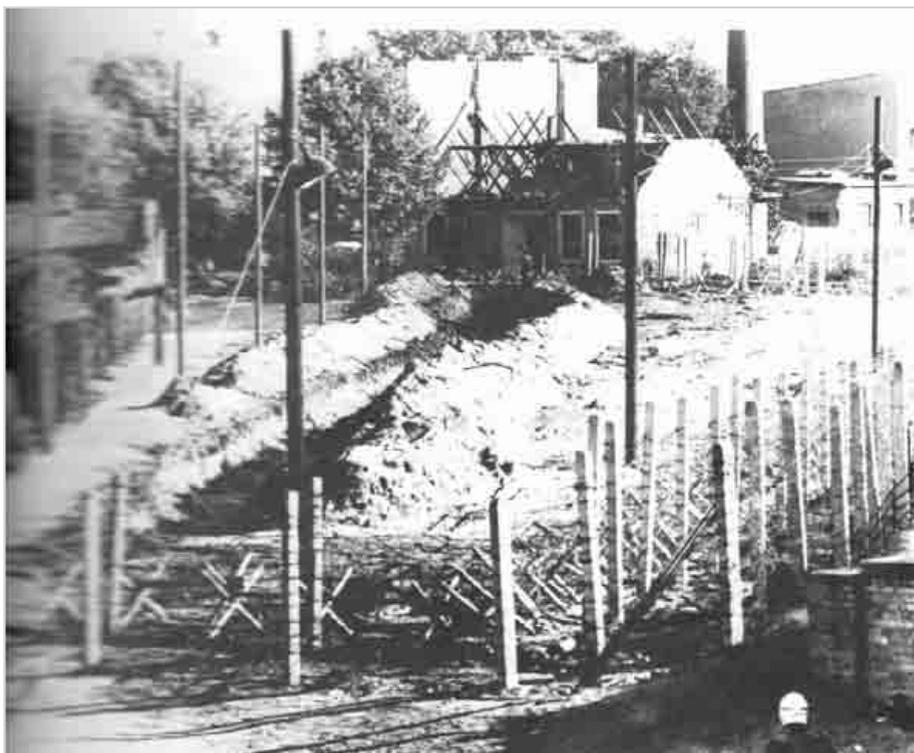


Fig. 1. The Berlin Wall at the beginning of its existence (1961). Source: Wright, 1992

Figures 1 and 2 show the Berlin Wall at different periods. The first photograph was taken in 1961. It shows some wire fences and small buildings, probably guardhouses. The silhouette of a man in the lower right corner of the photo lets us measure the height and the thickness of the fences. The second photo shows some young people sitting on top of the concrete Wall, observing a man striking it with a hammer. His face shows pain and accusation. He is possibly on the Western side, because the Wall is painted in colorful graffiti.



Fig. 2. The end of Berlin Wall. Source: Wright, 1992

Graffiti is one of the symbols of transformation in post-Communist countries such as Poland, where it had not been previously allowed, because rigorous state control prevented any open public manifestation of freedom. Police kept order and removed all sprayed-on comments as expressions of political opposition or counterculture.

When the Wall still existed, many Poles traveled by train to West Berlin to purchase high-tech goods, sweets, and clothes. They were then sold on the black market. All of the cities near the Polish-German border had markets with goods from West Berlin, and sported the German-borrowed folklore of the garden figurines of dwarfs. Dwarfs are also associated with the Polish movement of Orange Alternative – a network of students and other young people active in the 1980s in the big cities in Poland, such as Warsaw, Łódź, and Wrocław, where they protested against the regime by spray-painting dwarfs on walls. The Orange Alternative organized happenings which pointed out the absurdity of the system. In one of them, the protesters would run through the streets and when the police stopped them, they would exclaim: ‘You have just stopped galloping inflation’. The main force in the Polish opposition to the Soviet system was of course represented by the Self-Governing Trade Union ‘Solidarity’, whose activity was curbed by the martial law of 1980-81.

As has been already mentioned, The Berlin Wall was meant to separate two parts of Europe. The difference between the East and the West was based on politics and economy. The former had central administration, state-controlled production and distribution of goods, and mostly state-owned collective farms. The latter boasted of economic freedom of individual investors in the politically pluralistic state. On the Soviet side of Europe, e.g. in Poland, ration cards became a means of controlling the distribution of goods. In the West, products were freely available, and the main principle was competition practiced in a democratic manner.

The fall of the Wall became a symbol of the superiority of the Western system. The dualism of Capitalism and Communism was gone, replaced by the hegemony of liberal democracy. Michail Gorbachev’s *perestroika* had been an impulse for the new world order, and there was no return behind the Iron Curtain.

After the downfall of Communism, sparked by the strikes at the Polish shipyard in Gdansk and the fall of the Berlin Wall, post-Soviet Europe had to overcome the differences between the former East and West, resulting from

their separation. While people from the countries of the Warsaw Pact had needed to apply for visas to the West, a few years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, they needed to ask Russia for visas. Poland has an interesting location on the map of Europe. It was on its margins in the early Middle Ages, until the Christian crusades to the east placed it in the centre of Europe. This location seems to have shifted with later historical occurrences, but today it has been re-confirmed.

The information gathered in this paper shows a pattern of Europe's evolution. It may be presented as a curve, branching out into chaotic indeterminacy of fractal particles. Walls have symbolized our exclusion of the barbarians, pagans, and other minorities. The walls of Hadrian, Aurelian and Constantine were built to protect the countries against the barbarians and the pagans. The walls of the Warsaw Ghetto and many other ghettos in Poland are the symbols of the exclusion of the Jews. The Berlin Wall evidenced a confrontation between two hostile political and economic systems.

This paper has been concerned with the walls historically existing in Europe. The awareness of their existence lets us reflect on what had been excluded in the past and more recently. Hopefully no such spaces will be walled-off in the future. Walls served the division of the societies that were powerless to defend their own borders. All walls are temporary investments; they try to pretend that they are similar to geographical and topological barriers, but sooner or later they fall.

However, in the current climate, we are facing some new attempts at political control with the use of the electronic media; the digital surveillance is conducted from a distance by means of the Internet, radio frequencies, satellites, malware etc. This kind of control does not need walls; it cannot put people into two separate physical spaces, but it divides them exponentially into ever smaller groups. At the end of the two-and-a-half thousand year long process of the building and demolishing of walls, we are now being marginalized within a flattened horizontal reality even without radical otherness.

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### **KATALOG MURÓW. ZBIOROWA PAMIĘĆ MIESZKAŃCÓW EUROPY (streszczenie)**

Dlaczego mieszkańcy budują mury? Czy dlatego, by trwale utrzymać władzę wynikającą z podziału? Mur Berliński to jeden z przykładów ustanowienia władzy politycznej. Artykuł jest próbą skatalogowania najbardziej znanych murów Europy. Są to Długie Mury (450–404 p.n.e.) z Aten do Pireusu, Mury Serviusza (378 p.n.e.), Wał Hadriana (121 p.n.e.), Wały Antoniusza, Mur Getta Warszawskiego (1941), Mur Berliński (1961–1989). Wszystkie one dają nam wgląd w możliwość tworzenia barier, różnic, etnicznego i ekonomicznego embargo, zimnej wojny i w końcu nowego porządku świata. W artykule prezentuję tabelę zawierającą informacje na temat europejskich murów. Omawiam różnice etniczne, religijne i ekonomiczne, powodujące tworzenie podziałów w postaci muru. Podkreślam rolę, jaką pełnił Mur Berliński w tworzeniu się pewnej formy ewolucyjnej europejskiego społeczeństwa, wykluczającej część jego dzisiejszych członków.

**Słowa kluczowe:** mury, mieszkańcy, kultura, ewolucja, społeczeństwo, pamięć zbiorowa, wykluczenie, Mur Berliński.



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## “THE ORIENT” IN GLOBAL CULTURAL FLOW: THE CASE OF THE TURKISH RIVIERA

**Abstract:** Tourism has become an important sector in Turkey as a growing source of foreign exchange reserves and employment over the last two decades. An increasing number of foreign tourists makes the Turkish Riviera an area of intense global interaction. According to Arjun Appadurai, the new global cultural economy has to be seen as an overlapping, disjunctive order that can no longer be understood in terms of the existing center-periphery models. This article will explore such disjunctures and deal with the complex “-scapes” of the Turkish Riviera. It aims to look at the relationships among the five dimensions of the global cultural flow: *ethnoscapes*, *mediascapes*, *technoscapes*, *financescapes*, and *ideoscapes*. One goal of this review is to examine if the concept of “the Orient” coined by Edward Said still exists within the discourse and the visual imagery of tourism.

**Keywords:** the Turkish Riviera, tourism, Orient, disjuncture, “-scapes”.

### “ORIENTALISM” – GAME OVER?

Edward Said begins his best-known book *Orientalism* with the assumption that “the Orient is not an inert fact of nature”<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, he claims that it is the space which is not merely “there”. Drawing on Giambattista Vico’s notion of history, Said argues that man makes not only his own history, but also his own geography: “such locales, regions, geographical sectors as ‘Orient’ and ‘Occident’ are man-made. Therefore, as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence”.<sup>2</sup> He analyses the cultural misrepresentation of “the Orient” in general, and of the Middle East in particular.

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<sup>1</sup> E. Said, *Orientalism*, Vintage Books, New York 1979, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 5.

The central idea of “Orientalism” is that the Western knowledge about the East is not generated from facts or reality, but from preconceived archetypes that envision all “Eastern” societies as fundamentally similar to one another, and fundamentally dissimilar to “Western” societies. This discourse establishes “the East” as antithetical to “the West”. Said argues that Orient and Occident worked as oppositional terms, so that “the Orient” was constructed as an inversion of the Western culture. It is an image of what is inferior and alien (“Other”) to the West. Orientalism is a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on its special place in Western European experience. Said contends that “The Orient was almost an European invention, and had been since antiquity a place for romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences”<sup>3</sup>. Orientalism is also a Western style of dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient<sup>4</sup>. For this reason, “the Orient” signifies a system of representations framed by political forces. Drawing on Michel Foucault’s notion of “discourse”<sup>5</sup>, Said stresses that without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, ideologically and imaginatively<sup>6</sup>. In brief, Orientalism should not be thought of as a structure of lies or myths. It is, rather, a system of knowledge about the Orient<sup>7</sup>.

Said’s discussion of academic Orientalism is almost entirely limited to late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century scholarship. Most academic Area Studies departments had already abandoned the imperialist or colonialist paradigm of scholarship. In Said’s opinion, the Orient is “disappearing, in a sense it had happened, its time was over”<sup>8</sup>. However, I would argue that “the Orient” still exists within the discourse and the visual imagery of tourism.

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Described by Foucault in *The Archeology of Knowledge and Discipline and Punish*. Following the ideas of Michel Foucault, Said emphasized the relationship between power and knowledge in scholarly and popular thinking, in particular regarding European views of the Islamic Arab world

<sup>6</sup> E. Said, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*.

### "THE ORIENT" IS FEMALE

The depiction of this singular "Orient" which can be studied as a cohesive whole has deeply influenced the discourse of tourism. The website [www.thomascook.pl](http://www.thomascook.pl), offering different tourist destinations, shows a fragment of a woman's face, her beautiful eyes visible above a veil decorated with jewels. In the middle of the picture, above some marble tiles, is the advertising slogan: "Tempting Orient – at the lowest price". The content of the image evokes the feeling of luxury and mystery, while the slogan suggests that these remarkable experiences are within our easy reach.



<http://www.thomascook.pl/Last-minute.html>

It is not surprising that the Orient has a woman's face. Within the discourse of Orientalism, even the Oriental man is depicted as feminine (yet strangely dangerous because he poses a threat to the Western women). The Oriental woman is not only strikingly exotic, but also seems eager to be dominated. The picture from the website follows the model of an Oriental woman inspired – according to Said – by Flaubert's encounter with an Egyptian courtesan. She "never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence or history. **He** spoke for her and represented her. He was foreign, comparatively wealthy and male"<sup>9</sup>. Said argues that Flaubert's relation with his exotic lover was not an isolated instance. It stands for the strong pattern of relations between East and West and the discourse about the Orient that it enabled<sup>10</sup>. This discourse is laced with notions of power and superiority. The

<sup>9</sup> E. Said, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 6.

feminine Orient awaits the dominance of the West; it exists for its Western counterpart. For Said these cultural prejudices are derived from a long tradition of the romanticized images of Asia and of the Middle East.

### **TURKEY – “SCENT OF THE ORIENT AT THE EDGE OF CONTINENTS”**

The Oriental is a stereotype that crosses countless cultural and national boundaries<sup>11</sup>. Said focuses on the Eurocentric prejudice against Arabo-Islamic peoples and their culture, but what is considered “the Orient” in tourist discourse is a vast area that also includes the non-Arab countries of the Middle East. One of them is Turkey<sup>12</sup>, officially the Republic of Turkey. The way the tourist agencies portray Turkey reflects the geopolitical placement of this transcontinental country, located mostly on the Anatolian Peninsula in Western Asia and on East Thrace in Southeastern Europe. The leading Polish website advertising Turkey as a good place for holidays states that “Turkey is a mixture of oriental culture, interesting monuments, fascinating places, golden beaches and warm blue sea”<sup>13</sup>. Another example comes from the catalogue of Scan Holiday: “Turkey. Scent of the Orient at the edge of continents”. In both advertisements Turkey is identified as a borderland between East and West.

Tourism in Turkey has experienced rapid growth in the last twenty years, and constitutes an important part of its economy. In 2011, Turkey welcomed 33.3 million foreign visitors, which made the country the sixth most-popular tourist destination in the world and the fourth one in Europe<sup>14</sup>. Tourism in Turkey is focused largely in a variety of historical sites (with Istanbul as the most important one), and in the seaside resorts along its Aegean and Mediterranean Sea coasts. The Turkish Riviera<sup>15</sup> is a term used to define an area of southwest Turkey encompassing the provinces of Antalya and Muğla,

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<sup>11</sup> According to Orientalist scholars Orient includes most of Asia as well as the Middle East.

<sup>12</sup> The English name *Turkey* first appeared in the late 14th century, and is derived from Medieval Latin *Turchia*. Harper, Douglas (2001). “Turkey” Online Etymology Dictionary. Retrieved 16 June 2013.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.turcja.com.pl>, 15.10.2013.

<sup>14</sup> In 2011 tourists contributed \$23 billion to Turkey’s revenues. Foreign tourist arrivals increased substantially in Turkey between 2002 and 2005, from 12.8 million to 21.2 million, which made Turkey a top-10 destination in the world for foreign visitors. Tourism Statistics from the official website of Ministry of Culture and Tourism; <http://www.kultur.gov.tr/EN,36568/number-of-arriving-departing-visitors-foreigners-and-ci-.html>, 15.10.2013.

<sup>15</sup> The Turkish Riviera is also known popularly as the Turquoise Coast.

and to a lesser extent Aydın, southern İzmir and western Mersin. The area includes the Aegean Region and the Mediterranean Region. The combination of a favorable climate, warm sea, more than a thousand kilometers of shoreline, and archeological points of interest<sup>16</sup> makes this area a popular national and international tourist destination.

## NEW GLOBAL CULTURAL ECONOMY

The increasing number of foreign tourist makes the Turkish Riviera an area of global interaction. According to Appadurai (1996), the new global cultural economy has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order that can no longer be understood in terms of the existing center-periphery models<sup>17</sup>. Nor it is susceptible to the simple models of push and pull (in terms of the migration theory) or consumers and producers. In his opinion, even the most flexible theories deriving from the Marxist tradition have failed to come to terms with what Scott Lash and John Urry have called disorganized capitalism<sup>18</sup>. The complexity of current global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture, and politics.

Appadurai claims that the world has now become a single system with a range of complex subsystems. He is opposed to the account of globalization as cultural imperialism, which fuels much of the dependency theory and world-systems analysis. Appadurai proposes that an elementary framework for exploring such disjunctures is to look at the relationships among the five dimensions of global cultural flow that can be termed

- ethnoscapas,
- mediascapas,
- technoscapas,
- financescapas,
- ideoscapas<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Among the archeological points of interest are two of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World: The ruins of the Mausoleum of Maussollos in Halicarnassus; and the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus.

<sup>17</sup> A. Appadurai, *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1996, pp. 27-29.

<sup>18</sup> S. Lash, J. Urry *The End of Organized Capitalism*, Cambridge: Polity Books, 1987.

<sup>19</sup> A. Appadurai, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.

The suffix *-scape* allows him to point to the fluid, irregular shapes of these landscapes, the shapes that characterize international capital as deeply as they do international clothing styles. These terms also indicate that these are not objectively given relations that look the same from every angle of vision. Each of these “scapes” is constructed by particular perspectives, created by social actors<sup>20</sup>. These landscapes are thus the building blocks of the “imagined worlds”. Appadurai’s concept is similar to Benedict Anderson’s idea of the nation as an imagined community. The anthropologist believes that we now live in such globally imagined worlds and not simply in locally imagined communities.

### THE ETHNOSCAPE OF THE SEA RESORTS

By *ethnoscape*, Appadurai means the people constituting the shifting landscape we live in: the tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and individuals. Ethnoscapes arise then from multi-directional movements. This is not to say that there are no relatively stable communities and networks of kinship, work, or leisure, as well as of birth, residence, and other filial forms. But it is to say that the warp of these stabilities is everywhere shot through with the woof of human motion, as more persons and groups deal with the realities of having to move or the fantasies of wanting to move<sup>21</sup>.

Analysing the ethnoscape of the Turkish Riviera one should consider both the local communities (including seasonal workers) and the multiethnic flow of tourists. Article 66 of the Turkish Constitution defines a “Turk” as “anyone who is bound to the Turkish state through the bond of citizenship”; therefore, the legal use of the term “Turkish” as a citizen of Turkey is different from the ethnic definition. However, the majority of the Turkish population are of Turkish ethnicity. They are estimated at 70-75 per cent<sup>22</sup>. The three minority groups officially recognized in the Treaty of Lausanne are Armenians, Greeks, and Jews. Minorities other than the three officially recognized ones do not have specific minority rights, while the term “minority” itself remains

<sup>20</sup> These constructs are inflected by the historical, linguistic and political situatedness of different sort of actors: nation states, multinationals, diasporic communities, as well as subnational groupings and movements. A. Appadurai, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>22</sup> CIA World Factbook <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html>; 20.10.2013.

a sensitive issue in Turkey<sup>23</sup>. The largest non-Turkish ethnic group are the Kurds, variously estimated at around 19 per cent. Other ethnic groups include among others: Albanians, Crimean Tatars (7 per cent), Arabs (2 per cent)<sup>24</sup>. With the beginning of the tourist season a lot of people (mostly men) from different parts of Turkey come to seaside resorts to work in hotels and in Turkish baths (*hammam*) on the Riviera. Every year from May to October seasonal workers become a big part of local communities. The seasonal migrations within the country are one of the factors which influence the ethnoscape of the Turkish Riviera. Another factor is the flow of both Turkish and foreign tourists which mainly come from Germany, Russia, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France, Italy, the Arab world, Caucasia, and Japan. The tourists from North America and Scandinavia are also not uncommon. There seems to be a trend for the British tourists to go on holiday to the Aegean resorts such as Bodrum or Marmaris, while the Russian and Arab tourists almost exclusively visit the resorts on the Mediterranean coast of southern Turkey (e.g. Antalya).



Bitez 2009; photo E. Wiącek

<sup>23</sup> The Government of Turkey is frequently being criticized for its treatment of minorities.

<sup>24</sup> [www.turkstat.gov.tr](http://www.turkstat.gov.tr); 20.10.2013.

The complexity of the ethnoscape is probably most visible on the beaches. Roland Barthes noted in his *Mythologies* that one can find semiotic messages even on the beach<sup>25</sup>. One of such messages are the clothes. Next to the women from Europe sunbathing in bikinis or even topless are the traditionally dressed Turkish women or tourists from the Arabic countries bathing in special costumes covering the whole body. Another space of interactions of different ethnic groups are the discos and bars<sup>26</sup>.

Agata Bromberek, the Polish resident working with the tourists in Alanya has coined the term “a Turkish tourist worker”. In her opinion the Turkish men working on the Riviera have much more in common with the Italians, Spaniards, or Egyptians working in the sea resorts in their countries than with typical Turks doing other jobs. Bromberek claims that even the deep knowledge of Alanya or similar towns does not give us any valuable knowledge of Turkey. It gives us only the knowledge about the life in a sea resort<sup>27</sup>.

There are towns on the Turkish Riviera where the people from the West have become a fixed element of the ethnoscape. The evidences of their presence can be found e.g. in Alaçatı – an Aegean town on the western coast of the İzmir Province, which has been famous for its architecture, vineyards and windmills for over 150 years, and has recently made its name in the world of windsurfing and kitesurfing. With two British airlines offering direct flights to nearby Izmir, the resort is now easily accessible to British travellers who want an authentic Turkish experience. The signs of London tube stations vie with the names of Turkish streets and create an impression of multiethnicity. The complex ethnoscape of Alaçatı also includes the houses abandoned by the Greeks. The place was a Greek settlement area which became an Ottoman town in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. However, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Moslem population was a minority in the town<sup>28</sup>. The Greek population of Alaçatı was forced to leave in 1914, but most of it returned in 1919 during the Greek administration of Smyrna (1919-1922) when the Hellenic Army occupied the region of Izmir. The majority fled with the retreating Greek Army following Greece's defeat in the Greco-Turkish War, whilst others fled from the shores

<sup>25</sup> Barthes R., *Mit i znak*, Warszawa 1970, p. 29.

<sup>26</sup> <http://offtrackplanet.com/magazine/articles/getting-drunk-with-locals-10-best-local-bars-in-turkey>.

<sup>27</sup> A. Bromberek, A. Wielgołaska, *Turcja. Półprzewodnik obyczajowy*, Warszawa, p. 231.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. A. Spyros Sofos, U. Özkırımlı, *Tormented by History: Nationalism in Greece and Turkey*, C Hurst & Co Publishers. 2008, pp. 116–117.

of Smyrna<sup>29</sup>. The emigration of the Greek population was transformed into a population exchange backed by international legal guarantees<sup>30</sup>. The Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 sanctioned the compulsory exchange of populations: the Muslims who lived in Crete, Thrace, Macedonia and Dodecanese settled in Alaçatı in the houses abandoned by the Greeks<sup>31</sup>. Most of these houses still remain in Alaçatı.



Alaçatı 2011; photo E. Wiącek

## THE *TECHNOSCAPES* AND *FINANSCAPES* OF THE RIVIERA

By *technoscape*, Appadurai means the ever-fluid global configuration of technology and the fact that technology, both high and low, both mechanical and informational, now crosses at fast pace the various previously impervious boundaries<sup>32</sup>. Technoscapes arise from rapid technological diffusion and flow across national boundaries. Appadurai believes these flows are increasingly complex and multi-directional, in contrast to older models of technological dependency. The landscape of the Turkish Riviera brings many examples of

<sup>29</sup> Z.Y. Hershlag, *Introduction to the Modern Economic History of the Middle East*, Brill Academic Pub 1997, p. 177.

<sup>30</sup> Y. Kats, *Partner to partition: the Jewish Agency's partition plan in the mandate era*, Routledge 1998, p. 88.

<sup>31</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ala%C3%A7at%C4%B1>; 11.11.2013.

<sup>32</sup> A. Appadurai, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

multinational enterprise in the field of technology. The Antique Theatre in Bodrum features the names of two telecommunications companies carved in stone. In 2000 Turkcell (the leading Turkish mobile phone operator) and Ericsson<sup>33</sup> started the project of restoration of the site of the theatre, built during Greek and Roman times, under the supervision of Bodrum's Museum for Underwater Archaeology.



Antique Theatre in Bodrum  
<http://www.lavanta.com/francais/album.asp?id=7>

The landscape of the Turkish Riviera shows that some old technologies are replaced by new ones. The characteristic, white-domed water cisterns made of stone, called *gümbet*<sup>34</sup>, are falling into ruin since the introduction of electric and gasoline pumps. The ruins of the old hilltop windmills are another sign of changing technology. This does not mean, however, that the technological traditions of the area are completely forgotten. The past is still remembered in souvenirs and names. The windmills in Bodrum are no longer

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<sup>33</sup> Ericsson is a Swedish multinational technology company that provides and operates telecommunications networks, television and video systems, and related services. In 2012 it was the world's largest provider of wireless network equipment, with a market share of 38%. The company has offices and operations in more than 180 countries. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/06/11/markets-nordics-factors-idUSL5E8HB0K320120611;11.11.2013>.

<sup>34</sup> In Turkish *gümbet* means "dome".

in use, but they are still the most popular motif of the souvenirs and postcards sold in the town and in the nearby villages which have become sea resorts. The water cisterns gave their name to the new resort called *Gümbet* located on the South-west coast of Turkey. This resort, very popular with the British tourists, is geared towards younger holidaymakers, who spend time on the beaches by day and in bars and clubs by night.



Mills and souvenirs in Bodrum, 2008;  
photo E. Wiącek

The fluid global configuration of technology is especially visible in the Turkish marinas. They are the ports of call for international and local yachtsmen equipped with modern services<sup>35</sup>. Although the history of modern infrastructure geared to recreational boating in Turkey is only slightly more than thirty years long, one may predict the country's increasing popularity among nautical tourists, because of its spectacular coastline<sup>36</sup>. Marinas are now found in many resorts on the Aegean Sea or the Mediterranean Sea (İzmir is the largest port city on the Riviera)<sup>37</sup>. In recent years, they offer modern infrastructure and necessary facilities, offering a whole range of services. Some of the marinas<sup>38</sup> are operated by locally based enterprises, but international investments are dominating. Port Göcek is managed by the

<sup>35</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marinas\\_in\\_Turkey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marinas_in_Turkey); 11.11.2013.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>37</sup> There are close to three dozen marinas currently operational in Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

<sup>38</sup> Alaçatı Marina and İzmir's Levent Marina.

British company Camper and Nicholson<sup>39</sup>, in a joint-venture with the owner, Turkey's Turkon Holding. The marina is part of an integrated leisure compound, at the tip of a natural park and complete with a Swissotel and the beach gravel brought over from Canada<sup>40</sup>. In 2006, Camper and Nicholson also won the bid, together with IC Holding, for the completion and the operation of the Çeşme harbour marina<sup>41</sup>.

The creation of the specific technoscapes is frequently driven not by any obvious economic or political rationality, but by the increasingly complex relationships between the money flows and the availability of both unskilled and highly skilled labor. The phenomenon of seasonal workers lets us notice that ethnoscaping and technoscapes are interrelated and fluid. The development of the marinas shows that the technoscapes are also tightly interconnected with *finanscapes*. Finanscapes arise from rapid financial flows and the emerging global political economy. Appadurai believes that these flows are increasingly complex and multi-directional, in contrast to older models of technological dependency. The distribution of global capital is now a more mysterious and difficult landscape to follow than ever before. But the critical point is that the global relationships among the ethnoscaping, technoscapes and finanscapes is deeply disjunctive and profoundly unpredictable because each of these landscapes is subject to its own constraints<sup>42</sup>. A good example of those relationships is the billboard from Gümbet (the Aegean region) advertising a local restaurant. Its visual elements allude to the antique past of the region, while the slogan "European cuisine, Irish management" – to its present complex ethnoscape. The name of the restaurant – Annalivia – refers to the bronze sculpture located in Croppies Memorial Park in Dublin, Ireland<sup>43</sup>. The sculpture represents Anna Livia, a personification of the River Liffey which runs through the city. Anna Livia Plurabelle is also the name of a character in James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*<sup>44</sup>. The ethnoscape of the place presented on the billboard is accompanied by the finanscape represented by the images of credit cards.

<sup>39</sup> widely recognised to be the world's oldest and most prestigious yachting business name.

<sup>40</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marinas\\_in\\_Turkey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marinas_in_Turkey); 11.11.2013.

<sup>41</sup> [http://www.cnmarinas.com/problem.htm?error\\_guid=000035-550df6fb-52813abd-9d66-785a601c](http://www.cnmarinas.com/problem.htm?error_guid=000035-550df6fb-52813abd-9d66-785a601c), [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marinas\\_in\\_Turkey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marinas_in_Turkey); 11.11.2013.

<sup>42</sup> Appadurai, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>43</sup> It was formerly located on O'Connell Street. See: *New home for Dublin "Flozzy"*. Story from BBC NEWS: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/uk\\_news/northern\\_ireland/4641742.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/4641742.stm); 11.11.2013.

<sup>44</sup> The river is represented as a young woman sitting on a slope with water flowing past her from *Finnegans wake*.



Gümbet, 2009;  
photo E. Wiącek

Gastronomy and catering is the field where technoscapes, finanscapes and ethnoscapescapes overlap. One can have a Turkish coffee or a latte from Starbucks. One can have dinner at one of the fish restaurants which abound in the seaside towns, a typical Turkish fast food *döner*, or a Happy Meal at a McDonald's, a common lunch place in the bigger towns and cities. Alongside the first class Turkish restaurants, the tourists can choose from a variety of international cuisines, catering for those with Mexican, Chinese, American or German tastes.



Bodrum, 2008;  
photo E. Wiącek

## MEDIASCAPES: THE WOODEN HORSE AT TROY

Further reflecting these disjunctures are what Appadurai calls *mediascapes* and *ideoscapes*, which involve closely related landscapes and images. The term *mediascape*<sup>45</sup> refers to the way in which visual imagery impacts the world and its visual culture. Mediascapes have to do both with the distribution of the electronic means of producing and disseminating information (newspapers, magazines, television stations and film-production studios), which are now available to a growing number of private and public companies, and to the images of the world created by these media<sup>46</sup>. Some other sources of such imagery also include books, and above all, advertising, which can directly impact the landscape in the form of posters and billboards. Mediascapes result from the diffusion of the ability to produce media images and the global spread of those images.

What is most important about these mediascapes is that they provide (especially in their television and film forms) “large and complex repertoires” of images and narratives to the global audiences, which are used in creating local narratives<sup>47</sup>. One example of such influence is the big Wooden Horse that one can see at Troy (Turkish *Truva*)<sup>48</sup>. Some visitors think that “there’s not a lot to see at Troy,”<sup>49</sup> and indeed, Troy is rather bland compared to hundreds of Turkey’s other ancient cities, such as Ephesus. To answer these complaints, a 12.5 meters high Wooden Horse recalling the Trojan Horse from ancient *Aeneid*<sup>50</sup> of Virgil was built in 1974 by the Turkish Ministry of Tourism<sup>51</sup>. With no original sources to hand<sup>52</sup>, the horse was basically

<sup>45</sup> The term *Mediascape* was first used in trade by the U.S. company Mediascape Corporation, formed in 1992, for the purpose of delivering rich media through the Internet and Web. Mediascape is the U.S. owner of the Federal trademark for use of that mark in relation to multimedia products in commerce.

<sup>46</sup> These images involve many complicated reflections, depending on their mode (documentary or entertainment), or their hardware (electronic or preelectronic). A. Appadurai, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>47</sup> A. Appadurai, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.

<sup>48</sup> In modern Turkish, there is a tendency of shifting of the name of the site from *Truva*, which reflects the pronunciation of French name of the place (*Troie*) as that was the language of choice among the Turkish elites up to 1950s, to *Troya*, which is closer to the original Greek name, although both can still be heard interchangeably.

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.turkeytravelplanner.com/go/Aegean/Troy/>; 21.10.2013.

<sup>50</sup> Latin epic poem from the time of Augustus.

<sup>51</sup> The idea from the then-director of Canakkale Archaeological Museum, İlhan Aksit.

<sup>52</sup> There are three known surviving classical depictions of the Trojan horse. The earliest is on a fibula brooch dated about 700 BC. The other two are on relief pithos vases from the adjoining Grecian islands Mykonos and Tinos, both usually dated between 675 and 650

a product of architect Izzet Senemoglu's imagination, a war horse with a symbolic ladder suggesting how the Greeks came out. Situated at the entrance to the ancient city, the enormous horse, made of cedar wood, welcomes the hundreds of thousands of tourists who visit Troy every year. Before the horse was built, the tourists complained that they had nothing to photograph there<sup>53</sup>. Now one can see the Japanese visitors make the "V" sign when posing for photographs (although in Europe the V sign is known as standing for "victory", in Japan it emerged in the 1970s as symbolizing "peace"). The Horse was renovated in 2007 and it is still open to visitors today. However, now it is not the only one. The horse used in the promotional tour of the film *Troy* directed by Wolfgang Petersen was first erected outside the cinema in Potsdamer Platz for the world premiere in Berlin in May 2004<sup>54</sup>. A deal was then signed between Warner Bros and the Turkish Ministry of Tourism. The horse would be lent for 19 years to be displayed on the waterfront of Canakkale, only 30 kilometers from the site of the ancient Troy<sup>55</sup>. It cost the city of Canakkale 34,000 euro to get the horse transported and erected but it was certainly worth the money. It has proved a huge hit with tourists and became a major attraction in the town.

The Wooden Horse is a potent symbol. The first one, designed by Senemoglu, is often reproduced on postcards and has almost become one of the symbols of the country. This is fitting because it captures the whole story in one image. The case of Troy's horse shows that mediascapes tend to be image-centered, narrative-based accounts of some reality, and what they offer to those who experience and transform them is a series of elements (such as characters, plots, and textual forms) out of which scripts can be formed<sup>56</sup>.

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BC. B.A. Sparks, B.A., *The Trojan Horse in Classical Art*, "Greece & Rome", April 1971, pp. 54-70.

<sup>53</sup> T. Brosnahan, *Turcja*, Lonely Planet, Polish edition, Bielsko-Biala 1999, p. 367.

<sup>54</sup> In fact, the "wooden horse" is made of iron struts and fiberglass. It is 11.4 meters high and weighs 11 tons. From Berlin, the horse first "galloped" to Japan for to satisfy the longings of Brad Pitt's many fans in that country. <http://www.grandanzachotel.com/wooden-horse-of-troy.htm>, 21.10.2013.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>56</sup> A. Appadurai, *op. cit.*, p. 35.



Postcards, foto & design by Gabrielle Basinski, CAN Kartpostallari

### THE BLUE CRUISE: HOW LITERATURE HAS INFLUENCED THE MARINAS

An example of how mediascapes and technoscapes are intertwined and influence each other is the case of the Blue Cruise. *Blue Cruise*, also known as *Blue Voyage* (*Mavi Yolculuk* in Turkish), is a term used for recreational voyages along the Turkish Riviera, on Turkey's southwestern coast<sup>57</sup>. A full Blue Cruise generally starts in Didim or Kuşadası, although the tours may also depart from Bodrum or Marmaris. They usually terminate at the port of Antalya. The term, which is used in Turkey's tourism industry, has its origins in Turkish literature, deriving from the title of a book by Azra Erhat<sup>58</sup>. The term was first introduced into Turkish literature by a handful of writers, such as Cevat Şakir Kabaağaçlı<sup>59</sup>. The author, who had been exiled to Bodrum in 1925, fell in love with the beauty of the local landscape. He began taking trips with his intellectual friends on the sponge divers' sailing boats. These excursions became known as "Blue Cruises". Azra Erhat participated in these excursions. Those who united around the literary revue "Yeni Ufuklar" (*New*

<sup>57</sup> H. Taylor, *Where to Raise the Sails or Just a Glass*, "The New York Times" July 2, 2006, p. 10.

<sup>58</sup> A. Erhat, G. Çizgen (2005). *Mavi yolculuk: gezi*, Galatasaray, İstanbul: Can Yayınları.

<sup>59</sup> Cevat Şakir Kabaağaçlı (1890-1973, pen-name exclusively used in his writings, "The Fisherman of Halicarnassus") was a Turkish writer of novels, short-stories and essays, as well as being a keen ethnographer and travelogue. Cevat Şakir had a deep impact on the evolution of intellectual ideas in Turkey during the 20th century. D. Whiting, Dominic (2001). *Turkey Handbook*, Footprint Handbooks, p. 315. See also: J.P. Thiollet, *Bodream*, Anagramme Ed., 2010; R. Williams *The Fisherman of Halicarnassus: The Man Who Made Bodrum Famous*, Bristol Book Publishing 2013.

*Horizons*) in the 1950s and 1960s have also contributed to the popularity of the Blue Cruise, and guidebooks have been published in Turkish<sup>60</sup> and German<sup>61</sup>. Kabağaçlı is largely credited for bringing the formerly sleepy fishing town of Bodrum, as well as the entire shoreline of the Blue Cruise, to the attention of the Turkish intelligentsia, which made the region fashionable and later on let it become an international tourist attraction<sup>62</sup>. The case of the Blue Cruise shows that mediascapes and technoscapes influence each other. The imagery deriving from books helped to create the phenomenon of the Cruise and then the modern services offered by the marinas became part of the everyday culture in the area.

The mediascapes, especially in the form of television and film, provide the mass culture images for tourist souvenirs. Visiting the Turkish Riviera, we can buy not only local gifts, such as the traditional blue glass Eye Bead, an amulet used for protection, but also Hello Kitty gifts or children's clothes imitating the costumes of the heroes of popular culture (e.g. Spiderman or Batman) and towels with the characters from Disney's productions. Looking for a souvenir, one can find a small copy of the Artemis from Ephesus whose restored face resembles that of the Barbie doll.



Bitez, 2008, photo E. Więcek

<sup>60</sup> Bülent Özükan, *Mavi yolculuk = Blue voyage* (in Turkish). İstanbul: Boyut Yayın Grubu 2005.

<sup>61</sup> M. Hengirmen, *Die blaue Reise: mit 201 Fotos des Verfassers und 122 Karten = Mavi yolculuk* (in German). Ankara: Eğitim ve Kalkınma Vakfı 2000.

<sup>62</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cevat\\_%C5%9Eakir\\_Kabaa%C4%9Fa%C3%A7l%C4%B1#cite\\_note-2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cevat_%C5%9Eakir_Kabaa%C4%9Fa%C3%A7l%C4%B1#cite_note-2).



Barbie;  
photo Kinga Zajdel, 2013



*Artemis Ephesia* or The Lady of Ephesus,  
1st century AD, Ephesus Archaeological Museum  
photo E. Wiącek



Turkish souvenir representing Artemis, 2010;  
photo E. Wiącek

## THE TURKISH FLAG ON A TEACUP

*Ideoscapes* are also concatenations of images, but they are often directly political and frequently have to do with state ideologies. According to Appadurai, these ideoscapes are composed of the elements of the Enlightenment worldview, which consists of a chain of ideas, terms, and images, including *freedom, welfare, rights, sovereignty, representation*, and the master term *democracy*<sup>63</sup>. But the dissemination of these terms and images across the world, especially since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, has loosened the internal coherence that held them together in the Euro-American master narrative. As a result, these keywords may be subject to very different sets of contextual conventions that mediate their translation into public politics<sup>64</sup>. In Turkey, these ideas or keywords deeply influenced *Kemalism* – its founding ideology<sup>65</sup>. *Kemalism*, also known as *Atatürkism* (as it was propounded by the first president of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk), consisted in sweeping political, social, cultural and religious reforms in which all Turkish citizens were declared equal without reference to religion in creating a secular, national, unitary state from the Ottoman Empire (empire of Faith)<sup>66</sup>.

*Kemalism* derives partly from the tradition of Comtean scientific positivism. It envisions the political future as designed by/for humans, rather than of divine design, so it assumes secular ideas of European modernity for the fulfillment of many political goals in the Muslim context<sup>67</sup>. These goals include individual freedom, citizen equality, rational and accountable education and governing structures. *Kemalism* sets the boundaries of the social process in the Turkish Reformation. It is a philosophy of modernization, which guided the transition from the multi-religious, multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire to the unitary Republic of Turkey and its secular and nationalistic way of life<sup>68</sup>. The principles of *Kemalism* were implemented as state ideology only after the death of its founder, Atatürk<sup>69</sup>. There are six of them: Republicanism, Populism,

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<sup>63</sup> A. Appadurai, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>65</sup> E.J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*. New York, J.B. Tauris & Co ltd. 2004, p. 181.

<sup>66</sup> U. Azak, *Islam and Secularism in Turkey: Kemalism, Religion and the Nation State*, I.B. Tauris 2010.

<sup>67</sup> A. Davison, *Corporatist Ideology In Kemalist Turkey: Progress Or Order?*, Syracuse University Press 2004.

<sup>68</sup> E.J. Zürcher, *Turkey (...)*, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

<sup>69</sup> D. Everett Webster, *The Turkey of Atatürk; Social Process in the Turkish Reformation*, New York: AMS Press 1973, p. 245.

Nationalism<sup>70</sup>, Secularism, Statism<sup>71</sup>, Revolutionism<sup>72</sup>. The principles came to be recognized as unchangeable and sacrosanct. Republicanism<sup>73</sup> replaced the absolute monarchy of the Ottoman Dynasty with the rule of the law, popular sovereignty and civic virtue, including an emphasis on liberty practiced by the citizens<sup>74</sup>. Populism is defined as a social revolution aimed to transfer the political power to the citizens. Kemalist populism differs from the Western understanding of the concept. In Western European culture, populism is a political doctrine where one sides with “the people” against “the elites”. In the Ottoman Empire, “the people” were subjected to

<sup>70</sup> Kemalist nationalism originates from the social contract theories, especially from the principles advocated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and his Social Contract. The Kemalist perception of social contract was effected by the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire which was perceived as a product of failure of the Ottoman system. Kemalist nationalism, after experiencing the Ottoman Empire’s breakdown into pieces, defined the social contract as its “highest ideal”. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kemalism>

<sup>71</sup> Kemal Atatürk made clear in his statements and policies that Turkey’s complete modernization was very much dependent on economic and technological development. The principle of Kemalist Statism is generally interpreted to mean that the state was to regulate the country’s general economic activities and the state was to engage in areas where private enterprise was not willing to do so, or where private enterprise had proven to be inadequate, or if national interest required it. In the application of the principle of statism, however, the state emerged not only as the principal source of economic activity, but also as the owner of the major industries of the country. B. Sansal, *All About Turkey*, [http://www.allaboutturkey.com/ata\\_prensip.htm](http://www.allaboutturkey.com/ata_prensip.htm), 22.10.2013

<sup>72</sup> Revolutionism: a principle formulated by Atatürk, which means that the country should replace the traditional institutions and concepts with modern institutions and concepts. This principle advocated the need for fundamental social change through revolution as a strategy to achieve a modern society. Revolutionism is a principle of kemalism, which means that the country should replace the traditional institutions and concepts with modern institutions and concepts. This principle advocated the need for fundamental social change to achieve a modern society. The current understanding of this concept can be described that active modification. P. Hamilton, *Emile Durkheim: Critical Assessments*, Routledge 1995, p. 69.

<sup>73</sup> Among the many types of republic, the Kemalist republic is a representative democracy with a Parliament chosen in general elections, a President as head of state elected by Parliament and serving for a limited term, a Prime Minister appointed by the President, and other Ministers appointed by Parliament.

<sup>74</sup> Kemalist republicanism defines a type of constitutional republic, in which representatives of the people are elected, and must govern in accordance with existing constitutional law limiting governmental power over citizens. The head of state and other officials are chosen by election rather than inheriting their positions, and their decisions are subject to judicial review. In defending the change from the Ottoman State, Kemalism asserts that all laws of the Republic of Turkey should be inspired by actual needs here on Earth as a basic tenet of national life. Mustafa Kemal as quoted in *A World View of Criminal Justice* by R.K. Vogler, Aldershot Asgate, 2005, p. 116.

autocracy<sup>75</sup>, theocracy (Caliphate) and feudalism (tribal leaders). Kemalism moved the orientation of political power towards the best interest of the "general public"<sup>76</sup>. Kemalist populism denies the types of national unity based on racial, religious, totalitarian and fascist ideologies, by claiming that "Unconditional, unrestricted sovereignty belongs to the people"<sup>77</sup>. Kemalist criteria for national identity or simply being a Turk are a shared language, and/or shared values defined as common history, and the will to share a future. Kemalist ideology defines the "Turkish people" as: "Those who protect and promote the moral, spiritual, cultural and humanistic values of the Turkish Nation"<sup>78</sup>. Considering these criteria, it is no wonder that most of the people living in Turkey define themselves as "Turkish people" and identify with the nation. The ideoscape of the country reflects this attitude and conviction. Even in the Turkish Riviera, where the impact of new global cultural economy is especially strong, one can see much evidence of nation-centred attitudes. They are expressed by the Turkish flags. The number of national flags can be surprising for the tourists from abroad. They can be seen everywhere and every day, not only on national holidays. The Turkish people joke that when one looks around and does not see any Turkish flag, it means that one is probably no longer in Turkey<sup>79</sup>. The nation-centred orientation is also expressed by the images of Turkish flags placed every-where possible: on cars, motorbikes and even on teacups and glasses. Another expression of Kemalism are the numerous portraits of its founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. There is almost no place without his portraits. They are present not only in institutions, offices and museums, but also in hotels, restaurants, tea houses, and on all Turkish banknotes. You can also find them on many souvenirs.

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<sup>75</sup> Ottoman Dynasty.

<sup>76</sup> General public = citizens of the country, common citizens, citizenship. Kemalist populism is an extension of the Kemalist modernization movement. The Kemalist reforms brought about a revolutionary change in the status of women.

<sup>77</sup> Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as quoted in: *Constitution and Foundations of the State System* Embassy of the Republic of Turkey, Washington, DC. <http://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?collection=&handle=hein.journals/mistjintl3&div=35&id=&page=>; 22.10.2013.

<sup>78</sup> Republic Of Turkey Ministry Of National Education. "Turkish National Education System". T.C. Government, <http://www.unesco.org/education/wef/countryreports/turkey/contents.html>; 23.10.2013.

<sup>79</sup> A. Bromberek, A. Wielgólaska, *op. cit.*, p. 22.



Bodrum, 2009;  
photo E. Wiącek



Izmir 2011;  
photo E. Wiącek



Ephesus, 2009;  
photo E. Wiącek

Kemalist ideology perceived the French model as the prototypical form of secularism. Kemalism strove to control religion and reduce it to a private belief<sup>80</sup>. Kemalist laicism does not imply or advocate agnosticism or nihilism; it means freedom of thought and independence of the institutions of the state from the dominance of religious thought and religious institutions<sup>81</sup>. The ideoscape of the Riviera reflects this model of laicism. Bars are situated next to mosques, souvenirs with the images of the Virgin Mary<sup>82</sup> are sold together with the portraits of Atatürk.



Turgutreis, 2009; photo E. Wiącek

## ORIENTALISM REVISED

Another important idea which has a big impact on the ideoscape of the Turkish Riviera is Orientalism. In the discourse of tourism, modernity is identified with the Occident, while ahistorical, sensual paradise with “the Orient” (in Turkey embodied in belly dancers). Another feature attributed to the oriental aspect of Turkey is its warm hospitality<sup>83</sup>. The websites for the Western tourists create the image of the Turkish people as “Oriental”:

<sup>80</sup> S. Hanioglu, *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography*, Princeton University Press 2011, p. 153.

<sup>81</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kemalism>; 11.11.2013.

<sup>82</sup> Her house is believed to be situated near Ephesus.

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.tui.pl/wakacje-samolotem/blisko-i-cieplo/turcja/riwiera-turecka>, see also: <http://www.gti-travel.pl/pl/informacje/turcja-informacje-wycieczki-fakultatywne-egejska>; 2.10.2013.

Turkish people are mid Asia oriented. They have lived in tents and were nomads. In the history they have spread to all over the world from central Asia, where most settled in Caucasia and Anatolia from the 10th century A.D.on. This moving characteristic created some peculiarities that are exclusively Turkish. The two characteristic traits of the Turkish people are hospitality and close family relations... Hospitality is one of the cornerstones of the Turkish way of life. Turkish people are the most gracious and generous hosts as a result of their natural instincts. In every corner of the country such a traditional hospitality will meet you. They will open their houses to every guest with a smiling face and with all their sincerity give the best seat and cook the best food for their guest. (...) The mentality of that hospitality is “whatever religion you are from, whichever country you come from, whatever language you speak, you are ‘God’s Guest’”, so you deserve to be welcomed in the best manner<sup>84</sup>.

This description emphasizes some features typical of “the Oriental”, such as behavior derived from natural instincts. On the other hand, this description reveals that the Turkish people are not culturally backward. They are aware of the Western way of life and “they are very understanding about foreigners’ different customs and they try to communicate in order to help visitors according to their code of hospitality”<sup>85</sup>. The description of the family relations contributes to this wonderful image. According to it, Turks respect their elders and support each other in every way.<sup>86</sup>

Talking about the complex ideas of the Orient, Said distinguishes Oriental sensuality. He points out that in the works of many Oriental artists, Middle Eastern women are often depicted as sensual creatures, whose only use was to be sexual slaves<sup>87</sup>. French artists such as Eugène Delacroix or Jean-Léon Gérôme painted many works depicting the Islamic culture, often including lounging odalisques. When Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, director of the French Académie de peinture, painted his vision of a Turkish bath, he made his eroticized Orient publicly acceptable. This imagery persisted in art into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as evidenced in Matisse’s oriental semi-nudes.

The Turks themselves seem to be aware of the stereotype of an oversexed Oriental focused only on the pleasures of the body. They confirm the cliché

<sup>84</sup> [http://www.enjoyturkey.com/info/culture/People\\_Folklore.htm](http://www.enjoyturkey.com/info/culture/People_Folklore.htm); 2.10.2013.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>87</sup> Said furthers his theory with identifying the West defined itself as being of the “contrasting image” of the East, one illuminating a sensual culture which seethed sexuality polar to Euro-Christian culture which viewed women as being asexual.

image whose roots stem from 19th century images of Turkish baths – *hammam*. In postcards and leaflets, contemporary photos are juxtaposed with the pictures by Orientalist painters. Sometimes their design and the style of the photos are based on the 19<sup>th</sup> century canvases.

On the other hand, one of the main websites advertising Turkey as a tourist destination features some descriptions of *hammam* devoid of sexual context. Instead, a *hammam* is shown as a very important place in Turkish daily and historical life, as a result of the emphasis placed upon cleanliness by Islam:

When the Turks arrived in Anatolia, they brought with them one bathing tradition, and were confronted with another, that of Romans and Byzantines, with certain local variants. The traditions merged, and with the addition of the Moslem concern for cleanliness and its concomitant respect for the uses of water, there arose an entirely new concept, that of the Turkish Bath. In time it became an institution, with its system of ineradicable customs. For the Turkish bath was much more than just a place to cleanse the skin. It was intimately bound up with everyday life, a place where people of every rank and station, young and old, rich and poor, townsman or villager, could come freely<sup>88</sup>.

Important occasions in a Turk's life were, and in some townships still are, celebrated with rejoicing at the bath. These included the newborn's fortieth day, the Circumcision, the bathing of the brides, etc. The phenomenon of the Turkish bath, then, resides in its bringing together many dimensions of the society's culture to create an institution with a deep-seated social character. The description above which emphasizes that *hammam* was not only the place of erotic *rendez-vous* (as the European imagined it) shows that "the Orientals" begin to speak for themselves and to question their image created by the Westerners.

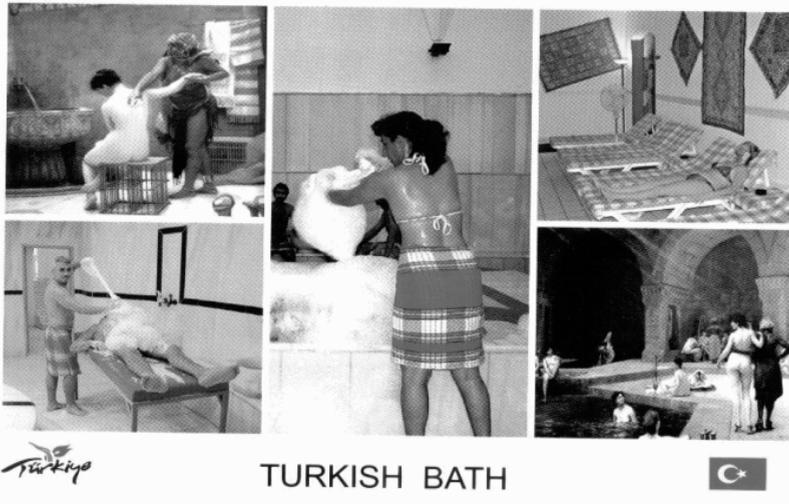
Not only postcards, but also some facts from the public space show that the Turkish people are aware of the concept of Orientalism, and they use it in a very conscious manner. Sometimes they even seem to mock the concept of "Oriental sensuality". The bazaars in tourist sites offer the Westerners "sex tea" which is actually nothing more than a mixture of fruit teas. Traditional sweets are advertised as "Turkish viagra". This strategy is almost a caricature of "the Oriental sensuality".

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<sup>88</sup> <http://www.enjoyturkey.com/Tours>; 3.10.2013.



Turgutreis, 2009, photo E. Wiącek

Postcard, *Turkish Bath*, Bodrum, Art Kartpostal ve yayncılık

The design of the interiors and public spaces in tourist resorts also refers to the idea of the Oriental splendor and Oriental sensuality. It evokes the atmosphere of comfort, passivity and harem-like relaxation. This adoption of the image originally shaped by the Westerners resembles a play with mirrors. “The Oriental” is holding the mirror and reflects the image of “the Orient”, showing it to the Western tourists. Sometimes these oriental settings have an admixture of the Occident – the piles of pillows bear the logos of Western companies producing drinks, e.g. the American Miller Brewing Company. In this case, ideoscape is intertwined with finanscape.



Bitez 2008; photo E. Wiącek



Bitez 2008; photo E. Wiącek

The strategy based on combining Oriental and Occidental elements is especially visible in the region of the Aegian Sea. One can note two strategies of shaping the image or ideoscape of the area. Some advertisements recall the ancient Greek or Roman past – in this case this part of the country is shown as the cradle of the Occidental culture. This generates a kind of

paradox, since according to most Europeans, civilization appeared in Turkey only after the reforms of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Another strategy of promoting the country is to emphasize the “Oriental” character of the place. In this case the elements of the image refer back to the times of the Ottoman Empire, viz. the oriental style of design at hotels or restaurants, the *hammam*, the belly dancers. It is possible to interpret this as an echo of the *Turquerie*, the Orientalist fashion in Western Europe between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries for imitating aspects of Turkish art and culture. Music, paintings, architecture, and artifacts were frequently inspired by the Turkish and Ottoman styles and designs. Following these exotic fashions, one would show one’s elite place in society as well as display one’s open-mindedness and interest in the world<sup>89</sup>.



<http://users.rowan.edu/~polikar/TURKIYE/ege.html><sup>90</sup>

John Urry has created the concept of the *tourist gaze*<sup>91</sup>, taking “gaze” as a metaphor for tourist practices, relations of power, and the mechanisms that put these into effect. Urry construes the tourist gaze as a practice of the consumption of what is regarded as extraordinary by tourists regardless of what those “spectacles” may mean for the “local” populations.

Places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is an anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily

<sup>89</sup> I. Breskin, *On the Periphery of a Greater World: John Singleton Copley’s “Turquerie” Portraits*. *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 36, No. 2/3. Summer – Autumn, 2001, p. 97.

<sup>90</sup> The photo from the article *Turkey – The Cradle of Civilizations*. *The Aegean Region*.

<sup>91</sup> J. Urry, *The tourist gaze*, Sage Publication Ltd London, 1990, p. 3.

encountered. Such anticipation is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist practices, such as film, TV, literature, magazines, records and videos, which construct and reinforce that gaze<sup>92</sup>.

The statement above shows that mediascapes have big impact on tourists' expectations and practices. Moreover, assuming that Orientalism has influenced so many areas of culture (literature, art, music, architecture, photography, films, pulp magazines), the tourist gaze also contains the Orientalists' gaze.

Having in mind the concept of the tourist gaze, the reason for creating this ambiguous image is not only geopolitical. Another reason is the tourists who visit Turkey. They expect modern facilities and high technological standards, but at the same time they are looking for something exotic. The *scapes* constituting the Turkish Riviera respond to these complex expectations and to the tourist gaze based on collecting signs. The tourists want to tick boxes and take back home characteristic oriental images, but they also expect to have easy access to their English breakfast every morning. Moreover, according to Urry, there is no single tourist gaze as such. It varies by society, social group and by historical period. Such gazes are constructed by difference<sup>93</sup>. For this reason, the answers to the question "What does Turkey offer to visitors?" include diving, golf, delicious cuisine, Biblical values, rafting, jeep safari, and nightlife<sup>94</sup>.

Said stresses that the discursive construction of the Oriental serves a vital purpose: it subtends the exclusionary process upon which European identity is predicated, that is, the "idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures"<sup>95</sup>. The result is an "idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans as against all those non-Europeans"<sup>96</sup>. Meanwhile, the disjunctive *scapes* of the Turkish Riviera seems to blur the clear-cut division between Europeans and non-Europeans. Turkey itself wants to play the role of a bridge between Europe and Asia, between the West and the East. The elements which constitute the constellation of ideas called Occident and Orient are blended. The Orient seems even to contain the Occident, to include the elements important for the Western culture, like the Biblical tradition or the ancient Greek culture. In

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 3.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 2.

<sup>94</sup> <http://www.enjoyturkey.com/index.htm>.

<sup>95</sup> E. Said, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 7.

such a case, Occident and Orient resemble broken mirrors whose fragments are arranged into a mosaic, showing that these two realities do not have to be opposed.

**„ORIENT” W GLOBALNYCH PRZEPLYWACH KULTUROWYCH:  
PRZYPADEK RIWIERY TURECKIEJ  
(streszczenie)**

Na przestrzeni ostatnich dwóch dekad turystyka stała się najmocniejszą stroną tureckiej gospodarki, zaś najchętniej odwiedzane miejsca w Turcji są sceną intensywnych interakcji społeczno-kulturowych o charakterze globalnym. Analizując złożoną specyfikę przestrzeni publicznej w kurortach na obszarze Riwieri Tureckiej, zastosuję zaproponowany przez Arjuna Appaduraia model bazujący na rozłącznym przepływie kategorii określonych przez autora mianem pejzaży. Głównym celem analizy jest zbadanie czy „Orient” w ujęciu Edwarda Saïda nadal istnieje w dyskursie turystycznym i związanym z nim obrazowaniu.

**Słowa klucze:** Riwiera Turecka, Orient, pejzaż, rozłączny przepływ.

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## **BOBREK – LIFE THROUGH DANCE<sup>1</sup>**

**Abstract:** The workers' district of Bytom, Bobrek, with its steelworks and a coal mine for 'the better future' under Communism, has now become the terrifying subject of media accounts of pathologies and hopelessness. Children continue to play against the backdrop of the derelict buildings, but they gradually abandon their dreams. The Silesian Dance Theatre in Bytom organized dance workshops devoted to break-dance, hip-hop and funk in the area. Three boys, the main characters of the story, Andrzej, Daniel and Paweł, decided to create something to portray the way they live through dancing. With a group of other dancers they prepared a performance at the local theatre. During the premiere night their families and friends entered the theatre for the first time. Will their dream come true? This paper reflects on the making of the film *Bobrek dance* (2002)<sup>2</sup>.

**Keywords:** dance, break dance, social engagement, postindustrial area.

My collaboration with the Silesian Dance Theatre (SDT) started at the end of the 1990s when the theatre organized some creative projects – dance workshops for the disabled, the elderly, and those with mental health issues. The main goal of these projects was to reframe the problems of social exclusion. As a film director, during the making of the film, I witnessed the changes in the participants' attitude and their self-esteem through dancing.

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<sup>1</sup> Paper read at the conference "Current Issues in European Cultural Studies", organised by the Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden (ACSIS) in Norrköping 15-17 June 2011. Conference Proceedings published by Linköping University Electronic Press: [http://www.ep.liu.se/ecp\\_home/index.en.aspx?issue=062](http://www.ep.liu.se/ecp_home/index.en.aspx?issue=062). © The Author.

<sup>2</sup> Awards for the film:

- Grand Prix Documentary at the 21<sup>st</sup> CIRCOM (International Cooperative for Research and Action in the Field of Communication) Regional Annual Conference in Grado (Italy), in 2003 for "an alert but often poignant view of life in a small and depressed Polish town".
- Grand Prix at the Polish Film Festival of the Media in Łódź (Poland), 2002.

Bytom is an industrial city in the Upper Silesia in Southern Poland with a population of 200,000 (the Silesian agglomeration has more than three million). The majority of the coal mines have now been closed down and the steel mills are slowly fading away. Bytom's districts, including Bobrek, grapple with growing unemployment, poverty and violence. "It used to be a land of work and love. And now it's thieves and f\*\*\*ing jerks who hate one another" – says one of the residents of Bobrek in the sequence filmed in a local bar, where unemployed miners now congregate. Their only source of maintenance – besides the meager welfare benefits – is robbing the trains carrying the coal and the sale of scrap metal. Frequently, whole families are involved in this forage for survival.

"This place is a shithole and nobody's gonna change it. Life sucks here. Your own people will f\*\*\*ing knock you down" – adds another man in the bar. It is the young people who are in the worst situation, often witnessing the worsening of the socio-economic conditions at their homes. Kids are left unattended and often turn to alcohol and drugs, and then give up school and end up in conflict with the law.



Bobrek – the workers' district of Bytom

STD prepared a social project entitled Closer to Art, which was directed at a group of young people from Bobrek. The workshop was devoted to street dance – an activity relating to the life on the street and involving rhythm and movement. The participants had the opportunity to develop their skills and interest in dance, under the guidance of the qualified dancers from the Silesian Dance Theatre and with some other affiliations. The project involved regular meetings of the dance group for rehearsals for the production of the performance. Together with a cameraman, I focused on three boys at the workshops and decided to record their dance experience from their first attempts at the workshops to the final performance.

“Many years ago, there were some beavers living on the river bank. One day a fire broke out at the nearby settlement and all the beavers ran away and hid in their burrows. But one of them jumped out onto the bank and pointed at the river. The fire was put out quickly thanks to its water. In memory of the brave beaver the settlement was called Bobrek. People lived there happily ever after” (the Polish word for beaver is *bóbr*, and the name Bobrek is claimed to derive from this word). The film opens with this narrated story, which a boy seems barely able to read; anxiety is channeled, through the sound, already in the opening sequence. The introduction transforms a mythical space (the archetype of the lost paradise) into the real Bobrek of today with its issues of violence, hopelessness and desperation. The soundtrack now features a rock song which becomes the film’s main musical theme: “They’ve been told/ there’s no way out of here./ Better not to dream about it./ There’s no future here/ they’ve understood/ there’s no turning back./ You have to fight for everything./ You have to live this way”.

This is the particular moment in the film when the voice is given to the boys – we are confronted with the material that is both subtle and challenging. The protagonists of the film – Andrzej, Daniel and Paweł are filmed in two separate spaces: the actual environment in which they live – their homes, school, backyard etc., and the neutral studio where the only element catching the eye of the viewers are their faces. There is a lack of visual distance while the boys narrate in their own language. Daniel, Paweł and Andrzej are between 16 and 18 years old; they are aware of entering the socio-economic pressures of adulthood. The message we are left with is that the boys want to escape the lives of their parents; working hard for little money in the conditions hazardous for their health: “I don’t want to toil like she does. It’s a job for a man and it doesn’t pay. If they do pay, they pay a pittance” – says Paweł, describing his mother who works at the nearby coking plant. He explains that in his family (half-Polish, half-Gypsy) only his mother has a regular income.



Daniel, Pawel and Andrzej during the dance workshop  
organized by the Silesian Theater of Dance



Daniel during the first workshop

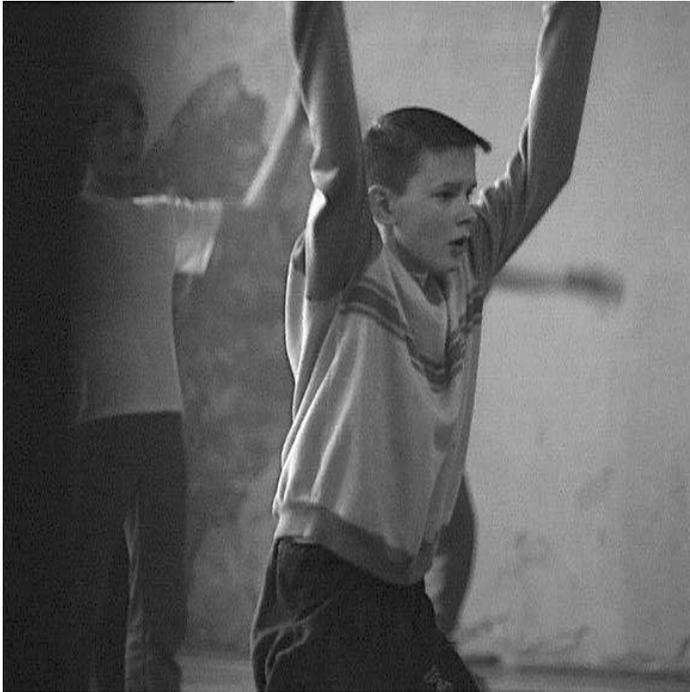
“The world is beautiful when you have money. Then you can have fun; otherwise you hang around the yard and only think about organizing some dough” – Daniel adds. The boys have experience with drugs, substance abuse (in Bobrek you can buy a plastic bag with airblast to inhale and stupefy for just a zloty), alcohol, brawls and petty theft. One day they come across the breakdance classes conducted by the Silesian Dance Theatre. They take up the challenge; after all, they have nothing to lose.

To create this film I had to familiarize myself with the daily life of the residents of Bobrek, to enter their spaces. I remember I heard one day: “show others how we live here and what future our children can have in this place!” I am very grateful I was able to enter that private space. But places like Bobrek can be found everywhere; this story is universal.



Andrzej and his mother in Bobrek

At the same time, I followed the activities of the Silesian Dance Theatre; recording day by day and month by month the influence of the dance workshops on the protagonists. It is worth noting that initially the boys were unable to relate to the people in wheelchairs, uncomfortable about the prospect of working with them: “at first we didn’t like it, but after a day or two we bonded with the group. It was fun”. The shared experience, which changed the boys over time, and made them more mentally mature was fascinating to observe in the process. Their awkwardness, complexes and aggressive attitudes seemed to disappear over time. They were affirmed – told they felt the rhythm very well, that their bodies moved in a fantastic way. Their efforts were appreciated.



Andrzej practicing break dance

It was a long awaited evening... The brightly lit foyer filled with guests, and the great bell announced the beginning of the spectacle. We were behind the scenes with our camera, and we shot the boys’ performance, their reactions, their stage fright, their mobilization. “I felt like an artist. I was so happy” – said Daniel after the final night of the performance at the theatre.

Among the audience they could see their parents and their peers. Many of them entered a theatre for the first time in their lives. Paweł shared with us his honest reflection: “Dancing was my best choice, ‘cause I kept clear of many mean things (...). Good for me and for others maybe. If it wasn’t for the dancing, I could be trashing some guy right now”. “When I heard the clapping I felt tears in my eyes. Everybody must’ve shed a tear or two” – commented Andrzej, visibly moved. That evening was their great victory.

Another ordinary morning at Bobrek; the unemployed are sitting in front of their buildings, the collectors of scrap and coal return home after “work”, children are playing in the backyards. In a small, dingy little basement our heroes arrange a youth club to teach their friends how to perform break dance. They are not the uncertain, fearful boys of the year before. They have changed, gained a new status in the district. And suddenly dance moves into the street and its inhabitants begin to swirl. The final scene of the film thus becomes a reversal of its ominous beginning.



Final scene – life through dance

This documentary connects the symbolic space (Bobrek – situated on the periphery of a big industrial town in Silesia) with the global power of the arts and a social movement. I am glad that my film turned out to be important for the young people in Bobrek, but also for the Silesian Dance Theatre. The subsequent workshops organized by this theatre were entitled “Bobrek dance”.

### **BOBREK – ŻYCIE POPRZEZ TANIEC (streszczenie)**

Robotnicza dzielnica Bytomia – Bobrek, z pobliską hutą i kopalnią była za komuny przykładem pracy „o lepsze jutro”; dziś straszy patologiami i beznadzieją. Klimat ten szczególnie mocno odczuwają dzieci. Bawiąc się przed odrapanymi familokami, obserwując codzienne, trudne życie swoich rodzin stopniowo pozbywają się marzeń. Stają się zakompleksione i agresywne. Już nawet nie próbują walczyć o siebie. Z myślą o dzieciach z Bytomia-Bobrka Śląski Teatr Tańca (ŚTT) zorganizował warsztaty taneczne. Był to taniec ulicy: *break-dance*, *hip-hop*, *funky*. Trójka bohaterów filmu – Andrzej, Daniel i Paweł postanowiła poprzez taniec zmienić coś w swoim życiu. Razem z grupą innych tancerzy przygotowali profesjonalny spektakl w tutejszym teatrze. Tego wieczoru po raz pierwszy w życiu progi te przekraczają także ich rodziny i koledzy z podwórka. Czy marzenia chłopców się spełnią? Tekst jest refleksją na temat pracy nad filmem *Bobrek dance* (2002).

**Słowa kluczowe:** taniec, break dance, inicjatywa społeczna, obszary przemysłowe.

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## **CONVERSIONS AND REDEFINITIONS – ARCHITECTURE AND IDENTITY OF A PLACE**

**Abstract:** Architecture substantially strengthens and supports the identity of a city and its citizens. Buildings are the most easily and commonly available testimony to culture. The political transformation which took place in Poland in 1989, causing a shift in the sociocultural order, contributed to an important transformation of the urban areas. New contexts and discourses are being created not only by new edifices, but also by old architecture which is being converted and redefined. Historical buildings are adapted to the changing times, balancing between the past and the present. A new semantic code is forming: old contents are being replaced with new ones, compounding the meanings originally and secondarily given to architecture. Old identities are being questioned and new ones are appearing, which is accompanied by substantial overlapping and hybridisation.

**Keywords:** identity, hybridisation, architecture, conversion, Łódź, revitalization.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Urban architecture has been always undergoing transformation. Alterations, additions, conversions or construction of new buildings from scratch gradually introduced new values and meanings within a city, a quarter or particular urban designs. In the past, this process was slow, yet the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought its rapid acceleration. Prior to it, during the life-span of a single person architectural surroundings remained relatively unaltered; now they are changing much quicker.<sup>1</sup>

It is not only the form and the structure of buildings that undergo alterations, but also their function. Since the 1970s, the number of converted, modernised

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<sup>1</sup> G. Kähler, 'Zum Alten Eisen. Vom Umgang Mit Den Denkmälern Und Landschaften Der Industriekultur', *Werk, Bauen und Wohnen*, 1991, pp. 50-59 (p. 54).

and reused buildings in Europe has significantly increased. In the 1980s, almost half of the money spent on construction works was allocated to the conversion of existing buildings.<sup>2</sup> Nearly 40 per cent of the investments in Central Europe involve modernisation and conversion.<sup>3</sup> This is so not only for the purpose of conservation (not all of these buildings are of historic value), but also in order to sustain the city's identity and image, to promote it, and to comply with the demands of economy, ecology and sustainable development (these factors may overlap and merge).

Deindustrialization, which set its stamp on various cities, questioning the *raison d'être* of numerous buildings and whole post-industrial areas, is an important phenomenon, requiring redefinition of the attitude towards the existing buildings. Post-industrial cities and their heritage have become a challenge for modernity.<sup>4</sup> The collapse of industry has brought about a crisis and made the cities search for the methods of regeneration and restoration of their devastated image.<sup>5</sup>

This process was most pronounced in the cities of Central and Eastern Europe, which the breakdown of Communism additionally put through radical and thorough political and economic transformation. The spatial, social and functional structure of the urban areas also underwent rapid conversion.<sup>6</sup> Many places needed reinterpretation and redefinition resulting from their new context and new functions, as they received new roles within the urban space. A particular form of semantic code alteration affected the buildings and post-industrial areas of relatively new origins, constituting the material manifestation of the industrial revolution.

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<sup>2</sup> J. Jessen, J. Schneider, 'Conversions – the New Normal', in *Building in Existing Fabric. Refurbishment. Extensions. New Design*, Institut für internationale Architektur-Dokumentation GmbH&Co.KG, Basel 2003, pp. 11-21 (p. 11).

<sup>3</sup> Ch. Schittich, 'Creative Conversions', in *Building in Existing Fabric. Refurbishment. Extensions. New Design*, Basel, 2003, p. 9 (p. 9).

<sup>4</sup> G. Kähler, *op. cit.*; J. Alfrey, T. Putnam, *The Industrial Heritage. Managing Resources and Uses*, Routledge, 1992.

<sup>5</sup> S.V. Ward, 'Marketing Re-invented Cities', in *Urban regeneration and renewal. Critical Concepts in Urban Studies*, ed. by Andrew Tallon, Routledge, London and New York 2010, pp. 48-82.

<sup>6</sup> S. Kaczmarek, *Rewitalizacja terenów przemysłowych. Nowy wymiar w rozwoju miast* Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź, 2001; M. Czepczyński, *Cultural Landscapes of Post-Socialist Cities. Representation of Powers and Needs*, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008; I. Jażdżewska, ed., *Miasto postsocjalistyczne : organizacja przestrzeni miejskiej i jej przemiany : XIII Konwersatorium Wiedzy o Mieście*, Katedra Geografii Miast i Turyzmu Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2000.

## ŁÓDŹ

Łódź, situated in the center of Poland, and still the third largest Polish city, is an excellent example of such change. It became prominent in the 19<sup>th</sup> century thanks to the intense development of industry and a good economic situation. The city became the centre of textile industry, frequently called “Polish Manchester”. Łódź took its opportunity and in less than a hundred years it developed from a small town into one of the most prosperous cities in the Kingdom of Poland.<sup>7</sup> During the later Communist period, Polish economy was driven mainly by the companies established through the nationalization of the former private ‘empires’. They even used most of the original machinery. That is why Andrzej Wajda had no problem in finding 19<sup>th</sup>-century production equipment when making his film “Ziemia Obiecana” [“The Promised Land”] in Łódź.

After the political transformation of 1989, Łódź faced a rapid collapse of its industry. Because of that, the city needed a complete redefinition of its identity and a revitalization of its building stock, since within a short period vast areas, mainly those situated in the inner city, suffered substantial degradation. The problem was even more serious due to the city’s lack of pre-industrial past. Łódź did not have earlier monuments, which could constitute important components of its identity and essential references to its history. Its whole architectural substance dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is based on industrial origins. After 1989, when most of the textile factories closed down, the city had to deal with the problem of their remaining physical substance.

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<sup>7</sup> In 1821, Łódź had 799 citizens; yet, only nine years later, in 1980, the number had grown to 4343, and by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century it had reached 330 000 people. In 1939, Łódź was inhabited by 680 000 citizens. 37% of all those employed in Polish industry were Łódź workers. B. Baranowski, J. Fijałek, eds., *Łódź: Dzieje Miasta. T. 1, Do 1918 r.*, PWN, Warszawa 1980; S. Liszewski, ‘The Origins and Stages of Development of Industrial in Łódź and the Łódź Urban Region’, in *A Comparative Study of Łódź and Manchester: Geographies of European Cities in Transition*, ed. by S. Liszewski and C. Young, Łódź University Press, Łódź 1997), pp. 11-34; W. Puś, ‘The Development of the City of Łódź (1820-1939)’, *Polin: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies*, 1991, pp. 3-19.

## “MANUFAKTURA”

In 1991, the Poltex<sup>8</sup> Cotton Industry Plant located in Izrael Poznański's former factory was put into liquidation.<sup>9</sup> It meant that an important post-industrial area in the city centre<sup>10</sup>, encompassing ca. 270.000 m<sup>2</sup> [66,7 acres], became a functionally dead space. The former company established by Izrael Poznański was the second biggest and most powerful enterprise in Łódź, after Scheibler and Grohman's Corporation. A huge complex, founded in the 1870s and 1880s, consisted of a factory, a workers' housing estate, a church, a hospital, a concert hall and other edifices. A palace with a private garden had been erected in the immediate vicinity of the factory. The whole complex constituted – and it still does – a significant architectural and urban component in the city space. The factory used to be a symbol of the power of Łódź industry. In the first years of World War I, it employed about 7000 people.<sup>11</sup> After 1945, the plant with 12,000 workers was still the second biggest employer of Łódź industry.<sup>12</sup> In 1997, when the factory finally ended production, its physical substance started to decay. The vast area in the centre of Łódź turned into what may be called a post-industrial urban fallow.<sup>13</sup>

After a few years of searching for an investor and for a conception of utilizing the abandoned buildings, a contract was signed with a foreign investor, the Apsys company, which is a global administrator of large-scale multi-functional shopping centres. The transformation of the entire area occupied by the factory took several years, from 1999 to 2006. Its goal was an economic and social revitalization of the important fragment of the city centre.

The area was converted into a huge shopping and entertainment centre called Manufaktura, one of the three greatest investments of that kind in Poland.<sup>14</sup> The old function of the buildings was fully replaced by a new one. In accord with the spirit of the times, the former space of production was taken over by

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<sup>8</sup> After 1945, Izrael Poznański's Cotton Plant was named The National Cotton Industry Plants No. 2 and later Julian Marchlewski Cotton Industry Plants. In 1970, the name “Poltex” was added and in 1980s the patronage of Julian Marchlewski was abandoned.

<sup>9</sup> By the decision of the Minister of Industry from 1 August 1991.

<sup>10</sup> Rada Miejska Załącznik do uchwały Nr XXXIV/568/04, ‘Uproszczony lokalny program rewitalizacji wybranych terenów śródmiejskich oraz pofabrycznych na lata 2004-2013’, 2004.

<sup>11</sup> D.M. Smith, *Moral Geographies: Ethics in a World of Difference*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2000, p. 57.

<sup>12</sup> S. Kaczmarek, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>14</sup> *Galerie i centra handlowe*. 12.06.2013. Available: <http://www.najlepszegalerie.pl/galerie>.

consumption. The centre consists mainly of shops, but there are also restaurants, cafés, cinemas, discos, a climbing wall, etc. The place seems to have gained more sophistication thanks to the presence of the Art Museum (ms<sup>2</sup>), located in a former so-called high weaving mill from 1895, and the museum devoted to the old factory. The official website of Manufaktura<sup>15</sup>, mentions the museums in the first place, although they occupy a relatively small area. Actually, the contrast between the commercial area and the art space is eagerly exploited today.<sup>16</sup> Another important part of the complex is a four-star Andel's Hotel occupying the building of an old weaving mill from 1878.

In line with the contractual agreement, a considerable part of the extant building stock was preserved during the transformation, which aimed at total functional conversion of the place. This resulted from the fact that the complex of former Izrael K. Poznański's plant together with the adjoining palace had become a conservation area in 1971.

The place was revitalized both economically and socially.<sup>17</sup> The old architecture was discreetly supplemented with modern constructions. Although the new buildings occupy as much as 95,000 m<sup>2</sup> [ca. 23,48 acres] and the area of the modernized edifices is ca. 90,000 m<sup>2</sup> [ca. 22,24 acres]<sup>18</sup>, the complex is visually dominated by the red brick buildings inspired by medieval defensive constructions, which are typical of Łódź 19<sup>th</sup>-century industrial architecture. Historical and new architecture was combined to create a coherent and harmonious spatial composition with a central marketplace of 30 000 m<sup>2</sup> [7,41 acres]. Thanks to the unique features of the historic architecture, the architectural complex seems to be visually consistent. At the same time, the different sizes of the old buildings and their placement contribute to a varied spatial layout, avoiding monotony.

The main shopping area is located in a new building, which is not dominating, since its height does not exceed the height of the other buildings, and its glass façade makes it neutral, almost invisible. Importantly though, the main

<sup>15</sup> *O nas. Manufaktura napędza Łódź*. 05.06.2013. Available at: [http://www.manufaktura.com/26/o\\_nas](http://www.manufaktura.com/26/o_nas).

<sup>16</sup> M. Dolistowska, 'Miasta wielokrotnego zapisu – ikonosfera nowych przestrzeni tożsamości', *Czasopismo Techniczne*, 2010, pp. 57-60; G. Makowski, *Świątynia konsumpcji. Geneza i społeczne znaczenie centrum handlowego*, TRIO, Warszawa 2003, pp. 113-118.

<sup>17</sup> F. Choay, P. Merlin, 'Réanimation', *Dictionnaire de l'urbanisme et de l'aménagement*, Presses Universitaires de France – PUF, 2010, p. 752.

<sup>18</sup> J. Dzieciuchowicz, *Wielkie centrum handlowe w przestrzeni miejskiej i podmiejskiej. Manufaktura i Ptak w Rzgowie*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2012, p. 37.

shopping centre is situated at the end of the marketplace, at the meeting point of all the main compositional axes. At the opposite end of Zachodnia street is the main “open” entrance to the area of Manufaktura, so naturally the biggest flow of the visitors is in these two directions. The walk-way is defined by pavements and, most importantly, by the rows of fountains, reportedly the longest ones in Europe.<sup>19</sup> Thanks to its transparency, the glass façade, though physically “closing” the marketplace, opens out to a new space and promises a passage to a new, fully modern world.

In order to make the area interesting, attractive for Łódź citizens and tourists, the historical space has been well-organized and the post-factory buildings – suitably converted.

Manufaktura is regarded as a landmark, an icon of industrial Łódź and at the same time a symbol of its post-industrial revival. However, the conversion of the place has resulted in creating a form of an outstandingly hybrid character. Standing at the Manufaktura’s marketplace, one may feel the atmosphere of old 19<sup>th</sup>-century Łódź, yet the space is artificial. It has undergone an extensive and carefully conceived process of contemporary urban spectacularization. Like many revitalized consumer areas, it is well-organized and clean for greater attraction and gentrification.<sup>20</sup>

The buildings which used to be part of the former Izrael Poznański’s factory have become attractive scenography. While their façades have been preserved, their interiors completely lost their original character and have been adapted for new functions. The roles of some elements of the buildings have been reduced to those of screens. The brick walls of the former lower weaving mill from 1872 not only host shops and restaurants, but they also hide a parking lot on the roof. Looking carefully, one can see the parked cars through the windows of the last floor. Anyway, the building is only a façade, since it has been deprived of a rear elevation.

The most characteristic building of the whole complex is a massive high weaving mill from 1878. The five-storey monumental edifice, 170.4 m [559 ft] long and 30.50 m [100 ft] wide<sup>21</sup>, built of characteristic red brick and

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<sup>19</sup> *O nas. Manufaktura napędza Łódź*. 05.06.2013. Available at: [http://www.manufaktura.com/26/o\\_nas](http://www.manufaktura.com/26/o_nas).

<sup>20</sup> P. Berenstein Jacques, ‘Urban Improvisations: The Profanatory Tactics of Spectacularized Spaces’, *Critical Studies in Improvisation / Études critiques en improvisation*, 7 (2011) <<http://www.criticalimprov.com/article/view/1390/2023>> [accessed 8 July 2013].

<sup>21</sup> I. Popławska, *Architektura przemysłowa Łodzi w XIX Wieku*, PWN, Warszawa 1973, p. 59.

inspired by medieval defensive and early Renaissance architecture, has retained its original character. The intervention into the body of the building has been very discreet and the alterations have not disrupted the general impression or the original form. The only major, but hardly noticeable accent is a glass cube with a swimming pool situated on the roof. However, the role of the internal architectural elements, going back to the times of Izrael Poznański, although emphasized and standing out, such as the rows of cast-iron pillars supporting the steel ceiling beams with binding joists, or the unplastered fragments of the brick shallow Prussian vaulting, has been limited to interesting ornamental elements.

The radical change of purpose has caused complete separation between the exterior and the interior, the form and the function. While originally the functional program of the building was evident both in its construction and its decoration<sup>22</sup>, the slogan that “the form follows the function” has now been abandoned, which is typical of contemporary architecture. On the other hand, there have appeared new contrasts and unexpected combinations characteristic of modern times.

The whole industrial cum residential complex of Izrael Poznański has also lost its coherence. The process of revitalization has encompassed only one part of the former “empire”. A distinct boundary was marked between the two sides of Ogrodowa street. The side of the old factory is a kind of oasis in the degraded urban landscape of Łódź, while the opposite side – that of the workers’ housing estate – is an enclave of poverty. The contrast is visible at first glance, it does not require any in-depth research. The carefully restored red brick weaving mill, now Andel’s Hotel, stands out against the neglected, degraded dirty brick workers’ houses.

This has resulted in the reorganization of the composition of the factory complex. Ogrodowa street, which used to be the main axis of the complex, has lost its function; it currently plays the role of one of Manufaktura’s outer limits. The main axis is defined by the internal marketplace, open toward the city.

The marketplace, now an attractive public space, accepted by Łódź citizens and very popular with them, has been created artificially. The area was originally a site of many factory buildings and a network of narrow streets.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>23</sup> Print from *Promyślennost Rossji w słowach i kartinach, 1896* in *ibid.*, p. 55.

It used to be an enclosed space with the main entrance through a characteristic ornamental red-brick and cast-iron gate. Nowadays, it is still used as one of the side entrances to the complex, yet it serves mainly a decorative function. The carefree atmosphere of the place, perfect for rest and entertainment, has nothing in common with its original character.

The case of Manufaktura's marketplace, brought to life by a global consortium, becomes an example in the discussion on the disappearance of traditional urban public space, its privatization and thus commercialization and trivialization.<sup>24</sup>

Although it is a commercial area, designed for mass consumption, Manufaktura seems to defy the anonymity of contemporary "non-places", including shopping centres.<sup>25</sup> It creates a delusion of recreating an authentic fragment of the city. It clearly refers to and founds its image on the local architectural identity. It is not an isolated example, but one of the concepts used in the modern shopping centres of the so-called fourth generation.<sup>26</sup>

The idea behind the image of the shopping centre draws on the blend of tradition and modernity. The strategy aims at making the visitors subconsciously identify the place with the image of the city. It constitutes a kind of brand mark, easy to accept and ready for on-the-spot consumption.<sup>27</sup> In this accumulation of cultural signs and symbols in a modern city, cultural meanings become a commercial artefact. Treating the city, its urban landscape and buildings with their characteristic features and meanings as market assets poses the fundamental threat that they will be deemed attractive as long as they bring profits.<sup>28</sup>

Making use of the existing buildings, which constitute an integral part of an urban landscape, authenticates and legitimizes a new commercial place in the urban area. Such an image is enhanced by the commercial slogans claiming that Manufaktura, *de facto* a shopping and entertainment centre, is one of Łódź landmarks, the "beating heart of the city" and a new city centre. How-

<sup>24</sup> Jacques, *op. cit.*; U. Hatzfeld, 'The Inner City: Crystallisation Point for Continuity and Change in Urban Development', *German Journal of Urban Studies*, 45 (2006) <<http://www.difu.de/node/5997>> [accessed 6 July 2013].

<sup>25</sup> P. Virilio, C. David, 'Ślepe pole sztuki', *Magazyn Sztuki*, trans. by E. Mikina, 1997, 13; Marc Augé, *Nie-miejsca. Wprowadzenie do antropologii hipernowoczesności*, PWN, Warszawa 2010.

<sup>26</sup> Dzieciuchowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>27</sup> Jacques, *op. cit.*

<sup>28</sup> Czepczyński, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

ever, these slogans do not refer to characteristic Łódź architecture, but to a place where “the space of culture and sophisticated entertainment is combined with the world of trade and recreation”.<sup>29</sup> Thinking about architecture is no longer based on form and style, but on events. And it is an event that creates a place.<sup>30</sup>

Offering Łódź citizens and visitors a whole range of attractions – from a vast shopping area, through entertainment, to cultural events and a space for recreation and social life, Manufaktura satisfies different social needs. In the summer the marketplace sports a sandy beach, in the winter – an ice rink, and all the year round one can spend one’s time at the aesthetically tidy and well- (but discretely) guarded space. There are concerts and shows; and even the winners of the competition for the “icon” of Łódź were announced there as well (however, the citizens still believe that icon to be Piotrkowska street).<sup>31</sup>

All those events attract new potential customers and thus increase the profits, becoming part of consumer pop culture. Using revitalized buildings is also a way of producing a tourist attraction for the industrial archaeologists or heritage tourists. Manufaktura is visited yearly by ca. 20 million people.<sup>32</sup>

According to an advertising slogan, Łódź is driven by Manufaktura.<sup>33</sup> However, the multifunctional centre, a hybrid enclave desiring to satisfy various needs in an attractive form, deprives the proper city centre of certain functions.<sup>34</sup> The potential of the place is used to improve the economic situation of the particular area, not Łódź as a whole; in fact what counts is the prosperity of the place, not the whole city. Its usurpation of the role of the new centre of Łódź has considerably contributed to destroying the traditional city centre as the area of consumption and, to a great extent, also of social life. The brand stores in Piotrkowska street have been replaced by second-hand shops. As a matter of fact, the loss of significance of the old city centre seems inevitable. Another “centre” of Łódź is currently being created. The

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<sup>29</sup> *O nas. Manufaktura napędza Łódź*. 05.06.2013. Available at: [http://www.manufaktura.com/26/o\\_nas](http://www.manufaktura.com/26/o_nas).

<sup>30</sup> E. Rewers, *Post-polis. Wstęp do filozofii ponowoczesnego miasta*, Universitas, Kraków 2005), p. 73.

<sup>31</sup> “Manufaktura” was classified third in the ranking, after Piotrkowska Street and Widzew Łódź: Piotr Wesolowski, ‘Piotrkowska ikoną Łodzi’, *Gazeta Wyborcza – Łódź*, 16 May 2009, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Redakcja, Zespół Manufaktury and Aleksandra Hac, ‘Łączyć to, co kochamy, z tym co dla Łodzi najlepsze’, *Gazeta Wyborcza – Łódź*, 16 December 2009, p. 5.

<sup>33</sup> *O nas. Manufaktura napędza Łódź*. 05.06.2013. Available at: [http://www.manufaktura.com/26/o\\_nas](http://www.manufaktura.com/26/o_nas).

<sup>34</sup> Makowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52.

slogan behind the revitalization of the area surrounding the former power station EC1 is “Nowe Centrum Łodzi” [“The New Centre of Łódź”]. It is another space meant to play a dominant role in the structure of the city. According to its promotional materials, the EC1 project is going to change Łódź into an attractive and modern metropolis, thanks to its interesting architecture and fascinating cultural events.<sup>35</sup> This is how negative connotations arise, suggesting that the city is currently in ruin or is deprived of interesting city-forming spaces. This is another project of city revitalization, which, though admittedly interesting, employs the rhetoric of usurpation and competition, instead of contributing to the sustainable development of the city. An organism having several “hearts” does not become stronger, but may become inconsistent, non-harmonious, defragmented. Contradictory aims and local strategies come to light, while the city structure gets interspersed with enclaves, peculiar oases of gentrification.

## CONCLUSIONS

According to Arian Mostaedi, “Ideally, converting old structures to new uses involves delving into the past, not to rewrite history, but rather to breathe new life into it”.<sup>36</sup>

It remains an open question if this ideal situation can be achieved in the case of industrial objects occupying large areas.<sup>37</sup> *Genius loci* is mostly preserved in the spaces used as autothematic museums, but then almost the whole city of Łódź would have to become an exhibit. There is no such possibility, or rational need; living in a city-skansen would be impossible.

What has been preserved during the revitalization of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century factory complex of Izrael Poznański is some of its material substance, acquiring new connotations and semantic codes. Particular buildings, characteristic of the landscape of the industrial Łódź, have been saved from “technical death”. At the same time, the newly-created place responds to and reflects contemporary needs and transformations. Having shifted their functions, the extant edifices are separated from their original context, forming new, unexpected

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<sup>35</sup> *Nowe Centrum Łodzi. Operacja na otwartym mieście 2006-2016.* [flier] Fundacja EC1 Łódź Miasto Kultury.

<sup>36</sup> A. Mostaedi, *Building Conversion & Renovation*, Carles Broto & Josep M<sup>a</sup> Minguet, Barcelona 2003), p. 8.

<sup>37</sup> The issue has been interestingly analyzed in the following article: G. Kähler, *op. cit.*

combinations. They cross the borderline of their original meaning in the urban area.

In this case, the old architectural objects have been subjected to the hybridization of their historical form and its visual message with the new function and meaning brought by it. At the same time, it was the only way to protect some important elements of urban landscape, such as the monumental red building of the former weaving mill or the gate leading once to the factory, from total destruction. These elements are a physical substance, helping the citizens of Łódź to find their identity. The influence of the image they produce is so powerful because of their unique character constituting part of the local, traditional urban landscape, and of the clarity of their layout.

However, historical continuity is mainly experienced here in an artificial way. The past is limited basically, though not exactly, to the sphere of the aesthetic, since the understanding of the old function and the form associated with it is rather dim. The shift in function, even if the building stock is preserved, results in significant deformations of the comprehensive perception of the complex. The citizens or tourists walking along the marketplace of Manufaktura among the bustling and colorful cafés, playing children and the swoosh of fountains will only see a kind of display of the brick architecture of old Łódź, but they will certainly not experience the “climate” and the character of Poznański’s empire.

The original meaning of a building cannot be preserved (unless in a skansen, which is, on the other hand, also a vision of the past). Each interference is falsifying. What remains is only the building’s “skin” subjected to a lifting, but, as in a human body, not capable of separate existence. That is why a new heart has to be implanted. Yet, while a human being remains him-/herself after such an operation, a building changes its identity.<sup>38</sup>

This process occurs inevitably, but it can stop at a certain point. There is one more essential question: does the creation of such places as Manufaktura, a historical and civilizational hybrid, make any sense? In the case of the complex as important for the history and architectural landscape of the whole city as Poznański’s factory, the answer has to be positive. This is the only way to create a point of reference, a place which characterizes and defines the city. Even if the rehabilitated tissue is only a reminiscence or memory of the former Łódź architecture, it still contributes to the sustaining of its continuity

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

and to the preservation of the city's identity, which are necessary for its proper functioning and development. Creating the image of Łódź as a modern European city and trying to reconstruct and consolidate its identity is a return to the references from before Communism and an attempt to recreate the positive image of Łódź from before 1939.<sup>39</sup>

As stated in the New Charter of Athens from 1998, historical legacy is a basic element which defines European culture in comparison with other regions of the world. For most citizens and tourists, the character of the city depends on the quality of its buildings and its urban areas.<sup>40</sup>



1. The marketplace of Manufaktura in Łódź,  
photo by Julia Sowińska-Heim

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<sup>39</sup> J. Michlic, 'Lodz in the Post-communist Era: In Search of a New Identity', in *Post-communist Cities: New Cultural Reorientations and Identities*, eds. Ruble Blair, John Czaplicka, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008; M. Fleming, 'Legitimizing Urban "Revitalisation" Strategies in Post-socialist Lodz', *East European Politics and Societies*, 26 (2012), pp. 254-273.

<sup>40</sup> 'Nowa Karta Ateńska 1998', *Biuletyn Informacyjny TUP*, 1998, p. 9.



2. Restored buildings of Izrael Poznański's former industrial complex,  
photo by Julia Sowińska-Heim



3. The lobby of the four-star Andel's Hotel Łódź,  
photo by Julia Sowińska-Heim



4. Andel's Hotel Łódź, occupying the building of an old weaving mill from 1878, photo by Julia Sowińska-Heim

#### **TRANSFORMACJE I REDEFINICJE – ARCHITEKTURA I TOŻSAMOŚĆ MIEJSCA (streszczenie)**

Architektura w istotny sposób utrwała i podtrzymuje tożsamość miasta i jej mieszkańców. Budynki stanowią najłatwiej i najpowszechniej dostępne świadectwo kultury. Transformacja ustrojowa, która nastąpiła w Polsce w 1989 r., a tym samym zmiana porządku społeczno-kulturowego, doprowadziła również do znaczących przeobrażeń w przestrzeni miejskiej. Nieoczekiwane konteksty i dyskursy tworzone są nie tylko przez nowe realizacje, ale również architekturę dawną, która poddana zostaje transformacji i redefinicji. Budynki historyczne przystosowują się do zmieniających się czasów balansując pomiędzy przeszłością a teraźniejszością. Następuje zmiana kodu znaczeniowego. Miejsce dawnej zajmuje nowa treść, odczytywana przez nakładające się kody semantyczne, pierwotnie i wtórnie nadane architekturze. Dochodzi do kwestionowania starych i tworzenia nowych tożsamości ich nakładania i hybrydyzacji.

**Słowa klucze:** tożsamość, hybrydyzacja, architektura, transformacja, Łódź, rewitalizacja.

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## **ON THE ARTISTIC PERSPECTIVES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Abstract:** The biggest problem of the European Union is that a true poet who would like to write a poem about it has not been born yet. The spiritual foundations of today's EU are not shaped by Christian priests, nor by marshals and generals. They are formed by EU politicians and bureaucrats who tell us the true from the false. Only banal and boring truths can meet the political and bureaucratic criteria of truth. Therefore, the truths of today's Union are banal and boring. They involve no mystery and therefore no metaphysics, in the depth of which individuals would be willing to lose themselves. If it is impossible to die for the Union, we thus need to ask if it is possible to live in the Union. The positive thesis of the article is the conviction that aesthetic experience might be the source of both the spiritual and life-giving mystery and hope.

**Keywords:** art, God, mystery, performance, the European Union.

### **INTRODUCTION – OR HOW TO LIVE WHEN YOU DO NOT HAVE TO DIE?**

The European Union is still the name of a problem. Its biggest problem is that a true poet who would like to write a poem about it has not been born yet. A true poet does not write poems on request, but from the depths of his poetic heart. This has not happened yet, although I have no doubt that the EU authorities could afford a contest for a poem about the Union that would be so financially attractive as to encourage poets not only from Africa, India, China and South America, but also from the United States, Canada and Australia, not to mention those from several Arab oil paradises.

Today's Union is not constituted by those who have done their best to spread the idea of the EU in our still nationalist minds. Namely, it is not constituted

by Christian priests, even though Christianity was the first religion meant to embrace all people, and thus all the inhabitants of Europe. The beginnings of Christianity heralded an absolute happy ending in which all people would be brothers and sisters. In contrast to the logic of the Old Testament, according to which spiritual and physical otherness condemned people to death, now euphemistically called exclusion, the New Testament offered all spiritually and physically different people the gift of the Gospel, owing to which each of them had a chance to become a citizen of the New Testament's world. At least this was how it was meant to be, but it turned out otherwise. There was and still is one God of the Old Testament. The God of the New Testament is nothing but trouble. Although there is one God, he exists in three persons. Protestantism has identified with the invisibility of the Father and the Holy Spirit, while Catholicism and Orthodoxy have built their spiritual identity on the visibility of the Son, the Virgin Mary and all the saints. Christian Europe was not superior to pre-Christian Europe, and there is no indication that post-Christian Europe, where more and more emissaries from all sides effectively undermine the so-called Christian roots of Europe, will prove worse. Without these roots, Europe seems to be more open to the future, rather than dwelling on the horrors of the past. The less God in Europe, the fewer wars and conflicts. The last time God reminded us of himself was in the former Yugoslavia. Let there be no doubt – I am not accusing God of anything. All I am saying is that where people derive the meaning of life from the necessity to rely on God, the atmosphere becomes thick and hostile to the ironic perception of human conflicts which are a faithful companion of the human condition. Nothing soothes the savage breast better than the need for self-mockery. Above all, the nearness of God, who – as was wittily observed by the artists from the Polish art group Łódź Kaliska, “envies people their errors” – is not conducive to self-depreciation.

## 1. THE EMPTY FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION?

The Europeans of the future will certainly not be religious people in today's sense emphasizing the denominational nature of religion. We should perhaps re-read the once-popular book by Leszek Kołakowski *Świadomość religijna i więź kościelna* [*Religious awareness and the ecclesial bond*] to glimpse an outline of the religious future of the United States of Europe. The title of the book perfectly captures the drama of any religious spirituality condemned to develop within the confines of a particular church. Religion offers spiritual awareness, the church is naturally founded on a bond – which on the one

hand unites and joins the faithful, giving them a sense of belonging to a community, but on the other hand limits, tames and enslaves them. Perhaps the future of Europe is non-ecclesial and non-denominational religiousness.

The Christian priests do not shape the spirituality of the EU, because no matter how loudly they proclaim the universality of their ideas, they continue to develop the concept of local and national church. Therefore, although she has long been the Queen of Poland and the Queen of Bavaria, the Virgin Mary is still not the Queen of the United Kingdom of Poland and Bavaria. It is probably not possible to go back to the universal Latin because the language is dead. But who knows, perhaps we should start promoting the services in English?

Who, then, forms the basis of the EU's spirituality? If it is not priests, neither is it marshals and generals. Since 1945, the European countries have not been resolving any contentious issues using tanks and bombs – the staple component of nationalist consciousness. The bloody events in the aforementioned Yugoslavia were an exception. The ghost of nationalism, however, is still haunting Europe; it feeds on the aggression of sports fans and finds a cosy shelter in the poverty and uncertainty that are still, unfortunately, an important part of European experience. The fundamentals of the EU's spirituality are formed by EU politicians and bureaucrats who believe they can tell the true from the false. Only banal and boring truth can meet the political and bureaucratic criteria. Therefore, the truths of today's European Union are banal and boring. They involve no mystery and therefore no metaphysics, in the depths of which people would be willing to lose themselves. If it is impossible to die for the Union, we thus need to ask if it is possible to live in it.

## **2. IN SEARCH OF A MYSTERY**

Every era is alive with a mystery it deserves. In the Middle Ages, it was provided by the language of liturgy and theology; God was not the subject of understanding, but the target of extra-rational love and prayers. Today, the average man in the street cannot learn the language of economics and comprehend the rules of the functioning of the stock exchange; he finds it equally hard to understand the theoretical principles of electricity, the telephone, the radio and television, the computer, the camera and the camcorder, the vacuum cleaner, or the microwave oven, even though he knows well enough

how to use these and other paraphernalia of modern life. The more light is thrown on the world by scientific understanding, the greater and darker mystery they become for the common sense. Once, both man and the world would “unravel” without God, because every moment of life and every element of the world was saturated with God. Today, however, the Nietzschean life without God can be quite easy to visualize and understand in all its biological, moral and social dimensions. We have known for at least two hundred years that people cannot be divided into believers and good on the one hand and non-believers and evil on the other. Neither goodness nor hope is necessarily defined by the heart of faith, or by the light of reason. The path to God led through suffering; in the culture of analgesics (already noted by Leszek Kołakowski in his *Presence of Myth* forty years ago), any recollection of this path provokes even more impassive silence over the empty coffin of God.

It is hard to imagine a life which would be able to free itself from the bonds of trust in the mysterious “beings” created by modern cybernetic and electronic metaphysics. It would be relegated to the margins of social life, and only in rare cases could it count on a positive valorisation. And such lack of trust would be understandable as a wise precaution in dealing with what we cannot comprehend. Because the mind does not understand the operation of the telephone and the radio, it should be wary of the voices that come out of them; if it does not understand the nature of television, it should be insensible to the beauty of the image that appears on it; for the same reasons it should distrust the calculator, while the computer should preventively go in the trash before we unpack it. However, it is not so. We trust the hands we have not seen and will never see, we trust the words we have never understood and will never understand; we trust the people of whom we know nothing and will probably never know anything. We entrust our everyday life and our future to the mystery which the light of our common sense will always be unable to penetrate. If we are to believe Nietzsche, even if we have not stopped praying, there is still no God who would sometimes take some human wisdom from our prayers; Foucault showed that our human reason was, is and probably will continue to be effectively knocked out by something – i.e. the world and life, by time and by place. It may be the end of a certain kind of man, and therefore a beginning of a new one. This passage may be called new humanism and post-humanism. The mirror of numerous old ideas and values in which our life has looked at itself so far is becoming cloudy right before our eyes. Life no longer wants to look at and find itself in the mirror as too many new expectations and claims escape it. Yet, let us not identify this crisis with the crisis of life itself; as Jan P. Hudzik reminds us,

“the aim of reflection is not to clearly and distinctly understand oneself, or to go beyond an incident in search of the essence of things – but to live in a creative way, i.e. to be able to orient oneself in the opaque world where each step involves uncertainty and risk.”<sup>1</sup> The still imperfect life continues to grow wiser and stronger as it develops increasingly perfect concepts.

### 3. THE EUROPEAN UNION AS A WORK OF ART

#### A) EVERYONE IS AN ARTIST AND ANYTHING CAN BE A WORK OF ART

A popular Polish saying is that (every) nature hates a vacuum. This time, it is the nature of contemporary human spirit, which is no longer able to fill itself with the signs of God. Contemporary art often attempts to redefine the transcendence inherited from God through artistic means. At the end of July 2013, I had the pleasure to participate in Contexts 2013 – the 3rd International Sokolovsko Festival of Ephemeral Art. For a few days, my “spirituality” was shaped by numerous performances and installations. We gathered around the performing artists, thus accepting their leadership. The leadership was safe because it was temporary. It was manifested by their annexation of the common area and their courage to focus the attention of the festival community on their performances or installations. Their actions offered us a momentary opportunity of experiencing a different perception of time and space. Each performance was composed of attitudes and gestures which created their own, ephemeral world through the liturgy of art, differing greatly from religious liturgy in its individualism and uniqueness, but within the same artistic situation, repetition was not only possible, but even desirable and recommended. The artists did not so much come to their performances with their own liturgy, as they created it in their course.

Jean François Lyotard wrote that "the postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes or the work he creates is not in principle governed by pre-established rules and cannot be judged according to a determinant judgment, by the application of given categories to this text or work. Such rules and categories are what the work or text is investigating. The artist and the writer therefore work without rules, and in order to establish the rules for what will have been made. This is why the work and

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<sup>1</sup> J.P. Hudzik, *Estetyka egzystencji. Szkice z pogranicza ponowoczesnej etyki i estetyki*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 1998, p. 127.

the text can take on the properties of an event; it is also why they would arrive too late for their author or, in what amounts to the same thing, why their creation would always begin too soon."<sup>2</sup> This description of the condition of the postmodern artist contains all that is present in Nietzsche's diagnosis of life.<sup>3</sup> When the artist described by Lyotard approaches the canvas (or any other material), he can use them artistically in any way. He is free from the ascetic wisdom of style and the promiscuous severity of craftsmanship possessed by the Greek, medieval, Renaissance and academic masters, which put up an effective resistance to his atavistic desire to live in a state of perpetual anarchy. The modern artist is painfully alone. There is no God (in whom he often believes), and so there is neither truth nor goodness. Although ethics is impossible, art (aesthetics) is still possible. Although the painter knows he can do anything with the canvas, he also knows all too well that not all of the fruits of his creative passion will ripen in the world of art as its works. Freedom does not mean – as Hegel put it – the understanding of needs, but the artistic courage to create them. Although there are no longer any rules of beauty, hope, which sometimes stems from them, can still be alive. The artist can afford any one of an infinite number of artistic gestures, yet not all of them will become another artistic and aesthetic need. Thus, along with Nietzsche, we enter a world in which life itself, and perhaps even life alone lends to art the materials necessary for the creation of art works. We reject the ethical mask and we put on an aesthetic one. Although there is freedom, there is still no tolerance for discretion. It is events that acquire the features of art pieces and texts. They appear either too early or too late, which definitely distinguishes them from the physiology of childbirth that always

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<sup>2</sup> J.F. Lyotard, "Answering the question: what is the postmodern?", in *The Postmodern Explained to Children: Correspondence 1982-1985*, trans. D. Bary and others, Turnaround, London 1992, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> "But even if the future were to give us no cause for hope – our curious existence in precisely this Now gives us the strongest encouragement to live according to our own standards and laws: the inexplicable fact that we live precisely today and yet had the infinity of time in which to come into being, that we possess nothing but this brief today in which to show why and to what purpose we have come into being precisely at this moment. We are accountable to ourselves for our own existence; consequently, we also want to be the real helmsmen of our existence and keep it from resembling a mindless coincidence. We have to approach existence with certain boldness and willingness to take risk: especially since in both the worst and the best instances we are bound to lose it. [...] No one can build for you the bridge upon which you alone must cross the stream of life, no one but you alone. To be sure, there are countless paths and bridges and demigods that want to carry you through this stream, but only at the price of your self; you would pawn and lose your self. There is only one single path in this world on which no one but you can travel", See: F. Nietzsche "Ultimately mediations", in: *The Nietzsche Reader*, K Ansell-Pearson, D. Large (eds.) D. Large (trans.) Blackwell Publishing, 2006, p. 143-144.

takes place at its proper time. The artist Alastair MacLennan has no doubts that “traditional Western religion is on the wane. It no longer sufficiently convinces, with its hidebound views of humanity's place in the universe. In postmodern times, some seek 'purpose' through DIY spiritual healing groups, eschewing dogmas and embracing core, pluralistic teachings from a diversity of sources. Krishnamurti recommends we all, individually and collectively, practise bare attention of mind. This serves to dissolve all unnecessary subject and object binary splits, which cause conflict throughout our private and public lives.”<sup>4</sup>

## B) EVEN THE SENSELESS MAY MAKE SENSE

Nothing heralds the time of performance apart from the information which tautologically heralds the time of performance – and even that is not necessary. The gestures of the liturgy of art are by no means metaphysically empty. Every festival evening at 9 p.m., the installation “Forcing a miracle” by Joanna Rajkowska (largely a repetition of her installation in London a year before) came alive. In the park, next to the ruins of the reconstructed Bremer’s sanatorium, numerous incense sticks hidden in the ground gave out a mysterious scent and formed illuminated streaks of fog hovering above the grass.<sup>5</sup> The artist defies the traditional religion in which the faithful ask God for a miracle despite the obvious lack of guilt borne by the human suffering that lies behind this request. Through her artistic activity based on a kabbalistic ritual, the artist wants to force a miracle upon nature. Perhaps the callous and inhuman nature will turn out to be more friendly and compassionate than God who either drowned in the ocean of undeserved human compliments, or became spoilt? One thing is certain: if we do not want to accept the fact that this single gesture of the artist has just as much power as all the gestures of all priests of all religions of the world from the beginning of its existence, it is only because of our quiet and rather shy hope that Rajkowska’s artistic gesture has enough power. She explains: “Soon after I had had a vision of smoking incenses my little daughter, Rosa, was diagnosed with a rare type of cancer, retinoblastoma, which is a cancer of the eye. Since then, the project has started to grow, along with my fear. I realised that I have a ready formula that I can use for something far more essential. I can activate the ground and

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<sup>4</sup> The Artists Newsletter June 1997, EYE TO EYE, *Mark Dawes in Conversation With Alastair MacLennan*. (<http://www.vads.ucreative.ac.uk/collections/macLennan/interviews.htm>).

<sup>5</sup> See: G. Borkowski, *Wielowymiarowe „konteksty” w Sokołowsku*, *Obieg*, VIII 2013. (<http://obieg.pl/kronika/29436>).

grass to manifest my own greatest, most inner wish – to help Rosa in her struggle. I do believe that if you give the ground (soil, little stones, insects and plants) a language, it is far more effective than any human desire. [...] Miracles don't happen on their own. You have to ask for them. Or at least allow them to happen. [...] I am interested in inventing new social rituals, which usually occur when people don't really know what to do with themselves. I trust situations which go beyond recognised types of rituals and force people to behave in a slightly different way. This moment of awkwardness is quite creative.<sup>6</sup>

Karolina Kubik, one of the artists performing in Sokolovsko comments on her work: “In my performance, *Pochodzić z rodziny* [*To come from a family*], I directed sticks alternately soaked with gentian violet or stuck in my shoulder towards the ground. I performed a subtle, two-hour ritual – a rhythmic medical treatment on the land of Sokolovsko full of diseases collected for many years in local nursing homes. I turned the sticks in a clay ring. This way I prepared special injections, acupuncture needles, which were stuck into the ground for the whole night in the final stage of the performance. In the morning, only the punctures were left. From the perspective of a casual observer, through the intense presence, I *gave* the specific event *autonomy devoid of motives and consequences*.” The medicinal theme that recurs in the description draws attention. The performance has the power of giving meaning to what is common, “Because people normally feel that if someone somewhere in the world repeats an action, it has to make sense, and thus deserves attention. People rarely waste their time.”<sup>7</sup>

### C) (NON)ACCEPTANCE OF OBVIOUSNESS

We create our own limits; at the same time, our own limits are what creates us. It is worth remembering that we are limited in a particular way by the need for obviousness satisfied throughout our life, and therefore, in accordance with what has been said, this need for obviousness is what forms us. Owing to the obviousness that we find in the world and that we also impose on the world, we do not have to stand to attention twenty-four hours a day, but we can also afford to stand at ease. Obviousness chooses objectives for us and identifies the simplest ways to achieve them. It is not bad when obviousness guides many of our numerous steps, yet it is bad enough when it is

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.dazeddigital.com/artsandculture/article/14878/1/frieze-week-joanna-rajkowska>.

<sup>7</sup> Private communication with the artist.

present in each of them. The largest and most powerful ally of obviousness is the conviction that our critical mind, in particular, will not let us fall into its trap. Popular culture largely filled with the spirit of voracious consumption seduces us with the images of a world in which we are active and all-powerful shapers of our fate; we are ensured within the limits of the culture that it is us and only us who choose responsibly our life goals, values and principles. Every day, we are showered by mass media with thousands of compliments and we use them to build our self-esteem: we give ourselves a bit of luxury that we always and everywhere deserve. Can we build the future of the European Union on the liquid foundations of the omnivorous popular culture?

## CONCLUSION

The point here is not that nothing is obvious in art; the point is that nothing has to be and nothing can be obvious in art. In life, in science, in religion, in law and in morality, freedom is about increasingly coming to terms with the profound needs which constitute the reality of life, science, religion, law and morality. It is only art and love that allow for freedom – the freedom which escapes the traps laid by our needs – because art and love have the courage to fulfil themselves in constant self-creation from anything and everything. It is not necessary to be or have a genius to live a life, which is a mystery even to itself and the source of our human eternity – or perhaps we should admit after Beuys that the genius is in all of us, and we all are, or at least should be, artists.

The strict Saint Paul wisely instructed the believers two thousand years ago that everyone should love someone and be loved by someone. Obviousness is not obvious and non-obviousness becomes most obvious in a unique way only when we emerge from the darkness through the light of love. Only art can seduce us with the same hopelessly ephemeral and at the same time eternal light. Even the most national work of art, if it is just a work of art and not an artistically coarse record of nationalistic delusions about the greatness of some nation, hides a secret which has the power to open it up to the spiritual needs of the people belonging to all other nations as long as they genuinely need to commune with works of art. We need to believe that it is this mystery – the mystery of an art work, which today frequently has to explain its *raison d'être* – is our common European opportunity. Even if this is a utopia, isn't it true that its beauty is truly seductive?

**O ARTYSTYCZNYCH PERSPEKTYWACH UNII EUROPEJSKIEJ  
(streszczenie)**

Największym problemem Unii Europejskiej jest to, że wciąż nie narodził się poeta, który chciałby napisać o niej wiersz. Duchowych podstaw dzisiejszej Unii nie tworzą także chrześcijańscy kapłani, marszałkowie i generałowie. Tworzą je natomiast unijni politycy i biurokraci, którzy orzekają, co jest prawdziwe, a co nie. Politycznemu i biurokratycznemu kryterium prawdy potrafią sprostać tylko prawdy banalne i nudne. Dlatego prawdy dzisiejszej unii są banalne i nudne. Nie ma w nich żadnej tajemnicy, a zatem i żadnej metafizyki, w której głębi jednostki mogłyby chcieć się zatracić. Jeśli niemożliwa jest śmierć za Unię, nie sposób nie zapytać, czy możliwe jest zatem życie w Unii. Pozytywna tezą artykułu jest przeświadczenie, że źródłem takiej duchowej i zarazem życiodajnej tajemnicy oraz nadziei może być doświadczenie estetyczne.

**Słowa kluczowe:** sztuka, Bóg, tajemnica, performance, Unia.

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## **THE ARTISTIC STATEMENTS OF INMATES ABOUT FREEDOM: THE “LABYRINTH OF FREEDOM” PROJECT AND ITS POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS**

**Abstract:** It is characteristic for the male prison community that showing one’s attitudes, beliefs and feelings is quite risky. In such an oppressive environment the inmates exhibit various strategies of adjustment. In some cases getting involved in artistic activities is not only a way of spending the time of isolation constructively, but it may also become a stimulus for some positive changes after the inmate’s release. The aim of this article is to describe the “Labyrinth of Freedom” project conducted at the penitentiary in Nowy Wisnicz, near Krakow, Poland, in 2012 and to discuss the inmate’s comments on freedom, the theme of the artistic project. Some possible benefits of the inmates’ artistic activity are also identified. The analyzed data consists of a selected set of inmates’ works, which share the common theme of freedom. The authors are convinced that the project had a therapeutic value because it created a chance for the inmates to express themselves through art and to reach the “outside” audience. Moreover, within the framework of the project, the inmates’ works were given the same status as the works of professional artists, which should have had a positive impact on the inmates’ self-esteem. Their artistic expression increased their sense of importance in the prison community, by reducing their feeling of isolation and dehumanization. The project was then an opportunity to develop the inmates’ awareness, and so to help them take a big step on the path to personal development and freedom.

**Keywords:** art, prison, freedom, inmates, psychotherapy.

## INTRODUCTION

The situation of imprisonment, irrespective of the location of the correction facility, causes discomfort of the inmates, as they are deprived of their freedom. The distinction between ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ forms of liberty or freedom<sup>1</sup> seems to be useful in describing the inmates’ situation: one possesses negative freedom when one is not externally constrained (e.g. by being imprisoned) and positive freedom when one is not constrained internally (e.g. by compulsion or addiction).

The loss of negative freedom in prison is undoubtedly a traumatic experience for the inmates, who have usually already experienced other traumas as well. Finding some form of psychotherapy which can be offered to them seems to be of special value. Although the negative freedom of the inmates is extremely limited, they have – to a greater or lesser extent – positive freedom, and they can express themselves through artistic activity, which opens up the possibility of compensating for the loss of the former kind of freedom by enhancing the latter kind.

Inside the institutions of a ‘total’ character<sup>2</sup> such as prisons, the desire to express one’s personality collides with the requirements of the system at every turn. Moreover, it is characteristic for the prison community (especially at the male penitentiaries) that showing one’s attitudes, beliefs or feelings is quite risky. In such an oppressive environment, the inmates exhibit various strategies of adjustment. In some cases getting involved in artistic activities is not only a way of spending the time of isolation constructively, but it may also become a stimulus for some positive changes after the inmate’s release. Participation in various programs enabling the inmates to undertake creative activities is sometimes a vital stage of self-development; it increases their social and personal competence and self-confidence. It also strengthens their motivation for further education<sup>3</sup>.

It is recommended by the institutions of the European Union that a broad spectrum of artistic activities should be incorporated into the process of prison rehabilitation. The projects run along those lines are conducted within the Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates and Grundtvig programs. The *Grundtvig and*

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<sup>1</sup> P. Taylor, *Philosophy and Human Sciences. Philosophical Papers*, vol. 2, Cambridge 1985.

<sup>2</sup> E. Goffman, *Asylums: essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates*. New York 1961.

<sup>3</sup> European Commission, *Prison education and training in Europe – a review and commentary of existing literature, analysis and evaluation*, Birmingham 2011.

*Leonardo da Vinci Catalogue of Projects on Prison Education & Training*, published after the international conference “Pathways to Inclusion. Strengthening European Cooperation in Prison Education and Training”<sup>4</sup>, lists twenty one international Grundtvig projects on “Arts and cultural creativity”. Poland takes part in five of them: *Roots*, *SONART*, *Crossing the Bridge*, *Little Stories*, *Great Hopes* and *Memory and Time*. Poland does not, however, participate in the broadest project of the *PAN European Network*, which involves sharing experience among the representatives of about a hundred institutions from over twenty European countries. The report by the Association of Legal Intervention, which was published within the “Watch 24” project, funded by the Open Society Institute, states that art rooms were in use in three out of eight visited prisons. Additionally, in two more institutions the inmates were able to develop their artistic talents within the educational and cultural groups or art workshops<sup>5</sup>.

Research on the influence of artistic activities on the inmates has been conducted since the end of World War II, but has intensified in the last twenty years. It has been pointed out that artistic activity in penitentiaries has educational, therapeutic and recreational value. It is important not only because it optimizes the well-being of the inmates, but also because it benefits the penitentiary itself, and – in the long term – the whole society<sup>6</sup>. The results of the research show clearly that art therapy increases the level of positive emotions, relieves the symptoms of depression, improves the interactions among the inmates and between the inmates and the staff<sup>7</sup>; it lets the inmates gain deeper psychological insight and express their difficult or dangerous thoughts and feelings<sup>8</sup>; it stimulates the changes which result in an

<sup>4</sup> GHK Consulting, *Grundtvig and Leonardo da Vinci Catalogue of Projects on Prison Education & Training*, Budapest 2010.

<sup>5</sup> M. Niełacznna, *Zmiany za murami? Stosowanie standardów postępowania z więźniami w Polsce* [Changes behind the walls? The use of standards in the treatment of inmates in Poland], Warszawa 2011.

<sup>6</sup> D. Heenan, Art as therapy: an effective way of promoting positive mental health? *Disability & Society* 2006, 21, pp. 179-191; L.M. Johnson, A place for art in prison: Art as a tool for rehabilitation and management. *Southwest Journal of Criminal Justice* 2008, 5, pp. 100-120; R. Parkes & C. Bilby, The Courage to Create: The Role of Artistic and Spiritual Activities in Prisons. *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice* 2010, 49, pp. 97-110.

<sup>7</sup> D. Gussak, A pilot research study on the efficacy of art therapy with prison inmates, *Arts in Psychotherapy* 2004, 31, pp. 245-259; D. Gussak, The effectiveness of art therapy in reducing depression in prison populations, *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 2007, 5, pp. 444-460.

<sup>8</sup> L.M. Johnson, Jail Wall Drawings and Jail Art Programs: Invaluable Tools for Corrections, *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences* 2007, 2, pp. 66-84.

increased internal locus of control<sup>9</sup>; it gives the inmates a chance to build their identity on the basis of positive patterns, to increase their self-esteem<sup>10</sup>, to improve their control over their negative emotions<sup>11</sup>, to correct their interactions with their relatives, to better cope with the discomfort of isolation<sup>12</sup>, and to increase their chance of early discharge<sup>13</sup>.

In sum, artistic activity has positive therapeutic effects on the inmates and can improve their chances of successfully adapting to their social environment. It can also be seen as a key to the inmates' way of thinking, making possible the better understanding of their problems. However, the works of the inmates – the products of their artistic activity – may benefit not only themselves, but also those who view them. An artwork can be seen as a tool of cognitive training<sup>14</sup>, due to its informational potential as an expression of the experience and knowledge of the artist, in this case – an inmate.

The aim of this article is to describe the “Labyrinth of Freedom” project conducted at the penitentiary in Nowy Wisnicz near Krakow, Poland, in 2012, to discuss the inmates' comments on freedom, and to consider its therapeutic value. Some possible benefits of the artistic activity of the inmates are also shown. The project was not meant to be only therapeutic. Its instigators considered the beneficial effects of the artistic activity at the penitentiary in a wider perspective, taking into account its diagnostic value as well as “its inherent ability to help people of all ages explore emotions and beliefs, reduce stress, resolve problems and conflicts, and enhance their sense of well-being”<sup>15</sup>.

The project was supposed to raise the level of the inmates' well-being inside the penitentiary and be a stimulus for positive changes after their release.

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<sup>9</sup> D. Gussak, Comparing the effectiveness of art therapy on depression and locus of control of male and female inmates, *Arts in Psychotherapy* 2009, 36, pp. 202-207.

<sup>10</sup> D. Heenan, 2006, *op. cit.*

<sup>11</sup> M.J. Breiner, L. Tuomisto, L. Bouyea, D. Gussak & D. Aufderheide, Creating an Art Therapy Anger Management Protocol for Male Inmates Through a Collaborative Relationship, *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 2011, 20, pp. 1-20.

<sup>12</sup> L.M. Johnson, A place for art in prison: Art as a tool for rehabilitation and management. *Southwest Journal of Criminal Justice* 2008, 5, pp. 100-120.

<sup>13</sup> S. Belton & L. Barclay, *J Block Women of Art Project Report: Evaluating Community Education in a Prison Setting*, 2008. Darwin. Retrieved 25.08.2012 from: [http://www.cdu.edu.au/gshp/documents/JBlockwomen of Artprojectreport.pdf](http://www.cdu.edu.au/gshp/documents/JBlockwomen%20of%20Artprojectreport.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> J. Tooby & L. Cosmides, Does Beauty Build Adapted Mind, *SubStance* 2001, 94/95, pp. 6-27.

<sup>15</sup> C. Malchiodi (ed.), *Handbook of art therapy*, New York 2003.

## THE “LABYRINTH OF FREEDOM” PROJECT

”Labyrinth of Freedom” was a project of artistic activities conducted at the penitentiary in Nowy Wisnicz. It is a closed unit for male multiple offenders under the jurisdiction of the District Inspectorate of Prison Service in Krakow. The originator of the project, Zbigniew Bajek, is the head of the Interdisciplinary Studio One at the Faculty of Painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow. The “Labyrinth of Freedom” is unique because of its attempt to engage in direct dialogue two completely different groups: inmates and artists. Freedom is one of the most important concepts for both communities.

The participants of the project comprised two groups of people superficially different in all respects. The first group consisted of 28 people – lecturers and post-doctoral, doctoral and undergraduate students. With the exception of Przemysław Piotrowski, a psychologist at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, they all came from the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow<sup>16</sup>. The second group of participants was drawn from the inmates of the Nowy Wisnicz Penitentiary.

The process of determining the aims of the project and completing the team of participants was finished by the end of December 2011. On 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> January 2012, the team met with the representatives of the local authorities and the penitentiary at the Nowy Wisnicz Castle; the management of the penitentiary was asked to explain the idea of the project to the inmates and invite those willing to join it to a meeting with the artists. That meeting was held on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2012. More than a dozen of the inmates who decided to participate had had some previous experience with the arts. The presentation of the general idea of the project and of the different understanding of art over the ages was followed by a discussion. The inmates were invited to take part in various workshops on literature, art, film and painting. They could also take part in creating a tapestry – a patchwork on the subject of freedom. The meeting was followed by a concert given by the Heavy Blues Band.

The inmates had a chance to express their views on the main subject of the project, which was freedom, until June 10<sup>th</sup>. Each of the more than 400 inmates received a sheet of paper sized 20 x 20 cm with the printed inscription “Wolność” [Freedom]. They were asked to express their feelings on the

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<sup>16</sup> Stefan Florek, philosopher and psychologist at the Jagiellonian University, joined the project in its final stage.

concept in any way convenient to them. Several meetings were also held with smaller groups of inmates interested in discussing art. Between April and June 2012, about 20 per cent of the inmates expressed themselves artistically in some way (e.g. by means of collages, drawings or simply by crushing the sheet into a ball). Taking into account the specific character of the group and the distrust of the inmates towards the “outsiders”, it should be stressed that this was quite a large number. It also shows that the artists managed to engage in a dialogue with the people who spend their time behind bars.

At the end of the first stage of the project an exhibition was arranged at the Nowy Wisnicz Castle on June 16<sup>th</sup>. It consisted of the works of the students and faculty of the Krakow Academy of Fine Arts as well as the works of the participating inmates. Professor Zbigniew Bajek used the nearly 500 submissions to create an installation entitled *Labyrinth of Freedom*. Thirty of these submissions came from the students and faculty; the rest were contributed by the inmates. Eighty per cent of the inmates chose to submit blank sheets of paper, which is itself a form of expression; twenty per cent submitted ninety works.

Some examples of the inmates’ works will be discussed in the next section of this article. Analyzing the contributions obtained during the project, we discovered that the advantages of the influence of art on the inmates in penitentiaries also include the diagnostic potential of the works.

## **THE FREEDOM OF THE IMPRISONED – PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS**

It would be difficult to find another community in which the word “freedom” is as frequently used as among prison inmates. Inside a penitentiary, freedom is an object of dreams, memories and plans for the future. As a forbidden fruit, it becomes the inmates’ object of desire, alongside women and alcohol. In a straightforward or symbolic way – it becomes the main theme of the inmates’ tattoos. But simultaneously, for many inmates the prospect of release is a source of an internal, often unconscious, conflict and fear. It is sometimes a curse for the inmates to imagine the ways in which their partners, left outside the prison walls, “use their freedom”. The “psychological presence” of freedom in the lives of the inmates may thus manifest itself in many ways. One may say that the mental representations connected with freedom play a central role in the inmates’ cognitive and emotional functioning.

Today, we consider the freedom to decide who we are and how we run our lives as one of the most important values – especially in the Western individualistic societies. At the same time, in difficult situations, we often willingly give up our freedom along with the responsibility for the decisions that are to be taken, to somebody else: a group of colleagues, experts, politicians, institutions or the state. We need to feel safe, while freedom and independence are not always easy. The sense of safety, a warm meal and a place to stay are sometimes much more valuable than freedom as such. Indeed, there are inmates who commit some minor crimes in order to spend the winter inside the penitentiary. Some other criminals – although they would never admit it – are truly relieved to be back in the predictable, familiar world of the prison after a short period outside it, because it is only behind bars that they can “be somebody”.

It seems that, although they declare their desire to be free, most of the inmates’ behaviour and way of thinking shows they are in fact running away from freedom. This is because freedom entails being self-aware, making decisions and taking responsibility for them. The privations of imprisonment are not limited to the tangible ones: the inmate’s state of mind and his dysfunctional habits impose more serious limits on his positive freedom<sup>17</sup>.

### **THE ART OF THE INMATES ON THE SUBJECT OF FREEDOM**

Expression reflects individual perception and way of thinking. A person’s life situation, and associated emotions obviously have a significant impact on the process of creation and the work itself. The male inmates have to deal with objectively difficult circumstances, as part of the community that negatively evaluates the expression of positive emotions and more broadly any signs of sensitivity and sensibility. At the same time, the inmates keenly feel the need for independence and personal freedom. Considering their special situation, it was to be expected that the project would be important for the inmates. On the other hand, it was difficult to predict the form and content of their works. Some of the inmates’ works may strike the readers/viewers with their simplicity, superficiality and naivety. On the visual level, they frequently feature sailboats, butterflies, birds, and plenty of open space (Figs. 1 and 2).

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<sup>17</sup> P. Piotrowski & S. Florek, Juvenile robbers: their disturbed rationality and innovative ways of restoring it. *Teaching Innovations* 2009, 12, pp. 5-24; S. Schleim, Brains in context in the neurolaw debate: The examples of free will and “dangerous” brains. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry* 2012, 35, pp. 104-111.

We can assume that such motifs are an expression of the needs that cannot be fulfilled inside the penitentiary or at least are not completely satisfied because of the nature of the place of isolation.



Fig. 1. Drawing by an inmate:  
[Freedom]



Fig. 2. Drawing by an inmate:  
[Freedom]

It seems that many inmates associate freedom with the ability to travel or move at will. This accounts for the fact that windows, bars and walls are a frequent motif (Fig. 3), along with some verbal comments or symbolic expressions of the ability to enjoy one's life (Fig. 4).



Fig. 3. Drawing by an inmate:  
[Though not my body, my soul is free]



Fig. 4. Drawing by an inmate:  
[It's a strange world]

Some of the inmates' works are overtly aggressive and sexist. The world portrayed by the collages below is peopled with "tough men" flaunting their arms. A Rambo-type "duraman", a "lord and master" sits comfortably in an armchair (on a throne?), while scantily clad women are crawling at his feet. The masked characters on the left of the image also evoke the domination and aggression of the masculinity ethos (Fig. 5). The same work also contains some clues about the author's emotional way of experiencing his situation. The head of the crucified Christ and the crosses are symbols of the "path of torture" that he has already walked. The other elements suggest that he has walked it bravely and arrogantly, using power to exercise his "rights" when necessary. Looking at the second collage and reading the headlines it is composed of, one is struck by the number of words connected with violence ("death", "terror", "torture", "funeral", "crime", "hatred", "anarchy", "war", "hell", "victims"). This "world map" is completed with "sex" and "sport".



Fig. 5. Collage by an inmate

[psychoactive substances; terror; death; crime; sex; 'clean' torture; devastation; hatred; anarchy; hell; sport; wars; 31 casualties; reviews; who is going to pay for your funeral?; your hobby becomes your job]



Fig. 6. Collage by an inmate

Self-pity is easy to see in many of the verbal works. One of the inmates complains: "They put me in jail in the Communist times; I don't know how the present system works". Another inmate says: "Freedom is a wonderful thing; you just need to get there. There is nothing good for me there, when they release me, I will be sixty. No prospects for the future but 1) homelessness 2) hard time in shelters 3) death in some place where nobody cares". Naturally, there is nothing wrong in complaining about one's life situation.

But in the case of the inmates – criminals serving time – a deeper reflection would surely be useful, not only on their fate, but also on why they had broken the law and on the situation of their victims. This kind of self pity invites others to see the perpetrator as a victim (viz. the homelessness, a hard time, and lonely death in the above-quoted statement).

The next group of the verbal works glorifies freedom. One of the inmates composes the poem: “Freedom is a world with no fear/ oh, freedom, speak to me/ it is so hard to understand you here/ in search of you I go dreaming”. Another inmate declares: “Freedom is everything that’s good and beautiful to me”. Yet another one states that “Freedom is one of the most beautiful things for a man; you can be poor, old, sick or handicapped, but always a free man”. Some of the works present an idealized vision of freedom as a chance to be with relatives. One of the inmates says, “freedom = life = home – family – love – friendship”. Another one identifies freedom with his girlfriend: “For me, freedom is a desire to touch her/ it is her tenderness/ it is being good to her”.

Another set of works is completely different: their authors make an attempt at rebellious humour. In those works psychoactive substances – drugs and alcohol – are the main “road to freedom”. Here one can meet a fishing enthusiast, for whom even the fishing rod floats are shaped like beer bottles (Fig. 7), and a marijuana advocate who sees prison enshrouded in smoke coming out of the cells’ windows, and calls it a “coffee shop” (Fig. 8).

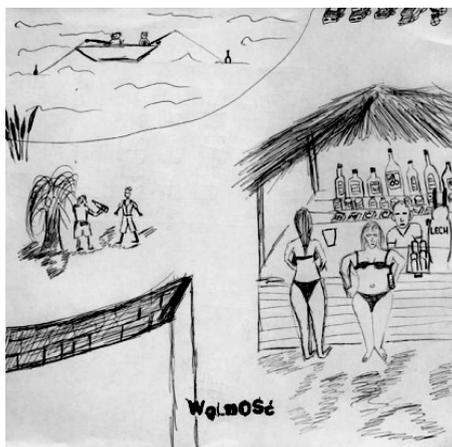


Fig. 7. Drawing by an inmate  
[Freedom]



Fig. 8. Drawing by an inmate:  
[There is life and freedom in prison]

One of the inmates drew a bottle of alcohol and added the honest comment: "I know! It kills, but I still love it". We can see an element of reflection in this comment, and although reflection in itself is not a cure, some action taken on its basis might be a step in the right direction.

Some of the inmates' works feature carefully worked-out plans for after their release. One of the more general ones is: "Get out of here and get to work; never go to Jail again. That's what I think of freedom". A precise, ten-point plan can be found in a work by another inmate, who wrote: "1) My freedom begins with the social help centre in my town; 2) Arranging accommodation; 3) Organizing private vocational course for Forklifts and Excavators; 4) Membership in A. A. group on Fridays; 5) Church; 6) After courses finding a job; 7) Applying for a social flat; 8) Always sober; no cigarettes; 9) Finding a woman for a permanent relationship (Christian)". The last point, and so a kind of definition of freedom is: 10) "Obeying the 10 Commandments".

The last group of works seems to be the most surprising. They are declarations of belief in some positive values. One of such works consists of a list of references to biblical quotations about freedom (Fig. 9).

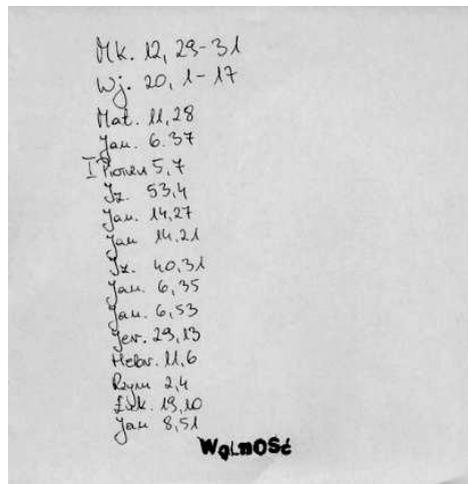


Fig. 9. Drawing by an inmate:  
[Freedom]

Another inmate summarizes his views in the sequence: "freedom – choice – no government oppression – life – not vegetation – no lie or falsity"; and the use of the maxim "days create history, minutes decide about happiness" is

accompanied by the author's comment: "and seconds may last forever! Only he who has lost it can appreciate it!".

Many of the inmates' works seem to be – as shown above – quite simple and direct expression of their emotional state. This can be seen as an attempt to reduce the tensions associated with the suppression of emotions; for some inmates involved in the project, this had a cathartic effect. In the case of other inmates, however, the significance of their works appears to result from a deeper and more complex analysis of their situation and position in the community. Their participation in the project brought about a deeper psychological insight, a phenomenon described by Johnson (2008).<sup>18</sup> Those inmates' works focus on the planning of their future, the identification of their core values and specific goals, accompanied by pointing out the ways of achieving them. It is worth noting that some of these plans include lifestyle changes, e.g. relating to the elimination of bad habits. In this case, the artistic expression is an analysis of and a plan for the future, based on the revision of the existing cognitive scripts. Particularly significant, however, is the fact that 80 per cent of the inmates who were asked for their comments on freedom refused to give any. This can be taken as a form of expression in itself. There is no doubt that this showed mistrust and withdrawal. This is hardly surprising, because the Wisnicz prison is an institution for serious offenders and the relationships among the inmates and the outside visitors are not easy.

It seems that for many inmates positive interaction with the artists would have a particular advantage. We believe that art therapy can result in some positive changes in the inmates' lives due to the fact that it is non-directive, it respects the autonomy and the privacy of the inmate, and it encourages the development of the sphere of positive freedom. It can also reduce the inmates' lack of confidence more effectively than other forms of therapy.

The fact that the authors of the project managed to overcome the distrust and dislike of a large percent of the inmates, along with the positive effects of the project, including a joint presentation of the works of the inmates and the artists in the same exhibition album (see the cover in Fig. 10 below), offers hope for a higher proportion of inmates actively participating in the future editions of the project.

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<sup>18</sup> L.M. Johnson, 2008, *ibidem*.



Fig. 10. The cover of the exhibition album *Labirynt wolności*  
[Labyrinth of Freedom]

## CONCLUSIONS

Analyzing the inmates' works that we collected during the project, we discovered an additional advantage of the influence of art on the inmates in penitentiaries – namely, its diagnostic potential. It is obvious that one should get a right, detailed diagnosis before commencing any therapeutic work. In addition, it is vital not to label the inmate with a clinical identification or an inflexible belief about the essence of his problem. To diagnose means to understand the world in the way the inmate understands it – his/her outlook on life, beliefs, fears, hopes and plans. A literary or art work enables one to find a “foothold” – a subject of conversation forming a common ground for a meeting during which the natural mistrust or hostility of the inmates towards the prison staff may be overcome. Both sides can see each other from a different point of view, not through the lens of their current social role and the limits consequent upon it. For the members of staff at a penitentiary (not necessarily psychologists) such conversation may become a valuable source of knowledge about the worldviews, attitudes, stereotypes, likes and antipathies, emotional status and many other aspects of the inmates' psychological functioning; and so enable the selection of the best therapeutic activities. This is so because an artistic presentation of one's views activates a projection mechanism whereby one's character and emotions are externalized in an unconscious, spontaneous way.

Artistic activity allows the inmates to comment on various topics. Despite the simplicity and accessibility of the tasks, it offers an opportunity to communicate complex psychological states, not available with the employment of other methods<sup>19</sup>. In the prison environment – often hostile and threatening – it helps the inmates to develop self-awareness, opens a space for the expression of emotions and creates a chance for opening up to other people in a safe way<sup>20</sup>. The artistic choices and art works do not need to be discussed by the authors – this could be difficult for them. At the same time, artistic activity allows the inmates to express themselves honestly, without the defense mechanisms used in everyday life. The use of art introduces diversion, prevents boredom and stagnation, very common in the prison community<sup>21</sup>. Art therapy enables the inmates to better understand themselves: their attitudes toward freedom and their potential to make use of it. It may also help them to participate in the life of the community after being released. Engaging the inmates in art therapy can be used to fulfill their need to be productive<sup>22</sup>. In the case of a project focused on freedom, they can also feel especially competent due to their unique and traumatic situation.

In order to obtain psychotherapeutic effects, it is obviously vital to choose the correct subject of the artistic work of the inmates. We hope that the described project dedicated to the basic problem of the inmates – the loss of freedom, which had mainly diagnostic functions, has shown its merits. The fact that some of its component motifs (like home or family) are already used in classical projection techniques is an additional advantage. Thanks to that, the penitentiary staff can use an extensive set of literature which may additionally aid the process of correction. Although most of the inmates connect freedom with the past and/or future, their sense of and feelings about freedom has an impact on how they manage their time “here and now”.

They can broaden the area of freedom inside the penitentiary – by working, learning, taking up therapy or trying to stay fit. We are convinced that the “Labyrinth of Freedom” project has a therapeutic value as it creates the chance for the inmates to reach “outside” audiences and to use the means of expression offered by art. It is an opportunity to develop the inmates’ awareness, and so take a big step on the path to personal freedom. It would

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<sup>19</sup> E. Kramer, *Art as therapy with children*, New York 1993.

<sup>20</sup> D. Gussak & E. Ploumis-Devick Creating Wellness in Correctional Populations Through the Arts: An Interdisciplinary Model. *Visual Arts Research* 2004, 30, pp. 35-43.

<sup>21</sup> D. Gussak, The effects of art therapy on male and female inmates: Advancing the research base, *Arts in Psychotherapy* 2009, 36, pp. 5-12.

<sup>22</sup> L.M. Johnson, 2008, *ibidem*.

certainly be naive to expect that the positive effects of taking part in artistic activity will come quickly or easily. The majority of the inmates participating in the project have a history of living in a pathological environment, as a result of which they cannot manage their everyday duties properly or live up to the expectations of typical social roles. They experience the stigma of being rejected. In other cases, a low level of cognitive competence and a lack of any cultural experience may become a barrier. But if we are to be serious about the correctional role of penalty, we need to give the inmates opportunities to build their self-esteem, provoke reflection, enable them to see themselves in a wider context than through the lens of their criminal status; and we need to work on this constantly. Taking into consideration both our own experience and the inmates' artistic expression we can see that our journey through the "Labyrinth of Freedom" was a valuable source of reflection for both sides. Talking about their meetings with the artists, the inmates noted that they had a feeling – so rare behind bars – that they are finally being treated "as humans". This was the best review and acknowledgement of the project.

*Translated by Daria Muzyczka  
Proofreading by Simon Dale*

**WYPOWIEDZI ARTYSTYCZNE WIĘŹNIÓW NA TEMAT WOLNOŚCI:  
PROJEKT "LABIRYNT WOLNOŚCI" I JEGO MOŻLIWE ZASTOSOWANIA  
(streszczenie)**

Specyfika społeczności więziennej sprawia, że nieskrępowane ujawnianie swoich postaw, przekonań lub uczuć jest ryzykowne. W tej specyficznej sytuacji psychologicznej, której istotnymi składowymi są przemoc, nuda i poczucie osamotnienia, osadzeni przejawiają różne wzorce przystosowania. Dla niektórych z nich zaangażowanie się w działalność artystyczną może być nie tylko sposobem na konstruktywne spędzanie czasu, ale także bodźcem do pozytywnych zmian po wyjściu na wolność.

Celem artykułu jest dokonanie charakterystyki projektu „Labirynt wolności”, zrealizowanego w 2012 roku w Zakładzie Karnym w Nowym Wiśniczu, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem wypowiedzi osadzonych na temat wolności. Podsumowaniem opracowania są wnioski dotyczące możliwości diagnostycznego i terapeutycznego wykorzystania artystycznych wypowiedzi osób pozbawionych wolności.

Autorzy są przekonani, że opisany projekt, poprzez stwarzanie więźniom możliwości nawiązania dialogu z osobami „z zewnątrz” i kontaktu ze środkami ekspresji, które oferuje sztuka, ma wymiar terapeutyczny. Może przyczynić się do zredukowania stresu izolacji, podnieść samoocenę i zmniejszyć poczucie alienacji. Jest szansą rozwijania świadomości, a więc zrobienia istotnego kroku na drodze ku osobistej wolności.

**Słowa klucze:** sztuka, więzienie, wolność, osadzeni, psychoterapia.

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