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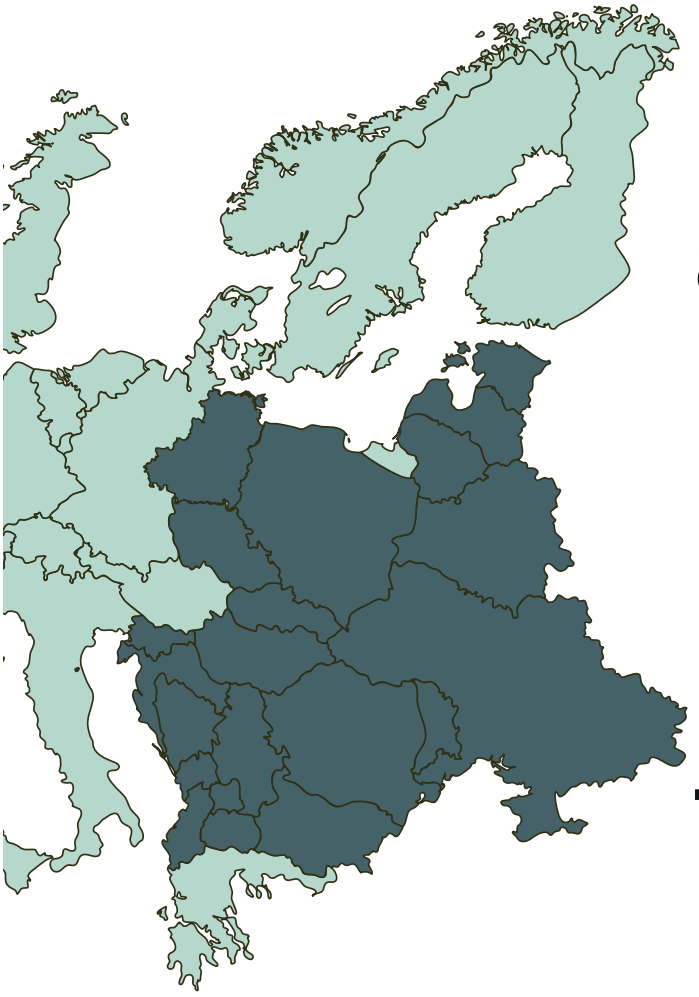

Identity and History in Documentary Films from Eastern Europe

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Editorial

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Identity and history in documentary films from Eastern Europe.

This issue of 'Panoptikum' is be devoted to documentary films from the countries of Eastern Europe. This notion is partly geographical, partly political, partly cultural, bearing a resemblance to the Kunderian reflections on Central Europe (those parts of Europe that find themselves in the geopolitical East but want to be part of the geopolitical West). What distinguishes these countries, compared to Western Europe, is the fluidity of their borders, their transience and provisionality. When we look at the constantly changing political maps of Europe in the 20th and 21st centuries, the difference is striking. The established countries of Western Europe – England, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal and even Germany – occupy a relatively fixed place on these maps. In contrast, the map of the eastern part of the European continent is subject to constant change and fluctuation. Countries appear and disappear, move territorially, pass from hand to hand, from one sphere of influence to another. These transformations of political geography inevitably connect with questions of identity. Each change of statehood means entering a new education system, a different vision of history, the imposition of a different language, and sometimes also of a different religion or ideology, not infrequently repression on the one hand and the struggle to save one's own identity on the other. All this must inevitably have had an impact on the inhabitants' states of mind and soul, on their sense of identity and on their perception of the world, leading to the crystallization of the sense of one's own separateness, peculiarity or even uniqueness in some people (messianic or besieged fortress syndromes), and uncertainty, imbalance and chaos in others.

The aim of this issue of 'Panoptikum' is to describe how these historical circumstances have been reflected in documentary film. In particular, we are in-

terested in matters of identity – how documentary film has shown the identity paradoxes of the inhabitants of provisional countries and lands, how it has registered the struggle to maintain their own identity, or even participated in this struggle, or – on the contrary – how it has shown the development of the art of mimicry, the blurring of a clear identity, the ease of change, adapting to new circumstances, adopting new patterns and attitudes. Identity is also inevitably linked to the past, to historical memory. What vision of the past emerges from old documentaries? What vision of history is built up by newer ones, especially those leaning towards the past?

This issue of 'Panoptikum' is about documentary cinema, but its stakes are much higher. Documentary film, that sensitive seismograph that records the oscillations and dislocations within human communities, allows us to learn about the history of a region and, through this, to better understand the contemporary meanderings of its policies and behaviour. This is not necessarily a case of films that openly set themselves the task of describing identity but more a case of those in which these issues appear, as it were, involuntarily, while recording the everyday life of now and then in Eastern Europe.

We have chosen to arrange the articles chronologically, starting with those dealing with the earliest times, and continuing through to the most recent times. This arrangement allows us to map both change and continuity. The issue thus opens with an article by Maša Guštin, dedicated to the pioneers of documentary filmmaking from the Balkan area, Yanaki and Milton Manaki, known as the Manaki Brothers. The author describes the life and work of the brothers, casting this against the backdrop of the very complicated and dynamic political situation of the early 20th century in this region. She also depicts the intricate path that the documentaries they made took to reach a contemporary audience. And finally, there is a very interesting presentation of contemporary disputes about the Manaki brothers, where they are considered pioneers of national cinematography by North Macedonian, Yugoslavian, Greek, Romanian, Turkish and Albanian researchers.

Volha Dashuk's article entitled 'The land of the sad songs: Belarusian national identity through Polish documentary films in the 1930s' recounts a peculiar situation, although quite typical for Eastern Europe. In the 1930s, part of the territory of present-day Belarus belonged to Poland. Two Polish filmmakers, Maksymilian Emmer and Jerzy Maliniak, shot footage there which was later used in several documentaries. These are the only documentaries from that area from that time, and as such they not only provide an essential insight into people's lives of that time, but also contribute to shaping the media image of the

area. This image, however, was shaped by Poles, i.e. representatives of another nation, and is not free of colonial accents. Hence the apparent paradox: films which contribute immensely to Bielarusian identity and tradition were made by others, people who did not belong to this tradition.

The above articles deal with more distant history. For the others, the main point of reference is the late 1980s and early 1990s, when most of the countries discussed in this section appeared on the map, either as a result of breaking out of the Soviet yoke (Lithuania, Latvia), the break-up of the former Yugoslavia (Slovenia) or the division of Czechoslovakia (Slovakia). For all these countries, the beginning of the 1990s marked a radical political, economic, and cultural change. Politically, they left the Soviet bloc and joined the bloc of Western states, in time joining its most important alliances – the European Union and NATO. At the same time, this meant building institutions appropriate to the free world: free media, an independent judiciary, a multi-party system. Economically, they moved from a centrally controlled communist economy to a free market. All this meant a cultural shock, an opening up to completely new customs, value systems, lifestyles. This process of transformation, painful for many, is still ongoing, generating many tensions.

A text by Zane Balčus provides an interesting perspective on these issues. It tells the story of three films by a single director, Ivars Seleckis, made over a period of more than twenty years, between 1988 and 2013, on a certain street located in a suburb of the country's capital, Riga. Balcus sets this text against the broad backdrop of the genre of longitudinal documentaries, in which filmmakers return to the same places, to the same people, over many years. At the same time, Balcus describes the three films in terms of micro-histories, where the meticulously documented fates of individuals are thrown into the background of fundamental historical changes.

Ewa Mazierska's article is devoted to films showing the shock of economic transformation and its impact on people's lives in the 1990s and early 2000s in Poland. For many people, the transition from state socialism to the version of capitalism known as neoliberalism, meant unemployment, a sharp deterioration in living standards, a lack of prospects and the need to emigrate. This was accompanied by propaganda emphasising that everyone is the blacksmith of his or her own fate, so if someone is unlucky, it is their own fault. Mazierska's article, in which one can clearly sense an aversion to neo-liberalism and sympathy for the poor, discusses a range of documentaries that showed different variants of this situation, one slightly different for large industrial workers, another for agricultural workers, another for internal and external emigrants.

Katarína Mišíková also focuses on the period after 1989, but looks at it from a different perspective. For she focuses on how Slovak documentaries from this period reflect and at the same time shape collective identities, charting the tension between dictatorship and democracy, liberalism and conservativism, the East and the West, the local and the global, resistance and resignation, ideals and reality. Mišíková borrows four types of narrative structures (romance, satire, tragedy, comedy) from Hayden White, and through their prism analyses four documentaries that she considers representative of the ways in which Slovak collective identity is shaped.

Andrej Šprah's article is devoted to Slovenian independent documentary filmmaking after 1990. In doing so, he focuses on the engaged documentary, i.e. the one that aims to effect social change, to emancipate the exploited and the underprivileged and to critique and reject universal injustices. Sprah focuses in particular on the activities of a guerilla documentary group called Newsreel Front and the three films it made about the situation on the Slovenian-Croatian border, which migrants are trying to cross. The films show the tragic living conditions of migrants in the border forests, using a guerilla mode of production, making creative use of the poetics of the so-called poor image. Sprah analyses these films in the context of the concept of tainted landscape and the dialectic of presence and absence proposed by Jean Paul Nancy.

Renata Šukaitytė writes about Lithuanian documentary films made by women. These films tell about extremely important events in Lithuanian history, such as the restoration of independence after the First World War, the fate of Lithuanian Germans after the Second World War or the political breakthrough of the 1990s. At the same time, she opposes the famous description of documentary film as a 'discourse of sobriety', which emphasises the cognitive, intellectual qualities of film, pointing out that an emotional message is equally legitimate. The films she discusses shy away from the cool, objective tone of a historical lecture, emphasising the individual characteristics of the protagonists, their experiences and emotions, which, according to the author, is a characteristic mode of expression for women. Sukaityte also draws attention to the original form of the films, in which they merge essayistic and personal approaches.

To sum up, we get a fragmentary but compelling view of the ways documentary films from certain Eastern European countries tackle the issues of their country identity in the face of turbulent historical changes which have haunted this region.

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The Manaki Brothers. The Chroniclers of the "Third" Europe

Abstract:

At the time of the birth of cinema at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, one more area was created on the cultural map of Europe, next to the West and the East. In the heart of this "third" Europe, under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, worked famous photographers of Wallachian origin, Janaki and Milton Manaki, their film work made them famous in the early 20th century as pioneers of "Balkan cinema". Most of the films that have survived to this day were made in the Ottoman period. They are a testimony of everyday life as well as important events that influenced the course of the history of the region. The study of the life and work of the Manaki brothers seems to be dominated by the least important aspect, that is, the question of their origin and nationality. Their films are included in many national cinema discourses in the Balkans, from North Macedonia, through Greece, Romania, to Albania and Turkey. This article, representing a synthesis of brighter research, is, on the one hand, an attempt to organize (objective) knowledge about the lives and works of the Manaki brothers, and on the other hand, an in-depth introduction to their film work.

Key words:

Manaki Brothers, Early Cinema, European Cinema, Documentary Film

During the birth of cinema at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, one more area existed on the cultural map of Europe, apart from the West and the East – the "third", "Turkish" – *La Turquie d'Europe* (Boué, 1840), Europe under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. This multi-ethnic, multi-religious geographic region, called the Balkans by the West, with dynamic borders that change depending on the political situation, in its turbulent history has constantly struggled with colonization, conflicts, integration and disintegration of various powers, kingdoms, countries or nations fighting for independent states. The birth of cinematography and its rapid development coincided with the reign of Abdülhamid II (1876-1909) in this territory, and more precisely at its end, which was a turbulent time in the region due to rebellions, uprisings, coups d'état, revolutions of nations supported by European powers, as well as internal tensions (the Young Turk movement eventually deprived him of the throne).

In the heart of this "third" Europe, the famous photographers of the region, Yanaki[1] (1878–1954) and Milton[2] (1882–1964) Manaki[3] (he was the actual filmmaker of the two brothers), Vlachs (Pindeans Aromanians)[4] by origin, had been working since 1898. They are the main characters of this article as the documentary filmmakers, and among others chronicled the emancipation of the region from the Ottoman Empire. The work of the Manaki brothers could be divided into five periods: Ottoman (1898-1912), Wartime (Balkan Wars and World War I, 1912-1918), Interwar period (1919-1941), World War II and Yugoslavia (until Milton's death in 1964), and the photographic work of Yanaki from Plovdiv (1916-1919) and Thessaloniki (1934-1954) should also be considered. Most of the films that have survived to this day were made during the Ottoman period. They are a testimony of everyday life, as well as important events that influenced the course of the history of the region.

In 1955, Milton Manaki handed over to the Cinematheque of Yugoslavia (*Jugoslovenska kinoteka*) a collection of black and white silent films recorded

[1] In various sources it appears as Janaki, Jakim, Ienache, Ianachia, Giannakis, Ioannis, Giannis, Giannakias, Ion, Ionel, Ianakis, Ianaki, Iovan, Yannakis, Iannaki, Janaq.

[2] In various sources it appears as Miltos, Miltiade, Miltiadis, Miltiadi, Miltiades, Meltis, Miltiadhi.

[3] In various sources it appears as Manaka, Manakas, Manakias, Manachia, Manaqi. They wrote their names as Milton i Ienache Manakia.

[4] Wallachians, Armani, Meglenites, Kurcovlasi, Vlasi, Cincari – an ethnic group, mostly Orthodox Christians, with their own Eastern Romance language, inhabiting the Balkan Peninsula, especially Greece, Romania, North Macedonia (Minov, 2021), Bulgaria, Albania and Serbia. In this region the Vlachs were mostly transhumant shepherds, but they also had their own intellectual elites. At the end of the Ottoman Empire, in the heyday of the intense pressure of national affiliation decisions, the Vlachs from the region were nationalally indoctrinated, nationalized by Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia or Romania, and as a result often (especially through language, but not only) assimilated.

on flammable 35-millimetre film. After numerous perturbations related to the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, these tapes were transferred to the Cinematheque of Macedonia, where in 1995-1996 they were copied onto acetate-based film tape, and in 2012 the impressive output was digitized and restored.[5] As a result, 42 documentaries were released on DVDs, divided into 5 groups: 1. *First films* (*Првите филмови*), 2. *Folk customs and religious rituals* (*Народни обичаи и верски обреди*), 3. *Revolution of the young Turks/ Hürriyet* (*Револуцијата на младите Турци/ Хуриет*) 4. *Important historical events and figures* (*Важни настани и историски личности*) 5. *In Bitola after World War I* (*Во Битола по Првата светска* војна). These films made the Manaki brothers famous as pioneers of "Balkan Cinema" (Ἐξαρχος, 1991; Tutui, 1), "The Homers of Balkan Film"[6], "The Balkan Lumière Brothers" (Xoxha, 1994) or "The Ottoman Lumière Brothers" (Şentürk, 2020) and at the same time they have become part of the early film history of many national cinemas from the region.

This article aims not only to present in detail the film work of the Manaki brothers of the Ottoman period, but also to bring complexity of the broader turbulent geopolitical context and changes in the region where they lived and worked closer, and how, since their death, numerous countries have included their work into their own history and cultural heritage (film).

Photographers of the "third" Europe

The Manaki brothers were born in the village of Avdella (today Greece) then part of the Manastir vilayet of the Ottoman Empire. Yanaki continued his education in Manastir (today Bitola, North Macedonia) in a Romanian high school. In 1898, engaged by his father's friend, Apostol Mărgărit[7] (serving as Inspector General of Romanian schools in the territory of the Ottoman Empire), he began working as a teacher of calligraphy and painting at a Romanian high school in Ioannina (today Greece), where a few months earlier he had opened a commercial photographic studio, where Milton began a permanent job as his brother's assistant. On request, they took various types of photographs, including portraits

[5] Both projects were financially supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia and UNESCO.

[6] See the film *The Homers of Balkan Film – the Manakia Brothers (Homerët e filmit ballkanik – vëllezërit Manaqi*), 2011, dir. Petrit Ruka.

[7] Apostol Mărgărit, (1832-1903) was one of the most important promoters of the so called Aromanian-Romanian national movement in the Ottoman Empire, in order to nationalize the population (Christian, Vlachs) from the Macedonian region through schooling, propaganda and endorsing national church hierarchies. Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia have the same external nationalizing politics as in Ottoman Macedonia. (Creţulescu, 2015, p. 105.) Margarit was the secretary of the Grand Vizier in Istanbul and, according to Marian Ţuţui, it is very likely that he enabled the Manaki brothers to meet the Imperial high society. (Цуцуи, 1997, p.33)

(also of important personalities), family photos, group portraits of social groups, photos of various state officials, photos of clergy (monks, priests, metropolitans) or portraits of politicians and military men. Not only did they work in the studio, but they also travelled to villages and towns in the region to photograph local events, sports matches, celebrations, christenings, weddings, and funerals, as well as events of various clubs and associations and political events. This was a real feat, given the conditions of travel and the uncertainty of the times that forced other photographers to work in the studio.

In addition to providing commercial photographic services, the brothers also devoted themselves to the passion of photographing scenes from everyday life, local holidays, or customs specific to the visited places. Contrary to the dominant trend of pictorial photography at that time, popular in the artistic circles of the Belle Epoque, the brothers were interested in "pure photography" and faithfully documenting social reality, which makes their photos of great historical, ethnographic, anthropological, sociological and cultural value. Their impressive photographic output[8], held by the Archives of the City of Bitola, includes 18,513 negatives (including 7,715 glass negatives, 2,087 board plates and 8,711 roll plates) and 17,854 photographs (including 10,952 originals and 6,902 photographs taken in the laboratory of the Bitola Archive from glass negatives and film frames) (Старделов, 2003b, p.70). During their career, the Manaki brothers were the official photographers of the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire Mehmed V Reşad (1911), the Kings of Romania, Charles I Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen (1906) and Alexander I Karađorđević of Serbia (1929).

Macedonia for Macedonians!

The turn of the 19th and 20th centuries in what is now North Macedonia was a time of political turbulence and unrest. Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania fought for the area of Macedonia, with the support of individual European powers. In October 1893, Slavic activists in Thessaloniki, strongly influenced by the ideas of early socialism and anarchism, founded the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO, Internal Macedonian-Adrianople Revolutionary Committee), which aimed to liberate the Christian population, and saw the future of autonomous Macedonia as a multinational state – the term "Macedonian" (and "Adrianopolitan") was a term of a supranational nature (in

[8] The full-length (70 min) documentary *Manaki – A Story in Photographs* (*Манаки – Приказна во слики*, 2017/18, dir. Robert Jankuloski) shows the photographic work of the Manaki brothers. Every fact and opinion presented in the film has been thoroughly researched and confirmed by the presented artifacts. The story is told through original documentary photographs that show their work from the opening of the first professional studio in Ioannina.

the spirit of the idea of a Balkan federation), which included Bulgarians, Turks, Greeks, Vlachs, Albanians, Serbs and Jews living in this area (Bechev, 2009, p. iviii). In 1897, after the Bulgarian-Turkish war, which ended with Turkey's victory, the Macedonian revolutionary liberation movement strengthened and transformed from a group of idealistic revolutionaries into a militant partisan group of members of the Slavic-speaking military Komitaji (*Комити*), operating under the slogan "Macedonia for Macedonians!".

It was emphasized that Christian ethnic groups were to work together to throw off the oppressive Ottoman yoke and lead to the creation of an autonomous Macedonia. Already at the end of the 19th century, the younger brother Milton Manaki sympathized with liberation movements and actively supported the activities of IMRO, for which he transported weapons and became a member in 1900 (Peterlić, 1990, p. 92). In 1904 he was imprisoned for six months by the Turkish authorities in Ioannina because of suspicions of collaboration with the IMRO insurgents (Илинденски сведоштва, 2017, p. 115-116). Over the years, he photographed various Macedonian liberation militias and documented the famous anti-Ottoman Ilinden–Preobrazhenie Uprising, which began on August 2, 1903, on St. Elijah's Day (Ilinden) in Manastir Vilayet, which lasted until the end of October and covered a vast area from the eastern coast of the Balkan Peninsula through the Black Sea to the shores of Lake Ohrid. After its brutal suppression by the Turks, Ottoman repression intensified.


Ljubljana, Latermanov drevored.

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943 Karel F. Lifka.

The fighting against the Turks and the Ilinden–Preobrazhenie Uprising attracted worldwide attention, and the dramatic events became international media coverage. The European powers were especially concerned because of their own interests in the area. In 1903, the Charles Urban Trading Company sent Charles Rider Noble (1854-1914) with a movie camera to Bulgaria, where in 1903-1904 he shot (Kardjilov, 2012), among other things, four films featuring Macedonian refugees and four films that he probably shot in Turkish Macedonia without the

consent of the Ottoman authorities[9] (Kosanović, 1985, p. 251-256). In the same year, Lucien Nonguet recorded a feature film in the style of a newsreel, *Massacres de Macédonie* (1903), at the Pathé studio, presenting the reconstruction and staging of the massacre committed by Turkish soldiers on Macedonians during the Ilinden–Preobrazhenie Uprising. It was intended to arouse the interest of the European public in the suffering and heroism of the Macedonians, and it was shown all over Europe.[10]

"Macedonianness" has been defined differently by the leaders of political organizations associated with the governments of different countries. Growing unrest among the population of Macedonia at that time mobilized states interested in taking over this territory to send paramilitary troops to be able to react in the event of a successful uprising and start annexation. After the Ilinden–Preobrazhenie Uprising, in 1904, the Greeks founded the Greek Macedonian Committee (*Ελληνομακεδονικό Κομιτάτο*), a revolutionary organization whose aim was to liberate Macedonia from the Ottoman Empire in the vilayets of Manastir and Thessaloniki. Its partisan militias in Macedonia Makedonomáchoi (*Μακεδονομάχοι*), also called Andartes, directed their actions not so much against the Turks (it was believed that their departure from the Balkans was only a matter of time) but against the Vlachs (supported by Romania) and, above all, the Bulgarians, whose intention was also the seizure of this territory after Turkey's withdrawal. (Stathatos, 2015, p. 34). The Serbs, recognizing the Macedonian lands as part of "Greater Serbia", initially, like others, limited themselves mainly to propaganda through schools and consulates. In 1902, the first militias were organized to fight in Macedonia. The first Serbian company, sent to Macedonia in 1904, was lost.

In 1905, the Manaki brothers' home village, Avdella, was burnt to the ground by Greek Antartes in retaliation for the pro-Romanian attitude of Wallachian inhabitants. In the same year, after Yanaki's participation (on the Romanian side) in riots between pro-Romanian and Hellenophile Vlachs in the village of Vouvousa, he was arrested and expelled from Ioannina. The Manakis left Ioannina and moved to the multicultural city of Manastir (Bitola), which boasted a reputation as an important political, diplomatic, economic, and cultural centre in the Balkans. Manastir (the centre of Monastir Vilayet in 1874-1912) was a key strategic point for the Ottoman Empire on the border with Europe, as well as the home to the consulates, the seat of the Turkish pasha and the Greek metropolitan of Pelagonia. (Gorgi Dimovski – Colev, 2007, p. 10). The city was an administrative, cultural, educational,

[9] Nr. 1154: *Refugees at Rilo Monastery*, Nr. 1155: *The Feast of St. John at Rilo Monastery*, Nr. 1156: Refugees at Samokove, Nr. 1232: *The National Dance of Macedonia and Bulgaria*

[10] Nr. 1228: *An Insurgent Band in Cover*, Nr. 1229: *A Macedonian Insurgent Band on the March (Under the leadership of Ivantcho Quevgueliisky)*, Nr. 1233: *Initiating a New Member into an Insurgent Band*, *The Macedonian Insurgent fighting with Turks.*

spiritual, and commercial centre where the influences of the Orient and the Occidental mixed. After building an atelier in Manastir in 1905, the Manaki brothers open the Studio of Artistic Photography (*Ателје за уметничка фотографија*). Soon a new chapter in their work will begin – documenting with a film camera *Bioscope 300* (*Charles Urban Trading Company)*, which is kept by the archives of the city of Bitola in North Macedonia. Contradictions appearing among researchers on the film work of the Manaki brothers concern, among others, the question of when (1905, 1906, 1907) and where (Paris, London) Janaki purchased a film camera, and therefore, the date of the first recording.[11]

First movies

The first films, dated in the period from (1905,1906) 1907 to 1911 are recordings illustrating the rural life and social work of Vlachs, from the registration of the aged grandmother of the brothers (*Grandma Despina*, *Баба Деспина*), weaving women in the backyard of Avdella (*Weaving Women, Домашна работа. Сновачки*),[12] women washing clothes in the river (*Washerwomen*, *Перачки*), through a break in the journey of Wallachian nomads (*Wallachian Nomads*, *Власи номади*), merchants selling fabrics, wool, leather, wood, reeds, handmade products or meat at the market (*Market Day in Bitola*, *Пазар и касапи*) or a fair (*The Mass*, *Панаѓур*; *Veria Fair*, *Панаѓур во Бер*), sheep farmers shearing, slaughtering and evisceration (*Sheep Slaughter*, *Бачило*), the mating of horses and cattle (*Veterinary Station*, *Ветеринарна станица*; *Turkish Teacher at the Agricultural School, Турски професор во земљоделско училиште*), to teaching children at an open-air Wallachian village school (*The Outside Class*, *Училиште на отворен*

[11] Screening of a film in Ljubljana in 1904 by the cinematographer Alexander Lifke. Slovenian film title: *Grozovitosti v Macedoniji*. Photo: „Slovenski narod", 02.04.1904, http://www.dlib.si/stream/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-O242T4KM/c6e3468b-4eea-431f-be48-31afef01e1d5/PDF.

[12] Researchers relied on Milton's words, including from an interview for Radio Skopje in 1963, that Janaki had attended a drawing course in Paris in 1905 and had bought a camera in London in the meantime, which he sent to his brother. The purchase of the camera in London during the Paris course is also confirmed in an interview with Igor Stardelov by Milton's long-time collaborator, Mihajlo Zera, who, however, claims that Janaki went to Paris and London after starting work in Bitola (*Старделов*, 2003a, p. 28). Stardelov, like the historian of early Yugoslav cinema Dejan Kosanović, and the film expert Marian Ţuţui from the Romanian National Archives, analyzing the available documents, believes that 1905 is too early a date (*Старделов*, 2003b, p.56; Kosanović, 1985, p. 263; Kosanović, 2000, p. 135) to purchase this type of camera and that there is no clear evidence that Yanaki was in Paris in 1905. They assume that the camera was purchased only after participating in the Great World Exhibition at the beginning of 1906 in Bucharest, where they presented their photographs in the Macedonian pavilion and were awarded for their photographic work. During this stay, they were invited by the Romanian King Charles I and appointed official photographers of the royal family, and for his photographic achievements, Yanaki received a scholarship from Charles I for study visits to several capitals of Western Europe (including Paris and London) in the fall of 1906 and the winter of 1907. Based on this data, the researchers mentioned above conclude that the first recordings from Avdella must have been made in the spring or summer of 1907.

простор). Equally valuable are the recordings of folk dances performed by a Wallachian community of over a hundred (*Wallachian Dance*, *Влашко оро*), customs and rituals (*Village wedding*, *Селска свадба*) and religious holidays (*The Religious Holiday All Souls' Day*, *Верски празник Задушница*; *The Celebration of Saint George*, *Прослава на Ѓурѓовден*; *The Celebration of the Religious Festival Epiphany*, *Прослава на Водици во Бер*). These films testify to the life and customs of the early 20th century and are valuable visual documents of ethnological studies of material, spiritual and social culture, especially of the Vlachs. For example, *Village wedding* presents in detail the process of the wedding ceremony, the descent of guests from the surrounding mountains, the bride's departure from the house, women carrying the dowry, the departure of the groom showered with rice by the matchmakers, the gathering of guests at the house, the passage to the market, the wedding reception – Wallachian dance, the groom's return to the house, the arrival of the bride on horseback or the greeting of the bride at the house.

Stills from the films: Village Wedding, The Religious Holiday All Souls' Day and Wallachian Dance.

Another series of films about the daily life of Bitola and Christmas is represented by the films *The Celebrations of St. Cyril and Methodius on the Main Street in Bitola* (*Прослава на Св. Кирил и Методиј*), *Fair near "Holy Sunday" Church in Bitola* (*Панаѓур пред црквата Св. Недела во Битола*), A *Funeral of a Metropolitan in Bitola* (*Погреб во Битола*) or post-World War I commissioned recordings *Opening of the City Café in Bitola* (*Отварање на градска кафеана во Битола*) and *A Wedding in Bitola* (*Свадба во Битола*). In *The Celebrations of St. Cyril and Methodius on the Main Street in Bitola*, the first of the two film sets is filled with a procession that crosses the main street, consisting of the clergy, festively dressed people from the surrounding towns, townspeople, representatives of schools and associations. Similarly, *A Funeral of a Metropolitan in Bitola*, consisting of a single set, is a recording of a procession in the main street. These processions, like

many other events that took place on the main street of Bitola, were recorded from the balcony of the Manakis' apartment. In the movie *Fair near "Holy Sunday" Church in Bitola* you can admire women and men in Bulgarian costumes dancing the circle dance (*oro*). The film starts with many shots of the church and people gathered in front of it from different perspectives. In the next plan we see many shots of women dancing in Bulgarian folk costumes, then men dancing separately, then the author returns to the women's dance. The changeability of plans and shots adds dynamism and diversity to *Fair near "Holy Sunday" Church in Bitola*, in which an uninvited "cheerful" bystander who pushed his way into the frame certainly disturbed the authors.

Stills from the film: Fair near "Holy Sunday" Church in Bitola

In the collection of works by the Manaki brothers presenting daily life in Bitola, there is a recording that is extremely interesting in terms of history and politics, showing the public gallows on a bridge on the Dragor river with the bodies of four men hanged by the Turks in five shots. They have cards hanging around their necks, most likely with a description of the crime for which they were convicted. The film without a specific date (made probably before the Young Turkish Revolution in 1908) is entitled *Reprisals by the Turkish Army against the Macedonian Population* (*Репресалии врз македонско население*). Shocking *Reprisals* seems to be a documentary record, a testimony to the political situation in this part of the Empire after the Ilinden–Preobrazhenie Uprising. In addition to the bodies of the victims, the recordings also captured everyday life of the city and the Turkish policemen, who seem to be unaware that they are being recorded, guarding the convicts. At that time, people in these countries did not know what a film camera was and thought it was a photographic camera (Kosanović, 1985, p. 266).

Chroniclers of historical events

The Manaki brothers witnessed many historical events that really changed the political and geopolitical face not only of the Balkan Peninsula, but also of Europe at the beginning of the 20th century. One of them was Freedom (*Hürriyet*) – gatherings and events as part of the Young Turkish Revolution of 1908 in Bitola. In June 1908, the 3rd Macedonian Army carried out a coup d'état under the command of the so-called modernization officers. One of them was Mustafa Kemal, later known as Atatürk, born, and raised in Thessaloniki and educated in Bitola. The Committee of Unification and Progress (Young Turks) restored the Ottoman constitution (briefly in force from 1876 to 1878), proclaimed the equality of all nations in the empire and organized elections for a multi-ethnic and multi-religious parliament. The Young Turks' Proclamation of Freedom brought equal rights and freedoms to Ottoman citizens regardless of their religion.

After the proclamation of the constitutional monarchy in 1908, the "exceptional" moments of the revolution that contributed to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire were documented by the Manaki brothers in eight films:

1. *The Celebration on the Occasion of Young Turks' Revolution in Bitola* (*Манифестации по повод младотурската революција*, 1908),
2. *The Celebration on Hürriyet* (*Манифестации по повод Хуриет*, 1908),
3. *Parade on the Occasion of the Hürriyet* (*Парад по повод Хуриет*, 1908),
4. *Turks' Hearing Speech on Hürriyet* (*Турци држат говор на Хуриет*, 1908),
5. *Infantry and Cavalcade on the Occasion of the Young Turks* (*Парада на турска пешадија и коњеница*, 1908), 6. *Parades of the Turkish Artillery in Bitola* (*Парада на турска артелерија*, 1908),
7. The *Celebration with Slogans in Greek* (*Манифестации: на грчки натписи*, 1908),
8. The *Defilee of Army Orchestra, Carriages and Horsemen* (*Манифестации дефилена на кочии и коњаници*, 1908).

The recordings depicting events related to the struggle for freedom are of great importance and value for world history and for the history of the folk of the Balkan Peninsula, who lived under Ottoman rule until 1912-1913. Milton and Yanaki participated in the activities of the revolutionaries, photographing (including the Ilinden insurgents who came down from the mountains to join the Young Turks) and filming the heroes of the revolution.

The *Manifestations* show a great commotion, a full street, hundreds of men and boys, representatives of various environments, schools, associations, or clubs, dressed in national costumes or uniforms, civilians gathering and passing down the main street of Bitola. It is decorated with flags and an ornate ceremonial triumphal gate. In *The Celebration on the Occasion of the Hürriyet*, decorated carriages are driven, one of which is the "freedom carriage", in which five girls dressed in white ride, with white wreaths on their heads, holding hands. On their sashes are written the slogans: Unity (*İttihat*), Brotherhood (*Uhuvvet*), Freedom (*Hürriyet*), Equality (*Müsavat*) and Justice (*Adalet*). The joyful crowd with banners and flags is accompanied by a brass band. A favourite place to record events on the main street is again from the Manakis' balcony. The proclamation of Hürriyet – freedom for all nations – was celebrated especially solemnly in Bitola. The documentary *Turks' Hearing Speech on Hürriyet* was compiled from three different shots: the speaker addressing the audience on the podium, the audience and the military parade, the continuation of which can be admired in the recordings *Infantry and Cavalcade on the Occasion of the Young Turks*, *Parades of the Turkish Artillery in Bitola* or *The Defilee of Army Orchestra, Carriages and Horsemen*.

1911 can be considered a breakthrough in the documentary films of the Manaki brothers. The brothers attempt to create newsreels, documenting part of the trip of the Romanian delegation to Bitola, Gopesh and Resen, the visit of Sultan Mehmed Reşad V in Thessaloniki and Bitola and the funeral of Metropolitan Emilianos of Gravena. These documents were probably intended for "distribution" or may have been made to order. An indication that this was the case may be a copy of the Romanian delegation's travel film stored in the Romanian Film Archive under the title *A Trip to Turkish Macedonia* (*Excursie în Macedonia turcească*, 1911) with Romanian subtitles[13], or the fact that the chronicle of the funeral of Metropolitan Emilianos contains inserts in Greek. The films listed above are already relatively well-thought-out recordings, both in terms of narrative and visual.

From 1 to 20 April 1911, documentarians accompanied the official Romanian delegation. 29 eminent personalities from Romania led by former Romanian minister prof. Dr. Constantin Istrate visited, at the invitation of Teodor Capidan, then headmaster of the Romanian high school in Bitola (Tutui, 1, p. 8), three towns: Bitola, Gopesh and Resen, to check the situation of Vlachs after

[13] According to Marian Ţuţui the Romanian Film Archive carries two films edited from Manaki's films: *A Trip to Turkish Macedonia* (*Excursie în Macedonia turcească*, 1911) and *Scenes from the Life of the Vlachs in the Pindus* (*Scene din viaţa aromânilor din* Pind, 1906/1907-1911), with film boards in Romanian, from which it can be inferred that they were intended for a Romanian audience (Tutui, 2017, p. 4).

Still from the film: The Celebration on the Occasion of the Hürriyet

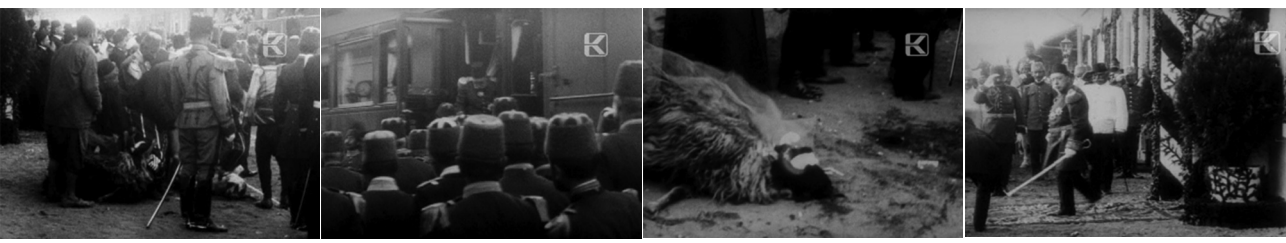
they had obtained rights thanks to Hürriyet. The films *The Romanian Minister Istrate visits Bitola* (*Романска делегација во посета на Битола*), *The Romanian Minister Istrate visits Gopesh* (*Романска делегација во посета на Гопеш*), and *The Romanian Minister Istrate visits Resen* (*Романска делегација во посета на Ресен*) form a thematic whole.

Another extremely valuable film "reportage" in two parts are the films documenting the visit of Sultan Mehmed V Reşad to Thessaloniki and Bitola under the title *The Visit of the Sultan Mehmed the Fifth Reşad to Thessaloniki* (*Турскот Султан Мехмед V Решад во посета на Солун*, 1911) and *The Turkish Sultan Mehmed V Reşad visiting Bitola* (*Турскот Султан Мехмед V Решад во посета на Битола*, 1911), recorded in June 1911. Milton, who had previously obtained permission to travel to Thessaloniki and accompany the Sultan as a photographer, also took a film camera with him. Mehmed Reşad V, the penultimate sultan of Turkey (1909-1918) ascended the throne because of the victory of the Young Turk Revolution. In 1911, just a year before the outbreak of the First Balkan War, he visited the places where the revolution had begun and where it had achieved

its first successes. The Albanian uprisings of 1910 and 1911 forced Mehmed V to make "goodwill" trips in the region (today Kosovo and North Macedonia) in May and June 1911 to awaken patriotism and solidarity among local nations and to counter nationalism.

In the film from the visit to Thessaloniki, Milton recorded the impressive panorama of the port of Salonica with the approaching ship of the Sultan *Barbaros Hayredin* (Tutui, 1, p. 9), beautifully decorated buildings on the promenade by the port, an orchestra preparing for the parade, soldiers, various social and ethnic groups, representatives of schools, associations, clubs lined up on the waterfront, awaiting the arrival and welcome of the Sultan. Then the Sultan, accompanied by his army, goes to his headquarters, greeted by crowds along the route. In the next part of the chronicle of the Sultan's journey, Milton rides the train preceding the Sultan's train from Thessaloniki to Bitola and documents the views through the window. During stops at the Florina and Suvichevo stations, the operator records a slowly departing train. It is a staged scene – passengers from the train are waving. Milton then records from the train again. At the train station in Bitola, the camera documents the arrival of the Sultan's train, the ruler leaving the train and the crowds welcoming him. Here we have an interesting "parallel montage", a combination of alternating shots showing the Qurban (sacrifice of a ram or a bock) at the station and the sultan, for whom the sacrifice is being made.

At the solemn parade in honour of the sultan, in the Manaki brothers' document, one can admire many representations of various organizations (religious, military, political), military leaders, social and political associations, a parade of students, councillors, soldiers, viziers, school authorities, representatives of the Hürriyet, various nations and minorities and a brass band. Participants of the procession parade under the arcade and line up to greet the Sultan. It can be seen how heterogeneous Bitola and its vilayet were at the beginning of the 20th century in terms of nationality, how rich and diverse in social terms.



Stills from the film: The Turkish Sultan Mehmed V Reşad visiting Bitola

In the same year, the Manaki brothers made the documentary film *The Funeral of the Metropolitan Emilianos of Silyvria* (*Закоп на Митрополитот Емилијанос од Гревена*, 1911), the only actually edited picture from their film output. On October 14, 1911, the Metropolitan of Grevena and his deacon Dimitrios Anagnostou were attacked while travelling between the villages and killed, and on October 24, 1911, their funeral was held, attended by the Manaki brothers as photographers and filmmakers. Film recordings of *The Funeral of the Metropolitan Emilianos of Silyvria* are combined with photographs, and the document itself is divided into seven parts using film boards: *Panorama of the City of Grevena* (*Τ πανόραμα τ ς πόλεως Γρεβεν ν*), *The Portrait of Emilianos, Metropolitan of Grevena and Martyr* (*προτ ομ τ Μάρτυρος Μητροπολίτου Γρεβεν ν Α μιλιαν*), *The bodies of National Martyrs Emilianos and Deaconos* (*Τ σώματα τ ν νομαρτύρων Α μιλιαν κα Διακόνου*), *Church of St. Achilles in Grevena, where the Exposed Body of the National Martyr Emilianos rests* (κκλησία τ γ(ίου) χιλλήου ν Γρεβεν ς, που μηνεν κτε ειμενον τ σ μα τ ν(ομάρτυρος) Α μιλιαν), *Homage of the People at the Body of the National Martyr Emilianos* (*Τ προσκύνημα π τ λαο πρ τ λειψάνου τ ν(ομάρτυρος) Α μιλιαν*), *Funeral of the Eternally Remembered Emilianos, Metropolitan of Grevena* (κηδεία τ ειμνήστου Μητροπολίτου Γρεβεν ν Α μιλιαν), and *Placing the Deceased in the Grave* (φαίρησης τ ς μήτρας καί καταβίβασην τ νεκρ ε ς τ μν μα). The first four parts of the film are a kind of introduction to the funeral. The chronicle opens with a 360-degree panoramic shot of Grevena, then we see a photo of the Metropolitan and a photo of the bodies of the "national martyrs". A shot lasting a few seconds presents the church of St. Achilles, followed by a photograph of the body of Emilianos of Grevena on display in the temple. In the next (main) part of the chronicle, you can see how the clergy and people gather, the bodies are carried out of the church, the camera follows the funeral procession and closely follows the laying of the body in the grave. The recording closes with the image of the gravediggers filling in the grave and one can get the impression that it ends suddenly, for example as if there was no more film tape. It is the last film of the Manaki brothers before the beginning of thirty-three years of war in the region.

From war to war

With the outbreak of the First Balkan War[14], Bitola found itself in the centre of war events, which lasted until 1918. Due to the geopolitical situation, the last two pre-war films of the brothers were most likely not shown to the public. During the wars, the Manaki brothers worked primarily as photographers, and only three films from that period have survived in the Macedonian archives: *Alexander Karađorđević visiting Bitola* (*Александар Карађорђевич во посета на Битола*, 1912/1913), *The Parade of Serbian Army in Bitola* (*Парада на српска војска во Битола*, no date) and *The Reception of the Greek King and the Heir Pavle made by General Bojovic in Bitola* (*Пречек на грчкиот крал и престолонаследникот Павле од страна на генерал Бојовиќ во Битола*, 1918). *Alexander Karađorđević visiting Bitola*, in the style of the above-mentioned chronicles, documents the consecration of the monument (Старделов, 2003b, p.55), registering the arrival of the king by train, the ordination ceremony with the participation of dignitaries of the Serbian Orthodox Church, the signing of the document and a photo of King Alexander Karađorđević with Nikola Paši posing.

Stills from the film: The Reception of the Greek King and the Heir Pavle made by General Bojovic in Bitola

During the First World War, the Manaki brothers faced many hardships. 1916 was exceptionally difficult. Earlier that year, after finding weapons and ammunition in a photographic atelier, Yanaki was arrested by the Bulgarian occupation authorities and interned in Plovdiv, where he opened a photographic studio a year later (Peterlić, 1990, p. 92). The Thessaloniki front was north of Bitola, and during the German bombardment in 1916 a grenade hit the studio of the

[14] War between the Balkan League (composed of Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro and Serbia) and the Ottoman Empire in 1912 and resulted in the Empire losing all territories in todays North Macedonia, Albania and much of Thrace in the same year.

Manaki brothers, which burned down. Since Bitola was heavily damaged during the war, intensive reconstruction and expansion of the city began after the war. Right after Yanaki's return from Bulgaria in 1919, the brothers rebuilt their photographic atelier. Over time, life in Bitola began to stabilize and the number of its inhabitants grew. The Manaki brothers undertook a new additional venture, namely, in 1921, they opened the open-air Manaki Cinema located on the main street of Bitola. According to Marian Țuțui's research, for the next two years they put all their efforts and financial resources into opening a permanent cinema. They established cooperation with the Chom brothers (Kosta/Costa and Taško/Taşcu Čom/Ciom) and Dimitri Georgievski (Tutui, 1, p.6) and in 1922 they bought better equipment needed for the functioning of the cinema from the Slovenian cinema Imperial. Huge investments in the construction of the cinema contributed to the brothers' financial difficulties, which forced them to cooperate with partners on their terms. Even before the opening of the cinema, in November 1923, they signed a sales contract with Kosta Chom and Georgievski. Based on this, by 1926, the Manakis' partners became the sole owners of the Manaki Cinema, and all decisions regarding its operation were made without the Manakis' participation. At the end of December 1923, a permanent cinema was opened with 373 seats on the ground floor and about 200 in boxes and on the balcony. The cinema burned down in a fire in 1939. (Tutui, 2021, p.160). In the 1930s, after the death of his wife, Yanaki moved to Thessaloniki with his son, where he again started working as a teacher in a Romanian commercial high school (Tutui, 1, p. 3) (there were no Romanian schools in Yugoslavia). Milton stayed in Bitola and continued to run a photography studio and World War II and the post-war geopolitical changes finally separated the brothers forever. They never met again. Yanaki lived in Thessaloniki (Greece) until his death in 1954. After World War II, Milton continued his artistic activity as a photographer in Bitola (then Yugoslavia).

The legacy of the Manaki brothers

Throughout the 1950s, in Yugoslavia, Milton's work was repeatedly honoured with various medals. He was recognized as a distinguished pioneer of Yugoslav film and received a memorial plaque in Bitola. His portrait appeared on a Yugoslav postage stamp in 1980 (Старделов, 1997, p. 11). Georges Sadoul himself sent his student to write a biography of Milton Manaki, but it was never finished.[15] The only recording of Milton's participation is a Yugoslav short documentary by Croatian director Branko Ranitović, *Camera number*

[15] Bitola belonged to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and from 1929 to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

300 (*Kamera broj 300*) from 1958, shot six years before Milton's death. In honour of the brothers, in 1979, on the initiative of the Macedonian Association of Film Professionals and in co-operation with the Cinematheque of Macedonia and the city of Bitola, the International Festival of Cinematographers "Manaki Brothers" was inaugurated – the world's oldest film festival dedicated to the work of cinematographers. The main prize is the Camera 300 statuette. In 2015 Bitola became a UNESCO City of Film and the "Manakis' film heritage is considered as a national cultural heritage (cultural monument) by our government" (of North Macedonia) (Stardelov, 1997, p.30).

The disintegration of the empire, nationalist aspirations, and the personal and professional choices of the Manaki brothers sparked a debate about their ethnicity among scholars during the last three decades. Their films are also included in many national cinematic discourses in the Balkans, from North Macedonia, through Greece, Romania, to Albania and Turkey:

The brothers Janaki and Milton Manaki were originally Vlachs, they fought for the introduction of the Romanian language in schools and churches, they exhibited in Bucharest, where they were promoted to court photographers of King Carol I and received awards and recognition for their photographic activity, making them belong to Romanian culture. On the other hand, they were born in today's Greece, then part of the Ottoman Empire, where they were educated, started and developed their photographic activity, which means that part of their work also belongs to Greek culture. In addition, they spent a large part of their working life in the Ottoman Empire, so Turkish culture can also boast of their work. But one should also consider the fact that the most intensive photography, as well as their main cinematographic activity, which was realized with the famous "Camera 300", coincides with their move, stay and work in Bitola. Therefore, with their most significant activity, cinematography, the Manaki brothers also belong to the Macedonian culture. (Старделов, 2003b, p.34).

In Greece, the first articles about the Manaki brothers appeared in the 1970s. In 1985, the association of Avdelliotes *"H Vasilitsa"* from the brothers' native village organized the events *Manakeia* 1985 and *Brothers Manakia - 80 Years of Greek Cinema* in Tyrnavos, Avdella and Athens. In 1995, *Manakeia '95* brought together everyone involved in the Manakis' lives and work: directors Nikos Antonakos and Fotos Lambrinos, journalists Christos Christodoulou and Georgis Exarchos, as well as the famous director Theo Angelopoulos, who in the same year, on the occasion of the centenary of world cinema, in *Odysseus' Gaze* (*Το βλέμμα του Οδυσσέα*, 1995) searches for the "lost" film reels of the Manaki brothers. Two documentaries were then made, and two books

published about the Manaki brothers (Χριστοδούλου, 1989; Exarchos, 1991). Albanian researchers and filmmakers also became interested in the Manaki brothers in the 1990s, when Abaz Xoxha, director of the Albanian Film Archive, started claiming that they were Albanians and included their work in Albanian cinema history (Xoxha, 1994).

Since the mid-1990s, the topic of the Manaki brothers has been a bone of contention in the film studies community of the aforementioned countries. In 1995, Christos Christodoulou published a book about the Manaki brothers in English which unambiguously connected them with Greek culture. In 1997, as part of the events of the European Capital of Culture Thessaloniki, another edition of the same book by Christodolou was published (Christodoulou, 1997). As a response to the appropriation of the Manaki brothers by the Greeks, a series of articles by Macedonian and Romanian cinema historians criticizing Christodoulou appeared in the Macedonian film studies journal "Kinopis" (*Кинопис*). For example, Tomislav Osmanli in his article believes that, regardless of the substantive richness, Christodoulou's monograph is seriously burdened with national reductionism and represents an anachronistic approach to the question of the origin of the brothers. He also wonders whether the film heritage of the Manaki brothers from another apple of contention could become one of the elements of Balkan cultural cooperation. Osmanli also states that the reissue of this book under the banner of the European cultural event *Thessaloniki '97* should make the author revise his own views, but unfortunately it is still an attempt at unilateral ethnic and cultural appropriation (Османли, 1997, p.21). Marian Ţuţui, a leading researcher of the Manakis' works in Romania, believes in his article in "Kinopis" that the Vlachs should be objectively perceived as a separate national minority, and at the same time he presents the brothers' connections with Romania but does not try to appropriate them. He believes that the Manaki brothers belong to the cultural heritage of Macedonia, because it was their homeland, regardless of the current political power (Цуцуи, 1997, p. 38). Twenty years later, Ţuţui recognizes that the Manakis' work is important to the overall legacy of European cinema (Tutui, 2017). In Romania, in 1995 and 2002, two documentaries were shot about the Manaki brothers[16], scripted by Ţuţui. In 2016, Eliza Zdru released a full-length documentary, *The Manaki Brothers. Diary of a Long Look Back* (*Fraţii Manakia. Jurnalul unei lungi priviri înapoi*), shot as a Romanian-Greek-Bulgarian-Macedonian co-operation, in which the author's reflections on family photography are gradually intertwined with the history of the life and work of the Manaki brothers. In 2017, the film was screened as part of the Manaki Brothers International Festival in Bitola.

[16] Milton Manaki on Radio Skopje 5 December 1963.

In the 21st century, Turkey also joins the discussion on the work of the Manaki brothers. For many years, the film *Demolition of the Russian Monument in San Stefano*[17] (*Ayastefanos'taki Rus Abidesinin Yıkılışı*, dir. Fuat Uzkınay) from 1914 was considered the first Turkish film. Back in 2014, Turkey celebrated the centenary of Turkish cinema, but as part of the festival, the *Manaki Brothers in Istanbul* (*Manaki Kardeşler İstanbul'da*) project[18] prepared by ESR Film Production in cooperation with the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the University of Fine Arts and the Macedonian Cinematheque was implemented as part of the festival. The recognition of the Manaki brothers as pioneers of Turkish cinema was problematic because, despite being subjects of the Ottoman Empire until the end of the Balkan Wars, they were considered ethnic Macedonians (Vlachs). As film historian Özde Çeliktemel-Thomen writes, if the Manaki brothers had been Turks, their place in Turkish film history could have been completely different (Çeliktemel-Thomen, 2009, p. 53). Historian Burçak Evren believes that the Manakis should be recognized as the pioneers of Turkish cinema and re-evaluated in the light of historical data from that period, as their films were made on the territory of Ottoman Turkey, document Turkish history and present the oldest film recordings of the Turks (Evren, 2013). Professor Rıdvan Şentürk even believes that the Manaki brothers should be considered "the Lumière brothers of the Ottoman period" (Şentürk, 2020). In recent years, two short documentaries about the brothers have been made: *The Manaki Brothers* (*Manaki Kardeşler*, 2019, TRT 2) as part of the TV programme *Spirit of History* (*Tarihin Ruhu*) and the documentary *Turkus – The first filmmakers from the Balkans the Manaki Brothers* (*Turkuaz - Balkanların İlk Sinemacıları Manaki Kardeşler*, 2020, TRT Avaz) as part of the *Their Turkey* (*Onların Türkiye'si*) programme.

Summary

This article, representing a synthesis of brighter research, is, on the one hand, an attempt to organize (objective) knowledge about the lives and works of the Manaki brothers, while on the other hand, an in-depth introduction to their film work. The consequences of national conflicts, wars and dynamic state-building changes in the region were, that the Wallachian Manaki brothers lived and worked in a multicultural region of Ottoman Empire (till 1912), under Serbian

[17] *The Life and Work of the Manakias Brothers* (*Η ζωή και το έργο τον αδελφών Μανάκια*, 1988, dir. Nikos Antonakos) and *Manakia Brothers* (*Αδελφοί Μανάκια*, 1988, reż. Costas Andritsos).

[18] The film shows the demolition of the Russian Victory Monument, erected in San Stefano (district of Istanbul) after the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878), and the reason for the demolition of the monument was the declaration of war between the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire in 1914, during World War I, a director who recorded while in the army.

(1913) and Bulgarian (1915-1918) occupation, in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (from 1929 Kingdom of Yugoslavia) in the inter-war period (1918-1941), under German and Bulgarian occupation during the second world war, in Greece (Yanaki from 1937) and Socialist Yugoslavia (Milton) after the war. It needed for sure a lot of diplomatic skills to work freely and "uninterrupted" despite the constant changes of rulers and not to fall into their disfavour. In this geographical and ethnopolitical region of Europe, particularly in the Ottoman period the Manaki brothers immortalized on film tape the multicultural society and the crucial historical events of the early twentieth century. Their film documents constitute important testimonies for the historical and cultural heritage of Wallachians, as well as certifying significant historical and cultural heritage of many (new) states like North Macedonia, Turkey or Greek. In their films, they recorded events of historical importance for further countries, such as Serbia or Romania. The films of the Manaki brothers are not just random "recordings", but documents that are characterized by an original sense of composition and staging of frames as well as the direction of scenes and entire newsreels. The dynamism of film documentaries is given by cutting between shots by turning the camera off and on. The frequent changes of filming locations, as well as the variety of shots and sets, also enrich the Manakis' films, as well as their clear narrative intuition. One cannot disagree with Marian Ţuţui that the work of the Manaki brothers is extremely important, not only for South-Eastern Europe (Balkan) – they are considered pioneers of national cinematography by North Macedonian, Yugoslavian, Greek, Romanian, Turkish and Albanian researchers, but for the entire European film heritage.

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The Land of the Sad Songs: Belarusian National Identity through Polish Documentary films in the 1930s

Abstract:

Belarusian national identity is a taboo subject in Belarus nowadays, unless identity is understood in a Soviet/Lukashenko way. So for Belarusians, who have gone through national destruction more than once, this issue is not just a usual research topic but a crucial question that can contribute to national survival.

In the 1920s-30s a part of Belarusian lands belonged to Poland and Polish filmmakers shot some documentaries there, which turned out to be the sole materials since whatever was taken in Soviet Belarus at this time, got burned later. This research aims to determine what these visual materials communicate, how they can add to the Belarusian identity and why it is important for modern Belarus and its cinema.

Key words:

Documentary, Belarusian cinema, national and cultural identity.

In the period between the First and the Second World Wars a part of current Belarusian lands belonged to Poland and Polish filmmakers shot some documentaries there, which turned out to be supposedly the sole footage of Belarusian life at that time since whatever was taken in Soviet Belarus, got burned later during the Second World War. This research aims to determine what these visual materials communicate, how they can add to the Belarusian identity and why it is important for modern Belarus and its cinema.

Belarusian national identity now – either in films, or in general – can be characterized (using the expressions of Polish and Ukrainian researchers in different contexts) as "uncertainty horror" (Kita, 2006, p. 18), "the national sparsity" (Кісь, 1998, p. 40) or at best as «an identity suspension" (Malicka, 2006, p. 51). Belarusian philosophers and writers are more categorical in their definitions. They speak about "the assimilative bog" (Лыч, 2015, с. 4), "the nation on a fault between being and non-being" (Бабкоў, 2004, p. 170), or even about "the suicidal, national destruction society" (Пазьняк, 1991, p. 109).

This state of affairs has been forming during the last few centuries, when not just once did Belarusians go through national destruction due to tragic historical events and endless devastating wars, mostly with Muscovy. While some other nations, like Poland, formed their national states in the end and later on were included into "the system of European democratic civilization", they guaranteed themselves "the irreversibility of the national existence process". On the contrary, Belarus stayed under the Russian Empire first and under the influence of Post-Soviet Russia afterwards. So not having gone through "the compulsory national-state stabilization", it has come to national degradation. Its national psychological and ideological development was slowed down. Belarus was pushed to "the relict level of the ethnic-local consciousness" (Пазьняк, 1991, p. 107).

After the fall of the Soviet Union about 30 years ago Belarus received independence. Still 29 post-Soviet-one-president-ruling years have almost completed the ruination of Belarusian national identity having transformed the state into a kind of an island among other countries where the concept of what is "national" has a specific sense, different from what is usually understood under this term. Now, since "Belarus is a colony although not in the metaphorical sense at all" (Дубавец, 2003, p. 129), everything that can be considered «national", is perceived in modern Belarus as «oppositional" and is being repressed and persecuted relentlessly - with this process having gained in intensity lately. In that way, any real analysis of the national identity is a taboo subject in Belarus nowadays, unless identity is understood in a revived Soviet/Lukashenko way. That is why this identity issue in any sphere is not just a usual research topic for Belarusians but a crucial question that can contribute to national survival.

Belarusian poet I. Babkou, writing about genealogy of the Belarusian idea, uses the notion of "Cultural Archive of a Nation", by which he means "a complicated and polyfunctional cultural and ideological complex…, which deliberately accumulates "national" myths, projects, prejudices, strategies that take as their prerequisite a potential or real existence of this nation" (Бабкоў, 1996, p. 40). Belarusian philosopher Ales Ancipienka suggests a similar concept. According to Ancipienka, the real national spiritual revival is connected with the appearance of a National Text. Under this term Ancipienka understands "any semantic structure, which reflects chronotype, worldview and character of the given nation" (Анціпенка, 2003, p.43), whereas chronotype for him is "a certain time model, through which the peculiarities of different ethno-cultural formations manifest themselves" (Анціпенка, 2003, p.41). In the opinion of Ancipenka, the National Text creates a cultural space for the nation's functioning. It also accumulates the cultural experience of a nation. So with every new generation a nation has an opportunity for self-regeneration through reading of this Text. In this regard, a hypothetical addition of any new material, for example, found-footage, to the Belarusian National Text/Cultural Archive, its inclusion into the Belarusian background, means a step to the renewal of Belarusian identity.

As a result, the Polish film series under review showing Belarusian Polesie – marshy woodlands in the southern-western part of contemporary Belarus – provides an essential insight into people's lives of that time and could now be valuable material for a poetic film representing a collective image of Belarusians.

Polish filmmakers M. Emmer and J. Maliniak, the authors of the abovementioned documentary series, are known mostly for the fiction film by A. Ford "*Legion of the street"* made in 1932, for which Emmer wrote the script, whereas Maliniak was the DOP. This film stood out from the other fiction productions of the thirties: it did not have a commercial approach, which was typical for the period. In 1935 a crew consisting of the director M. Emmer, cameraman J. Maliniak and an assistant took up a non-fiction project and spent some months shooting in numerous barely accessible places, mostly forests, bogs, villages, in small remote factories and by rivers.

These lands, now Belarusian, a Polish agricultural periphery in the thirties, were then considered a neglected and underdeveloped region. For example, L. Grodzicki, the editor of "*Yearbook of the Eastern Lands 1937"*, mentioned two types of Poland – Poland A and Poland B – clearly connoting the superiority of zone A, with all the Eastern Lands (Kresy Wschodnie) being in part B (Grodzicki, 1936, p. 20). He wrote also that "during the last century these territories were treated as a transitional terrain", whereas now "the independent Polish state has embraced

the Eastern Lands, destroyed through the war, with their people, exhausted and mostly scattered" (Grodzicki, 1936, p. 3). So Poland set a task of their economic, social and cultural "raising". According to Grodzicki, "time has come to a stop seeing the Eastern Lands as a poor relation" (Grodzicki, 1936, p. 41). However, (and here the romantic tradition, deeply rooted in Polish culture and thinking, especially at that time, penetrates even applied texts of an economic character), there is "a need to wake up those sleeping", who are to be involved in the development of the backward lands, yet "this whole great job is still far from being over" (Grodzicki, 1936, p. 3).

After Emmer and Maliniak's four-month Polesian expedition 25 km of 35-mm film were brought, positive and negative all together, and some documentaries were made. This costly production did not get any institutional support and was organized by the authors at the expense of their private studio "Awangarda". The films did not just have historical value but also artistic and later on were shown in Poland (for educational means) as well as abroad. One of the most famous films – "*Polesie: Report from the land of the sad songs"* was shown at the International Cinematography Exhibition in Venice and received the Silver Medal there. Yet, financially this project did not bring its authors any profit, and "Awangarda" lost the possibility of further activity.

Unfortunately, just a few films exist now. From Emmer's series we managed to find "*Polesie: Report from the land of the sad songs"* (16 min) and "*Horodno, the town of clay pots"* (10 min). There is also a 1 min piece "*Water market in Pinsk"* from a newsreel of 1935 belonging to PAT (Polish Telegraph Agency), evidently shot by Emmer's crew. Another valuable source of information was a diary of the director, published a bit later, who made notes during this memorable trip. One more film on a similar subject shot by PAT in 1938 "*Beauty of our Eastern Lands"* (11 min) contains some short fragments filmed in the same Belarusian territories and in the same style. We consider all this relevant footage as a whole, yet "*Polesie"* is the most representative and significant case, so we will focus our analysis mainly on this film. "*Polesie"* is a sound film (with written commentary, voice over, original music and folk songs from this region), whereas the other three are mute at the moment, the soundtrack of one of them is waiting for its digitalization. The materials are to be found in the National Film Archive in Warsaw and in Wytwornia Filmów Oświatowych in Lodz.

Emmer admitted that the Venetian Medal "was not exclusively our accomplishment" but first of all of "fabulous exotic Polesie" (Emmer, 1936, p. 280). Then, almost 90 years ago, it was an exotic and wild land with another rhythm of life even for Poland, in which it had recently been included and to which it had

belonged for about twenty years. As filmmakers Emmer and Maliniak wanted to depict this peculiar unknown terrain, and as Polish citizens they, of course, perceived these territories as "theirs", "Polish". At the same time – and it makes this film material even more important – it involuntarily refers to the foundation of the Belarusian mindset, of its origins.

Belarusian philosopher V. Akudowich writes, "Belarusians as a modern nation have formed entirely in the womb of the Belarusian village" (Акудовіч, 2008, p. 157). The images of the film represent everyday peasant life – faces, games, work, rituals, customs, material environment, buildings, scenery; most of this was later destroyed by the Soviet authorities or time. We analyze these motion pictures with the following questions in mind: What are the basic structures of Belarusian mentality? How can a national and cultural identity manifest itself through a documentary? What is hidden in these specific shots? Are they just a representation of past reality or does something else lie behind this provincial daily routine and festivities? Do these pictures reveal more for a contemporary viewer than just what they literally demonstrate?

Many definitions of a nation refer to the concept of an independent state, with which its citizens can identify themselves. Yet, this formulation is inapplicable in the case of this Polesian film representation: the territory was really "transitional" – belonged to the Russian Empire, to Poland (at the time of the shootings), to the Soviet Union after the Second World War and for the last thirty years to Belarus, which definitely could not form a strong and clear identity among the residents.

Another definition seems to be more relevant. British historical sociologist A. Smith believes that "at the root of the «national idea» is a certain vision of the world and a certain type of culture. According to this vision, mankind is «really» and «naturally» divided into distinct communities of history and culture, called nations" (Smith, 1979, p. 2).

The most elementary manifestations of an identity can be references to the language of a specific country or certain historical events, situations and political figures. "*Polesie"* has such evident signs as well. From the very beginning the authors adopt the Polish perspective, Polish point of view and try to define the historical context. In his notes Emmer recalls "the bolsheviks' border" (Emmer, 1936, p. 280). The first caption of the film informs the viewer about "Polesie, the land of Kościuszko and Traugutt", thus underlining the historical coordinates through mentioning a politician of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Belarusian-Polish-American national hero T. Kościuszko and general R. Trau-

gutt, one of the leaders of the national-liberation rebellion against the Russian Empire in 1863. The next caption refers to "russification", which the "hard" local resident "could not escape" being in the Russian Empire. These facts and personalities Poles and Belarusians share, it is our common history.

It is worth noting that the "local resident" here is mentioned in the singular form, which denotes the characters of the film as a type, a kind of a collective image. What is more, this "typical representative" is named neither Pole (despite living in the Polish state then), nor Belarusian (who these people actually were) but "Poleshuk" – "a person who lives in the woodlands". This peculiar definition associating the protagonists exclusively with the place where they reside is a very characteristic trait, another factor designating the Belarusian identity – the so called locality concept (in Belarusian "*tutejshasc"* – from "*tut"* – here). "Locals" or "*tutejshyja",* according to Russian political scientist A. Akara, are "ethnic Belarusians without a «consolidating» idea, with low national self-conscience", earlier it concerned uneducated peasants (Акара, 2008, p. 256).

Smith thinks that "Without territory, you cannot build the fraternity and solidarity that the national idea requires. You cannot instill in people a sense of kinship and brotherhood without attaching them to a place that they feel is theirs…" (Smith, 1979, p. 3). For Smith "a close link with soil and territory" is one of "the oldest and most basic forms of human association" (Smith, 1979, p. 160). Yet, in the case of Belarusian mentality, it happened historically that this locality concept reached its hypertrophied level, not just with Poleshuks but with the inhabitants of other regions too. Due to historical disasters, the Belarusian was so often close to elimination that he was bound to develop a protection strategy – this self-definition through locality provided people with a kind of a hiding. Belarusian philologist P. Vasiuchenka names Belarusians "the hobbits of the European forest, who hide in the shadows from themselves" because "it is advantageous for them that their real existence is unnoticeable" (Васючэнка, 2008, p. 108). According to V. Akudovich, through this locality «ethnonym» "our man marked his nature through coordinates in space" and Belarusians (unlike Russians) can consolidate only "through the territory instinct and not through the idea of collective «I» (Акудовіч, 2008, p. 154). Another Belarusian philosopher A. Ancipenka explains this defense mechanism in such a way: being just "local" means for the Belarusian being "a part of this landscape", "I grow here as grass, or I lie here as a stone", "what do you want from me? I have no identity". This locality concept, in the opinion of Ancipenka, is "a kind of answer to the next conqueror that I am not here", since "any certainty in Belarusian history has always ended very dramatically

or even tragically" (Анціпенка, 2012, p. 59). That is why this director's definition of his character as "Poleshuk" is very indicative and absolutely natural for the Belarusian nation. On the other hand, Emmer could have used the term "Poleshuk" instead of "Pole" since it was more diplomatic and less obliging – which was understandable in the case of a group of people with a complex history and vague identity.

Moreover, it turned out that the protagonists did not accept even that classification, they were "masking" themselves even further. Emmer writes in his memoirs that he repeatedly asked the characters where exactly their terrain – Polesie – was. All of them kept saying, it was just such and such place, whereas Polesie was not here, somewhere else, farther away, which brought Emmer to the ironic conclusion "that Polesie is nowhere" (Emmer, 1936, p. 280). So, unintentionally, Emmer came across a very characteristic feature immanent of the Belarusian identity.

The reason why this land in the 1930s was so disconnected from other regions of Poland, keeping its wildness and peculiar lifestyle, was its exclusive isolation by natural barriers. Emmer underlines this in different ways. First of all, through the voice-over, which mentions "swampy inaccessible forests", calling them a "wet Polesian jungle", stating that this is "the only natural reserve in Europe for numerous elks and wild boars". The commentary also informs that "tradition and local conditions" cause people to be used here "as a driving force" – we see men on the bank of a river pulling a ferry and boats heavily loaded with timber, on the field plowing with a pair of oxen. In the written text of the film Emmer acknowledges the fact that forests have always been there and now "primitive tar mills arise on uprooted clearings". In his diary the director mentions "Polesie, backward for years" (Emmer, 1936, p. 279) and "fishermen from a remote wilderness" (Emmer, 1936, p. 274). Actually, in the captions for the film, describing the Poleshuks' mode of life, Emmer uses the word "primitive" twice, which connotes a bit of a condescending position.

He writes about doing a very difficult job in Pinsk "revealing on screen a fair on water – the only one of its kind" (Emmer, 1936, p. 275). In his diary the author remembers the complicated conditions they were shooting in, such as long distances, thickets, heat, mosquitoes, absence of any benefits of civilization. He recollects that their characters, working in the fields and being thirsty, used to drink water from the puddles on the meadows. Emmer himself did the same and got ill. Still, the most interesting evidence of how intact, wild and impassable this terrain was we found in Emmer's memoirs where he remembers how naturally his protagonists behaved while being filmed in the episode on haymaking. It

happened not only because they were extremely busy with very hard work. In addition, they actually did not realize what the crew was doing: they had neither seen the filming process before, nor had they ever heard about it.

What the authors do with this subject (as far as we can judge from the incomplete footage having survived up to now) – is not only observe this unique life, calling one of the films from the series a "report", but they also set a poetic task of generalizing, of creating a kind of epic narration. The protagonists are not specific people with individual features, they are rather types, functions.

Emmer notices that they film "characteristic ways" of fishing, of boatmen pulling the boats and other activities like this (Emmer, 1936, p. 274). He emphasizes this typicality once mentioning his generous tips for the characters "for being extras" (Emmer, 1936, p. 275). (Mentioning this fact in the memoirs can also be considered a bit of a colonial attitude, typical for that time.)

Emmer also describes the efforts the team made to stay unnoticed while filming at the fair in order to avoid people staring into the camera – they covered it with newspapers – and he was satisfied with the result, observing how natural peasants were, "great actors involuntarily" (Emmer, 1936, p. 275). By this he means the filmmakers were trying to capture people at their daily chores as authentically and naturally as possible. Another sign of this generalized approach is determined by the lifestyle of the characters, which is governed by the changes of the seasons and the whole agricultural cycle. Researcher G. Mathews summarizes the thoughts of sociologist P. Berger writing, "Homeland, according to Berger, places the man not just in space but in time as well: there the man – in the sense of space – stands face to face with friends, neighbors and strangers; then – in the sense of time – stands facing the ancestors and descendants" (Mathews, 2005, p. 276) R. Radzik analyzing traditional life in the XIX century points out that "time in the village did not have a linear dimension" (Радзік, 2009, p. 332). This describes exactly the way of life Emmer's characters have – they live as their forefathers did centuries ago. Neither time is "actual" in the film. On the contrary, the narration is not determined by a chronological order; whatever happens is not a onetime unique occurrence but part of a repetitive scheme like plowing or haymaking that never end. The activity of the protagonists is "circled" while time can be characterized as "eternity". Such an interpretation of the time category is a usual attribute of archaic traditional culture and this "timeless" motif is underlined in the film more than once. At first, we see people working hard, whereas at some moment a caption appears saying: "And on Sunday…" Afterwards the toil is over and festivities began. It is not a specific "Sunday" here, an actual

"today" but rather an endless biblical cycle – time for work and for rest. What is more, this "out of time" concept uniting the characters' past and present is stressed in the film on a verbal level as well. One of the captions says that this land "keeps eternal beliefs and customs", another mentions the Poleshuk, who "did not give up eternal methods of fighting for the primitive everyday life of a fisherman and farmer in one person". Apart from that, in the very same caption as a double exposure, an image of a sickle appears in the background of the frame, as if to confirm visually the thought of immemorial peasant being, the symbol of a farmer. The voice-over says that "primitive tar mills" are still built "in the same way" as "great-grandfathers did" and "this whole … business" keeps "the traditions of past centuries long gone".

Polish researcher K. Loska states that a nation is "rooted not only in the past and tradition but in everyday life as well" (Loska, 2008, p. 81). Polish film historian M. Dopartowa speculating on identity in literature mentions keeping "any regional distinctness and local flavour" (Dopartowa, 2009, p. 16). It is what the director depicts in his Polesie series and everyday life of these rural communities is represented in the film in a ritualized form. Swedish sociologist G. Therborn underlines the correlation between an identity and rituals: "In the consolidation and reproduction of collective identities, rituals play a main part. Rituals revive memory and meaning, organize and visualize togetherness, and express a mutual re-affirmation, re-assurance of the collectivity. Hence rituals constitute an important empirical means of entry into the collective identity of a population" (Therborn, 1995, p. 230).

How does this rituality manifest itself in these old films? What we mostly see is rather not an individual action but a part of a collective activity with a clear cyclic pattern. Episodes are structured in a linear way. Actually, all the main activities of countryside life are shown in the films. First of all, it is hard agricultural work: plowing, haymaking, rafting of wood or hay. Boatmen are walking along the river, pulling boats heavily loaded with timber with the help of the ropes. People are having dinner together in the field eating from one pot but each with their own spoon. Countrymen live in multigenerational families – in the scene of bringing the clay pots and other products for kiln firing everyone is working, men, women and children of all ages, including toddlers . All village inhabitants are in functional traditional clothes, decorated with ornaments, which even assuming that in some episodes new and better items are worn due to the filming, are still used on a regular basis. In one of the scenes the voice-over refers to self-sustainability of these farmsteads, mentioning a comb, "made of wood with their own hands".

Besides collectivity and repeatability – and it is characteristic of traditional societies – rituality reveals itself in dual juxtapositions, antipodes: male/female; boys/girls; children/adults; work/rest; young/old etc – the actions have their constant once and for all determined order (like rotating the potter's wheel), the roles are distributed and fixed. Some work is fulfilled by men only – like pulling the ferry or boats, plowing, digging out clay, working with tar. Sunday also gives an occasion for separateness: men and women prepare for the Sunday service in church in different ways. Men just wash their faces and change their "*lapci*" – bast shoes – to leather boots, whereas women decorate themselves with festive kerchiefs and necklaces, with the voice-over adding that "the desire to dress nicely is inherent in all daughters of grandmother Eve". Girls copy what women do, the voice-over informs that "their festive clothes are not different from the ones of the adult women", while "the boys are not bound to dress up even on weekends". Also the games boys and girls play are not the same. Girls are leading a round of dancing, whereas boys are tumbling actively on the grass. Even taking into account the director's will – Emmer was looking for the most characteristic – these distinctions caused by gender are very typical for societies of this kind. In the adults they manifest themselves even more expressively. Leisure time for men means to shake hands in their own male circle and share a moment of tobacco smoking. At the same time, women chatter with each other (the voice-over says, they have "always and everywhere much to tell each other") and an elderly woman is eating sunflower seeds. Still, there is an interaction between men and women, at work as well as during the games in the open air – here with a note of flirting.

In spite of the fact that many elements of this village life of the 1930s have already gone forever, nowadays there is still an echo of some archaic traditions in the Belarusian countryside, which I could observe myself. For example, even today no old woman in the village would appear with her head uncovered (at the time of Emmer's expedition this was a rule for all married women). At some important occasions – like funerals – besides a kerchief, old women could still wear their traditional clothes – skirts, vests and an apron, embroidered in a special way.

All archaic societies are closely connected with nature and depend on it. Moreover, making his documentary series Emmer was evidently guided by a romantic tradition, very strong in Polish art and culture at that time, and it can be seen in the way nature is represented in these films. One of the documentaries, later lost, was called "The Storm" – it showed a thunderstorm and shower on the river – the director mentions this production as a "mood report". Actually,

the characters in the survived series are depicted as a part of nature, its intrinsic element. One of the episodes is edited in such a way that a river and forest seem to be completely uninhabited, no sign of man, just a paradise for animals – until some forest guards appear from nowhere. Also as an indication of wildness some pieces show bisons. In fact, both dense forests and bisons can still represent Belarus. As well as storks, one of which Maliniak, the cameraman, chased and which, as the voice-over informs, "provides an essential addition to the Polesian landscape". Now the stork remains one of the most banal and widely used symbols of Belarusian culture and nature.

Yet the film representation of nature in "*Polesie" has* raised questions from some modern researchers. S. Łotysz is very critical of Emmer and Maliniak's "vision of social and nature realities of Polesie in the interwar period" (Łotysz, 2022, p. 114). He disapproves of Emmer's romantic approach that results in not mentioning some unpleasant facts in the films, such as, for example, the barbarian way, which characterizes relations of Poleshuks with their environment. In Łotysz's opinion, the nature depicted in the film was actually neither virgin, nor untouched. The tar mills, in turn, were "one of the main instruments for deforestation in the past". As for fishing, "Poleshuks were killing fish mercilessly" (Łotysz, 2022, p. 119). Łotysz also remembers the unfortunate weather phenomena in Polesie in 1935-1936 – a dry summer, rainy autumn, a huge fire, frostless winter, the flood in January that all together brought hunger and a typhus epidemic to the region – at the same time as the film was being shown on screens.

Emmer's filmic reality is indeed rather "romanticized", idyllic and does not show any threats, great hardships or conflicts. The protagonists are represented as a single organism, a harmonious community, who have not lost their connection with nature and their roots. The characters work really hard but it is routine for them; after their labours they rest and play with the same enthusiasm. This criticism of Emmer's point of view, no matter how justifiable it is, seems to be a bit misdirected: the authors of the film were not responsible for the ecologic situation in that region and could not have seen matters from the perspective of a contemporary man. Besides, the director evidently did not even set a task of this kind. What is more, knowing now what damage to nature was done on these territories later – in the Soviet Union, for example, including extensive melioration and not only – in comparison, the Poleshuks' subsistence farming and the scale of their harm to the environment does not look so disastrous at all.

One more manifestation of Emmer's romantic orientation and his endeavors to convey the peculiarity of his filmic subject, is his varied, elaborated work with sound. The composer Henryk Gadomski creates a new melody for almost every

episode, usually it intonates the mood and rhythm of the scene. Some fragments are also illustrated with a voice-over. Sometimes one dominating sound is selected, like laughter in the scene of the mass game in the village street, or hoofbeats combined with splashes of water in the moment of crossing the river on a cart. In addition, Emmer uses original local folklore songs in the film, which really set an emotional intonation, for example, in the fragment when boatmen pulling the boats on the bank are walking with great effort, ropes tied around their bodies. The songs here are perceived as a kind of men's cry or moaning. In his memoirs Emmer writes that Polesian songs are "as sad as the landscape surrounding Poleshuk" (Emmer, 1936, p. 276). These songs – like everything connected with folklore – also manifest a national singularity, and they even gave the title to one of the films. The director observes that "the Poleshuk sings often, willingly and well" (Emmer, 1936, p. 276). It inspired Emmer to such an extent that he himself writes a song, dedicating it to one girl he heard singing, saying there that her "wild song" was written by nobody, it was a lullaby of the wind, or probably the girl's grandfather eavesdropped it. Yet he did not use his song in the film but brought some peasants from Polesie to Warsaw where their singing was recorded in a studio. Right after the films were released, Emmer was criticized for overusing the songs and melodies. Nowadays it is even more evident, one perceives the endless singing and playing of music in "*Polesie"* as excessive. It is also disputable, to what extent these studio records are authentic, still Emmer's intention was absolutely clear – this folk music was bound to add to the genuine atmosphere of the film. Emmer himself was sure that "without those songs the film would not have achieved the fullness of mood and longing" (Emmer, 1936, p. 278).

Another feature of traditional culture is mystical and religious consciousness. Emmer tried to get to Polesian sacred life not only through folk songs but in other ways as well. He was eager to "reveal … the hidden activities of local healers" (Emmer, 1936, p. 279) and for that purpose the crew went to a very remote place to film a Polesian witchdoctor. Unfortunately, the plan failed since on the way the cameraman fell ill with dysentery (undoubtedly due to his drinking water from a swampy puddle some days earlier) and urgently needed to be taken to hospital. Then Emmer shot people coming to an old wooden church on Sunday as a solemn ritual collective practice. The final scene of "*Polesie"* shows an elderly man crossing himself in front of a big wooden outdoor cross. Such crosses were then (and in some places in Belarus are even now) a typical element of a country landscape.

Eventually, Emmer achieves unexpected results thanks to his editing technique, modern for that time. As a rule, in his documentary the transition of one

episode to another is carried out with the help of all possible "special effects" of the 1930s. In "*Polesie"* there are about 11 different types of frame changes, starting from a usual dissolve to using different vertical or horizontal lines, a diagonal shift, "opening and closing lenses" and other technical methods. Paradoxically, this excessive diversity, a kind of superfluity that would break the conventions of a contemporary poetic film, still functions in Emmer's documentary. These technical tricks somehow create a contrast to the archaic nature of the filmed reality and accentuate the pristine mode of life represented there.

However, not all film experts agree as to the extent of "truth" in the representations of the characters. S. Zahorska wrote that onscreen Poleshuks were "strangely clean and wealthy". She also noted an absence in the film of the smoky interiors of the houses, which people sometimes shared with their cattle. (Zahorska, 1936, p. 7). Łotysz insists that Emmer "quite consciously did not show the whole truth, in what conditions Poleshuks lived" (Łotysz, 2022, p. 117). Indeed, Emmer remembered ironically how they preferred to spend a night in schools or sheds since they realized that the air in Polesie was good just because "peasants do not open their windows" (Emmer, 1936, p. 278). The film contains only a couple of shots showing the huts' interior, which we as modern viewers regret very much. Nonetheless, it is hard to judge now. Firstly, just a part of the footage is left, it is not known what exactly the lost films showed and what Emmer's plans were. Secondly, the shooting conditions were really extreme. Many places were inaccessible, interiors poorly lit and it must have been a huge problem for the team to shoot in the houses in the dark with film that was not sensitive enough. Yet, as Łotysz aptly formulates writing about the protagonists, Emmer "did not use the opportunity to show their life in all its colors" (Łotysz, 2022, p. 122).

In the context of our analysis it is of interest what Emmer said in his interview for "*Kino"* magazine in 1936 after his Venetian prize. He remarked that he had wanted to show Poleshuks as "withdrawn, distrustful people" (Emmer, 1936, p. 6). At first sight, this negative remark may seem a manifestation of the abovementioned "colonial" point of view, yet here the director rather stated the fact. It is exactly how Belarusians, especially those living in remote places, are characterized up to now, one of the stereotypes or "common truths" about the nation.

On the other hand, Łotysz reveals an interesting fact: analyzing what was written in Poland after the screening of Emmer's film in Berlin in 1937, the researcher finds out that citing German press on the occasion, Polish director and journalist J. Bossak communicates just praising passages from it, while intentionally missing a remark about the "non-Polish character of Polesie" (Łotysz,

2022, p. 114). If we turn to the original, we can read by J. Rutenberg finishing his review for "*Polesie"* with the summary, "Not only in the landscape and people does a vast wide Russian valley resound, but also the spreading songs remind us that once the Tsar's eagle reigned here" (Rutenberg, 1937, p. 2). In light of Belarusian history with its complicated and long road to independence, this sobering connotation of Russia made by Germans in the 1930s is unfortunately unsurprising and explainable; it is just more evidence of how suppressed, almost eliminated, the Belarusian identity was after 200 years of being a part of the Russian Empire. Still, it is quite understandable why J. Bossak tried to hide the mentioning of the "Russian roots" in this context: independent Poland had got these territories then and wanted them to be "Polish".

This subtle connotation of "foreignness" is noticeable by other critics as well. Zahorska points out that in the films "everything breathes with some truth, unmoved for centuries, vaguely close and foreign at the same time" (Zahorska, 1936, nr. 9). M. Sztycer characterizes the music in "*Polesie"*, mentioning its original folk songs, "full of mysterious reminiscences of alien motifs, clearly Eastern, with a spirit far from Slavic music" (Sztycer, 1936, p. 3).

One more Polish critic of the 1930s writes about "*Polesie"* as a "treasury of beautiful shots and charming folklore moments" (Ford, 1936, p.2) M. Łukowski indicates the following features of an ethnographic film: "a) old and modern customs and practices; b) traditions of crafts as well as professions of folk arts, which are dying out, including architecture; c) musical traditions; d) legends, myths, folk tales in a spoken and written form" (Łukowski, 1987, p.7).

Indeed, these films – as we see them now – have obvious ethnographic traits. The narration is turned towards the past, tradition, cultural legacy; the characters' lives in the XX century look as they could have looked some centuries before. The action takes place in a remote "wilderness" – in the country, among forests and marshes with no trace of urbanization (which, in its turn, always associates with "modernity" and "civilization"). The camera is focused on observing the everyday life of the protagonists, meticulously registering local customs and rituals. Folklore themes are accentuated – through clothing (floral ornamental pattern on a sleeve is shown in close-up), games, songs, behavioral models etc.

Among other characteristics of an ethnographic film Łukowski marks also "the achievements, activity, work methods of the ethnographers, who are involved in documenting folk culture as well as the accomplishments of the people developing and promoting folk traditions" (Łukowski, 1987, p.7). Emmer's films do not have these attributes.

Strictly speaking, there is no scientific commentary in "*Polesie*" either – different to the convention of ethnographic films – yet several aspects of it are present: the narrator refers to some data about history, nature, economic activity and even the demographic situation in Polesie.

Yet Zahorska notes in the 1930s that the film's language has become "extremely international" and underlines how difficult it is to extract from it "completely specific accents". She admits that probably not all of Emmer's "reportages" "penetrated the wonders of Polesie to a large extent", yet they escaped the "dancing, festive" note, "smoothed and sweet folklore", so typical "for our film approach to local history research". Thus, the films, according to the not-only-ethnographic vision of Zahorska, describe the land and the people "through life and not only through traditions" (Zahorska, 1936, nr. 9).

Often an ethnographic approach in historical films implies a kind of a "paternalistic" attitude on the part of the authors ("cultivated people") towards their protagonists ("less civilized"). As we mentioned above, there are some elements of this in "*Polesie*" as well, yet it is not a dominating feature in the film, which actually goes a bit beyond ethnographic criteria, representing a wider picture of human existence.

Sztycer writes about "*Polesie*" as a "material valuable in a filmic sense, moving and dynamic", admitting that the author's method of filming causes "a perfect effect of directness, brings the action closer to us, puts the viewer somehow in the center", mentioning the film's "lively and interesting editing" as well as its "really artistic values" (Sztycer, 1936, p. 3).

We highly appreciate the meaning of these archive films for "stopping the moment, saving the world that has passed already (or will disappear soon)" (Smoleń, 2009, p. 273).

On the one hand, Emmer's series was a big foreign success of Polish cinema abroad: being awarded, being shown in different countries and later on included in textbooks on the history of Polish cinema. M. Hendrykowska in her extensive "History of Polish Documentary Film (1896-1944)" sees "*Polesie*" in the context of the Polish film industry in the 1930s as "something exceptional". Yet, recalling the main points of Polish reviewers of that time, Hendrykowska agrees that even now the series evokes "similar reflections". She specifies "the most authentic character" of "*Polesie*" and its "unusual documentary value" (Hendrykowska, 2015, pp. 205-206).

On the other hand, it is unique footage for Belarus: nothing of that kind filmed by Belarusians themselves in the 1930s survived the Second World War,

all Soviet materials got burned in fires. This circumstance also affects the perception and analysis of these historical film materials: for a Belarusian film scientist it is a very valuable source, and its very availability makes some potential critical perspectives less significant. Moreover, although a couple of decades ago there were a few attempts in Belarus to introduce these film representations into the Belarusian cultural context (mainly in ethnographic research – it was a Belarusian ethnographer who discovered Emmer's films in Poland at the end of the 1990s), yet they were not really incorporated and their unquestionable potential for a documentary discourse has not been used up to now. The reason for this is that any step in that direction – either a scientific reflection, or any reinterpretation and decontextualization of this old footage by artistic means of documentary cinema – is unimaginable in contemporary Belarus. This would be labeled as "subversive" activity since it contradicts the official state paradigm. In addition, no Belarusian organization would dare to step into collaboration with an "unfriendly" country – this is the definition Poland is now given in official Belarusian discourse. However, for Belarusian cultural heritage – especially in the current "nationally-unfavourable" political conditions – these documentary pieces mean a lot.

Thus, here we are dealing with a paradoxical situation: the films that saved an image of Belarusians 90 years ago, making such a considerable contribution to the Belarusian national identity, do not come from a Belarusian cultural environment but from "outsiders" – from Polish artists who shot their documentaries on Polish territories and about Poles. This example shows the affinity of the two nations, complex historical turns and the important role of cinema. As I.Babkou notices, the process of an individual self-identification is "not really a clear event of joining some existing identity, equal to yourself, but rather a process of balancing in a polycentral space of cultural diversity" (Бабкоў, 2003, p. 67).

Finally, this footage in an expressive and poetic way to represent certain elements of Belarusian singularity, which is important for the consciousness of modern Belarusians as citizens of an independent state. Even some traces of the national originality, expressed in the reviewed films, could serve as a contribution to the Belarusian National Text, through which a nation determines itself and states its presence in the world (Анціпенка, 2012, p. 89).

Ultimately, "the ability to «visualize» a culture or society almost becomes synonymous to understanding it" (Fabian, 1983, p. 106).

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Microhistories of the *Crossroad Street* films

Abstract:

Crossroad Street (Šķērsiela in Latvian) is an 800 m long street in the suburbs of the capital of Latvia – Riga. The street and its inhabitants have been documented in three films by Latvian director Ivars Seleckis over more than two decades. They represent microhistories of people's lives, which reflect the political and socioeconomic situation in the country over more than two decades (the films were released between 1988 and 2013). The political transformations of the country's present and past weave through individual destinies, reflecting the deportations of the 1940s, Soviet oppressive politics, the period of *perestroika* and the awakening of independence, as well as the consequences of joining the European Union, and transiting through the economic crisis in the first decade of the 2000s.

The article looks at the characters' lives where the individual is in constant negotiation of the normative reality as described by Giovanni Levi, and explore their representation in the framework of longitudinal documentaries. Longitudinal documentaries involve revisitations – incorporation of the previously filmed material within a new film, which present an incremental form of narrative (Kilborn), where characters' lives become "infra-ordinary" (Miller Skillander, Fowler).

With each subsequent film, Ivars Seleckis deepens the understanding of the complexity of everyday life in the country in a specific historic period, and presents a multi-layered narrative evolving at the specific location.

Key words:

Microhistory, longitudinal documentary, Ivars Seleckis, revisitation, Latvian cinema

Introduction

The discipline of history experienced changes in the 1970s, giving space to a new term – microhistory, describing smaller scale, individual stories about people's lives that are viewed in close detail. Interest in people's destinies has been characteristic of Ivars Seleckis' films throughout his career, especially since the 1970s, focusing on pressing social issues and various characters – as documented in the three films on Crossroad Street. He has returned to several topics or characters of these previous films, allowing to perceive specific issues or observe a person's life over a longer time.

Giovanni Levi describes that a microhistorian's "work has always centred on the search for a more realistic description of human behaviour, employing an action and conflict model of man's behaviour in the world which recognizes his – relative – freedom beyond, though not outside, the constraints of prescriptive and oppressive normative systems. Thus, all social action is seen to be the result of an individual's constant negotiation, manipulation, choices and decisions in the face of a normative reality which, though pervasive, nevertheless offers many possibilities for personal interpretations and freedoms." (1991) Levi points to the question it rises – how to distinguish the margin between the individual's freedom and normative systems surrounding him. The normative systems can be attributed not just to the characters whose lives are documented in films but also the filmmaking system which influences the film's materiality.

Microhistory has close links to anthropology. Referencing Clifford Geertz's 'thick description' – not to make observations and create a law-like theory, but perceive the signs and see what structure can be made of them, Levi notes: "This approach succeeds in using microscopic analysis of the most minute events as a means of arriving at the most far-reaching conclusions." (1991) Through observing details in the characters' everyday lives and in their biographies, three films on Crossroad Street prompts to create a sense of diversity in the society those people live in.

Katherine Miller Skillander and Catherine Fowler created the term "infra-ordinary" to describe the ordinary person who viewed longitudinally is no more ordinary but becomes "infra-ordinary". They suggest three forms of time in longitudinal documentaries – historical, biographical and biological time. (2015)

Historical time reflects the particular historical context from multiple perspectives – political and social agendas, appearances, specific film production techniques. Biological time concerns the changing physical features of the characters, but biographical time involves the life course of the characters. With every film, we witness not an amplification of the characters but a deepening through learning new details about their biographies and their feelings, attitudes, which allow the audience to know them to a greater extent. (Skillader, Fowler, 2015)

Researching longitudinal documentaries, Richard Kilborn proposes the term 'incremental' form of narrative, which is a defining feature of such films. "With each successive instalment or episode of the work, the slowly unfolding text is subject to a characteristic process of expansion and consolidation." (2010) In each subsequent film, the filmmaker needs to integrate references to the previous films and engage with already pre-existing filmic material. This reworking of the previous material Kilborn calls 'revisitations' that includes combining previously shot footage with the new material. (2010) The approach of integrating previous material in the new form of content is a common praxis in contemporary media, however, in the longitudinal documentaries "the idea of revisitation acquires absolute centrality" as the expectations of viewers are that they will be provided with new information on the characters since the last film. (Kilborn, 2010)

Ivars Seleckis' three films about Crossroad Street present the "infra-ordinary" characters who can be followed through more than two decades of their lives. The film's incremental narrative is multi-layered, becoming more extensive with each film and revealing a wider spectrum of political events. If in the first film, the events of the Awakening and their presence in society are revealed in an unobtrusive way, then in the next films the presence of the political and socio-economic details become more present.

I would argue that with each subsequent film, Seleckis deepens the understanding of the complexity of everyday life in the country in a specific historic period and presents multi-layered narrative evolving at this specific location.

Longitudinal documentaries of the Eastern Block and the *Crossroad Street* films

The longest and most discussed series of longitudinal documentaries in the Eastern Block has been Winfried and Barbara Junge's *The Children of Golzow* (1961-2007). The films follow the lives of the first generation of people brought up in socialist Germany after the wall between East and West was erected. As argued by Silke Panse, over the course of the years, films transform from the ex-

pository style to becoming more self-reflexive in presenting the stories of people who have lived through and seen the collapse of the socialist regime, as well as experienced its consequences. (2008) The transitional time of socialist Germany was documented in another project of longitudinal documentaries – Gerd Kroske's *Kehraus* trilogy (1990, 1997, 2006) filmed in Leipzig. The films document street sweepers and through these characters who are on the margins of political reforms, they challenge the "celebratory discourse of the unification", as argued by Ilona Hongisto. (2017) Volker Koepp in his Wittstock films created an image of women in the small town of East Germany (seven films from 1975-1997).

There have been several films in Latvian cinema which fit into the longitudinal documentary approach, however, until now, except *Crossroad Street,* only one more film has seen three instalments.[1] In a similar time frame as Seleckis' work on Crossroad Street, Juris Podnieks' ground-breaking film *Is It Easy To Be Young?* (*Vai viegli būt jaunam?*, 1986) portrays characters from the time of perestroika until 2010. The two subsequent films were directed by Antra Cilinska, who had contributed as editor for Is It Easy To Be Young? and after Podnieks' passing away became head of his studio. The films *Is It Easy To Be…? After 10 Years* (*Vai viegli būt…? Pēc 10 gadiem*, 1997) and *Is It Easy…? After 20 Years* (*Vai viegli…? Pēc 20 gadiem*, 2010) returns to the same characters following up on their lives.[2] Since the films share a similar time frame of their production with the Crossroad Street films, there are recurring thematic patterns which reflect the broader changes in society.

Having finished work as a cameraman on the film shot in several USSR supporting countries,[3] Ivars Seleckis described his arrival at Crossroad Street: "When after so much travelling around in various locations you reach such a Crossroad Street, then you realise that the world is becoming smaller. It's like viewing one point on the globe with a powerful zoom lens." (Jēruma 2009) This one point was a street about 800 metres long on the outskirts of Riga, where the film's script-

[1] Several other Latvian films should be named here: Una Celma directed two films about her classmates – *The Girls of 1960* (*1960. gada meitenes*, 1995, 2023) following several women and their destinies. Seleckis himself is in production with the second instalment of the film similar to the "7 Up" approach: the film *To Be Continued* (*Turpinājums*, 2018) presented five children in their first school year, in the second film they return to the same children seven years later (the film is planned for release in 2024, co-directed with Armands Začs, current working title: *Coming of Age* (Pieaugšana)).

[2] See the discussion on the filmmaking career of Juris Podnieks: Balčus, Z. (2021). 'Discussion: Juris Podnieks and the Constellations of Times'. *Culture Crossroads*, vol. 18, pp. 75-88. DOI: https://doi.org/10.55877/cc.vol18.84 . On the production history and release of the film see: Rozenšteine, A. (2010). ""Vai viegli būt jaunam?" filmas vēsture. Tapšana, apstiprināšana, parādīšanās ekrānos." In: Proskurova, O. (ed.), *Laiku atšalkas: žurnālistika, kino, politika*. Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Sociālo un politisko pētījumu institūts. 73.-90.lpp.

[3] *The Best Hours of Our Lives* (*Mūsu dzīves zvaigžņu stundas*, 1987, dir. Uldis Brauns).

writer Tālivaldis Margēvičs once lived. This designation includes a two-fold view – a technological filming approach and an immersion in a specific event. The director writes that the idea of the film was submitted to the Riga Film Studio as focusing on typical elements of the suburbs at the time – the proletariat, the factory, and so on at the time of Gorbachev's perestroika. (Jēruma 2009) None of the filmmakers had any prior intention to continue and expand the film into several parts, covering the fates of the characters over a period of almost 25 years.

Crossroad Street was the street of the scriptwriter's childhood. Margēvičs describes the film's genre as unusual – proposing that it be called a "people's novel". He stresses the film's theme: "We often talk about the nation as a whole, but here we look at the destinies of individual people." (Skalbergs 1993) As Gorbachev's perestroika had begun, they thought that the title of the film could be "Searching for the Prophet". It would reflect the atmosphere of the time when there were no more strict regulations to be followed but people themselves had to find a recipe for life. They had to look for the answer and re-evaluate everything – in business, religion, human values, and so forth. The "people's novel" (Jēruma 2009) that Margēvičs mentioned can be linked to the novelistic quality of documentary film suggested by Elisabeth Cowie. Documentary as a fiction film offers a spectator certain desire and imagining, in which the viewer engages fully in the moment of reality and truth. (Cowie 2011)

The three instalments of the films on Crossroad Street are each shot at a specific historical moment for Latvia. The first film *Crossroad Street* (*Šķērsiela*, 1988 (recipient of the Felix award as the Best European documentary (in 1990), among many other international awards)) was filmed at the end of the Soviet era and in the atmosphere of the soon to be independence. It portrayed several characters whose life stories reflected the tumultuous history of the country during the 20th century. The second film *New Times at Crossroad Street* (*Jaunie laiki Šķērsielā*, 1999) presented the arrival of the neo-liberal economy and the effect it had on the daily lives of the characters – the ones seen in the first film and new ones. The third instalment, *Capitalism in Crossroad Street* (*Kapitālisms Šķērsielā*, 2013) focuses on yet another momentum – the country has joined the EU, the 2007-2008 financial crisis has hit, as a consequence leaving many in a precarious situation, some joining the labour emigration flow to other European countries.[4] The incorporation of fragments from the previous films that are used as an archive of the characters' lives, the tone of the voice-over (and choice of the narrator) and

[4] For exploration of the representation of themes of social and economic precarity in Baltic cinema since the 1990s see: Näripea, E., Šukaitytė, R., Balčus, Z. (2022). Economic and Social Precarity in Baltic Cinema. In: Cuter, E., Kirsten, G., Prenzel, H. (eds.). *Precarity in European Cinema: Depictions and Discourses*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, pp. 289-302. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110707816-016

other specific elements all contribute to particular narrative construction, where private and public discourses intersect. The films on Crossroad Street reflect not just the changing features of the characters and their social and historical situation, but also shifting cinematic approaches related to technological changes. These films represent an 'arrhythmic' mode of longitudinal documentary, since they have been made not in fixed intervals, but with different periods in between them. (Kilborn 2010)

All three films employ an observational technique following the characters in their daily routines, which is combined with interviews and the voice-over commentary. The voice-over is modelled as representing a person who has lived on Crossroad Street for a long time and is familiar with its inhabitants. Sometimes the questions of the scriptwriter are heard behind the frame reaching from general topics to very personal ones (feelings, happiness, love, etc.). The technique shifts over time and in subsequent films the film's scriptwriter and also the director are visible in the frame, and audibly present more than before. With his films, Seleckis' creates a social ethnography (Redovičs 2021) allowing to witness society at close proximity.

Crossroad Street (*Šķērsiela*, 1988)

The film presents the location – the street – with great care and interest. It combines representation of the place, the characters, and also visual metaphors (a meteorological measuring device which is lifted in the sky over Šķērsiela at specific hours of the day to predict the weather forecast, thus the street and its inhabitants in a subtle way are presented as a micro portrait of the city.) Seleckis references the beginning of his career in the 1960s and the film *The Shore* (*Krasts*, 1963), when his views on the power of the visual image were formed: "I discovered that an image does not develop evenly, but concentrates in compressions, instead of stretching out into kilometre-long sketches of nature scenes and episodes, but leans towards visual capacity." (Jasņecs 1989).

Each character is presented in their own environment and briefly introduced by the male over voice. For example, the old woman Oliņiene suffers from a heart condition, and there is no one to help, her pension is small, no aide can be hired and paid for; Osis and Osiene – another old woman and her son; Mārrutku Pēteris, who specializes in making horseradish sauce and sells it at the market, and so forth. The way of presenting them characterizes the rhythm of their daily life: Pēteris cooks horseradish with his daughter, Oliniete cooks in her tiny kitchen, Osiene works as an order patroller on streets, and so on. The character Daiga, who is expecting a child, lives in a small room in her relative's house, Aldis has a tombstone business, which causes the dissatisfaction of neighbours, Ilga and her

son Toļiks, who has had health problems from the time when he was growing up in exile in Siberia with no medical assistance available, taxi driver Jūlis and his conflict with his neighbour Aldis due to the noise in his stonemason's company. There are some joint activities on the street, such as the celebration of Midsummer night, when all the rows become forgotten, and neighbours enjoy themselves. The current historical context is introduced with a TV broadcast where the dissident Mavriks Wulfsons gives a speech and condemns Stalin's' repressions. The people cheer his speech with a chant – "Not a step back, never again".

Seleckis wrote about the filming routine when making the first film, that they had a daily ritual, when in the morning, together with his assistant, sound operator and lighting engineer "we took a tape recorder, a camera on our shoulder, walked around our street and looked very carefully at what was happening, to find out if something had happened. That's how we discovered that one day the trees had started to be cut, the next day something else had occured. When we didn't appear in Crossroad Street for a week, immediately everyone asked – where were you? Has anything happened? We were like *pranksters* or *comedians* for them, who became necessary to the local community, because something was always "boiling" around us. In addition, we were harmless, because we were not interested in who was making moonshine, for example. We were not going to condemn anyone, moralize, or so on. We were also always informed about coming events." (Jēruma 2009)

New Times at Crossroad Street (*Jaunie laiki Šķērsielā*, 1999)

One of the last scenes of *Crossroad Street* presented a celebration on the street, the voice-over read: "Never before have the Crossroad Street inhabitants had such a desire to come together. Have new times begun?" Even though another film hadn't been foreseen, this phrase reflects the title of the second film – *New Times at Crossroad Street* (1999). It returns to some characters, whilst also introducing new ones. The film uses more interviews and in-depth character studies: the scriptwriter talks to Daiga about her family, her childhood at the orphanage, a conflict with her neighbour Aldis. Then we hear the story from the opposite side – Aldis is interviewed about the conflict. Two new characters are the businessman Guntis Plūmiņš and his wife, a textile designer Dzintra Vilks. Interviews with Dzintra are very personal – about her most happy time in life, meeting her second husband, the feeling of time slipping away. The questions are specific and direct: like when the scriptwriter asks Pēteris – "what has changed in Latvia since the Soviet times?" He and his wife say that nothing has changed, but there is less money, life is quite difficult. While the first film was mostly shot

on Crossroad Street with just a few scenes filmed in other locations, the second film more often allows to follow characters outside the confines of Crossroad Street. We see Plūmiņš' doing his job – inspecting a bar, greeting guests at the casino in Riga Old Town, interviews are also held in his office. The same goes for Aldis – he performs a baptism in the water somewhere in nature. Coming back to the scenes from the first film and incorporating them in the second film, the phrase Kilborn is used as a "time shuttle" describing transition between different moments in time in characters' lives. These are not flashbacks because they are not mere presentations of events in the past, but moving back to specific films, moments in a film. (2010) Moving between footage filmed at different periods of time, this footage is perceived as archival and presenting a specific experience for the viewer – an archive effect, as argued by Jaimie Baron. (2014) The sense of the material being "archival" for the spectator proceeds from understanding that the various footage in the film comes from another earlier context of use (or intended use). (Baron 2014) The distinction between new and previous footage is made more distinct by using it in black and white even though the first (and all three films) were made in colour.

The film also presents more public events, such as a pre-election campaign for the first time in the street. This film involves more diversity – in terms of the kaleidoscope of different characters, their lifestyles, opportunities, experiences. Overall, there are more conflicts between the neighbours. Even though the events are still organized on the street, there is some tension between the characters. The film ends with the celebration of the founding of Latvia on 18 November. The filmmakers show adark autumn evening, some streetlights, Osis cooks milk soup, there are fireworks above the river Daugava. Even though this is a celebratory day, the mood of the last episodes does not reflect it.

Capitalism in Crossroad Street (*Kapitālisms Šķērsielā*, 2013)

The third film *Capitalism on Crossroad Street* (2013) – presents the time of economic crises seen through the perspective of recurring characters and again new ones. One of them is the woman taxi driver Vallija, whose three children live abroad, the main reason being labour emigration. The children are the essence of her life and them not being there makes her question what reason she has to stay. Another is a former teacher who is now homeless and lives with her partner in a self-constructed shelter without electricity or water. Energy seeps from the daily routines of another character who is included for the first time – Viktors, who kayaks, makes sour cabbage and rides a bicycle. There are also more younger generation characters, whose life prospects do not seem easy either, one of their

income sources is collecting scrap metal. There are several characters from the previous films who feature in the third instalment – Aldis, Daiga, Osis and Toļiks. Osis now lives in a care home, Daiga has a second son, Aldis still has his business. For the incorporation of the images from previous films, the film uses those shots in black and white to distinguish them from the otherwise colour palette of the new work.

Revisitations or "reworking material already collected" and revisiting people already shown before (Kilborn 2010) are incorporated in the third film less than in the second film. There are scenes with Osis at the Midsummer night celebrations on the street, which is Daiga's son Toms' 10th birthday celebration. In the new film it is again his birthday celebration, and the shots of him as a 10-year-old boy are shown, and now his brother is about the same age as he was in the previous film. Daiga is the granddaughter of Latvian writer Jānis Veselis, whose name was forbidden during the Soviet period as he left the country. The filmmakers along with Daiga travel to her mother, who wasn't with their children when they were young. One of the new characters is Kurts, representing Latvians who left the country because of the Second World War. Kurts has returned to Latvia after 60 years, the picture of him as an 18-year-old is shown at the time when the German army capitulated in the Kurzeme cauldron, and Kurts ran away. He was imprisoned in a Russian prisoner of war camp, built in Riga. We see some of his photos, the newsreels from the archive reconstructing visually the past. When visiting Latvia now in old age, Kurts has met his love from his youth and they are now part of the community of the street.

It is Aldis and Daiga, who are neighbours, whose stories weave through all three films to the greatest extent. Aldis, from a young man enrolled in a spiritual seminary in the first part of the film, who started his tombstone business, has become a spiritual leader, continuing the tombstone business, in which one of his sons has now also joined the father's work. Daiga's story is disclosed from many respects – her childhood in the orphanage, her grandfather as if erased from Latvian literature, her brother, her sons and private life. In the interviews she often stresses that she can only rely on herself, disclosing also different details about the precarious situation she has to go through time and again. As observed by Kilborn "projects which start life with a distinct sociological orientation have a habit of slowly transmuting into works with a far more biographical inclination." (2010)

In *Crossroad Street* interviews in the first film are introductory – about the characters' lives, relationships between the neighbours, plans and hopes for the future, but the two following films provide a slightly different approach, as

there is already information available for the spectators – or material for the filmmakers to employ. As Kilborn notes in the context of linking longitudinal documentarians work with that of oral historians – generally oral historians will allow informants to freely wonder in their recollections, but "sometimes such historians will feel the need to provide their subjects with certain prompts in order to trigger the memory flow." (2010) In the second and third film the filmmakers prompt specific topics from their characters, which continue the themes of their life stories seen in the previous films. These stories and the overall context of their situations allows to observe the society of the time and specific historical moments.

Conclusion

The three films on Crossroad Street and its inhabitants present changes in socioeconomic and political life in Latvia for more than two decades, seen from the perspective of specific people. Starting from the end of the 1980s and the atmosphere of the awaking of the independence movement, the films represent the history of Latvia and its society in the transformative moments of recent decades. "By tracing the manner in which subjects, over an extended period, respond to the demands of the changing times, long docs supposedly not only give us insight into how adept individuals are at adjusting to new situations; they also provide a socio-political record of the times themselves," as reflected by Kilborn (2010).

Revisitations of footage from previous films – using interviews, biographical documents, and strong presence of voice-over, the film uses formal voice where the filmmakers have a specific position on the events and characters portrayed (Plantinga 1997) – has been employed with a specific purpose. As the film's director Ivars Seleckis recollected: "Learning from similar examples, we realized that a film cannot be made from quotes – in the past and now, then it has no development. Foreigners also asked – how will those who have not seen the first film watch it? Of course, a standalone film should be made, regardless of the first one. In the end, the decision crystallized that we are making a film about people today who have had something in the past. Retrospection deepens it, but the film is about today, and it was the right way to go." (Jēruma 2009)

Each film has a strong presence of music expressing a certain mood or presenting in the lyrics an extra meaning. The choice of the music shifts throughout all the films, but keeps the notion of supplementing the visual material. The tone is also important in the voiceover commentary's sound. It is sympathetic, sometimes soothing, as if being another distinct character of each film. Apart from

the strong textual and musical layer, the films employ certain visual symbolism – the meteorological device, a cat, a crow. The cat and the crow are addressed almost as if being characters of the film, who also have their place on the street.

The look at the people's lives presents the viewer with microhistories which create an understanding of society at a specific time.

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Documentary Films About Polish Transformation from State Socialism to Capitalism[1]

Abstract:

This article discusses Polish documentary films made after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, till 2005. I focus on films concerning class issues, not least because the changes which happened in 1989 were as political as they were economic in their character, leading to creating a distinct class stratification: winners and losers. I examine here films made in the 1990s till the mid-2000s, as it can be argued that after this period, the transformation was completed. I focus on films concerning labour and labour relations, as this was the part of life which changed most after the fall of state socialism and affected ordinary people most profoundly, and class issues, more broadly. I am particularly interested in how the changes of the 1990s affected individual and group identities of Poles, especially identities pertaining to age, education and place of living.

Key words:

Polish documentary cinema; political transformation; films about migration; Maria Zmarz-Koczanowicz.

[1] This paper is an extended and revised version of a chapter from Ewa Mazierska's book entitled *Poland Daily. Economy, Work, Consumption and Social Class in Polish Cinema*, New York-Oxford:Berghahn Books 2017.

Documentary films tend to be produced faster and more cheaply than fiction films. They also give less mediated access to what ordinary people think. For these reasons, they are better equipped to convey a sense of actuality, capturing momentous changes right when they are happening. This is also true about Polish films made after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, which are the subject of this study. In this article I am focusing on films concerning labour relations and class issues more broadly, not least because the changes which happened post-1989 were as political as they were economic in nature, leading to creating a distinct class stratification: winners and losers. I examine films made in the 1990s till the mid-2000s, as it can be argued that after this period, the transformation was completed and cinema mostly lost interest in this topic. I am particularly interested in how the changes of the 1990s affected individual and group identities of Poles, especially identities pertaining to age, education and place of living.

In economic terms, the transformation I refer to here was from state socialism to the version of capitalism, known as neoliberalism. David Harvey, its leading analyst and critic, defines neoliberalism as a version of capitalism, in which accumulation of capital is achieved by

1) privatisation and commodification of public assets;
2) financialisation, so that any commodity can become an instrument of economic speculation;
3) management and manipulation of crises; and
4) state redistribution, by which wealth and income is distributed upwards, from lower to upper classes and from poorer to wealthier countries and regions (Harvey 2005, pp. 160–62).

These four features of neoliberalism reverse the principles on which Eastern European economies, including that of Poland, were built after the Second World War. Privatisation is the reverse of nationalisation of industries, which was meant to ensure that the whole of society and especially the workers, not the capitalists, own the means of production. Financialisation is a reverse of non-monetary distribution of welfare, such as communal apartments, heavily subsidised culture and childcare and rationing of shortage goods to ensure that everybody receives some of them. Management and manipulation of crises is the reverse of the principle of planning, which was meant to prevent economic and social crises. State redistribution of income from the poor to the rich is the reverse of the policy of redistribution from the rich to the poor by land reform, nationalisation of factories, capping salaries of the managers in state firms and heavy tax on private producers. The attempts at marketisation did not start in

Poland and Eastern Europe at large after the fall of the Berlin Wall, but began as early as the 1960s and gained momentum in the late 1980s. However, these attempts were patchy and slow in comparison with the torrent of changes which affected Eastern Europe from 1989 onwards. In the Polish context, neoliberalisation was in the 1990s typically described as 'restructuring': the economy needed to be restricted along the lines mentioned above, to be efficient again.

Unemployment as a tool of identity destruction

Polish documentaries in the 1990s tackle the less attractive facets of neoliberalism, such as the pauperisation of a large chunk of Polish society, chiefly because of unemployment, which, once it came to Poland, oscillated between 10 and 15% for the entire period of the transformation. This does not mean that Polish documentary filmmakers in this period rejected the dominant pro-neoliberal ideology tout court. In most cases, in the 1990s the opposite was the case, which reflected the fact that the main purchaser of the documentaries was Polish state television, which represented the views of the ruling elites. The relatively low number of documentary films concerned with unemployment in this decade points to it not being a subject favoured by the authorities (Przylipiak 2015). Even those which were made at the time, tended to adopt a neoliberal position, rendering the unemployed responsible for their predicament. In this article, I focus on several types of documentaries: those concerned with unemployment.

One film about unemployment from this period is *This Wonderful Work* (*Ta wspaniała praca,* 1993) by Piotr Morawski. The very title harks back to the period of socialist realism, when work was officially proclaimed the most important good, also in an aesthetic sense, as something providing the worker with valuable aesthetic experience and rendering them beautiful. The film tells the story of three female textile workers from Łódź, who lost their jobs when their factory was closed down in the early 1990s. The women describe their current situation, while comparing it with their past. The past was not rosy, because their work was hard, poorly paid and damaged their health. However, they also mention the stability of their lives and the sense of camaraderie and joy derived from a job well done. All this was gone and now one woman is unemployed, one gets temporary jobs as a seamstress and the third, the 'lucky one', is a pensioner. Their stories are juxtaposed with images of the textile factory which looks like a ghost town and those connoting consumption, such as display windows with mannequins and sex shops. In one of them we see a woman performing a striptease. Eventually the sex worker tells her story and we learn that she was also a textile worker, laid off at the same time as the other women. She was accepted into the sex club, which

was not an option for the older and less attractive women. She presents herself as a winner, due to the fact that she can support herself and afford some luxuries, such as expensive clothes and cosmetics, although she mentions the moral turmoil she experienced when she had to retrain herself. The ultimate message of the film is that any work, including backbreaking physical work and sex work, is wonderful in comparison with unemployment. This would not be the case, if unemployment benefit allowed a decent life and there were no stigma attached to those who do not work. It is worth adding that in 2006 the textile factory where Morawski's heroines worked gave way to a large shopping mall called Manufacture (Manufaktura). Such a transformation became very common in postcommunist Europe, implying that production gave way to consumption. But, of course, consumption is only for those who can afford it; the lack of the opportunity to produce for many means exclusion from even basic consumption.

Another film concerned with unemployment, euphemistically termed in the 1990s 'restructuring', is Tomasz Dobrowolski's *The End of the Epoch of Coal* (*Koniec epoki węgla kamiennego,* 1993). In common with Morawski's film, its title is ironic, as it can be interpreted as either referring to an epoch in the geological history of the Earth or the role of coal in human history. The conflation of the two meanings points to the archaic mindset of Polish miners, who do not accept that their time is over. They use the past as a means to legitimise their demand for the preservation of their jobs and their ways of living, saying that 'Poland is based on coal. Our entire industry is based on coal'. Their supposed status as 'dinosaurs' is confirmed by their conviction that the plans to close down the mines is a consequence of some conspiracy, as opposed to a healthy economic calculation, which is an opinion espoused by the film's author. Again, as Przylipiak notes, responsibility for finding a new job and adjusting to the new reality is ultimately placed on the miners, rather than the neoliberal state which inherited the supposedly unprofitable mines or their new, private owners (Przylipiak 2015). From this perspective it is worth comparing *The End of the Epoch of Coal* with the British film *Brassed Off* (1996) by Mark Herman, which referred to a similar process, albeit taking place in Britain over twenty years before Dobrowolski's film is set. However, Herman questioned the view that British coalmines were unprofitable and that their laid-off employees should take care of their own future. The difference in the approach might reflect the context of these films; in 1996 Britain neoliberalism, especially in the version practiced by Thatcher, brought largely negative memories; in 1993 Poland it was seen as a source of hope.

Although the 1990s brought many fiction films set in the countryside, such as the acclaimed films by Jan Jakub Kolski, for example *Pograbek* (1992), *Mi-*

raculous Place (*Cudowne miejsce,* 1994) and *Sabre from the Commander* (*Szabla od komendanta*, 1995), they do not offer a realistic depiction of making a living from farming post-1989. Perhaps this was because, as Paul Coates argues, after 1989 the countryside in Polish cinema was relegated (or upgraded) to the position of a metaphor of Poland as backward, yet spiritual place, resisting joining 'Europe' or the 'West' on the West's terms (Coates 2008). The countryside as a place of daily struggle attracted more attention of Polish documentarists, who tackled the fate of people working in state farms (the PGRs), which after the fall of state socialism were dismantled and sold off to private owners. The best known examples of this cycle are *Fog* (*Mgła*, 1993) by Irena Kamieńska and *Arizona* (1997) by Ewa Borzęcka. *Fog* is set in an unnamed place where there used to be a PGR. The shots of what was before a functioning microcosm and now looks like a ghost town is juxtaposed with the utterances of their members, who compare the present, which for them is a time of misery, resulting from unemployment, with the communist past. One man says: 'When I had work, I had everything. Now, with no work, I'm a common beggar'.

Some try to pinpoint the reasons why they cannot get work. First, they were deprived of their means of production by being excluded from privatisation of the common land. One man says that if he gets ten hectares, a horse and a cow, he will be fine now. Others mention that on the ruins of an old PGR a cooperative farm should be created and the old workers should be its new owners and managers. This raises the question why this did not happen, suggesting that privatisation of state land in Poland was conducted according to the rule of accumulation through dispossession, as identified by Harvey. The characters also notice that as ex-farm workers, whose professional capital became obsolete, they have no chance to find employment in agriculture elsewhere. Neither did they get a chance to upgrade it by attending courses to learn foreign languages and new professional skills. On top of that, they are not elegible to get credit to set up their own businesses. All they got from the postcommunist rulers is unemployment benefit (*kuroniówka*), which is so low that they live below the poverty line, lagging behind on rent and owing money to the local grocery shop. One woman mentions that she has no money to call a doctor or buy medicine for her sick child. Kamieńska's interlocutors are not blindly nostalgic for the bygone times, listing their shortcomings, such as wasting material and human energy and undeserved privileges of those in positions of power. That said, they admit that even though the communist elites enjoyed disproportionate benefits, the crumbs from their table allowed the common people to survive. Under state socialism there was always enough work, which ensured both income and self-respect. The postcommunist regime took all of this away, bringing nothing valuable. We hear

somebody saying 'I would never have believed Wałęsa would do it to the people. If I had known it, I would not have voted for him'.

In their discussion of *Fog*, Mikołaj Jazdon and Mirosław Przylipiak argue that the title refers to the state of mind of the inhabitants of the post-PGR village. Their minds are 'clouded' by their sense of helplessness, which prevents them from improving their lot (Jazdon 2008; Przylipiak 2015). According to these critics, they are homini sovietici, locked in the past. Without rejecting this interpretation I suggest that the titular fog might also refer to an invisible calamity coming from outside, as suggested by the shots showing the village enveloped in this immaterial substance. I read the 'fog' as a barely visible, yet real means, through which the village and its inhabitants are cut off from the centre and condemned to civil and eventually material death. One example of this 'enfoggement strategy' is discontinuing the only train connecting the village with the city on the grounds that it is not profitable. The lack of transport creates an extra obstacle in finding work or selling the fruit of local labour in the city. They also mention the authorities' lack of interest, who refuse to visit such a 'shithole'.

Unlike *Fog*, whose exact setting is not revealed, *Arizona* is set in the post-PGR village Zagórki in the Słupsk region in northern Poland. Its title is taken from a cheap wine, whose drinking is the main entertainment of its inhabitants. The film paints an image of a world which has reached its end and is going through a 'slow apocalypse'. The sign is the end of profitable production and return of the inhabitants of Zagórki to some kind of natural state (which in *Fog* was at best hinted at). We learn that they poach animals living in the nearby forest and that it is easier for them to survive in summer than in winter because in summer they collect berries and mushrooms which they sell in the city of Słupsk. One of Borzęcka's interviewees admits with pride that he has enough wood for five years; this is wood which he 'gleaned' rather than bought. Deprived of paid employment, money and any chance of decent entertainment, they amuse themselves with spying on each other and drinking Arizona. As with all socially excluded people, alcohol on the one hand allows them to forget their miserable existence and reach utopia (one character admits that 'Arizona saves our lives'), but on the other hand reduces their chance to leave the vicious circle of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion.

The majority of people presented in the film looked after animals when they worked in the PGRs, with many milking cows. Their attachment to the animals transpires through the narrative. Some look after the few animals which survived the privatisation of the PGR, such as a pig and a horse. The horse is now over 30 years old and the owner takes him for walks, as if he was a beloved pet. An

old woman, who presents herself as an ex-prisoner of Ravensbrück, lives with numerous cats and dogs, which is her way to redeem her shameful deed of eating a dog after she left the camp (possibly out of hunger). This draws attention to the danger that the unemployed farmhands will also be reduced to eating their pets. Borzęcka also points to the fact that they are treated like animals rather than human beings by the authorities and by each other. One of the characters even compares his wife to a horse who only moves 'from here to there'. The fact that these people were used to their narrow habitat is seen as a reason why they are unable to adapt to the neoliberal world of greater mobility. Being a homo sovieticus precludes becoming a successful neoliberal (wo)man.

The way Borzęcka shoots her characters through the gates, augments the connection between their situation and that of caged animals. The reference to animals and life in a concentration camp brings to mind the concept of 'homo sacer', as elaborated by Giorgo Agamben. According to Agamben, 'homo sacer' has only his physical existence (*zoo* as opposed to *bio*), therefore can be killed with impunity. This condition is epitomised by the inmates of Nazi concentration camps, who were devoid of any individuality, reduced to numbers and practically dead even when they were still alive (Agamben 1998: 181–88). However, as I argued elsewhere, the condition of an unemployed or precarious worker under neoliberalism has much in common with homo sacer (Mazierska 2015, pp. 155-91). This is also true about the villagers of Zagórki. One factor in their 'homosacerisation' is the lack of social security, which leads to debt and their physical and social degeneration. The death in the film of two animals, the pig and the horse, who featured extensively in the film, underscores the point that the people from Zagórki are sentenced to death.

Borzęcka focuses on the here and now of her characters, as opposed to asking the question of who is responsible for the status quo. The 'authorities' or the 'system' are not visible in this film. According to Tadeusz Sobolewski (a critic regularly working for the *Wyborcza* daily, which is the main voice of neoliberalism in Poland), Borzęcka departed from the rule governing the Polish documentary cinema of the 1970s, namely that 'people are good, the system is bad' (Sobolewski 1998, p. 70). This might reflect that, paradoxically, under state socialism filmmakers had more freedom to criticise the state than under neoliberalism. The critic also suggests that the film is about a certain category of people, which is universal. He writes:

There have always been, are and will be excluded people near us who have failed, who have been left behind, who have sunk, for whom the only refuge is a bottle [of alcohol] and empty laughter... I have had such neighbours everywhere

I lived: on Woronicza Street, on Wilcza, Chłodna, Hoża. There were plenty of them in Praga, where my father came from. After watching Borzęcka's film, they paraded in front of my memory all these neighbours who we so easily – too easily – describe as 'degenerates'. We, concerned about the fate of society. (Sobolewski 1998: 70)

Of course, it is possible to see *Arizona* this way and it is especially tempting for those who, like Sobolewski, tried to merge a humanist concern for the excluded with the conviction that neoliberalism in the 1990s was the only viable political route for Poland. From such a perspective the title of the film can be interpreted as referring to the post-PGR village as a new 'wild West' which needs to be re-captured and re-civilised the 'neoliberal way'. However, on repeated viewing, one picks up signals that it is the neoliberal system which produces those who Sobolowski describes as 'degenerates'. For example, one of the characters, a wealthy incomer who apparently wanted to rejuvenate the bankrupt PGR, mentions that under state socialism the PGR had 300 cattle and 300 hectares of land which post-1989 went wild. One wonders who is responsible for this decline as surely not the workers who lament the disappearance of their livelihood. In common with the characters in Kamieńska's film, one ex-worker mentions that communist times were better than now because the communists stole from the workers but also allowed the workers to steal. Nowadays, on the other hand, the rulers still steal from the workers, but the workers are not allowed to steal any more. It is difficult to find a better summary of the neoliberal condition.

Arizona received some important awards, such as the Grand Prix at the 1998 Kraków Film Festival and is widely regarded as one of the most important Polish films of the 1990s. But it also brought accusations that the filmmaker behaved in an immoral way by picking characters, who best illustrated her point and buying them Arizona so that they could better play the role of degenerated lumpenproletariat. One critic compared the reality presented by Borzęcka to that created by Pieter Bruegel (Nowak 2011, p. 47). Without diminishing this comparison, I will evoke here the concepts of 'dark tourism' (Lennon and Foley 2010) and 'ruin porn' (Millington 2013), which refer to the phenomenon of special interest granted to sites of poverty and misery, and the attempts to make money out of them. No doubt Borzęcka uses the aesthetics of 'ruin porn' through exaggerating the negative aspects of life in Zagórki. That said, these attacks on the filmmaker themselves were ideological, as they allowed to move attention away from what the film shows, to the integrity of its author.

In contrast to films about the bankrupt PGRs, *Welcome to Life!* (*Witajcie w życiu!*, 1997) by Henryk Dederko takes as his characters those who bought

into the rhetoric of capitalism, choosing, to use the well-known slogans from Danny Boyle's *Trainspotting* (1996), 'life, career and electric tin opener'. The film shows the operation of the American firm Amway which sells cleaning products and food supplements, juxtaposing fragments of the firm's own promotional material with interviews with its employees and recordings of interviews between more experienced workers and those who only recently joined the firm. Amway entered the Polish market in the early 1990s and by the time Dederko's film was made had over 80,000 employees. Amway is shortened from 'American way', suggesting that its methods epitomise the American approach to business and life. The film focuses on recruiting and training new employees, because these two processes ensure Amway's longevity and are an important source of its income, accounting for about 30 per cent of the firm's total revenue. The new recruits are asked to buy cassettes and books from which they can learn how to become successful businessmen. Rather than being taught how to sell washing powder and toilet cleaner, they are told how to recruit new people willing to sell Amway products. Ultimately, Dederko's film suggests that Amway is not selling commodities, but ideology – the ideology of capitalism (Piątek 2011). It declares that everybody can be a winner if only they put their heart into it. We hear such statements as 'We have to think what we desire and money will come automatically'. Conversely, losers choose to be losers, because 'poverty is a state of mind' and 'if we surround ourselves with poor people, we become impoverished ourselves', as the Amway gurus teach us. Such views are peddled in the promotional sessions by the most successful people in the organisation: the Americans who are high up in the firm's hierarchy, as well as some Poles who proved themselves to be outstanding workers. The former address the newcomers from the Amway tapes and travel to Poland to preach Amway modus operandi in training courses, which look like political rallies or religious gatherings. The latter recruit new agents trying to convince them that thanks to joining Amway all their dreams will come true.

The main idea promoted by these people is that not technology or material resources, but faith makes a successful capitalist. This is demonstrated by images of new recruits who during the Amway rally sing the Polish national anthem or lie on the floor in their apartments with headphones, listening to the 'Amway gospel' emanating from the cassettes. These people use their family relations, friendships, everything they do in their spare time to sell Amway's products. Hence the title of the film: 'welcome to life' rather than 'welcome to Amway'. By the same token, Dederko's film announces a return of the shock worker or 'new Soviet man', known from Stalinist times. As Boris Groys observes,

The slogan of the age became 'Nothing is impossible for a Bolshevik'. Any references to facts,

technical realities, or objective limits was treated as "cowardice" and "unbelief" unworthy of a true Stalinist. It was thought that willpower alone could overcome anything that the bureaucratic, formalistic eye perceived as an insurmountable obstacle.... Generations were raised on the examples of Pavka Korchagin and Mares'ev, invalids who overcame their physical infirmity through sheer willpower. (Groys 1992, p. 60)

The difference between now and then is that in the past the saying was that 'Nothing is impossible for a Bolshevik' and now 'Nothing is impossible for those embracing capitalism'. However, this claim is undermined by the statistical data presented at the end of the film. The closing titles state that 0.2% of Amway employees earn 95% of the income of the firm. Amway's structure is thus similar to a pyramid (even if this is not a pyramid scheme in the strict sense of the term), in which the few take the chunk of the surplus value created by the many. The many thus work for a pittance in the hope that one day they will join those at the top, This scheme can be seen as a metonymy of neoliberal capitalism, with the employees of Amway fitting the type of 'homo neoliberalis', who replaced the old 'homo sovieticus', as suggested by Tomasz Piątek (Piątek 2011, p. 155).

Predictably, the film was not to the taste of Amway bosses and the firm tried to prevent the broadcast of *Welcome to Life!* on television by suing its producers and won the court case. This fact attracted much attention in the Polish press as it undermined the widely held view that the media under capitalism are free, unlike under state socialism (for example Malatyńska 1998; Jałoszewski 2002). Unfortunately, the outrage caused by this crude act of censorship overshadowed discussion about the content of the film, namely the inegalitarian character of neoliberalism. The perceptive essay by Tomasz Piątek is the only article I found which attempts to engage with the film text, rather than its production and distribution history.

Seeking new life abroad

Among the freedoms Poles achieved following the fall of state socialism was the freedom to seek employment abroad. This subject is tackled by several films, such as *A Bar at Victoria Station* (*Bar na Viktorii*, 2003), a documentary directed by Leszek Dawid about two unskilled young men from Kluczbork, a small town in southwestern Poland, seeking work in England. The film premiered only one year before Poland joined the European Union, of which a major benefit was

the possibility to get legal employment in Britain. It depicts the time when it was still illegal for Poles to work in Britain and hence getting the work permit is an important factor in the two men's circumstances. By the same token, it is an opportunity for various feral entrepreneurs to make money, taking advantage of the naiveté and despair of poor foreigners. The film's protagonists, Piotr and Marek, are promised a job in a hotel if they pay 45, 120 or 150 GBP for a false work permit and then discover that they have paid to get jobs which do not exist. As the days pass, they get more desperate to get any job, even paid as little as £2 per hour, but these jobs do not materialise, while their situation worsens. They spend the little money they brought to the UK, have to leave the room of their friend who allowed them to stay with them for free and their shoes get worn out. In the end they ask the question: 'Why do Poles have to go abroad to earn their living?' The director leaves the characters at the time when one of them decides to return to Poland, although from the closing titles we learn that they both stayed in London where they eventually found work. Even if *A Bar at Victoria Station* has an off-screen happy ending, we get the impression that it comes at a heavy price: misery, humiliation and home sickness. The title of the film refers to a dream one of the characters shares with the viewers: having a small bar at Victoria station, where he could sell Polish dishes, such as bigos and borsch with croquets. They also talk about their desire to get married, have a child and a house. Although the men are victims of the capitalist order, they identify with the ideal of a private entrepreneur and the bourgeois lifestyle.

A Bar at Victoria Station was Dawid's student film and it was made under the supervision of Kazimierz Karabasz, one of the leading Polish documentary filmmakers working under statev socialism. Karabasz's influence can be detected in the film's style, consisting of following a working class character (or two in this case) who describe their situation in their own words. Although it is easy to make fun of Piotr and Marek, whose coarse language might put off a sensitive ear, ultimately the film elicits compassion and conveys well some universal emotions pertaining to those seeking jobs: anxiety, low self-esteem and a sense of injustice. What the film is missing, however, is any attempt to explain why thousands of people like Piotr and Marek have to leave their towns and villages to earn their daily bread. As the director admits in the interview, he merely wanted to make a film about two young men, who might choose a different path, for example fall in love during their trip, rather than one which analyses a social phenomenon (quoted in Pietrzak 2011, p. 107). In his analysis of *A Bar at Victoria Station* Jarosław Pietrzak, rightly, in my view, attributes such a lack of political ambition on the part of the director to the dominant ideology, which discourages attacking its (neoliberal) foundations (ibid.: 108).

Warsaw Available (*Warszawa do wzięcia*, 2009) by Karolina Bielawska and Julia Ruszkiewicz does not tackle foreign migration, only one from the country to the city, but I decided to discuss it in this section, as migrants portrayed in this film encounter similar problems to those in *Silesia* and *A Bar at Victoria Station*. The film can also be looked at in the context of the 'post-PGR films', analysed above, because it concerns people who are determined to leave a post-PGR village. To an even larger extent than Dawid's film, *Warsaw Available* shows the strong influence of Kazimierz Karabasz's style, most importantly his *Krystyna M.* (1973). The film, like *Krystyna M.*, follows in the footsteps of an ordinary person, who is meant to represent a larger group of those who moved from the country to the city. However, there are also differences. Karabasz in *Krystyna M.* presented the story of only one young woman. Her character thus appeared, on the one hand, more individualised, but on the other hand paradigmatic for the whole generation of young people, who moved from the provinces to Warsaw. Bielawska and Ruszkiewicz follow three young women as if to reflect on the fact that there is no single or even dominant scenario of migration; much depends, for example, on the person's initial circumstances. The three women, Ania, Gosia and Ilona, move from the countryside to the city, taking advantage of the 'Bursa' (Boarding School) programme, offered to young women from villages where PGRs used to be, to relocate to Warsaw. Each of the girls, who are between 18 and 21 years old, comes from a modest, although not very poor or disfunctional background. They have only finished secondary school and have never had a job requiring advanced skills. There are also differences between them. Gosia has little to tie her to her native village and is most optimistic about her metropolitan future. Ania left a boyfriend behind in another village and Ilona, who is a single mother, left her little son with her mother, to find employment in the capital. The film just points to two forces in the lives of Ania and Ilona: centripetal and centrifugal. Each force is very strong – the girls are under great pressure to succeed in Warsaw, but they also miss what they left behind in the provinces. In this respect only Gosia can be seen as a contemporary version of Karabasz's Krystyna M. Life in Warsaw turns out to be hard. The manual work in service industries, such as restaurants, bars, shops and in security, which the girls eventually find, requires long working hours and being available to their employers all the time. It is a 'zero-hour contract' type of work. As a result, even a monthly visit to see one's family and friends becomes a luxury. Another factor why the young women find it difficult to achieve success in Warsaw is the harsh regime of surveillance, to which they are subjected both at work and at home. After work they have to attend courses where they learn new skills, mostly how to wear the right type of clothes when attending a job interview, talk to one's boss

and prepare food and eat in a 'middle class' way. In the dormitory, where they are allowed to live for several months free of charge, they have to leave the shelves and the floor perfectly clean and make their beds to the satisfaction of a stern, even mildly sadistic supervisor. The whole regime appears to be geared at producing Foucauldian 'docile bodies'. This is unlike Krystyna in Karabasz's film, for whom it was enough to fulfil her duty to be accepted and rewarded at work and who did what she pleased in her small apartment. *Warsaw Available* is the story of a contemporary precariat, with few employment rights and no security.

During the course of the narrative Ania and Ilona give up and return to the provinces, blaming it on their weaknesses, not being able to bear separation from their loved ones. Their attitude reflects on the neoliberal ethics, which makes the individual responsible for their failure. We assume that Gosia would stay in Warsaw but the final titles state that she also lost her job and had to leave Warsaw. From the closing titles we also learn that out of 892 girls who took part in the 'Bursa' programme, 479 finished it and found employment in Warsaw, but nobody knows how many of them remained there long term. The film intimates that its overall success rate might be low; hence this is not the best way to address the problem of unemployment and poverty in the Polish countryside. A better way would be to change the provinces, make them more prosperous, so that girls like Ania, Gosia and Ilona could stay there, where they all ultimately wanted to be. This message is reiterated by the girls's comments about Warsaw and the film's mise-en-scene. Ania and Ilona mention again and again that they dislike Warsaw, feeling alien there and acquiring a sense of inferiority which they did not have in their home villages. Warsaw, previously known to them from the media, turns out to be greyer than the villages which they left behind. The space in which they move, such as the main railway station (Warszawa Centralna) and the nearby shopping mall, full of adverts encouraging consumption, underscores their transitory status and inferiority as consumers, as they cannot afford any of the things which are advertised, similarly like their work in bars and restaurants points to their status as servants with practically no rights.

Unlike under state socialism, when the state took upon itself the duty of facilitating the transition of the workers from the country to the city, now this task is 'relocated' to a Catholic charity. Although this fact is merely mentioned in the film, its importance cannot be overestimated. This is because charities are not accountable to the whole of society, but only to those who support them, often acting against the interests of the whole of society and offer less sustainable help than that of state institutions. Furthermore, as the word 'charity' indicates, the recipients of their assistance have to accept it as an act of somebody's good

will, thus without complaining, unlike a client of the state, who might demand better treatment. This is what we observe in the film – the girls are subjected to a tremendous pressure to succeed in a short period, because this might be their only chance.

Generations of winners and losers

Watching the films discussed so far, one is tempted to ask whether the transformation made sense, given its cost for ordinary people, especially the young. The answer to this question is given by two films by Maria Zmarz-Koczanowicz: *I, the Bricklayer* (*Ja, Robotnik budowlany*, 2001) and *Generation '89* (*Pokolenie '89*, 2002).

The first film concerns Albin Siwak (1933-2019), a shock worker, who distinguished himself during the period of rebuilding Warsaw in the 1950s, was active in the (socialist) trade unions before joining the Party in 1968. In the 1980s, when the Party was in a state of decline, he advanced in its hierarchy, becoming a member of its Central Committee and the Political Bureau. During this time he represented the most dogmatic section of the Party, criticising Solidarity, defending martial law and Poland's union with the Soviet Union. In today's language, Siwak can be described as a 'tankie': an honest, but unreformable Stalinist, who eventually became a source of embarrassment to the Party, which in the 1980s tried to modernise itself. In the Polish context, people like him were described as 'concrete' (*beton*).

Zmarz-Koczanowicz's documentary consists largely of her interview with Siwak, against the background of old newsreels, showing various events from Poland's communist past, chiefly the period of martial law and the demonstrations against the government of Jerzy Buzek, concurrent with the period of shooting her film, whose economic politics was neoliberal, leading to problems described in the previous sections of this article. In these interviews Siwak shows pride in his working-class credentials, musing about his pleasure of working as a simple bricklayer and revealing his distrust of the intelligentsia, which puts their interests first. However, he also admits, echoing Marx, that having working-class background does not guarantee having pro-communism views. Equally, people of the intelligentsia or the middle-class background could have communist instincts. What is important here is not so much what Siwak says, but how his discourse is framed. Before we see him talking, he is introduced to students of the private school of journalism by an eminent Polish sociologist, Edward Wnuk-Lipiński, who describes Siwak, probably tongue-in-cheek, as a 'living utopia' (of socialism). He is thus presented as a specimen, who needs to be examined,

rather than somebody with whose voice the director identifies herself, as was the case with Karabasz's films.1 Wnuk-Lipiński asks his students whether they have heard about Siwak, but most have no idea who he is and even those who are familiar with his name, are unable to associate it with any specific achievements and views. This, points to the fact that in the early 2000s Siwak was an anachronism. The interview with him confirms this fact. He comes across as somebody for whom life stopped in the 1950s, when he was a shock worker. He did not recognise a need to modernise the country or the problems the state socialist economy faced, leading to the comprehensive rejection of the system. His anachronistic mindset is further confirmed by his circle of friends, consisting of old party apparatchiks, ex-army officers and the film director Bohdan Poręba, whose views combined pro-communist sympathies with nationalism. One of them says that only a few people are allowed to enter his house, which he describes as his 'fortress'. Such words are meant to emphasise the privilege of being on friendly terms with Siwak, but for the external observer they are proof that the old communist has a closed mind. Siwak's status as a relic from the state socialist past is further confirmed by him confessing that the at some point the Party saw him as an embarrassment and tried to get rid of him, by offering him the post of Polish ambassador to Mongolia.

Although, ostensibly, Siwak's care for the working class is conveyed by a demonstration of working class people against neoliberal policies, which make them poor, Zmarz-Koczanowicz is at pains to discredit them by showing that they are attended mostly by older people and that their character is similar to the old, May Day parades.

Another foray of Zmarz-Koczanowicz into the period of the PRL, which is compared with the present, is *Generation '89*. The film is about people who were born in the 1960s and gained maturity in the 1980s, during the period of the Solidarity movement, martial law and, finally, the Round Table negotiations, which resulted in a peaceful transition of power from the Party to the Solidarity movement. This is a generation whose identity was profoundly shaped by these events – they wouldn't be who they were in 2002, if it were not for the changes brought about by the Solidarity movement.

What is striking about Zmarz-Koczanowicz's film is the choice of the characters. Not only, as Witold Mrozek observes, does she choose those with a specific outlook, which subsequently was associated with the more liberal and cosmopolitan wing of the Solidarity movement, represented by the parties Unia Wolności and Platforma Obywatelska (Mrozek 2011, p. 95), but that she equates this generation with a handful of (mostly) men, who were recruited from the young

intelligentsia, often with significant political and intellectual traditions. These men (and one woman), such as Marcin Meller, Krzysztof Varga, Paweł Piskorski and Anna Smółka, subsequently became very successful, becoming famous journalists, media personalities, owners of advertising agencies, and – in the case of Piskorski – the mayor of Warsaw. One of the protagonists mentions that in the early 1990s there was so much 'room at the top', one could simply walk the corridors there and be picked by somebody who offered them the position of director of a department in some ministry or top civil servant. However, Zmarz-Koczanowicz's interviewees fail to mention that it was only on certain corridors where such offers were made. It is not difficult to guess that these corridors were in Warsaw and were populated by the young elite.

Such a representation points to two ideas, which I find problematic. First, it gives the impression that the Solidarity revolution was an uprising of intellectuals, bored by the monotony of life under state socialism. Such a view, ironically, chimes with the opinion presented by Albin Siwak in the film discussed previously. More precisely, Zmarz-Koczanowicz's interviewees mention workers, but they function in their stories merely as a background to their activities, which is presented largely as carnivalesque antics, whose purpose was not so much an overthrowing of the system (as they did not even believe that it was possible), as to make fun of it. In reality, however, it was mostly a working-class revolt, albeit supported by a cross-section of the population.

Second, by putting front and centre those who benefitted from the victory of Solidarity, becoming the new postcommunist elite, Zmarz-Koczanowicz suggests that this change had practically no social cost, except for losing a sense of carnival, pertaining for these (still) young men to the 1980s, although the cost was very high, as shown in the films discussed in the previous sections of this article. The (almost complete) erasure of the working class from the Solidarity narrative foretells the position taken by the neoliberal parties, most importantly the Civic Platform.

From industrial production to art exhibition

The last example I decided to use in this article is *Solidarity, Solidarity…* (*Solidarność, Solidarność*, 2005), an omnibus film, made by thirteen directors of different generations, made up of both short documentary and fiction films, asked to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the strikes of 1980, which led to the legalisation of the Solidarity trade union in the same year. Through its very structure, the film acknowledges that there is no 'master narrative' about Solidarity; its history is open to multiple interpretations, competing with each other

for the viewers' attention and sympathy. As Tadeusz Szyma admits, the subject is now too big and too complex to be tackled by one director (Szyma 1995, p. 54). Yet, it should be added that the film was initiated by Andrzej Wajda, who suggested its production to Polish state television. By posing himself as the 'father' of this project and making an episode, which includes the stars of *Man of Iron*, Krystyna Janda and Jerzy Radziwiłowicz, as well as the leader of the first Solidarity, Lech Wałęsa, Wajda tacitly suggests that his narrative is still privileged; if it is not a 'master-narrative' then at least it remains a 'father narrative'.

The majority of the etudes are set in the present and take issue with the legacy of the events of 1980 and 1981. Paradoxically, older directors, such as Robert Gliński, Ryszard Bugajski, Jacek Bromski and even Andrzej Wajda, tend to be dismissive about the fruits of the Solidarity revolution. In Bugajski's episode, which takes the form of a music video, the veteran of Polish rock, Ryszard Markowski, sings about Polish history, beginning in the year 1968 and finishing in 2005. His narrative acknowledges the victory of Solidarity, but also the erosion of its ethos post 1989, especially the disappearance of solidarity from Polish life. In Wajda's episode the director interviews Lech Wałęsa, who admits that the early 1980s was the last moment of Polish history when the working class mattered in Poland and by extension, in the whole of Eastern Europe. This was because its importance relied on the Soviet Union's demand for the products of heavy industry, provided by Poland and other 'satellite' countries. Once this demand diminished, the working class declined, as the capitalist West does not want Polish coal or ships. We can conclude that the West, which in *Man of Iron* functioned as the chief ally of Polish workers struggling to overcome state socialism, ultimately proved a false friend.

The conclusion that Solidarity did not do the shipyard workers any good is evinced in the episode by Robert Gliński, who through the medium of Japanese tourists takes us on a tour of the old shipyard in Gdańsk, where the famous strike began. The yard is now derelict, looking like a ghost town, a clear metaphor for the decline of the working class in Poland. The workforce in the Gdańsk shipyard, which was about 20,000 people at the time Wajda and Zajączkowski shot their films, after 1989 was reduced to about 2,000, labouring in over 70 different private companies. Decimated, fragmented and threatened with unemployment, this workforce has little chance to attract attention to their plight, not least because they now work in a democratic country. Once famous for its ships and the political engagement of the workers, today the shipyard is better known as a destination of tourists and musicians. In the mid-2000s Jean Michel Jarre and David Gilmour performed there to celebrate the Solidarity 'revolution'. It also

hosts a lavish 'European Solidarity Centre', a museum and performance space devoted to the memory and heritage of Solidarity. In this sense the trajectory of the Gdańsk shipyard follows in the footsteps of such famous factories, like the factory buildings in New York adopted by Andy Warhol for his studio in the 1960s and Tony Wilson for Factory Records in Manchester in the 1970s, proving that neoliberal capitalism might be good for the artists and those working in the media, but not for the blue-collar workers.

Conclusion: Transition and the problem of identity

In this article I argue that Polish documentary films made in in the 1990s take issue with the influence of the fall of state socialism on the individual and collective identity of Poles. They acknowledge that, paradoxically, this change had the most profound effect on the working class people, virtually crushing their lives and their sense of identity. By contrast, it was conducive to develop a new elite, who originated in the Solidarity movement, but showed no loyalty to workers. Despite this rather depressing diagnosis, none of the films discussed here are nostalgic for state socialism. This part of Polish history is in the past: it can be retold, reconceptualised, but it should not be repeated.

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(Endnotes)

[1] Zmarz-Koczanowicz is renowned for adopting such a distant, often mocking attitude to her subjects, as exemplified by her film *Jestem mężczyzną* (*I Am a Man*, 1985).

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A Future Archive of Identity. Stories and Tropes of Contemporary Slovak Nonfiction Cinema

Abstract:

The study focuses on cinematic reflection of the post-1989 history of Slovakia as the most recent layer of communicative memory closely related to the formation of the country's modern identity. Its aim is to explore what image nonfiction films create for the future of the present reality. Therefore, it examines what rhetorical and narrative tropes documentary filmmakers use to construct knowledge about the socio-political reality.

Key words:

Slovak documentary cinema, history, collective memory, archive, socio-political realities, memory studies, new historicism, poetic tropes

Collective memory, as a crucial factor in the formation of collective identity, is not only preserved through documentary films but can also be directly shaped by them. The significance of documentaries for cultural memory is more recog-

nised as epistemic tools, less as messages of filmmakers creating a testimony of their own knowledge. The form of these messages shapes the ways in which the current reality is understood when it becomes a past reality. But when does the present become the past? Let us assume that it happens when it is preserved in memory.

This study focuses on the cinematic reflection of the current social reality in Slovakia, spanning from the 1990s to the present. It explores the most recent layer of communicative memory, intertwined with the country's identity formation in the era of independence on the one hand and European integration on the other. As stated by Jan Assmann, "memory is knowledge with identity-index," (Assmann, J., 2008, p. 114) thus always being tied to specific social groups. These groups shape their collective selves as diachronic identities through processes of communication, social interaction, and external symbols, such as artworks.

The aim of this study is to examine the images of the collective identity constructed by Slovak nonfiction films concerning current socio-political themes as a form of archive for the future. What narrative forms and rhetorical tropes do documentary filmmakers employ to construct knowledge about the socio-political reality? How do they organize knowledge of the present for collective memory and identity?

Dynamics of cultural memory of Slovak nonfiction cinema

According to Jan Assmann (2008)[1], communicative memory pertains to a social group's recent past, representing shared memories of contemporaries within about three generations (around 80 years). Unlike cultural memory, which relates to a group's distant past and is institutionalized, communicative memory is informal and dependent on affective frameworks. Changes in these frameworks can lead to forgetting. It is my belief that documentary films can influence memory by creating affective frameworks through narrativization of events.

Aleida Assmann (2008) discusses cultural memory dynamics between remembering and forgetting. Active cultural memory, within established frameworks like religion, art, and history, is called the memory canon. Passive cultural memory, stored outside its original frames, is the memory archive. Slovak historical documentary films mainly focus on memory canon events, such as world wars, the Holocaust, the communist era, etc. Documentary films about the current social reality deal with the most recent layer of communicative memory.

[1] Assmann proposes the distinction between communicative and cultural memory as two aspects of what Maurice Halbwachs originally referred to as collective memory.

These films capture reality in latency, representing a potential archive for the future. According to Assmann, "the archive is the basis of what can be said in the future about the present when it will have become the past." (Ibid., p. 102) Events preserved in the memory archive have the potential to update or reframe the existing canon, because memory is, as Nassim Nicholas Taleb points out, "… a self-serving dynamic revision machine: you remember the last time you remembered the event and, without realizing it, change the story at every subsequent remembrance." (Taleb, 2007, p. 71) Thus, films about current social reality become part of the memory archive, potentially updating the existing canon.

Slovak nonfiction production has a rich reservoir of memory about the current social reality, often prioritizing topics like the Roma minority[2] or using documentary portraits with a wide spectrum of themes and authorial approaches reflecting Slovakia's post-1989 history in creative documentaries.

To confront the legacy of communism, several filmmakers have explored various aspects of Slovak history and society. Ľubomír Štecko's *Stanislav Babinský* (*Stanislav Babinský: Život je nekompromisný boomerang*, 1990) focuses on a fraudulent scandal involving a director of a socialist state enterprise. Dušan Hanák's *Paper Heads* (*Papierové hlavy*, 1995) delves into political persecutions during communist totalitarianism and their parallels with the cult of personality surrounding prime minister Vladimír Mečiar in the 1990s. Jaroslav Vojtek's *The Border* (*Hranica*, 2009) captures the story of a village on the Slovak-Ukrainian border divided by the Red Army in 1946. *Velvet Terorists* (*Zamatoví teroristi*, 2013) by Peter Kerekes, Ivan Ostrochovský, and Pavol Pekarčík explores the lives of three romantics attempting terrorist acts against the communist power in the 1980s.

Filmmakers have also depicted Slovakia's transition from socialism to democracy. Iľja Rupeldt's *Letová správa OK 89-90* (1990) focuses on the year from 1989 to 1990, capturing changes after the downfall of state socialism. Eva Štefankovičová's *All Together… / In a Slovak Way* (*Všetci spolu… po slovensky*, 1991) portrays the fading euphoria of freedom. Zuzana Piussi's *Men of the Revolution* (*Muži revolúcie*, 2011) presents personal interpretations of historical events by Slovak tribunes of the Velvet Revolution.

[2] Given that the life of the Roma ethnic group is a timeless and significant topic in Slovak nonfiction production, forming a crucial segment of social documentaries, it may not be the subject of this particular study unless it intersects with broader socio-political events, as exemplified in the film *The Gypsy Vote* (*Cigáni idú do volieb*, 2012) by Jaroslav Vojtek. The reflection of Roma-related themes in Slovak fiction and nonfiction films has been the focus of Zuzana Mojžišová's work (Mojžišová, 2014).

The era of "Mečiarism" and the 1990s were subjects of interest as well.[3] Marek Kuboš's *Hlas 98* (1999) examines attempts to buy votes before the 1998 elections. Zuzana Piussi's documentary detective story *Koliba* (2009) focuses on the fraudulent privatization of the state film studios by Mečiar's family. Tereza Nvotová's *The Lust for Power* (*Mečiar*, 2017) reassesses the period of her childhood from an adult perspective. Barbora Berezňáková's *Never Happened* (*Skutok sa stal*, 2019) explores connections between the abduction of the president's son and the murder of a police officer by the secret service.[4]

Filmmakers have also covered the rise of nationalism, right-wing extremism, and Slovakia's integration into European structures. Mário Homolka's *Countrymen* (*Rodáci*,1997) examines fascist resentment during the Mečiar era. Zuzana Piussi's *Fragile Identity* (*Krehká identita*, 2012) depicts the abuse of nationalist sentiments. Marko Škop's *Osadné* (2009) shows efforts to put a Slovak village on the map of Europe. Zuzana Piussi's *Difficult Choice* (*Ťažká voľba*, 2016) focuses on the 2014 presidential elections. Miro Remo delved into the subject of right-wing extremism in a portrait of an autocross enthusiast *At Full Throttle* (*Láska pod kapotou*, 2021). Jaroslav Vojtek's film *The Gypsy Vote* (*Cigáni idú do volieb*, 2012) explores the ambitions of a Romani musician in local politics. Vladislava Sárkány's *That Monarchy* (*To ta monarchia*, 2020) provides insights into the relationship between mayor and residents of a village in Eastern Slovakia.

Economic transformation and globalization are themes in various documentaries. Robert Kirchhoff's *Hey, Slovaks!* (*Hej, Slováci!*, 2002) examines economic problems. Marko Škop's *Other Worlds* (*Iné svety*, 2006) delves into the clash between the East and the West in the midst of globalizing processes. Tomáš Krupa's *Graduates – Freedom Is Not For Free* (*Absolventi - Sloboda nie je zadarmo*, 2012) portrays struggles of university graduates. Mária Rumanová's *Hotel Sunrise* (*Hotel Úsvit*, 2016) depicts the bleakness of the Slovak-Hungarian-Ukrainian border region after the economic collapse. Dominik Jursa's *The Golden Land*

[3] Vladimír Mečiar was the prime minister of the Slovak Republic for three terms and his reign was marked by abuse of power, corruption affairs and the international isolation of Slovakia.

[4] The abduction of the President's son Michal Kováč organised by the secret service in 1995 was part of a discreditation campaign that was supposed to discourage further public protests by the President against the abuse of power by the prime minister Vladimír Mečar. Michal Kováč junior was beaten and forced to get drunk, then abducted to Austria where he was held because of an international arrest warrant issued on the basis of fabricated economic crimes.

This conspiration plot was disclosed by a member of the secret service hiding abroad and his friend and connection, a young policeman Róbert Remiáš. In 1996 Remiáš was killed in an explosion of his car, which was organised by the secret service to dispose of witnesses and cover the traces of the abduction. Legal charges against the perpetrators had to be dropped because of an amnesty issued by Vladimír Mečiar during the time he served as acting president in 1998. The amnesty was annulled in 2017. For more on the case see (Lesná, 2017).

(*Zlatá zem*, 2020) sheds light on the residents' fight against a large American oil company in three eastern Slovak villages.

Miro Remo's *Coolture* (*Cooltúra*, 2016) and Marek Kuboš's *The Last Self-Portrait* (*Posledný autoportrét*, 2018) explore the impact of transformation on culture. Zuzana Piussi's *The Grasp of the State* (*Od Fica do Fica*, 2012) covers political machinations during the kleptocratic regime of prime minister Róbert Fico[5], while *The State Capture* (*Ukradnutý štát*, 2019) investigates the murder of journalist Ján Kuciak in 2018[6]. Eduard Cicha's *Peter Breiner's Elementary School of Art* (*Základná umelecká škola Petra Breinera,* 2018) highlights political power abuse in local politics.

Institutional failures and the absence of the rule of law are explored in Robert Kirchhoff's *Normalization* (*Kauza Cervanová*, 2013) and Zuzana Piussi's *Disease of the Third Power* (*Nemoc tretej moci*, 2011) and *Ordeal* (*Očista*, 2021). The dehumanization of obstetrics is highlighted in Zuzana Límová's *Before I Met You* (*Medzi nami*, 2016) and Maia Martiniak's *Unseen* (*Neviditeľná*, 2020).

Collective film projects and television cycles also reflect current social reality. *Slovakia 2.0* (*Slovensko 2.0*, 2014) offers insights into Slovak statehood over two decades. *Customs office* (*Colnica alebo Československo po 20 rokoch*, 2013) confronts identities between Slovakia and the Czech Republic. *Ex Prime-Ministers* (*Expremiéri*, 2018) portrays seven post-1989 prime ministers of the Slovak Republic.

From this concise overview of documentaries capturing contemporary social reality, it is evident that Slovak nonfiction film does not shy away from political topics. It is also clear that in the early years after the fall of socialism, filmmakers made efforts to reflect on current events. Considering the resurgence of socio-political themes in the new millennium, one could hypothesize that the absence of immediate past images in the second half of the 1990s was more a result of the collapse of the film industry than a lack of interest from creators. This is supported by the fact that after the emergence of the so-called "Generation 90"

[5] Róbert Fico, four-time prime minister of the Slovak Republic, has been connected to several corruption affairs of his close collaborators, repeatedly convicted of abusing political power and stirring conflicts with both his political opponents, journalists, and NGOs.

[6] Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová were shot dead in their house in 2018. Kuciak was an investigative journalist covering the corruption affairs of Róbert Fico's government and his business allies, including the businessman Marián Kočner. The assassination was linked to Fico's close circles and stirred massive civic protests across the country, which forced the prime minister to step down. Marián Kočner is accused of organising the assassination. Although he was sentenced to 19 years of jail for economic crimes, he has to this day not been lawfully convicted for plotting the assassination. For background of the case see the documentary film *The Killing of a Journalist* (Matt Sarnecki, 2022).

filmmakers, the interest in socio-political themes intensified. It seems that the apparent absence of current socio-political themes in Slovak nonfiction production compared to the Czech one may also be due to the long-term resignation of Slovak public television in mapping key sociological issues in its original documentary and journalistic programs, unlike Czech Television.[7]

Instead of (investigative) journalism, Slovak nonfiction films about the current social and political situation focus on relating the reflection of a specific contemporary issue to a broader historical framework (e.g., comparing the celebrations of International Women's Day in the 2010s organized by the Smer party of Robert Fico to the rallies in the 1990s of Vladimír Mečiar's HZDS party in the film *Lust for Power*, or exposing the current failures of justice in the context of continuing practices from the communist era in *Normalization*). They also examine the geographical context (e.g., the relationship between small and large politics, minority and majority in the film *The Gypsy Vote*, or the relationship between the centre and periphery in the film *Osadné*).

The filmmakers' interest in challenging the principles of liberal democracy and their engagement in the never-ending struggle for the rule of law and the functionality of its institutions become particularly prominent. There is also a noticeable activist stance among filmmakers who deliberately intervene in social events through their films, aiming to influence them (e.g., the intentional release of *Peter Breiner's Elementary School of Art* on the internet shortly before local elections[8] or the director's advocacy in the reopened trial of the accused men in the case of murder of a medical student in the film *Normalization*[9]).

This is closely related to the fact that documentary filmmakers not only engage in public discussions on the events they represent in their films, but they also make themselves present in the films themselves. Whether through self-reflection (e.g., The *Last Self-Portrait*), interaction with respondents (as seen in the methods of Zuzana Piussi in almost all of her films), through authorial commen-

[7] For more on the comparison of handling social themes in Slovak and Czech nonfiction films, see Mišíková, 2022, p. 203.

[8] For more on the case see the interview with the director Eduard Cicha. (Cicha, Krekovič, 2018).

[9] See Kirchhoff (2017). The film *Normalization* deals with the violent murder of medical student Ľudmila Cervanová in 1976. It is one of the most controversial and longest justice cases in the history of Slovakia. Seven men were accused and convicted of raping and killing the young woman. However, after the fall of communism, their case was reopened due to claims that their confessions were coerced by the police and manipulated by judges to cover up for the real perpetrators. Kirchhoff's film makes a strong claim about malfunctions of the judiciary system and implies the convicted men were victims of "judiciary mafia". This claim, supported by several Slovak journalists, was not supported by either the Slovak constitutional court or by the European court of human rights.

tary (e.g., *Never Happened*), framing the topic with their own memories (e.g., *The Lust for Power*), or with less obvious authorial interventions like associative editing (e.g., *Paper Heads* or *Coolture*), staging (e.g., *Velvet Terrorists*), utilizing the syntax of fiction films (e.g., *Hotel Sunrise*), animated sequences (e.g., *The Grasp of the State*), and last but not least, through frequent use of archival material from various sources, to relate the present to the past. Filmmakers thus emphasize the subjective memory aspects of their testimony on the socio-political reality to which their films refer.

Documentary film as lived history

Although processes of memory making through non-fiction films are grounded in the subjective perspective of the filmmakers, forms of collective memory are shaped by specific collective narratives. These can often be identified as stories about the country struggling for its post-socialist identity between dictatorship and democracy, between liberalism and conservativism, between the East and the West, between the local and the global, between resistance and resignation, between ideals and reality.

Documentary film, whether focused on historical events or the representation of current reality, is parallel to what Hayden White refers to as the historical work: it presents a model or symbol of past processes to explain what they meant through their representation. (White, 1973, p. 2) White points out the structural kinship between literary fiction and historical nonfiction, as both use rhetorical and poetic tropes in the process of composing events (imagined or conjectured in the case of fiction, real in the case of history) through literary techniques to create an organized picture of the world. (White, 1978, p. 121-125) Just as, for White, fictional discourse is not structurally distinct from historical discourse but differentiated by its reference to events, today's understanding of nonfiction and fictional film is more a matter of discursive practice than the form itself.

In this study, however, I am not focusing on documentary films about history but on those that reflect current events. My goal is to examine how these films construct meanings about the present, how they relate to past events, and how they create the basis for collective memory. With this intention, I apply Hayden White's typology of historical writing to cinematic representations of the present.[10] Similar

[10] Hayden White's typology of genres inspired James Krapfl in his analysis of the Velvet Revolution (Krapfl, 2016). Jana Dudková (2021) also applied Krapfl's rhetoric of revolution in her typology of narratives of social change in television fiction from 1990 to 1993.

to the interpretation of past events, genres[11] of representing current reality differ not in the events themselves but in how they construct the central problem/conflict and present possibilities for its resolution. I believe that among Slovak documentary films, we can find representatives of the genres of romance, comedy, tragedy and satire that correspond to White's typology of historical discourse. They do not fundamentally differ in terms of themes but rather in the way they formulate conflicts. They also vary in the rhetorical and poetic devices chosen, which serve not only an aesthetic function but, as conceptual tropes and experiential gestalts, play a crucial role in cognition.[12]

The selection of documentaries presented here does not aim to be representative in the sense of representing universal tendencies in Slovak documentary filmmaking about contemporary social reality. It is likely that several films combine approaches from multiple discursive genres, and not all films falling under a certain genre are dominated by the same discursive tropes. However, the four documentaries that will be the focus of the following analysis illustrate the possibilities of structuring current socio-political reality as a kind of archive for the future through characteristic discursive practices. Besides referring to the lived reality, they also share the aspect of relating the reflection of the present to its past through the use of archival material. In different ways, they handle what Jaimie Baron (2012)[13] calls the "archive effect" (drawing attention to transformation through temporal disparity) and through the "archive effect" (evoking a longing for a forever lost past), they create various affective frameworks for the represented events. They evoke different dimensions of memory that refer to various aspects of collective identity. They function in a historical continuum dominated by a kind of "present perfect tense" – experienced in communication and interaction – where events flow in a state of historical latency with the potential to penetrate from the archive into the canon in the future.

Let us, therefore, examine through the lens of White's four types of plots the four different possibilities by which documentary filmmakers, as historians and archivists of the present, can represent the current socio-political reality. The specific form of the plot determines the genre of the story that the film presents and grants it its meanings. White's typology inspired me to identify four prominent stories that establish affective frames for the identity of Slovakia: the story

[11] White's typology draws from Northrop Frye's genre theory in literary studies (Frye, 1957). However, it does not align with the commonly used genre classification of nonfiction writing/filmmaking; it is more related to genres of discourse.

[12] For the cognitive function of conceptual metaphor, see Lakoff, Johnson, 1980.

[13] Baron's concept was applied to the study of Slovak cinema by Martin Palúch (2021a). He also dealt with it in connection to appropriated cinema. See Palúch (2021b)..

of a search for the authenticity lost because of the change from the idealism of the post-socialist transition period to the contemporary pragmatism of neo-liberal society (*The Last Self-portrait*), the story of moral values challenged by the economic transformation and by the downfall of the working class (*At Full Throttle*), the story of the struggle of civic society against the toxic alliance between politics and business (*The State Capture*), and the story of self-identification through locally specific topics and globally universal goals (*Osadné*).

The *Last Self-Portrait* as the romance of a documentary filmmaker

According to Hayden White, "the romance is fundamentally a drama of self-identification symbolized by the hero's transcendence of the world of experience, his victory over it, and his final liberation from it." (White, 1973, p. 8) Director Marek Kuboš filmed the documentary *The Last Self-Portrait* as his testament to documentary filmmaking. He returned to his student assignment with the intention of answering why he hadn't made an auteur film in fourteen years, how the world around him and himself had changed during that time, and lastly, what his responsibility was towards the people he had portrayed in his films.

In the film, Marek Kuboš travels back in time and space to revisit his completed and unrealized films, retracing his own filmmaking history. He visits the protagonists of his documentaries, confronts their past images captured in the films with their current appearance, and combines film excerpts with repeated re-enactments. He reveals his creative struggles with filmmaking and, in conversations with fellow filmmakers, confronts various approaches to the ethics of documentary filmmaking. Ultimately, in trick sequences, he engages in conversations with his own alter ego, which urges him to abandon inhibitions and, in the name of art, disregard responsibility towards the world and other people.

Gradually, he identifies external causes for his crisis: paperwork that literally stands between the camera and the protagonist; the fears of individuals who experienced the euphoria of freedom in the 1990s but became conformist and now fear being on camera; the tabloidization of the media, which seeks out inauthentic exhibitionists. But there are also internal causes: the director's introversion and loss of contact with the world; his own "softness," fearing to harm his protagonists. He also proposes preliminary solutions: dealing with an unscrupulous double; removing his previous film from YouTube to prevent anonymous commentators from attacking his protagonist; asking the participant ridiculed in a reality show not to appear on television anymore; considering making a fictional film; attempting to distance himself from his mother to find a partner.

Kuboš's self-portrait is not just an autobiography; it is also autofiction and, last but not least, cultural history. It speaks about the changing social atmosphere from the 1990s to the present, the increasing commercial pressures of life, the loss of immediate human connections, and the rise of cynicism. It also reflects on the legacy of a filmmaking generation that, since the turn of the millennium, has been focused on reflecting social reality. Lastly, *The Last Self-Portrait* is also a discussion about the forms and ethics of documentary filmmaking.

Kuboš frames his self-portrait with the central metaphor of a journey. This is physically present through the repeated filming of himself and respondents in a car or walking on the road at the end. Figuratively, it is represented through the rear-view mirror and windshield of the car, which continually show what is left behind. These tropes of the journey, along with the film's structure using Kuboš's film archive, emphasize the temporal disparity between the present Kuboš and his past self, between his present-day protagonists and those from the past.

The temporal disparity highlights the physical transformation of Kuboš himself and his protagonists, as well as the transformation of places, especially the railway station in Kraľovany, which the director portrayed in a humorous essay about rules and people in his student film *Železničná stanica II. triedy Kraľovany* (1998). It is precisely in these passages that the epistemological effect of the archival footage is most evident, allowing for an understanding of the changes over time, as well as the emotional impact of perceiving this change, known as the archival affect.

Kuboš portrays his journey of self-discovery and self-identification as a romance, as a story of triumph of good over evil in the metaphorically conceived quest of life. He stylizes himself with a certain detachment as the hero fighting against the adversities of fate and his own uncertainties, ultimately seeking an answer to the question of how to come to terms with the world both as a filmmaker and as a person/man.

At Full Throttle as a bitter satire of heroism

According to White, "the archetypal theme of satire is the precise opposite of this romantic drama of redemption; it is, in fact, a drama of disruption." (Ibid.) Miro Remo presents such a drama of disruption, sophisticatedly disguised as an upside-down romance, in his film *At Full Throttle*. The film portrays Jaroslav, a fifty-year-old living on the Moravian-Slovak border. Jaroslav is a passionate enthusiast of autocross, who modifies racing cars for his girlfriend, Jitka, a race

car driver. Both are mature individuals who have not had an easy life and, both in everyday life and on the racing track, face one obstacle after another.

Remo's portrayal of the protagonist, whose central conflict lies in the clash between imagination and reality, has many facets. He presents him as an idealist, constantly pursuing his goal regardless of the circumstances: undeterred by repeated defeats in races, tirelessly improving and repairing the racing car, living for his beloved Jitka's desired victory. He is also portrayed as a man broken by fate: the son of a man whose property was confiscated by the communists during collectivisation, a former miner who earned a lot during socialism but lost his job after its fall, and now has compromised health and nerves. Additionally, he is depicted as a romantic hero, faithfully standing by his partner, with whom he found not only a life companion but also the will to live after his failed marriage. And finally, as a man in constant conflict with his family: he is in legal disputes with his adult children over property and constantly argues with his aging mother, who does not understand his passion for cars. Remo, in turn, encourages the viewer to oscillate between amusement at the absurdity of the protagonist's efforts and pity for his wasted fate.

The plot of this portrait unfolds as a series of unsuccessful attempts to overcome obstacles. Jitka gets stuck in the mud during the races or the car's engine stops working, Jaroslav is dragged from one court case with his daughter to another. In conversations with the director, his girlfriend and his mother, Jaroslav reflects on his life's failures, but at the same time, we see that he doesn't give up. He identifies himself with Don Quixote, the knight of the woeful countenance, who fought against windmills but in the name of authentic ideals. And finally, victory comes, and Jitka places first in the races.

It seems that Jaroslav's struggle had meaning. He celebrates his triumph in the circle of friends at a concert of the xenophobic music group "Ortel". Here, this eternal outsider finally finds recognition within his community, and during a song with explicitly anti-Islamic lyrics, he experiences rare moments of harmony with the surrounding world. However, for the viewer, it is a moment of sobriety, as Remo subverts the meaning of the previous events. He shifts towards what White calls romantic satire: "a form of representation intended to expose, from an ironic standpoint, the fatuity of the Romantic conception of the world." (Ibid., p. 10) Until then, the viewer perceived Jaroslav mainly as a somewhat eccentric idealist and followed his growing frustration due to a chain of life's failures. The story of the film was read as a tale of love overcoming obstacles. Despite mild amusement, one couldn't help but feel a mixture of pity and admiration for his determination. Now, however, the characters' frustration finds

a simple solution in collective rejection of other identities, and suppressed aggression is released through a straightforward vent. Jaroslav, the idealistic knight, suddenly transforms into Jaroslav, the latent aggressor in the last scene.

Similarly to Marek Kuboš, Miro Remo also works with the central trope of a journey as a metaphor for life. He portrays Jaroslav and Jitka behind the wheel and on the backseat, during races and travels, even in private moments of sleep. However, unlike Kuboš, Remo does not focus on the journey in relation to the past but in relation to the obstacles that need to be overcome in the present. These obstacles are physically manifested during races and emotionally in interpersonal relationships. But in the spirit of satire, Remo satirizes the metaphor of obstacles: he does not present it as a grand goal to be overcome but as mundane failures or an annoying fly that constantly bothers the protagonists with its buzzing. This fly even makes its way into the closing credits, which follow the portrait of the central couple dancing. With a similar ironic effect, Remo manipulates the image in a shot where Jaroslav sits in the racing car under a colourful rainbow.

Remo, unlike Kuboš, is not directly involved in his documentary discourse but rather through authorial interventions. However, like Kuboš, he utilizes archival material, but in two different ways. In the visual component, this is achieved through home movies without sound, capturing Jaroslav's original family. Despite Jaroslav's negative statements about his former wife, these family scenes evoke a lost domestic idyll, reinforcing his claim that things were good back then. Remo complements the family archive with Jaroslav's old photographs, archival news footage, and photos and headlines from period press. In the audio component, memory is evoked by popular songs from the 1980s, which implicitly refer to the protagonist's current situation and create the impression of his subjective experience through a mental return to an idealized pop past. Jaroslav's mother also speaks of the past as a better world in her chillingly humorous comments while reading tabloids or reminiscing about the communist era. While for Kuboš the trope of a journey was a way to refer to his future through a reflection on the past, for Remo's protagonist the journey is a process of continuous disruption. The resentment of an unfulfilled life can be seen as the root of the xenophobic inclinations of the characters who seek self-identification. In the surprising final scene, Remo does not satirize the protagonist's search for self-identification itself but rather its resolution.

The State Capture as a collective tragedy

According to White, tragedy portrays the downfall of a person in their struggle with the world. However, this downfall has a deeper meaning because "there

has been a gain in consciousness for the spectators of the contest. And this gain is thought to consist in the epiphany of the law governing the human existence which the protagonist's exertions against the world have brought to pass." (Ibid., p. 9) Zuzana Piussi is undoubtedly the most tireless chronicler of the current Slovak socio-political scene.[14] In her film *The State Capture*, she focused on the most traumatic event of the recent past: the murder of investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová, which occurred in 2018. Piussi unravels the complex web of connections between Kuciak's work and death, as he was dedicated to exposing the relationships between the government, the business environment, and the mafia. The director portrays this crime as a symptom of the state's failure.

Piussi focuses on the confrontation of honest people, represented by Kuciak, with corruption and crime that have permeated the state apparatus. She creates a richly structured mosaic of testimonies from dozens of respondents, through which she presents her version of the story behind Kuciak's murder. Her respondents come from diverse backgrounds, including journalists, political commentators, former secret service officers, philosophers, former politicians, security analysts, lawyers, and representatives of civil protest initiatives.

This mosaic is assembled not only from interviews but also from other heterogeneous materials, such as footage from the demonstrations "For a Decent Slovakia / Za slušné Slovensko," which led to the government's reconstruction after Kuciak's murder. It also includes anti-protest warnings about the alleged threat of a civil war provoked by Western powers, recordings from government press conferences and businessman Marián Kočner's trial, as he was accused of ordering the murder. Additionally, there are shots from Ján Kuciak's funeral, published and unpublished photographs documenting the surveillance of various figures involved in the case, audiovisual materials taken from the news or YouTube, audio recordings of phone calls and live conversations, as well as text message transcripts. Piussi weaves these diverse materials together with animated passages and her own commentary, vividly illustrating the connections between politics, business, the secret services, the police, justice, and journalism.

The director concludes that while she initially thought the title *The State Capture* might be an exaggeration, after hearing testimonies during the trial of Marián Kočner, the accused businessman with political connections, she realized that a stolen state is indeed a reality in Slovakia. The tragedy of the state's collapse is complete. However, the film also offers awareness of a possible solu-

[14] Martin Palúch draws attention to the uniqueness of Zuzana Piussi's position. See Palúch (2015, p. 251 and 267).

tion, which one of the respondents, a Czech philosopher, mediates: the systemic problem of the state, infested with parallel structures, can only be resolved by separating politics from business.

The citizens, like spectators of the fight for the rule of law, singing the national anthem during protests, might be aware of this possibility. But Piussi combines their image with the tragic finale of the city filled with cranes and high-rise buildings, representing developers connected to politics. This juxtaposition conveys a powerful message about the struggle for a just state amid the challenges posed by intertwined political and business interests.

While the previous two films worked with archival material to evoke the past, in *The State Capture*, archive footage serves an evidential function to support the director's discourse. Similarly, Piussi employs a skilful montage of testimonies, which mutually corroborate and verify her interpretations. Piussi doesn't solely select respondents based on their relevance to the case but also for their controversial nature. During interviews, she interacts with some respondents, adjusting their reactions or confronting them with subsequent testimonies, while leaving others unmodified. Furthermore, she freely integrates archival material into the film, blending it seamlessly with the overall narrative.

The film's mosaic-like structure follows the principles of synecdoche, describing the phenomenon by using its various parts to symbolize the whole. The arrangement of the mosaic appears smooth due to the connections established between its components. However, it is essential to recognize that the portrayal of events is inherently selective, and without a more thorough articulation of individual testimonies, it may inadvertently support conspiracy theories, which are also present in the film.[15]

Osadné as a local comedy

According to White, "in comedy, hope is held out for the temporary triumph of man over his world by the prospect of occasional *reconciliations* of the forces at play in the social and natural worlds." (White, 1973, p. 9) This reconciliation is traditionally represented by festive occasions that culminate in the process of transformation. The conflict in a comedy ultimately leads to harmonization. In his film *Osadné*, Marko Škop portrays the story of the small Eastern Slovak village of Osadné on the road to Europe in a comedically structured plot. The village's problem lies in its isolation from the world, lack of job opportunities,

[15] Synecdoche as a crucial creative technique of Zuzana Piussi was described by Mária Ferenčuhová (2009).

and population decline due to the migration of young people for work. Symbolic heads of the small community – the mayor, a former communist who has governed the village for thirty-six years, and a young Orthodox priest – embark on a mission to revitalize Osadné by connecting it with Europe. The mayor aims to build a House of Mourning with the help of EU funds, while the priest plans to establish a spiritual centre.

Škop labels the film as a "document-toury movie" in the opening titles, implying a kind of documentary film journey. He organizes it into three chapters along the axis of Osadné – Brussels – Osadné. The visual motif of the journey dominates the entire film, as the protagonists from Osadné travel to the world, or the world represented by official authorities comes to Osadné. Although the mayor and the priest join forces in their common effort, the film suggests through their mirrored representation that there is also rivalry and separation in their worlds.

The aging mayor, who overcomes a heart attack while filming, represents the dwindling Ruthenian population. The young priest, expecting the birth of his first child with his wife, symbolizes hope for the future. The mayor embodies secular power, while the priest represents ecclesiastical authority. The priest provides spiritual comfort to the faithful, while the mayor helps them in their fields. The mayor hangs the EU flag alongside the Slovak flag on the municipal building, whereas in the home of an old woman who the priest visits, a communist diploma hangs right next to a crucifix. The mayor and his wife watch a programme on television about the only Czechoslovak astronaut from the socialist era, while the priest and his wife choose a name for their child. However, both are prepared for the journey to Brussels, where they were invited by a Slovak member of the European Parliament to seek support for their development plans, by their beloved wives. The mayor's wife prepares pork cutlets, while the priest's wife prepares soy-based cutlets. The mayor's wife packs formal shirts and ties for him, while the priest's wife packs Bibles.

After their visit to Brussels with the caricaturist and representative of the Ruthenian minority, Fedor Vico, both are sobered by the lack of interest in their grand plans. They realize that neither the Slovak European Commissioner nor the former Czechoslovak astronaut and current Czech member of the European Parliament are particularly interested in their projects. In line with folk wisdom, they conclude: "Help yourself, and the Lord God or the EU will help you too." Ultimately, both abandon their visions and instead decide to build an information board with a wooden statue of a bear – a symbol of the Ruthenians – in the village.

The film's plot is organized around a series of various rituals and festive occasions: elections, religious holidays, baptisms, funerals, welcoming official visits, events related to Slovakia's entry into the Eurozone, and the opening of tourist attractions. These celebrations serve as a binding force within the community and aim to connect it with the world outside. Their portrayal emphasizes the contrast between the official behaviour of the likable provincial authorities and their spontaneous expressions in private, creating a comedic tone. The final celebration of unveiling the information board is a celebration of hope: the mayor, after health problems, is "reborn" for the second time, and the priest welcomes another Ruthenian into the world. In his speech, Fedor Vico compares Ruthenians to bears that must wake up from their winter sleep to continue living. While their grand European plans for Osadné did not come to fruition, they managed to unite the community and build a symbolic path between their village and Europe. Marko Škop emphasizes this connection between the small and the large world through news reports integrated into the film, which capture the official image of Osadné's integration efforts.

Mária Ferenčuhová noticed that Škop's film is built upon spatial metaphors, depicting movement to and from Osadné in line with the European written tradition, from left to right: Osadné represents the old world on the left, Europe the new world on the right. However, the final shot of the village nestled among the mountains transitions into a map of Europe with a small red dot representing Osadné, located on its very edge and outside the circle of European stars. (Ferenčuhová, 2011) While the film contains various visual tropes, it seems that the principle of connecting Osadné with Europe is dominantly metonymic, not metaphoric – the whole is reduced to one of its parts. Osadné symbolizes isolated eastern Slovakia and its dying national minority, striving to preserve its cultural identity in the face of European globalization. Brussels, on the other hand, represents the larger world of the European Union. Similarly, the mayor and the priest, along with the MEPs, are metonymic representatives of these two worlds, with the former astronaut even being a space explorer. These two worlds have distinct spatial orientations: while Osadné and its surroundings are associated with horizontal movement along the road, in Brussels, our protagonists move vertically in tall buildings of EU institutions. Although they fail to connect these two worlds as the mayor and the priest originally envisioned, the hope for the future of Osadné through the European ethos is revitalized, and their mutual rivalry appears to be overcome in an act of reconciliation. After all, even the European Parliament made its way to the "pub parliament" in Osadné, and a piece of a Ruthenian pub, in the form of gifts for MEPs, travelled to Europe.

Conclusion

The opening question of the study asked how creating an archive of the present for the future shapes the images of collective memory and identity in Slovak documentary films dealing with contemporary socio-political topics. The answer cannot be exhaustive since these films not only work with the most recent layer of communicative memory but are also a living part of it. However, from the presented research, it is evident that Slovak documentaries addressing current socio-political issues share common characteristics: linking specific problems to a broader context, adopting an activist stance, employing reflexive and self-reflective approaches of hybrid filmmaking, and utilizing various types of archival material.

The four case studies of the films demonstrate four different paths that filmmakers choose to formulate their understanding of reality and create various possibilities to capture the ever-changing epistemic frameworks of lived reality. It became apparent that films focused on the seemingly private fates of protagonists (*The Last Self-Portrait* and *At Full Throttle*) can equally relevantly depict the current social reality as films explicitly addressing a specific socio-political problem (*The State Capture* and *Osadné*). Additionally, through the application of Hayden White's metahistorical method of analysis, it was revealed that different genres of discourse on the present relate to social reality in different ways and utilize archival material differently. While the romance *The Last Self-Portrait* and the satire *At Full Throttle* work with older and more private images of the past to evoke nostalgia through the archival effect, the tragedy *The State Capture* and the comedy *Osadné* use more recent news footage to illustrate or support their interpretations of the represented events. Furthermore, both the comedy and tragedy maintain more distance from their protagonists compared to the romance and satire - unlike the latter two, they do not enter the private sphere of the protagonists' inner experiences.

The forms of cognition and mediating knowledge about reality are not only reflected in the plots or genres of discourse but also in the tropes organizing the film's representation of reality. The four analyzed films present four possibilities of using conceptual tropes: metaphor, irony, synecdoche, and metonymy. Their validity is not universal: each film works with several types of figures to help documentarists capture and preserve images for the memories that we live by.

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Engaged Documentary Cinema in Independent Slovenia

Abstract:

The essay discusses engaged documentary cinema in independent Slovenia. It focuses on the aspects of political engagement that address the deprived, underprivileged or oppressed communities and groups in contemporary Slovenian society. In the most unenviable position among them are members of the Roma community, the administratively erased inhabitants stripped of all their civil rights, exploited seasonal workers, representatives of the LGBTQIA+ community and the like. The discussion devotes its main attention to the operation of the informal collective Newsreel Front and its latest project "If the Forests Could Talk, They Would Dry Up with Sadness", which documents the tragic situation of the refugees on the so-called "Balkan route" and their attempts at crossing the border between Croatia and Slovenia, fenced off with a razor wire.

Key words:

Slovenian documentary cinema, engaged documentary, essayistic documentary, found footage, documentary ethics, political landscape films, Newsreel Front

Introduction

The history and development of Slovenian cinema is characterised by its prolonged neglectful attitude to documentary films, both in terms of their production and the reflection on documentary filmmaking. The *Filmography of Slovenian Feature Films 1931–2010* discusses only one documentary made before 1991: *Opre Roma* (1983), a touching work by Filip Robar Dorin, who documented the unenviable living situation of the Roma communities in Slovenia according to the cinéma vérité principles. This does not mean there was no documentary activity in Slovenia, but it seems to have taken place mainly in short form or television production. In this context, the names of filmmakers such as Dušan Povh, Mako Sajko, Jože Pogačnik, Karpo Godina, Franci Slak, Alenka Auersperger, Helena Koder, Žare Lužnik and a number of others testify to a rich tradition of socially engaged, thematically diverse, creatively in-depth and aesthetically edgy documentary creativity. This, however, has (except for rare exceptions) unfortunately not received its deserved in-depth theoretical consideration or relevant inclusion in the history of Slovenian cinema.

The period after Slovenia gained its independence, in which the film sphere was subject to intensive attempts of (wild) privatisation, hostile capital takeovers and commercialisation, was also one of a state of pitiful stagnation and a struggle for funds. All this only worsened the invidious sideline position of documentary cinema. The production conditions kept changing and most documentary works were made in the framework of the national public broadcaster, which was also subject to political and capital interests. In such a situation, it was especially the auteurs who managed to fight their way to a certain independence that stood out. If we started by searching for a cineaste whose activity represented a bridge between production in the former and the new state, we would doubtlessly find them in Filip Robar Dorin.[1] His work is characterised by his creative commitment, with which he raised a number of pressing social predicaments, including the continuation of his probing of the "Roma issue", which resulted in two more in-depth studies: *Aven Chavora* (2005) and *Opre Roma 3* (2011). In the new circumstances, documentary filmmaking long endeavoured to find its place on the big screens and consequently in the awareness of the broader public especially through various forms of activism and guerrilla production. Such a deviation from subsidy cycles and state funding contributed to its increasingly more intensive development, which, especially in the last decade, boomed to the extent

[1] At the beginning of the 1980s, Robar Dorin founded Filmske alternative, one of the first independent production companies in Slovenia.

that the number of documentary works practically reached the number of fiction films and, in a certain period, even exceeded it.

Documentary engagement and commitment

Our interest is focused primarily on the documentary filmmaking that is most broadly defined as an engaged probing of contemporaneity and recent history. The concept of public engagement is discussed in the most general sense of the endeavours and activities to eliminate inequality, regardless of the specific activity in the form of social, civic or political engagement. For we are convinced that, in the processes of detecting and announcing social changes, an engaged documentary film (can be or) is the one that actively participates in the endeavours to emancipate the exploited and the underprivileged and to critique and reject universal injustices. Its frequent connection with the harbingers and bearers of social changes is reflected both in the testimonies and the conveying of information about the situation and the position of the communities or individuals that are neglected or excluded from the system and in the treatment of subversive processes, revolutionary seething, rebellious eruptions and other forms of popular insurrection, in which it often also directly participates. With its activity, it expresses much of what Amos Vogel, one of the key thinkers on "film as a subversive art", categorises among the fundamental criteria of emancipatory cinema:

> The basis of politically and socially subversive cinema is the tension that exists between society and artist. This expresses itself in forms and subjects that vary from country to country, resulting not from greater or lesser artistic sophistication or skill but from differing stages of societal development, from political pressure, from the absence or presence of democratic tendencies and the degree of sharpness of social contradictions. In each instance, however, the artist goes further than his particular Establishment wishes him to. This "going beyond" is the precise characteristic of all subversive art (Vogel, 1974, p. 120).

On the basis of the above, we can posit the thesis that, despite the fact that today's capitalism, which with all its brutality has also grown rampant in the countries that have emerged from the ashes of the former socialist Yugoslavia, tries to subjugate all alternative initiatives, including the forms of direct resistance against it, and change them into consumer goods, subversive practices are not only possible, but are constantly conducted – if not otherwise, then according to Samuel Beckett's famous principle: "Try again. Fail again. Fail better." Or, if we look at it from Nil Baskar's point of view expressed while analysing documentary filmmaking that endeavours to return human dignity to the out-

cast and the oppressed: "If the director's heart is on the side of the victims of the wheelwork grinding the homeless bodies of 'foreigners', his solidarity with the protesters – workers, students, autonomists, foreigners in his own country – is the commitment of a real documentarian: it is his duty to be there, too, carefully observing and listening, so he can understand, for himself and for us, what has gone wrong, so that next time it will go wrong in a different, perhaps less erroneous way." (Baskar, 2013) On the one hand, the subversive charge is certainly the most intense at the core of the processes of detecting social oppositions where the established social order is questioned and the initiatives of overcoming, rejecting or destroying the existing one (either spontaneously or in the form of organised actions) emerge. On the other hand, it is intensively reflected within the filmic treatments of the attempts at stigmatising, rejecting, excluding or erasing all that is supposed to endanger the identity of Slovenian nationhood.

Invisible destinies

At the level of content, various forms of being underprivileged and oppressed are related especially with the sort of difference or Otherness that is supposed to threaten all that the Slovenian people have managed to finally fight their way to by becoming an independent nation. These Others appear primarily in two predominant aspects of "danger": the danger forcing its way in from the outside and the threats that supposedly "lurk" and "scheme" within national borders. Among the bearers of the external threat are especially refugees, seasonal workers or economic migrants and representatives of the communities living on the other side of the border. The refugee tragedy and the disenfranchisement of foreign workers is examined especially by the Newsreel Front (discussed in more detail later) and also Metod Pevec in *Home* (2015), an observational documentary about a former workers' hostel where unenviable temporary dwellings are shared by sidelined seasonal workers and socially endangered youngsters who cannot afford more suitable accommodation. Nadja Velušček and Anja Medved, on the other hand, have for many years focused on the dilemmas regarding the possibility of the communities from both sides of the Slovenian-Italian border co-existing and cooperating. Especially in their most prominent works *My Borderline* (2002), *Binding Memories* (2006), *Timeless River* (2010) and *Burnt in Memories* (2017), they employ a combination of personal perspective and historical memory to point out the phenomenon of the border, which simultaneously divides and connects, endangers and calms, represents an area of conflicts and hate, but also reconciliation and coexistence.

The other type of threat – the one coming from within – is (in addition to the already mentioned Roma people, who were especially the focus of Robar Dorin's films) represented by the second generation of economic migrants; the so-called erased (25,671 individuals who, with a political decree in 1992, were stripped of their Slovenian civil rights and their right of residence); members of the LGBTQIA+ community; participants in various uprising movements, which most intensely spread during the great economic and political crisis between 2012 and 2014; and also women, especially the artists and activists who strive for equality in male-dominated misogynous circumstances. The problem of the erased is the subject matter of Dimitar Anakiev's *Slovenia My Homeland* (2010) and Damjan Kozole's *The Long Vacation* (2012), works that in the form of witness-bearing documentariness convey the fate of those whom the xenophobic bureaucratic gesture reduced to "bare life". Siniša Gačić's *A Fight For* (2014), a documentary shot in the manner of direct cinema, is a detailed analysis of the dynamics of the rise and the disintegration of the Slovenian variant of the *Occupy! movement.* The film is a testimony about the process of class struggle and at the same time its constant self-reflection, which provides an in-depth study of the problem of political insurrection in its key dimensions. In *Growing Up* (2017), an intimate subjective document about a little boy growing up and the political struggle of his two mothers Daja and Jedrt against the discrimination of their family, the same filmmaker faces us with an endless series of problems encountered by same-sex parented families and the broader LGBTQIA+ community in Slovenia. The problem of neglecting women is documented by Urša Menart's *What About Mojca?* (2014) through foregrounding the specifically filmic dispositif. This compilation essay examines the role and significance of female characters in Slovenian filmmaking and through them provides an analysis of the changes to their social status.

To the mentioned bearers of the stigma of "being different", we can also add the filmmakers that probed the traumatic facts of Slovenian reality "from the outside" – either "foreigners" filming in Slovenia or Slovenian filmmakers who directed their gazes beyond national and/or state borders. Such is the docufiction exploration of the limitations in "Europe without borders" *Fortress Europe* (2000), with which the famous Serbian "Black Wave" filmmaker Želimir Žilnik decisively criticises the bureaucratisation of the EU's migration politics in the territory of Slovenia. Such is the compilation-essay documentary by the American photographer and filmmaker Michael Benson *Predictions of Fire* (1996), which deals with the rebellious charge and creative development of the artistic-collective project *Neue Slowenische Kunst*. Such is the poetical landscape documentary *Greetings From Free Forests* (2018) by the American researcher Ian Soroka, whose collaging-essayistic approach places it among the examples of political, social and

cultural awareness raising that draw their inspiration for current emancipatory endeavours from the revolutionary (recent) past. Such is the "view of Europe through the eyes of a little girl from the Balkans that can easily shatter our notions about where we live", as we can read in the announcement of Petra Seliškar's poetical-political essay Mother Europe (2012), which, through the perspective of the daughter from a nationally mixed marriage between a Slovenian woman and a Macedonian man, paints a picture of a "new Europe" and the fate of those who do not have the privilege of being its fully fledged citizens. And such is also the retrospective view of Slovenian filmmakers on the happening in the former federation as represented by *Karpotrotter* (2013), an essayistic compilation film dialogue between two cineastes from different generations: Matjaž Ivanišin and Karpo Godina, his former professor at the film academy and a "Black Wave" *auteur*, who, in addition to his own directorial feats, also worked as a DOP with Želimir Žilnik and a series of other filmmakers of the New Yugoslav Film.

Nika Autor and the Newsreel Front

In the context under consideration, one of the forms of film engagement that made the greatest breakthrough is the filmmaking that was established and has developed and grown beyond the predominating production cycles – in the form of independent, guerrilla, low- or no budget documentary activity related to the broader art field. Among its key actors in Slovenia is the artist Nika Autor in her individual engagement and the group cooperation of the *ad hoc* collective Newsreel Front. On the one hand, the collective's name originates in the fact that it revives the creative practices of the newsreel as a specific documentary form that, in historical development, played an exceptional propagandistic and anti-propagandistic role. On the other hand, by foregrounding the "front aspect", the collective strives to act so as to deconstruct and construct at the same time – it rejects and destroys the hardened images and beliefs that the capitalist system creates and indoctrinates with, while conceiving images that sum up the reality of the struggles for emancipation and equality and endeavouring to find formal solutions that best suit the situation under consideration.[2]accessed: 22.6. 2023].

[2] This is most tellingly explained in the justification of the jury at the Rotterdam film festival that conferred the newly established Found Footage Award on Nika Autor for one of the internationally most prominent works of the Newsreel Front *Newsreel 63 – The Train of Shadows* (2017): "This film convincingly introduces a new critical paradigm in which every new image questions the entire history of film as a medium and its role within society. It does so through brilliant use of the train as a rich metaphor for human aspiration and technological advancement, connecting the first Lumière film all the way through to the current practice of shooting smartphone footage to document refugees on their quest for a better life." Available: http://press.iffr.com/163669-iffr-presents-47th-edition-award-winners [

That is why their aesthetics is characterised by a distinct formal heterogeneity, ranging from found footage and essay film (which, in addition to the considered subject matter, also intensively reflect on the ways and forms of their audiovisual representation) to observational and participatory documentary film.

The different approaches are adapted to the urgency of the problems that the individual projects deal with, which range from the traumatic consequences of the crimes committed during the time of Yugoslavia's disintegration, the questioning of the "truths" of recent history, the partisan struggle and the values of the revolution, the activities of uprising movements and protest happenings in Slovenia, the exploitation of seasonal workers from the former republics of SFRY and the refugee tragedy (which exploded during the time of the so-called Balkan route and is now only worsening) to the question of the relation between art and various forms of activism. The mentioned topics are conveyed in various formats – as feature-length documentaries (*In The Land of Bears*, 2011; *Newsreel 80 – Metka, Meki*, 2021), as newsreel episodes within an individual work (*Newsreel 55*, 2013, *Newsreel 63 – The Train of Shadows*, 2017) and as shorter independent units (*Report on the State of Asylum Seekers in the Republic of Slovenia*, 2009; *Postcards*, 2010; *Newsreel 242 – Sunny Railways*, 2023), which are often connected into diptychs, trilogies or multipart collections (*Newsreel 65 – We Have too Much Things in Heart...*, 2021; *If the Forests Could Talk, They Would Dry Up with Sadness*, 2022).

In the creative processes of the Newsreel Front, one of the most important forms of uncovering the existing reality and constructing a new one is the so-called "film act" – an activist practice that does not conclude with the film's postproduction and distribution, but continues in the forms of its engaged viewing where the screenings are accompanied by direct interactions with the audience through lectures, discussions and commentaries, which often also receive their printed version in the form of "Newsreel Shreds" – flyers, leaflets, booklets and also more extensive journals that are published upon the film's release. Such a procedure not only complements the film, but also makes it easier for the audience to become its active participants. A film act is a method that, among other things, encompasses the strategies of solidarising, informing, awareness raising and also educating, organising and the direct mobilising of resistance energies directed towards the transformation of both society and cinema. One of the key theoreticians of documentary filmmaking Bill Nichols, who began his exceptional pioneering work in the field of documentary studies precisely with his dissertation on the American revolutionary documentary movement Newsreel (*Newsreel: Documentary Filmmaking on the American Left*), defined the creativity of the Slovenian collective as follows:

> Newsreel Front's work restores a sense of life, and value, to people who might otherwise be merely objectified and forgotten. Their reports identify a massive and dangerously overlooked threat to the social order: the reduction of human beings to objects, even criminals, based on their place of origin and the validity of their travel documents. Newsreel Front indirectly, implicitly asks – Who are we and what must we do to affirm and defend our status, and the status of others, as full human beings when institutions and nation states fail to honor this fundamental premise? (Nichols, 2017b, p. 43)

Migrants and refugees in "silent forests"

Since the almost fifteen-year-long creativity of the Newsreel Front has already become well-established at the Slovenian and international level, also through a series of theoretical reflections in English (as we will show at the end of the article), we will focus primarily on its latest newsreel project "If the Forests Could Talk, They Would Dry Up with Sadness" (2022). The project deals with the fate of the refugees on the European southeast "Schengen border" (which at the time still ran between Slovenia and Croatia, but has recently been moved to Croatia's eastern borders), along which Slovenia put up panel and razor-wire fences.[3] The project includes an exhibition consisting of three newsreels – the short films *Newsreel 2021 – Here I Have Picture* and *Newsreel 670 – Red Forests* and the medium-length film *Newsreel 4517 – Across the Water to Freedom*, accompanied by a collection of texts and visual interventions. At the project's thematic core is the famous "Game", which is what the refugees themselves call a series of (mostly failed[4]) attempts to cross from Croatia into Slovenia, and the consequences of the brutality of border authorities, which they are constantly subjected to. That is why their fundamental strategy consists of endeavours for "invisibility", which enables them to "remain in the game" and evade violence and deportation.[5] In this inhumane game, nature becomes their key ally – especially the forests, which, on the one hand, offer them physical shelter, in which they arrange their provisional accommodation, while, on the other, they are their hiding places from the executors of repression, who prey on them at every step.

[3] The entire length of the fence encompasses 143 km of panels and 60 km of razor wire, which Slovenia began removing after the change in government in 2022.

[4] The protagonist of *Newsreel 4517 – Across the Water to Freedom*, the Tunisian activist Zied Abdellaoui, who managed to reach Vienna, where he was granted asylum, spent three years and eight months in the extraordinary state of his refugee odyssey, travelled 4517 km and went through 26 "games".

[5] This is tellingly expressed in the following excerpt from the commentary of *Newsreel 670 – Red Forests*: "Prepping for the *Game*. / Sheltered by the forest. / An exercise in endurance. / Where *being seen* means *game over* / and only *invisibility* represents *a chance*."

Thus, the project's internal dynamics also follows the buildup of invisibility that its protagonists strive towards – as, in the end, it is precisely invisibility that becomes the most suitable, autonomous expression of their condition.

Like most projects by the Newsreel Front, the latest one was also largely conditioned by the guerrilla mode of its production due to the activist approach, which follows the idea and vision regardless of the financial and material conditions for their realisation. We could therefore say that one of the fundamental aesthetic determinations here is the concept of a "poor image" as defined by the committed artist and theoretician Hito Steyerl, who herself cooperated on the "silent forests" newsreel project. Steyerl believes that "the circulation of poor images initiates another chapter in the historical genealogy of nonconformist information circuits" and thus "takes its place in the genealogy of carbon-copied pamphlets, cine-train agit-prop films, underground video magazines and other nonconformist materials, which aesthetically often used poor materials" (Steyerl 2009, 8). In view of the essayistic creative principles, according to which the representation of the happening is closely intertwined with the author's reflection on the possible modes of its expression, the film trilogy can also be placed in the category of poetical documentariness, a concept developed by Bill Nichols in his famous "modes" theory of classifying documentary films:

> The poetic mode is particularly adept at opening up the *possibility of alternative forms of knowledge* to the straightforward transfer of information, the pursuit of a particular argument or point of view, or the presentation of reasoned propositions about problems in need of solution. This mode *stresses mood, tone, and affect* much more than displays of factual knowledge or acts of rhetorical persuasion. The rhetorical element remains underdeveloped, but the expressive quality is vivid. We learn in this case by affect or feeling, by gaining a sense *of what it feels like to see and experience the world* in a particular, poetic way. (Nichols, 2017a, pp. 116–117; my emphases)

The newsreel trilogy of "silent forests" has no particular chronological order, but for the purposes of this paper, I will discuss it in the following sequence: *Newsreel 4517*, *Newsreel 2021* and *Newsreel 670*. The first film deals with the refugee fate of Zied Abdellaoui (see note 11) in a relatively classical manner of an observational documentary. In the initial part of the film, we follow his life in the "limbo" of preparing for the recurring "games" of trying to cross the Schengen border, while, in the second part, we see fragments of his life in Vienna, which he managed to run to. In its first two thirds, *Newsreel 2021* faces us with the life in a temporary refugee camp in the middle of a forest, where some of the

"inhabitants" use their photos to mark their temporary, improvised dwellings, knocked and glued together out of branches, cardboard, polyvinyl and tin foil. Their testimonies about their unenviable condition are complemented by the footage they shot themselves as a certain authentic audiovisual commentary on the images shot by the documentarian. In the last third of the film, people suddenly disappear from the picture – what remains are only the forgotten clothes and the shredded remains of the improvised shelters (where the discarded cardboard boxes of humanitarian aid with the boastful symbols of the EU stand out as cynical emphases). Thus, the camera records only the absence with the traces of recent presence, attested to especially by the lost, forgotten, discarded footwear of the most various shapes, colours and purposes covered by fallen leaves, branches and undergrowth. The film patiently devotes enough time to the footwear for us to sense the imprint of the decaying sole and the impression of the walked journey...

The reality of absence is fully developed in *Newsreel 670*, where there is no longer any trace of refugee presence, rather some completely different traces appear – the traces of brutal human relentlessness. The latter is "embodied" in the Slovenian razor wire, which extends through the forests, bushes and meadows on the Schengen border. In the image field, we watch various static images of the landscape and the intrusive danger cutting into it, filmed in a distinctly aesthetic way, for every shot could become an idyllic postcard in which the rust-proof wire is primarily an interesting decoration. The commentary in the "subtitles" describes its key characteristics, its role and significance and its influence on and consequences for people and nature. Similarly to the visual part, the textual part also emphasises, in a distinctly poetic way, all that we cannot see, but is present in our awareness and our notions, perhaps even our knowledge – in our consciousness about the reality that mercilessly lurks and waits, cuts, tears and rips up… This contemplative, calm visual atmosphere is complemented and enhanced by "Deep Waters", a dreamy song by the Australian instrumental rock band *Dirty Three*, which can be heard throughout the newsreel and serves as the film's "editing matrix" since the transitions between the scenes consistently follow the rhythm of the melody. At one level, we could consider the film to be an exercise in the style of counterpointing opposites, an emotional rollercoaster that appeals to our visual sensitivity and, by way of abstraction, tries to raise our awareness about the reality we usually avert our eyes from.

The film, however, also contains another dimension, which is a consequence of the optical-chemical characteristics of analogue film technology and the guerrilla, low-budget mode of production. The camera with which the film was shot

had a technical error, due to which the light that penetrated the camera coloured certain spots on the film red, orange or yellow or completely exposed the film. That is how visual aberrations were created, a sort of optical stain in the form of glows, reddenings, which more or less intensively determined the image until excess finally "predominated" over normality. That is also why the statement of the film's commentary that accompanies the height of the audiovisual intervention is quite clear and unambiguous: "The forest is red, not green." In an incisive analysis of this creative process, Nace Zavrl emphasises that the mentioned realisation clearly echoes the categorical perverting of "the ossified patterns of understanding", which "opens the possibility of a different, new, still unimaginable future. A future that only a technical error with its 'mistaken', 'misguided', 'unnatural' vision can realise" (Zavrl, 2022, p. 30). But the author goes even a step further and in the fact that the filmmaker insisted on the "solutions" or images that had not been planned, but just happened recognises the phenomenon of the "technical unconscious". In a dialogue with Walter Benjamin, who developed the concept of the "optical unconscious"[6] already back in 1931, he claims that, similarly to the filmic and photographic image, the photo-chemical materiality manages to capture something that escapes the ordinary observer:

> Instead of the "optical" unconscious, *Red Forests* features something else. *The technical unconscious*: that which flawless craftsmanship cannot see; that which evades optical perfection. A camera and a lens worth tens of thousands of euros might see the calm and peace of riverside forests, but the dimensions of blood, camouflage, and unconditional camaraderie remain alien to them. Here (…) only a technical error can intervene. Only with a mistake that is not one at all can a different, re-established world be imagined in contemporary cinema. Only with a mistake that discovers the horizons are the changes of a slightly less wrong world traced on the screen. Only with a mistake that uncovers the unconscious can we see the depths of the forest, the forest of solidarity (Zavrl, 2022, pp. 30–31; author's emphases).

Presence in absence

The above makes it clear that one of the central questions of the project is the relation between presence and absence in images and the possibility and impos-

[6] Benjamin first used the concept of the "optical unconscious" in his "Little History of Photography". By applying it to the field of cinema, he developed it further in the latest version of his famous 1939 essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction".

sibility of a filmic representation of the states of exception of human existence. In the conceptual basis of such a relationship, heterogeneous creative visions and the theoretical reflections that consider them coincide in a picturesque and powerful intertwinement of the energy forces of "mobilising the gaze" as discussed by Jean-Luc Nancy in his monograph The Evidence of Film. His imperative is based on the belief that an explicit image never shows "everything" – least of all the truth – and that the possibility of actually grasping the meaning of an image is subject to the process of mobilising the gaze. That is a unique sort of an engagement on the part of the viewer, which can be prompted especially by images characteristic of the "intensified cinema" that goes from its inside towards "an essence" directed towards presence. But, as Nancy says, "presence is not a mere matter of vision: it offers itself in encounters, worries, or concerns" (Nancy, 2001, p. 30). They are the forces that break the fetters of the indifference of the "objective" showing, the "credible" presenting or the "neutral" representing of reality. On the contrary, it is about "a set-up for a complex configuration in the relation between presence and absence, on the one hand, and appearance and reality, on the other" (Nancy, 2001, p. 34).

Twenty years after Nancy's epochal study, Pavle Levi[7] published his booklet *Minijature: o politici filmske slike*, in which he explores the new conceptuality of engaged audiovisuality. He devotes his attention especially to "political landscape films", which is how he names the documentaries from the territories of former Yugoslavia that deal with the traumatic topics of the bloody disintegration of the federation and the consequences of the crimes that the victims, who have been forever marked by the atrocities, are still facing. This category also includes works that focus on various aspects of the unenviable life situations in post-Yugoslav reality, which the engaged filmmakers call our attention to – from the expansion of rampant capitalism and the consequences of neoliberal globalisation (the turbulence of migrations, universal exploitation, poverty, surveillance, dehumanisation and injustices) to the problems of (new) borders, refugee crises and ecological catastrophes. These works are characterised by their focus on the landscapes where the tragic devastations took place, caused by the tendencies to subjugate fellow human beings, on the one hand, and the liberation

[7] The Serbian film theoretician, who has lectured at Stanford University for many years, is among the people who deserve the most credit for introducing the concept of post-Yugoslav cinema, which he did in 2007 in his pioneering work *Disintegration in Frames: Aesthetics and Ideology in the Yugoslav and Post-Yugoslav Cinema*, with which he symbolically overcame the predominance of the Balkanological approach in the discussions of the cinemas of former SFRY.

endeavours of the oppressed, on the other.[8] On one level, Levi points out the determinations with which he defines the general role of the relation between nature and people or the reaction of nature to "civilisational" interventions. On another level, he calls attention to that "which with its dominant experience most strikes the eye" (Levi, 2021, p. 32). The experience that he points out is the absence of people, of (living or dead) human bodies, for the discussed films involve a "radically reduced" depiction, landscapes from which people are disappearing. So it is a matter of an asceticism based on a clear ethical principle: "That is how landscapes remember a crime! For the mentioned filmmakers, asceticism at the level of representation even means a sort of a common 'ethical imperative' about the relation between film and crime. We could say: the film image will be charged, saturated with absence because these films are based on a traumatic experience …" (Levi, 2021, pp. 35–36).[9]

The foregrounded interventions thus testify to a certain universality of creative processes, art practices and the reflection on them, which through their dialogue and mutual enrichment become a unique common emancipatory project motivated by an encounter with the increasing indifference of the predominant modes of representation. This intertwinement strengthens the vision of the "film act" where the creative process does not end when the lights in the cinema come on (or various screens are turned off), but lasts until the awareness of the urgency of engagement fades away, the engagement that Tomas Waugh recognises as "combined documentation, provocation, historiography, interpersonal encounter, and call to solidarity and action …" (Waugh, 2017, p. 30). Thus, Nace Zavrl's concept of the "technical unconscious", which defines the breakthrough nature of the newsreel trilogy, fits well with the creative imperatives of "Relational Filmmaking" as defined by the activist media artist Julie Perini in her "programme" text "Relational Filmmaking: A Manifesto":

[8] In this context, it is worth mentioning Martin Pollack's influential notion of "tainted landscapes", which he defined as follows: "These are landscapes *that were places of mass killings committed covertly and out of plain sight, often under strict secrecy.* And after the massacre, the perpetrators make every conceivable effort to erase the traces. Inconvenient witnesses were 'taken care of'; the pits into which corpses were tossed were filled with soil, levelled, and in many cases sowed with grass and carefully planted over with trees and bushes to enable the mass graves to disappear. *The graves are hidden, they are camouflaged*" (Pollack, 2015, p. 21).

[9] In her "Nika Autor's *Red Forests*: A Material History of Barbarism / An Ethical Perspective", Nicole Brenez also draws our attention to the ethical imperatives of the newsreel trilogy: "To us, exhausted and enraged by all the battles lost and to be fought incessantly, Nika Autor rightfully points out: The forest must become an ethical model for humans. (…) The poem about contemporary bio-power composed by Nika Autor (*Newsreel 670 – Red Forests* and the entire migrant trilogy) shines a light on our political path with its flaming colours. One rarely comes across a masterpiece more collectively indispensable" (Brenez, 2022, pp. 8–9).

> Relational filmmakers do not know what the final film will look like.
>
> *Relational filmmakers make formal decisions that address the aesthetic, ethical, technical, and personal problems encountered throughout the making of the film.*
>
> Relational filmmakers do not adhere to established modes or conventions.
>
> *Relational filmmakers make films that are abstract, factual, and fictional, all at once.*
>
> Relational filmmakers do not fuck around with these tools of representation and power.
>
> *Relational filmmakers use their tools to experiment with new ways of being and to emancipate new forms of subjectivity.*
>
> *Relational filmmakers believe that reality is the consequence of what we do together. Their films carry and conduct traces of this belief. Relational films are co-created through careful and playful interrogations of the roles performed by the people and materials involved with the film's production and reception: artists, subjects, passers-by, audiences, environments, ideas, and things* (Perini, 2011).

On the other hand, the tendency towards foregrounding invisibility in the newsreel trilogy is in clear consonance with the reflections of Pavle Levi, who in the heterogeneity of the relation between film and nature, which is often marked by the absent presence of human film protagonists, recognises one of the essential characteristics of political landscape documentaries. Namely, in following the ruthless "game" in which there can be no winner, simply because such a game should never have come into existence, the newsreel triptych of silent forests engages in another "game" – a tragic play in which the key creative element and semantic motivation is the relation between presence and absence. At the core of this "game" is the incomprehensible devastation inflicted on humanity by the institutions of the cold, ruthless system, whose consequences are invisible/unseen, concealed, denied… Because they cannot be credibly presented, the trilogy addresses other registers of perception: the method of conveying presence in absence (or vice versa) becomes a conscious gesture of resistance against, as Levi puts it, "the simplicity of thoughtlessly accepting the possibility of the 'reliability of pictorial representation'" (Levi, 2021, p. 40). For what is explicitly shown will be devalued in comparison with the rest of the "worn, trite" image field of the ideologically selected mass media companies.

Furthermore, the "absence at the heart of the image", as Levi emphasises, represents a practically "new ontology of the film image" with the key imperative that the viewer's experience of the presented reality must be "largely dissociative, disjunctive – it must be both a sensory and an intellectual experience of the established (Daneyean) 'incongruence' or 'dissonance', whereby the ethics of a film image passes into its politics" (Levi, 2021, p. 41). That is why, precisely due to its absence, what is missing, what is not there, stares us in the eyes and guides us to the attentiveness of the gaze – to the observation in which we can see and grasp all that is not or was not shown. Thus, the main devastation that the triptych defines and depicts in an active relation between absence in presence and presence in absence is actually the devastation of the gaze itself. The unbearableness of the knowledge that, again and again, dehumanisation reaches unimagined dimensions is no longer only a question of audiovisual interpretation, artistic illustration, creative incisiveness and activist engagement, but (again and) again a matter of the gaze – a matter of raising the awareness of the gaze.

Reception and reflection

Awareness raising by no means ends when the lights in the cinema come on or various screens are turned off. The vision of engaging the audience in the style of the activist strategies of Third Cinema is implemented at several levels and in various ways. In the creative segment, it is manifested in the publication of (the already mentioned) newsreel shreds, which are never merely a "catalogue" addition to the films or art projects, but are their composite part and provide an in-depth reflection on the considered problem from various aspects and theoretical approaches. In the stages of presentation, screening and reception, the Newsreel Front team (in various line-ups) attends film premieres, special screenings, exhibition openings, film festivals, symposia or panel discussions and other special events, where it cooperates with various interventions in the form of conversations, interpretations, lectures, workshops and the like. In connection with individual projects, such activities take place at the screenings and exhibitions in almost all the larger towns in Slovenia and almost all the capitals of the countries established after the disintegration of SFRY. Especially important in this context are the screenings intended for target audiences – the refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers in squats of alternative culture and the occupied territories in Metelkova Street and Roška Street in Ljubljana; the participants of the Autumn Film School, an international symposium on film theory and critique in Ljubljana, and students of the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television, University of Ljubljana, the Academy of Visual Arts, Ljubljana, Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt and Stanford University (California); and,

last but not least, high school teachers teaching film subjects at more than twenty high schools across Slovenia. In a certain period (especially when the COVID-19 measures were in force), the films were also accessible online. In addition to such activities in Slovenia and the broader region, various forms of engaged viewing are, if possible, also carried out at international venues where projects by Nika Autor and the Newsreel Front are presented – at film festivals, art museums and galleries or similar one-time events. Such was the case at the 57th Venice Biennial, Jeu de Paume, Paris; MAXXI – National Museum of 21st Century Art, Rome; Stanford University; MSUM+MG, Museum of Contemporary Arts Ljubljana; MIMA, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art; Tokyo Photographic Art Museum; GARAGE, Museum of Contemporary Art Moscow; TIFF Cinematheque, Toronto International Film Festival; IFFR, International Film Festival Rotterdam; Film Center Serbia, Belgrade; Jeonju International Film Festival; VIENNALE, Vienna; ARS Electronica and LENTOS Kunstmuseum, Linz; Dokufest, Prizren; CRIC Festival of Critical Culture, Skopje; Artport, Tel Aviv; MSU, Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb; The Kunsthaus, Graz; The Mosaic Rooms, London etc.

Based on the coverage in all the key film journals in Slovenia and a number of important journals abroad, we can also talk about a noticeable and often discussed activity of the Newsreel Front at the level of media reception and reflection. In Slovenia, the Newsreel Front was covered by the film journals *Kino!*, *Ekran* and *Kinotečnik* and by magazines and journals covering the broader fields of society and culture such as *Dialogi*, *Borec* and *Likovne besede*. At the international level, we can especially mention *Mediantrop* from Belgrade, *Studio Cinema Journal* from Austin, Texas, *International* from New York, *Journal of Canadian Art History* from Montreal, *Herri* from Stellenbosch, Senses of Cinema from Melbourne and *SCB Journal* from Berlin. At the same time, a large part of the Newsreel Front production was subject to an in-depth theoretical discussion in the chapters of the following books or journals: *Jolted Images, Unbound Analytic (2017) and Minijature: o politici filmske slike* (2021) by Pavle Levi; *Film d'actualité – l'actu est à nous, Nika Autor*, edited by Muriel Rausch (2014); *The News Belongs to Us!*, edited by Nika Autor (et al.) (2017); *Politics of Truth I: Between Reality and Fiction*, edited by Alžběta Bačíková and Anna Remešová (2017); *Corenous Stories: Cosmetics in Society and Time*, edited by Petja Grafenauer and Katja Kobolt (2020); *When Gesture Becomes Event*, edited by Alenka Gregorič and Felicitas Thun-Hohenstein (2020); *Popularization and Populism in the Visual Arts: Attraction Images,* edited by Anna Schober (2020); *Third Cinema, World Cinema and Marxism*, edited by Ewa Mazierska and Lars Kristensen (2020).

Conclusion

With the discussed works and projects of engaged Slovenian documentary filmmaking, we wanted to draw attention especially to the practices that, on the one hand, represent a reaction to social injustices and repressions and, on the other, strive to open a space for the re-establishment of the very possibility of emancipation by transcending borders and limitations. We focused primarily on the filmmakers that treat the unenviable, often traumatic existential conditions of their "social actors" or the latter themselves as equal co-creators of the film process. In the present framework, the essential thing is the mode of "staging" the film characters, with which the cineastes endeavour to overcome the in-visibility of domination, alienation, repression and resistance. For only the aspects of the equal value and equal rights of the filmmakers and their subjects, their mutual respect and personal engagement can ensure that, in their depiction, the subjects are not reduced to a symbol of suffering and hopelessness that would arouse pity and compassion, but retain the dignity of their whole person. At the same time, such creativity represents the kind of engagement that always conceives a reciprocal bond with which a special commitment is forged: a commitment that is not merely a connection, but a resonance with the mechanisms of seeing, which coincide in the characteristic tripartiteness in which all the actors of the documentary film act are co-involved. This is elaborated by Jean-Louis Comolli in his insightful analysis of the documentary process in which he rejects the model of the bipartite creative investment – the co-participation of the "filmers" and those "filmed". As a necessary pre-condition of creative transformation, a "third party" is supposed to always be formed, which

> establishes the film's necessity for both sides; something in-between that's a *third element* between self and self. Author or director, *actor or directed body, and spectator or subject are all* separated from themselves and restored, exceeded, made new to themselves, renewed in the representation that, divesting them of self, transports and transforms them within the work, in this other zone of togetherness that is the work. Each in turn becomes actor, becomes director, becomes spectator of the trio, and of each within the trio (Comolli, 2004, p. 448).

By focusing on the Other, who from a (social) actor changes into a co-creator of the film act, the works and art projects discussed in this text also belong to the field of engagement that, if Or, if we look at it from Živojin Pavlović's[10] point of view, by creating drastic images powerfully and relentlessly breaks through the armours of human indifference.

[10] Živojin Pavlović is a famous representative of New Yugoslav Film, more commonly known under the pejorative term "Black Wave", who, at the time when he was in political disfavour at home in Serbia, filmed an important part of his film oeuvre in Slovenia.

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History in Lithuanian Women's Creative Documentaries: Critical and Personal Approach

Abstract:

Over the last two decades, documentary has become an important tool of communication for Lithuanian women filmmakers since their number and visibility on national and international screens has grown significantly. Better gender balance in documentary-filmmaking noticeably increased the exposure to greater stylistic and thematic diversity, as well as paved the way for the new cinematic approaches to national and world history, politics, warfare, collective identity, and other issues traditionally assigned to men. This article examines creative documentaries directed by Giedrė Žickytė, Jūratė Samulionytė and Vilma Samulionytė, Martina Jablonskytė and Ramunė Rakauskaitė. First, it investigates how these films combine subjective, analytical, and critical approaches to examine and mediate complex phenomena in Lithuanian history. Second, it discusses how these women documentarists engage with the past and in what ways their approaches and languages differ from conventional historical documentaries.

Key words:

History, memory, Lithuanian documentary, female filmmakers, creative documentary

Introductory remarks about intersections of documentary film and history, emotions and women's cinema

In this article, I delve into two traditionally male-dominated fields of activity – documentary cinema and history – belonging to the certain cluster of "non-fictional systems", which according to Bill Nichols constitute "the discourses of sobriety" and have "instrumental power" and can "effect action and entail consequences" (Nichols, 1991, p. 3). Belinda Smaill has aptly pointed out that this way Nichols prioritized knowledge and education (which are associated with the public sphere) "while disavowing the importance of emotions" (Smaill, 2010, p. 5). She articulates a different point of view since "emotions are not only private matters" as they circulate in society "through specific textual practices" and thus confer "cultural meanings onto others" (Smaill, 2010, p. 3). Nichols' characterization of emotions as inferior in rank to knowledge, is deeply rooted in the tradition of Western thought. The field of sensations is largely associated with women, "who are represented as 'closer' to nature, ruled by appetite, and less able to transcend the body through thought, will and judgement." (Ahmed, 2014, p. 3) Several years later Nichols expanded his previous views about documentary film and the ways it engages with the audience claiming that films invite us to experience the world "emotionally" or "intellectually" and both these ways "go hand in hand in documentary" (Nichols, 2010, p. 100). A similar opinion about equal importance of emotions and "a rhetoric of cognition" has been voiced by Ib Bondebjerg (Bondebjerg, 2014, p. 14), who supported his arguments with the insights of cognitive neuroscientists. This recognition of the role of emotions in discovering documentary film meanings, mirrors a paradigmatic shift in non-fiction film production and marks an "emotive" and "personal" turn in media and culture (Ahmed, 2004, 2014; Rascaroli 2009; Smaill, 2010; Helke, 2016), which can be regarded as "an outcome of the process of postmodernisation of both the social and the artistic fields" (Rascaroli, 2009, p. 4). Another important development in the documentary milieu to be noted (especially in Europe) is the steadily growing number of women directors and producers of feature documentary films[1], which has an influence on the thematic and stylistic diversity of the

[1] In 2022 the European Audiovisual Observatory published a new report on female professionals active in the European film industry between 2017 and 2021. It revealed that women still only represent 25% of all film directors and 34% of producers working in Europe, although their presence is stronger in documentary than other film genres. For instance, women accounted for 30% of all directors of documentaries and 38.9 % average share of female producers per film. (Simone, 2022) In 2019 the European Audiovisual Observatory's published report on Female directors in European cinema from 2003 to 2018, revealed that among the films produced in the period 2013-2017, female directors represented only 21% of all directors with at least one European feature film produced and released in the period, and on average 25% of all documentary feature films were directed by women. (Simone, 2019)

films. The new millennium has been also marked with the growth of history "consumption" and "comodification", especially mediated in films and TV, and this new tendency in the nonfiction domain is remarkable, and has been widely discussed by nonfiction film researchers (Alter, 2002; Rosenstone, 2006; Kurz, 2008; Schwartz, 2008; Groot, 2009; Bell, 2011; Kortti, 2016, 2022; Bondebjerg, 2014, 2020; Mikonis-Railienė, Šukaitytė, 2020).

This article discusses these aforementioned tendencies and developments in Lithuanian documentary milieu by focusing on women documentarians' works, which can be identified as "emotive", "personal" and "historic". The analysis explores how meaning is given to historical subjects through emotions, rhetorical, narrative and aesthetic devices in four prominent Lithuanian films, produced and distributed over the previous decade: *Kaip mes žaidėme revoliuciją / How We Played the Revolution* (2012, Giedrė Žickytė), *Močiute, Guten Tag! / Liebe Oma, Guten Tag!* (2017, Jūratė Samulionytė and Vilma Samulionytė), *Lituanie, mano laisve / Lituanie, My Freedom* (2018, Martina Jablonskytė) and *Kelionės namo / Back to the Dreamland* (2019, Ramunė Rakauskaitė). Bringing together the aforementioned creative documentaries, which look into different periods of Lithuania's history, I argue that they suggest a range of different approaches (subjective and personal, analytical, and critical) to explaining the country's recent and distant past. They employ miscellaneous aesthetical, rhetorical, narrative and emotive devices to (re)frame and (re)assess the history and those who built it, while being careful with binary oppositions and mythification. Despite being "liminal" and "marginal" (these terms Dagmar Brunow applies for defining small scale (minor) productions, 2015, p. 2), these films are valuable from an epistemological point of view and play a significant role in refreshing national and European collective memory by creating emotive and personal narratives about the dramatic times of post-World War I, post-World War II, and the end of the 1990s and mediating them to people who did not directly experience the actual events and situations. They are themselves "one of the loci of debates" about a nation's heritage and history, values and identity, as national films according to Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie, "do not simply represent or express the stable features of a national culture" (Hjort, MacKenzie, 2000, p. 3-4).

Cinema, in the words of Ewa Mazierska, "is a part of history, namely a discourse on the past" (Mazierska, 2011, p. 1). Both history and the past have an intertextual nature, the notion of which changes according to the relation to texts produced through different discursive modes, media, languages, and value imperatives. One more thing that unites cinema and history is that cinematic

and historical works act as *cultural memory* (for term approach see J. Assmann and A. Assmann, 2008) in society, forming a national collective identity and reinforcing ideological and value attitudes. Films, especially documentaries, can serve as a source and evidence in historical research; can engage us in reflections about history and the past; or produce knowledge about social, political, cultural life in the past; even foster agency. Hayden White in his influential text "Historiography and Historiophoty" has argued "the representation of history and our thought about it in visual images and filmic discourse" is vital to the historical knowledge of the society (White, 1988, p. 1193). He believes that photographic and cinematic "evidence provides a basis for a reproduction of the scenes and atmosphere of past events much more accurate than any derived from verbal testimony alone". (White, 1988, p. 1194)

History and cinema are interlinked in many other ways. Vanessa R. Schwartz, for example, has suggested several areas of inquiry in this sense, namely "film as a historical object; film as an archival record; historical storytelling on film; and finally, cinehistory, the cinematic representation of the past and the simultaneous thought about it in film" (Schwartz, 2008, p. 200). It is this last feature that predominates the examination of the selected Lithuanian documentaries in this article as well as Schwartz's idea about the ontological similarity of cinema and history, as they both claim a relationship with or reference to the real world and both are concerned with the problem of temporality. (Schwartz, 2008, p. 199). Historians, however, are more concerned with the stories themselves than with the way they are told, and for filmmakers the latter is always crucial. In Žickytė's *How We Played the Revolution, the* Samulionytė sisters' *Liebe Oma, Guten Tag!*, Jablonskytė's *Lituanie, My Freedom* and Rakauskaitė's *Back to the Dreamland*, the focus on the stories and the way in which they are told is evident. By combining freely in the narrative structure of the films the recorded memories and testimonies of those who directly experienced historical moments, their family members and friends; with historians' commentaries, material from state archives and fragments of video and photo archives of private people; reflections of filmmakers themselves; and by merging essayistic or personal narrative with the language of facts, these women filmmakers bring complex moments in Lithuanian history and the people involved in them closer to the lived experiences of people of our time, encouraging them to look for parallels to the present day and to create a personal relationship with history.

"History", according to Jukka Kortti, "is the narrative construction of the human mind and cultural orientation in human life" (Kortti, 2016, p. 141), just as cinema is. Documentary film is a form of public discourse and as such has a big

role in creating a sense of the experiences of the past by allowing its authors to communicate with audiences in an aesthetically pleasing, rhetorically convincing and emotive way. Behind every audiovisual representation "lies a personal value system, authorial positions and attitudes, priorities, doubts and criticisms" (Šukaitytė, 2005, p. 65). It is therefore no coincidence that European audiovisual policy makers have been encouraging countries to foster diversity and gender balance in national audiovisual industries to make sure that previously marginalized points of view (of women, sexual and ethnic minorities, people of colour) are present on the national and European screens, especially on subjects which traditionally were assigned to men's expertise. It is worth noting that in Soviet times and the first decade after the restoration of Independence, only a few woman directors were active in the field, predominantly in creative and TV documentary. For instance in the period from 1991 to 2005 Janina Lapinskaitė was one of a few established women-documentarists, renowned for her distinct style (based on the blending of fiction and documentary components, performative, observational, interactive and poetical modes), which was exceptional in Lithuania at that time, despite the globally emerging phenomenon of *new documentary*, which Jane Chapman associates with a rejection of "the boundary distinctions of traditional documentary modes" (Chapman, 2009, p. 97), the fall of popularity of Direct Cinema and an increase in "the range of documentary possibilities and the hybrids" (Chapman, 2009, p. 18). The reason behind women's marginalization in the film industry was quite similar to Western Countries. Betsy A. McLane explains women documentarians' place in history of documentary cinema as follows: "Women were allowed into the 'ghetto' of documentary television since it was perceived as secondary to fiction and entertainment TV", moreover nonfiction-making was a less visible, less profitable and less prestigious area (McLane, 2012, p. 350).

In Lithuania the number of documentary films whose directors were women apparently increased between 2010 and 2020, due to augmented volumes of female graduates from film directing programmes, bigger available national funding, as well as mutual support and mentorship of women producers and filmmakers, namely Janina Lapinskaitė, Giedrė Beinoriūtė, Živilė Gallego, Jurga Gluskinienė, Ieva Norvilienė, Teresa Rožanovska, Dagnė Vildžiūnaitė and Giedrė Žickytė. International film festivals held in Lithuania, particularly the Vilnius Documentary Film Festival, the Human Rights Documentary Film Festival *Inconvenient Films*, the Vilnius International Film Festival *Kino pavasaris* and the European Film Forum *Scanorama,* also did their best to provide visibility to women's films at home and promoting them abroad. This vibrant documentary ecosystem gave stimulus for a new generation of women-documentarists to

build their profiles in the milieu (namely, Oksana Buraja, Ramunė Rakauskaitė, Jūratė Samulionytė and Giedrė Žickytė), and allowed great directorial feature-length debuts of directors such as Olga Černovaitė, Rugilė Barzdžiukaitė, Aistė Žegulytė, Martina Jablonskytė and Marija Stonytė, which were internationally screened at various film festivals and were well accepted at home. Better gender balance in documentary-filmmaking noticeably increased the exposure to greater stylistic and thematic diversity, as well as paving the way for new approaches to national and world history, politics, warfare and other issues traditionally assigned to men.

Women's approaches to the cinematic representation of the past

As it has been already argued, I have selected four documentary films for my qualitative analysis: Žickytė's *How We Played the Revolution, the* Samulionytė sisters' *Liebe Oma, Guten Tag!*, Jablonskytė's *Lituanie, My Freedom* and Rakauskaitė's *Back to the Dreamland* (2019), which are directed and produced by women. The sample does not represent Lithuanian history documentaries; however, the chosen films mirror vibrant trends/tendencies in global documentary filmmaking (as has been argued above) and are thought-provoking from the point of view of how they approach complicated historical subjects. These documentaries differ from a traditional history documentary (primarily aimed at TV distribution), which Nichols categorizes as "the expository" (addressing the viewer directly) in his typology of "documentary modes of representation" (Nichols, 1991, p. 32-75. The works of Žickytė, the Samulionytė sisters, Jablonskytė, and Rakauskaitė present a personal perspective on different periods and emblematic events in Lithuania's history (i.e. Lithuania's becoming an independent state after the collapse of the German and Russian empires after World War I; Lithuania's way to restoration of independence from Russia in 1988-1991; Germans' displacement from Lithuania after World War II; the connection Lithuanian World War II refugees and their children have with their homeland and returns during the Soviet occupation) and apply mixed modes of representation and emotive devices in their loosely narrated stories. Instead of reconstructing historic events, the authors (re)frame, (re)interpret and refresh them and create a space for the historical debate on the subjects of their films.

According to Ib Bondebjerg, documentaries are "important for the shaping of our sense of a historical past and for our personal and collective memory" (…), but they "cannot replace the academic discipline of history, and scientific data and arguments will always be an important background" for such works (Bondebjerg, 2014, p. 18). The films under discussion have no claims to replace histori-

cal works, however, they apply historical knowledge and use archival sources to support their arguments about events and their participants, and actual problems of those who lived in the depicted historical times. Thus, to put it in the words of Robert A. Rosenstone, they respect "the spirit of objectivity" and keep "a critical distance between the historian and his or her subject" (Rosenstone, 2018, p. 101). For the filmmakers, however, equally important are the personal traits and charisma of film characters, the testimonies and emotions of the common people who have lived through the historical events, and the personal experiences and approaches of the filmmakers themselves, or their family members or friends. This "emphasis on the personal, the intimate and the domestic" has always been according to Pam Cook "a means of self-expression for women" (Cook, 1981, p. 272). Thus, to paraphrase the historians Eileen Boris and Nupur Chaudhuri's thoughts on the work of (women) historians, Žickytė, the Samulionytė sisters, Jablonskytė and Rakauskaitė construct historical narratives as individual subjects and members of a certain generation in their profession (Boris; Chaudhuri, 1999, p. xi). Their films reconsider the path and the cost of Lithuanian's freedom, and from a historical perspective, they open up the micro-worlds of the individual, the family, minorities, migrants and artists in the historical change. In their historical cinematic narratives, we can recognize the different aspirations of women historians: to uncover "the truth about history", to "make history" and to be "the historian of change" (Boris; Chaudhuri 1999, p. xi).

Martina Jablonskytė, in *Lituanie, My Freedom,* looks back to the times of post-World War I in Lithuania and Europe. She is in particular concerned with one political event – the Paris Peace Conference, held in January 1919, which was initiated by the victorious Allies in order to agree on the terms of the peace treaties to be signed by the belligerents. As this event of the diplomatic elite was to discuss and consolidate the new national borders of the European countries, the delegation of the State of Lithuania, which was restored by the Act of Independence of 16 February 1918 (but not yet recognised *de jure*), prepared for and participated in the Conference – unfortunately without an official invitation, proper funding or diplomatic and negotiating skills. At that time, Lithuania was heavily devastated by the war, had suffered an attack by the Red Army, and soon also had to repel attacks by the Bermontists and Poles. The film thus, by revealing the motives and circumstances of the Lithuanian delegation's work at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, reveals in which complex political and economic circumstances Lithuania emerged as a new European state, and how/why this became possible. Lithuanian political scientists and historian Šarūnas Liekis shared his opinion in the film, saying that "it was a miracle that had no rational basis." Meanwhile, French historian Julien Gueslin aptly pointed out "that nothing in

world history is predetermined, therefore every step, every personal contribution counts". It is only when small actions come together into a whole that the great events of history are born.

Lituanie, My Freedom is an essayistic story inviting the viewer to reflect on how the idea of freedom and of Lithuania itself have changed over the past century. She raises the question of what the meaning of Statehood and Freedom to Lithuanians and Lithuania's patriots who lived in the 1910s and that of people of our times was? Its narrative is reminiscent of an avant-garde essay film, interweaving poetry, subjective and objective information, emotions, various space-times and geographies. The film opens with a poetic sequences of poetry by the Polish-born French poet and playwright Oscar Vladislas de Lubicz Milosz (in Lithuanian Oskaras Milašius), set against the backdrop of a bird's-eye view of the Lithuanian landscape. The film includes a number of episodes shot in Paris, where researcher Akvilė Kabašinskaitė, who develops the film's narrative, interacts with French historian Julien Gueslin and artists of various nationalities. Paris in the film represents political power and freedom as the fate of Lithuania and Lithuanians was decided during the diplomatic debates in Paris in 1919. The documentary mainly hints at Milašius' contribution to the establishment of Lithuanian statehood and diplomatic history, while sidelining the chair and other members of the Lithuanian delegation. This film's style can be described with Nora M. Alter's thoughts about the essay film as a cinematic form enabling "to make the "invisible" world of thoughts and ideas visible on the screen" and as having a distinctive structure that is "transgressive, digressive, playful, contradictory, and political." (Alter, 2002, p. 8). Moreover, films of this type are often interdisciplinary and transnational, as their makers navigate across disciplines, cultures and countries and embrace broader social and political issues (Alter, 2018, p. 6).

Ib Bondebjerg claims that documentary as a cinematic form can demonstrate different approaches to reality, namely, be authoritative (use "documentation, explanation and analysis through experts and witnesses"), speak with an "open voice" (by letting the viewer observe reality and life), and finally "take dramatized or poetic approaches to reality, in which subjectivity and objectivity, the more symbolic and imaginary, the fictional and the factual meet or even clash." (Bondebjerg, 2014, p. 57) Though the form of *Lituanie, My Freedom* is essayistic, and a poetic approach to historic reality dominates in it, other approaches are employed as well. For instance, historian Vilma Bukaitė provides the audience with factual and contextual information about the complex situation in Europe and Lithuania at the time, and the work of Lithuanian diplomats and negotia-

tors in Paris in 1919, which was little known to the general public, and which led to the recognition of Lithuania's independence. The audience also sees several photographs of the Lithuanian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, found in the archives. Along with that, the film includes views of other historians, namely Julien Gueslin, Egidijus Aleksandravičius, about this international political event, the political elite of that time and the participation of the Lithuanian delegation. However, the film does not develop a coherent narrative either about the political situation at the time, or about the circumstances and the course of the work that the Lithuanian delegation carried out. Rather, it makes a nostalgic excursion into an era and years when freedom and statehood had a different meaning and significance in people's lives as past generations had to fight for it, while new generations are simply born in a free democracy and have no experience of living in another system. The film contains quite a lot of the director's own reflections on what freedom is and what it means to different people, so *Lituanie, My Freedom* clearly has the characteristics of an essayistic personal film.

Rascaroli pointed out that the concept of essayistic cinema has become expansively used to the "variety of films and cinematic forms", thus "the essay" has almost become synonymous with creative documentary (Rascaroli, 2009, p. 1), especially those films having a strongly articulated personal perspective. She argued that essayistic films share common features such as "metalinguistic, autobiographical and reflective, they all posit a well-defined, extra-textual authorial figure as their point of origin and of constant reference; they strongly articulate a subjective, personal point of view; and they set up a particular communicative structure" to address the spectator (Rascaroli, 2009, p. 3). Of the documentaries I have selected for sample analysis, the most pronounced features of essayistic personal cinema are characterized by Martina Jablonskytė's *Lituanie, My Freedom* and Jūratė and Vilma Samulionytės' *Liebe Oma, Guten Tag!* The latter film opens up two little-discussed topics for Lithuanian audiences: suicide and the fate of the Baltic Germans after World War II. These themes stand out in the very first shots of the film, where we see the sisters cleaning their grandmother's grave and remembering the circumstances of her death, which their mother carefully kept hidden from the public. From the sisters' conversation in this and later scenes – travelling in a car on the motorway and talking to their mother about the contents of a letter that their grandmother wrote before her death – we learn that the granddaughters had little knowledge of their grandmother's private life. Attempting to understand their grandmother, they immerse into a larger story that had existed as if apart from them, but at the same time, paradoxically, it also brings to light the traumas of an individual family, linked to the time that they have lived through. Becoming the main protagonists in the film, as well as the

researchers and narrators of the life story of their grandmother Elė Finkytė (Ella Fink), a woman of German minority in Lithuania, they involve historians and their own parents and other family members living in Lithuania and Germany, thus obliging them to remember something which is painful and which people hardly talk about, even in narrow family circles. The filmmakers feel intrigued by the fact that their grandmother was the only one in the family to return to Lithuania after repatriation to Germany. After the return she married and lived an isolated, reserved life, which she herself lived to a ripe old age. As Natalija Arlauskaitė noted, "the attempt to understand her is accompanied by a review of the family archive, primarily related to the life of the Lithuanian German family during the war and post-war years, and is supplemented with material preserved by relatives in Lithuania and Germany, stored in state archives and in open circulation" (Arlauskaitė, 2020, p. 225).

In the film *Liebe Oma, Guten Tag!* the personal perspective of the authors' is particularly pronounced, as the Samulionytės sisters patiently and thoroughly investigate their family, using the narrative structure of a road movie and "the construction of a new family archive" (Arlauskaitė, 2020, p. 225). By travelling to the places where their grandmother spent her childhood and post-marriage life, visiting her cousins in Germany and collecting new pieces of information during the journey, they enrich the narrative with new information, which they reflect upon and ventilate right away under the camera's gaze. Thus, the film's shots communicate strong emotions – which are live, not staged – in order to pursue a close emphatic relationship with the viewer. Some scenes in the film are highly sensitive and carry great emotional "charge", such as the sisters' conversations with their mother about the suicide note that their grandmother left behind, and the dialogue between the shocked sisters on the ferry from Germany to Lithuania, having learned about their grandmother's father's suicide. Obviously, they discover some of the dramas in the life of their German family at the same time as the viewer, so the sincere astonishment and sadness of the sisters/directors is particularly moving.

According to Scott MacDonald, "personal film documentarians allow male and female viewers to experience what the characters in their films – certain people – were going through at a particular time, and to make sense of these experiences", this way the audience is "*experiencing* these cinematic versions of the subjects' experiences" (MacDonald, 2013, p. 9). The Samulionytė sisters let the viewer feel their pain and sadness even after their father (who had been one of the social actors in the film) passes away during the shooting of the film. They immediatelydecided to share this information with their audience in a very restrained way, with a black frame and a white caption "In the course of the

filming, our Dad has passed away of his own free will" integrated in the narrative. Inthis way they subtly send a message to the viewer about the need to talk over one's experiences with one's nearest and dearest. Lithuanian film directors are generally reluctant to open up their lives and emotions to viewers, preferring rather to provoke/stimulate the feelings of their characters (social actors) and expose these to the audience. In this respect, the Samulionytės' documentary is innovative and encourages other filmmakers to delve deeper into the ethical aspects of filmmakers' sincere communication with their audience. They also show that documentary film can be used therapeutically in several ways. First, as a form for personal-discovery and personal-therapy for the filmmakers. In the film the camera "plays the role of an objective therapist and an unobtrusive listener" (Wan, 2023, p. 3) when the directors share their feelings and family secrets with the viewer. Second, this film can be a tool of "experiential education" (Wan, 2023, p. 3) for other filmmakers or viewers with similar experiences and family stories. At the end of the film, for example, we see the directors having a sensitive conversation with their mother after the screening in the cinema, along with the shots they make of taking photos in Vilnius by the Neris river. In the latter, both the directors and their mother look happy and relaxed. These episodes reveal the therapeutic effect of the film: to reflect on painful experiences and thus heal individual and collective traumas.

Although the film is dominated by the authorial (personal) narrative perspective, we can also hear an expert voice: the commentary by historian Norbertas Černiauskas, who spices up the personal narrative with a scholarly perspective. The historian's interjections help us comprehend the history and fate of the Germans who lived in Lithuania (and other territories occupied by the soviets): at the outbreak of World War II, they were displaced to Germany (under the USSR-Germany Population Exchange Treaty), and those who had stayed behind secretly, or who had returned to Lithuania after the German occupation of the country were discriminated against and deported, so they were forced to conceal their identity. We also learn how uneasy living in Soviet Lithuania was for those with German roots from the childhood memories of the directors' mother and her brother, as well as the tragic fate of their grandmother. Thus, the film, even though personal and biographical, opens up the contexts of international politics and history, making us rethink the impact of totalitarian regimes on nations, ethnic groups and individuals. Thus, it is not accidental that the film premiered at the Lübeck International Film Festival and is a co-production between Lithuanian and German film companies.

Jablonskytė's *Lituanie, My Freedom* and Jūratė and Vilma Samulionytės' *Liebe Oma, Guten Tag!* are Lithuanian examples of a tendency in documentary film culture, which Susanna Helke has described as "the emotively personal" and prevailing in Finland and Scandinavia. According to her "instead of the traditionally historical, societal or political observations, more and more films – in terms of their perspective, approach and topic – have dealt with the area of emotions, family relations, questions of identity and individual growing pains" (Helke, 2016, p. 185). Scott MacDonald noticed a similar trend in American documentary cinema and indicated the following types of personal films: "the cinematic chronicling of the filmmaker's personal and/or family life"; experimental "psychodramas"; "personally expressive"; and "diaristic" works. Though *Liebe Oma, Guten Tag!* deals with historical and social subjects, an "emotive" and "personal" approach to reflecting on these subjects is strongly expressed as in the documentary the viewer observes "the personal lives of the filmmakers during which family members, friends and others are recorded in sync sound, or with the illusion of sync sound, interacting conversationally with the filmmaker" (MacDonald, 2013, p. 4). Unlike the Samulionytė sisters, Jablonskytė does not appear in the film, however, when watching the film, audience members come to certain generalisations about what the subject of the film means to the filmmaker through an essayistic form and emotive narrative. I argue that both of the above discussed Lithuanian films belong to the co-called "intellectual cinema" tradition, to which, according to Scott MacDonald, belongs personal documentary cinema.

It is worth pointing out that in Lithuania only a few personal essay films reflecting on the history of Lithuania have been produced. One of the most remarkable in this category is Algimantas Maceina's *Juoda dėžė / Black Box* (1994). It is a very personal and sensitive film, made in a style close to Jonas Mekas' film and video diaries. The director uses a subjective video camera to document the journey of his grandfather's remains from Siberia (where he was deported during Stalin's rule of the USSR) to Lithuania, a journey he embarked on together with his father in October of 1998. Another striking example of this type of film is the intimate video portrait *Visa teisybė apie mano tėvą /All the Truth About My Father* (2003) by Vytautas V. Landsbergis, which reveals to the audience the multifaceted personality of Vytautas Landsbergis, a prominent Lithuanian politician, professor, and musicologist (the filmmaker's father). It is a personal and emotive film that subtly combines various means of audiovisual expression (voice over, emotion-building illustrative music, photographs and video records from the family archive, observations and panoramas) into a single story. One of

the first female directors to create a personal essay documentary on a historical topic is undoubtedly Giedrė Beinoriūtė. Her 2007 short film *Gyveno senelis ir bobutė / There Lived a Grandfather and a Grandmother* employs a child's point of view on one of the most tragic phases in Lithuania's history: the genocide of the Lithuanian nation by the Soviets in 1944–1953 (when the people of Lithuania were being imprisoned, murdered, and deported to the USSR's labour camps). The narrator in the film is a little girl, who comments throughout the film on the experiences of the director's grandparents in inter-war Lithuania and later in exile in Siberia. The director incorporates memories of beautiful and tragic life experiences that her grandmother and mother told to her during her childhood. She combines very heterogeneous visual material (i.e. family photographs, animation, shots from newsreels, exile files, drawings, etc.) to illustrate the period of that time, how people felt. These three films share essential features of essayistic documentaries such as "reflectiveness, subjectivity, transgressiveness, personal, autobiographical, which Laura Rascaroli indicated in *The Personal Camera. Subjective Cinema and the Essay Film* (Rascaroli 2009).

In Giedrė Žickytė's *How We Played the Revolution* and Ramunė Rakauskaitė's *Back to the Dreamland*, the features of essayistic films (as described by Alter and Rascaroli) are less obvious, but these films demonstrate their directors' strong relationship with the issue that they are examining, which they have also articulated in the metatexts of the films – interviews with journalists and film critics. These documentaries contain the features of personal cinema singled out by Alistair Fox, such as the clear articulation of a personal vision, the fusion of subjective and objective narrative styles, the focus on family members, friends, professional expression, feelings, and similar (Fox, 2011). They also expose the coherence between the personality and the filmmaker and their individual relationship to the material, even autobiographical elements or individual experiences in the making of the film. Both film directors – Žickytė and Rakauskaitė – tell their audience about events and situations of which they and their family members were observers and/or participants.

Giedrė Žickytė's *How We Played the Revolution* and her other documentaries (*Baras* (2009), *How We Played the Revolution*, *Meistras ir Tatjana* / Master and Tatyana (2014), *Šuolis/The Jump* (2020)) clearly directs her focus on the late Soviet era, where her parents lived and she spent her own childhood. Another element that connects all of Žičkytė's films is personality type of the main characters. These are bright, gifted, brave and nonconformist personalities, mainly of the Lithuanian art and culture scene of the late Soviet era, whose creative practices and lifestyles were an expression of their resistance to the regime. One can

describe these films as "montage cinema" or "archive-based documentary", for montage plays an important role in constructing the narrative from various archival materials (TV footage, video materials of independent cinematographers, personal records of the film's characters, etc.) along with on-camera recollections of the artists, cultural figures and people from the main characters' inner circle and expert commentaries.

With her film *How We Played the Revolution*, Žickytė became known as a talented storyteller of intriguing stories, who is capable of establishing a great bond with Lithuanian and foreign audiences of all ages. As Lina Kaminskaitė-Jančorienė has specified, one can consider this work "exceptional, because it brings to light previously unseen footage from personal archives or emphasises footage that "publicists" have overlooked" and "one should consider it attractive to the younger generation, because it uses a simplified cinematic language and a playful form to tell the same story that their parents have repeatedly rhapsodized, in which the latter are not only unconditional patriots, but also "rocking" young people – and to the older generation, too, because the story has not been forgotten" (Kaminskaitė-Jančorienė, 2011).

Employing the phenomenon of the cult rock band *Antis* and its leader Algirdas Kaušpėdas, the film playfully reveals the course of Lithuania's Singing Revolution and its achievements. The band's theatrical, grotesque performances at the *Roko maršas / The Rock March* rock music festivals in 1987–1989, their easy-to-remember melodies and witty lyrics criticising the Soviet system attracted the young and the old, the provincial and the urban population. When the Sąjūdis reform movement of Lithuania invited the band's leader to become a member of their initiative group founded in 1988, *Antis* became a phenomenon and a *soft power* (a term coined by Nye, 1990). "As the founders of Sąjūdis recall, they made efforts to elect people to the Initiative group whom the authorities could not so easily arrest or otherwise deal with", and those were known to the public as "prominent scientists, artists, journalists or leaders of informal organisations" (Laurinavičius; Sirutavičius, 2008, p. 78). The film reveals that the involvement of *Antis* and Kaušpėdas in the political transformations and revolution was spontaneous, playful and quite unexpected, and that the line between political and artistic events can be quite thin. It is no coincidence that the film opens with a fragment of *The Rock March* of 1988, in which we see the performers of *Antis* and members of Sąjūdis on stage together singing the National Hymn and holding interwar Lithuania's tricolour flags in their hands. According to Gintautas Mažeikis, "the <R>rock marches demonstrated not only a revival and a singing revolution, but also the rise of subcultures", which one can associate with "fluc-

tuations, ruptures and mimicry", a process necessary for the revision, critique and creative interpretations of the colonial condition, and these "transformations of consciousness" that the subcultures generated reinforced and complemented the activities of Sąjūdis from 1988 to 1991 (Mažeikis, 2016, p. 68).

Žickytė constructed the narrative of the Singing Revolution from carefully selected archival footage with a strong emotional charge, representing the economic stagnation, the political farce and the alleged reorganization of the time, the vacuum in social and cultural life and the musical subcultures that filled the void, the civic movements and the political events that they triggered, which brought society into a new epoch. The dynamic puzzle of archival images includes comments and reminiscences by active members of the Sąjūdis movement (such as Arvydas Juozaitis), organisers of *The Rock Marches* (such as Margarita Starkevičiūtė and Gintautas Babravičius), architect Algirdas Kaušpėdas, who was the leader of the band *Antis*, as well as his wife Audronė Kaušpėdienė, who was actively involved in the band's organisational work. That which also galvanizes the narrative is *Antis'* frequently performed hits.

The film's narrator and commentator on the epochal transformations is the philosopher Leonidas Donskis, a neutral observer of the events of the time, whose calm narrative manner, reminiscent of reading a fairy tale, allows the viewer to immerse deeply into the history of *Antis* and the epoch of the Revival. The viewer watches Donskis sitting in a car driving round the streets of Vilnius, and listens to his perceptive insights into the cultural and political context of the time, as well as the relationship between the artist and the audience, which the philosopher has called "a silent conversation", made possible by people's ability "to comprehend the ambiguities" and "to be able to read the language of the equivokes". Kaušpėdas was indeed proficient at playing games of ambiguity with the audience, which were difficult for the Soviet political bosses to grasp, and this made Kaušpėdas and his colleagues even more passionate. This is perfectly captured in the scene in which *Antis* performs live on the popular USSR music show *Ring* and its leader answers questions from the audience, which they formulate as a joke and provocation for a segment of Soviet society that is unable to react adequately. At the end of the film, the director cleverly deconstructs the protagonist, who wore the "intelligentsia grimace" during the Soviet era, was the "flag bearer" of Sąjūdis, and was the head of Lithuanian television on the fateful night of the Soviet military attack on January 13, 1991. *How We Played the Revolution* is a personal work of creative documentary, with a playful structure that encourages the viewer to create an individual relationship with history, politics and heroes. It is one of the most popular historical and political documentaries in

Lithuania and has been shown at international festivals in Rotterdam, Warsaw, Sheffield and other prestigious festivals.

The documentary *Back to the Dreamland* by Ramunė Rakauskaitė also opens up episodes of Lithuanian history that have been little known to the public. Her film tells a melancholic and ironic story about the memories of Lithuanians who emigrated to the USA after World War II and the Soviet occupation, about their first journeys to Soviet Lithuania, their experiences in refugee camps, and about the division of the Lithuanian community in the USA and cooperation with the Lithuanian resisters. Through vivid recollections of the film's social actors (Kornelijus Jazbutis, Henrieta Vepštienė and her daughter Indrė, Birutė and Vytautas Zalatorius, Petras Vytenis Kisielius, Daina Čyvienė, Teresa Boguta and J. Kimo Arbas, amongst others), the documentary vividly recounts memories of the Lithuanian people in the US, showing the rapid and brutal transformation of Lithuania into the unrecognisable Soviet Lithuania, and of the Lithuanian nation to the Soviet people. The film uses authentic stories and memories, but also video and photographic material from the characters' first visits to Lithuania, making it a film of great lasting epistemological value. The director clearly avoids a biased view of "Soviets" and "displaced persons" and their ethnographic exoticization: "<My>intention was to tell the story of our war refugees, whose fate is no less painful than that of those who were deported to Siberia. I wanted to recall the absurdity of Soviet Lithuania, and by telling about a rather narrow period of Lithuanian-American life – the journeys to Soviet Lithuania – I wanted to invite the viewer to generalise the picture of that generation" (Radzevičienė; Rakauskaitė, 2019).

The documentary does not immediately reveal the director's personal relationship with the film's subject, but one can feel her very close relationship with the film's social actors – Lithuanians who fled the Soviet occupation to the USA and their offspring – as well as her great orientation in the Lithuanian-American cultural environment and knowledge of the psychogeographical impact of being in a culturally and ideologically alien space. From the information about the film presented in the press and the interviews with the director, we find out that she interned at the Lithuanian-American Television in the USA while still a student in 1997, and after her studies she lived and worked in Chicago for several years, where she was involved in Lithuanian community activities. It was there that the idea of making a film about Lithuanian-Americans was born (Radzevičienė; Rakauskaitė, 2019)1. An important factor was the memories of her uncle living in Canada about his first visits to Lithuania. As Rakauskaitė says in one of her interviews, "a couple of times my uncle came to Lithuania, we all

went to Vilnius airport to meet him, all dressed up, with flowers. There was that extraordinary atmosphere. Those meetings are still some of the most memorable moments of my childhood. Like the chewing gum, the badges he gave us, or the bright checked trousers my uncle wore." (Rakauskaitė 2019)2. Interestingly, the film uses visual (photo, video, and film) footage from the archives of the Lithuanian Research and Studies Centre, private Lithuanian-American foundations, and even some of the film's characters' comments (e.g. by Petras Vytenis Kisielius, Daina Čyvienė, and J. Kimo Arbas) to visualise the director's recollections of her visits to her uncle. Although, as I have mentioned, the film avoids stereotyping or exoticizing those who lived in conflicting geopolitical camps, this was not entirely avoidable due to the emigrants' nostalgic relationship with their lost homeland, the drastic policy of Sovietisation in Lithuania at the time, and the propaganda about the USSR's competitive economy and a bright tomorrow.

The film reminds us of the collective trauma that Lithuanians living in the diaspora experienced, revealing the community's internal confrontations over their relationship with Soviet Lithuania, their belief in the possibility of a different Lithuania, and their systematic assistance to the underground fighters against the totalitarian regime. Rakauskaitė's film demonstrates that collective identity is created and reconstructed through various cultural acts of loss and discovery which are captured on film and in the memories of private individuals.

Conclusion

The four documentaries by Giedrė Žickytė, sisters Jūratė Samulionytė and Vilma Samulionytė, Ramunė Rakauskaitė and Martina Jablonskytė, which this article has discussed, suggest the formation of a vivid tendency in Lithuanian documentary culture to talk about historical and political subjects by employing a personal and unconventional style as opposed to the traditional "expositional" documentary style. By choosing an emotionally sensitive, playful and, at times, ironic tone for talking about dramatic historical events and personalities, these women filmmakers bring the serious and complex issues discussed in the films closer to the lived experiences of people of our time and encourage them to create a personal relationship with history. Although their films use quite vareid narrative, aesthetic and rhetorical devices and work structures to create meaning, they share the following key features of essayistic cinema: reflexivity, subjectivity, the personal, the autobiographical and the political. They clearly articulate a personal artistic vision, blend subjective and objective narratives, talk about historical subjects and personalities through the facts, testimonies and feelings. The filmmakers boldly break societal taboos and deconstruct the characters, adding new

narratives to national collective memory. Their films are interdisciplinary and transnational, as their makers navigate across disciplines, cultures and countries, and embrace broader social and political issues when (re)assessing and (re)framing Lithuanian history and those who constructed it.

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Varia

Charles Musser

Longue durée filmu dokumentalnego: początki, formacje, genealogie[1]

Publiczne używanie rozumu musi być zawsze wolne i tylko ono może przynieść ludzkości oświecenie.

Emmanuel Kant, 1784

Staram się pokazać, w oparciu o ich historyczne ustanowienie i ukształtowanie, te systemy, które są nadal aktualne i w których jesteśmy uwięzieni. Zasadniczo chodzi o przedstawienie krytyki naszych czasów w oparciu o analizy retrospektywne.

Michel Foucault, 1971

Jeśli media cyfrowe przekształciły współczesne praktyki dokumentalne – tworząc nowe sposoby opowiadania historii, modele odbioru i przedstawiania rzeczywistości, a także nowe sposoby pracy – to możemy również zapytać, w jaki sposób ta rewolucja technologiczna pomaga nam inaczej myśleć o wczesnej historii dokumentu, o jego długim trwaniu. Film dokumentalny powstał w ramach

[1] Jestem szczególnie wdzięczny Joshowi Glickowi, który poprowadził ten esej przez kilka kolejnych wersji, a także zmarłemu Brianowi Winstonowi, który skłonił mnie do głębszego zastanowienia się nad długą historią dokumentu. Jest to poprawiona i rozszerzona wersja eseju, który ukazał się w NECSUS 12 grudnia 2020 r. #Method, Features. DOI: https://doi.org/10.25969/mediarep/15327.

określonej praktyki medialnej – kina. Według znanych anglojęzycznych historii tak zwana „tradycja dokumentalna" rozpoczęła się wraz z filmem *Nanook – człowiek z północy* (Nanook of the North, 1922). Lewis Jacobs okrzyknął *Nanooka* Roberta Flaherty'ego „klasycznym protoplastą idiomu dokumentalnego, z pewnością najbardziej wpływowym w tym gatunku" (Jacobs, 1971, s. 8). Następnie stwierdził, że „w krótkim czasie jego innowacyjny duch, jego afirmacja tematu, który wyewoluował naturalnie z interakcji człowieka i jego środowiska, stał się wzorem dla twórczych zamiarów i innowacyjnych umiejętności innych twórców filmów dokumentalnych". Przed *Nanookiem* mieliśmy do czynienia jedynie z „prekursorami i prototypami" (s. 12). Podobnie Erik Barnouw rozpoczął swoją wybitną historię filmu dokumentalnego od „proroka" Lumière'a, a następnie przeskoczył do właściwego filmu dokumentalnego, wraz z jego odkrywcą Flahertym (Barnouw, 1974, ss. 3-50). Nawiązując do nowszych trendów historiograficznych, Elizabeth Cowie, unikając ograniczających teorii historycznych wiążących wszelkie zmiany z działalnością „wielkich ludzi", stwierdziła, że dokument „wyłonił się z pracy filmowców w Europie i Ameryce Północnej w latach 20. XX wieku jako estetyczny projekt zarejestrowanej rzeczywistości". Dokument powstaje „w ścisłym związku z rozwojem zarówno nowoczesności, jak i modernizmu" (Cowie, 2011, s. 1). Inni wywodzą początki gatunku dokumentalnego od filmów z czasów pierwszej wojny światowej, takich jak *Bitwa nad Sommą* z 1916 roku (Smither, 1993, s. 160)[2].

Czy tradycja dokumentalna ma zaledwie sto lat? Jeśli dokument jest ważną formą kulturową, wydaje się bardzo mało prawdopodobne, aby ta niezwykle silna forma audiowizualnej niefikcjonalności pojawiła się nagle w latach 20. ubiegłego wieku (lub choćby w latach 10.). Twierdzenia o nagłym pojawieniu się filmu dokumentalnego powinny wydawać się problematyczne zarówno pod względem historycznym, jak i teoretycznym. Potrzeba bardziej rozbudowanej historii rodzi pytanie: „kiedy i jak to się zaczęło?". Po pierwsze, pełniejsze zrozumienie historii dokumentu wymaga od nas oddzielenia tradycji dokumentalnej od historii nowoczesnej technologii filmowej. Przez kilkadziesiąt lat obie te dziedziny nakładały się na siebie i były traktowane jako nierozerwalnie ze sobą związane. Jednak w ciągu ostatnich dwudziestu do trzydziestu lat stało się oczywiste, że praktyka dokumentalna szybko porzuciła medium filmowe i zaczęła polegać na analogowym, a następnie cyfrowym wideo. Media cyfrowe przekształciły niezliczone sposoby komunikacji i ekspresji oraz otworzyły zupełnie nowe możliwości, ale to, co Lewis Jacobs nazwał tradycją dokumentalną, nie tylko przetrwało, ale wręcz rozkwitło.

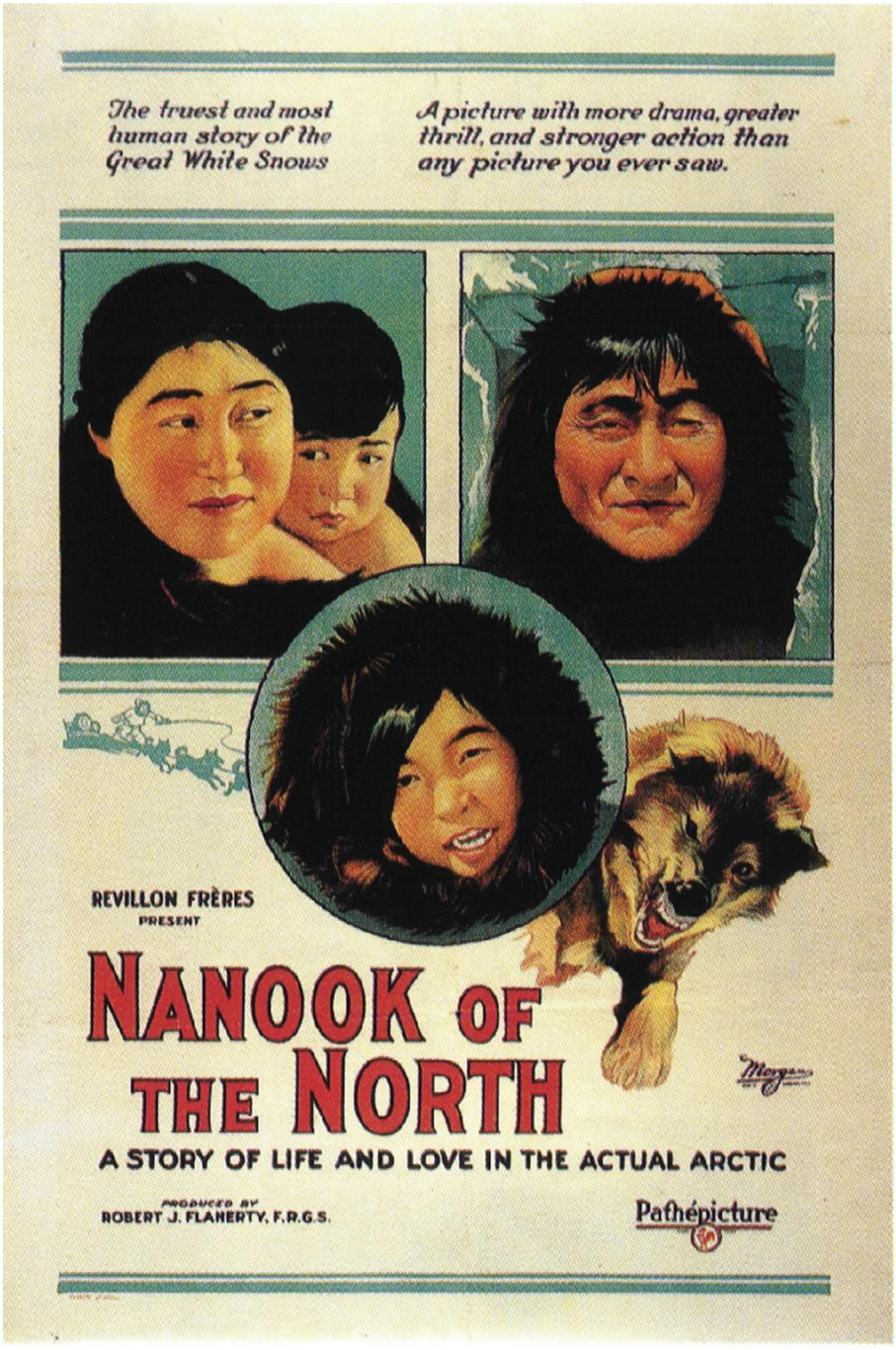
[2] Zob. również: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Battle_of_the_Somme_(film) (dostęp 27 czerwca 2022).

Podobnie, istniały solidne praktyki niefikcjonalne, które wykorzystywały ruchome obrazy przed „dokumentem". Z jednej strony były to filmy krótkometrażowe lub „sceniki" (scenics), a z drugiej ilustrowane wykłady, nierzadko pełnometrażowe. Zamiast traktować to przejście od ilustrowanych wykładów i „sceników" do właściwego dokumentu w kategoriach zerwania, po którym filmowcy ostatecznie odkryli właściwy sposób traktowania materiałów niefabularnych, powinniśmy dostrzec ciągłość i transformację. Krótko mówiąc, w miarę jak tryb dokumentalny przechodzi kolejne przemiany, rośnie wartość cofania się i badania dłuższych ram czasowych. Co by było, gdybyśmy – zamiast pięćdziesięciu lat Barnouwa i Jacobsa – spojrzeli wstecz około 320 lat, w duchu szkoły Annales Fernanda Braudela i jej obecnego szefa Rogera Chartiera? U Braudela *longue durée* obejmowało tysiąclecia; Chartier natomiast zajmował się szczególnie *lectures et lecteurs* (lekturami i czytelnikami) na przestrzeni kilku stuleci, co stanowi analogiczne ramy czasowe do tego, co proponuję tutaj (Braudel, 1958, s. 8-37; Chartier, 1977, s. 3-12)[3] . Taka perspektywa odsuwa na dalszy plan wydarzenia – takie jak, być może, pojawienie się Ruchu Filmu Dokumentalnego (Documentary Film Movement) w Anglii czy ruchu *cinema verité* we Francji, Kanadzie i Stanach Zjednoczonych. Chociaż rozmaite formy faktualne (niefikcjonalne) w okresie od około 1700 roku do dnia dzisiejszego niewątpliwie przechodziły liczne, często radykalne przemiany, zarówno w obszarze mediów, którymi się posługiwały, jak i swojego funkcjonowania, to przecież widoczne są fundamentalne ciągłości. Stałe zainteresowanie takimi podstawowymi pojęciami jak dowody i prawda, a także oscylowanie między obiektywizmem a osobistą, subiektywną perspektywą, utrzymywały się przez wieki (Hongisto, 2017, s. 61-75)[4].

Jedno z podejść do historii tradycji dokumentalnej obejmuje badanie praktyk ekranowych – wyświetlanego obrazu i towarzyszącego mu dźwięku. Ułatwiło to zwrócenie uwagi na zmieniające się sposoby produkcji i reprezentacji, a także zmieniające się technologie – w tym między innymi kolejne „media", takie jak slajdy latarni magicznej, celuloidowe filmy i wideo. W rzeczywistości dokumentalizm nie wiązał się z nowym medium (filmem) czy nowymi technologiami, ale z niewielką, choć znaczącą przeróbką ilustrowanego wykładu. Dla kina głównego nurtu zmiana ta była szczątkowa, peryferyjna, ale jej wpływ na pełnometrażowe przekazy niefikcjonalne był znaczący. Nic dziwnego, że Robert Flaherty i *Nanook* pozostają użytecznym miejscem startu.

[3] Zainteresowanie Chartiera wczesnym okresem nowoczesnej Europy może znaczyć, że nasze ramy czasowe się nakładają, ale niniejszy esej dotyczy wykładów i wykładowców (konferencji i ich uczestników), nie zaś *lectures et lecteurs* (lektur i czytelników). Ten przykład lingwistycznej filogenezy wyraźnie pokazuje, że *longue durée* dokumentalizmu obejmuje różne historie, nawet jeśli się nakładają.

[4] Problemom prawdy w mediach niefikcjonalnych poświęcono numer pisma NECSUS, #6:1, 2017; https://necsus-ejms.org/introduction-ring-true-contemporary-media/



Plakat do filmu Nanook z Północy

W 1914 roku Flaherty przygotowywał się do poprowadzenia ekspedycji geologicznej na północnych terytoriach Kanady dla sir Williama Mackenziego. Nieco wcześniej miały miejsce ambitne ekspedycje na Antarktydzie (wyścig kpt. R.F. Scotta na biegun południowy), w Arktyce (kpt. F.E. Kleinschmidt dla Carnegie Museum) i w Afryce (afrykańskie safari Paula Rainey'a), które zostały udokumentowane za pomocą zdjęć i filmów wykonanych przez profesjonalnych operatorów. Zdjęcia te zostały włączone do wielu głośnych ilustrowanych wykładów, które okazały się komercyjnym sukcesem. Dlaczego Flaherty nie miałby zrobić tego samego? Jego wysiłki okazały się na tyle skuteczne, że zorganizowano uroczystą premierę filmu w Toronto's Convention Hall:

> Obrazy z życia Eskimosów na Ziemi Baffina [zostały] zarejestrowane i wystawione przez pana Roberta J. Flaherty'ego, szefa Arktycznej Ekspedycji sir Williama Mackenzie. Każda scena wywoływała aplauz licznej publiczności złożonej z naukowców, archeologów i laików, dla których zdjęcia były źródłem zachwytu i instrukcji.
>
> Oprócz filmów pokazano prostą sztukę Eskimosów w rycinach i rysunkach. Pan Flaherty objaśniał każdy obraz. (Toronto Globe, 1915, s. 8)

Następnie Flaherty wyruszył ze swoją kamerą na kolejną arktyczną wyprawę. Jak donoszą Paul Rotha i inni, Flaherty wykorzystał zebrany materiał do wyprodukowania programu wyłącznie filmowego. Gdy negatyw poszedł z dymem, Flaherty wyruszył w trasę z nowym ilustrowanym wykładem, wykorzystując ocalałą kopię roboczą (Rotha, 1983, s. 26). Kiedy następnie powrócił nad Zatokę Hudsona pod auspicjami Revillon Frères w celu nakręcenia filmu *Nanook z Północy*, odtworzył wiele scen z życia Eskimosów, które on i inni nakręcili wcześniej: polowanie na morsa, polowanie na fokę przez otwór w lodzie, życie eskimoskiej rodziny w igloo itd. W filmie *Nanook z Północy* wykład i wykładowca zostali zastąpieni przez napisy, komentarz mówiony został zamieniony na tekst pisany. Nie był już ilustrowanym wykładem, czym więc był? „Variety" nie wiedziało, jak go nazwać, określając go mianem „dziwoląga" („Variety", 1922, 40). „New York Times" i ogłoszenia reklamowe mogły opisać film tylko przez to, czym nie był: „było to coś innego niż fotoplastykon, krótkometrażowy film edukacyjny czy film podróżniczy" („New York Times", 1922, s. 18; „Moving Picture World", 1922, s. 182). Minęła prawie dekada, zanim ludzie wpadli na pomysł, jak to nazwać: filmem dokumentalnym. Termin ten został również zastosowany retrospektywnie do „sceników" i krótkometrażowych form niefikcjonalnych, takich jak *Manhatta* Paula Stranda i Charlesa Sheelera (1921).

To przejście od ilustrowanych wykładów do pełnometrażowych przekazów niefikcjonalnych wykorzystujących napisy stało się bardziej powszechne w drugiej połowie drugiej dekady XX wieku, w szczególności w przypadku filmów wojennych. W pierwszych miesiącach wojny „Chicago Tribune" sponsorowało *On the Belgium Battlefield* (listopad 1914), 75-minutowy film nakręcony przez fotografa tej gazety, Edwina F. Weigle'a. W Studebaker Theater w Chicago Weigle komentował swoje filmy na bieżąco. Gdy obraz trafił do kin w całym kraju, szanowany wykładowca Joseph G. Camp robił to samo w Atlancie („Atlanta Constitution", 1914, s. 5; „Minneapolis Tribune", 1917, s. 12). Szybkie rozprze-

Reklama filmu Bitwa nad Sommą. „Motion Picture News", 2 December 1916

strzenianie się takich filmów stanowiło coraz większe wyzwanie, ze względu na konieczność zatrudniania i szkolenia lektorów. Pełnometrażowy film *Bitwa nad Sommą* (sierpień 1916) oferował wstrząsającą relację z wojny przy użyciu napisów, a nie rozmaitych lektorów stojących przy ekranie. W rezultacie ten sam film mógł być wyświetlany w wielu różnych miejscach w tym samym czasie. Podobnie było w przypadku innych pełnometrażowych filmów wojennych, w szczególności ośmioodcinkowego *Pershing's Crusaders* Komitetu Creela (kwiecień 1918) i *America's Answer* (lipiec 1918). Nie wszyscy autorzy ilustrowanych wykładów poszli w ślady Flaherty'ego i zostali dokumentalistami, ale nie było to rzadkością. Pełnometrażowe filmy dokumentalne mogły wreszcie zostać włączone do przemysłowego systemu dystrybucji i wyświetlania filmów – choć pokazy pozakinowe pozostały oczywiście niezwykle ważne.[5]

Ilustrowany wykład był żywym sposobem komunikacji niefabularnej, który posiadał wszystkie istotne elementy dokumentu – z wyjątkiem tego, że tekst był prezentowany na żywo przez wykładowcę w czasie pokazu, a nie włączony do filmu w formie napisów lub (wkrótce) komentarza lektora. Jeśli „ilustrowany wykład" był bezpośrednim poprzednikiem „filmu dokumentalnego", to patrząc wstecz na początki dokumentu, dokąd może to prowadzić? W latach 80. XIX wieku ilustrowany wykład był żywą formą obejmującą projekcję fotograficznych slajdów z latarni magicznej, którym towarzyszył wykład i często przypadkowa muzyka. W latach 90. XIX wieku i pierwszych latach wieku XX wielu wykładowców zaczęło łączyć pokazy slajdów z filmami. We wczesnych latach 1910-tych niektórzy wykładowcy używali wyłącznie filmów. W ten sposób ilustrowany wykład jako praktyka z łatwością dostosował się do zmiany medium – od slajdów fotograficznych do celuloidowych filmów – tak jak dokument z łatwością dostosował się do przejścia od filmów do wideo. Oto kolejny dowód na to, że tradycja dokumentalna łatwo wykracza poza konkretne media.

Analizowanie dokumentu i jego długiego trwania w teoretycznych ramach praktyki ekranowej działa wystarczająco dobrze dla epoki po 1880 roku, ale im dalej cofamy się w czasie, tym bardziej staje się to problematyczne. Rozpoczynanie historii przekazów dokumentalnych od wynalezienia latarni magicznej i najwcześniejszych pokazów z jej użyciem jest zbyt proste. Od lat 70. XVII wieku oferowano programy o życiu Chrystusa przy użyciu ręcznie malowanych slajdów wyświetlanych z latarni magicznej; nieco później jezuiccy księża używali latarni do objaśniania swoich podróży do Chin i innych miejsc. Łącząc pokaz latarniowy z tymi wczesnymi zastosowaniami wyświetlanych obrazów, można

[5] Warto przy tym zauważyć, że termin „film dokumentalny" (*documentary*) wszedł do powszechnego użycia w tym samym czasie, gdy kino wzbogaciło się o dźwięk, więc słowa, które pojawiały się w napisach, zaczęły znowu rozbrzmiewać na sali kinowej. Por. *Africa Speaks* Waltera Futtera.

„logicznie" dodać kolejne dwa wieki tradycji dokumentalnej. Jednak wybieranie dowodów i dopasowywanie ich do istniejącego wcześniej paradygmatu jest wysoce problematyczną metodą badawczą. Przed pojawieniem się cyfrowych technik humanistycznych, w których naukowcy mogli wykorzystywać losowy dostęp do słów w gazetach i innych materiałach pisemnych w celu gromadzenia dowodów tekstowych, generalnie niemożliwe było opracowanie obszernego, zniuansowanego zbioru danych, który ułatwiłby dogłębną analizę. Przykładowo, przeszukiwanie amerykańskich gazet ujawnia, że termin „wykład ilustrowany" stopniowo zakorzenił się w krajobrazie kulturowym dopiero w latach 50. i 60. XIX wieku. Co więcej, ilustrowane wykłady z lat 1840-1870 nie mogą zostać zmapowane na technologiczny dyspozytyw praktyki ekranowej.[6]

Bill Nichols zauważył, że „film dokumentalny w dużej mierze opiera się na słowie mówionym", a to spostrzeżenie okazuje się szczególnie przydatne, gdy staramy się nakreślić tradycję dokumentalną i jej *longue durée* (Nichols, 1991, s. 21). Wyeksponowanie wykładu zamiast ilustracji – słowa zamiast obrazu – może stanowić bardziej skuteczną drogę naprzód, przynajmniej w kontekście amerykańskim[7]. Pod tym względem pomocny może być ukłon w stronę studiów nad dźwiękiem. Również w tym przypadku podejście Nicholsa do definiowania dokumentu jako konstrukcji historycznej wydaje się szczególnie istotne. Jego zdaniem

> Zmiany w rozumieniu tego, czym jest film dokumentalny, zachodzą na różne sposoby. Większość zmian zachodzi jednak z powodu tego, co dzieje się na jednej lub więcej z czterech następujących aren: (1) instytucje wspierające produkcję i odbiór filmów dokumentalnych, (2) twórcze wysiłki filmowców [tj. praktyków], (3) trwały wpływ konkretnych filmów, (4) oczekiwania widzów. Nichols, 2010, s. 3-31.

Do tego można dodać jeszcze trzy źródła zmian: (5) wprowadzenie nowych technologii, w tym materiałów lub mediów, które są wykorzystywane przez filmowców; (6) zmiany w sposobach produkcji i reprezentacji (które nie zawsze pochodzą od twórców filmowych); oraz (7) zmiany w języku lub terminologii. Im-

[6] Chociaż próbowałem śledzić wczesną historię filmu dokumentalnego w kontekście praktyk ekranowych w moim artykule „Problems in Historiography: The Documentary Tradition Before *Nanook of the North*", opublikowanym w *The British Film Institute Companion to Documentary*, pod redakcją Briana Winstona (London: BFI/Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 119-128, po tym artykule pozostały nierozwiązane problemy historiograficzne, które doprowadziły do powstania niniejszego eseju.

[7] Chociaż badania nad dźwiękiem koncentrowały się na formach technologicznej reprodukowalności (Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), zarejestrowany dźwięk nie odgrywał większej roli w tradycji dokumentalnej do mniej więcej lat 30. XX wieku. Natomiast przed tą datą wyróżniającą cechą filmu dokumentalnego był dźwięk na żywo.

pulsy do zmian nakreślone przez Nicholsa pomagają również wyjaśnić, dlaczego istnieją odrębne nurty filmu dokumentalnego, zorganizowane wokół instytucji i przepisów państwowych, języka i innych czynników społeczno-ekonomicznych i kulturowych. Dlatego też niniejszy artykuł skupia się na doświadczeniach amerykańskich. Ustalenia te, miejmy nadzieję, zasugerują w pewnym stopniu podobne historie w innych formacjach kulturowych i tradycjach narodowych. Tradycje te nie tylko miały różne momenty i mechanizmy powstawania i rozwoju, ale często były oceniane przez historyków w odmienny sposób.

Wykłady z wykorzystaniem ilustracji

Co poprzedziło „wykład ilustrowany"? Wykład wykorzystujący ilustracje, czasami nazywany „demonstracją wykładową" (*lecture demonstration*), który zaczął pojawiać się w Stanach Zjednoczonych w latach 20. XVII wieku. Sam wykład nie był niczym nowym. Termin „wykład" (*lecture*) pojawiał się z pewną częstotliwością w najwcześniejszych gazetach brytyjskich kolonii północnoamerykańskich, ale był konsekwentnie kojarzony z kazaniem i stanowił część nabożeństw religijnych. Wykłady te oświecały członków kongregacji poprzez słowo Boże, zapewniając środki do przekazywania Bożej prawdy objawionej w Biblii. Takie wykłady były szczególnie rozpowszechnione w Bostonie i Nowej Anglii („Boston News-Letter", 1711, s. 2; „New England Weekly Journal", 1740, s. 2). Jak zauważył Perry Miller, „życie purytanów w Nowej Anglii koncentrowało się na korporacyjnej i wspólnotowej ceremonii, na ustnym wygłaszaniu wykładu..." (Miller, 1939, s. 298; Hambrick-Stowe, 2014, s. 93-135). Kiedy wędrowny kaznodzieja George Whitefield podróżował po amerykańskich koloniach, wygłaszał liczne wykłady, które oferowały duchowe „prawdy ewangeliczne, traktowane w sposób odpowiadający wyroczniom Boga, to znaczy z powagą, prostotą i dobrym osądem" („American Weekly Mercury", 1740, s. 1).

Wykłady te z pewnością angażowały się w to, co Bill Nichols nazwał dyskursem trzeźwości, ale w ściśle religijnym sensie. Zmieniło się to, gdy wykład wyszedł poza kościół, przybrał nową formę i nabrał zupełnie innego znaczenia. Te wykłady z ilustracjami nie były jedynie szczególnym rodzajem wykładu, były dialektyczną antytezą tradycyjnego wykładu. Publiczne wykłady – a dokładniej publiczne demonstracje wykładowe na tematy matematyczne i naukowe – pojawiły się z szybko rosnącą popularnością w Anglii i Europie Zachodniej na początku XVIII wieku. Na przykład John Harris prowadził swoje kursy w londyńskiej Marine Coffee House w latach 1698-1704. Początkowo oferował instrukcje z zakresu matematyki, ale wraz z rozszerzeniem oferty o astronomię i nawigację dodał ilustracje wizualne. W 1703 roku opublikował esencję dwóch wykładów

jako *Opis i zastosowanie globusów niebieskich i ziemskich oraz kieszonkowego kwadrantu Collinsa* (Description and Uses of the Celestial and Terrestrial Globes and of Collins' Pocket Quadrant). Najbardziej utytułowanym z tych wczesnych wykładowców był John Theophilus Desaguliers (1683-1744), który w 1713 roku zaczął wygłaszać publiczne wykłady z filozofii eksperymentalnej w londyńskich kawiarniach i salach konferencyjnych (Stewart, 1992, s. 120; „London Evening Post", December 1712).

Pierwszą osobą, która wygłosiła otwarte wykłady w amerykańskich koloniach, był Isaac Greenwood (1702-1745). Studiował on matematykę, astronomię i nauki ścisłe w Harvard College, który ukończył w 1721 roku. Podróżując do Londynu w 1723 roku w celu kontynuowania studiów, otrzymał od swojego mentora Cottona Mathera, który próbował pogodzić purytańską religię z nauką (Leonard, 1981, s. 140-155; Mather, 1721), list polecający do członków Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge. Dało to Greenwoodowi dostęp do „wewnętrznego kręgu przywódców religijnych i naukowych w Londynie" (prezesem organizacji był wówczas Isaac Newton) (Leonard, s. 142-143). Wkrótce został uczniem Desaguliersa, a następnie jego asystentem. Po powrocie do Bostonu w 1726 roku, 16 stycznia 1727 roku Greenwood rozpoczął „Eksperymentalny kurs filozofii mechanicznej". Używając „tak prostego języka, jak to tylko możliwe", zademonstrował „zasady szlachetnej nauki z odkryciami niezrównanego Sir. Isaaca Newtona" za pomocą „ponad trzystu ciekawych i przydatnych eksperymentów" („Boston New-Letter", 1727, s. 4). W następnym roku został powołany na katedrę Harvard's Hollis Chair of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, jako pierwszy zajmujący to stanowisko. Po śmierci Thomasa Hollisa, który ufundował katedrę Greenwooda, jego siostrzeniec podarował harwardzkiej uczelni „bardzo bogaty dodatek do Aparatury Filozoficznej; składający się z ciekawego *Mikroskopu, dużej i wykwintnej Sfery Armilarnej* oraz bardzo kosztownego *Orrery*, instrumentu, którego ta lub jakakolwiek inna część Ameryki, o ile nam wiadomo, nigdy wcześniej nie widziała" (Cambridge, Septemb. 9; „Boston News-Letter", 1732, s. 2).[8] Isaac Greenwood wykorzystał następnie swoje letnie wakacje w 1734 roku, aby poprowadzić kurs astronomii, który został zilustrowany niedawno otrzymanym mechanicznym modelem Układu Słonecznego. Chociaż Greenwood zapewniał publiczność, że jego prezentacje potwierdzają zasady religii, w rzeczywistości, jak zauważył David Leonard, przedstawiał on „podstawy matematycznego systemu natury, który przeczył podstawowym pojęciom wiary purytańskiej" (Leonard, s. 156-7; „New England Weekly Journal", 1734, s. 2). Benjamin Franklin również zaprzyjaźnił się z Greenwoodem,

[8] Przybycie Orrery zostało odnotowane z entuzjazmem i niejaką zazdrością w gazetach z Nowego Jorku i FIladelfii.

gdy ten wygłosił podobny zestaw wykładów w Filadelfii w 1740 roku (Cheyney, 1940, s. 12).

Otwarte wykłady z filozofii naturalnej lub eksperymentalnej stały się dość powszechne w amerykańskich koloniach od 1750 roku. Prowadzili je między innymi współpracownik Franklina, Ebenezer Kinnersley, który wygłosił serię wykładów na temat „nowo odkrytego ognia elektrycznego", oraz Lewis Evans, który zaoferował „Kurs filozofii naturalnej i mechaniki". Kurs Evansa składał się z „13 wykładów" i był „ilustrowany eksperymentami", w tym mechanicznym modelem Układu Słonecznego. Kinnersley przez kolejne dwadzieścia pięć lat regularnie prowadził wykłady, którym towarzyszyły eksperymenty oraz ilustracje dotyczące różnych aspektów elektryczności („Pennsylvania Packet", 1774, s. 1; „Pennsylvania Packet and the General Advertiser", 1772, s. 4)[9].

Otwarte wykłady z filozofii eksperymentalnej lub naturalnej obejmowały wystawy różnych urządzeń lub „eksponatów", a także demonstracje i eksperymenty. Były to prawdziwe doświadczenia audiowizualne, w których wizualizacje – to, czego publiczność była świadkiem – były kluczowym wsparciem dla prawdziwości twierdzeń prowadzącego wykłady. Podobnie jak inni wykładowcy, William Johnson angażował się w dogmaty religijne, zauważając: „Ponieważ wiedza o naturze ma tendencję do rozwijania ludzkiego umysłu i daje nam bardziej wzniosłe wyobrażenia o BOGU NATURY, zakłada się, że ten kurs okaże się dla wielu przyjemną i racjonalną rozrywką" („Virginia Gazette", 1766, s. 3). Jednak wykłady Johnsona nie były tylko wyzwaniem dla dosłownego czytania Biblii, lecz również prowadziły dialog z konkurencyjnymi prezentacjami naukowymi, ponieważ twierdził on, że „wiele błędów, które wkradły się do tej gałęzi filozofii naturalnej, zostanie usuniętych, a prawdziwa teoria zostanie ustanowiona na solidnych podstawach rozumu i eksperymentów" („Virginia Gazette", 1766, s. 3). Prawda była kluczowym celem – nie tylko opowiadanie się za deistyczną teologią, która odrzucała nadprzyrodzone objawienie i ingerencję Boga w prawa wszechświata, ale także propagowanie nowej, bardziej aktualnej prawdy naukowej, kontestującej ustalenia wcześniejszych, błędnych teorii.

Ta nowa forma wykładu była kluczowym, ale być może niedocenianym aspektem Oświecenia – w szczególności Oświecenia amerykańskiego, które często datuje się od około 1750 roku (Ferguson, 1994). Naukowcy generalnie badali

[9] Wykłady z filozofii naturalnej wygłaszali również Paul Jackson (Philadelphia, 1755), David Mason (Boston, 1764) i William Johnson, który podróżował po miastach wschodniego wybrzeża (Newport, RI, Boston, New York, Williamsburg) w latach 60. XVIII wieku. Peter Benes ocenia, że do roku 1826 około 45 osób prowadziło w Ameryce wykłady na temat różnych aspektów elektryczności (Benes, 2016, s. 249-251).

Oświecenie w ramach historii intelektualnej, o której mówi się, że obejmowała republikę słowa z naciskiem na teksty i czytanie. Jednak do oświecenia szerszej publiczności książki i listy nie wystarczyły. Te wykłady zrobiły to, czego nie mógł zrobić żaden drukowany tekst: zaoferowały prawdziwe dowody na poparcie słownych twierdzeń. Zwracały się do uważnej publiczności spoza ambon i ławek, odwołując się do ludzkiej obserwacji, rozumu i analizy, a nie do religijnego tekstu i ortodoksji. Krótko mówiąc, stworzyły kontrpubliczność, która bezpośrednio i pośrednio kwestionowała różne formy biblijnej dosłowności. Nic dziwnego, że kwestia prawdy prześladowała tradycję dokumentalną w Ameryce. To właśnie o nią toczyła się gra, gdy dokumentalna *longue durée* miała swój początek; rygorystyczna, pozornie obiektywna prawda, którą można było zobaczyć na własne oczy i wyjaśnić za pomocą naukowego rozumowania, a nie za pomocą słowa Bożego (dosłownej interpretacji Biblii).

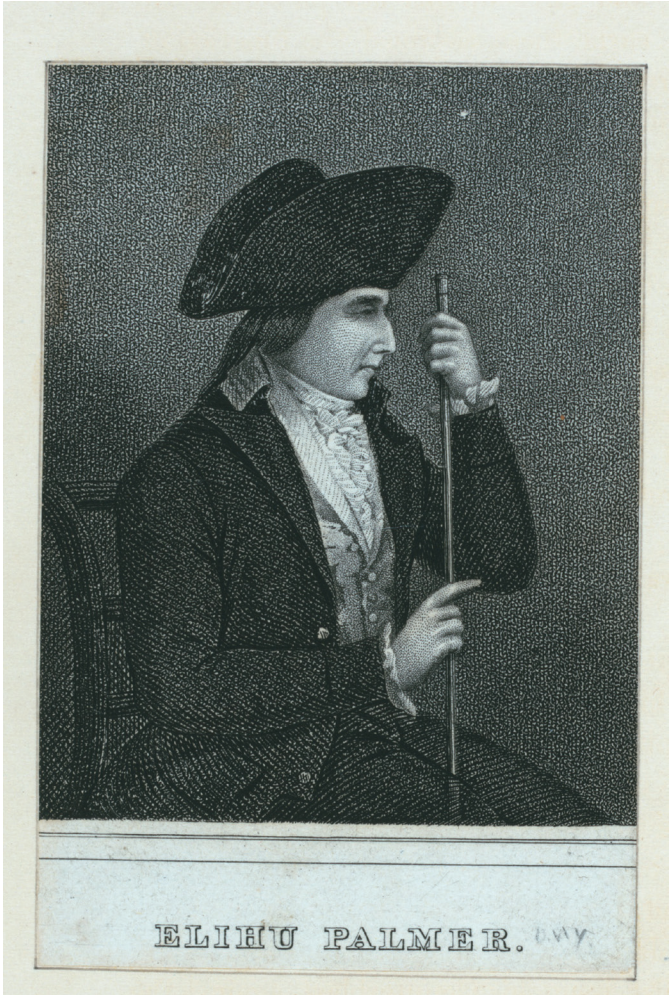
Nie tylko kluczowe elementy dokumentu były już na miejscu, ale także wiele kluczowych terminów z nim związanych. Jak zauważył Michael Warner,

Nie ma mowy ani przedstawienia skierowanych do publiczności, które nie próbowałyby z góry określić, na niezliczone, wysoce skondensowane sposoby, swojego adresata. Osiąga się to nie tylko poprzez twierdzenia dyskursywne, o których można powiedzieć, że są zorientowane na zrozumienie, ale także na poziomie pragmatyki, poprzez wpływ gatunków mowy, idiomów, znaczników stylistycznych, adresu, czasowości, mise-en-scène, pola cytatów, protokołów interlokutoryjnych, leksykonu i tak dalej (Warner, 2002, s. 81).

Dokonania nauki dostarczały podłoża wykładom otwartym również w XIX wieku, z szeregiem powiązanych, ale rozszerzających się tematów, w tym medycyny, położnictwa, astronomii i nawigacji, chemii, botaniki, geologii i pneumatyki.

Nic dziwnego, że napięcie między wykładem kościelnym a świeckim wykładem z ilustracjami było tak duże, że dialektyka ta stworzyła przestrzeń wypełnioną formami pośrednimi, w tym świeckimi wykładami pozbawionymi ilustracji. Krótko mówiąc, sam wykład został uwolniony od wcześniejszych ograniczeń. Jednym z nowych gatunków, który się pojawił, był wykład polityczny, często nazywany oracją, który stał się popularny na początku lat 70. XVIII wieku. Pewien mieszkaniec Portsmouth w stanie New Hampshire pogratulował przyjacielowi z Bostonu wprowadzenia w tym mieście corocznej oracji na temat zarządzania i wyraził nadzieję, że inne miasta wkrótce pójdą w jego ślady. Ostrzegł jednak, iż „musimy spodziewać się, że wrogowie wolności dołożą wszelkich starań, aby zapobiec ustanowieniu politycznych wykładów lub oracji...." („Providence Gazette and Country Journals", 1772, s. 3). W marcu 1772 r. obywatel Braintree w sta-

nie Massachusetts poprosił Johna Adamsa o wykład na temat jakiegoś obszaru działania rządu („Boston Gazette", s. 5). Pastorzy zaczęli wygłaszać wykłady poza kontekstem nabożeństw religijnych i podejmować tematy o bardziej ogólnym znaczeniu. Kaznodzieja Elihu Palmer, który stał się radykalnym wolnomyślicielem, wygłaszał wykłady od połowy lat 90. XVII wieku, ale początkowo promował je jako „oracje", „dyskursy moralne" i „badanie prawdy". Na początku XIX wieku zaczął opisywać wiele swoich prezentacji jako „wykłady polityczne" („New York Commercial Advertiser", 1802, s. 3). Podobnie jak wykłady bardziej



Portret niewidomego wykładowcy Elihu Palmera (1974-1806). Ze zbiorów New York Public Library.

konwencjonalnych osób duchownych, opierały się one na czystej mowie, bez materiału ilustracyjnego.

Radykalną innowację – I zakłócenie – w dziedzinie wykładów otwartych zawdzięczamy George'owi A. Stevensowi, brytyjskiemu aktorowi, którego jednoosobowy spektakl *A Lecture on Heads* (Wykład o głowach) miał swoją premierę w londyńskim Haymarket Theater 30 kwietnia 1764 roku jako rozrywka w porze lunchu. Jak Stevens zauważył na początku swojego satyrycznego, kpiarskiego wykładu, w którym wykorzystywał serię popiersi jako eksponaty: „Niektóre z tych głów są wykonane z drewna, a inne z tektury, aby zaznaczyć, że istnieją nie tylko Twarde Głowy (Blockheads), ale także Papierowe Czaszki (Paper Sculls)" (Kahan, 1984, s. 70). Szeroko naśladowany, dotarł do angielskich kolonii dwa lata później. W Filadelfii nauczyciel Joseph Garner kazał swoim uczniom – najpierw 12-letniemu Josephowi Redmanowi (1754-1818) – wygłaszać te edukacyjne bzdury do tłumów wypełniających jego Christ-Church Schoolhouse („Pennsylvania Gazette", 1766, s. 5)[10]. Własne wariacje na ten temat zaczęli wkrótce prezentować profesjonalni aktorzy. David Douglass, menadżer pierwszego amerykańskiego zespołu teatralnego, wygłosił „poważno-komiczny wykład satyryczny", najpierw w Charleston w Południowej Karolinie, a następnie – wraz ze swoim pasierbem Lewisem Hallamem Jr. – w Nowym Jorku i Filadelfii (Kahan, s. 116-125). Utwór cieszył się popularnością w koloniach do 20 października 1774 roku, gdy Kongres Kontynentalny przyjął rezolucję przeciwko „sztukom teatralnym i innym kosztownym rozrywkom". W rezultacie ten konkretny rodzaj wykładu – produkt teatru, który wyśmiewał wykład jako sposób komunikacji – nie był już wykonywany. Natomiast wykłady publiczne – z ilustracjami lub bez – oferowały swój własny rodzaj przedstawienia, były one jednak częścią silnego antyteatralnego nastawienia, które przeniknęło tradycję dokumentalną. Należały do dyskursu trzeźwości, więc na ogół pozwalano im trwać.

Prawa antyteatralne utrzymały się w Pensylwanii, Nowym Jorku, Massachusetts i innych stanach po rewolucji, ale *Wykład o głowach* okazał się idealnym sposobem obejścia tych zakazów i dostarczył poręcznego modelu dla podobnych podstępów w nowym środowisku czasów pokoju. Szczególnie otwarta była Filadelfia. Oprócz powtórzenia *Wykładu o głowach* jeden z teatrów zaoferował serię wykładów obejmujących „poważne badanie moralności Szekspira, zilustrowane jego najbardziej uderzającymi postaciami" („Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser", 1784, s. 3). Późniejsze podstępy obejmowały komiczny wykład w pięciu częściach, zaczerpnięty z sekwencji sześciu obrazów Williama Hogartha

[10] Garner powtórzył to wydarzenie w następnym roku („Pennsylvania Gazette", January 15, 1767, 4). Satyryczny wykład, który wydaje się przywoływać *A Lecture on Heads*, ukazał się jako *A Lecture in Full-Bottomed Wigs* („Connecticut Courant", February 3, 1766, 4).

Małżeństwo a-la-mode (1743-45) oraz „poważny, pouczający wykład moralny przeciwko pierwszym grzesznym pokusom, na przykładzie historii George'a Barnwella" („Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser", 1788A, s. 3; „Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser", 1788B, s. 3). W Nowym Jorku pani Kenna przedstawiła *Wykład o sercach*, ilustrowany serią obrazów „wykonanych przez wybitnego artystę" („Independent Journal", New York, s. 3).

Bostończycy opierali się tym sztuczkom przez około dekadę. Pan Powell był w końcu w stanie wygłosić „Moralny i satyryczny wykład doktora Dodda na temat serc w sali koncertowej w Bostonie" w sierpniu 1792 roku („Columbia Centinel", 1792, s. 3)[11]. Wkrótce potem pojawił się „Wykład moralny w pięciu częściach, zatytułowany *Król Ryszard III*" – Szekspir raczej w formie wystawy niż przedstawienia („Boston Gazette, and the Country Journal", 1792, s. 3).

Gdy dawne kolonie połączyły się w Stany Zjednoczone Ameryki, świeckie formy rozrywki stały się bardziej popularne (Benes, 2016, s. 2). Pensylwania (1789) i Massachusetts (1793) uchyliły swoje prawa zakazujące teatru, umożliwiając rozkwit kultury teatralnej. Popularne muzea oferujące dziwną mieszankę rozrywek pojawiły się w wielu amerykańskich miastach: Muzeum Peale'a w Filadelfii (1786), Muzeum Amerykańskie w Nowym Jorku (1791) i Muzeum Kolumbijskie w Bostonie (1795). „Panorama Londynu i Westminsteru" Edwarda Savage'a, pokazana w Bostonie latem 1794 roku, zainicjowała serię wielu innych panoram w kolejnych dekadach („The Mercury", 1794, s. 3; Piggush, 2013, s. 427-428). Szał na fantasmagorie rozpoczął się wraz z wystawą Bologny i Tomlinsona w Nowym Jorku w listopadzie 1803 roku („The Daily Advertiser", 1803, s. 3). Chociaż takie pokazy „duchów i zjaw bezcielesnych" sugerują, że fantasmagoria i wykład otwarty znajdowały się na przeciwległych biegunach kultury publicznej, pan Turnbull czasami uznawał za celowe poprzedzenie swojej wystawy fantasmagorii „wykładem wprowadzającym i wyjaśniającym" i wykorzystywał go do „ujawnienia praktyk zręcznych oszustów i egzorcystów oraz do otwarcia oczu tym, którzy nadal wspierają absurdalne wierzenia w DUCHY i ZJAWY BEZCIELESNE" („Portland Gazette and Maine Advertizer", 1808, s. 3; „Theatre, Providence", 1806, s. 3).

Wykładowcy podejmowali coraz bardziej zróżnicowane tematy: C.W. Peale regularnie wygłaszał wykłady na temat historii naturalnej w Muzeum Filadelfijskim swojego ojca, wykorzystując wiele jego eksponatów do zilustrowania swoich wystąpień („General Aurora Advertiser", Philadelphia, 799, s. 3). Thomas

[11] Wykład Dodda został opublikowany jakieś 25 lat wcześniej: James Solas Dodd, *A Satyrical Lecture on Hearts: to which is added, a Critical Dissertation on Noses*, London, 1767.

Swann wielokrotnie wygłaszał wykłady na temat „wielkiej nauki jeździectwa", którym towarzyszyły pokazy, w tym „szerokiego miecza do ruchów kawalerii pani Scott" i „Wystawy pościgu za lisem" („Poulson's American Daily Advertiser", 1806, 3). Kiedy wódz Czerwona Koszula wygłosił w Muzeum Amerykańskim w Nowym Jorku „długą mowę o swoim życiu i krzywdach, jakich jego plemię doznało od białych od czasu ich pierwszego osiedlenia się w tym kraju", przynajmniej jedna gazeta określiła jego wystąpienie jako „publiczne opowiadanie lub wykład" („New-York American", 1829, s. 3; „Woodstock Observer", VT, 1829, s. 3). Nowojorskie muzeum Peale'a odpowiedziało „nowatorską wystawą starożytnych zwyczajów i ceremonii, przygotowaną przez grupę Indian z plemienia Sandusky ubranych w odpowiednie stroje" („New-York American", 1829, s. 3)[12]. Obejmowała ona różne sceny tradycyjnego życia, w tym tańce wojenne i pokaz skalpowania. W międzyczasie kontynuowano otwarte wykłady na tematy medyczne i naukowe, ilustrowane odpowiednimi eksperymentami i przedstawieniami, ale coraz częściej odbywały się one pod patronatem lokalnych szkół wyższych i uniwersytetów[13].

Wraz z rozpowszechnieniem się wykładów w latach 20. XIX wieku pojawiły się dwie kobiety, które uosabiały przeciwstawne podejście do otwartego wykładu. Anne Clarke pochodziła z rodziny z klasy średniej, borykającej się z trudnościami finansowymi. Zarabiała na życie jako nauczycielka i korepetytorka (Ganter, 2014, s. 709-746). Pod koniec 1823 roku w sali swojej szkoły w Filadelfii wygłosiła serię wykładów na temat historii starożytnej, „ilustrowanych mapami i wykresem na nowym planie" („Poulson's American Daily Advertiser", Philadelphia, 1823, s. 3). Następnie prowadziła wykłady w wielu miastach i miasteczkach na północnym wschodzie Stanów Zjednoczonych. Jeden z bostońskich komentatorów donosił, że:

> Wykładowczyni, za pomocą wykresów i ilustracji obrazkowych, pogrupowała najważniejsze cechy historii świata, od potopu do czasów współczesnych, i przedstawiła obraz jednocześnie pomysłowy, zabawny i pouczający. Jej sposób bycia był wstrzemięźliwy, ale przyjemny, jej styl przenikliwy i płynny, a wymowa jasna i wyraźna. Wierzymy, że dała powszechną satysfakcję. („American Traveller", Boston, 1830, s. 3).

[12] Peale miał dwie figury woskowe Indian, którzy odwiedzili jego filadelfijskie Muzeum w 1796 roku. W następnych latach wystawiał je w swoich galeriach („The General Advertiser", Philadelphia, 1797, s. 3).

[13] Ebenezer Kinnersley, David Rittenhouse i inni wygłaszali wykłady w College of Philadelphia (później University of Pennsylvania) na początku lat 70. XVIII wieku („Pennsylvania Gazette", 1771, 3). Por. „Columbia College", „New-York Evening Post", 9, 1807, s. 4; „University of the State of New York", „American Citizen", New York, 1807, s. 2.

Dziesięć lat później do swojego repertuaru ilustracji dodała przezrocza – wybór mediów przyjęty również przez wielu innych wykładowców („Vermont Watchman and State Gazette", Montpelier, VT, 1833, s. 4).

Frances Wright, która najpierw dała się poznać wielu Amerykanom jako autorka sztuki pt. *Altorf* (1819), urodziła się w Szkocji, zaś obywatelką amerykańską została w 1825 roku. Od końca lat 20. XIX wieku podróżowała po Stanach Zjednoczonych, prowadząc wykłady na temat szeregu radykalnych idei, w tym feminizmu, abolicji i reform społecznych. Jak zauważył „New York Observer":

> Panna Frances Wright wygłosiła wykład na temat wiedzy w poniedziałek wieczorem, w City Hotel, dla dużej publiczności. Jest kobietą o pięknej mowie, ale ukrywa swoje występne poglądy pod pozorem cnoty, moralności, wolności, równości i tym podobnych, dążąc do ośmieszenia religii i ganiąc pobożnych, wiernych kaznodziejów Ewangelii („New-York Observer", 1829, s. 3).

Zamożna i komunikatywna, Wright przemawiała z mocą i dynamiką. Nie potrzebowała materiałów ilustracyjnych[14]. Pomogła przygotować scenę dla wykładów przeciwko niewolnictwu, które zaczęły pojawiać się w latach 30. XIX wieku („Boston Courier", 1833, s. 2).

Amerykańskie Oświecenie przywróciło literaturę, sztukę i muzykę jako ważne dyscypliny, warte studiowania w szkołach wyższych. W Bostonie pan Philipps wygłosił wykład na temat sztuki śpiewu, wykorzystując ilustracje wokalne. W Baltimore, po wygłoszeniu wykładu na temat „geniuszu i pism Lorda Byrona z ilustracjami i krytyką", dr Barber szybko kontynuował kolejny wykład, tym razem na temat „geniuszu i poezji Cowpera" („Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser", 1826, s. 3). Publiczne wykłady na temat odległych krajów również stawały się coraz bardziej powszechne. W Filadelfii pan Evans wygłosił kurs dwunastu wykładów na temat „Manier i zwyczajów różnych krajów świata, ilustrowanych licznymi i eleganckimi rysunkami, mapami i innymi obszernymi aparatami" („National Gazette and Literary Register", Philadelphia, 1831, s. 2).

Ilustrowany wykład

W miarę jak otwarte wykłady stawały się coraz częstsze, coraz bardziej przydatne okazywało się sygnalizowanie różnic między tymi, które wykorzystywały jedynie słowo, a tymi, które opierały się na różnego rodzaju materiałach ilustracyjnych. W Stanach Zjednoczonych określenia „ilustrowany wykład" użyto najwcześniej w 1841 roku, w prawdopodobnie przedrukowanej relacji z Londynu,

[14] Więcej na temat Wright zob.: Eckhardt, 1984.

dotyczącej pokazu elektromagnetycznego telegrafu drukarskiego: „Nowe zastosowanie niezwykłych mocy elektromagnetyzmu było wczoraj po raz pierwszy tematem ilustrowanego wykładu w Royal Polytechnic Institution" („Manchester Guardian", 1841, s. 4; „National Aegis" - Worcester, Massachusetts, 1841, s. 1)[15].

Pojawienie się nazwy zbiegło się w czasie z upowszechnieniem wynalazków opartych na reprodukcji: telegrafu, a także fotografii. Ta zbieżność nie sięgała jednak zbyt daleko. Fotografii nie poświęcano zbyt wielu wykładów – ludzie po prostu robili sobie zdjęcia. Co więcej, Amerykanie nie od razu przyjęli ten nowy termin. Zajęło im to prawie dekadę. Oto dwa najwcześniejsze przypadki jego „amerykańskiego" użycia: Pan Holt wygłosił „bardzo interesujący i pięknie ilustrowany wykład na temat Palestyny" w Belfaście, w stanie Maine, 6 lutego 1849 roku, podczas gdy William C. Richard wygłosił „serię trzech popularnych wykładów na temat atmosfery" w Auguście w stanie Georgia, „ilustrowanych prawie stu błyskotliwymi eksperymentami" – pod koniec listopada 1849 roku („Republican Journal", Belfast, Maine, 1849, s. 3); „Augusta Chronicle", Georgia, 1849, s. 2). Rosnąca popularność terminu „ilustrowany wykład" była powiązana ze zwiększonym użyciem takich pokrewnych określeń jak „ilustrowane książki" i „ilustrowane czasopisma", które stały się powszechne w latach 40. XIX wieku.[16]

Utrwalenie pojęcia „ilustrowanego wykładu" można zaobserwować w odniesieniu do wystaw zorganizowanych przez Maungwudausa, wodza Indian Chippewa, oraz J. Wesleya Jonesa z jego Pantoskopem. Podróżując po Stanach Zjednoczonych z rodziną pod koniec 1848 roku, po powrocie z długiej podróży po Europie, Maungwudaus wygłosił dwa wykłady, anonsowane w następujący sposób:

> Wykłady wraz z ilustracjami dotyczącymi charakteru i zwyczajów Indian, wygłoszone przez jednego z nich w jego rodzimym stroju, wywrą o wiele lepsze wrażenie niż to, które może wywrzeć biały człowiek wygłaszający wykład na temat charakteru Indian, a nawet niektórzy sami Indianie, którzy zniechęcają publiczność swoim nieokrzesanym hałasem i gestami („Hartford Daily Courant", 1848, s. 3).

Ilustracje pokazywały szereg indiańskich tańców, a także indiańską metodę karmienia niemowląt, scenę skalpowania, radę pokoju oraz strzelanie do celu z łuków i dmuchawki. Gdzie indziej ta wieczorna rozrywka była określana mianem „publicznego występu" lub „wystawy". Jednak od roku 1851 przez kolejne cztery lata Maungwudaus reklamował swój program jako „ilustrowany wykład",

[15] Pojęcia „ilustrowanego wykładu" używano okazjonalnie w Anglii w poprzedniej dekadzie. Zob. „The Times", London, 1838, s. 6; „Illustrated London News", 1843, s. 42.

[16] Czasopismo „The London Illustrated News" zaczęło wychodzić w 1842 roku.

i robił to konsekwentnie („Cleveland Daily Herald", 1851, s. 2; „American and Commercial Daily Advertiser", Baltimore, MD, 1852, s. 3; „Newark Daily Advertiser", 1855, s. 3).

Reklamując się jako „artysta, podróżnik i wykładowca", J. Wesley Jones zadebiutował swoim Pantoskopem w Boston Amory Hall na kilka dni przed Bożym Narodzeniem 1852 roku („Boston Bee", 1852, s. 2). Jones przemierzył kontynent amerykański, wykonując aż 1500 dagerotypów. Na ich podstawie zlecił grupie malarzy („najlepszym artystom tego kraju") skopiowanie wielu z tych obrazów do swojej panoramy „Pantoscope", aby stworzyć „największy obraz na świecie". „Przedstawia całą trasę przez GÓRY SKALISTE oraz SALT LAKE CITY, przez kopalnie, miasta i miasteczka KALIFORNII, a także maniery, zwyczaje i osobliwości Indian, mormonów, górników i Kalifornijczyków, ich Walki, Tańce i Niedostatek" („Boston Herald", 1852C, s. 3). Jones wygłaszał wykłady na tej niezwykłej wystawie dwa, a czasem trzy razy dziennie, przed publicznością liczącą każdorazowo około 200-250 osób. Niewątpliwie ruchoma, ogromna panorama (choć nigdy nie została wyraźnie opisana jako taka), w której przynajmniej niektóre fragmenty sugerowały podróż pociągiem, a także obrazy i komentarz Jonesa spotkały się z entuzjastycznym przyjęciem (Huhtamo, 2013, s. 6-15, 245-261). Jednym ze sposobów, w jaki showman był w stanie zapełnić Amory Hall, było organizowanie przez raczkujący system kolejowy grupowych wycieczek z okolicznych miast; organizatorzy łączyli w ten sposób podróż rzeczywistą i wirtualną; to podwojenie doświadczenia widza jako pasażera było czymś nowym („Boston Daily Herald", 1853, s. 2).[17] Od czasu do czasu bostońska prasa opisywała prezentacje Jonesa jako „ilustrowane wykłady" („Boston Herald", 1852B, s. 2). Od roku 1853 Jones pokazywał Pantoskop w Nowym Jorku i reklamował swoje prezentacje jako „ilustrowane wykłady" („New York Herald", 1853B, s. 1).

Wykład ilustrowany był określonego typu prezentacją, nawet niezależnie od wyświetlanego materiału ilustracyjnego. Prezentacje Maungwudausa obejmowały „dokładny obraz prawdziwego INDIAŃSKIEGO ŻYCIA", i to „na szeroką skalę i w najbardziej wszechstronny sposób" („Cleveland Daily Herald", 1851, s. 2). Jones oferował swoim patronom ciągłą podróż: jeden z duchownych, który podróżował podobną trasą, chwalił jego wystawę za oferowanie „wiernego zapisu tego kraju" („Boston Herald", 1852A, s. 2). Obrazy oparte na zdjęciach były często chwalone za ich „prawdziwość", oferowanie prawdziwego obrazu, „samej

[17] Koszt biletu powrotnego z Newburyoport wraz ze wstępem na wystawę wynosił 1.25 dolara. Zob. Wolfgang Schivelbusch, 1979, s. 153).

natury" z „wydarzeniami [które] są podobne do życia" („Boston Bee", 1853, s. 2; „Boston Bee", January 21, 1853B, s. 2). Te określenia („prawdziwy", „dokładny", „podobny do życia", „wszechstronny", a także wynikający z nich „autentyczny") wzbogaciły logikę informacyjną tradycji dokumentalnej.

Owe na nowo scharakteryzowane „ilustrowane wykłady" dotyczyły coraz szerszego zakresu tematów. Niejaki pan Shaw „wygłosił ilustrowany wykład na temat frenologii, który może być godny uwagi dla przyjaciół tej nauki" („North American", 1844, s. 2). Dr Boynton wygłosił ilustrowany wykład na temat geologii, zatytułowany „Historia stworzenia", wykorzystując 18 dużych obrazów pokrywających ponad 3000 stóp płótna („New York Herald", 1853A, s. 5; „Richmond Enquirer", 1859, s. 3). W 1859 roku pani D.P. Bowers, znana aktorka, wygłosiła ilustrowany wykład na temat „Pieśni i Pasji" – była to jedna z wielu takich prezentacji, do których ilustrację stanowiła muzyka („Baltimore Daily Exchange", 1859, s. 1).

Ilustrowany wykład konfrontuje się z fotografią i technologiczną reprodukcją

Pojawienie się terminu „wykład ilustrowany" nie tylko zbiegło się w czasie z wprowadzeniem i rozwojem fotografii; dodatkowo miłośnicy fotografii używali wielu tych samych pojęć i tropów. Od samego początku dyskurs wokół fotografii jako oferującej prawdziwy obraz pokrywał się z retoryką związaną z ilustrowanym wykładem. W 1840 roku Edgar Allan Poe napisał:

> Jeśli zbadamy dzieło zwykłej sztuki za pomocą potężnego mikroskopu, znikną wszelkie ślady podobieństwa do natury – ale najściślejsza analiza fotogenicznego rysunku ujawnia tylko bardziej absolutną prawdę, doskonalszą tożsamość aspektu z przedstawianą rzeczą. Wariacje odcieni i gradacje zarówno perspektywy liniowej, jak i powietrznej, są samą prawdą w jej doskonałości. (Poe, „Alexander's Weekly Messenger", 1840, s. 2).

Twierdzenie Poego obejmuje dwa aspekty prawdziwości, z których jeden – dotyczący absolutnej prawdy i doskonałej zgodności z naturą – był przekleństwem dla studiów dokumentalnych. Drugi, w dużej mierze ignorowany, jest bardziej pomocny. Obraz fotograficzny jest prawdziwszy od obrazu malarskiego. Jest względny i porównawczy – podobnie jak twierdzenia Maungwudausa dotyczące jego ilustrowanych wykładów i wielu innych wykładowców na temat ich prezentacji / wystaw. Niemniej jednak wykład ilustrowany i fotografia działały w dwóch różnych sferach, które rzadko, jeśli w ogóle, się pokrywały. Pod tym względem J. Wesley Jones był nietypowy.

Pantoskop Jonesa podkreśla fakt, że dagerotypy – a więc, bardziej ogólnie, fotografie – nie nadawały się do pełnienia roli ilustracji do wykładu. Zaczęło się to zmieniać, gdy John A. Whipple, wybitny bostoński dagerotypista, i William B. Jones opracowali proces albuminowy, który pozwolił im przenieść obraz fotograficzny na szklaną powierzchnię. Jeszcze przed opatentowaniem tego procesu w czerwcu 1850 roku, Whipple zaprezentował „coś nowego". Jak zauważył jeden z dziennikarzy: „Dzięki doskonałemu i potężnemu zestawowi instrumentów wystawca jest w stanie reprodukować dagerotypy naturalnej wielkości na podświetlanym ekranie" („The Daily Atlas", Boston, 1850, s. 2; Patent no. 7,458, 1850). Whipple unikał jednak nazywania swoich prezentacji wykładami. Wolał mówić o pokazywaniu różnych nowości naukowych lub „cudów współczesnej nauki optycznej" („Boston Herald", 1850, s. 3).

Fotografowie z Filadelfii, Frederick i William Langenheimowie, również opracowywali proces albuminowy, który w 1849 roku pozwolił im przenieść obraz fotograficzny na szklaną powierzchnię. W 1850 roku reklamowali swoje osiągnięcie jako latarnię magiczną, pisząc:

> Nowe obrazy z latarni magicznej na szkle, wytwarzane za pomocą kamery obscury przez działanie samego światła na przygotowaną szklaną płytkę, muszą zepchnąć w cień stary styl slajdów z latarni magicznej i zastąpić je natychmiast, ze względu na większą dokładność najdrobniejszych szczegółów, które są rysowane i utrwalane na szkle z natury, przez kamerę obscurę, z wiernością naprawdę zdumiewającą. Powiększając te nowe slajdy za pomocą latarni magicznej, prezentacja staje się samą naturą, unikając wad i nieprawidłowości w rysunku, których nigdy nie można było uniknąć podczas malowania obrazu w małej skali wymaganej dla starych slajdów („The Art-Journal" 1851, s. 106).

Zaskakujące, jak niewiele wskazuje na to, że ilustrowane wykłady wykorzystujące slajdy z latarni fotograficznych weszły do życia publicznego w tym czasie. Jeden wyjątek: Charles Gayler wygłosił serię ilustrowanych wykładów na temat artystycznych podróży Elishy Kenta Kane'a, w Brooklyn Athenaeum, w marcu i kwietniu 1858 roku („New York Tribune", 1858, s. 6). Wykorzystane w nich obrazy, prawdopodobnie nabyte od Langenheimów, mogły zawierać niektóre rzeczywiste fotografie (być może portret Kane'a), ale wiele z nich było ręcznie kolorowanymi reprodukcjami fotograficznymi naturalistycznych rysunków – styl później udoskonalony przez Josepha Boggsa Beale'a (Borton, 2014).

Pokazy fotograficznych slajdów w niefabularnych programach latarni magicznych osiągnęły masę krytyczną dopiero pod koniec 1860 roku – dzięki

urządzeniu, które stało się powszechnie znane jako „stereoptykon". Ta nazwa była ograniczona do amerykańskiego dyskursu, ale sygnalizowała to, co można uznać za nową formę medialną. Łączyła ona w sobie trzy podstawowe elementy: po pierwsze, obraz fotograficzny; po drugie, nowe i znacznie mocniejsze źródło światła; i po trzecie, ostre soczewki. Szybko doprowadziło to do prezentacji całej serii programów. Wiele z nich było związanych z podróżami, ponieważ stereoptykon wydawał się przenosić widzów w odległe miejsca.

Stereoptykon został opracowany przez Johna Fallona z Lawrence w stanie Massachusetts pod koniec lat 50. XIX wieku. W przeciwieństwie do Whipple'a, Fallon nie zaprezentował tego nowego typu latarni magicznej samodzielnie, ale powierzył

Slajd brytyjskiej latarni magicznej przedstawiający wyprawę Elishy Kenta Kane'a na Arktykę (1853-55) i porzucenie żaglowca Advance w 1855 roku. Slajd jest fotografią namalowanego obrazu (prawdopodobnie czarno-białą, a następnie pokolorowaną). Ze zbiorów Terry'ego Bortona oraz the Borton Magic-Lantern Collection.

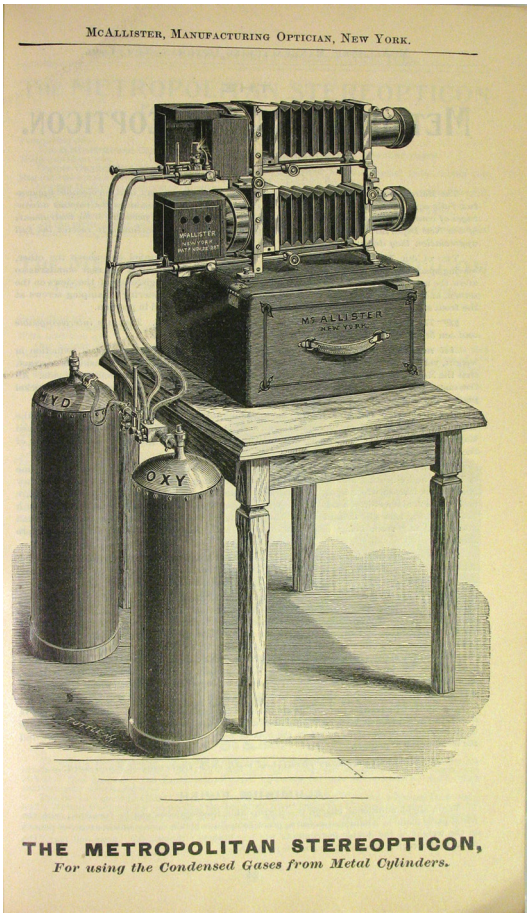
to zadanie dwóm osobom, które miały doświadczenie w branży rozrywkowej. Po kilku nieformalnych, mało nagłośnionych pokazach, stereoptykon Fallona miał swój komercyjny debiut w Filadelfii, pod kierownictwem Thomasa Leylanda, współpracownika Fallona, i Petera E. Abela, który pracował w lokalnym biznesie teatralnym (Wells, 2011, s. 2-34; zob. też Musser, 2016, 62-75). Po premierze w Concert Hall 22 grudnia 1860 r. nastąpił tydzień popołudniowych i wieczornych pokazów. Ich reklamy promowały „Gigantyczne obrazy stereoskopowe", które przewyższały „wszystko, co do tej pory było prezentowane publiczności", ponieważ obrazy były produkowane „z zaskakującą i niemal magiczną dokładnością" („Philadelphia Inquirer", 1860, s. 8). „The Saturday Evening Post" zauważył, iż „powstaje cudowne wrażenie, że patrzysz na prawdziwe sceny i obiekty" („Saturday Evening Post", 1861, s. 2). W latach 60. XIX wieku istniały dwie uzupełniające się, ale niezintegrowane praktyki, które posługiwały się podobnymi pojęciami. Oba odwoływały się do nauki i prawdy. Ilustrowany wykład i pokaz stereoptykonu mogły z łatwością pojawiać się w tych samych miejscach. Skąd więc to ostre rozróżnienie? Być może stąd, że w połowie XIX wieku istniały trzy nadrzędne sposoby prezentacji, znane do dziś:

- Wykład. Wraz z kazaniem i oracją był on jedną z trzech form przemawiania.
- Wystawa. Obrazy i fotografie były zazwyczaj wystawiane. Chociaż malarze lub fotografowie mogli wystawiać swoje własne prace, wystawy zazwyczaj wiązały się z publiczną prezentacją prac innych osób.
- Przedstawienie. Teatr i inne formy rozrywki zazwyczaj obejmowały wykonawców i występy.

Kategorie te niekoniecznie się wykluczały. Cyrk był czasami nazywany wystawą, a czasami występem – ale nie wykładem, nawet jeśli był tam mistrz ceremonii, który zwracał się do publiczności.

W przypadku przenikających się obrazów reklamy i ogłoszenia w gazetach konsekwentnie odnosiły się do stereoptykonu jako rodzaju wystawy – lub elementu wystawy, bez żadnej wzmianki o wykładzie. W niezwykle obszernej recenzji dotyczącej stereoptykonu firmy Abel & Leyland czterokrotnie nazwano pokaz „rozrywką" i siedmiokrotnie użyto wariantów „eksponat" oraz „wystawa". Skupiono się na „Stereoskopowych Obrazach Fotograficznych" i „niezwykłych wymiarach" obrazu („Philadelphia Inquirer", 1861, s. 5). Termin „wykład" nie pojawia się ani razu. Te pokazy stereoptykonów wygenerowały również szereg pojęć, które pokrywają się z tymi stosowanymi w odniesieniu do ilustrowanego wykładu: prawdziwość, pośrednictwo edukacyjne, wierny obraz (autentyczność

i wierność), dokładne i precyzyjne przedstawienie, i tak dalej. Ta sieć określeń pojawiała się wielokrotnie: reklama „wielkiego STEREOPTYKONU" w „New York Tribune" głosiła, że „prezentowane widoki stereoskopowe były naprawdę piękne, wierne życiu i naturze, jak to zawsze bywa w przypadku takich widoków, a sposób prezentacji znacznie zwiększał ich wyrazistość i piękno" („New York Tribune", 1863, 8). Nastąpił więc rozłam. W przypadku ilustrowanego wykładu komentarz – słowo mówione – został uznany za podstawę. W przypadku wystaw obrazów lub slajdów stereoptycznych najważniejszy był obraz. Nie oznacza to, że obywano się tu bez słów. Na wystawie mógł się pojawić prelegent, a pokazom stereoptykonów mógł towarzyszyć komentarz. W latach 60. XIX wieku pojawił się nowy, nieoczekiwany podział, w którym po jednej stronie znalazł się ilustrowany



Stereoptykon. (T. H. McAllister's Catalogue of Stereopticons, Dissolving Views Apparatus & Magic Lanterns (New York: ca. 1880s).

wykład – jako forma wykładu. Po drugiej stronie znalazł się stereoptykon – forma wizualna. Jednak pokazy stereoptykonów rzadko traktują swój temat w sposób pogłębiony i kompleksowy, jak to się dzieje w filmach dokumentalnych lub licznych wykładach ilustrowanych, takich jak pokazy Pantoskopu Jonesa z jego przedstawieniem „ciągłej podróży". Jednak stereoptykon ucieleśniał również nowoczesne technologie wizualne w sposób, w jaki nie czynił tego wykład ilustrowany, stosunkowo świeża nazwa dla stuletniej praktyki. Oto nowa dialektyka. Na nową syntezę trzeba było czekać prawie dwie dekady.

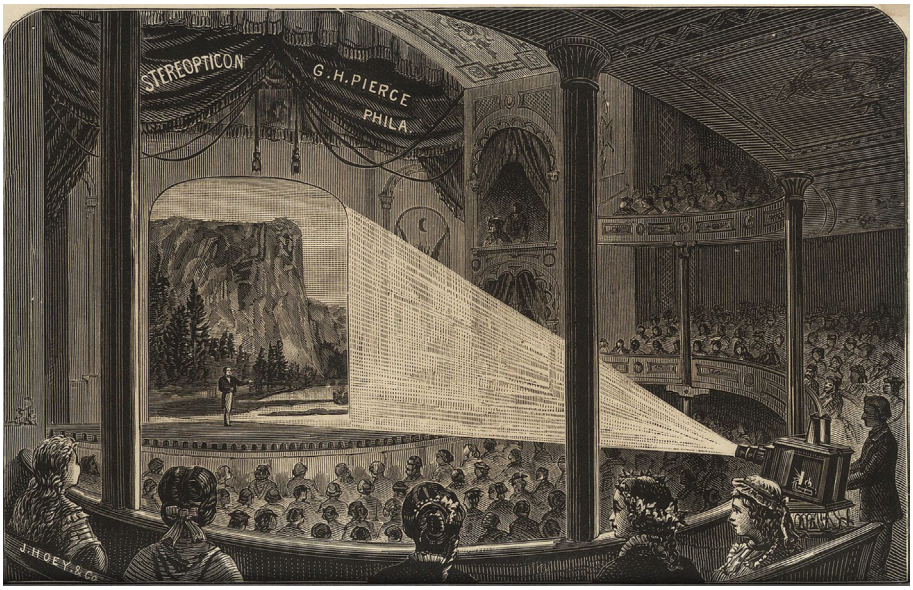
Integracja stereoptykonu i wykładu ilustrowanego

Decydujący moment w rozwoju, jeśli nie wręcz w kształtowaniu współczesnej praktyki dokumentalnej, nastąpił, gdy stereoptykon i ilustrowany wykład połączyły się. Integracja ta była stopniowym i nierównomiernym procesem, który skupił się wokół dużej liczby prezentacji ekranowych, skoncentrowanych na Dolinie Yosemite i Parku Narodowym Yellowstone na początku i w połowie lat 70. XIX wieku. Biorąc pod uwagę, że dokument przyrodniczy jest jednym z najważniejszych i najbardziej dynamicznych gatunków współczesnego filmu dokumentalnego, jest to szczególnie interesujące: sugeruje, że tematy przyrodnicze były katalizatorem łączenia wystawy i wykładu – obrazów i słów – w równowadze i harmonii. Na przykład fotograf T. Clarkson Taylor z Wilmington w stanie Delaware udał się do Yosemite latem 1869 roku. W grudniu tego samego roku zaprezentował „wystawę stereoptykonów", zatytułowaną „California and the Yo-Semite Valley", w filadelfijskiej Mercantile Library. Reklama tych wieczornych spotkań wyraźnie podkreślała fotografie – termin „wykład" nie był używany. Programy były „ilustrowane pięknymi podświetlanymi fotografiami, zajmującymi 500 stóp kwadratowych, wystawianymi po raz pierwszy w tym mieście" („Philadelphia Evening Telegraph", 1869, s. 2). W następnym miesiącu Taylor wystawiał na Manhattanie i Brooklynie. Tym razem ogłoszono, że „wygłosi dwa wykłady", drugi zatytułowany po prostu „Dolina Yosemite": „Wykłady te zostaną zilustrowane czterdziestoma fotografiami wykonanymi przez niego podczas minionego lata i powiększonymi przez Stereoptykon" („Brooklyn Eagle", 1870, s. 1)[18]. Chociaż terminy „wystawa" i „wykład" zostały połączone w związku z prezentacją stereoptykonu, nazwa „wykład ilustrowany" nie została zastosowana.

Określenie „wykład ilustrowany" w odniesieniu do wykładów z użyciem stereoptykonu zaczęło pojawiać się z nieśmiałą regularnością po 1875 roku. Profe-

[18] Taylor, który prowadził szkołę w Wilmington, Delaware i wygłaszał ilustrowane wykłady z pomocą stereoptykonu, zmarł 25 października 1871 roku („Delaware Republican", 1866, s. 2; „Philadelphia Inquirer", 1871, s. 5).

sor William L. Marshall z Fitchburg, MA, zaprezentował bardzo udany „ilustrowany wykład" na temat Yellowstone w Boston's Art Club pod koniec 1876 roku („Boston Daily Advertiser", 1876, s. 4). Rok później w nowojorskim Cooper In-



Wykład ilustrowany na temat doliny Yosemite. (T. H. McAllister's Catalogue of Stereopticons (ca. 1880s).

stitute prowadził podobne wydarzenie, w którym uczestniczyło 4000 osób. „Jego uwagi były ilustrowane widokami Stereoptykonu", ale napięcie między samym wykładem a wyświetlanymi obrazami było oczywiste: „obrazy ze stereoptykonu były tak podziwiane, że wykładowca kilkakrotnie musiał prosić publiczność o powstrzymanie się od oklasków, aby móc kontynuować wykład" („New York Herald", 1877, s. 12). Pod koniec dekady termin „ilustrowany wykład" był rutynowo używany do promowania i opisywania tego typu wydarzeń.

Zmiana ta nastąpiła również w innych gatunkach. W latach 80. i 90. XIX wieku naukowcy wykorzystywali fotograficzne slajdy z latarni magicznych na wykładach z historii sztuki, ale wydaje się, że praktyka ta rozwinęła się w Stanach Zjednoczonych dekadę wcześniej (Fawcett, 1983, s. 442–460; Leighton, 1984, s. 107–118). Wystawy stereoptykonu z początku lat 60. XIX wieku prezentowały slajdy z latarni magicznych przedstawiające rzeźby, arcydzieła architektury i – sporadycznie – obrazy, takie jak „Bingen on the Rhine" Lamberta Doomera (1663) (American Broadsides and Ephemera). Katalog McAllistera z 1867 roku zawierał wybór do stereoptykonu ponad 50 fotograficznych

slajdów latarniowych „najsłynniejszych dawnych i współczesnych malarzy – z królewskich galerii w Dreźnie, Berlinie, Monachium itp." (McAllister, 1867, s. 23). W 1872 r. ks. Gage wygłosił wykład na temat „miejsc i dzieł sztuki", wykorzystując widoki stereoptyczne wykonane w Europie przez profesora Eatona z Yale. Poinformowano, że „wystawa będzie podwójnie interesująca dzięki objaśniającym uwagom ks. Gage'a" („Hartford Courant", 1872, s. 2). W marcu 1874 roku William Henry Goodyear, syn wynalazcy wulkanizowanej gumy i profesor w Cooper Union, wygłosił wykład na temat „czterech wieków sztuki włoskiej", „któremu przez cały czas towarzyszyły widoki stereoptyczne, ilustrujące różne okresy sztuki, o których mówił wykładowca" („New York Times", 1874, s. 8). W marcu 1878 r. ks. J. Leonard Corning oferował serię „ilustrowanych wykładów o sztuce" oraz „ilustrowanych wykładów" w Waszyngtonie i Nowym Jorku („Washington Post", 1878A, s. 4; „Washington Post", 1878B, s. 2). Goodyear i Corning spędzili pewien czas w Niemczech. Kuszące jest przypuszczenie, że zainspirował ich Bruno Meyersem, uznawany często za innowatora w tej dziedzinie. Niemniej jednak, w porównaniu z ilustrowanymi wykładami na temat Yosemite i Yellowstone, ilustrowane wykłady na temat sztuki były w amerykańskim obiegu wykładowym rzadkością.

Około roku 1979 okazjonalnie stosowano również inny termin: „wykład stereoptyczny", który jeszcze bardziej podkreślał integrację obrazu / fotografii z latarni magicznej ze słowem / wykładem, a tym samym subtelną zmianę znaczenia samego „ilustrowanego wykładu". Tradycja dokumentalna osiągnęła nową fazę rozwoju, bo wykłady ilustrowane można również było nazywać wykładami latarniowymi lub stereoptycznymi. Wykład ilustrowany w końcu objął narzędzia technicznej reprodukcji. Obrazy, wykresy, modele i ruchome panoramy, które były używane jako materiały ilustracyjne, zostały w dużej mierze zastąpione i stosunkowo znormalizowane przez zastosowanie slajdów z latarni. Terminy, które były związane zarówno z ilustrowanym wykładem, jak i wystawą stereoptykonów, zostały połączone w ekspansywną, dialektyczną jedność.

Uwagi końcowe

Niniejsze badanie długiego trwania dokumentu wykazało, że tradycja dokumentalna ma prawie 300 lat, i stale ewoluuje. W angielskich koloniach Ameryki Północnej pojawiła się wraz z amerykańskim Oświeceniem. Te oświeceniowe korzenie są czymś, co długą historię dokumentu bez wątpienia łączy z innymi tradycjami narodowymi, choć istotne szczegóły – lub więcej niż szczegóły – będą się różnić. Czy wykłady z „filozofii naturalnej lub eksperymentalnej" miały w początkach dokumentu takie samo znaczenie, jak inne czynniki

związane z formowaniem się narodów i związana z nimi konfrontacja z religią? Czy kwestia prawdziwości od samego początku zajmowała centralne miejsce? Czy przeciwstawienie wystawy stereoptykonu wykładowi ilustrowanemu, które nastąpiło w latach 60. i 70. XIX wieku, było widoczne w innych tradycjach narodowych? Czy błędem jest założenie, że wielkie zmiany w *dyspozytywie*, wynikające z postępu technicznego, były wspólne dla lokalnych i krajowych praktyk, nawet jeśli czas ich wystąpienia był nieco inny? Obejmuje to przejście do wykorzystywania fotografii jako ilustracji, a później włączenie ruchomych obrazów; przejście od wykładu do napisów na filmach, a następnie od napisów do nagranego dźwięku. W każdym razie periodyzacja dokumentu w ramach 300-letniej historii będzie nieuchronnie wyglądać inaczej. Pantoskop Jonesa można teraz postrzegać jako wczesny przykład prezentacji autobiograficznej lub osobistej, badanej przez Jima Lane'a i innych (Lane, 2002). Ta autobiograficzna tradycja była kontynuowana w ilustrowanych wykładach Johna Stoddarda, Burtona Holmesa i wielu oficerów, którzy przekształcili swoje zdjęcia Kodaka w slajdy z latarni i przedstawili osobiste relacje z wojny hiszpańsko-amerykańskiej (Stoddard, 1903; Holmes, 1901).[19] Podobnie, wiele zagadnień etnograficznego dokumentu jest już widocznych w ilustrowanych wykładach Maungwudausa, a także w jeszcze wcześniejszych publicznych prezentacjach Czerwonej Koszuli i ówczesnych rdzennych Amerykanów. *Wykład o głowach* (1764) można uznać za pierwszy mockument. Tak wtedy, jak i teraz tradycja dokumentalna jest nieodwołalnie zaangażowana w pilnowanie granicy między faktami a fikcją – na przykład w debaty na temat dopuszczalności takich praktyk, jak rekonstrukcja. Mówiąc wprost, perspektywa historyczna może okazać się nieoceniona. Pokazuje ona, w jaki sposób: 1) tradycja dokumentalna działa w kontrze do kazań i doktryn religijnych w swoim świeckim zaangażowaniu w sceptycyzm, dociekanie i naukowe poszukiwanie prawdy, oraz: 2) jest przeciwstawiana fikcji i teatralności (Lofton, 2021, s. 99-120). Miejsce dokumentu w tej triadzie, widoczne od początku XVIII wieku, musi niepokoić badaczy z wielu dziedzin.

Badanie długiego trwania dokumentu ma również wpływ na to, jak podchodzimy do historii kina. Możemy przyjrzeć się kilku szeroko zakrojonym praktykom kulturowym i zobaczyć, jak wpłynęły na nie filmy – a nie odwrotnie. Nie tylko to, jak filmy wpłynęły na tradycję dokumentalną, ale także to, jak kino przekształciło i zdominowało kulturę teatralną. W rzeczywistości, kiedy ilustrowany wykład został przekształcony w to, co łatwo rozpoznajemy jako film doku-

[19] Przegląd osobistych i autobiograficznych wykładów ilustrowanych na temat wojny hiszpańsko-amerykańskiej oraz filipińsko-amerykańskiej znajduje się w: Musser, 2016, s. 154-168.

mentalny, to przecież nie zniknął on, ale trwał obok filmu w bardziej szczątkowej formie. Jeśli chodzi o kulturę teatralną, dynamika między występami na żywo a kinem jest szczególnie złożona. Być może warto powrócić do *Stage to Screen* A. Nicholasa Vardaca i na nowo wyobrazić sobie historię kultury przedstawień (Vardac, 1949). Moglibyśmy nawet spróbować skonstruować historię eksperymentalnych lub awangardowych praktyk medialnych, które poprzedzały kino, jak i następowały po nim. Tom Gunning powiązał kino atrakcji z późniejszym kinem awangardowym, ale równie dobrze można je prześledzić wstecz, do *Wonders of Modern Optical Science* Johna Whipple'a lub *Phantasmagoria* Robertsona. Czy nowa historia filmu, której orędownikiem jest Thomas Elsaesser, zestarzała się i została pokonana przez potrzebę nowych paradygmatów, wymuszonych przez nasze obecne okoliczności? Czy możemy porzucić historię konkretnych mediów i skupić się bardziej na sposobie, w jaki istniejące praktyki kulturowe są przez nie przekształcane? Dokument i jego długi czas trwania sugerują, że tak właśnie może być.

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