



UNIVERSIDADE
LUSÓFONA
CENTRO UNIVERSITÁRIO DE LISBOA

ESCOLA DE COMUNICAÇÃO, ARQUITETURA, ARTES E TECNOLOGIAS DA INFORMAÇÃO
DOUTORAMENTO EM ARTE DOS MEDIA E COMUNICAÇÃO

REENACTING TRAUMA: Working with Documentary Characters through Fiction Film

Tese apresentada a provas públicas para a obtenção do grau de Doutor em Ciências da Comunicação, orientada pelo Professor Doutor Manuel José Carvalho Almeida Damásio

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REENACTING TRAUMA:

Working with Documentary Characters through Fiction Film

“Memory is a poet, not a historian”

Paul Gerald

PhD Supervisor

Manuel José Damásio

Key-Words

Artistic reenactment, hybrid film, ritual, trauma, memory.

Introduction

Preface

My interest in reenactment-based hybrid film comes from my passion for exploring new artistic forms and cinematic languages as a filmmaker. I love to watch, research, and work on both fiction and documentary films and I feel my own director's style can be described by experimenting in their combination.

For five years I studied documentary and fiction film directing at the B.A. program in Kyiv, Ukraine. During my student years, I created several short films. After graduating, I directed both fiction and documentary. I am a holder of a Master of Arts degree received in 2019 in the Kino Eyes program where I studied film directing.

My thesis for the M.A. program was research on the merging of fictional and documentary elements in Werner Herzog's works. I tried to implement my knowledge in practice: for the thesis short film, I used interviews of Ukrainian former political prisoners, who have gone through Russian captivity. In the film, we reenacted them in a fictional scene with an actor. This is when I discovered artistic power and potential reenactment has for the medium of film, and this is where the idea for this PhD research is rooted.

While today, the political arena in Ukraine and worldwide is getting more and more chaotic, while deaths and destruction are becoming a norm in media and our minds, while our daily life is so closely intertwined with traumatic events, our only way through is to stay hopeful and do what is urgent and feels right. This is why, my sincere hope is that perhaps this research could bring a glimpse of hope in the film's potential to be an instrument of memorialization, to represent and also work through trauma we are encountering on the

individual and collective level as a society. I believe reenactment is a vital approach to be used in filmmaking for exploring issues of social and political trauma, and individual and collective memories. I make a stand that artistic reenactment needs further research, and this research can only be comprehensive when a theoretic method of document studies is combined with practice-based artistic research, which is my aim for this work. This is why one of the main deliverables of my work is the creation of reenactment-based short film. I intend to work on it as an author, participant, and observer, and use the experience and the outcome as a contribution for both science and artistic practice.

This research began in 2019 and is finished by 2024. Back in 2019, I already felt a need for a comprehensive study of addressing trauma through film. It is especially important for communities who recently lived or continue to live through the times of war. This happens to be exactly the case with Ukrainian society. Because the war in the east of the country, my homeland, has been going on since 2014, I acknowledged the need for cinema to reflect upon our incredibly difficult reality. After February 2022, I realized this work has become even more urgent. The amount of trauma our people have been going through every day, the number of overwhelming stories, and experiences hearing about which can cause almost physical pain, the number of survivors with their traumas locked inside, keeps on growing every day. Meanwhile, other wars and disasters keep adding themselves to history books of the future. More and more survivors are becoming documentary protagonists or giving testimonies to the media. The body of trauma they carry needs channeling now, and this need will increase in the future. This is why, our research becomes extremely important, as it aims to learn ethical ways of working with trauma survivors and externalize and archive their heavy memories.

Introdução

Prefácio

O meu interesse em filmes híbridos baseados na prática do *reenactment* surge da minha paixão, enquanto cineasta, por novas formas artísticas e linguagens cinematográficas. Adoro assistir, pesquisar e trabalhar tanto em filmes de ficção quanto em documentários, e sinto que o meu próprio estilo de realização pode ser descrito como uma combinação desses dois géneros.

Durante cinco anos, estudei realização de filmes documentários e de ficção no programa de licenciatura em Kyiv, Ucrânia. Durante os meus anos de estudo, realizei várias curtas-metragens. Após a graduação, realizei tanto ficção quanto documentário. Sou titular de um

Mestrado em Artes, obtido em 2019 no programa Kino Eyes, onde estudei realização cinematográfica.

A minha tese para o programa de Mestrado foi uma pesquisa sobre a fusão de elementos ficcionais e documentais nas obras de Werner Herzog. Tentei implementar os meus conhecimentos num projeto prático: para a curta-metragem da tese, servi-me de entrevistas de ex-prisioneiros políticos ucranianos, que passaram pelo cativeiro russo. No filme, recriámos essas entrevistas através de *reenactment* numa cena ficcional representada por um ator. Foi aí que descobri o poder artístico e o potencial que o *reenactment* tem para o meio cinematográfico, e é aí está a raiz da ideia para esta tese de doutoramento.

Hoje, enquanto a arena política na Ucrânia e no mundo se torna cada vez mais caótica, enquanto mortes e destruições se tornam uma norma nos meios de comunicação e nas nossas mentes, enquanto a nossa vida diária está tão intimamente entrelaçada com eventos traumáticos, a nossa única maneira de seguir em frente é manter a esperança e fazer o que é urgente e parece certo. Por isso, a minha sincera esperança é que talvez esta pesquisa possa trazer um vislumbre de esperança no potencial do cinema para ser um instrumento de memorialização, para representar e também trabalhar o trauma que estamos a enfrentar a nível individual e coletivo como sociedade. Acredito que o *reenactment* é uma abordagem vital a ser usada no cinema para explorar questões de trauma social e político, e memórias individuais e coletivas. Defendo que o *reenactment* de cariz artístico necessita de mais pesquisa, e esta pesquisa só pode ser abrangente quando um método teórico de estudos documentais é combinado com uma pesquisa artística baseada na prática, que é o meu objetivo neste trabalho. Por isso, um dos principais resultados do meu trabalho é a criação de uma curta-metragem centrada no *reenactment*. Pretendi trabalhar nele como autora, participante e observadora, e usar a experiência e o resultado como uma contribuição tanto para a ciência quanto para a prática artística.

Esta pesquisa começou em 2019 e foi concluída em 2024. Em 2019, já sentia a necessidade de um estudo abrangente sobre a abordagem do trauma através do cinema. É especialmente importante para comunidades que recentemente viveram ou continuam a viver em tempos de guerra. Este é exatamente o caso da sociedade ucraniana. Com a guerra no leste do país, minha terra natal, a decorrer desde 2014, apercebi-me da necessidade do cinema refletir sobre a nossa realidade, por mais difícil que seja. Após fevereiro de 2022, percebi que este trabalho se tinha tornado ainda mais urgente. A força do trauma que o nosso povo tem sofrido todos os dias, ouvir o número de histórias e experiências avassaladoras, que pode causar uma

dor quase física, o número de sobreviventes que guarda demónios trancados dentro de si, continua a crescer em cada dia. Entretanto, outras guerras e desastres continuam a adicionar-se aos livros de história do futuro. Mais e mais sobreviventes estão a tornar-se protagonistas de documentários ou a dar testemunhos aos meios de comunicação. O corpo do trauma que carregam precisa de ser canalizado agora, e essa necessidade aumentará no futuro. Por isso, a nossa pesquisa torna-se extremamente importante, pois visa encontrar maneiras éticas de trabalhar com sobreviventes traumatizados de forma a externalizar e arquivar as suas memórias mais difíceis.

Problem to Investigate

The main problem this work will address is the exploration of the interrelation between methods of artistic reenactment and contemporary film and how this can depict an original cultural process. We argue that film as a medium is very well suited to be used for practices of artistic reenactment of traumatic events, and these practices can result in considerable cultural and political impact. The work will discuss the multiple possibilities and outcomes of such artistic and thematic crossings between different practices, and highlight the relevance they can have as examples of artistic research and novel exploitations of film's multidimensional potential.

In-depth research contributes to both artistic and scientific practice and blurs boundaries between artistic practice and science (Makela, & Nsenga, 2019). In this work, we will approach artistic research both as a method and a place of inquiry.

Humans are brought up and formed based on the experiences they lived through. We tend to perceive these experiences as our life story. These can be stories of joy, love, acceptance, loss, loneliness, or betrayal. These can be happy or traumatic stories. Many spoke of the importance of our life stories for the kind of worldview a person shapes. However, in the case of traumatic memories, the “story” carved so deeply into the survivor's mind, has a peculiar capacity to escape the medium of language, in other words, a survivor fails to utter their trauma with words. Bessel Van Der Kolk is a neuroscientist and a psychologist who has discovered that once trauma occurs in the life of the individual, it blocks precisely the part of the brain that is responsible for speech (Van Der Kolk, 2015). Later on, based on this insight, a discourse was built among visual arts researchers and practitioners. They wonder if the nature of trauma while being elusive from representation through language-based mediums, may be better suited to work through media forms based on sound and image. They hypothesize that

the gap in trauma communication is something that could be bridged through the visual media process. Jill Bennett (2005) confirms the theory and considers reenactment to be the state-of-the-art method for working through traumatic memories in contemporary art.

In his book on the crisis of zeitgeist of the 21st century, *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (2014), Mark Fisher argues that the contemporary culture, particularly music, has faced its inability to project the vision of its own future and does not have a distinctive “sound” of the present epoch. He calls it a problem of a “canceled future”. According to it, the cultural process of the 2010s is characterized by revisiting the past to borrow its vision of the future, which is nowadays lost (Fisher, 2014).

Our reading of *The Ghosts of My Life* evoked the curiosity to trace hauntological phenomena in contemporary film. Derrida called cinema an art that allows ghosts to come back (McMullen, 1983). Our idea is that within the medium of film, the need for “revisiting” and “replaying” the past manifests itself in the most literal way through the practice of reenactment. We hypothesize the most effective way to bring back memories of the past is to replay and re-live them again. Thus, artistic reenactment is a great tool for excavating history and memory in order to contemplate, reevaluate, and integrate them. We make a point that artistic research is a mean for achieving it and intend to evaluate the dimensions and relevance of the process. The title of Fisher’s book contains the word depression, and it brings a pessimistic tone to the mood of his work. Fisher talks about two ways of dealing with the hauntological present: either depressive acceptance or hopeful rejection of the state of things (Fisher, 2014, May).

Our take on this trend does not share the same depressive character of Fisher’s book. We see the cultural compulsion to look back not as a dead-end but rather as a way through. Contemporary culture, we argue, seeks self-reflection in order to use the material from the past for reevaluation of lived experiences and traumas. It seeks to integrate and heal old traumas before moving on towards the “future”, before transforming to the “new”.

We hypothesize that reenactment as a tool in contemporary media process is as necessary for today’s society as psychotherapy is for a traumatized individual. This is why in this work we use reenactment as an artefact of artistic research.

Questions/Hypotheses

Questions:

1. How is hybrid cinema related to postmodern philosophy and the crisis of authenticity?
2. Is there a cultural necessity for the society of today to revisit the past in order to find its path of cultural and artistic development?
3. Can artistic reenactment be a method for reevaluation and integration of collective traumatic memory? What is the process required for it?
4. What is the role of hybrid cinema in this cultural process?
5. What is the role and potential of artistic reenactment in the contemporary film process?

Hypotheses:

1. Contemporary trends of hybrid cinema and artistic reenactments share causes with the phenomenon of hauntology described by Jacques Derrida and Mark Fisher. The artistic process can be defined as the unconscious of society. Ritual is an ultimate instrument for memorialization and incorporation of experiences, a transition signifier and a builder of social bonds and identity. In the times when ritual is omnipresent in our lives even despite of lack of our awareness about it, today's culture searches for a ritual, repetition. What it finds is reenactment.
2. The most essential process of the cultural scene of contemporaneity is characterized by the reevaluation of past cultural achievements rather than innovation. It is through this reevaluation, integration, and therefore reenactment that the culture of nowadays attempts to find its path toward the future. This process is tightly linked to working with individual and collective trauma and can be thought of as a process of psychotherapy on the societal level.
3. The potential of artistic reenactment as a method for this process is under-researched. It needs to be investigated within the framework of media art, psychology, and sociology. Artistic reenactment has the ability to both strengthen and change individual and collective memories, thus serve as a tool for reshaping and preservation of cultural heritage.
4. Hybrid film with its current tendency to blur the boundaries between fiction and documentary, with its awareness of vulnerability of objective and multitude of subjective, becomes a perfect field for applying artistic reenactment. The films taken into the research as case studies reveal this potential and exemplify the trend which is yet to unfold.

5. Artistic reenactment used in hybrid film has a power to be therapeutic practice for both participants of the process and the audience, but just as much it can be harmful. It is a powerful however dangerous method for artistic research of personal and collective past. It is a necessity to discover and describe methodology for working with artistic reenactment in the field of hybrid film.

Context

The practice of having non-professional actors reenact scenes from their lives in front of the camera goes back to the 1920s. Back then Robert Flaherty asked inhabitants of a northern Canadian tribe to repeat their daily activities for his film *Nanook of the North* (1922). On the European continent, elements of this method evolved particularly after World War II into the Italian neorealism movement. There, the reenactment was seen as a tool for adding authenticity to the screen of fiction films (Margulies, 2002). In the 1960s, Jean Rouch saw reenactment as something more than an instrument for reaching verisimilitude with past events. He used repetition as a way of finding new meanings in what has happened (França, 2011). Relationships between cinema and reenactment are still evolving, reshaping the history of both.

This research will take the historical background into consideration but narrow its focus down to the examples of a specific concept in contemporary cinema: reenacting traumatic events with the participation of the subjects who have gone through them in the past.

This thesis is an attempt to raise and answer questions about the reasons (artistic, political) behind the directors' decisions to create a fictional story around documentary heroes, as well as ethical threats; methods, and techniques the directors use to achieve their goals while working with their characters; and the way the experience of reenacting traumatic events influenced the non-actors.

Method of reenactment is not only relevant for filmmaking. Traumatic reenactment is a notion known and used in psychotherapy. It has been a century since Sigmund Freud had established a term “the repetition compulsion” – a tendency for traumatized individuals to unconsciously repeat their actions from the past. According to him, this instinct is so powerful that it could overrule the “pleasure principle” (Freud, 1920). In other words, the need for human mind to complete its understanding of traumatic event is so urgent that it overshadows its need for pleasure and comfort. This theory found both its followers and critics, and became an important milestone in Freudian work on psychoanalysis. It was discussed by and had a strong

influence on Lacan, Deleuze, Sacks even though fairly criticized by them (Sacks, 2013). Psychologist Jacob Moreno has developed Psychodrama - a technique used nowadays in Gestalt therapy where patients are encouraged to reenact traumatic events from their past in order to overcome them (Bloom, 1996).

Now, before the 1970s, memories were generally more trusted as evidence of facts and barely questioned in terms of their truthfulness. However, after a number of researches have proved the existence of false memories, the perspective in science and culture shifted. The terms “objectivity” and “truth” approached their paradigm shift (Blackson, 2007). In the 1980s, postmodernism is known to have evoked what scholars call “the crisis of confidence” (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011).

Memory is characterized by its instability, flexibility, and ability for fictionalization (Thomas & Loftus, 2002). A study shows that repeated imaginings of an action never performed in reality lead individuals to construct what they believe to be memory. This effect is applicable to both recent memories and old ones. Thomas and Loftus emphasize on the necessity to further research the mechanism of creation of false memories. An essential insight emerges from their text: sensory information is an influential factor for helping create false memories. Now, reenactment being a physical action is exactly the practice which allows sensory experience to be relived and re-felt. It gives an opportunity to (re)create experiences not only visually and audially but also kinesthetically. However, we have to face the fact that the study by Thomas and Loftus brought a certain harm into scientific understanding of traumatic memory, which differs to a regular memory. We will discuss these aspects in detail in our article on trauma.

A great account of working with personal memories can be derived from ethnographic and autoethnographic studies. Carolyn Ellis is a scientist whose research is made both on and through traumatic memories. Her works give valuable knowledge on in-depth autobiographic research. According to theoretical and practical autoethnographic writings of hers, an evocation of personal memories for autoethnography allows an author to uncover and understand them better, and become a “witness” to their own past. She adds that these self-reflections through autobiographic recollections have the power to be transformative not only for the authors themselves but also for their audience (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). In this sense, if we treat the reenactment of trauma as a form of ethnography, it gives us access to apply an essential layer of knowledge to the practice. Another reason why the works of Ellis become an important contribution to our research is her approach to and understanding of memory. In her works, it becomes evident how blurred the boundaries between fact and fiction are when it comes to

personal experience. She is conscious of the position between fiction and social science that the writings of hers take place and argues that autoethnographic studies deserve to belong to both fields of artistic practice and science (Ellis, 1993). In its turn, this leads us to propose film as a perfect medium to serve scientific and artistic purposes, with its unique abilities to capture, document, preserve, and fictionalize memories whether they are verbal or purely visual, audial or related to the notion of aura (let Walter Benjamin reject the ability of the latter to exist in film (Benjamin, 1935), but filmmakers like Maya Deren, whose usage of her own body in her films and relation with ethnography was extensive, argued in defense of its applicability (Deren, 1946)).

França (2011) problematizes the exploration of memory through cinema as a complex, contradictory, and misleading issue, acknowledging the risk of mixing up memory and remembrance. Memory cannot serve as proof of the past, he claims. This goes in accordance with the ideas of the scientists mentioned above. It is an essential point to keep in mind not just in relation to film but all the other media that serves for documenting memories. Discussing the films of Jean Rouch and Abbas Kiarostami, França notices that reenactment can be much more multidimensional than the fact that has originated it (França, 2011). He moreover emphasizes on the necessity to add those new meanings to the original fact while building the reenactment: “Singularity and repetition, truth and lie, face and mask, all this reconciled by the power of the film, that makes this confusion between the stage and play its ethical and aesthetic principle” (p.159).

An Arena in Which to Reenact by Swen Lütticken (2005) is a text accompanying an exhibition by the same name. In this comprehensive study of the state-of-the-art of artistic reenactment, and its role in reshaping and understanding history, the author examines the value of reenactment in comparison with the one of a record. The example of Marina Abramović's reenactment of the seven non-recorded previous performances and the polemics around the validity of this kind of interpretation is one of the cases to elaborate on the theory. As Blackson (2007) argues, reenactment has a bigger effect on participatory and audience engagement than the one recorded action is capable of. The author criticizes conservative at the time mass culture reenactments as means of repetition rather than resurrection. He claimed that an essential function of artistic practice was a “trial” for action, and gave optimistic prognoses to the future state-of-the-art of reenactment which seem to have proven themselves nowadays. He raised the question of the value of the initial action in comparison with the reenacted one and defined the problem of originality as well as the problem of the illusion of truth. He highlighted the idea of

uncanny effect reenactment (as well as memorials) are able to produce. According to Lütticken (2005), reenactment should go beyond the limits of mainstream and activate social change.

As a method used by both cinema and psychology, reenactment therefore has its powerful potential for storytelling and changing perception of the past. That is why this research narrows its focus down to the examples of a specific concept in contemporary cinema: reenacting traumatic events with the participation of subjects who have gone through them in the past. We are interested in how non-actors can work with their sensitive experiences, awakening painful and often suppressed memories of traumatic events of their own or/and collective past in order to reenact them once more in front of the camera. The case study part includes three films of the decade of the 2010s: *The Act of Killing* by Joshua Oppenheimer (2012), *Horse Money* by Pedro Costa (2014), and *Atlantis* by Valentin Vasyanovych (2019). These films are exemplary for the topic, and at the same time approach it in different ways.

The Act of Killing is one of the most critically acclaimed creative documentaries of its decade. According to the British Film Institute, it is the 19th best documentary ever made. Errol Morris who was one of the creative producers of the project suggested there is inherent madness in Oppenheimer's approach. The film follows some members of the former death squad who had committed a massacre in Indonesia in the 1960s. The director decided to not only talk to the retired murderers about their crimes. He asked them to reenact them for a fiction film. During the process of production, his main protagonist (should we rather call him antagonist?) has been awakening memories of his youth, contemplating the notion of sin and virtue, and finally, probably for the first time in his life, came across the realization that his victims were human beings who had suffered because of him. A lot of polemics in critical circles were going on about the ethical issues of Oppenheimer's piece. However, the outstanding and central for this research effect of *The Act of Killing* is the cathartic transformation of the main character reached as a result of the method of reenactment.

Pedro Costa's *Horse Money* is an outstanding example of Portuguese contemporary auteur docufiction where documentary characters appear in highly stylized imagery. The narratives from Ventura's life lie in the esthetic of surreal Caravaggian-like images where the director shows his hero's memories as being "trapped" in the corridors of a mental facility. Pedro Costa himself characterized his attempts as "exorcizing the demons from Ventura's past". Later on, though, in an interview with Mark Peranson, he specified that the main motivation for making this film was not for Ventura to remember the past but to forget it. Therefore, the director talks about a very important function of his art: therapeutic. The film received an award for Best Direction at the 2014 Locarno International Film Festival.

Atlantis is a Ukrainian film by Valentin Vasyanovych released in 2019. It has gotten attention from the A-class festivals - participated in Toronto and won the Best Film award in Venice. It is definitely one of the most significant works in contemporary Ukrainian cinema. The events unfold in 2025 suggesting the nearest future of Eastern Ukraine, which is currently under the state of Russian occupation. The director draws a fictional portrait of a destroyed and chemically poisoned area exhausted by the war, and of the depressed people trying to cope with their PTSDs. The protagonist is a former soldier who struggles to come back to “normal life” after his military experiences. Vasyanovych chose to work with Andriy Rymaruk, who at the time had been fighting in the frontline of Donbas. Even though the plot of the film is completely fictional, it reflects experiences the soldier had to go through in his real life. The experience for Rymaruk, according to the director himself, was far from therapeutic. He jokingly mentions that before the film production his actor had one PTSD, and after he got the second one (Lisbon & Sintra Film Festival, 2019, Q&A session). Clearly, *Atlantis* has aims different from the previous cases. The film is filled with references to Orwell’s *1984*. The concept, the dystopian genre and the style of the film suggest a link with the retro-futuristic nature of hauntology.

In his 2009 work, Jonathan Kahana addresses the problem of the cultural return related to the reenactment trend, the problem linked to the one described by Mark Fisher in the field of music of the 2000s. The tendency Kahana is talking about is what can be called the “repetition compulsion” in contemporary cinema itself. He discusses reenactment as not only a method for coming back in time but also its popularity in contemporary filmmaking as a sign of this return itself. As if answering Fisher’s concern, Kahana states that documentary reenactment should be treated not as a cultural rejection of present and future, not as a sign of the “cancellation of future”, but as a way of questioning “what now?” (Kahana, 2009, p. 58). This exact question, we argue, is quintessential for the contemporary cultural process, whether it is a musical scene, film industry or other field.

Contribution

This thesis investigates the role of artistic reenactment for contemporary culture. It explores reasons (artistic, political, philosophical) behind directors’ decisions to bring their film characters back to their past traumas. It studies the way reenacting traumatic events influences personal memories and collective perception of history.

Our work intends to be research about film, for film, and through film (Klein, 2010).

Firstly, it studies artistic reenactment as a method and contributes to a better understanding its qualities and potential.

Secondly, it describes the role and relevance of this approach in contemporary film culture. Therefore, extending the medium is the second contribution.

Thirdly, this thesis includes artistic research of personal experience. The author intends to apply film practice in order to work with her personal memories and transform them. Learning through feeling is our approach. As described by Dombois (2006), the contribution of a felt knowledge is contained in the product of art itself.

Through these three dimensions, our work is a comprehensive methodology for using artistic reenactment in filmmaking, which will move the medium forward.

Scientific Method

The approach for this work is qualitative and will involve primary and secondary data analysis. We will conduct film discourse research, case and document studies.

We intend to put main methodological efforts around the use of artistic-based research as action research.

The first stage of the project is to address the problems with the help of a literature review and case studies from the decades 2000s-2010s, the era of hauntology according to Fisher. In the chosen films, *The Act of Killing* (2012), *Horse Money* (2014), and *Atlantis* (2019), participants and victims of political instabilities reenacted their own stories. *The Act of Killing* has become a framework for its director's artistic research on reenactment and memory (Kerrigan, S. & Callagan. J., 2019). The methodology of *Horse Money*, Pedro Costa characterized as exorcizing the demons from Ventura's past in order to conquer them (Peranson, 2014). *Atlantis* is a projection of the lost future of the region ruined by ongoing war and enacted by its victims (Bałaga, 2019). We aim to prove that all three films reached a significant impact both politically and culturally thanks to their hauntological character and work through artistic reenactment. In addition, they caused a transformation in the documentary characters themselves. Reenactment here is a mean of expanding the boundaries of artistic research and blurring lines between fictional and documentary.

The films will be analyzed with the help of secondary (documents and the selected films) and primary (interviews with crew and cast participants) data. We then analyze the texts

in order to find common traits of the cases and defend their exemplarity for the study. Collected data will become a base for the development of the methodology of practical action research.

The action research part of the project, *Moments When We Freeze*, is an autobiographical film-reenactment produced and reflected upon.

This experimental short film is based on performances by the author herself and her family. Several scenes from her own and her family's past are reenacted in studio settings.

Design Summary

According to the methodology we developed, Part 1 of the thesis is a thorough review of existing up-to-date literature on the topics of our field of study. We pay special attention to the books and articles published during the relevant for this research time frame, which is the decades of the 2000s-2020s. The topics of focus are media, memory, trauma, ritual culture, hybrid film, documentary, and mediatization. Our first chapter is built of five articles covering the problems related to these themes of the study: mediatization and memory, reenactment history and theory, trauma studies in psychology as well as trauma in artistic practice, culture and tendencies of ritual, and hybrid film in post-modern times.

The next chapter of the first part consists of the three case studies of the chosen hybrid films where in-person reenactment was the key methodological approach. For this chapter, we collect and analyze both primary and secondary data. The chosen cases are a 2012 film *The Act of Killing*, the 2014 *Horse Money*, and the *Atlantis* from 2019.

With the findings from Part 1 of this work, we move on to the second part of the thesis. It is dedicated to our practice-based research: an experimental 30-minute-long film *Moments When We Freeze*. The project is an autobiographic work dedicated to research on traumatic memories and their relations with the family archive and mediatization processes. It is based on reenactment and a hybrid approach and implements strategies and tools learned and outlined in the articles of the first part of this research. Both the film itself and the documents analyzing the production process contribute to Part 2.

The Part 3 of the thesis, we aim to bring together and triangulate the findings collected during the previous stages of this research. This leads us to the discussion part, where we analyze the results according to our initial hypotheses. This, in its turn, allows us to conclude the findings, highlight our contributions, and outline future work suggestions.

PART 1

The State-of-the-Art

The first part of this thesis is an in-depth analysis of secondary data on our topic of research. It consists of a literature review and case studies chapters. For the first chapter, which is a literature review part, we focus on five themes, each of which constitutes the corresponding article.

The first article of this part is an analysis of the interrelations between media and memory. We explain why mediatization theory is relevant to our research on memory, what happened to memory and media of post-modernity, and how seeing contemporary archives through the prism of contemporary media helps us understand the hybrid cinematic process of today.

The second article studies the history and theory of reenactment. After discussing the general historical background, we focus on in-person reenactment, in other words, a reenactment of own memories by the memory owner in film, performance, and other artistic forms. We look at reenactment as a contemporary mediatized ritual and compare the cultural functions of the old and new practices. This allows us to suggest the framework to study reenactment in relation to ritual culture, trauma studies, and mediatization theory.

We proceed with the third article, on trauma. In addition to historic and theoretic overview, we look at the theory of Mark Fisher, who problematizes the trauma on societal level as a factor for depression in the contemporary Western culture and artistic process. We research trauma studies in film. We also look at how repetition is a common phenomenon for trauma, reenactment and ritual and memory. We examine how repetition acts on different levels in those cases.

The fourth article is on contemporary ritual and its crucial link with media. We explain what ritual was and what it has become today, examine its relevance for contemporary culture, and functions. We trace how media has always been an important component for any ritual, and find examples of the second wave media acting as this component today. Finally, we analyze in particular reenactment as a form of such contemporary ritual in order to define its meaning in the current artistic and cultural processes.

The final for the first chapter fifth article is a discussion of hybrid film. We look at this form as a postmodern media, analyzing its relation with tendencies of the current zeitgeist.

Here we speak of the methods of hybrid filmmaking, its aesthetics, and functions as a political tool.

Chapter two of the first part consists of three case studies. It is an examination of the hybrid films where reenactment was used as the essential methodologic basis. All three films apply the method for work with traumatic memories of their participants. They were all created within the decade of the 2010s and produced or co-produced in Europe. Our first case study is the film *Horse Money* by Pedro Costa made in 2014 in Portugal. The second one is a 2019 Ukrainian film by Valentin Vasyanovych named *Atlantis*. The final case is *The Act of Killing*, a 2012 production by Joshua Oppenheimer filmed in Indonesia and co-produced in Denmark, Norway, and the United Kingdom.

In the first two case studies, we use methods of secondary data analysis in combination with primary data: semi-structured interviews with creators. For the third case study, we found it sufficient to rely on the secondary data only. In each of the films, in-person reenactment was used in its own way. We analyze and discuss these individual styles, as well as the author's intentions behind the methodology. We also discuss aesthetic, and ethical implications, way the films worked for audience, criticism, genres and how hybridity is built in every case.

Both the articles of the first chapter and the case studies of the second one, prepare the necessary background for us to understand the relevant state-of-the-art, and create the methodology for working with our artistic research component of the thesis.

CHAPTER 1

Literature Review

This chapter is a literature review of the works relevant to understanding the field of reenactment and its implications for contemporary media in general as well as hybrid film in particular. We divided the chapter into five articles, each of which leads toward comprehending the relevance of the next one, as well as the interrelation between the fields of the study.

At first, we speak about media and memory. The second article is an analysis of reenactment as a cultural method. In the third one, we study trauma as described by psychological perspective, and its representation in culture. Then, we speak about ritual and its relevance in today's media environment and see if we can apply ritual as a framework for understanding reenactment practice. Finally, the fifth article is a research on hybridity in filmmaking: the blurred boundaries between fiction and documentary, problems of authenticity, copy, and originality, factual and fictional, ethical and methodological implications of hybrid films, and how reenactment can be a methodology applied to this type of filmmaking.

These articles prepare the essential theoretic framework for us to then delve into the case studies and practice research work, with the understanding of the theory, history, and interrelations between the methods, philosophy around it, and interrelations between the phenomena and fields of study.

**Media and Memory:
Between Omnipresent Past and Canceled Future**

“If memories could be canned, would they also have expiry dates?”

Chungking Express (1994)

Mediatized Memory

Memory as a fragile and fluid but essential part of human cognition is not only a learning tool and archive to personal past. Significantly, it is also a value for humans to share: a storage of common narratives, stories that allow us to bond, build sustainable communities and understand each other.

As a platform for memories to be stored, manifested, re-lived and transmitted, media's role has been crucial for human culture since the beginning of recorded history. Media here is understood in its broad sense, following the ideas of J.D. Peters (2015), Knut Lundby (2014), Andrew Hoskins (2011). According to them, mediatization theory is a relevant framing for research work on memory today as it explains how strong the link between memory and media is.

Mediatization as a term started to circulate in Western academia in the beginning of the 2000s. The concept is “used to analyze critically the interrelation between changes in media and communications on the one hand, and changes in culture and society on the other” (Couldry & Hepp, 2013, p. 197). It comes from the German tradition, and describes the process of transformation media brings to the life of the contemporary society. Before the mid-2000s, media was researched from the three main approaches: text analysis, analysis of production and its political economy, and audience research. By the mid-2000s, the moment which is nowadays described as a transition to the second wave of mediatization, these approaches have come to crisis. They were not anymore sufficient for solving the problem of media's role in the life of the society. Contemporary mediatization theory thus aims to concentrate on this problem, and also find new approaches, insights, and importantly, methods of inquiry. Finding new metaphors for the processes related to mediatization is as well of great importance (Hoskins, 2014).

Analysis of mediatization, we argue, is the aim of not only media studies, but also contemporary philosophy, artistic and social studies. The discussion on memory includes viewing it both as a personal as well as a collective heritage; it is both a number of individual stories, as well as our common history (Dhoest, 2014).

This text focuses on a number of problems circulating in the academic discourse on the issue of mediatization of memory:

1. Orality and literacy: chain theory of production and perception, the problem of authenticity.
2. Interconnectivity: collective and personal memories increasingly merge, making our minds more and more networked.
3. (Im)materiality of archive: how it changes the notion of memory? Role of media metaphors for memory.
4. Dynamic process of time and memory perception: tendency of social acceleration and its effect on memory. Excess of data. Quantity vs. quality.

Orality and Literacy

“Media coverage is the quintessential externally driven act of rehearsal”

Hirst and Maksin (2009, p. 213)

If we look at the process of mediatization as a paradigm shift, then different scholars see this shift in a number of ways. For some, the second wave of mediatization is a revolution from the broadcast era to the internet one. For others, like Krotz and Hepp, it is rather an evolution. Grusin (2010) explains this process as co-evolution of humans alongside with technology. Media as a technology of communication changes while leaving new imprints on the memory of the epoch (Hoskins, 2014). Memory of today, according to Hoskins, is interlinked with the technological unconscious of society. The mutual change for him has many implications (positive and negative impacts, as well as those we are conscious and unconscious about). This is the reason why Jansson (2018) calls mediatization a double-edged sword. This change however is not something that has to do just with the beginning of the 21st century. As he claims, media has been always bringing up dialectical experiences into the society.

Two main views on mediatization give us two ways of conceptualizing the transition from orality to literacy in relation to memory. What is the difference between the story told and heard, and the one written and read? Since contemporary media of all kinds gives us multiple possibilities for conservation of real and fictional stories, the question is at the peak of its importance.

Frederick Barlett brings up the example of a skilled game to elaborate on the issue: “We may fancy that we are repeating a series of movements learned a long time before from a text-book or from a teacher. But motion study shows that in fact we build up the stroke afresh on a

basis of the immediately preceding balance of postures and the momentary needs of the game. Every time we make it, it has its own characteristics” (Bartlett 1932, p.204). What this idea explains is that regardless of where the story (or a skill) was obtained from, it will still go through a transition, firstly, in the way its told, and secondly, in the recipient’s mind, before or/and during its re-enactment or re-performance. Put by Andrey Tarkovsky, “A book read by a thousand different people is a thousand different books” (1986, p.177). Perception is a distorting process, whether we like it or not.

Anderson and Curtin (2002) emphasize that media themselves are social productions defined and reshaped through use. This highlights the importance of media audience research, and their personal, historical and cultural contexts as they shape the perception of media and of the stories told through it. In his research of the early Flemish TV audiences, Dhoest interviewed people who had experienced the first emergence of television in Belgium in the 1950s (Dhoest, 2014). He warns his readers about reconstructed and fragmented nature of these testimonies. Factually, the old memories of his interviewees are extremely flawed, incomplete and contradictory. For the researcher, the value of the interviews is not in their indexicality with the past or their precision. Rather it is an account of how to understand the present and the change that has taken place throughout half a century in relation to the medium. A research like this, Dhoest claims, only works outside of positivist paradigm. The approach he uses is therefore constructivist.

Memories of Dhoest’s participants are intertwined with their biographical memories, and it becomes obvious how they affect each other. People he was studying kept on comparing past with present, “then” with “now”, regardless of whether they have been or not asked to draw such parallels. The feeling of nostalgia haunted their recollections. This let the scholar suggest that memory is shaped not only by the object of remembrance, but not less than that, by later experiences and by present. The past of his subjects was largely defined by their present. He cites the words of Annette Kuhn that remembering is an active practice.

Another important observation of his study is that the construction of memory has usually a narrative structure, similarly with film. Within this structure, stories can stay more stable and make sense for the subjects. This mythologizing, this need for symbolic meaning in order to keep a memory preserved is a quality inherent to human mind. This however brings on a tendency for fictionalization of memories, blurring the authentic and the imagined.

Just like narrativization is important for remembering and feeling the significance of our past, metaphors are essential for conceptualization and comprehension of notions. This becomes significant when we speak of orality and literacy in relation to media. In his article on mediatization of memory (2014), Hoskins highlights a peculiar tendency: it is usually media

that we compare memory to. He recalls Plato's metaphor of "wax tablets" used to describe the quality of thoughts which are subject to wearing away. Even though Plato rejected his own concept later, scholars keep on referring to it millennia after. In the current discussion his idea is significant simply because it highlights linkage between orality and literacy. Even though media give us a sense of preservation, conservation of the thoughts, of the memories – it is not more than an illusion. Every media is fragile and information is subject to getting lost and erased, just like thoughts on wax tablets. Keeping them alive is always an active practice. "[C]ollective memory is not a matter of collecting, but of continuously performing" (Rigney, 2008, p. 93).

More contemporary metaphors for memory as well have to do with media: writing, photography, flashbulb, magnetic tape, and eventually, a network. Each new media metaphor alters our understanding of the notion of memory, and this is why creating and conceptualizing metaphors is of such importance for Hoskins. Seeing memory as a network, for example, disillusions us about its stability and independence. It reveals how interconnected and dependent on environment memory is (Hoskins, 2011).

The problem of stability and indexicality of recording in comparison to oral practices was discussed by Stephen Rose (1993): unlike oral cultures who keep memories dynamic and fresh by constant retelling, written and recorded media preserves authenticity of a text, and therefore challenges transformative qualities of memory. He thinks of photo, video and audio recordings as "freezing" of memory, and criticizes inflexibility of these media. This leads him and his followers to see archive as a static storage. The metaphor of network challenges Rose's concept. Hoskins argues that the stability of recorded media is too easily assumed, and in fact, permanence quality of a given medium and its relationship with durability of memory is a subject of discussion.

Further in this thesis, we come back to Rose's concept, as the very name and idea of our practice-based research is *"Moments When We Freeze"*. The following work acts as a critical and open dialogue with the concept of memory "freezing". In order to contribute to the argument, this work proposes seeing memory transmission through media in a form of two links of one chain. The first link is the text production or its expression, and the second one is its perception. This way, it can be suggested that oral tradition allows both of the links, the text production and its perception, to happen simultaneously, and this allows more dynamic. In comparison, written or recorded memory leaves only the second chain of the link flexible, while the first one is seemingly fixed, resistant to change. Yet, this resistance is relative, which is why we should still keep in mind Plato and his wax tablets concept. In case the reader of this

article, just like its author, has never seen a wax tablet in real life, we can transfer Plato's metaphor on vinyl records: the sound of scratches on a vinyl record, which has in fact become cozy and nostalgic one for our ear today, which is extensively discussed in Mark Fisher's *Hauntology* (2014), is a good example of recorded media subject to distortion by time. Not only sounds of scratched vinyl distort the original sound of a record, they also update the original track, marking it with time. The sense of authenticity is deceiving, even though media seems to be a perfect instrument for memory preservation.

In her research on home photography, Patricia Blanco (2010) sees photos as objects to preserve memories. She conceptually positions photo albums between orality and literacy. The image, she claims, is not finite unlike written text. This claim can be subject to argument though, since both an image and a piece of text can be open to interpretation and perceived in a variety of ways despite their material nature. However, her idea seems to be more convincing in the framework of narrative. If we presume that narrativization serves as a meaning maker for our perception, any narrative text can be seen as more finite than any non-narrative data. Mikos (1995) and Neiger (2020) supports the argument by highlighting the importance of narrativization. For them, narrative is what makes stories personal. And it is personal stories, not just sequences of facts and events, that shape personal and collective memories, and strengthen the community engagement. Lohmeir and Böhling (2017) as well discuss the deceptive power of photographs and home videos. According to them "the poor quality of home movies and their lack of narrative and structure gave viewers the space to develop their own understanding and interpretation of what they saw on the screen." (p. 8). These theories lie in the core of our further artistic research, where we observe in detail how the perception of one image gets distorted by time, personal perspective and narrativization preferences of the family archive owners.

According to Bordieu, (1965/1981) family photo fulfils its memorial function only when shared with others. In other words, a certain ritual, an active practice of revisiting and recalling, is necessary for remembrance (Neiger, 2020). It is within the rituals that narrativization can happen. "Performances of memory, moreover, can be – and are – enacted across a range of activities, places, rituals and media" (Kuhn, 2010, p. 299).

Often those who first experienced a new media, would compare it to magic (Dhoest, 2014). For the Flemish emerging television audiences, their "magical" experience was ritualized. One of the research participants compared a TV set to a shrine, as it was given the main place in the living room of the house. The family would gather around it for sake of having a common experience, and eventually that experience would strengthen family ties.

Media, as Lohmeir and Böhling argue, does not come into family, and therefore community, from the outside. Rather it is created by community, and it helps constructing one. Furthermore, it is not helpful to see media as something that replaces face-to-face communication, but rather as something that augments it and helps to create and shape community ties. Memory analogically has a strong constructivist and material component. The scholars also disagree that memory as what happens entirely inside one's mind, and highlight vital role of communication practices for memory preservation. The abandonment of oral tradition therefore weakens family memory (Lohmeier, C., & Böhling, R., 2017).

If orality and literacy highlight the problems of authenticity, then the problem becomes even more relevant in regard of the second wave of mediatization. According to Neiger (2020, p.6), “such cultural phenomena undermine the distinction between authentic and inauthentic memories and between personal and collective memories”.

Interconnectivity

Interconnectivity in the world after the second mediatization wave is a phenomenon due to which collective and personal memories increasingly merge, and people's minds become more and more networked. As a result, we live in interconnected society with collective memories shared all over the globe. Scholars call this a transition from collective to connective memory (Hoskins, 2011).

The common shared version of the past, Harari (2015) and Neiger (2020) claim, is an essential component for construction and sustaining of large communities, where the members do not necessarily know each other personally (wars perhaps can be understood as clashes between groups who share different narratives).

Due to the second wave of mediatization, 21st century has obtained a description of an “era of digital memories”. Neiger (2020) highlights that digitalization challenges memory in a way that is unprecedented, therefore the issue needs a lot more research.

Just like collectively shared narratives and memories, rituals have community building function. Interestingly, media is an active participant of both memory sharing and ritualization. Anderson (1983) compared newspapers reading to a ritual of morning prayer: “It is performed in silent privacy, in the lair of the skull. However, each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others

of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion” (1983, p. 39).

Cosmopolitan turn has made a significant shift in structures of community. Due to networked shape of media, nowadays an individual can be (and often is) a member of multiple communities, can have several identities, and communicate with many different collectives regardless of their geographical location.

Our memory is networked, and this means it is also diffused. Hoskins (2009) talks about the “long tail” of information from the past we leave behind, which emerged due to the increased amount of data circulating around our digital devices and the Internet, as well as constant availability of archival information online. Media ecology studies are preoccupied with the problem of “digital abundance”. As the study indicates, it is in this environment, that the phenomena called flashbulb memories re-emerged. Metaphor of flashbulb describes the ability of human brain to retrieve memories with seeming precise definition and detalization. Memories of photographic quality are usually evoked by a strongly emotional and outstanding experience. Authenticity of flashbulb memories though still can be illusive. In order to understand the phenomena better, he argues, it is necessary to see media as possessing similar qualities to memory in terms of intensity and dominance of their visual character.

In his later study (2014), Hoskins discusses qualities of the “living archive”, and the way it has become organizing and habitual condition of memory. The memory boom we live in, according to the scholar, gives us a sense of unfinished past and vitalized future. Humans produce a lot of content, data, material goods. The excess of media produces excessive amount of memory, and as a result “past is everywhere” (Hoskins, 2014, p.662).

Moreover, memory obtains a quality of a circuit. It extends from the human mind, into the mediatized cultural and social world, and then comes back, having become both private and public, individual and collective, augmented, reconstructed and (re)contextualized by media. It combines biological, social and cultural natures (Hoskins, 2014).

The problem of external memory was studied by Sparrow, Liu and Wegner (2011) with help of four experiments. They problematized our constant state of dependence on the living archive of information on the Internet and revealed several conclusions about mediatized character of our contemporary memory from psychological and perspective. The general question of the enquiry has been exemplified this way: “If asked the question whether there are any countries with only one color in their flag, for example, do we think about flags or immediately think to go online to find out?” (p.776).

The study showed, the participants tended to rush to their computers in order to find an answer even before putting an effort to recall the information by themselves. They simply trusted Google more. Alternatively, in the case when information storage on a hard-drive was suggested, the participants would memorize rather the route to the information than the information itself.

The study explains adaptation of the human brain to the new mediatized environment. It makes a disclaimer that external sources of memory are not a new thing. What nowadays is a responsibility of Google, earlier was the one of transactive memory groups: a community chain, where each different individual would store specific information. If before people would turn to a community member in order to retrieve what they did not remember themselves, now it is a machine that does that for us. The authors of the research expressed their wish for humans to be less dependent on digital technologies, even though they acknowledged they might be simply nostalgic.

Jansson (2018) conceptualized problems of media dependence, diffusion, and hyperconnectivity with the help of Bordieu's notion of doxa. By definition, doxa is a norm accepted within society, a practice or behavioral pattern that individuals must conform to in order to be accepted and recognized within their social environment. Media, Jansson argues, and its specific components, play the role of such doxas. It is not always a matter of choice nowadays, which apps one has to install and how much time one should spend online. Digital media is one of the necessary instruments required for work and social life today. The consequences are hypoconnectivity and possibility for mediated presence. Implications of these are multiple, both positive and negative ones. In particular, diffusion between the spheres of life and a lack of division between family and work life, duty and leisure time, issues which were given special attention in 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic glued people all over the world to their homes, as well as their work to their private life.

The significance of mediatized interconnectivity within family context is even stronger for migrant families or those family members who do not live together. Internet era has brought the whole another way of feeling connected for those families (Lohmeier & Böhlting, 2017).

Interconnectivity in the context of mediatization means not only that we as humans are increasingly connected to each other. This connection takes place also between human beings and artificial intelligence itself. 2019 research of Pereira is a critical discussion of Apple Memories, a feature iPhone have incorporated. As Jens Ruchatz (2004) argues, family photo is not born as memory, but becomes one when the members come back to it after some time, and

therefore contextualize it. But what if this return happens not due to the individual's intention, but as a result of AI algorithm? Pereira quotes Apple's executive in his description of the new feature: "we can figure out that you might want to see photos of a highlight reel of the last weekend (...) and offer those to you at just the right time" (Pereira, 2019. p. 2). She questions, if they in fact can do it. The scholar criticizes Apple in humanization of the machine, and highlights a number of ethical problems related to it. Pereira argues that the Apple's technology is just one of the manifestations of the shift in personal data treatment. For her, a deeper level of the ethical issue lies in the fact that AI has become an active decision maker on what a user should remember and how vividly. The machine as well as its creators treat personal memories as data, and subjects them to automatized categorization. We agree, there is a strong need for a more responsible approach to memory and its treatment, as well as for awareness of memory importance and power.

Immateriality

"The capacity to make something absent symbolically present defines human meaning making and thus culture."

Fornäs, J. (2016. p. 5215)

Digitalization of archive and therefore memories is an important problem in times of the second wave of mediatization. But how does this new immaterial condition of information affect our understanding, perception of memory? This problem was discussed in the studies by Blanco (2010), Hoskins (2014), Fornäs (2016), Lohmeier & Böhling (2017) among others. Hyperconnected immaterial state of the archive, according to Fornäs, transforms the very nature of memory. There is so much data, content and archive, he claims, that we constantly live in a digital mess; structuring and tidying it up can be a challenging task. This brings up the next issue of preservation. It is an illusion that everything stored in a cloud is safe and preserved forever. Because production and storage of information is so massive, Hoskins highlights, the process of crystallization of memories and the division of inessential from what is worth keeping is more complicated. Another problem is articulated by J. D. Peters: "everything durable wears down and everything transient leaves a trace" (in Fornäs, J., 2016. p. 5225-5226).

According to Blanco (2010), the shift from haptic paper materiality to digital immateriality of family photography affects the perception of the shared past and its "realness". Hoskins (2014) argues, immateriality of data contributes to a sense of ephemeral memory.

Another observation of his is about a collapse of meaning of ontological divisions like fact and fiction, nature and culture, science and art, technology and humanity. This makes the notion of any stability fallible, including the stability of memory. If following the advice of Hoskins, we will try to metaphorize contemporary memory, we would say it has made a shift from the solidity of tape or wax tablet towards the ghostly, uncertain, fluid, ethereal state manifested by digital clouds.

Time Accelerated

Due to their increased quantity, digital photographs have become “less archival”, and more transitory and ephemeral, Hoskins suggests (2014). Even though the meaning of the term “archival” is a questionable matter, quantity still prevails over quality in archives of our phones. The sacral notion of family archive is being increasingly challenged (Blanco, 2010).

The clash between quality and quantity of not only family photography but any content is an important issue in the last decade of the 21st century. Producing content is easier than ever, and it is in vogue nowadays, which is why there is so much content of various quality. Tendency for production rush as well as productivity rush is discussed among the others by Wajcman (2014, 2018), Dhoest (2014), Hoskins (2014).

The area of Judy Wajcman’s investigation (2014) is time and our relationship with it and with communication technologies. She highlights the trend, even a fashion in contemporary Western society of being constantly busy, which she links to nature of our technological innovation as well as the state of culture. Wajcman challenges a belief that technological progress would necessarily bring life and well-being quality increase to the society. There is a race for productivity and speed in Silicon Valley. And because people of Silicon Valley lead technological progress nowadays, she claims, their life style characterized by acceleration and their values are projected onto the rest of the world. Being burnt-out is practically a fashion. Email services offer us to save 10-15 seconds more with its prepared reply suggestions. Buttons for increasing playback speed is already an important feature of YouTube and various podcasting platforms. Recently Netflix offered to its audience a possibility for watching films and shows on fast forward.

“There is a whole raft of social theory that promotes the idea that digitalization has accelerated time and spawned a new temporality, variously described as: timeless time, instantaneous time, networked time” (Wajcman, 2014, p. 194). The time is at stake, however, Wajcman questions: what is it that we want so much to save it for? Are we even aware of it?

She argues the acceleration itself is socially destructive, and that this trend is driven both culturally and technologically.

The contradictory finding of her study is that even though the quantity of leisure time did not decrease, but in fact increased over the last half of the century, people feel the opposite, they feel “pressed for time”. Does it have to do with quality of time rather than its quantity?

Wajcman investigates the design of digital calendars and their effect on the highlighted social problems (2018). She suggests that these organizational media make us see time as a resource characterized of quantitative nature only, abandoning its qualitative differences. The time therefore is seen as a commodity, and its managing is trusted to the software. However, what is the connection here with the problem of memory?

Along with the mediatized and optimized time, memory is produced “on-the-fly” (Hoskins, 2014). This means that production, archiving and retrieving processes happen simultaneously, and they happen fast. Hoskins discusses Huyssen’s notion of “collapse of memory”, a result of the quickening pace of material life and information acceleration.

Memory, Hoskins claims, is unfinished. “The future historian may be confronted with an apparent void of information on lives that were in fact richly documented, but only through fleeting digital entries on security encrypted online services” (Arthur, 2009, p. 54).

If our memory is unfinished, and our past is omnipresent, then our future, according to the postmodernist Mark Fisher, is canceled (2014). One of the main explanations for his bold argument is the cultural inability to exist and evolve in the conditions of the acceleration dictated by today’s capitalist-driven society. Artists, he claims, are simply “pressed for time”, and instead of *creating* they are forced to *produce* (and increasingly, artistically re-produce). There is simply no time to try, experiment, search for the new artistic styles and voices, because failing nowadays is unaffordable.

Mark Fisher’s depressive vision of the zeitgeist should be subject to careful analysis and critique. However, the significant point is that he problematizes the same postmodern tendencies, and highlights the same issues of time and its effect on culture as the other scholars discussed here.

The “third time” is a term introduced by Paul Ricoeur for defining cultural time, as a separate dimension of time, a bridge between the actual, cosmic time on one hand, and the subjective, phenomenological time on the other (Fornäs, 2016). Calendars, clocks, archives, monuments, Fornäs claims, are third-time tools. J.D. Peters calls calendars and clocks logistical

media since they serve to organize and structure our lives. The calendar's function for Fornäs is to connect cultural time with cosmic one. Calendars synthesize political and astronomical aspects. Therefore, there is a problem of power related to media of clocks and calendars: because these media coordinate and organize people's actions, they can become a weapon for those who controls them. This idea is supported by Jansson (2018), who calls mediatization a hegemonic form of change driven mainly by the interests of power elites. If according to Wajcman's discourse, control over the media of time scheduling is currently in the hands of Silicon Valley developers, does it mean metaphorically those are the guys with the gun?

Digital detox is proposed by several scholars as one of the cures for "media addiction", however, its effect is limited on the social and global levels, we argue. The societies' lifestyles and politics affect our environment; simple individual isolation is hardly a solution. Moreover, it is a utopia, if we take into consideration the concept of media as one of the doxas of our time. The increasing need for communication technologies should not be seen just as an addiction, a disease of our epoch, the view should not be one-sided. Cancelling a part of human culture will not make us more wise, aware, or happy, we claim.

The third time is changing due to mediatization, as well as our perception of time and memory. However, it is too early to announce the end of history, as Fornäs argues with Fisher. These words stand as a balancing claim between polarized radical views on mediatization. "It makes little sense to squeeze late-modern transformations into any simple formula, though this is a temptation for those who prefer all-explaining keywords such as acceleration or denarrativization... If anything characterizes recent times of mediatization, it is the coexistence of a widened set of time tools and temporal representations rather than any more specific single trend." (Fornäs, 2016. p. 5227).

Conclusion

Contemporary digital media changes not just the way we remember, but also the way we forget. Even though media seems to be a perfect instrument for the preservation of indexicality and authenticity of memory, its stable character is deceiving. The abundance of digital media thus leads towards problems of digital mess, hence, inability to remember the essential, while our overreliance on its indexicality and durability often plays a bad joke to our memory.

Still, in the case of literal media, there is much more capacity for the text to be preserved in comparison with oral tradition; which has its positive and negative implications. It does not mean though that we should overly rely on the durability of any media. Information stored on vinyl, tapes, film or digital cloud is still vulnerable to being lost or simply forgotten. It is the act of recollection that keeps memories of any kind alive.

Oral traditions are based on the active process of recollection, it is a dynamic process. These processes, we suggest, should be seen not as merely repetitive. They have to do with ritual culture. Reenactment as a particular instance at focus in this work becomes a technic for active memory preservation and recollection. In the further chapter focused on reenactment, we develop this insight.

We see the communicational process as a chain with two links: text production and its perception. In oral practices, both of the links enhance the transformation of memory. In case of literal tradition, the first link stays relatively stable, the second however is still unpredictably dynamic.

Nowadays we live in the interconnected society with collective memories spread all over the globe. These memories are increasingly digitalized which makes them lose their material character, but stay around resembling ghosts.

More than ever, time is at stake in the 21st century. The contemporary society is constantly busy with finding new ways to save some extra seconds in a day. However, time should not just be treated as a quantitative resource, its important characteristic is qualitative. Our culture exists balancing between the objective, cosmic time, and subjective phenomenological one.

The implications for our perception of this omnipresent ghostly past in the time we are running out of is what we aim to comprehend in the further texts of this work.

In-Person Reenactment as Contemporary Mediatized Ritual

“Similar to the mechanical recording techniques (slow motion in film, enlargements in photography) described by Walter Benjamin, re-enactments make the Optical Unconscious visible.”

(Horn and Arns, 2007, p. 9)

Evolution of reenactment

While reenactment has become an increasing trend in the artistic practices of the mediatization era (Kahana, 2009), we hypothesize that its roots are traced back much further than one would expect.

It is important to first of all acknowledge that the history of reenactment as a cultural tradition precedes the history of filmmaking. For this thesis and the development of its practical artistic-research component, it is essential to understand both aesthetic and methodological dimensions of reenactment practices of different epochs, as well as cultural aims that these dimensions supported at each period of time, for example, memorialization of historical events and experiences, narrative definition and shifting, society and community building, sustaining of tradition etc. This is why, in this part, we analyze the evolution of those dimensions starting from 19th century practices and finishing with those of the 21st century.

Ancestral practices of parades and pageants named “historicisms” are classified by scholars as earliest reenactments (Lütticken, 2005). In this work, we intend to update this theory by linking the reenactment practice to even more antient tradition of ritual culture, which will be the focus of the following subchapters. Roots of historicism lie in the 19th century, however those forms are quite far relatives of what we call reenactment today: in many cases they had to do with recreations of “exotic” environments, architectures and designs for European audiences. According to Walter Benjamin, the interiors of the 19th century palaces had an aim to create an impression for its visitors that a major historical event from the past could be happening next door right at the given moment. In fact, Benjamin recognizes not only cultural events as reenactments, but historical ones too. He claimed that French Revolution itself has been a reenactment of the times from Ancient Rome (Lütticken, 2005), and this theory poses extremely relevant questions in the context of the most contemporary history, which need further exploration and research.

Meanwhile, historical parades of 19th century Europe attempted to bring historical events out of archives and into city streets. Action role-plays have an ability to give a different perception of history than written text, scholars notice, and this happens through immersion, personification and empathy (Horn & Arns, 2007). Hence, we see that the longing for removing the gap between then and now is not just a contemporary desire. While parades had been practiced also in the times of Renaissance, Lütticken suggests there is a significant theoretical difference between the practices of 16th and 19th centuries. During modernity, history was used to methodologically replace myth in Western culture. It was not one specific story or myth that served as an object for historicist practices in the 19th century, but rather the aim was to recreate the features of past time itself. Lütticken notes also the significance of parades in the USA of 1910^s. There, it was a common trend for members of the city's elite to play the roles of their ancestors, thus making pageantry a form of “democratic ritual”. He argues that contemporary reenactment practices of 20th centuries should be considered historicism as well. Coming back to Eurasian continent, and continuing Benjamin's logic, Lütticken suggests that Russian Revolution itself was a reenactment of French Revolution. Meanwhile, reenactments of October Revolution were an essential tradition of the established communist regime in Russia. The most important artists and cultural players of the time such as Kazimir Malevich and Vsevolod Meyerhold were in charge of the reconstructions, while the participants of the “original” storming of Winter Palace have been replaying their own actions of the past, therefore practicing ‘in-person reenactment’ (Margulies, 2019).

With the rise of cinema, Lütticken argues, reenactment practices inherent to historicism moved to film, while historical reenactments started to be given less attention and credit in performative arts, which was the case up until the rise of happenings in 1960s (Lütticken, 2005). It is thanks to filmmakers, that the traditions of historicism survived through the 20th century, Baldacci adds (2022). In Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North*, reenactment pioneered as an important method for accessing tradition and history. In the core of Flaherty's practice was portraying a community while not relying only on the tools of direct observation (Nichols, 2008).

The 1940s-60s postwar European cinema wave of Italian Neorealism is seen by some as a continuation of in-person reenactment tradition in cinema (Margulies, 2019). It is so due to methodological choices to cast non-actors playing “themselves” and film in “real locations” instead of film studios. Through examination of cases from the oeuvre by Antonioni and Zavattini, Margulies highlights psychoanalytical role of the method through the analysis of Antonioni's episodes *Attempted Suicide* and Zavattini's *The Story of Caterina* from *Love in the*

City series (1953), where the creative decision of working with non-actors, allegedly, creates a new relationship between the film and its spectator.

At the same time, according to John Brewer (McCalman, 2010), important in understanding poetics and methodology of reenactment are also the works of Roberto Rossellini, specifically *Rome the Open City* (1945) and *Paisa* (1946), as they construct the notion of the real for that certain epoch.

Neorealism was able to give an opportunity for an actor to relive their experience once again, therefore reclaim it and “take an active role in their lives” (2019, p.48). This suggests a potential of change and redemption to be accessed through reenactment. In addition, Zavattini (in Margulies, 2019) proclaimed that each human can be interesting for cinema, because each individual carries a story. The movement which turned camera’s focus to “average humans”, was able to access a closer feeling of “realism”. Margulies calls such practices a kind of ritual, and claims they serve as a way to reestablish individual’s role in the society, which is in fact one of the ancient rituals’ functions (Segal, 2005).

Normally, French direct cinema and cinema verite are seen by scholars as oppositional to the methodological and aesthetic principles of reenactment (Nichols, 2008). Indeed, according to the verite tradition, a documentary shot lacks authenticity if any kind of staging or intervention from author has taken place for its production. Paradoxically, Margulies finds connections between reenactment and the tradition of cinema verite, and his critical approach differs from the other scholar’s theories who view the French postwar movement strictly in an opposition from methods of reenactment. Margulies examines the imaginary in the direct cinema, its relationships with psychodrama, the questionable reality of the “objective truths of image” (Margulies, 2019), and points out that these features and notions are used for reenactments too.

In the 1960s, reenactment practices in art and media shifted its focus from representations of events to recreations of experiences, which emancipated the practice and the authorship (Lütticken, 2005). The shift from objective and collective to individual, personal and singular is not accidental, as it is indicative of a broader shift in Western philosophical thought. The ideas of postmodernism bring a strong transformative twist into the Western artistic practices, and this is exactly when reenactment tradition has obtained a vital role in the discourse again. Here it is important to speak about the shift in performance art of the 1960s-70s, what Lütticken calls “the golden years” of the performance. It was the period when happenings got established and popularized, and the discourse about their documentation shaped the method and philosophy around it.

The term ‘performance art’ itself was griped at that time, when numerous artists like Allan Kaprow and Marina Abramovic, and Fluxus movement tried to break free from the materialism of classical art and, bring it out from galleries into public spaces (Baldacci et al., 2022). Oeuvre of Kaprow and Abramovic depicts an evolution from refusal of any mediation or remediation of their works towards acceptance and encouragement of those. According to Abramovic, in the early 70s, performance artists largely were opposing any documentation, as they would believe it could never provide a substitution of the original experience of the performance, which is supposed to be a unique event, and take place just once (Jones, 2011). Kaprow’s method mostly relied on pre-mediation, in other words, on meticulous scripting of his performances in advance, in order to provide him control over his happenings. This approach proved to disappoint the artist, as even the most precise scripting could not guarantee his performance to be exactly as he intended. In addition, this also caused conflicts between the author and the performers. It was only later in his career that the scripts of Kaprow offered some freedom of variation for his performers. These scripts now also suggested a possibility of multiple restagings of a single piece (Jones & Heathfield, 2014).

The initial ban on reproduction in classic performance art was a form of a political protest against capitalistic mode of reproduction. Artists of this movement attempted to oppose the idea of serving to “society of spectacle”. There was simultaneously an exact opposite movement at play: pop-art with Andy Warhol on its frontline. Once happenings become popularized events, the new trend started to emerge: performance which happens only in order to be mediatized, happenings have become commodified (Lütticken, 2005). Another problem was lying on the other extreme: undocumented performances produced such a hype from audiences and media precisely due to their uniqueness, that they themselves became an object of capitalist fetishization and demand (Jones & Heathfield, 2014). In other words, in absence of the object itself, audience developed an obsession with its “ghost”. It became obvious that avoiding mediation and materialization of art object does not provide a cure for society of spectacle breastfed by capitalism.

We see that these tendencies are quite familiar in contemporary art scene nowadays, and is especially relevant for activist art. While thinking of the issue of repetition in performative arts, Jane Blocker suggests, echoing Rebecca Schneider’s idea, to see performance as a sort of archive, but the one that does not only stay in material form, but suggests a body-to-body transmission, working in the field of embodied memory (Jones & Heathfield, 2014).

In regard of this issue, it is perhaps, the most interesting to observe the shift in Marina Abramovic’s artistic and philosophical transformation. The “grandmother of performance” has

been at first basing her method on avoiding rehearsals, repetitions of any manner, scripting or predicting the final for her works. Later in her artistic practice, she got obsessed with reenactments and documentation of her pieces. The radical shift in the approach coincided with her 1988 breakup with Ulay, her partner in life and in art. The transition has become evident after the work *The Biography* was presented in 1992, in which Marina Abramovic narrated her every year of life. Later she started reenacting her own performances (Baldacci et al., 2022). We can see such a transition in many ways. It is possible that time and evolution of cultural and philosophical thought played its role in change of the artist's methods, as one knows nobody can avoid the flux. It might be the case also that by separating with Ulay, Abramovic had a chance to better follow her own artistic ideologies. Finally, one might also find a link in the creative (and cognitive) shift to be a “compulsion” to preserve and repeat the past precisely due to the trauma of separation. Whether the early years of the tandem were characterized by reflecting on their “now”, and the later years after the separation became dedicated to memorialization of the gone “then”, one can only speculate.

One way to see reenactment as a postmodern trend is to follow the theory described by Jacques Derrida with a term “archive fever”, in which he explains the compulsive, repetitive desire to return to the lost original moment of the past (Baldacci et al., 2022). It has to do with nostalgia, homesickness, where the archive becomes a fetish, and a portal to enter the long-gone “then”. Such view is connected to the contemplation of Mark Fisher on cultural zeitgeist of 2010s as “hauntological”. This is a view of present refusing the future due to being haunted by the past, and due to discrepancy between what the future seemed like back in the days, and what it has actually become (Fisher, 2014). Marcus Miessen sees the tendency as the “western obsession with memory”: in the 2000s re-curating exhibitions and reenacting performances has become a vogue, and according to him, it has to do with the need for reconstructing and reestablishing individual and collective identities (Baldacci et al., 2022).

However, postmodernist idea of “different repetition” brings another focal point for us to see the process. As Lepecki views it, “[t]here is a fundamental difference between reenacting (understood as performing as before) and doing again (understood as unleashing the stored energy of a diagram-in-waiting into an act, not as before, but once again).” (Jones & Heathfield, 2014, p.156). This is perhaps what can help us understand the concept of archive as an instrument for contextualization (Ferdin, 2016), a tool for transformation of future, and not just a peephole into the past. This transformative potential is what we speak of in detail further.

Reenactment Today

The boom of reenactment as a trend in both contemporary performative art and audiovisual productions of the postmodernity did not go unnoticed by scholars and critics. In-person reenactments, where non-actors play their own selves have become wide-spread cases with the turn of the century (Kahana, 2009). This was especially evident in historical films. Kahana finds a possible predecessor of this trend in reality TV and docudrama, which was a prime-time format of the 1990s to 2000s both in the USA and Europe. Werner Herzog and Errol Moris were among the most important filmmakers who employed methods of reenactment and pushed the movement forward to the attention of a larger number of audience and authors.

Alongside with their contributions went the projects by Claude Lanzmann, Alex Gibney, Rithy Panh. Margulies finds that reenactment is a method reliant on unconscious, accidental and compulsive repetitions, which is evident in the projects like *Close-Up* (1990) by Abbas Kiarostami, *Sons* (1996) by Zhang Yuan, Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1984), and *S-21: The Khmer Rouge Killing Machine* (2003) by Rithy Panh (2019).

At the same time, a different kind of reenactment movement emerged in the States: experimental film remakes aiming to work with earlier examples of avant-garde and documentary cinema, which shifted the path of American experimental filmmaking and video-art.

Similar tendencies could be seen on the scene of performance art of the time. Historical re-performance and artistic reenactment became in the main theme in curatorship by Robert Blackson, Inke Arns, Helena Reckitt, Kerry Broucher (Kahana, 2009). Two of the most important pieces created at the time and quoted by almost all the scholars of reenactment studies are Rod Dickinson's *Milgram Experiment* (2002), and Jeremy Deller's *Battle of Orgreave* (2001), and one of the reasons why these two creations as of such importance is their hybridity: their method was based on combining performance, installation and video disciplines into one artistic reenactment project. "Reenactment operates at the uncanny of the spectacle", Dickinson observed, which is why he finds it well-equipped to address trauma (Blackson, 2007, p.33).

Meaning

The very word “reenactment” can refer to many different practices and concepts, hence it is essential to frame the very definition(s) of reenactment, and in particular, artistic reenactment, before proceeding to the analysis of its qualities and roles.

Kahana (2009) approaches the problem from semantic perspective, and deconstructs the very word enactment (stripped of the prefix re-). He quotes Oxford English Dictionary in order to deconstruct three definitions of the word ‘enact’, which has its roots as far as in the fifteenth century:

1. “To enter among the acta or public records; also, to enter in a record or chronicle.”
2. “To make into an act; hence, to ordain, decree.”
3. “To declare officially or with authority; to appoint.” (Kahana, 2009)

Kahana argues that this set of definitions describes a linguistic act and points to connection between enactment as action, and staging and mediation as its necessary components. The very first definition also provides a strong sense of link to archive. There is the second set of definitions of the same term, coming from the same period of time, which articulates performative and activating aspects of enactment:

4. “To work in or upon; to activate, influence. Also, to implant, inspire (a feeling, etc.) into a person.”
5. “To represent (a dramatic work, a ‘scene’) on or as on the stage; to personate (a character) dramatically, play (a part). To perform (a ceremony).” (Kahana, 2009).

As we see, these two definitions mark a power of enactment to manifest not only itself by means of announcement but to influence, activate, inspire, in other words, to generate a change within witness or audience. Enactment even without its prefix re-, already possesses relationship with representation and impersonation. Peculiar is also the part on ceremony performance as it links enactment to ritualistic practice. Kahana highlights the necessary condition of enactment according to which a transformation of the self into another version of the self has to occur. Such transformation can be both temporal and spatial.

Now, in regard of reenactment, the Oxford definitions get blurry: they only describe it as repetition or rehearsal of enactment. The analysis points out that ontological ambiguity is unavoidably inherent to reenactment terminology, especially in case of reenactment in film. It is of course fair to admit that the definitions from the 15th century are problematic to use as an instrument of deconstruction of today’s reenactment practice. In addition, the palette of contemporary reenactments varies methodologically, institutionally and culturally (Kahana, 2009).

Amelia Jones goes as far as to claim that history and memory are themselves reenactments; she defines them as scriptings of the past into the present which itself is already over (Jones, 2011), making boundaries between the concepts even more blurry. This idea of history as reenactment echoes the claim of historian R.G. Collinwood from half-a-century ago. This makes sense within the contextualization of Robert Blackson's argument that both history and memory are creative acts (Blackson, 2007).

Another contemporary definition states that a reenactment is an act that restages any historical or biographical event or a typical traditional behavior (Margulies, 2019). An action that stands in relation to another recognizable event or action, and as Sven Lütticken adds, often "attempts to reach the original" (Baldacci et al., 2022). The essential for understanding of contemporary reenactment practices point is articulated by André Lepecki. He highlights, reenactment is a gesture that produces not a repetition, but an opening of meaning (Baldacci et al., 2022). Therefore, the prefix re- cannot be mistaken for signaling a simple repetition or return, Baldacci warns, nor does it indicate a tendency of nostalgic obsession with the past, or fetishization of the past aesthetics due to creative exhaustion, as has been suggested by Mark Fisher (2014). Reenactment theorists see its main role in protecting memory from fading, ensuring its preservation for the future, while well aware of fallibility of any medium, and impossibility to resist transformations of all sorts. Reperforming is not the same as simply doing again (Jones & Heathfield, 2014).

This last idea is essential to the discourse; paraphrased and re-thought from different angles by different scholars and artists, it appears in almost each text on contemporary reenactment practice, and is a framework for this research as well.

The Schools of Thought

There are at the moment two main schools of thought on artistic reenactment in documentary film: one by Brian Winston, and another by Bill Nichols (Kahana, 2009).

The key point of Winston's theory is that documentary practices exist on the spectrum of intensity of author's intervention. It is not just the good old "authenticity" of events, characters and locations that define documentary, argues Winston. Intervention and construction can be also valid parts of a documentary, which in that case is placed on the other side of the spectrum.

Nichols' theory does not oppose the one by Winston, but rather updates it. He attempts to group documentary into six types, and structure them according to form and function, and most importantly, according to mode of self-reflexivity. The modes are:

- *Observational*
- *Expository*
- *Poetic*
- *Participatory*
- *Reflexive*
- *Performative*

According to Nichols, the less stylized and constructed modes are on the less-reflexive side of the spectrum. The more stylized are more “self-conscious”.

The theory of reenactment according to Bill Nichols is constructed within the framework of Freudian psychoanalysis and anthropology, which is manifested in his discussion of “fantasmatic subject” of documentary, using the term uncanny in order to explain the quality inherent to reenactment.

Winston explains reenactment from semiotic perspective, since it is language that defines and shapes what we consider a “true story”. He sees history of documentary as an evolution of the genre. Nichols, on the other hand, analyses reenactment as a compulsion, a manifestation of a suppressed consciousness, which suggests a possibility of “working through” in Freudian terms (Kahana, 2009). Nichols notices the ritualistic coded into reenactment practices. He highlights that unlike archive, artistic reenactment does not provide evidence, but interpretation of memories and historical events. “Put simply, history does not repeat itself, except in mediated transformations such as memory, representation, reenactment, fantasy– categories that coil around each other in complex patterns.” (Nichols, 2008, p.73).

These points give access to a number of further insights and theories discussed further in this work. This is why, in this thesis, we choose to work closely with the Nichol’s theory.

Categories

Bill Nichols divided reenactments into five types:

- *Realist Dramatization* – the one that has become overly popular in reality TV shows, and is characterized by suspenseful dramatism and minimal stylization. Therefore, it attempts to remove the gap between itself and the event it reenacts, and possesses qualities of a conventional representation. Nichols traces this style back to Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North* (Flaherty, 1922) and *In the Land of the War Canoes* (Curtis, 1914) by Edward S. Curtis. This methodology of usage of realistically dramatized flashbacks exemplified itself best, according to Nichols, in American reality TV shows of the late

80s such as *Unresolved Mysteries* (John Cosgrove & Terry Dunn Meurer, 1987) and *Cops* (John Langley & Malcolm Barbour, 1989).

This most classic style of reenactment, has its relevance for our work in that it has been the creative choice of the co-author of the artistic research, and as we call her here, the memory co-owner. It is based on suspenseful dramatism and minimally stylized aesthetic of realistic dramatization type that she told and written her memories, hence this mode has become a part of the aesthetic of our film *Moments When We Freeze*. However, this reenactment type has been combined with the other ones, of which we speak further.

- *Typifications* are the reenactments which do not refer to a specific event from the past but rather reconstruct general behaviors, rituals, patterns, in other words, those actions which are “typical” for a certain community or group. This cluster was popular in British documentary filmmaking of the 1930s thanks to John Grierson, and later it spread wider. Nichols calls them ‘typical particulars’, where a particular event or character represents a larger tendency or group. In this case, *Nannook of the North* (Flaherty, 1922) comes up as an example as well, alongside with other early documentary works like *Coal Face* (Cavalcanti, 1935) and *Night Mail* (Wright & Watt, 1936). But we shall go as far as suggesting that the very first film ever produced could be in fact a typification. Lumiere’s brothers’ *Workers Leaving the Factory* (Lumier, 1895), classified normally as the first documentary, however many argue that the famous exit of the Lumieres’ employees was in fact staged, and even that the workers had to come in for the reshoot of the film on their day off (Srinivasan, 2021). If this was in fact so, that would mean that the first film ever made was a typification reenactment.
- *Brechtian Distantiation* – a technic of deliberately distancing audience from the sense of verisimilitude and authenticity of reenactment. It is based on increasing the gap between the reenactment and what it reenacts in order to remind of the difference between the two. Nichols claims that Brechtian Distantiation allows fantastic to manifest, while paradoxically, strengthening a link with historical specificity. Such technics are found in the films like Jill Godmilow’s *Far from Poland* (Godmilow, 1984) and Werner Herzog’s *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* (Herzog, 1997).

This type is crucial for our work. In *Moments When We Freeze*, reenactment of the events that happened 40 years earlier, is constructed in combination with meta-elements: mentioning of QR-codes while action takes place in 1982, out of place and time props, and the main one is of course filming fictional scene at the location of the backstage behind the film decoration. These elements are sharing aims with Brechtian

Distantiation, reminding the audience that the scene is fictional, the story world is constructed out of the combined memories which mix and merge. This tool helps the authors to hint on the unreliable character of memories, and highlight the “broken” quality of timeline as it manifests itself in our author’s minds.

- *Stylization* diminishes effects of realist dramatization as much as possible while shifting the perspective towards using artistic stylization as an expressive tool. As a result, the reenactment striped of any attempts to reach resemblance or verisimilitude with the event it stands for, instead it focuses on portraying a perspective, or signifying rather than illustrating the event. This was observed by Nichols in *The Thin Blue Line* (Morris, 1988) by Erol Morris, in particular in the scene of Randall Adams's interrogation. The other example is an animated documentary *His Mother's Voice* (Tupicoff, 2009) by Dennis Tupicoff which uses stylized animation in order to narrate the traumatic events happened to the protagonist. The Argentinian production *Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo* (Muñoz & Portillo, 1982) also uses animation as an instrument of stylization for certain key scenes.

In our artistic research, while working with the memories, it was the stylization that one of the main protagonists and creative collaborator would choose as a preferable tool for representation of memories. Unlike his co-author who preferred realistic dramatization, he wrote his story and gave his suggestions in highly stylized way. The film borrowed 80s-like black and white aesthetics thanks to his ideas.

- *Parody and Irony* plays an important role and establishes the final type, according to Nichols. It is the transgressive quality of comedy that allows it to question, mock, break conventions, traditional ways of representation, narrativization and understanding. Again, in *Moments When We Freeze*, an idea was suggested by the creative collaborator and the memory co-owner to film the dramatic jealousy scene as an Othello parody, to stylize it as a silent movie from the 1920s and bring humorous tone instead of dramatizing the scene in a realistic manner. Even though this version of the scene only exists in the film as his emotional description of it, it signifies the importance of irony in dealing with dramatic memories for him.

The classic examples of the actual parodic and ironic reenactment are *Cane Toads: An Unnatural History* (Lewis, 1988) uses humor and melodramatism in order to mock the typical way of representation of a wild animal by documentaries on wild life. *The Eternal Frame* (Farm, A., Uthco, T. R., & Lord, C, 1976) is a video art installation that uses parody in order to reenact Kennedy’s assassination. The focus of mockery in this

work was not the event of the assassination itself, but the media as a producer of narratives.

It is clear that in practice, the categories merge more often than not, which is recognized by the scholar.

In her *Re-Presenting Art History* essay (2022), Cristina Baldacci contemplates on whether reenactment is a practice that can be a critical method for rereading history, which does not represent it but presents it anew. In her analysis, she characterizes reenactment potential in the following acts: (re)appropriation, (re)interpretation, (re)construction, (re)mediation, (re)circulation and (re)contextualization of images.

The eternal prefix re- haunting today's artistic discourse, she claims, is not accidental. It is due to tendencies brought by epoch of mediatization, that all the processes described above have become one of the most used media practices (Baldacci et al., 2022). Indeed, image once mediatized, acquires uncountable number of copies, uncontrollably spreads all over the globe, while being re-appropriated, reinterpreted, re-contextualized, remediated; and this process will not come to an ending even if the copy of the copy of the copy breaks into pixels and falls apart cracked by a glitch. This idea is to keep in mind when trying to understand why reenactment is such a relevant artistic practice today, and how mediatization theory plays the key role in this tendency.

The role of reenactment, Baldacci argues, is to allow witnesses of the 'original' event to reexperience it again, and for those who had not, to get acquainted with it for the first time in their own way of perception (Baldacci et al., 2022). This idea has one problem: it is not unique for reenactment practices, but can be applicable to any form of art representation, be it a painting of a landscape made by method of live drawing, or a concert by a classical composer performed yet again.

One way out of the enmeshment can be to theorize that reenactment as a term can be only applicable to a practice of reconstructing an event that had occurred and remained in the memory of a person and/or collective. However, this would undermine Nichol's category of *typification*.

In that case, does it mean we should think of reenactment not only as a possible methodology for an artistic practice, but also as a quality that can be possessed by any art practice? This thesis attempts to answer this question. For now, we quote Ivone Margulies hoping his idea can bring back a little clarity and focus to the discourse, even though he speaks of a narrower category which is In-Person reenactment: "In-person reenactment, I suggest,

provides a particularly exemplary embodiment in that it confirms through replay one's story, its historicity, its value." (Margulies, 2019, p.8).

It is exactly the category of in-person reenactment, addressed in the book of the scholar, that will be especially of interest for us. By in-person reenactment, Margulies means such reenactment practice where the very owner of the memory participates in re-performing it again.

Problems

Following Andrea Fraser's discourse on reenactment informed by psychoanalysis, Baldacci questions, what kind of investments are necessary for practicing (re)enactments: economic, social, psychological; and importantly, what gets reproduced as a result (Baldacci et al., 2022).

To add to the number of problems the method evokes, Jonathan Kahana (2009) offers a list of nine more. Those are the echoes of the problems stated in this work as well, they go as follows:

- What place memory, narrativization and testimony take in producing and preserving historical knowledge?
- What is the role of ritualistic and unconscious in the process?
- How can film and audiovisual media work for preservation of individual and collective memories and inscribing them into cultural strata?
- How does imagination and the fantasmatic operate inside the methodology of artistic reenactment in documentary?
- Can reenactment have a therapeutic effect, and if so, on whom?
- How do we define the embodiment, and what does embodied knowledge mean for science, pedagogy, archive and performance?
- Where do we place acting in tension between performative arts, political and social practices?
- Which are the ways of practicing reenactment in future and for future, what is its potential?
- How does reenactment stand in tension with the notion of nostalgia and fear of loss of originality and novelty, as described by the concept of 'hauntology' (Fisher, 2014)?

Now, Robert Blackson (2007) goes even further, and questions, whether a historical fact can only obtain its meaning after being interpreted by a cultural act.

Blackson talks about how his research of reenactment has led him to the crucial transition of its understanding: his initial opinion was that performing reenactment was a direct opposite practice from creating history. As a result of his research, the scholar and curator has been led to change his point of view, and to conclude that reenacting is a way of constructing history. When Blackson talks about contemporary reenactments, he considers not only art practices but also hobbies, religious traditions, music genres, scientific methodologies and trades. Repetition and reproduction, he highlights, are what reenactment often being mainly associated with by fault of oversimplification. In fact, the opposite is true, Blackson claims: reenactment is more than a repetition, it is a practice which brings transformation of knowledge, memory, culture and the very history, and that it has a liberating quality.

Blackson continues his argument by discussing the interconnection between history and memory, and the fallible quality of the latter, which has been better understood only after the 1970s thanks to the studies on false memories (Thomas & Loftus, 2002). Blackson argues that it is thanks to artistic and cultural practices like reenactment that the narratives of history can embed themselves in a certain way into the memory of society and individuals. Not only can reenactment have a power to strengthen the narratives, he argues, but also to transform them.

He suggests, reenactment as a cultural tradition and artistic tool has an ability to shift meaning of the initial fact or event. Through analyzing a number of case studies starting from Nordic Viking festival Up-helly-aa, and finishing with Marina Abramovic's reenactments of her own performances, he traced this effect: reenactment is not concerned about maintaining appearances, but rather about creating an act. His theory is that history might be worth nothing without a cultural representation of itself. He hypothesizes that such a representation constructed by cultural practices of reenactment might contain more value and power on society than the original fact itself. Citing Orwell, he highlights that "those who control the present, control the past, and those who control the past, control the future" (Blackson, 2007, p.33), and by tools of control, Blackson here means mediated reenactment practices and artefacts which interact with historical narratives and memories. This idea is directly echoed, in a more critical way, by John Brewer: "Amateur enthusiasts, the representatives of identity politics and, above all, participants in the culture industries that produce TV, video, and film – not academics – are the creators, purveyors and consumers of this past. What they create is a past that is at once consumer good and cultural possession" (McCalman, 2010).

As scary as the last hypotheses is, it highlights the fact that one should not underestimate the importance of cultural practices for the construction of historical narratives and preserving memories for shaping society and its views on their own history. This way, according to

Blackson, history, can only exist when being remembered through the lens of a certain interpretation.

Reenactment: between mediatization, trauma and ritual

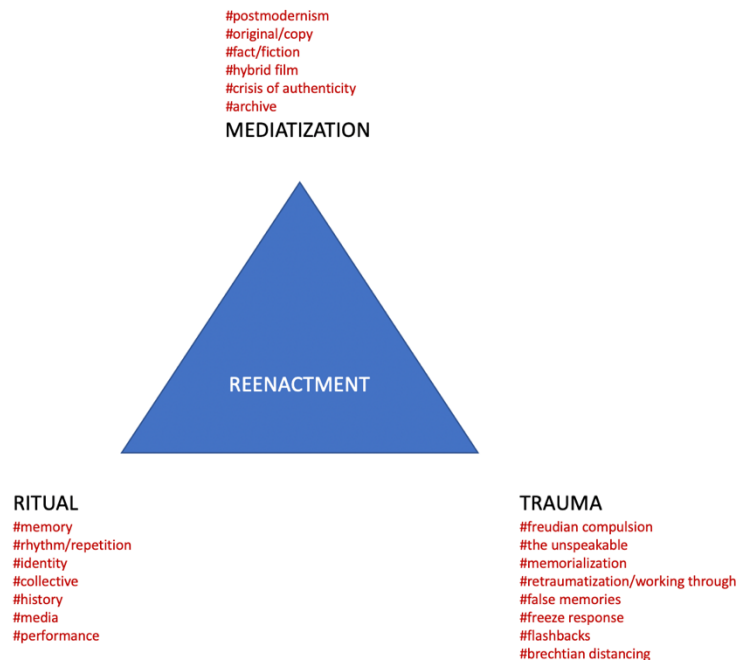


Figure 1. Table of triangulation between trauma, ritual, and mediatization around reenactment

As the research shows, there are three important frameworks circling around reenactment in contemporary artistic practice. Figure 1 shows them in a form of scheme.

The first one is reenactment's relation with psychoanalytic framework, more precisely with the notions of individual and collective trauma.

If in the late 1990 in the West, trauma studies were thought of as a field of decreasing relevance, then with the shift of the millennia, it turned out to be exactly the opposite case. Jill Bennett links this phenomenon to the 9/11, and the way the attacks brought a different proximity to the notion of collective trauma and empathetic potential in the Western society (Bennett, 2005). Extrapolating from that logic, one can suggest that the events of the two further decades marked by the war in Ukraine, Covid-19, increasing climate change threat, and numerous local tragedies we had to live through, the relevance of trauma studies and trauma art is at its highest peak since perhaps World War II times. Bennett sees trauma not just as an interior condition of an individual, but also a transformative process that impacts society and the world, which is why trauma is so closely linked to the political, not merely to the subjective. Therefore, when art is concerned of trauma, it is influencing the political. Trauma-centrism is what differentiates contemporary artistic reenactments from pop-cultural historical recreations:

it is not the performative aspect of archival fetishization what at stake, but the re-contemplation on the events which had left its mark on the present (Horn & Arns, 2007).

The second framework has to do with the contemporary zeitgeist, and importance of the reenactment as a tendency of the postmodern mediatized culture. For this work, mediatization theory (Couldry & Hepp, 2013) has a significant relevance: our practice-based research traces and analyses the tendency of loss of memory in cases when this memory isn't backed by media. One of the main protagonists and the memory owner in *Moments When We Freeze* confesses, he wouldn't remember the event if he had not found a photo of it. This leads towards suggestion that the produced reenactment becomes not only a new "container" for the updated memory, but the guarantor of the possibility for the memory existence. In other words, according to mediatization theory, memory tends to evaporate when not preserved by means of media. Even though, we should not be tricked into believing that a memory "conserved" by media, like for example a photo or a voice message recording, would last forever and not be subject to eventual distortion or demolition. This conundrum was beautifully articulated in *Chungking Express*: "If memories could be canned, would they also have expiry dates?" (Wong Kar Wai, 1994).

Even if reenactment practice has a long history, its cultural role has changed after the 1980s, with the rise of postmodern philosophical thought. For film, postmodernity meant the urge to review the credibility of established narratives and historical memory (Kahana, 2009). This philosophy is characterized by the discourses on loss of original and multiplicity of copies, which leads scholars to come back to the notion of simulacra again and again (Gushchina, 2019). Postmodernist philosopher Jean Baudrillard introduced a concept of simulacra back in 1981. According to Baudrillard (2001), in postmodern time, a real object does not have to even exist in order for its representation or "simulacra" to be created. "Abstraction today is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal" (Baudrillard, Poster, Mourrain, 2001, p. 166). The idea of simulacra suggests that the real is what goes through crisis, reality becomes produced by its copies, not vice versa. The term describing the disappearance of the original and the proliferation of copies describes the contemporary condition even more accurately today with the boom of AI, creating avatars, artworks, texts etc.

Breakage of the link between original and truthful, simultaneous absence and presence inherent to digital imagery, its loss of material quality as we used to know it in analogue; the very human memory understood as subject to falsifications and transformations (Thomas &

Loftus, 2002); all these phenomena offer a framework to look at reenactment as a process mirroring the dimensions of the postmodern reality, and to question, why so. Reenactment is a practice that simultaneously erases and creates distance (Horn & Arns, 2007), the one that simultaneously preserves and changes memories (Blackson, 2007), and indicates our desire to reach the knowledge of the past and impossibility to acquire this knowledge other than through repetition (Jones, 2011). All these processes are especially relevant, we believe, for reenactment in hybrid film, an audiovisual artwork balancing between factual and fantasmatic, and often unsure of the clear boundary between the two (Nichols, 2008).

It is nowadays argued that no documentary film can really be created without an artistic intervention, the idea circling around since the 1950s when outlined by Joris Ivens. This hypothesis has more weight today, after TV and social media taught us how unreliable an image of reality can be. It is a common theory among the scholars studying reenactment of the two latest decades, that the crisis of authenticity of the period between 1980s and 2000s can find its resolution in the kind of “post-truth” that reenactment aims to access (Gushchina, 2019). It is an appropriate time to contemplate on how much of what we perceive as truth is in fact a social construct shaped by omnipresent media (Horn & Arns, 2007).

Finally, the third link is to ritual, a cultural pattern known to humanity from the dawn of times. Margulies (2019) and Nichols (2008) both recognize ritualistic qualities and functions inherent to the tradition of reenactment. Just as ritual, reenactment is simultaneously representational and live (Jones, 2011). Kahana finds these qualities problematic because they are under researched (2009). Increasingly, nowadays scholars look at mediatized events as mediatized rituals (Cui, 2019). They notice that ritual culture is not just a practice we get to know of from an anthropological archive, but a practice still existent in our life today, even if we do not recognize it as ritualistic. It is undergoing constant evolution, which means that its new forms are emerging nowadays (Couldry, 2005).

The meaning of this evolution is difficult to overestimate, since human society can hardly exist without mediatized rituals (Cottle, 2008). The political relevance of ritual is in its ability to bind the society together around common narratives and habits, and importantly, to shape hierarchic structures and community’s relationship with authority (Whitehouse & Lanman, 2014). Analyzing connections between film, theater and ritual practices, Lyden (2003) finds performative aspects of ritual essential: the need to dramatize narratives and make audience empathize with them, helps them to establish a certain perspective on reality. The scholar highlights a peculiar phenomenon: performance and ritual are so interconnected that for some cultures, theater is still a religious site. As an example, he speaks about Traditional

Chinese theater (Peking Opera), where a part of performance is exercised purely for ritualistic purposes. Rather than criticizing the phenomenon of mixing secular with religious, Lyden offers to question why Western society tends to separate artistic from ritualistic, and what the division indicates.

We suggest that reenactment is in fact a ritualistic communication strategy. It opens a channel for connecting with the past, be it a historical event, an event from a life of an individual, or a past performance. It is an attempt in communication and understanding of the event itself, and in connection with its “original” participants. Interestingly, in case of in-person reenactment, these “original” participants are the reenactor’s own past selves. Inspired on the text by Jill Bennett (2005), where he analyzes meaning of contemporary trauma art, we argue that trauma needs ritual to work through itself. Unseen and unspeakable as trauma is, it needs mediated ritual to safely repeat, document and frame itself, speak itself out. We suggest that memorialization into an artistic object can have redemptive qualities among others.

Conclusion

As we closely look at the practice of reenactment as it presents itself nowadays, we find it located in the center of a theoretic triangle: between mediatization, trauma and ritual. In-Person artistic reenactment, we argue, *is* a contemporary mediatized ritual. As such, it opens a possibility to work with memory and through memory, making visible the unspeakable of individual and collective trauma, perhaps even offering a possibility to work through it, because of its transformative potential.

This is why we see it necessary to research the practice within this specific framework, which is the task of the following chapters.

Trauma: The (un)Escapable Loop

Introduction

Since the early 2000s, Western artistic process has been fascinated with trauma and obsessed with memory, Andreas Huyssen claims (in Bennett, 2005). If this is indeed that way, what does it say about the current cultural zeitgeist? Can this mean our contemporary society is living through a period marked by what we can call global post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)?

Ten years later, in his contemplations on hauntology and canceled futures, Mark Fisher (2014) continues the discourse by stating that today's cultural productions have lost their drive for originality, while being stuck in depressive and nostalgic repetitive cycle, longing not just for the past, but for the past where future seemed bright and promising. In other words, he claims there is no hope for the future in the present, hence artists try to bring back the sounds and images of the past in search for this lost nowadays hope.

Fisher hypothesizes on the reasons behind his diagnosis to contemporaneity. The author focuses on post-Fordist economy and the financial crisis, mediatization, and also collective trauma. The latter is mentioned in the text just a few times, however, notion and symptoms of collective trauma noticeably haunt the text: "It is not that nothing happened in the period when the slow cancelation of the future set in. On the contrary, those 30 years have been a time of massive, traumatic change" (Fisher, 2014, p.18).

We believe, hauntology concept offers valuable and unique insights on contemporary artistic tendencies, but also, we believe it is important to keep in mind that hauntology as a condition related to trauma.

Speaking of retro-futuristic dystopia, Fisher's *Ghosts of My Life* mainly focuses on British music scene, and mentions just a few cases from international film and literature.

Jill Bennett's insightful text on relationship between trauma and contemporary art offers many good answers and even more great questions, however it still does not focus on film productions. At the same time, we find a lot of literature on contemporary documentary and hybrid film trends, which speak of reenactment, ritual, and mention trauma. We noticed though a lack of comprehensive up to date research that would combine trauma studies with film studies. We are certain there is a need for such research. We feel that cinema, as one of the newest art forms, has a lot of insights and possibilities to offer in regard to cultural studies related to trauma. We argue that knowledge on trauma can contribute to further understanding of our society haunted by their own lost future. Now, in order to recognize the ghost of trauma

which imprints itself on film tape, it is necessary to examine trauma as a human condition, we believe.

This chapter overviews the most important theories and research on trauma, while locating grey areas on the map of knowledge, which for us ultimately stand for possibilities in future research. In this article, we suggest ways of crossing the gaps of unknown and searching for points of connections between scientific and artistic practices informed by notion of human trauma.

We start with an overview of historical evolution of trauma knowledge in neuroscience and psychoanalysis, informed by the iconic Bessel Van der Kolk's text *The Body Keeps the Score* (2015), and continue by speaking about psychoanalytic film theory.

We proceed then to discussing what trauma is characterized by, and which qualities it possesses, in other words, we look at theoretic knowledge of this extraordinary condition. We approach issues of relationship between trauma and language, memory and narrative, and how false memories studies affected the scientific, the artistic, and the political aspects. Further, we analyze qualities of trauma that are especially peculiar and paradoxical, speak of why Jill Bennett (2005) claims representation of trauma is such a challenge for artistic and literary practices, and of course, what hybrid film can bring to the table. We continue somewhat romantically by bringing up observations and contemplations on communal practices for trauma healing, as they take place in theater and documentary filmmaking, according to Van der Kolk's book (2015) and Agnieszka Piotrowska's thesis (2013). We touch the questions of ethics in trauma informed art, and importantly, explore the connections between trauma, repetition and ritual.

Our main questions are on representation of trauma in artistic practice of hybrid film, on the meaning it gives to the artwork, and on the relationship between survivor's experiences and film product which are developed as a result of such practice, and on the possible transformative effect on the participants and audience.

We hypothesize that knowledge on trauma can contribute to understanding of contemporary tendencies in hybrid film, and vice versa, knowledge of trends in cinematic field helps to learn about trauma as a contemporary social condition.

Trauma Studies and History. Psychoanalytical Perspective in Film.

Bessel Van der Kolk, one of the world's top experts in trauma studies, begins his famous *The Body Keeps the Score* text (2015) by highlighting a problem he had encounter in the beginning of his practice as a psychiatrist: at that time, in 1978, he struggled to find

literature on postwar traumatic stress in medical libraries in his reach. The lack of academic knowledge was striking against the backdrop of the zeitgeist: after the end of Vietnam war, veterans needed to urgently receive help from mental health facilities across the USA. This necessity and this gap motivated the academic to trace history of trauma research and update the state-of-the-art with his important insights.

History of traumatic stress research is rooted in the insights of Sigmund Freud, who in 1885 suggested that his patient could be suffering from own memories. His theory about trauma repetition compulsion first emerged in the text *Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through* (1914), and is explained in depth in 1920 *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* work (Freud & Gay, 1990). By using concepts of Eros and Thanatos from ancient Greek philosophy, Freud explains: while Eros, or as he names it, the ‘pleasure principle’, exists in an individual as a drive towards actions rewarding her or his psyche with pleasurable experiences; Thanatos, or the ‘death drive’ attributes a person with compulsions to repeat her or his traumatic stress. Freud built his theory based on four fields of observation: dreams, play, memory reenactments, and destiny neurosis. Ultimately, according to Freud, repetition compulsion is evoked by desire to master coping mechanisms, and overcome the consequences of one’s own negative experience. Contemplating on dramatic ‘death drive’, one may philosophize that repetition compulsion is a manifestation of our very human desire to take power over very death, find ways to avoid the eventual unavoidable.

Freud was not the only important figure contributing to the understanding of trauma in the late 19th – early 20th centuries. Jean-Martin Charcot revealed that traumatic emotional affect can manifest physically in the body, the condition we now call psychosomatics. Meanwhile, Pierre Janet’s essential discovery was the very difference between regular and traumatic memories. He wrote about trauma-induced amnesia, dissociation and reenactment (Van Der Kolk, 2015). These were the theories at root of the further history of ‘trauma studies’, however, this term only got coined in 1990s (Bennett, 2005).

Both Bennett and Van der Kolk observe how strongly academic research on traumatic experience in humans is linked to the political, and how affected scientific state-of-the-art was throughout the 20th century history by the established dominant powers of each period and location. Western interest in trauma fluctuated decade after decade depending on the events affecting the society and the elites, and even more so, depending on the political agenda of those elites. Hence, trauma studies went side by side with history.

It is during the World War I, thanks to nothing else but the new medium of film, that the scientists received a chance to observe and document in detail traumatic stress effects on the soldier’s bodies (Brithsh Pathé Archives, 1914). After a century, these archives have of

course skyrocketed in value, as those were one of the first documented proofs of effects trauma has on survivor's bodies. We can also say, those were the first documentaries about trauma.

Van der Kolk brings his readers' attention to the consequences of ignoring trauma on a political and social scale. Specifically, in Germany, in the 1930s, post-traumatic reactions were generally considered as a "weakness", and victims would be frowned upon. Such approach to human vulnerability, the scholar argues, is one of the factors that fostered Nazi ideology, because it saw what we now call post-traumatic stress disorder as a human defect which would undermine the very right of its victim to live: "This cascade of humiliations of the powerless set the stage for the ultimate debasement of human rights under the Nazi regime: the moral justification for the strong to vanquish the inferior—the rationale for the ensuing war." (Van Der Kolk, 2015, p. 203). Trauma denial is a denial of the very humanity, condition inherent to every genocide, either from the past or ongoing.

After the World War II, a number of studies dedicated to wartime trauma survivors and their experiences has been conducted, and this led to invaluable insights about PTSD in adults and children. For example, Grant Study of Adult Development studied war veterans and their memories over 4 decades: "The men were interviewed in detail about their war experiences in 1945/1946 and again in 1989/1990. Four and a half decades later, the majority gave very different accounts from the narratives recorded in their immediate postwar interviews: With the passage of time, events had been bleached of their intense horror. In contrast, those who had been traumatized and subsequently developed PTSD did not modify their accounts; their memories were preserved essentially intact forty-five years after the war ended" (Van Der Kolk, 2015, p. 191).

Another revolutionary for its time case was a discovery made by John Bowlby, who observed kids separated from their parents due to the war, and found that disturbing antisocial and rebellious behavior of troubled kids was actually caused by the separation trauma, violence, neglect, and not by "early sexual fantasies", which was the post-Freudian mainstream belief of the time. Bowlby's claim was so radical at the post World War II time, that he had been expelled from British psychoanalytic academia. As we see, recognition of trauma is a challenging task not only for survivors.

A few decades after the medium of film started informing psychiatry, psychoanalysis started informing film theory in return. Psychoanalytic film theory has originated in the 1960s in France, was based on structuralist philosophy, and got supported and updated by British theorists a decade later (Piotrowska, 2013). Again, the new theory had everything to do with the political movement of the time, in particular the French student movement of 1968.

Psychoanalysis in this case has been employed in order to define relationships between the spectator and the screen. Lacanian claim that the unconscious is structured like language, and his Mirror Stage theory have become a ground for it. For our work, his ideas on the notion of truth are especially relevant: the philosopher highlighted that truth had a structure of fiction (Lacan in Piotrowska, p.21). The influence of the theory peaked until the 1980s, and directed theorists' focus on the notion of unconscious of a spectator, their identification with the screen and the apparatus.

According to Piotrowska, attempt of the movement to revolutionize the dominant European political system of the time, has failed. She is however more optimistic in regard to feminist film theory, which has been launched by Laura Mulvey's iconic article on male gaze. The theory explained gender hierarchy in imagery production of film, where male perspective played a dominant role. Important were as well contributions of other feminist theorists like Annette Kuhn, Elizabeth Cowie, Mary Ann Doane. Feminist film theory movement has had a more lasting effect both on the medium and on society, Piotrowska claims (Piotrowska, 2013).

Perhaps, one of the most comprehensive and insightful writings on working with trauma through artistic practices, Jill Bennett's *Empathic Vision* (2005), analyses a number of case studies around the world in order to explain values of poststructuralist and postcolonial approaches of combining artistic practices with trauma studies. He highlights the importance of locating memory involved in production of 'trauma art' in relation to the political framework, as he is certain one aspect should not be unlinked from the other.

His observation of the contemporary Western cultural process is that despite a prognosed decline of trauma studies around the late 1990s, the 9/11 attack has influenced this relevance to skyrocket. Mike Davis spoke about a phenomenon of "globalization of fear", and Bennett optimistically suggested that this fear contributes to global empathy too. Following this logic, we can contemplate on the relevance of trauma studies and trauma art in 2023, and conclude there is hardly a way to underestimate it. In addition to these tendencies, today we face heightened attention to memory and archive studies (Huysen in Bennett, 2005).

It is very curious to look at how much Mark Fisher's concept of 'hauntology' (2014) reflects the symptoms manifesting in a traumatized individual, which leads us to suggest that today we deal with a global PTSD. And when we say today, we keep in mind the drastic shifts in historical strata of the world which have occurred during the past decade since *Ghosts of My Life* was published, the shifts artists and academics will be dealing with for a very long time from now.

Essentially, according to Bennett, up until very recently, trauma has been mainly researched and theorized in relation to literary studies, and to much lesser degree to visual art. This exposes another gap, but at the same time offers another niche for research and practice. It is only in the 21st century have we begun to pay real attention to this niche, therefore so many contemporary artworks created in order to research and represent traumatic memories emerge nowadays (Bennett, 2005).

Trauma theory: qualities of trauma

The word ‘trauma’ originates from Greek, where it literally means a wound. Cambridge Dictionary defines the term as “severe and lasting emotional shock and pain caused by an extremely upsetting experience, or a case of such shock happening”. Even though the word is widely used to signify both physical injury and mental one, in this work we are interested in specifically psychological trauma. In general, in English literature, usage of the word ‘trauma’ has been quite low up until the 1980s, but from that moment on, it jumped drastically, and is at its historical peak of popularity nowadays.

The diagram below (Figure 2.) reveals the tendency, which serves as an illustration to what Bessel Van der Kolk testified: back in the 1980s, he was not able to find almost any academic literature on trauma and ways of working with it in the libraries of the USA. Nowadays, on the contrary, intellectual community is busy discussing trauma.

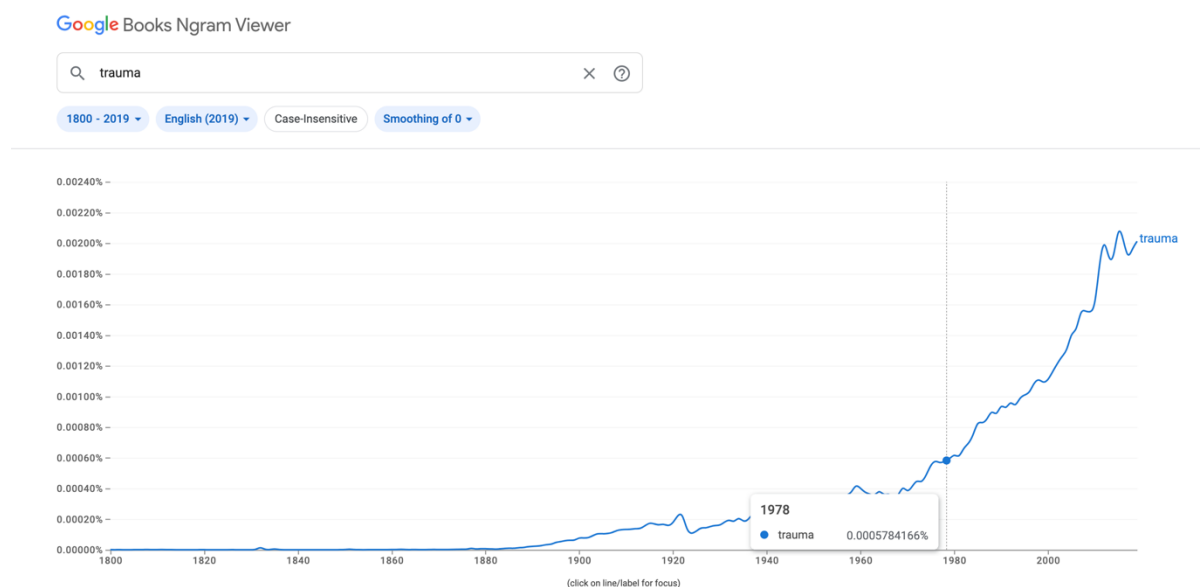


Figure 2: Diagram showing the usage of the word “trauma” in English literature between 1800 and 2019

From Van der Kolk’s research (2015) we learn that trauma is characterized by its effect on imagination and memory, perception of time, its disconnection with parts of the brain

responsible for verbalization and narrativization, connection between physical body and traumatic affect.

Trauma affects individual's behavior in numerous significant ways. Traumatized people tend to superimpose their past traumatic experience on things that happen around them in present, even in cases when the connection between the two realities or experiences is not really there, but somehow is created by association. From his patients, Vietnam war veterans, the doctor discovered that ex-soldiers would have lost a sense of being fully-present or gripped to their civilian lives, and instead would only “feel fully alive” during the flash-backs when they were revisiting their trauma from the past (Van Der Kolk, 2015, p. 36). In other words, the pain of traumatic experience never ceases, since in survivor's subconscious, the traumatic experience is still happening in the present and will keep lasting, reenactment after reenactment. This leads the scientist to question, echoing Freud, if trauma forces people to seek what is familiar to them, and as a result, to attract experiences similar to their traumatic ones. Further, he claims, that trauma-driven way of life forces a survivor to organize their life as if their trauma was continuing in the present. It is exactly the task of therapy to help a patient to unlink past from present in their consciousness. Why such practice happens to be so difficult, can be explained by the anatomy of the human brain.

In cases when external stimulus has a character similar to one that was traumatic for an individual (and triggered “severe and lasting emotional shock and pain”), it is processed by the brain differently from how a regular stimulus would be. The traumatic stimulus is processed in the brain through a so-to-speak “fast highway”: it passes from sensory receiver thalamus directly to amygdala, while not making a detour through prefrontal cortex, usual for other kinds of stimuli processing. Now, it is exactly the role of prefrontal cortex to be responsible for rational intellectual analysis, narrativization, and time perception of the experience. Cortex is obviously the ‘youngest’ from evolutionary perspective part of the brain, the one where unconscious perceptions and senses get converted to the conscious. Experiences resembling traumatic ones make our brain use the fastest route to process and respond, as brain is convinced that our survival depends on those micro seconds. Because it avoids prefrontal cortex, body reacts to the trigger before the conscious brain tells it to. It programs us to choose fight, flight, freeze or fawn response.

A testimony from one of the participants of our film project describes the phenomenon: Victoria who had to flee from her Ukrainian home as a result of the full-scale invasion, shared her experience living in Portugal where she migrated to. Evenings of football games were the toughest for her in Lisbon, she complained. Whenever a fan's firecracker explosion sound penetrated her window, she would instantly find herself lying on the floor before being able to

process the irrationality of this reaction. Thousands of kilometers away from the war zone, her brain still uses the survival response learned in Ukraine.

What complicates traumatic response of war survivors is that stress hormone secreted during traumatic and re-traumatic situations may provoke flight reaction, and this is when our brain switches on the program to “run home” (Van Der Kolk, 2015, p. 63). But what about people whose home is exactly the place of danger due to war, and running home is not a guarantee of safety, but in fact the opposite? Can this be the reason why so many people refuse to leave their homes and evacuate from territories under attacks when a war starts, just how this has been the case with many Ukrainian families since 2014, including one of the main protagonists of our artistic research? This question is going to remain unanswered in this work, but we are certain it is worth a separate research.

Importantly, described by Van der Kolk, human memory quality is very different in cases of regular and traumatic memory. In regular situations, memory of a given experience will be the stronger the more adrenaline has been secreted at the time. It is not the case for traumatic memory, however: during an excessive overwhelming experience of “inescapable shock”, our mental system breaks down (Van Der Kolk, 2015, p. 192). For this reason, traumatic memory is not recorded as a logical narrative, but stays fragmented, contains gaps, unprocessed images and other sensations as a disturbing messy chaos inaccessible for language, instead of a calming logical verbalizable order. Jill Bennett claims that for art it is a challenge to work with these qualities of trauma: experiences beyond the scope of language and representation. Traumatic memory is reactivated through its very own mechanism of unconscious and uncontrolled repetition (Bennett, 2005).

Another important quality is how interconnected by association the components of traumatic memories are. The full package of trauma triggers presents itself in survivor’s imagination very vividly after only one trigger was actually re-encountered. In other words, a sound which is a trauma trigger for an individual can also make their brain reproduce images, smells, emotions and physical sensations linked to the same trauma at the same time, even if the latter ones did not come from external reality of the moment: “Traumatized people simultaneously remember too little and too much” (Van Der Kolk, 2015, p. 195).

A disturbing side effect of trauma and a result of this inability to properly comprehend a traumatic experience is that an individual also gradually loses the ability to process and assimilate new experiences, as a result, survivor exists as if “frozen in time”, being lonely and alienated (Van Der Kolk, 2015, p. 196). The name of our artistic research project ‘Moments When We Freeze’ was chosen with an intention to point to this exact feature of trauma.

According to Freud, traumatization happens not directly because of the experience, but as a result of failure to process, assimilate and comprehend the experience (Freud in Bennett, 2005). Bennett adds to the gloominess of the theme's mood by comparing survivor's inability to comprehend trauma to such inability in case of own death: an external witness is necessary in order for the death to be noticed, witnessed and processed. It is only in presence of external witness, Eric Santner echoes, that the affect can be recuperated and a patient finds a way out of a repetition compulsion (Santner in Bennett, 2005). Van der Kolk highlights the importance of integrating the divided trauma-triggering images, sensations, and emotions into one narrative in order to start the process of healing, reduce the negative effect on human brain's abilities.

This brings us to contemplate on the relationship between concepts of repetition (compulsion), re-traumatization, and re-enactment. These concepts characterize trauma art, Bennett highlights. And if we choose to trust Freud on this, it is the patient's challenge to transfer as much as possible from the unconscious to the conscious, where "past is recognized rather than unconsciously reenacted" (Freud in Bennett, 2005).

Memory, language, and gaslighting of the traumatized

The historical journey of academic research on memories had always a very strong link with the political. In 1970s, false memories were discovered, and effect of imagination on memory started to be investigated. Insights of the research are very interesting and relevant for our study. According to Johnson and her team, repeated imaginings of words or actions increased incorporation of the imaginings into the participants' memory, to the point that the participants would eventually claim the imagined events had in fact happened (Johnson et al. in Thomas & Loftus, 2002).

For post-structuralist philosophy, this insight was very precious. It as well broadened horizon for theorists and practitioners researching contemporary art, documentary and hybrid film (Blackson, 2007). But the downside of this discovery became tragic for many trauma survivors of the time, and it had to do with political appropriation of the results. In the 1980s and 1990s in the United States, Europe, and Australia, science of False Memory Syndrome started to be used against victims of domestic and sexual abuse seeking justice in court. Van der Kolk (2015) describes scandals which involved the Catholic Church. During those decades, priests being sued for pedophilia, would find their escape from justice by using so-called experts on false memories. They would claim during the court proceedings that the abuse had never happened but was only imagined by victims. As it shows, however scientifically

important, research on False Memory Syndrome can be misused in order to gaslight real victims of trauma.

Van der Kolk criticizes the famous Lost in the Mall experiment (Loftus, 1993), where the latter suggests it is easy to implant memories, even the negative ones, into people's brains. The scientist counterargues by highlighting that fake memories unlike actual ones do not cause visceral terror as a reaction in the individual. In other words, a fake memory cannot affect body and psyche and cause PTSD in the way real traumatic memory does. In addition, the essence traumatic memories are usually accurate, while only some details and the linear structure is subject to transformations, research shows (Van Der Kolk, 2015).

In 1997, Pezdek et. al added that memories of sexual abuse in children can hardly be fake, since such events are implausible, unlike the examples of memories used in the research on false memories. Loftus in her turn argues: those might still be false, since images and narratives of sexual abuse have been largely mediatized in the last couple decades, which in her opinion makes them less implausible. Her paper concludes "bizarre" false memories are possible to be manufactured after seeing them on the TV or on the Internet (Thomas & Loftus, 2002). Thus, mediatization theory adds a whole new dimension to the problem of memory, while creating possibilities to politically manipulate those affected by trauma. It is useful to look here at Bennett's research again, where he speaks of the difference between primary affect in a traumatized individual and secondary affect caused by images. Primary affect remains "owned" and unsharable even if communicated, Bennett argues. He problematizes the hypotheses about "secondary traumatization", a theory that mediatized imagery can itself be traumatic. By quoting Dominic LaCapra, Bennett highlights the importance of distinguishing the two: primary trauma, and empathetic experience of witnessing mediatized images of someone else's trauma. To identify the latter, LaCapra proposes the term 'empathetic unsettlement', and highlights that "Art expands the sympathetic imagination while teaching us about the limits of sympathy" (LaCapra in Bennett, 2005, p.9).

Limitations of language too play a role in making it difficult for survivor to be heard, believed, and understood. As previously mentioned, trauma is preverbal, it deactivates left hemisphere in a brain, activates the right one. Traumatic flashbacks shut down Broca's area of the brain responsible for speech. Time perception gets distorted (Van Der Kolk, 2015). Cathy Caruth in her reading of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* explains: "trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature - the way it was precisely not known in the first instance - returns to haunt the survivor later on. Traumatic memory is, in this regard, resolutely an issue of the present" (Caruth in Bennett, 2005, p.40). Perhaps, describing feelings of trauma through language is as

frustrating as trying to make a photo of a full Moon with one's phone camera. It is for this reason, Bennett questions why has trauma studies mainly been the domain of literature but not visual arts theory. This, in his opinion, can be a niche for contemporary art to fill.

Reenactment, the uncanny, and the energetic reaction

According to Freud, the uncanny has to do with what is known but repressed, and the return of this repressed. At his time, Freud used hypnosis to bring back the repressed into the consciousness. However, further practitioners noticed limitations inherent to practice of hypnosis. According to Van der Kolk, even though hypnosis is not an ideal cure, unlike the predecessors believed, it can provide necessary calm state in patient for working with traumatic memories (Van Der Kolk, 2015).

An essential question is whether artistic practice, film in particular, can be compared to memory retrieval process in hypnosis? Can reenactment in film work as a sublimation for trauma, a way out for the repressed? Bill Nichols speaks about Freudian uncanny and the fantasmatic power in regard to reenactment, which deals with the absence and the everlasting repetition: "The viewer experiences the uncanny sense of a repetition of what remains historically unique. A specter haunts the text. This specter is a variation on the ghost of the absent subject" (Nichols, 2008, p. 74).

Carl Jung called art evolutionary and considered it as a tool for expressing the unconscious, while Herbert Read defined artistic practice as "the spontaneous emergence of psychic energy," which can provide a strong transformative effect (in Nutting, 2007, p. 67). Now, Freud highlighted a liberating power of patient's strong "energetic reaction" transforming and neutralize the traumatic memory (in Van Der Kolk, 2015, p. 198). According to his theory, there is a moment in analytical practice when the patient approaches a catharsis and finally becomes able to detach the affect from the memory. This energetic reaction can be a result of action causing emotional liberation, hence disarming trauma from its power on the survivor. For Freud, this can be done through practice of speaking, which for him could be a substitute for real action, however, Van der Kolk disagrees, and privileges the latter.

Reenactment, some argue, is very well equipped to address and work with trauma due to possibility of an uncanny return to the past time and space (Horn & Arns, 2007). When working with traumatic memories through in-person reenactment, Margulies suggests, the necessary gap between past self and present self of the survivor is maintained (2019). The individual is well aware about the difference between the "I" of the self and the "I" of the character, even when they act themselves of the past. Bill Nichols agrees with the theory, he

highlights how in the films *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* by Werner Herzog (1997) and *The Thin Blue Line* by Errol Morris (1998) it is the technique of Brechtian distanciation that allows subjects to safely explore own experiences within reenactments. Stylization allows to avoid acting out original trauma, and instead creates a possibility for working through traumatic memories in a safer way. This idea is highlighted and further explored in the analysis of our practice based artistic research part. The ability to be at two places at the same time is something common for reenactment and hypnosis, we suggest. “Activating a multidirectional temporality, both cinema and reenactment are effective stages for actualization, exemplary purposes, and critical analysis” (Margulies, 2019, p. 11). Rowena Santos Aquino used a term of “composite body” to describe the phenomenon. This body, she claims, is a signifier of not only present self and past self, but also for the individual and collective experiences and memories (in Margulies, 2019, p. 10).

Reenactment practice works by creating a sense of detachment between a role and a person acting it (Jones & Heathfield, 2014). This detachment is important for working through trauma (Van Der Kolk, 2015). The latest research suggests film practice is full of potential as a better alternative for endless repetition compulsion (Piotrowska, 2013).

Representation, Healing, and Ethics

Jean Rouch observed how a camera can act like a ‘psychoanalytical stimulant, both “a mirror and a window” (Rouch in Piotrowska, 2013, p. 53). This has to do with on one hand heightened self-awareness of the protagonist, and on the other hand, with the awareness that their image will be mediatized.

In her 2013 text, documentary director and academic Agnieszka Piotrowska traced parallels between psychoanalysis and documentary encounter between a director and a protagonist. Quoting the ideas of psychoanalyst Emanuel Berman and filmmaker Kevin Macdonald, she claims that there are similarities between processes happening in the office of psychoanalyst and on a documentary film set. This of course brings up a paradox: a confession to psychotherapist is ultimately confidential and an interview for camera is meant to be exhibited publicly. The idea by Cowie is highlighted in Piotrowska’s text to explain how a phenomenon of transference inherent to psychoanalysis is observed during documentary production “in the confessing to the other as one who can forgive, as priest, or understand, as therapist or judge. The other here is both a fantasized and powerful other and the fickle other of the media and television audience” (Cowie in Piotrowska, 2013, p. 53).

Interestingly, the filmmaker echoes other scholars by highlighting the gap between psychoanalytic and artistic practice, and realizing that documentary film theory has not yet as much research to offer on that matter as one would expect (Piotrowska, 2013).

She believes, transference mechanism is fueling a documentary encounter, and explains why documentary subjects often agree to take on a proposed by the filmmaker creative journey. This does not imply that every documentary encounter is therapeutic. But according to the scholar, there might be a possibility, and there is definitely a hope for that, at least from the side of the protagonist.

In Miller's reading of Lacanian concept of truth structured as fiction, he observes how due to transference, communication between two parties is already haunted by element of fiction: "the unconscious is not truth itself without at the same time being a lie: the analytic concept of truth is connected to lying" (Miller in Piotrowska, 2013, p. 74). In this case, similarly to analytic, a documentary encounter is also built upon testifying to fictional 'powerful other'. "If feelings of transference-love are as ubiquitous in documentary as they are in the clinic, what chance is there at all to produce some kind of an 'objective' text?" (Piotrowska, 2013, p. 74). She concludes the quest for the truth in documentary encounter to be a search for 'simulacrum', and advocates for an awareness of rather another kind of truth, "true fictions that people we make films about can live with" (Piotrowska, 2013, p. 261).

Van der Kolk described how human psyche can overcome traumatic experiences by fictionalizing them with help of artistic practice and ritualistic action. His striking example was of a kid who had witnessed the 9/11 attack and seen people falling off the skyscraper. After a few days, the kid made a drawing of the horrifying scene, however under the skyscraper, he drew black circles – those were trampolines. The child's psyche used fantasy for sake of creating a hope. These trampolines on the drawing have in fact become lifesaving, but for the kid's psyche itself (Van Der Kolk, 2015). Through psychoanalytic lens, this example communicates hope for trauma art, as it illustrates greater meaning behind the paradox of hybridity between fact and fiction. We suggest, there is a way hybrid film can act as a symbolic trampoline for a traumatized psyche.

Bennett claims contemporary artistic practice to do more than place audience in the role of mere witness. It instead creates a space for encounter where "empathy is, in part, the product of being touched by another and, in part, effect of seeing oneself feeling, catching oneself in the act of acting" (Bennett, 2005, p.123).

These last words point out to the importance of ethical dimension of documentary film production, and fairness of the collaborative effect for each party.

While Alethea Rockwell speaks about importance to position therapy as existing at the margins of art (Baldacci et al., 2022), there is a necessity to distinguish the two causes: artistic and therapeutic. Indeed, some documentary works do not attempt to redeem its subject but merely represent their experience (Jones & Heathfield, 2014). Now that we are aware of the transference process inherent to intimate documentary encounter, as well as conscious or unconscious expectation of protagonist to be redeemed, a question arises: can such encounter be considered ethical? What complicates ethical question even further is the fact psychoanalytic encounter can only be ethical as long as anonymity and non-disclosure are maintained on the side of analyst, which is of course the opposite in case of filmmaking.

Piotrowska describes Butler's notion of 'ethical violence'. At first it sounds like an oxymoron, and is itself very problematic. She speaks about the distinction between notions of moral and ethical, and highlights the importance of those for documentary. She claims, giving an account on oneself always in a way means being subject to violence. Seeing that account on the screen after the film is ready might be an additional suffering for a protagonist, since documentary characters are almost never happy with their image reproduced. However, even in this case, ethical encounter is still possible, both scholars agree. For that to take place, testimony of the participants should not be forced out or prevailed upon (Butler in Piotrowska, 2013).

On the other hand, Van der Kolk has described a peculiar example of working through trauma during a communal theater rehearsal, and this example is one of seemingly unethical speech forcing. An actor who participated in Tina Parker's acting workshop was forced by the director and fellow participants to stay on the stage and continue his performance despite the wish of the former to end the scene. After being encouraged to go through his discomfort, the actor suddenly felt a flow of energy, and a massive tension relief. Later, he testified: "It was almost like going back and changing the story" (p. 416). That experience he describes sounds like the Freudian "energetic reaction", and according to the participant, became therapeutic. But was it ethical?

One more issue is linked to spectator's gaze and perception of image. "It can be empowering to imagine that somebody we care about is watching us. But Bonomi points out, there is a possibility that somehow the benevolent gaze might turn into a sinister one" (Piotrowska, 2013, p. 82). Due to consequences of the second wave of mediatization, the sinister gaze problem is more serious nowadays than ever. In addition to audience perception of documentary character, there is a problem of self-perception: film subject witnesses their own image being watched by audience and by oneself, and this may be a difficult moment for

the participant. There is a possibility of misrecognition by the other, but affective is also misrecognition by oneself, which is exactly what Badiou called a ‘simulacrum of truth’ (in Piotrowska, 2013, p.206). “In a sense, the experience of the subject of any documentary film, is that of having a double: a person just like the original subject of the film, except that he or she is not that person: she tells stories which are recognizable but different and uses images which are familiar but not quite. The speech too is dissociated and the subject has no longer any control over what is being used” (Piotrowska, 2013, p. 237). Interestingly, in mythology seeing one’s own doppelganger is often considered a bad omen (Joshi, 2006).

Thus, there is a responsibility on the author to be honest and open with the subject, not abuse the subject’s trust, produce text which speaks ‘true fiction’ due to inability to speak ‘objective truth’, and if not to redeem from suffering (we agree with Piotrowska that filmmaking shares more objectives with psychoanalysis than with psychotherapy), at least keep the participants safe from traumatization or re-traumatization by the text and process. It is an open question, we believe, if the ‘powerful other’ in fact has the power over of these things at all times.

Repetition vs. Ritual

The Body Keeps the Score, while being a quite heavy and gloomy text, leaves the reader with a light of hope in the last chapter. This light is brought by nothing else than Van der Kolk’s insights about performance therapy. He analyses practices of theater, dancing, singing alongside with free writing and collective rhythmic movements, and concludes that practices deriving from ancient ritualistic traditions have an enormous potential for individual and community healing. “The capacity of art, music, and dance to circumvent the speechlessness that comes with terror may be one reason they are used as trauma treatments in cultures around the world” (2015, p. 290).

Van der Kolk’s research on combination of writing and expressive movement showed it to be effective for improving trauma survivors’ state. However, he highlights the limitations linked to the lack of comprehensive research for this technic, and lack of investigation of the relationship between communal ceremonies and their effects on human brain. In the core of therapeutic drama practices is hybrid documentary approach: a protagonist performs their own life experience from the traumatic past, but instead of attempting to produce the exact “truthful” copy, they modify the situation, and act out a situation with better resolution. This allows mind to incorporate an alternative to the negative experience. An advantage over the “talking cure” in this case is in that reenactment allows participants to acquire sensory experience of the

positive outcome, and this facilitates re-scripting of the original memory. “Trauma causes people to remain stuck in interpreting the present in light of an unchanging past. The scene you re-create in a structure may or may not be precisely what happened, but it represents the structure of your inner world: your internal map and the hidden rules that you have been living by” (p. 367).

The scholar hypothesizes that ancient rituals using theater as well as collective movements and music, could be our ancestors’ instruments to cope with trauma, which itself is as old as times. He highlights the importance of Ancient Greek theater for civic life of the community. Significantly, among both audience and performers of Greek theater, there were citizen-soldiers and combat veterans, for whom theatrical practice could be a form of therapeutic reintegration into civil life.

The meaning behind rhythm and music, the backbone of ritualistic culture, is to strengthen feeling of identity and belonging to community. It is for that reason, many civil rights movements as well as religious rituals used collective rhythmical movement and music to empower and bring citizens together. An example of this brought by Van der Kolk are the civil rights movements in the US, Estonia’s Singing Revolution, as well as dancing and chanting during public court hearings in South Africa in 1996. We can definitely add to this list the most contemporary example of 2013-14 Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity, which started with collective singing, dancing and chanting of the citizens gathered in Kyiv’s Maidan Nezalezhnosti square.

Nichols notices ritualistic quality inherent to practices of artistic reenactments: going through scripted motions and actions that carry strong symbolical meanings (Nichols, 2008) has to do with not just simple repetition, but rhythmicality. In addition, there is a performative, memorial, communicative, and communal aspects of reenactment which confirms its ritualistic quality.

Treating traumatic memories with help of communal performative action proved to be among best practices: since the essence of trauma is feeling of abandonment, rituals performed together with the community can offer an escape from the loop of traumatic helpless solitude. Going through difficult experiences together with community brings healing through a generated sense of a “common humanity” (Van der Kolk, 2015, p. 403). Scholars increasingly find artistic reenactment to be a suitable instrument for addressing not just individual but also collective postcolonial trauma (Gushchina, 2019). This approach is the one we use in our own practice-based research, while attempting to deepen our knowledge on the relationship between trauma, mediated performance, and potential of collective ritualistic practices.

Conclusion

Film can work with trauma in ways that do more than simply portray the human condition. Artistic practice of hybrid filmmaking is a potentially powerful instrument to help comprehend, represent and even work through traumatic memories, which can facilitate the connections between the traumatized and the community.

Film can do so by firstly, enforcing a ritualistic action in collaboration with community. Unlike some of the other art practices which do not necessary require communal engagement, filmmaking ultimately requires a collaborative effort. This collaboration is integral to healing, studies show.

Secondly, it produces a record of traumatic memory. Therefore, it materializes and externalizes the it. Unlike theater, which belongs to the time and space of actual performance, advantage of film medium is creating a tangible archive, or in other words, a digital memorial of documented experience.

Thirdly, hybrid film gives us a possibility to work with original memories, but also to rescript and modify them. Hybridity of the genre welcomes flexibility and interplay between factual and fantasmatic. Symbolically speaking, hybridity allows to draw a fictional lifesaving ‘trampoline’ for survivor of trauma, in which case fantasy is responsible for creating hope when the reality itself is too harsh to witness. Paraphrasing Landesman’s stated necessity for “lying to be real”(2015), we argue that hybrid film can work with a principle “lying to be healed”. Filmmaking opens a therapeutic possibility to create a transference with the camera or filmmaking by imagining one’s perfect audience or Big Other, or the receiver of the message necessary for protagonist to transmit.

Last but not least, hybrid film produces invaluable archive of personal and collective memory, the history of experiences. Those archives are so valuable because they serve as an identity anchor for the community’s generations to come: accounts of traumas worked through rituals become the community’s roots.

Media and Ritual: The Story of Mutual Evolution

Introduction

John Durham Peters explains the complexity of human social interaction by stating: “Encountering a member of the same species is a deeply rooted challenge for an animal” (Peters, 2016, p. 6). It is methods and ways of communicating with one another among human beings what constitutes culture. Rappaport calls ritual the basic social act (in Marvin, 2002), and therefore, ritual is a tool for managing the deeply rooted challenge we as a society encounter every day since the dawn of time. However, the term ritual nowadays sounds archaic, and our associations send it either way back in time or far away geographically. In this case, does it mean ritual is absent from contemporary culture? And what should we understand by contemporary ritual exactly?

This chapter explores rituals as a vital component for managing the human encounter today. We analyze the up to date literature which theorizes rituals, discuss its the relationships with media, and explore why one needs the other. Further, we research the meaning of ritualistic culture for artistic practice and hybrid film specifically, and finally crystalize the understanding of its connection with individual and collective trauma. Ritual is the word met often in the texts on reenactment, which of course has to do with repetition and rhythmicity. But what are the other qualities inherent to rituals that are transferable to reenactment? How are rituals present in contemporary media, and what is their importance?

The Definition and the Meaning of Ritual

Sociologists and anthropologists consider ritual an essential phenomenon for their research. When it comes to the definition, theories on what constitute rituals and their functions are multiple and sometimes contradictory.

For Homans (1941) and further researchers who elaborated and updated his theories, ritual is essentially an action striped of practical function. It is not meant to produce a result in a direct way by means of its actions. However, he argues, it is wrong to assume that ritual has no function, since ritual's function is internalized within an individual and society. And ironically, it is this seeming lack of function what produces the greater meaning, which is what we will discuss in depth in this text.

Social scientists have created two main theories on ritual. The first view explains ritual as evoked by the human need of both generation and expression of feelings. Among the

followers of this view are Durkheim, Radcliffe-Brown (inclined to argue ritual is generative), Malinowski, Marx, Freud, and Jung (for them ritual is expressive). The second view, explained by Tyler and Fraser as well as Geertz, Douglas, and Turner, finds ritual to be a result of the need for expression of belief. In the both cases, ritual works by using prescientific principles (Segal, 1983).

A large number of theorists on ritual use the discourse of Emile Durkheim's legacy as a starting point: his social theory explained value of religion and rituals in creating identity as well as shaping the society and bringing individuals together. In other words, to generate feelings of unity and interdependence within society. Victor Turner follows and updates Durkheim's functionalist theory. He highlights that ritual is not merely instrumental. It is meant to not produce but rather to express one's belief of unity within humanity and the world. He gives ritual the key role in defining a place for human being in both society and cosmos. He largely advocates the power of ritual on society, however, Segal pays our attention, he does not explain how exactly does ritual achieve that result.

Contemporary scholars find it necessary to criticize and update Durkheim and Turner. Nick Couldry (2005) importantly unlinks associative ties between rituals and religion. Indeed, religion might be the most popular example of ritualistic practices application, however, it does not mean that rituals have to be necessarily connected to religion, nor do they only work within the religious context. Couldry therefore liberates ritual from ties with theology, instead opening space for researching the phenomenon in our contemporary everyday lives, and highlighting multiplicity of forms and functions inherent to ritual. He believes ritual has a potential to enrich media theory, and through this process also contribute to anthropological knowledge. Couldry focuses on three approaches which help to describe ritual: habitual action, formalized action, and action involving transcendental values.

Otnes and Lowrey (2004) speak about consumption rituals, working with anthropological approach applied to contemporary capitalist Western society. They notice that repetitiveness of rituals does not contribute to their inflexibility, but vice versa. Rituals are far from being mundane or emotionless, and keep on evolving and adjusting to present day environment and society.

Lyden (2003) explains rituals as enacted myths. According to his theory, not every habitually repeated action qualifies as a ritual. Echoing Homans, for Lyden, in order for a custom to be a ritual, it has to have a significance beyond practical, and also a performative aspect. He has developed a structure for rituals according to their functional meaning. There are six modes or types of ritualistic actions: rites of passage; calendrical rites; rites of exchange and communion; rites of affliction; feasting, fasting, and festivals; and political rites.

O’Gorman (1998) supports this idea in his research on perception of death and historically adopted social attitudes of dealing with grief. His claim is that the role of ritual for coping with existential inevitability of death is crucial. O’Gorman noticed that in the first half of the 20th century, Western society has neglected ritualistic culture related with dying, which has had its negative consequences. Death-related rituals according to him have become medicalized and institutionalized. As a result, tendency of “fast grief” occurred in the Western society. The author points out that it is essential to reconsider the meaning of rituals related with loss, grief and traumatic events as they give guidelines of how these challenges could be approached.

Importance of Media for Rituals

Recently academic field of media started more active participation in discourse on ritual. The term “media ritual” is discussed by a number of social scientists (Couldry, 2005). Some like Cottle (2008) go as far as to claim that our contemporary society can barely exist with no mediatized ritual. Cui (2019) considers mediatized events to be media rituals, therefore accenting their ritualistic nature and importance of mediatization for the trend. Couldry warns us that media rituals are much more than just mediatized events, and encourages theorists for rethinking the notions.

Couldry argues that, firstly, ritual is a contemporarily relevant phenomena, and second, that ritual is linked to media tightly. He introduces and explains ‘media ritual’ by criticizing and updating Durkheim’s functionalist theory. “‘Media rituals’, in broad terms, refers to the whole range of situations where media themselves ‘stand in’ for something wider, something to do with the fundamental organisational level on which we are, or imagine ourselves to be, connected as members of a society” (Couldry, 2005, p.3).

Marvin (2002) criticizes scholars who claimed the term media ritual to be oxymoron and who argued that the new mediatized culture has distorted authentic version of what used to be ritual. Marvin states the contrary - that rituals cannot exist if they are not mediated. Following this view, we here elaborate on the hypotheses that all rituals are media rituals, and that ritual is impossible without media. In fact, we find that mediatized ritual is not an oxymoron, but on the contrary, a tautology.

In order to explain this, we turn to theory of elemental media by J.D. Peters, author of *The Marvelous Clouds* (2015). He explores origins of the notion of media and its connection to nature which he claims is much more ancient than its connection to technology. According to it, the term “medium” meant substance or instrument in between things. Earth, fire, air and soil

were considered media long before television, internet, or books came to life. Understanding media as a natural element was prevailing in Western society up until the 19th century. This way, media is an environment. From mythological perspective, fire is a ritualistic destroyer and purifier. Its flames burned thousands of women of so-called “diabolic nature” in the medieval times, its smoke has been used in Chinese rituals for “feeding spirits”; water is a holder of sacred meaning, it is what has given Achilles his powers and irrevocably converted the lands of Kyivan Rus to Christianity; earth hides bodies of the dead and releases new life; air, sky and stars have given inspiration to astrology.

For Peters, the old and the new notions of media carry the same name not accidentally, and therefore their connection is much stronger than we tend to believe. The difference between elemental and technological media, the scholar argues, lies only in the new ways of expression of old notions (Peters, 2015). Media keeps supporting the old social needs by means of technological progress.

The importance of natural elements for antient rituals is crucial, we hypothesize, precisely because they are media. Further we explore, how understanding of ritual culture can get updated by viewing new media as applied for contemporary rituals instead of elemental ones.

New Media for New Ritual

The most commonly agreed ritualistic function of community shaping is articulated by a number of scholars, among which are functionalists like Malinovsky and Radcliffe-Brown, structuralists like Douglas and Leach and post-structuralists like Foucault. They characterize rituals by synchronized movement, costly signaling and displays of commitment. By these means rituals produce fusion and identification within the group, even though the mentioned features are not necessarily common for every ritual. One essential transformational feature of ritual is its ability to “frame the moment” (Marvin, 2002). In other words, to capture and preserve an episode of time by highlighting it, dividing it from regular routine. This function is inherent to medium of photography. Isn't our compulsion for capturing a picture and uploading it to Instagram in order to preserve it comes from the same need to “frame the moment” and creating an archive out of it? Digital media therefore can legitimize an event in a ritualistic way.

Another essential function of ritual is to give a relief from stress. Malinovsky explains the need of humans to call for supernatural forces when their ability to cope with a situation in practical ways ends. This is when the human need for religion, magical forces, and

consequently ritual is getting sharp (Homans, 1941). Seemingly unnecessary repetitive gestures or actions occur compulsively when a person is stressed. Through this stability of repetition and rhythm body can bring itself back to calm state (Otnes & Lowrey, 2004). Rosary is a good example of a ritualistic artifact created to produce repetitive action for anxiety relief. As one counts beads of rosary and repeats the same words of mantra over and over, it brings a state of calmness and even trance. The same process, we suggest, happens as a result of rhythmical dancing to both tribal music or contemporary techno. Since the ultimate repetitive impulse functioning in our body is heartbeat, and our body works in cycles, repetition gives human beings a confidence that life keeps going on.

Performative aspect of ritual is of special importance, which links it directly to all types of performative cultures including theater and film. Performances are meant to dramatize narratives and visualize stories. They bring them out of human's minds in order to pierce reality. As Lyden (2003) notices, in some cultures religion and theater are entangled. For example, Chinese Peking Opera performs exorcism rituals on stage as a part of the play. In this culture, the first performance of a play is made just for 'god', not for human audience.

Analyzing Instagram food trends, Ruby Tandoh noticed: "It's aesthetic first, taste later and, quite often, no taste at all" (in Worth, 2020). It is indeed paradoxical how much images of food on social media together with multiple cooking TV shows gain popularity: food on the screen looks tempting but it is impossible to taste. In other words, practical function of food becomes secondary, giving space to aesthetical one. This stripping of direct purpose and replacing it with a deeper meaning is characteristic for ritual. Roland Barthes discussed the symbolic significance of food in relation to sustaining a myth, and his idea is relevant for Instagram, Worth claims. Images of food do not transfer taste but communicate social status and belonging to community and culture. The habit of Instagramming a dish before consuming it mirrors a Vaishnava ritual, where samples of food are put on an altar, and left for some time to get blessed by the gods. Only after the ritual is done, one is allowed to taste the meal (Gutiérrez, 2023).

It is possible that Instagram takes up a function of a kind of altar with help of which people approve and immortalize their meals? Hashtags in their turn, Worth suggests, work as sacred words of a prayer (2020). Does in this case Internet play the role of God?

For Marvin (2002), blood is among the most important classic ritualistic artifacts. It is extremely rich in symbolic meaning. First blood signifies coming of age: for males it means they are ready for fights, for female it signals the beginning of fertility period. Blood is associated with death and plays a role of essential sacrificial element. It is due to the importance of sacrifice rituals, Marvin argues, mediatized wars, death, victims of attacks and hurricanes

take such an important place in our media lives. She considers mediatized violence to be a representation of blood sacrifice.

When it comes to the element of fire, Peters (2015) calls it the most radical shaper of environment. It is necessary for rites of passage rituals, and sustains a metaphor of passion. These two factors together make fire crucial for revolutions, cremations, celebrations, and romantic dinners. Fire is also central in a more literal sense. Fireplaces and hearths were the central points in houses throughout history, fire gathered members of tribes together. Analyzing new media, Nick Couldry (2005) presented the term of “mediated center”. He explained it as an illusory central point which mass media creates in themselves. At the same time, mythological social center has a lot to do with power and authority (Cui, 2019). Exemplary, in today’s homes the social center nowadays is rarely a fireplace, but far more often a TV.

The boldest connection Peters makes between media and religion is his comparison of God and Google. As an entity with no material representation which reaches every house and affects every person’s life, answering every request, Google has become a representation of God for Western culture, he argues. Due to Google usage, every person’s actions and thoughts become recorded and observed, and the massive data is stored in the cloud with no apparent location. Internet is everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Wi-fi therefore has everything in common with the mythological element of Ether, responsible for prayers to be transmitted to God; It is also by Ether, according to myths, one can communicate telepathically with another (Peters, 2015).

To sum up, value of rituals has not decreased in contemporary culture, however its notion and understanding are extremely complex. In order to create more clarity, we investigate the theory of interconnection between ritual and media. Just as media evolves throughout history, so does ritual. Digital media, we observed, show a strong tendency of getting incorporated into contemporary ritualistic culture, and they do so by replacing elemental media.

Reenactment as a Ritual

As stated earlier, there is a certain problematic inherent to positioning ritual within the conservative framework, when the conservatism lies in the idea that ritual practices do and should preserve themselves in their original form without transformation. This position is criticized by a number of anthropologists and media scholars (Couldry, 2005). A number of cultural and artistic practices today serve as good examples of contemporary rituals.

Reenactment, we argue, is an artistic practice that descended from ritual while preserving most of its similarities: participants reenact what themselves or other members of

the community did in the past, and this way they become connected with them, the past, and with the archetype behind the reenactment. Repetition of certain formal actions, preservation and simultaneous transformation of narrative through its repetition, extracting meaning beyond practicality of action, collective cohesion and feeling of belonging make reenactment truly a ritualistic practice. For these reasons, we see reenactment as nothing else but a form of ritual. Robert Blackson observes the quality of reenactment to be a plastic practice. Even though it tends to repeat a certain scenario, it is known to be a dynamic process. It is a resurrection and transformation (Blackson, 2007), which is what Marvin has highlighted about nature of rituals too: they inherit a paradoxical ability to simultaneously repeat and reshape themselves.

Bill Nichols agrees that “reenactment introduces a sense of the ritualistic quality” (2008, p. 82). According to Margulies, it is the relation between the trace of an original event and its performed actualization that is significant in the actions like both rituals and artistic reenactments (2019). For him, rituals do not only signify the event but act like fragments of the event. This is the part of the process which allows transformation of narrative, and evolution of meanings on the journey between initial and further reenactments. Margulies does not idealize reenactment’s powers, however. He acknowledges the need for further practice and research, while highlighting potential of the method in creating alternative ways of representation, transmission of aesthetics of co-presence, and strengthening social cohesion. In addition, Homans (1941) claims that new rituals appear when there is a need for them in the society, for example, when the level of anxiety in front of an uncertainty gets increased. If his insight was relevant for the 1940s, we believe it is not at all less relevant for the 2020s.

It is important, we believe, to highlight the difference between how ritual of reenactment is organized in theatre and in film. In the instance of cinematic practice, process of ritualization happens in two stages: during production process, thus performing; and during screening and reception by audience. These two stages are divided in time and space from one another. In theater though these two stages stand side by side – they happen within the same time and space, immediately. This leads us to argue that in film, ritualistic process is divided, and takes place twice: on film set, and in the screening room. Further research is needed in order to explore, how this phenomenon of dual-staged ritual stands out from its predecessors in terms of methodology and affect.

Meaning of Ritual Framework for Contemporary Art

If ritual is a practice of regular repetition and thus transformation of the inscribed sequence of actions and meanings attached to them, can we speak within this framework about

originality of a performance and its “copies”? Is every ritualistic repetition as original as the other one?

In order to better understand how ritualistic culture affects contemporary art, we suggest to look at art conservation theory, which aims to theorize and problematize the issue of art archiving. It is necessary to consider the transformation conservation theory has undergone during the period from modern to postmodern times (Brost in Baldacci et al., 2022). In the 19th century at the core of art conservation process was the idea of authenticity and uniqueness of art piece, and originality of material object was considered to be guarantee of its authentic value. Discourse on originality as the main value has changed by the 21st century. Contemporary artworks, Brost highlights, may not be consisted of a material object, which forces museums and archivists to look at conservation theory at a different angle.

How does one preserve an art work which is not a material object? What about performances, happenings, interactive works? Contemporary art theorists thus introduce a term “variable media”, which explores a framework for a possible solution for artworks like performances, interactive artworks or moving-images. Objects of this media can exist through restaging, recreations, reenactments, while transforming through time and space. Theory of variable media suggests “that an artwork has a vital connection to a past event but also a meaningful difference, often a physical one” (Baldacci et al., 2022, p. 184). While the term “variable media” might be a new one for art theorists, Brost argues that in the core of its idea lies the concept of ritual. She claims that considering museums and galleries to be ritualistic settings allows for the clearer understanding of how to resolve the problem of authenticity in variable media.

Brost tries to resolve the problem by bringing up an example of ritual probably most popular in the contemporary Western world: birthday celebration. If we think of which birthday celebration is more authentic - the first, the seventh, or the thirty-third, - we immediately realize that every yearly re-performance of the ritual is as legitimate and authentic as the other from the past. In other words, ritualistic framework offers a new (in fact, an old) notion of authenticity for contemporary art. “If artworks are performed as a practice or ritual, then they are authentic every time” (Baldacci et al., 2022, p. 190). Ritual becomes a guarantor of originality by providing certain guidelines for actions in order to preserve the conditions of interrelatedness between its different manifestations.

Similar issues are discussed by Amelia Jones (2011) who analyses reenactments of Marina Abramovic. She highlights the problem of durational performances as those which are “always already “over”” (p.31), be it the initial performance or its reenactment. What the scholar intends is to highlight fleeting and immaterial character of performance. In case of

Abramovic and her *Seven Easy Pieces* (Abramović, 2005), however, documentation of the reenactments played a decisive role in its preservation and notion of their authenticity. For Abramovic, the objective of reenacting a performance is in its further crystallization of meaning, rather than in its endless evolution: “by re-enacting an earlier performance its true meaning can be retrieved, and then it can be written into art history” (in Jones, 2011, p. 32). Original for Abramovic can be only extracted by means of repetition. She suggests we should treat instructions of performance as a musical score, which can be replayed by a professionally trained artist at any point, and that replay will be as original as any other one. Meanwhile, Fischer-Lichte argues by suggesting there is no such thing as an original at all (Jones, 2011), which can be a challenging idea for comprehension outside of the ritualistic framework.

Religious vs. Secular

According to Benjamin, during the age of industrial revolution, history has replaced myth in society (Lütticken, 2005). By the 20th century, value of factual has dominated over fictional, and as a result, secular dominated over religious. However, the decrease of myth and religion does not have to mean that one of ritual culture, we find. As Baldacci noticed, ritual has preceded formal religion in the history of humanity (Baldacci et al., 2022), in the same way art has had a longer history than any known formal religion. Thus, relationship between ritual and art is older and even stronger than the one between ritual and religion. It is for this reason, museums are seen by some scholars as structures for ritualistic practice (Baldacci et al., 2022).

As Carol Duncan claims, museums are built in similar way to temples, they are places of pilgrimage, procession and contemplation. If the aim of an artwork is to communicate ideas, create transformative effects in audience which Duncan compares with experiencing enlightenment, then art can function beyond materialistic framework, and on metaphysical level. Duncan questions boundaries set between religious and secular experiences, and argues that artistic ceremonies, even if they are of secular nature, possess ritualistic qualities and affect audience in ways similar to that of religious rituals. “Some of the recent art practices that appear to challenge us in wholly new ways may in fact have deep histories, connecting us to behaviors that are fundamentally human” (Baldacci et al., 2022, p. 190).

The idea is echoed by Lyden (2003) who in his book *Film as a Religion* explains how performed drama allows actors and audiences to express and feel emotions labeled as negative in society, and how ritualistic setting of theater or cinema makes the act socially acceptable.

Pain and Empathy

In their research, Whitehouse and Lanman (2014) highlight the importance of what they call “dysphoric rituals”. By dysphoric, the scientists mean those based on experiencing and sharing negative emotions evoked by the same cause of stress. Dysphoric rituals trigger exceptionally rich episodic memories, consolidated in the collective memory of the group. It is therefore not an accident that many rituals are based on experiencing dysphoric states instead of euphoric ones. In this sense, tragedy, and consequently thriller and horror, come forward as important genres which in fact embody a ritualistic mechanism for expressing and experiencing grief. According to Lyden, functions of drama are the same of some religious rituals. It is capable to generate and transmit catharsis, hope, redemption (2003).

In his investigation of representing trauma through artistic practice, Bennett approaches the problem of transferability of pain. His discussion is about capability of artistic practice to represent pain of other through affective connection: “There is something innately uncontainable about the phenomenon of pain within representation”, he claims (2005, p. 50). When pain of one individual is witnessed by another, Bennett explores, the process occurring as a result is a process of social relationship redefinition. As already highlighted in the beginning of the chapter, it is crucial and complicated process for humans living in society, guided by ritualistic culture.

Konvalinka and Xygalatas confirmed Emile Durkheim’s classic theory that extreme rituals involving witnessing and experiencing pain may be facilitating pro-sociality (Xygalatas et al., 2013), (Konvalinka et al., 2011). They conclude witnessing of pain of another creates synchronized empathic arousal and amplifies prosocial attitudes and behaviors. In their study of a Spanish fire-walking ritual held up until nowadays, the ethnographers managed to quantitatively measure social cohesion between participants and audience. Point of the ritual is to walk on a carpet of burning coals while carrying a person on one’s shoulders. The person carried is usually a family member or a close one for the fire walker, and the metaphor acted out is of carrying a loved one through flames. The scientists have observed fire-walkers and their audience, and revealed how heart rates of both the participants and the observers get synchronized once highly dangerous and painful part of the ritual starts. Especially similar looked the heart rate graphs of the participants and people in the audience belonging to the same community. This highlights the role of ritualistic actions for cultivation of empathy. Nowadays, when art theorists look at artistic performance as a form of ritual, they arrive to similar conclusions as the ethnographers.

Pain being communicated and witnessed is as important for social cohesion as for healing. As previous chapter discussed, it is exactly unnoticed and unassimilated pain that manifests as a trauma. Similarly, unwitnessed or not properly mourned death is what is seen problematic in our society, and labeled by some as “bad death” (Seremetakis in Bennett, 2005, p. 51).

According to O’Gorman’s argument (1998), contemporary Western society tends to act in avoidant manner towards dealing with death and grief: mourning is not properly ritualized, it is instead medicalized. Death itself isn’t referred as such, and replaced with euphemisms. In his opinion, these tendencies are symptomatic of grief avoidance, or what he calls “fast grief”: “contemporary society has endangered health by being unable to discuss death” (O’Gorman, 1998, p.7). The scholar links the tendency with a decline of mourning rituals usage. Artworks which embody, represent, and transmit emotional weight of loss, register sense memory of grief and trauma, communicate and memorialize them, are able to transform “bad death” to “good death” (Bennett, 2005).

Conclusion

Rituals are undergoing constant evolution, as they keep adjusting to environment and society of each epoch. Importantly, today’s artistic processes are manifestations of contemporary ritual culture. Media plays the key role in accommodating rituals, and if in the antient times we spoke of elemental media like water, fire, air etc.; today similar role is played by contemporary media, among which are internet, art objects, performances, moving images. A number of ethnographers and media scholars argue that contemporary media, both digital and analogue, replace natural elements utilized by antient ritualistic practices. We utilize media as a transmitter of ideas, emotions, and as a storage for meaning.

Today, ritualistic framework is what helps scholars and artists rethink the problem of reconstruction, conservation and originality of artworks. The term “variable media” has been introduced for defining artworks which are not consisted of a single material object. Many agree, variable media works should be available for reconstructions and reenactments, while each of manifestations of the work should be considered authentic. This concept becomes comprehensible with help of ritual framework: every repeated ritualistic action is as authentic as one before.

In addition to the mainstream theory by Durkheim explaining ritual’s main objective as to strengthen social bonds between members of a society, we see ritual as performing more functions: anxiety relief, identity building, memory conservation, rite of passage, empathy

strengthening, communicating emotions and experience, processing loss, myth building and rebuilding. Artistic practices acting as new rituals are aimed to mediate most difficult human feelings as terror, pain, grief. Researchers highlight special importance of these processes in today's world.

We analyze reenactment as a ritualistic practice which is evoked by a deep-seated societal desire to not just repeat and memorize the past, transmitting the experienced history between members of community, but also to 'change' the past. We argue that re-experiencing past and even shifting its perception becomes possible by means of ritualistic practice. The transitions rituals undergo, and as a result, transformations in meaning, together with changes in collective memory happen because of evolution through multiple reenactments. Future research is necessary in order to understand this process in detail.

Hybrid Film as a Postmodern Media: What is Now?

About Time

The task to define postmodernism is challenging as it requires us to look at our own very zeitgeist, which would mean we should look at the present time. But how does one look at the time, moreover, while one lives during the time? It is perhaps possible, we suggest, through analyzing how we perceive the time, and what we do with it from the perspective of cultural and artistic tendencies. In order to look at the postmodern of today, we take filmmaking as a point of analysis and investigate trends in contemporary hybrid documentaries. It is these types of films, we hypothesize, speak loudest about the political of our time, while the methodology and the aesthetics of this type of films express the postmodern zeitgeist.

In 2019, a book by Deane Williams came out, and it was called *Ten Years of Studies in Documentary Film* (Williams, 2019). For our research, this text is relevant as one of the most recent editions in the field. It studies Western documentary process of the decade 2007 – 2016, and describes its methods, tendencies, and cases; it is a comprehensive analysis, which is accurate and well conducted. What we found problematic however, is how unexpectedly outdated the studied cases and tendencies seem today, in 2023. Indeed, 2016 seems to be a different era, due to the number of political, technological and cultural updates, let alone the distant 2007.

We couldn't help but to observe, how speeded up the time is nowadays, which echoes concerns described by Judy Wajcman (2008), according to which, these days (back in 2008 already) we are pressured by time acceleration, a process driven by technological progress and capitalist ideology of increased productivity. Here we come to a conundrum: in the times when the technologies seemingly help us to save the time, we find ourselves having no time to conduct and reflect on a comprehensive research of one decade we just lived through, because as soon as the research is done, and the work is published, the most recent past turns out to be already far gone. The issues of digitalization, interactivity, and personal camera are obstructed by the new ones: AI, deepfakes, VR technologies and so on.

Peculiarly, this impossibility to analyze processes which happen with us today is one of the phenomena of postmodern times discussed in Mark Fisher's work on hauntological present (Fisher, 2014). Fisher complains about time acceleration too, and he finds it to be a problem for artists and musicians: there is no time to reflect on the present, let alone to think of the future. As a result, the artists tend to lean towards the past aesthetics, to symbolically return to the times when the future has still been a possibility.

With this awareness of the gloomy reality in mind, in this chapter we will give the deserved attention to literature describing trends and cases of hybrid films of the 2010s. We aim to see how they mirror contemporary postmodern ideas, deal with the problems of originality and copy, and with those of fact and fiction, survive the crisis of authenticity, and use archives in order to address the political. As Kahana argues, the postmodern method of “documentary reenactment can be seen not as a turning away from the present, but as a way of posing the question, “what now?”” (2009, p. 58).

Perhaps, his perspective is as optimistic as it gets. We will therefore hold on to it, and in this text analyze contemplations of the theorists on postmodern processes in artistic practice. We will then focus on three main aspects, being methods of hybrid filmmaking, its aesthetics, and ways it communicates and transforms the political. We will discuss how those aspects of hybrid film reflect the zeitgeist. After this, in the next chapter, where we look at three case studies of the chosen hybrid films in depth.

Post-Modernity and Artistic Practice

As theorists like Lütticken highlight, the decade of 1960-1970 has been characterized by the boom of performative arts. Later, in the 1980, notions of representation and immediacy, dealing with issues of making the past historical events present, began to play an important role in the practice. Now, there is an essential modification of the postmodern artistic and media process which distinguishes the 2000s in comparison to 1980s processes. In addition to notions of re-presenting the past, the new obsession on immersion and experience is added to practices and discourses of media studies (in Baldacci et al., 2022). This, according to the scholar, complicates culturally perceiving the historical. He problematizes tendencies of retro-fashion and superficial pastiches as they replace the “proper engagement with history” (2022, p.5). He observes this process in contemporary reenactment practices, and therefore, echoes similar concerns of Mark Fisher (2014) on the aesthetic tendencies in the music scene of the 2000s.

Sven Lütticken considers the fantasy of time travel to be nothing else than a temporal colonialism. But it is his awareness of the power of reenactment to not just revisit, but to transform the idea of the past, that allows the scientist to claim colonial features take place. A question arises, what would be a non-colonialist, but ethical way of rethinking, re-experiencing the past, the “proper way of engagement with history”, the possibility he mentions, while leaving us with the question unanswered.

Three definitions of representation as it is seen by Western philosophical thought are offered by Arianna Sforzini: “(1) the myth of an ordered scientific space transparent to the activity of the subject; (2) the correlation between an object-world and an a-historical subject, capable to dominate the world in its truth; (3) the necessary expulsion from discourse of what is essentially unrepresentable: the disorder of non-sense, of madness, of unreason” (in Baldacci et al., 2022, p.22). She brings up ideas by Foucault: for him, the new way of thinking of representation had to do with a paradigm shift from seeing the world from the perspective of possibility of transparent truth, to seeing it as a number of perspectives; hence a sum of different representations. These representations for Foucault, are not based on pre-existent understandings, but are created through practicing repetition. Sforzini sees Foucauldian thought aiming “to construct a counter-history of classical thought as a representative practice built on a dialectic of complementarity between the subject and the object of knowledge, and to offer new ways of doing philosophy. He tries to find forms of anti- or counter-representative thought in which artistic practices themselves remain an important element of criticism and historical concretization of the concepts at issue.” (p.23). Hence, for him, active artistic practicing is vital for shaping and reshaping the knowledge of the world. Artistic practice, we argue, works as a prototype of life which can accommodate role-play necessary for practicing the dialectic, in other words, it acts like a game where a subject can not only assume, but test a point of view. It is not just that an artist can inform the world with her creation, it is also, and importantly, the creation that will inform the creator about the world.

A series of Andy Warhol’s art objects, like Marilyn Monroe portraits and those of a soup can, represent a similar idea: truth if it is repeated cannot be unique. These ideas are pointing at the conceptual philosophy of simulacra, and allow criticism of each single object due to the multiplicity of possibilities shown. However, if we recall our insights given by the philosophy of ritual, every repeated representation is as valid as the other one, and in combination they constitute the truth. Thus, “Repetition is an exercise in freedom, a gesture of insubordination that Foucault himself never ceases to affirm through his practice of thought: a power of scandal, the force of fiction” (Baldacci et al., 2022, p. 27).

The idea is echoed by Walter Benjamin in his *Excavation and Memory* essay, who believes if we attempt to revisit our past, we should keep digging, because the memory for the philosopher is nothing else but a site of burial. He encourages to bravely return to the same matter time after time, scattering the soil of settled memories, and in this case, an investigator can possibly reach the strata that offers its long-sought secrets as a reward (in. Baldacci et al., 2022). Now, Agamben’s idea of repetition is a possibility “to live what has been unlive” (ibid, p.201), and as a result being able to put the present into question, and arrange a variety of

futures. For him, memory restores the very possibility of the past. It is here that Joanna Kiliszek suggests the reconstruction becomes a Baudrillardian simulacrum: an evocation of the reality which is a copy of the non-existent.

Benjamin's concept of *Jetztzeit*, which has been established as long ago as in the 1940s, speaks about the urgency with which the past needs to be appropriated in the present. The point of this appropriation is in re-interpretation, Sacco claims (in Baldacci et al., 2022). It is not an option for the past to be existing in the consciousness of the present without being transformed in one way or another. She brings an example of quotation: when a part of text is being quoted, it is always replaced towards the new context, and therefore, it cannot possibly remain unchanged. This kind of quotation is what happens when a piece of factual is placed around the fictional, which is exactly the process of hybrid film construction. Derrida has a slightly different perspective on quotations: for him, quotation marks have a function to stand guard over the world. He encourages to go as far as to get rid of the guardians, and unleash the free spirit of the text (Jones & Heathfield, 2014).

Since we speak of quotations, it is an appropriate moment to quote Umberto Eco: "it takes years to understand the significance of an event, it is all part of the logic of history. Time itself creates its own legends and perspective is what sharpens the outlines of things and takes their measures" (in Baldacci et al., 2022, p. 146). This very awareness of the phenomena, and the desire to rethink and reinterpret is what characterizes Western postmodern philosophy. As a counterpoint to the depressiveness of Fisher's concept of hauntology, Baldacci argues that there is a benefit of returning to the past instead of fixation on new and avant-garde, if this return opens a dialogue with memory and history.

Jacques Rancière in his important essay *The Emancipated Spectator* (2009) in fact speaks of reinterpretation from the perspective of emancipation. For him, the multiplicity of options for interpreting a fact, an art piece, a narrative; allows the breakage of the patriarchal ideology, by putting the concepts of original, unique, autonomous authorship under doubt.

Scholars call the 2000s an era of post-truth, which is connected to the crisis of representation, which has begun to emerge in the 1980s art and philosophy. Simultaneously, the crisis of realism in documentary has marked the beginning of hybrid film method growth in popularity and relevance (Williams, 2019). A number of philosophical discourses can be looked at to explain the trend. For Lacan, "the Truth draws its guarantee from somewhere other than the Reality it concerns" (in Gushchina, 2019, p. 16). In 1984, Lyotard claimed that rational

thought and scientific reasoning of the postmodern age are not good enough methods to convince us about the truth anymore (in Williams, 2019).

For Deleuze, difference is what inhabits repetition. He challenges the binary oppositions in which notions of self and other, and origin and copy, and eventually, fact and fiction, are placed (Jones & Heathfield, 2014). Many scholars agree: Lütticken, for example, advocates artistic freedom, and in particular its function of destabilization, recontextualization over historical factuality.

Boris Groys looks closely at Benjamin's problem of "loss of aura", which was described as an issue which emerged as a result of the abundance of copies in the age of mechanical reproduction. Groys reinterprets Benjamin, arguing that there is no eternal value in the original. Therefore, while an object can indeed suffer a loss of aura as a result of a copy production; the opposite is also possible: the object can acquire aura in the process. This last point is essential for understanding the value and capabilities of postmodern art objects. It opens a door for a possibility to not only make a copy out of an original, but to create an original out of a copy. "That means: the fate of modern and contemporary art can by no means be reduced to the "loss of aura." Rather, the (post)modernity enacts a complex play of removing from sites and placing in (new) sites, of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, of removing aura and restoring aura" (Jones and Heathfield, 2014, p. 217).

Indeed, if we put the two concepts together – the one of Benjamin's aura, and the other one of Baudrillardian simulacrum – and let them collide, we will come to the similar insights. These ideas are helpful for the comprehension of postmodern documentary. While the film documents the reality, and produces its recording, a seeming 'copy' of the factual, what it produces in fact is an original art object with its own aura. We also argue that by adding the 'fictional' to the recordings of the 'factual', that the art work acquires an even stronger sense of originality, even stronger aura.

We believe this is a relevant way to look at artistic practice today, however it is necessary to highlight that while consciously applying this approach, artists carry ethical responsibility over subjects and objects of their reinterpretation. In hybrid film thus, the audience does not know where exactly factual and fictional lie, and how they are blurred. It is a mystery that a viewer is invited to try and resolve (or to fail to do so). Precisely this mystery, this mix, this 'game' is what makes hybrid cinema so attractive, we suggest. The storyteller invites her audience to play, and the audience has to be an active participant of the game. A viewer of a hybrid film is being in dialogue with the author: "Here, is this for real? Or are you joking?". And sometimes the storyteller is the most real when she is joking.

Methods of Hybrid Film

Janet Walker draws a formula of a ‘classical mainstream’ documentary methodology of the early 2000s; moreover, according to her, this scheme has to do with documentary on trauma. It is these methods that we will compare with auteur hybrid ones and see which differences they make. The first component of a ‘classical mainstream’ documentary is carefully staged interviews with the survivors, who “speak from their beautifully appointed homes” (in Williams, 2019, p.30). The interviews thus lack intimacy, and are manufactured as a result of a marked appointment with the subject, rather than of built relationships between the author and the testifier.

The second trend Walker speaks of is an attempt to combine different characters’ testimonies into one narrative. This way, authors attempt to speak of the collective experience rather than an individual one. This hints at a distrust in the ability of an individual memory to represent the collective one. Classical trauma documentaries feel the need to work with quantitative methods of analysis rather than reaching into the depth of qualitative research of one person’s experience.

Finally, the testimonies are intercut with personal and public archival footage, in one more literal attempt to combine personal and historical. It is these three methodological stylistic instruments that auteur hybrid film of the post-truth era breaks. We here understand the auteur in accordance to Kochberg’s definition: as a personal style stamped on the author’s works through repeated topics and/or visual language (Merewether, 2009). It is not to say that testimony, collective portraits and archives are out of use, quite the opposite, however the way of working with these methods differ.

Walker herself highlights that the appreciation of testimony in the new documentaries has never been higher; the usage of archive is arguably a tool for political communication through film. And merging individual and collective, but doing so by finding the interrelations between the personal and collective memories, is an important feature of the postmodern hybrid film. What differs, in this case?

Taking Erol Morris as a focus of her analysis on postmodern documentary, Lucia Ricciardelli defines it “as a form of filmmaking that favors self-reflexivity, adopts a provocative tone, rejects the totalizing meta-narrative as a way to organize knowledge of the past, and mixes fact with fiction” (in Williams, 2019, p. 90). Conventions of realism are today challenged and put into question. This means, rejection of linear narrative structure, decline in direct testimony and “expert’s commentary” usage, doubting photographic indexicality, abandonment of authoritarian commentary by the narrator (however, if we look at cases of

Werner Herzog's works, we notice that they offer us a different way author's narration might work: not by dictating the one version of truth, but suggesting an introspection, contemplation and playfulness, even perhaps a dialogue), author's commentary does not equal objectivity, rather the other way around (Merewether, 2009).

For Ricciardelli, this change has to do with postmodern disappointment with the philosophical approaches of Enlightenment such as positivism, rationalism and humanism; and comes as the result of digitalization, globalization and eventually, mediatization. Truthfulness in hybrid postmodern documentary, for her, comes from the acceptance of the inconsistencies between the different perspectives, and different ways to remember, instead of reproduction of the real with an illusion of objectivity. The establisher of 'anti-vérité' style Morris however makes a disclaimer for his audiences: "I like to point out that people very often confuse the idea that truth is subjective with the fact that truth is perishable. [...] Historical evidence is in fact perishable. People can burn the archives, people can destroy the evidence. Or they can ruin the evidence in many, many, many, many, many ways. Adulterate it, so that it's impossible ever to know what the evidence really was. And I think that's true of many episodes in history" (Morris in Williams, 2019, p. 99).

For Ohad Landesman, there is still space to evolve for hybrid type of the films, and they do so by merging fact with fiction, and redefining the ethical doctrines set for the medium: "the documentary film has been going through significant formal changes since its early naïve days of observation and omniscient narration, gradually abandoning its efforts to emphasize an impression of objectivity" (2008, p.34). His suggestion is to define hybrid with its fictional ingrown into factual, by emancipating the spectator, and giving them the authority to create the truth for themselves. It is the audience, for Landesman, who will decide on their mode of engagement with the film, and determine if they view it as a documentary or as a fiction. There is still, however, an option for the viewer to accept the undefined and obscure nature of hybrid documentary of the post-truth era (Landesman, 2008).

Hybrid Aesthetics

In 2008, Craig Hight highlighted how fast documentary and its aesthetics and theory responded to what up-to-date technology had to offer. At the time, the digitalization and the new online platforms for distribution were at stake for documentary to perform its transformation. Essentially, the theory and practice had to deal with the problem of

transitioning of documentary from cinematic and TV screens to online platforms (Williams, 2019).

One of the important implications for contemporary documentary were hybridizing home video aesthetics with the one from TV documentary, as well as methods of direct observation with participatory methods. When the blogging fashion transitioned to vlogging one, the process has generated a revival in the autobiographical genre. Participatory culture has also been facilitated by online communication with the audience. Accessibility of digital recording devices in the beginning of the 2000s has democratized the medium, which contributed to the boom of non-commercial amateur films, the wave which disregards the conventions of documentary film industry and TV journalism, however, were able to reach deeper levels of intimacy with documentary subject. Even the very size of the digital camera affected relationships between a filmmaker and a protagonist: the small handheld cameras allow closer proximity between the two even in the literal sense, the cinematographer is now able to come closer to their subject, while keeping focus on the person. A number of professional practitioners of documentary criticize such aesthetics for being less ‘cinematic’ due to the increased depth of field (Iseli et al., 2020). However, it is clear nowadays that the trend has already deeply installed itself as a new fashion in auteur cinema.

We will bring below two quotations from two different articles, which act as a dialogue on the topic:

“Will the artlessness (intended or unintended) and immediacy characteristic of the mobile phone camera or computer webcam undermine the considerable artisanal skills employed by the documentary auteur? Or can we, as directors, view this democratization of media not as a threat but as an opportunity to integrate multiple methods of high definition and lo-fi imaging technologies within single productions” (Merewether, 2009, p. 12).

“I find that interesting, because people are running around with GoPro cameras, others are taking a snapshot with their mobile phones, there is a drone flight [...] And all these things are put together to form a new reality, which is actually an exaggeration of reality that we cannot experience as individuals” (Samir in Iseli et. al., 2020, p. 37).

Bill Nichols has found the aesthetics of archival home footage to have ‘fantasmatic power’ as that which describes the absence of an object recorded which is already lost (Nichols, 2008).

As Lev Manovich notices, these phenomena gave birth to the new ‘hybrid, intricate, complex and rich visual language’ (in Williams, 2019, p.39). The recent study shows there has been a shift in audience perception of the convincing ‘realistic’ character documentary image:

if a previous 2012 Swedish audience research concluded that higher production value of the audiovisual product in combination with narrow depth of field (associated with classic cinematic aesthetics) contributed to a stronger viewer's trust; than the 2020 investigation revealed the opposite result, and this according to the authors, had to do with the increase of home-made content in the new media environment (Iseli et al., 2020). At the same time, due to the contemporary crisis of realist representation (Gushchina, 2019), the audience perception changed, and the credibility of realist images is in decline. Stylization is playing an important role in creating distance between audience and image, and this distancing is found to be an important artistic instrument for certain works, and particularly for reenactments (Horn & Arns, 2007).

Today, a number of innovations pose further challenges to contemporary documentary cinematic language and theoretical discourses. While realist aesthetics in documentary undergoes its crisis in the West for more than 10 years now (Williams, 2019), questions of hybridity, participation, interactivity, AI generation, and digital manipulation of footage are the questions at stake in the early 2020s. Even though the focus of this thesis is filmmaking methods where hybridity is defined by combination of documentary and fictional approaches; these days cinematic hybridity is reached not only by the aforementioned method, but also through AI text and visual generation based on factual data, animated documentary, mobile phone or laptop screen record technics, interactive, cross-media projects etc. "Most of today's digital works of art are processual, ephemeral, interactive, multimedia, and, fundamentally, context dependent" (Baldacci et al., 2022, p. 193). There is a vast field of research that we as makers and theorists further need to conduct in order to grasp the new aesthetics posed by the latest technological advances.

Political Power of Hybrid Film

When it comes to the political perspective, there are two essential dimensions which we should discuss. Firstly, how postmodern hybrid film communicates the political aspects of the contemporary world. Secondly, it is how it acts as an agent of political change. Keeping in mind that communicating is strongly linked with acting itself, we must see these two dimensions as interconnected.

John Corner attempts to clarify the dimensions of politicality by suggesting a framework of how documentary film acts and communicates the political. He highlights the difference between the way artistic approach in documentary acts in comparison to news

journalism, and it lies in utilization of imaginative capacity, portrayal beyond factual, and offering the discourse which accepts contingency and is able to be liberated from official established agenda. “There is a sense in which all documentaries are political, whether they or their audiences are aware of it or not” (in Williams, 2019, p.50). Here the scholar speaks of rather classical documentaries, not hybrids in particular.

For Corner, documentary acts politically by:

- Visualizing the political
- Articulating the political
- Applying reason and causing the affect
- Addressing audiences

In the case of the first bullet point, he discusses two different ways of documentary visualizing the political: by ways of illustrating, and by those of raw observation. For example, archival footage for him works usually as a way of illustrating in documentaries. Everyday direct documentations, he suggests, provide the function of observation. However, with the previous discussion in mind, we argue there can hardly be a sharp distinction between observation and illustration in postmodern hybrid film. Visualization is also recognized by Corner in choosing central political event for the film to follow.

The second mode is about “talking the political”. This one has to do with ways the topic of the film is narrated and introduced. It is important here to analyze the tone of the film in which it speaks to its audience, in other words, how the narrative sets expectations for audience perception.

The mode of reasoning and affecting is essential. It considers dimensions of rational versus emotional communication to the audience. “The nervousness of much documentary journalism and observational work about the use of music on the soundtrack (see Corner 2002) is one indication of this judgment about how emotions should be ‘contained’ in documentary, albeit a judgment often radically modified by developments in reality television” (in Williams, 2019, p. 58). The theorist observes how this “nervousness” applies to rather journalistic approaches. He highlights the importance of defining, which structure, rational or emotional, a film places as primary in its aesthetics and narrative tone. Essentially, film can function within either positivist or open dialogue rhetorical design. There are examples which apply a singular sense of truth, and those accommodating pluralism of perspectives. This shapes the dialogue with the audience, and the kind of affect the film produces.

The last mode has to do with the problem of target audience. In other words, who the film is for, and which intentions are put by the authors in regard to influencing their viewer, which influences the whole communicative design. Corner problematizes the tendency of “preaching to the converted” (p.62), by which he means creating a political documentary which reaches an audience already sharing the author's point of view. He claims that alternative ways are possible. By “strategies of revelation, exposition, argument, testimony or emotional intensity political documentaries attempt to create change in their viewers” (p. 63). In addition, the very postmodern approach of indirectness and accommodation of ambiguity can problematize the dominant discourse effectively. It welcomes flexibility in audience perception, and as a result, possible transition from their perspective to the one suggested by the filmmaker. These methods allow films to work as trojan horses with “hidden” counter-points disrupting the dominant ideology, and making their ways to audiences of different political perspectives. Finally, he highlights the power of cinematic aesthetics, which can convince audiences through the sensorious, thus emotional, rather than the rational.

By acknowledging these modes as instruments to communicate ideas, we have to be aware, these tools are in danger of being exploited, even weaponized by different parties for communicating various ideas, whether they are ethical and not. “Documentary has a longstanding, often highly self-conscious and sometimes controversial connection with the portrayal of the ‘political’.”, he claims (in Williams, 2019, p. 48).

Hybrid documentary, which utilizes both observation and imagination, is used to communicate and represent political issues as well as social and scientific concerns (Merewether, 2009). As a medium often used for auteur and independent works, the genre contributes to criticism of the dominant political system, and gives voice to the underrepresented. Mereweather brings up the examples of how through feminist autobiographic works of documentary and avant-garde hybrid that the issues of female intimate experiences and struggles are communicated. In autobiographical works, she highlights, the author has to risk in order to expose what the dominant system tries to silence. The scholar links the positivist approach used in the direct cinema with patriarchal and authoritarian tendencies, and the obsession with truth and objectivity as a single correct established narrative – with authoritarian control. Thus, we see that the very ideology behind the values in hybrid documentary methods, aesthetics as well as philosophical discourse communicates and works through political issues of the time.

In the postmodern discourse, as articulated by Renov (1999), there is no more subjectivity shaming, instead, the experience of an individual and the embodied knowledge is valued as a

perspective which communicates the personal truth. Performance, in this case, becomes an important tool of expression; reenactment – an essential methodology. And the camera, according to Mereweather, becomes a partner, a witness and a companion; thus emancipates the author, and acts as a “husband replacement” (2009, p. 9). This reference is peculiar if we look at it through the lens of a psychoanalytic film theory framework, where the camera was seen as a phallus producing male gaze (Piotrowska, 2013). There is also a term of “imperialist gaze”, established by Zimmerman and applied to criticize Robert Flaherty and his “fatherhood of documentary” (in Mereweather, 2009). We can suggest in this case that feminist hybrid filmmaker appropriates the camera-phallus; and in a gesture that twists Freudian ‘penis envy’ theory from literal to metaphorical one (where a female does not want a penis, but does want human rights), and reclaims the gaze, thus, the power taken away from female by the male domination. It is relevant to recall that often in documentary theory and practice, the camera is seen as a weapon. For Margulies, for example, a camera is capable of making a radical shift in one's sense of identity, but it also polices the alienation created as a result (Margulies, 2019).

As discussed above, for survivors of trauma, the trust given by the conceptualization of postmodern truth, is crucial so that the survivor is able to communicate their experiences without being silenced by the advents of the positivist approach for some factual incoherence in their testimonies. As we have already discussed above, and as the research by Janet Walker confirms, factual varies in the memory of trauma survivor: “Chronological linearity is often broken; internal audio-visuality fragmented, marked by repetition, and centred on retrospective events that the mind simultaneously calls attention to and deflects attention from” (Williams, 2019, p.19). But the horror of trauma never appears out of the blue, and is ultimately credible. Walker warns us of the danger trauma survivors face: “One shrinks from the prospect of impugning the credibility of retrospective eyewitness accounts when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has struggled mightily against four decades of state-sponsored denial or when Holocaust deniers are poised to pounce on contradictions within and among testimonies as evidence that the Holocaust was a hoax” (Williams, 2019, p. 21). As a Ukrainian, the author of the present article, suffering from the ongoing full-scale war initiated and justified by Russia, and of the narratives spread by the propaganda far beyond its own borders, is fully aware of how destructive the experience of victim-blaming is. The dread of being labeled as a member of a society that needs to be eradicated is almost as great as the one to be killed in the war. Being conquered ideologically and being written into history as a nation deserving its genocide, which is the Russian's ultimate goal as of today, is as scary as actually being destroyed.

For Arns, it is by eliminating the safe distance between abstract knowledge and personal experience, that allows for comprehension of history, and for him, it is what reenactment does (Horn & Arns, 2007). According to Margulies, “Activating a multidirectional temporality, both cinema and reenactment are effective stages for actualization, exemplary purposes, and critical analysis” (2019, p.11). Some like Lütticken, on the contrary, doubt that reenactment has a strong emancipatory potential due to its reliance on capitalistic performativity; however, he agrees its functions and possibilities, as well as its problematic need to be researched deeper (2005).

Turning to postmodern documentary, as a straw to grasp, we discover that it can serve as a tool of liberation, communication of the experience, and the inherent hybridity stated in the very name of the genre, creates a disclaimer warning: the following piece communicates the truth, even if some elements of the story have been merely imagined. This disclaimer is important to release the survivor from the danger of victim rejection or victim blaming, and we feel the necessity to apply it to our own practice-based research, which functions as an essential part of this thesis. It is interesting to study reenactment as a method of hybrid film, and witness how historically, war has always been its favorite subject (Baldacci et al., 2022), a phenomenon which cannot possibly be coincidental. For Veena Das, "Trauma is not something immaterial that happens to the individual, leaving the world unchanged - rather, it has a palpable extension within the world" (Bennett, 2005).

Answering Bennett's question of what art itself is capable of, we suggest that the art of hybrid reenactment-based documentary allows perspective and a dialogue between times, generations, and communities; and it is this gap, spatial and temporal, as well as the credit of trust the hybridity allows, is what becomes necessary to communicate trauma caused by political turmoil we experience throughout difficult times in history.

Conclusion

Methods of hybrid documentary are closely linked with the very time due to which they appeared, and thus, cultural and philosophical approaches of today. There is a phenomenon of being time pressured by trends of technological transformation and productivity acceleration, felt by scholars and artists. This trend goes hand in hand with the established capitalist agenda. There is a challenge for culturologists and artists to research and comprehend the present processes, as they progress so quickly, being replaced by the next ones. Perhaps AI can help out, but which are the implications awaiting us?

At the same time, confusion of the present epoch reflected in post-modern ideas also speaks of acceptance and accommodation of different experiences, perspectives, and ultimately, ‘truths’. This is the philosophy where hybrid film thrives. Methodology and aesthetics of contemporary hybrid films would be impossible under the gaze of a positivist perspective, which is seen by many as oppressive. Demonization of positivism is not the ideal position, we believe, but a pluralistic dialogue where positivism can be one of the players, offers a good perspective for new discourses, where hybrid film is an active speaker today. If an artist can inform the world with her creation, it also works in the opposite direction: the creation can inform the creator about the world.

Contemporary hybrid film exists in numerous forms, where hybridity can be reached by combination of fiction and documentary as well as other approaches: through AI text and visual generation, animation, screen record techniques, and cross-media. These projects are processual, ephemeral, interactive, multimedia, and context dependent. Scholars argue that aesthetical and methodological instruments hybrid films utilize give a chance to communicate political issues and affect dominant political discourses. Democratization of the medium facilitated production, which allowed voicing the perspectives of marginalized, oppressed and traumatized. There are still concerns in this regard, since effects of media algorithms which create personal info-bubbles obstruct the path of the marginalized towards being represented. Simultaneously, the postmodern idea of taking personal experience at face value allows new ways of communicating and perceiving experiences of trauma survivors.

Hybrid reenactment-based documentary creates a bridge between epochs, generations, and communities; the dialogue for personal traumatic memory to be expressed, processed and heard; its incoherences and its unrepresentability to be accepted as a unique configuration of one’s experience.

Further research is strongly needed in this field, but do we have the time for it?

CHAPTER 2

The Case Studies

The second chapter of this thesis consists of three case studies. Its role is to reveal the instances of how reenactment methodology works in the practice of hybrid filmmaking tendencies within the timeframe relevant to the study. The chosen films work with the traumatic memories of their participants, reenacted by the memory owners. We aim to understand how in-person reenactment affects the participants, and also what it does to the film and to its audience perception when the authors make it transparent that the actors perform their own life stories, which however are altered by a layer of fictionality. We necessarily include a critical perspective as well as the ways in which each film made a difference in the cultural and political arena.

The films the focus of our analysis are the following:

- *Horse Money*, directed by Pedro Costa and released in 2014.
- *Atlantis* by Valentin Valentin Vasyanovych, a film that was released in 2019.
- *The Act of Killing*, directed by Joshua Oppenheimer and first screened in 2012.

The first two case studies include the results of semi-structured interviews we conducted with the authors and the participants. The third one is based on analyzing the interviews and literature of secondary data.

The case studies help us understand the mechanics of how the reenactment method in hybrid filmmaking works, and the diverse methods it can be applied for working in different genres, aesthetics, and themes. In combination with the findings of the first chapter, this research provides the knowledge necessary for creating the methodology of our reenactment-based artistic research.

Case Study 1: Horse Money

Introduction

The following article is a case study of the film *Horse Money* (2014) by Pedro Costa. It analyses the literature, among which is critic of the film, reviews, and interviews of the director, including the one we conducted specifically for this research. We also conceptualize the film within the contemporary hybrid filmmaking process and discuss it as a case of the tendency for hybridization, mediatization of memory and ritualization of artistic and media processes. The points for the discussion are the following:

Hybrid

Method

Narrative

Themes

- Time
- Space
- Memory
- Ritual & Repetition
- Mythic & Mystic

Character

Aesthetics

Political aspect

Critique

“Why invent? Only idiots invent in the basis of a cinema that has already been seen, of what’s general, universal, of the majority. Now, good movies don’t have to invent anything, they only have to watch and reproduce”

Pedro Costa

(Moutinho & da Graça Lobo, 2015, p.22)

Hybrid

In today's independent cinema, hybrid films are becoming a more significant trend (Fernández & Álvarez, 2015). The festival circuit embraces this shift, despite the industry's best efforts to oppose it (Ribas & Cunha, 2020). One excellent example of this hybrid nature in the cultural sphere is *Horse Money*.

Film hybridity, a fundamental blend of fictional and documentary techniques, can be interpreted in several ways. The first views it as a conflict between fiction and documentary (Cordeiro, 2017), with fiction representing the ability to imagine and create the new and documentary representing the ability to bring what already exists back together. As a result, perception or maybe rather categorization becomes problematic for audience, which comes as a result of this conflict.

The second approach views hybrids as an organic symbiosis. In this case, factual and imagined are treated as two elements that are essential to support one another. As a result, this in-betweenness is seen as a key component of today's hybrid film. Establishing the zone free of concrete fact and made-up fiction is crucial, as Robert Koehler stated (Koehler, 2009). There is no disagreement about the fact that this zone challenges the familiarity of the audience with the representation paradigms and categorization between fact and fiction, however, according to the scholars, it should be taken with acceptance (Koehler, 2009).

There is definitely a provocation in hybrid films of Pedro Costa, a provocation for the viewer's perception and the industrial classification system, a dare to accept a lack of certainty, (Landesman, 2015), perhaps one of the most important challenges for contemporary humanity both on screen and in life. Nowadays, there is a lot of debate about even the notion of fiction vs. documentary. In line with Vaughan (1999), Ohad Landesman (2015) suggests viewing documentary as a means of audience response to film rather than as a style or even a methodology. The researcher here emphasizes how important viewers are to the life of a cinematic work. He stresses it is crucial for viewers to understand if a film is fiction or documentary because this distinction alone matters. This label could be compared to a label with supportive text for a gallery art piece: the label is not officially a part of the piece; however, it can completely change its understanding, contextualize it, highlight or destroy its value. For Pedro Costa however, this very notion of label is foreign. As he confessed, people often ask him if they should treat his work as fiction or documentary. He argues, that by this they actually mean to ask another question: if what they watch is false or true (Costa, 2011). And since any kind of "truth" we might be shown on screen is a matter of representation and

perception, such a question is not relevant for the director: “Cinema is not exactly life. It works with the ingredients of life and you organize, construct these ingredients in a manner different from life” (Costa, 2011). “A film is always a documentary of its own filming, of its own making” (Costa, 2011, p. 6).

According to Rancière, the goal of a documentary in the twenty-first century is to represent a fact so that it can be comprehended, rather than to recreate or replicate reality. In a post-structuralist world, reality is viewed as a fabrication or a work of fiction. The dichotomy between fact and fiction is no longer as relevant as before; instead, it serves as a guide for developing connections between reality and how is felt (Álvarez & Fernández, 2015).

Costa has a peculiar philosophic stand on the origins of fiction and documentary. For him, the former emerged when Lumière brothers started directing actors (or should we rather say characters) of their very first *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory* (1895). Because in the shot we see the factory that belonged to the Lumières themselves, these directions were in fact orders from a boss to employees. For Pedro Costa, this signifies the very commercial nature of fiction. In his search for the origins of documentary, the filmmaker identifies early erotic films and home videos. Those, in his opinion, were made as a gesture of love, of desire to make a film for its own sake (Costa, 2011).

As insightful as they can be, these ideas have a certain extreme nature. They probably should be ingested alongside with a pill of critical thinking; however, these ideas are helpful in understanding the filmmaker’s approach and the reasons behind his choice of hybrid.

Method

Repetition is an important element in Pedro Costa’s cinema, and particularly in *Horse Money*. With its help, Costa plays with time in the narrative of his film, making its layers overlap (Branco, 2020). Repetition has to do not only in the sense of reenacting Ventura’s past for the film but also with the method of rehearsing shots and scenes multiple times before moving on to the next ones (White-Nockleby, 2018).

The amount of footage the director gains as a result of making multiple takes is exactly the reason why digital technologies are crucial for Costa’s method. Apart from aesthetical role, it plays a practical one (Branco, 2020). Indeed, it is only because of digital ability to store practically unlimited amounts of footage, of its mobility, and simple maintenance that film like *Horse Money* were able to be made (Pantenburg, 2010). As Costa himself articulated, the goal

behind his multiple-takes methodology was to remove any melodramatic tone of the scenes and make them fluidly represented (White-Nockleby, 2018).

It is wrong to say Costa documents or reconstructs reality in *Horse Money*. The filmmaker does not just construct his cinematic world, he creates a space for his characters to live in (Ribas & Cunha, 2020). The emphasis of the process is not as much on scripting and pre-planning, but rather on making, which is the core of the participatory approach: “I have bits and pieces. It begins with mystery and desire” (Kasman, 2020, p.11).

A number of scholars talk about realism in relation to Pedro Costa’s filmography, however they talk about it just in order to bring up a disclaimer in regard to this realism. Pantenburg (2010) calls it digital realism, “a temporal form of experience that needs a certain extension in time. This realism relies on duration and patient observation” (p.60) According to him, this kind of realism should not be understood as an indexical one. Costa’s realism is in the method of collaboration with his subjects and the elements of reality he’s working with. It is the small crew where each participant relates to one another not just strictly professionally but also personally that allows this kind of realism to emerge. Building relationships and trust is an important part of the method (Landesman, 2015). Spatial confinement and temporal duration are what bring the method closer to theatrical work. Work on each film takes Costa around three to four years (Sandu, 2019). One shot can have up to thirty takes (Kasman, 2020). Interestingly, the direction Costa follows during his film construction is not towards adding details, enriching the narrative, melodramatic tone. Instead, his way is reaching the perfect minimalism, richness in simplicity. He calls film an art that can fight against excess, in the context of money, images, or effects (Costa, 2011).

Narrative

As much as narrative is one of the most important aspects to talk about in relation to *Horse Money* and hybrid cinema in general, it is a very complicated point to analyze and even more so to conclude about.

Horse Money doesn’t follow the classic film narrative structure, which is why critics classify the film as an example of “post-narrative” cinema (Young, 2014). In order to understand this, we should discuss the classical schools of thought on narrative.

Certain theories of narrative in cinema have derived from literary schools of narrative, in particularly those of Tsvetan Todorov and Gerard Genette, and others by Roland Barthes, Claude Levi-Strauss, Vladimir Propp.

Todorov conceptualized the structure of literary narrative and developed a comprehensive system for understanding it. Genette criticized certain points in the Todorov's theory and updated it. The narrative discourse analysis was defined by him as investigation of relationships between text and story, text and narration, and story and narration. He categorizes narrative according to the three aspects: order of text, story and narration; duration, and repetition of those. Genette brings up the definition of focalization which has become useful for film narrative theory. Focalization is defined as the distance and difference between the awareness of the story by the character and its narrator and therefore by its audience. He highlights the role of narrator, or author in the story and his involvement as a character. Important functions of a narrator according to this theory are directing, communicative, certificatory, and ideological (Genette, 1980).

Todorov's theory of Equilibrium is applicable to classic novel and film narrative structure. According to it, narration starts from the state of Equilibrium, which is challenged by further events. A storyline is thus a character's journey towards redefining or recreating the disrupted Equilibrium (Todorov & Weinstein, 1969).

Roland Barthes proposes to see narrative line of a story through lens of his Enigma theory. Story, he argues, situates itself around a mystery which has to be resolved by the end of character's journey. The Enigma is encoded in hermeneutic, semantic or proairetic codes (Whitehead, 1992).

Claude Levi-Strauss proposes the theory of oppositions. This way, he defines a conflict between two oppositions like good and evil, human and nature, peace and war etc. as the center of any narrative line. Propp, finally, has developed model for characters necessary for classical narrative structure. His model describes archetypical Hero, Villain, Donor, False Hero, Helper, Princess and Dispatcher (Dundes, 1997).

The important discussion among film narrative theorists is if literary narrative theory is applicable to film, and in particular if film language operates by the rules or at least comparable to those of written language, and if so, if literary narrative theories can be of any use for film.

Cinematic narrative has two classical approaches. One narratological point of view, specifically that by Genette and Chatman has to do with finding similarities between the natures of film and literature. Genette recognizes that film as a medium affects narrative system of written text in a certain way, however, not significantly enough to make it inapplicable. Another point of view, the one of Krakauer and Bordwell, highlights cinema's unique ability to transmit indexicality of objects, which is similar to photography, and impossible for literature, therefore for them the narratological system for film has to be completely different

one from the one developed for written text. Krakauer, specifically, highly valued cinema's capability of representing reality, as he argued, therefore, his school of thought became very useful for documentary filmmaking and opposed to artificiality of fiction side of the genre spectrum.

Metz (1990) advocates the idea of seeing cinema not as a language but as a unique semiotic system with its own functioning rules. For him, Genette's system of narrativity cannot be applied completely to film, even though some of its elements seem to work well with cinema. Terms like focalization, clearly borrowed from optical field, are tempting to be applied to film without a second thought. Metz warns however that the translation from literature to film is not as simple as it seems. For Metz, cinema stands on phenomenological narrative system of successive, encoded signs. His semiotic system highlights orientation on audio-visuality, not literary textuality of film.

Heath criticized Metz for formalism and universalization of film language and its meanings, and therefore drawn attention to questions of audience perception of cinema. Alternatives thus are psychoanalytic theories for reception studies, having to do with comparing films to dreams, hallucinations and desire (Kuhn & Schmidt, 2014).

Finally, contemporary scholars suggest a number of alternative and innovative lenses and perspectives for analyzing film narrative. Mark Kaplan has proposed to see cinematic products as Holonic structures, where the complexity of narrative elements is viewed as a chain of Holon, individual elements every one of which is both whole by itself and is a part of a bigger structure. Another system he applies for cinema is the one of quadrates. Kaplan organizes all meaning into four categories: individual interior, individual exterior, collective interior and collective exterior; and argues that every element of the film should be analyzed from all the four perspectives (Kaplan, 2010).

The problem arises when contemporary cinema, particularly but not exclusively auteur films with experimental hybrid approaches challenge well-defined classical systems of narrativization. Scholars indicate a tendency for complication of narrative structures in cinema since the decade of 1990s. Even though, they argue, such cases had happened before, for example, in avant-garde movement, in the previous turn of the centuries, audiovisual products increasingly break previously established systems (Kuhn & Schmidt, 2014). *Horse Money* is exactly the case proving the tendency.

The film puts a number of challenges for Genette's prism. It uses anachronisms as conceptual starting point, while far often not defining what are the exact types of anachronical leaps it makes. Certain scenes of the film might be understood as either flashbacks, flashforwards or present-time narrative elements simultaneously. The same confusion happens with the repetitiveness of narrative elements. The question of focalization and author's presence in the piece is another challenging aspect in relation to Genette's system. It turns out to be almost impossible to analyze *Horse Money* from the perspective of any narrative theory grounded in literary text school of narrative.

When it comes to Todorov's theory of Equilibrium, it falls useless for Costa's film. In the case of Costa's movie, Equilibrium has not existed in the first place, and was not reached by the end of the film. There is simply no place for Equilibrium in a film like *Horse Money*, however broadly we might define this term. Barth's Enigma seems more suitable as a perspective for discussion here. In *Horse Money* everything is enigmatic, the film operates as Enigma. One scene's mystery leads us to the next scene's mystery. However not all the elements of mystery get resolved for the viewer, it is rather far from that. The Levi-Strauss' theory of oppositions struggling within the film is semi-applicable. Whether a conflict clearly exists there, and it is a conflict between the marginalized community of Cape Verdeans and the Portuguese post-colonial political system, the opposition between life and death, love and violence, prosperity and poverty, sanity and madness; it is complicated to identify clearly who is the protagonist and who is an antagonist of the story. This can be seen clearly in the pre-final elevator scene, where the bronze soldier assumes both the positions of enemy and ally. Propp's model of characters therefore falls short in the labyrinths of ghostly-like, zombie-like, ultrahuman characters of *Horse Money*.

Krakauer's obsession with indexicality can be criticized for it tends to equalize realism and reality, and we should be careful with this distinction while talking about *Cavalo Dinheiro* (Pantenburg, 2010). But with that in mind, certain aspects of his school of thought are useful for discussing a film by the director who claimed that only idiots have to invent rather than reproduce (Moutinho & da Graça Lobo, 2015).

The theory by Metz seems to be one of the most relevant for thinking about *Horse Money*. Reliable mostly on the system of signs, symbols, free of literary narrative structures, the film could benefit from semiotic analysis. Pedro Costa, as it became clear from our interview with him, agrees with Metz on the fact that film is not a language and has to be treated and analyzed in a very different way. Even though some scholars claim we should not read

Horse Money symbolically (Branco, 2020), the director himself does not seem to understand why that would be a mistake.

Heath's perspective on dreams and hallucinations and their role in cinematic narrative would be useful for the delusional nature of the narrative of *Horse Money*, however Pedro Costa himself strongly disagrees with the perception theory for film analysis, as he highlighted in our interview.

Kaplan's integral cinema approach again seems to be extremely useful for classical cases of narrative structures, as it tends to systematize and explain production of realistic, convincing stories aiming to connect with the viewer by means of mimicking natural law of human perception of global systems. In other words, it would be useful for a film that aims to tell a coherent story.

The film *Horse Money* while is knitted out of representation, is spoken about as a post-narrative piece precisely because it is not trying to tell a story or even be a story. Even while having all the elements a story usually has (characters, setting, conflict, events with beginning and end, but not necessarily in the classic order), *Horse Money* is hardly aiming to represent a story. A mental landscape is suggested as one of the definitions instead (Cordeiro, 2017). This is exactly the point: the film does not show us a story, its aim instead is to immerse us into the way Ventura thinks, feels and remembers. While watching *Horse Money* we are not looking at the character's life from the perspective of an outsider, we are experiencing the constructed world on screen from inside the character.

It is because Ventura is generally confused about his own thoughts, feelings, memories and life in general, that to follow the post-narrative of *Horse Money* means to get lost many times. As much as the confusion can be irritating for the viewer at times, the movie itself is content with such wandering in darkness. Not knowing who is a character and who is a result of the character's imagination is normal. This confusion does not belong to the viewer only, we share it with the main protagonist (Seitz, 2015). What serves as beginning, middle and end of the story is open to interpretation.

The post-narrative built through the character's reflections and memories shows the consequences of Portugal's colonial history (Cerecina, 2016). It brings up the dialectic between individual and collective and challenges the conventional political representation of history. According to the director, the film takes place in eternal present which leaves no possibility of seeing the story as a timeline of events (Preto, 2017).

Post-narrative of *Horse Money* inevitably refers to post-structural and post-modern, thus something that breaks up with any positivist convention, certainty or singularity of

meaning. It is rather useful to speak of Costa's cinema in the context of the post-structural philosophical framework rather than of any single structural narrative theory.

Themes

- Time

Time is an essential aspect for *Cavalo Dinheiro*. This part reviews how time is represented as a theme in the film and how time is treated as a component of audio-visual piece of 104 minutes length. Time in the film is represented as fragmented, frozen and modified by memory (Cordeiro, 2017). "Past haunts present in the very fabric of film" (Pinkerton, 2015, p.1). As defined by Rancière, in *Horse Money* the time is condensed, and the temporal gaps are hidden since Ventura plays himself at different ages. Not only the character on screen looks the same while travelling through different periods of his own life (Rancière, 2015), different times can even coexist in the same shot.

The director does not mark shifts between past and present, flashbacks and real-time (Cerecina, 2016). This way, Rancière highlights, Costa narrativizes space by the noise of time (in Branco, 2020). The portrait of Ventura, which is a collective portrait, leading the viewer across years, is seen by the most poetic of critics as a landscape of time (Cordeiro, 2017).

The second temporal aspect has to do with slowness of pace, meditateness of the film rhythm. Some compare the film of Pedro Costa to Andy Warhol's cinema with its time stretched infinitely. This extension of time is the quality that constitutes realism of *Horse Money* (Pantenburg, 2010), if one may speak of any realism in regard of this highly stylized artistic construction. Patient observation is what contributes to perception of the film as realistic, Pantenburg argues (2010). The slowness in cinema with its idea that less is more, as Jaffe (2014) suggests, is able to connect past and present temporalities in the audience's reception. He recalls Laura Mulvey's association of continuous and dynamic concept of "now" as a juxtaposition to the motionless one of "then".

For Pedro Costa however, *Horse Money* opens the discourse about present time, the film for him is essentially about today and what we can do about the today we inhabit (Cordeiro, 2017). Similar to Tarkovsky who talked about time as a material for sculpturing and about a filmmaker as a sculptor, Cordeiro calls Costa an architect of time, and his cinema – a sculptural and a funerary art, more particularly, a tomb of the present. He quoted Rui Chafes in his comparison of sculpture with the art of those who cannot forget, therefore defining *Horse Money* as a memorial (Cordeiro, 2017). This echoes with Costa's own words: "Some people say they make films to remember, I think we make films to forget" (Preto, 2017, p.39).

- Space

In *Horse Money* time and space are the two realms connected to one another, the two indivisible concepts: “The matter is sparse, and time is suspended” (Preto, 2017). Spatial confinement therefore is an important element of the film (Landesman, 2015) which signifies also a time-loop, and ultimately a mind-loop. The environment should not be treated as a pre-given world filmed, it is a construction, a place for the characters to inhabit (Ribas & Cunha, 2020). Ventura travels in half-destructed institutional spaces, which resembles both a hospital and a prison, and this connection makes a lot of sense if we recall Foucaultian philosophy. At some point, the space transforms into an abandoned factory. Functions of the places are stripped away, establishing shots are rare (Cerecina, 2016) – the author is trying to not give any certainty, and therefore his cinematic world with the locations blending into one another offering no escape for the protagonist, works according to all the rules of dreams, or nightmares.

Preto (2017) analyses the location of the hospital as a place for the character to find himself between life and death. There he is diagnosed, stigmatized and institutionalized, disconnected from his freedom, dispossessed of time, history and rights. In this way, hospital is in fact a prison, and Ventura’s costume, a striped pajama, resembles the uniform of concentration camp prisoner for a reason. According to Agamben, concentration camp is a perfect representation of the modern politics (Fernández & Álvarez, 2015).

The final elevator scene not only confines the character even more for the whole 15 minutes of screen time, it puts him in a non-place (Branco, 2020), where he does not understand in which direction he is moving, and if this movement is spatial or temporal. This is why Branco calls this lift “a chamber of history” (Branco, 2020).

- Memory

Cavalo Dinheiro’s structure and aesthetics is based on the fragmented nature of memory (Sandu, 2019). The aim to memorize behind it merges with the one to forget. Pedro Costa helps his characters to forget, or get over what has happened to their lives (Preto, 2017), while simultaneously creating a memorial out of their stories for the generations to remember. His films, as he himself confessed, are not love stories but anxieties, “something which says to you: ‘Don’t forget’” (Costa, 2011, p.2).

The film is an example of the connection between individual and collective memory made in one piece (Cerecina, 2016). Individual memories of Ventura which Costa aimed to help him erase or at least tame, are fragments of which historical memory is constructed, and those

fragments should be not just buried but monumented in what Preto calls the living cemetery of history (2017).

Bureaucracy is an essential detail that stays present in the film's plot: Vitalina reading her birth and marriage certificates, Ventura waiting in front of a door of an abandoned factory office, talks to a doctor answering formal questions for a form to fill. This should not only be understood as a representation of Portuguese bureaucratic processes which can at times be Kafkaesque. It is a hint that institutionalization of individual is a connecting point between personal memories and history, and therefore, collective memory. Once an individual is erased, it is in bureau archives that the life keeps its trace. There it is documented, mediatized, and therefore, memorized. With *Horse Money* Pedro Costa who rebels against bureaucratization of mind (Costa, 2011), gives audience a symbolic warning: beware, if we do not put an effort to carve a memorial to our past, it will only exist as a standard form in database.

Finally, "this film, more than any other in Costa's oeuvre, rewards repeated viewing" (Cerecina, 2016, p.127), and this is one more quality that *Horse Money* shares with memory.

- Ritual & Repetition

As mentioned above, Pedro Costa uses repetition as an important element of both narrative, aesthetics and methodology (Ribas & Cunha, 2020). Preto calls *Horse Money* a spiritualist ritual (Preto, 2017). Indeed, with the director's later testimony that cinema has a ceremonial aspect for him and must be a ritual (Kasman, 2020), we get to see a connection between and the possible reason for his repetition and ritualism.

Reenactment as an ultimate repetition is what happens in the heads of the actors, the characters and their prototypes. This repetition is simultaneously a method of Costa's filmmaking, its plot, and the reason behind the very existence of the film. It is "a repetition that hopes, if only dimly, to encounter something for the first time, in order to get out of the cycle" (Fujiwara, 2016, p. 3, in Branco, 2020).

There is a lot of repetition in the scenes and dialogues of *Horse Money*. Vitalina is repeating the text from her and her husband's documents as if trying to learn it by heart, Ventura's visitors talk about the revolution as something that both had happened and is going to happen.

Multiple rehearsals and takes are again a repetition. In these repetitions the team searches for the perfection of their every scene. Costa refers to Chaplin's method as a similar one (Kasman, 2020).

The director finds repetition in history, and reveals it through the opening sequence of *Horse Money* (Branco, 2020). The film starts from the slide-show of the pictures by Jacob Riis

portraying the inhabitants of New York's Harlem in the shift of centuries, the 19th to the 20th. He echoes Inke Arns (2007) saying that repeating ourselves is our fate as mankind, in fact, he calls this fate a tragedy of everlasting present (Costa, 2015 in Branco, 2020).

The connection between ritual, repetition and medium of film is not accidental and explained in the chapter above (see Media and Ritual). Ritual is an action of remembering, and film is one of the most suitable platforms to serve as a stage for contemporary ritual.

- Mythic and Mystic

Cavalo Dinheiro ultimately should be perceived as a representation on metaphysical level (Grozdanovic & Grozdanovic, 2015). Jacques Rancière (2015) highlights mythic dimension of the film, finds references to Ancient Greek mythology and suggests to take its construction for comprehension of the cinematic reality of the film. In particular, he interprets it as Hades' world where the hospital stands for Charon's ferry carrying Ventura from life to death (Rancière, 2015). Some call Ventura an exiled who had in fact died a thousand deaths (Branco, 2020), and haunts the reality of the film, trying to come back to the living (Preto, 2017). The ghostly theme is what almost all the critics mention in relation to *Horse Money*'s aesthetics. For Rancière (2015), cinema is in its quintessence a medium for ghosts from the past or another world to get evoked once again in front of our eyes and tell their stories; and we can hardly argue with this metaphor.

Pinkerton (2015) sees Ventura as enacting for himself and us, his audience, the scene of final judgment, not being sure if he is alive or not anymore. The film is itself a passage for its viewers into the realm of ghostly (Ribas & Cunha, 2020).

Alongside with the image of ghostly in the critical discourse there is one of zombie. The characters and the dark aesthetics of shots are seen as inspired by Tournier's zombie movies (Rancière, 2015). In fact, the scene of an encounter with military ghosts in elevator has been already seen in the Tournier's *Bedlam* (1946) (Ribas & Cunha, 2020). Some connect the film's mysticism with Friedrich Murnau's noir, seeing zombie as the key archetype for Pedro Costa's oeuvre since *Casa de Lava* (1994). They highlight political dimension comparing Ventura and others to living deads in the hands of the political system (Fernández & Álvarez, 2015).

The duality between existence and non-existence of the protagonist leads António Preto (2017) to see motives of Francisco Goya's *Caprichos*, with its monstrous figure of a ghost who had visited Hamlet, with its perplexing ability for portraiture of the non-existent in a realistic way.

Ghosts and zombies, are Ventura and the others spirits with no bodies or bodies with no spirits?

Character

As Pedro Costa himself confessed, once he first met Ventura in the middle of Fontainhas neighborhood, he was wandering through the streets and talking to himself. His endless internal monologue allowed the director see a bottomless dark pit inside this person and it was the starting point for the construction of the character (Kasman, 2020). “If you place your camera in front of Ventura or Vitalina you must be prepared to face your own solitude”, Costa said (Kasman, 2020).

Construction is the key word for understanding characters of Ventura, Vitalina and the others: “that they have stepped outside themselves and they begin to look for a memory of the people they have known, of their pasts. For me, in the best cases, a character is many people concentrated in one body”, the director claims (Branco, 2020). Cordeiro (2017) suggests to see the prototypes as intercessors of an artwork that had to go through fabrication in order to appear as characters on screen. This way one character being many people, in other words a collective portrait, is what makes *Horse Money* political, and this is perhaps what lies in the Cordeiro’s definition of the landscape of time. The characters of *Horse Money* do not only represent other people and their experiences (Cerecina, 2016), they also at times exchange the roles, blend into each other, repeat each other’s lines and adopt each other’s memories. In addition to that, they play themselves in different times of their lives (Rancière, 2015). Among the commonalities between them all is the fact that everyone seems to be sick or dying (Ribas & Cunha, 2020). Indeed, Ventura’s poor health condition, both physical and mental, was not fictional at all (Cronk, 2020). His hands are shaking in real life and memories are coming as nightmares and reveries from the traumatic past (Branco, 2020), (Cerecina, 2016).

Through the reenactment of past experiences, dreams, fears, and pain, *Horse Money* is a work about memory, for memory, and through memory. Some mention the therapeutic quality inherent to these reenactments, however without defining whether the client for this therapy is the protagonist or audience, and how exactly the therapeutic effect is reached (Grozdanovic & Grozdanovic, 2015). Most certainly, it is an exploration of psychological purgatory and internal terrain (Young, 2014).

Aesthetics

The work uses stillness, darkness and slow pace as the main aesthetic criteria. Stillness is a representation of the state of in-betweenness, of being stuck, left out of life. Darkness with

its Caravaggian, or as others would say Rembrandtian (Sandu, 2019) construction of light speaks of disease, death and grief (Branco, 2020). Slowness of rhythm as well as digitality of the image is what constitutes Pedro Costa's realistic style (Jaffe, 2014), which however stands alongside with dreamy, phantasmagoric and theatrical features (Ribas & Cunha, 2020), (Grozdanovic & Grozdanovic, 2015).

Critics point out a specific way of constructing the cinematic space through work with angles in the shots. The composition Costa chooses is unstable and has no pictorial center, the diagonals are vivid but make viewer get lost in depth, height and sense of gravity (Ribas & Cunha, 2020). Therefore, in order for the reality to get reinvented, he reinvents the representation of time and space.

All the elements discussed above nurture the looseness of narrative, unfocused on the plotline for the benefit of portraiture of a person broken, tired, confused and lost in the jungle of his own mind. As a result, *Horse Money* is neither a call to action nor an attempt to pity or aestheticize misery (White-Nockleby, 2018), being clearly aware of its one representative quality (Landesman, 2015).

The referential palette found by scholars and critics is wide, ranging from Greek (Rancière, 2015) and Christian mythology (Branco, 2020), (Sandu, 2019) to art of Charles Baudelaire, Bertolt Brecht, Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, Fritz Lang, and Jean-Luc Godard (Grozdanovic & Grozdanovic, 2015).

What the critics agree about is the fact that *Horse Money* has signified a shift in the aesthetics of Pedro Costa's oeuvre (Cerecina, 2016), (Grozdanovic & Grozdanovic, 2015). This tendency will only become more vivid with his next film *Vitalina Varela*.

Political aspect

The more individual pain is, the more it is political, Pedro Costa convinced (Kasman, 2020). *Cavalo Dinheiro* cannot be comprehended outside of the context of Portuguese colonial history and its consequences on migration, minorities and current democratic regime. The film is putting a number of inconvenient questions regarding the idealization of the Carnation revolution, class division of contemporary Portuguese society, and marginalization of the immigrants from ex-colonies like Cabo Verde (Branco, 2020). The film shatters any idealization and tranquilization with the political situation of today by pointing a ray of light onto the hidden neighborhoods of Fontainhas and their inhabitants, both in a literal and

metaphoric way. What did the revolution bring to people like Ventura (Rancière, 2015) ? What has to change in order for citizens from the ex-colonies living in Portugal to have their voices heard, their rights in spheres of public life acquired; for racial violence to stop, for contemporary Portugal to stop being a limbo with neither possibilities nor exit for these people (Branco, 2020)? This is exactly the code hidden in the seemingly weird name of the film: the horse named Money which Ventura had owned back home, has been torn apart by wolves, and while being in Portugal has no sense anymore, there is nothing left for him in Cabo Verde either.

In regard to native Portuguese society, the problem of hyperidentity takes place in the discourse. The so-called “excess of existence” which came from the self-proclamation of Portugal as the oldest nation of Europe, stayed within the society as a consequence of the old Salazar’s regime. Preto (2017) suggests to see Ventura as a ghost specifically in this context, a ghost of the political regime. The crucial injustice here, he emphasizes, is in the fact that people like Ventura, representatives of the working class, were used and exploited for rebuilding the new democratic Portugal in a very literal sense of the word. However as this often happens with working class in many different countries, the government has forgotten them as soon as their work was done. Their existence is ignored, and that is what makes Ventura a prisoner of the revolution (Branco, 2020), a character in limbo, a bodiless ghost, a voiceless zombie, a futureless undead.

Critic

Contemporary artistic process is not anymore interested in water lilies, Jacques Rancière declares. Instead it finds aesthetics in rougher objects and environments of everyday life (2008). This stands as a countercriticism for those accusing Pedro Costa in aestheticizing poverty, which is one of the main points for the critic of *Horse Money* and some of his other works. Rancière sees in Costa’s aesthetics a focus on the possibilities of life and art within the situation of misery, which in this case differs from the accusations, and highlights the film’s capacity to give a voice to the marginalized community. Among the counterarguments is also the fact that the representatives of the poor do aestheticize themselves, Ventura’s dandyish style is a proof of that (Pinkerton, 2015).

The second point of criticism is looseness of narrative and excess of theatricality in *Horse Money*, since the film is intellectually challenging and requires an effort from the audience to meet it half way (Grozdanovic & Grozdanovic, 2015). Apart from the narrative,

the ambiguity is caused also by hybridity of the film approach (Landesman, 2015). As Landesman argues, distinction between documentary and fiction helps audience to produce the adequate response to the material. Lack of this definition adds to viewer's confusion with how to apprehend what they see. However, Pedro Costa is not the only filmmaker who chooses to create the cinema of in-betweenness. Hybridity, as discussed above, is an important contemporary trend, which is why the problem of perception, and understanding the concepts of truth and representation are more and more at stake nowadays.

Case Study of the film *Atlantis* by Valentin Vasyanovych

Introduction

The following article is an analysis of *Atlantis*, a film by Valentin Vasyanovych. This case study is focused on the questions of the role of artistic reenactment for this production, and in particular, the special modality of reenactment used in this case. With help of literature review and semi-structured interviews with the crew members of the film, we investigate how the artistic approach reflects and affects the political situation in contemporary Ukraine and its discourse.

The following points are at the center of the research:

- Politics
- Aesthetics
- Hybridity
- Method
- Metaphors and Archetypes

“Cinema is pulling me back from [the war] there to civil life, even more effectively than my own family does. When I return home, I have to be myself. And when I arrive at a film set, I can be a completely different person.”

Andriy Rymaruk

Politics

Atlantis is a 2019 Ukrainian movie that is constructed around a political situation, personal and collective memory, and trauma, which links it with the other case studies for this work, and makes a great example of a politically impactful reenactment-based film. The most internationally awarded in Ukrainian history film (Korniienko, 2020), *Atlantis* deals with PTSD, war, climate change, and the negative sides of capitalism. It renders them into a poetic dark imagination of the nearest future stroke by the war in Donbas which began in 2014 (Sobczynski, 2021).

As Danylenko (2020) highlighted, the politics of Russia at the time before the full-scale invasion was to conceal the fact of their participation in the Donbas war, which made films about that issue so crucial for inviting Western audiences to look closer at the war and its contributors. The director however is not overly optimistic about the political power of his creation, he argues that an auteur product has a potentially less impact on a mass

audience than a mainstream film: “...look, we have our president Zelensky. He has become a president thanks to a film. *The People’s Servant* is a series, three episodes. I guess that means that mainstream cinema is working a bit more effectively than the auteur one. Auteur cinema is a good channel to spread certain ideas to a worldwide audience, only if you are lucky enough to get to A class festival, and participate in the Q&As. ...As long as mine is an auteur artistic expression, it has a lesser impact. But anyways it becomes a reason to speak at the festivals about the war in Ukraine with Europeans or Americans, with the whole world.”

Valentin Vasyanovych, who was behind writing, producing, directing, cinematography, and editing of his film, offers something more than just the portrait of the destroyed region. He stretches his imagination and makes the dream of Ukrainians come true: in the story world of *Atlantis*, the war comes to an end. Remarkably however, the author does not pursue a blindly optimistic view on the future of the region. The war had destroyed everything it could have – people, infrastructures, economy, nature, the very land and water in Donbas. The region is poisoned and uninhabitable (Lattanzio & Lattanzio, 2021). This situation is not entirely fictional, according to the main actor of the film, and the veteran of the Donbas war Andriy Rymaruk: “The ecological disaster is already beginning there, Valentyn looked into the future. I am witnessing now how rivers and lakes are disappearing, water quality is already becoming a problem on the East [of Ukraine]. I was seeing it back then and still seeing now.”

What makes the dystopia so urgent and universally relevant is precisely the awareness that war affects not just human beings but also environments, particularly, nature. Climatic catastrophe is shown as an implication of the conflict itself, which grants the film with an aura similar to dystopian *Mad Max* (Miller, 2015) and auteur hybrid *Lessons of Darkness* (Herzog, 1992). This is why it is landscapes that are the key to the imagery of *Atlantis*.

Aesthetics

The film is built with long takes of mostly static shots, in the tradition of “slow cinema”, which some critics associate with the style of early Jarmusch, Kubrick, Chantal Akerman and Werner Herzog (Kenny, 2021; Lattanzio & Lattanzio, 2021; Sobczynski, 2021). Some refer to the style as the signature of Slavic arthouse (Felperin, 2021) and see the influence of *Stalker* by Tarkovsky (Lattanzio & Lattanzio, 2021). “My experience of working on documentaries helps a lot. The method there is to take a camera and a tripod, then you have your character in the shot, you press Rec, and you can see if there is a film or not. You

wait and wait, up until at some point – boom! – and you get goosebumps on your skin. The film has emerged.” – shares the director, - “The main thing from that moment on is to not press pause. It doesn’t matter that the shot is already 10 minutes long. I can feel this energy somehow even physically.”

The scene of the factory takeover by American entrepreneurs echoes the iconic *Big Brother* setting, the referentiality which the director himself however does not confirm (Basse, 2021). The soundscape of the story mirrors the main character’s mindset, and thus evolves from industrial heavy cacophony towards the resolution in natural more harmonious sounds like rain and birdsong (Baughan, 2019).

In regard to character analysis, striking is the metaphor of ghost used by Basse in his critical review (2021). Considering how many times have critics compared Pedro Costa’s Ventura to a ghost, one is made to think that ghosts seem to be a popular way to represent heroes trapped in their PTSD, whose life is better described as a post-mortal limbo, and their journey as a search for escape from the memories.

Since the stillness of the shots is compared to the cold-hearted attitude of an autopsy (Accomando, 2021), one of the rare movements of the camera, a slow zooming in used in the scene of the love making, might suggest a gradual coming back to life. Perhaps, that is why Felperin (2021) dares to call the movie oddly hopeful and even upbeat. For Vasyanovych, the absence of motion both in the camera and within his scene’s settings create a suitable stage to highlight the state of minds of the characters through their body language (Korniienko, 2020). The director highlights one more essential relation of his aesthetics and his theme: “Regarding the perception in Ukraine, a lot of people with the war experiencing background came to watch the film... The most important thing I did hear was that they noticed the film was viscous and heavy, and that feels exactly like PTSD. It feels like a slow, lethargic and pressuring state of mind, which was transmitted by the atmosphere of the film”.

Hybridity

Hybridity of *Atlantis* is less obvious than the one of the other case studies investigated in this work. The script is completely fictional and was based on an extrapolation of the political situation in Eastern Ukraine at the time. And still, one of the most crucial elements of the concept is war-related background of the non-professional cast. The director argues, war veterans are the people with the unique imprint of emotion on their faces, that can be documented by camera but not copied by any actor (Korniienko, 2020). This statement may

be argued as any aspect of a certain conceptual and artistic vision. The question to ask here is whether the facial expression indeed carries and transmits that unique aura of PTSD, or is it audience who “perceives” this aura knowing that the person they are seeing on screen was suffering from PTSD. Whichever option is true, Western critics mostly compliment work of the non-actors in the film (Baughan, 2019; Felperin, 2021). We would like to however disagree, and suggest that for eye and ear of a native-speaker, the acting work might at times be not that convincing, something the director agrees upon: “I see that some things there sound not very convincing.” This flaw however can be seen as strength since it constantly reminds viewers, they are watching not an actor performing, but a former soldier enacting his own struggles to come back to “normal life”. As one of the reviewers notices, Sergey’s line “I used to live like normal people” sounds nostalgic (Harvey & Harvey, 2019). This, we suggest, is one of the moments where the character and the actor merge, it is not just fictional Sergey speaking, it is what Andrey says through his character. The actor agrees on the fact that his character’s phrases sounded in fact like his own.

The actors’ contribution to the storyline, story world, and the characters they play is an important aspect of the methodology of *Atlantis*. “All of the dialogues of mine and Luyda, and partially Vasya, were rewritten on set during the rehearsals”, testifies actor Andriy Rymaruk. From the interview with the director we discover that “the guys were actively arguing, about the lines, for example: “I would never say it this way”, and were suggesting certain solutions... It was very curious to observe how these two very different people would launch verbal battles regarding one situation or another.” Rymaruk confirms: “I contributed with my experiences. For example, how to hold a gun, how to shoot correctly, to move, to run. Also, when you’re under stress, you carry an insured person not exactly in a proper medical way, but the way the situation allows... Luda, the other main character, added a lot of details from her medical experience. Then, the guys from “Black Tulip”, the evacuation group, they gave to Vasyanovych terabytes of video footage about how the excavations were executed and so on. So, based on this research through knowledge and memories, Vasyanovych at the rehearsals would modify the script.”

Method

By choosing *Atlantis* as a case study for the research on reenactment in film, we hereby argue that reenactment is present in its method. This statement might seem confusing taking into consideration that *Atlantis* is a dystopia which story is placed in the near future. Perhaps, the term ‘enactment’ could seem to be more accurate in this case.

However, the situation with the method and process of integration into the story world of *Atlantis* invites for a closer look.

Andriy Rymaruk and Vasyl Antoniuk who play the main roles are veterans. Rymaruk still volunteers supplying Ukrainian soldiers on the frontline. The characters of sappers, medics, military people and a coroner were in fact played by those who had according experiences (Korniienko, 2020). Unlike Pedro Costa, who had confessed in the interview for the previous case study that he too had a trauma to contribute to his film, Valentin Vasyanovych honestly recognizes, he was far away from the position of a traumatized person. That is why it was important for him to conduct casting among war veterans. He also claims, his actors were able to work through their PTSD with help of the filming process (Basse, 2021). The crew however does not speak much about the details of the healing process, and the mental state of the actors before and after the (re)enactment. Between themselves they even joke about the second PTSD caused by the filming itself (Korniienko, 2020).

In our opinion, the film is exemplary for the framework of our research because Rymaruk was forced to reenact his current mental state, and also to enact the future he was struggling to imagine. According to him, “The hardest thing here was to imagine myself in the future. So, those scenes where the characters are reflecting on their past, it was hard to transfer myself into the future and to pull back again, and to use my own skills and memories from war and so on.” As Sobczynski notices (2021), the film is not plot-driven, rather it is a journey through the mental landscape of the main character. The method of (re)enactment involves long takes and multiple rehearsals (up to 45 per one shot) in order to help the characters reach the immersion into scenes (Korniienko, 2020). This multiplicity, we suggest, is the necessary element which engines accessing and transformation of memory. Such methodology is one more common trait *Atlantis* shares with *Horse Money*. The insight of the case of *Atlantis* lies in the fact that trauma can be reenacted and worked through not only by repeating scenes from one’s past, but also from imagining and enacting one’s future.

Even though Vasyanovych has remained in ultimate control of all the creative processes, as a head of every department starting from scriptwriting and finishing with editing; in the process of making, the storyline took a dynamic turn. The original screenplay has been deeply immersed with the political context and overloaded with its details. The early idea was to make a dark story in a classic genre (Korniienko, 2020). This was not enough, the director confesses. After the shooting and the initial editing was done, Vasyanovych noticed that the story even though not lacking realism or gloominess, was not sufficient. The female line and Katya’s character appeared as a solution. It was a way to bring love and hope into the story (Korniienko, 2020). Even though the purely romantic role of her character was fairly criticized (Baughan, 2019), what this decision of the director marks is a shift of his piece from purely postmodern self-aware gloominess, to metamodern search for sincerity and hope. As highlighted by scholars, those elements are characteristics of the new philosophic wave of the 2010s (Pipere & Mārtinsone, 2022).

A part of the shooting process took place outside of the city where the main actor lived with his family, which was important for him and his role. Rymaruk had a chance to spend some time by himself and isolate of the usual person he was: “I began to “wear” the role, imagining myself in future, and it happened to be easy and interesting for me. After we would come back from the rehearsal, I would lock myself in the room and had no contact with anyone at all before I would arrive on set. I guess I succeeded, if I did not, I would not have kept acting after *Atlantis*. And since then I have already starred in seven films, both short and features.”

This testimony plays a contradictory role in relation to the director’s claim that since his actors were non-professional, directing them was reduced to choreographing bodies. Whether Vasyanovich was aware of it or not, his following words proved to be an understatement: “When you work with non-professional cast you shouldn’t expect from them deep emergence into emotional sphere. They do not have acting skills... Emotional part and depth, or reflection was out of the question. We used *mise-en-scene*... I just look at Andriy’s face and it seems to me that I can see his trauma without him having to do anything.” Considering how Rymaruk describes his process of working on the scene most difficult for him, it might be argued that the director took the veteran’s facial expression for granted: “In the scene of coming back home, which was the difficult one, I have imagined my own family, and how it would be if I entered my home and wouldn’t see my wife and children... It doesn’t show at all, but there was a tear indeed. This one was hard... Also, a very traumatic scene for me was the morgue scene. Because that was a real case in my life, I was collecting my soldiers, and there was a lack of medical staff... and I had to drive them directly to morgue, I’ve seen that happening. How they review the body, then question the people and so on... how they announce the reason of death and all that procedure. Flashbacks.” The use of the words “flashbacks” and “traumatic” here suggests that the process of reconnection with the original event has taken place for the actor. Whether it has been a therapeutic experience or the other way around however, stayed unclear, since it was not a relevant point for the director: “Our aim was to make a film. I’m not a psychotherapist.” In addition to emotional pressure, the crew had to go through extreme physical difficulties: “When we were shooting the scene with the broken car, - Rymaruk testifies, - it was already November, and the temperature was around zero. We even had to sometimes stop the shoot due to snowing. It was raining in the scene, we’ve been watered additionally, and at the same time we only had two sets of costumes, so the third take we started already wet. And when we would start making out with Lyuda in the car, we would be already shaking.”

The question of ethical treatment from the side of the director is a relevant one. However his main actor seems to be contemptuous about his experiences, which makes the question of ethics in *Atlantis* even more multifaceted: “After some time, you stop resisting these difficulties and understand the importance of the process you’re in,” shares Andriy.

Vasyanovych suggests that it is precisely due to these extreme conditions that the veterans could experience their reenactments not just from within the film plot, but also in regard to the overall production process: “Maybe it is because the shooting process resembles army. You have a mission you go on with around fifty people, it is tough conditions and discipline, you are far away from home and you make close connections with other people, and filmmaking is quite hard work. You have to wake up at five in the morning, go out to the field covered with snow, and the whole day you have to work there, freezing in attempts to get the perfect take. On the way home you stop at a gas station and get a bottle of whisky, get back to the hotel, and communication with friends continues. You go to sleep at 2 am, just to wake up at 5 again the next day. And that is your life for 3 months. This is quite a hard, uncomfortable, and maybe that is how it works. And of course, in *Atlantis*, the guys had to talk through the themes of war and losing friends. And that resembles what therapists do.”

Metaphors and Archetypes

Analyzing certain elements of the plot from the perspectives of metaphoric and archetypic brings up curious insights.

As the story opens, Sergey's life is wrapped around his work at the factory. His character is a servant of industry, a slave of machinery. As one can observe, that current state of things brings Sergey's PTSD to the surface, moreover for Ivan the circumstances become fatal.

After the factory gets taken over by American businessmen, a newer technology replaces human labor (the scene of Ivan's suicide might suggest the incompatibility of human sensitivity with the demands of heavy industry), machines symbolically take over “insignificant” people like Sergey. The hero proceeds his journey to start doing what can be seen as more “humane” work: he becomes a deliverer of clean water to people of the exhausted region. The character evolves from being a slave of industry to serving for living beings. However more noble and more humane, this volunteering job does not grant him with the redemption he so badly needs, his path is far from an end. Sergey volunteers to be a part of the group in charge of exhumation of the dead. They search for corpses of dead soldiers and civilians in order to bring them back to their families and give them a chance to be buried properly. In this final stage of his journey, Sergey becomes a servant for the dead.

Such a finale is particularly interesting in the framework of “bad death”, a concept by Nadia Seremetakis (Bennett, 2005). According to it, unwitnessed or improperly mourned death is symbolically not recognized, as a result there is no space for the necessary closure. The importance of a ritual and an acknowledgement is highlighted here. There is a similar symbolism involved in the process of healing from trauma, according to our findings from

the previous chapter. Trauma has to be exhumated, witnessed, mourned, and ritualized, for it to stay as an external memorial instead of the darkness eating a survivor within.

In this sense, it is obvious that for Sergey, exhumation of the bodies becomes the one job that can give him some kind of a resolution. It is important to recall at this point the graphic, almost physically painful for the audience scene with an iron from the first part of the film. This scene goes right after another shocking scene: the suicide of Sergey's friend Ivan, who jumps into molten metal at the factory.

In his book on artistic vision of trauma and empathy, Bennett (2005) speaks of the relevance in this regard of the premodern concept of imitation of pain. *Imitatio Christi*, he underlines, which is encrypted into the very iconography of Christianity, has its key role in allowing viewer to empathize by taking on the pain of the other.

Sergey's impulse to burn his own leg with an iron becomes an echo, the necessary empathic response to his friend's death, the proof of their bond, and of the need to redeem Ivan's "bad death". "He wants to feel it, wake up and feel it, since his friend basically burned to death", confirms the director.

Bennett confirms: trauma itself is a metaphoric "bad death". A peculiar psychological quality of trauma, he highlights, lies in the phenomenon that it goes unrecognized by its victim. He backs his argument by the studies such as Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1990) and the developments of his discussion by contemporary scholars. They argue that trauma itself cannot be only caused by the initial event of being hurt. It appears in case the pain is not properly recognized and assimilated. That is precisely, Bennett argues, the reason why traumatic memory has haunting effect on survivor. Ghosts return in order to be recognized, redeemed of "bad death" and of oblivion.

The protagonist of *Atlantis* is doing precisely that: he returns to the battlefield in order to search for the bodies of dead Ukrainians, therefore face and "embody" his personal and collective national trauma, and give it a chance to receive a proper ritual of recognition, redeem it from the oblivion. Only then Sergey finds a way to see the "afterlife", to recognize that his future can have hope, and that new beginnings are possible. We suggest hereby that the owner of the memories Andriy Rymaruk might himself have had a possibility to follow such a mental journey through the immersion into the mind of his protagonist, and reimagining his own future.

Case Study of the film *The Act of Killing* by Joshua Oppenheimer

The following text provides critical review for the film by Joshua Oppenheimer *The Act of Killing* (2012). This case study covers the following points:

- Aesthetics & Film structure
- Hybridity
- Genre
- Method
- Political activism
- Criticism
- Ethics
- Documentary and Philosophy

As a result, it highlights the relevance of the case for the overall research in artistic reenactment used in hybrid cinema, its role as a method to work with trauma, it proves reenactment to be a transformative practice, both in a personal and societal scale.

Aesthetics & Film structure

As a hybrid film which combines both fictional and documentary methods, its aesthetics itself is also eclectic. While the “documentary” scenes use a visual tradition of observational documentary, the reenacted scenes borrow its visual language from a number of classical Hollywood cinema genres. It is important however to consider that rather offering a full resemblance, this latter aesthetics suggests an armature imitation of what Hollywood movies look like. Therefore, Tiwon (2014) poses a relevant question of whether this way film’s aesthetics offers distancing for spectators as a tool for perception of the movie.

The film employs participatory approach, therefore does not attempt to provide linear or one-sided narrative to represent the Indonesian genocide of 1960s (Reestorff, 2015). In fact, due to this hybridity the very question of whether to consider *The Act of Killing* (later TAOK) a documentary at all or not, stays open for some of critics (Tiwon, 2014). Others see fictionality of the film as a documentary strategy (Iversen & Nielsen, 2016). The director himself describes his creation as a “documentary of imagination” (Hill, 2021), as his attempt was to document the way his characters imagined themselves.

- Film in film

Method of reenactment is the key characteristics of the film (KEMA, 2016). The structure of the film employs fictional reenacted scenes wrapped into the narrative of documentary observations of the production, and reflection on these scenes. In other words, there is a film in film, and if we were to identify the main narrative line of *The Act of Killing*, we would suggest it is exactly that: a story of the interaction between the protagonists and their own media creation based on their memories of atrocities executed decades ago.

This participatory approach, as Reestorff notices (2015), is built within hierarchy where the director Joshua Oppenheimer has final control over the footage, even though its creation was based on artistic decisions of the protagonists. Therefore, Oppenheimer creates kind of a lab, where the protagonists, their memories and intentions of self-representation assume the role of the researched, while Oppenheimer is clearly the researcher. Mutual awareness of these roles is questioned by many, and we will discuss this in detail in the subchapter on ethical issues. Reestroff (2015) suggests due to this hierarchy, the role of the gangsters should be considered as nonparticipation. He however acknowledges therapeutic effect on them as a result of the process. The fact of the matter here is that by conducting such an experiment, the filmmaker uncovers not just hidden pages of Indonesian history, but largely a conflict in the very notion of truth, relationship of the perpetrators with morality and their own vision of their collective past.

This approach of combining the two different perspectives, one of the protagonists and another one of the film director, is central to TAOK. Innovation of the method lies precisely in the connection between these two lenses. Therefore, crucial transitions in TAOK happen when the protagonist Anwar Congo watches his own fictional footage (Wartenberg, 2017). This is when recognition, reflection and transformation become possible.

Many scholars highlight absence of traditional for documentaries element of author's voice over. Oppenheimer willingly refuses to use the tool that could provide a direct clarification and/or manipulate audience perception (Nichols, 2013). We would like to argue that the film offers clarification and guidance for the viewer in a subtler way by utilizing cinematic language without help of verbal one. It is in the very concept of Oppenheimer's film to defy expectations coming from conventional cinema. However, audience still can have a resort in their need for text through the official webpage of the film, which provides a large amount of information on the historical background, methodology, protagonists, moral stand of the authors and their biographies. In fact, this online platform becomes a reason for understanding *The Act of Killing* as a transmedia project.

According to Lyn Hejinian, the term “barbaric” can be implemented to characterize art that investigates posttraumatic reality, and it is due to its relation to strangeness, foreignness and bizarreness. Barbarism is what critics find in the aesthetics TAOK (KEMA, 2016).

Scholars break down reenactments from Oppenheimer’s movie to these several categories: dreams and nightmares, imaginings, intertextuality, straight invention (Iversen & Nielsen, 2016). They highlight that the main reason behind using these methods is not playing with genres for the sake of it, but rather an attempt to shape the representation of memories.

Hybridity

The hybrid film as it is, TAOK problematizes factual and fictional, which we believe can be insightful. This problem within the context of cinema is discussed by many scholars and filmmakers: Werner Herzog, who can be called an advocate of the borderline space between fact and fiction through his theory and practice, uses the term post-fact world that can be created in documentary filmmaking as a tool to access truth (in Biswas, 2018). Stella Bruzzi highlights a quality of Oppenheimer’s movie: according to her, his documentary presents a mutable truth, the truth which only emerges due to the filming process. Her concept, we suggest, can be applied to films with participatory approach in general. Dominic LaCapra questions the very process of working through difficult memories for film, and what exactly is camera’s role in evoking these encounters with one’s memories (in Crichlow, 2013).

Here it is necessary to look at this case study not as an exception of the mainstream trend, not as an experimental work which came out as a result of author’s genius only, but as a film which constitutes a part of what John Corner describes as ‘post-documentary world’. This term describes a trend popular for documentary and television content of 2010s, where elements of factual are told with help of fictional elements, be it reenactment, genre stylization or fictionalization of true stories which produces a range of textual hybrids (Hearman, 2014). Hybrid-driven productions often were used for representation or subversion of established political notions. This brings a set of dilemmas, as for example the problem of objectivity versus subjectivity, ethical issues arising from that, fiction as a conventional genre versus fiction as a quality, and ultimately, deceive versus imagination (Iversen & Nielsen, 2016).

However, while diversifying documentary, contemporary television simultaneously typified it as a genre. As a result, there is a set of expectations general viewer approaches a documentary with (Hearman, 2014). For example, victim’s testimony on camera, author’s voice over to guide the perception, a deep excursion into data of historical background, and usually takes a clear moral position.

The Act of Killing breaks the conventions and with that confuses audience's expectations. It employs fictionality as a rhetorical method (Iversen & Nielsen, 2016), it communicates imagined as if remembered, and remembered as if imagined, it also highlights the very confusion between these two cognitive modes.

The used modes of fictionality can be categorized into reenactments, dreams and nightmares, imaginings, intertextuality and straight invention (Iversen & Nielsen, 2016).

One of the most important ideological points the film makes is deliberately stepping outside of dichotomy of good and evil, right and wrong (Walker, 2013), but just in order to delve deeper into the research on empathy and aggression, which are both at the core of human nature. The film therefore makes a philosophical claim, and as it often happens in contemporary philosophy, it poses questions instead of dictating answers.

- Audience perception and trust

It is important to note that this hybrid-inclusive method comes with a consequence of trust issues or, in other words, confusion for the audience who struggle at times to determine whether the scene is a documentary observation or if it was staged. Thus, Bill Nichols (2013) questions nature of the TV show broadcast scene, where the perpetrators talk about their criminal past in front of excited television audience and anchor. He highlights his own uncertainty regarding if it was all staged just for Oppenheimer. The same doubts Nichols and some other critics have in regard to the very last scene where Anwar seems to be attempting with no success to spit his guts out. Some go as far as to call the scene a result of bad acting (Cribb, 2014), and others respond with a counterargument that the scene is a convincing acting out of one's inability to vomit (Iversen & Nielsen, 2016). For a character that pays so much attention to the elegance of his own look, while being little aware of extreme methods of contemporary performance, it seems to us unlikely that he would do it on purpose or even agree to act a scene like that out, was it completely fictional.

Even though the director himself disproves the theory about fictionality of this last scene (Nichols, 2013), Erol Morris, who is an executive producer of the film stays skeptical. Some audience shape a perception that Anwar, the immoral perpetrator, comes to a self-recognition and thus growth by the end of the movie (van Klinken, 2014). There are others who suggest a possibility of manipulative nature of documentary has taken place (Iversen & Nielsen, 2016), last but not least, some simply resist to believe in the possibility of Anwar's character shift, and this is often the case with Indonesian critical audience (Wandita, 2014), which makes sense

if we think of how challenging it can be to accept humane side in a character of aggressor, especially for the victim.

Perhaps, an understanding of the scene as both a performance and a reality at the same time, the one position that marries the two opposites, can be a reconciliation here (Walker, 2013). Nichols suggests a peculiar reading for *The Act of Killing*, and we believe it can be implied for the final scene: “We confront the paradoxical power of a double bind: If you believe what you see and hear, you will understand the truth, but you can only understand the truth if you don’t believe what you see and hear—at least not entirely” (Nichols, 2013, p. 29).

Genre

Problematic is also assigning TAOK to one specific genre. Because it does not dictate a specific mode of understanding the ‘truth’, it cannot be categorized as an advocacy documentary, even though it shares some elements with one. Likewise, ethnographic documentary is not the case here either. And even though the director was inspired by methods of cinema vérité, his film could not go further away from its dogmas (Precup, 2017).

In fact, some critics argue that *The Act of Killing* is not a documentary at all (Tiwon, 2014), which is a statement that can be as well made about every hybrid film, and it would be partially fair. Particularly this one has performative character and a complex temporality, as noticed by Reestorff (2015).

What falls easier into a categorization is genres of the reenacted scenes, since those derive their methods, aesthetics, and their very inspiration from classic Hollywood movies popular in the 50s and 60s. The most peculiar here is the fact that back in the days Anwar and the other gangsters were cinephiles, their little business was scalping movie tickets at a local cinema of Medan. As the communist movement progressed in Indonesia, there was an attempt to ban American cinema, which Anwar and his colleagues fought against. Their inspiration in musicals, film-noirs and westerns has been setting up the gang’s mood, style, fashion, and it ended up inspiring, according to Anwar’s testimony, one of the methods for killing his victims – strangling with wire (Precup, 2017). We go as far as to hypothesize that those movies, with mafia aestheticized and crimes fetishized, where murder could be committed in a light-hearted way to a soundtrack of cha-cha-cha, has worked for the perpetrators from Medan as a motivation, an example and a permission to commit their real crimes. According to Anwar, he was even able to go to a greater length of violence than the one watched in the films (Precup, 2017). In one of the scenes, Anwar shares that he has been able to kill “in a happy way” after watching a cheerful musical with Elvis Presley.

In this case, would it mean that his own acts of killing were in some way reenactments of the murders he has been watching on screen? That way, the killings were committed not out of context, but backed up by a massive visual heritage of Western culture, the culture the Indonesian gangsters were looking up to. As a result, their crimes were for them a form of ritual of reconnection with their ally, and the community of idolized (fictional) gangsters. Perhaps it is not just the compulsion to reenact his own trauma for Anwar, but also wanting to be more like Marlon Brando, Al Pacino and John Wayne has become the reason behind his perplexing agreement to collaborate with Joshua Oppenheimer and act in his own movie. This is how, “*The Act of Killing* is haunted by the ghosts of American cinema” (Precup, 2017, p. 26).

In his study, Precup (2017) notices a discrepancy in Anwar’s statement about borrowing garroting method of murder from American cinema scene. As he points out, this method has become spoken of not earlier than in Coppola’s *The Godfather*, and before Hollywood movies mainly explored shooting as a representation of gangster’s favorite method. *The Godfather* only came out in 1972, whether Indonesian genocide took place in the 1960s. We believe, what the critic was able to trace here is precisely a testimony of Anwar’s false-memory.

Perhaps, the most perplexing for Western critics of TAOK have become the grotesque scenes with colorfully dressed women dancing by the waterfall next to a giant fish, and Anwar’s fellow gangster in drag. This is partially explained by Indonesian cultural traditions where drag is a very popular public spectacle, where transgender women are associated with buffoons or sexual deviants (Precup, 2017). Genre of grotesque in its turn as a combination of horror and comedy provides an alienation effect and is understood by some as a suitable approach for describing cognitive dissonance linked to despicable truth of traumatic past. Grotesque and absurdity reject any positivism, which cannot take place in the instance. Instead they bring the audience into what Lyn Hejnan calls the “realm of barbaric” which provides cathartic affect “by the deliberate contamination of genres and feelings” (Muntean et al., 2016). As Reestorff noticed, genre stylization alienates audience in their compulsion to search for truth of the original event in the visual testimonies of the perpetrators (Reestorff, 2015). Instead, we are given an entrance to the killer’s poisoned imagination, faded memory and distorted self-image.

- Symbolism

The symbolism of the fish is interpreted by some Western critics through the prism of Shakespeare’s heritage: “Pericles: Master, I marvel how the fishes live in the sea. First Fisherman: Why, as men do a-land; the great ones eat up the little ones.” (Pericles, Prince of Tyre, act 2, Scene 1 [Shakespeare, 1981])” (Iversen and Nielsen, 2016, p. 258)

However, there is a much closer association that works even better with the fish symbolic: often bodies of the gangster's victims were thrown into the river, to be "eaten by fish". Now, there is a scene of Anwar and his friend Adi fishing by the river, this is where Anwar confesses Adi about his nightmares and they have a rather intimate conversation about dealing with memories of their own crimes. The fish are then eaten by the characters. Finally, in the last scene, Anwar is having impulses to vomit, though he is not able to (Iversen & Nielsen, 2016). Reading of the fish symbolism through the prism of such an arch discovers a beautiful metaphoric meaning: the aggressor is fated to ingest his own crimes but is unable to digest them, instead he remains in this eternal circle.

Method

- Theme and method development

It is necessary to pay attention to the long process of theme and method research Oppenheimer has made prior to creating the final concept and the actual film. The development of the film which premiered in 2012, started in 2005. First three years the director was focusing on interviewing victims of the Indonesian genocide, and intending to make his film about them as main characters. He testifies that the process had brought obstacles in safety for both his film crew and heroes themselves. In Indonesia at the time it was still dangerous for survivors to speak their truth, since the dominant political narrative belonged to the ultra-right political party in power (Reestorff, 2015). The crew met many obstacles in their attempts to tell the story of the survivors, their process was 'subtly' interrupted many times. But surprisingly for them, none of these problems occurred when the director "turned his camera" towards the actual genocide perpetrators. The more unique approach turned out to be the one with less resistance. And, because the gangsters happened to be cinema fans, they happily accepted the invitation to reenact their "glorious" past in order to leave their narrative in history.

The tool of reenactment in its turn helped not just the killers to portray their history but also the crew and audience to reexamine the nature of documentary, hybridity in cinema, trauma, memory and humanity (McIntosh, 2017).

- Reenactment

While the artworld of 2010s was fascinated with method of reenactment (King, 2013), in TAOK, Joshua Oppenheimer challenges said method. Traditionally this tool has been used by documentary filmmakers mainly in order to represent unfilmed events, for example, historical or biographical events of the past (Nichols, 2013), and therefore to suggests a "truthful"

representation. This is not the case with *The Act of Killing* where the only “truth” reenactments testify is the very impossibility of an objective representation of one’s memories. Instead, they represent memories as personal imaginations built upon biographical and historical events. The director himself has some doubts about using the term reenactment at all, suggesting that his method is absolutely different from that one of classic reenacting (Biswas, 2018).

Fictionality of reenactment plays an important role in liberating characters of Oppenheimer’s movie from their own past through genre stylization (Reestorff, 2015). Reestorff argues that the murderers are forced to undergo a certain kind of therapy through making the film, and it is by evoking and challenging their own memories and beliefs. Perhaps, this is the best way to analyze the methodology of *The Act of Killing*: to remember that the reenacted scenes do not represent events they aim to signify, but rather offer evidence of time passage, memories stuck, memories transformed, a glimpse into one’s mind (Nichols, 2013).

Interestingly enough, Oppenheimer’s reenactment operates in two opposite ways simultaneously. It offers the actors an active engagement with reencountered memories on one hand, and emotional distancing and dissociation from them on the other. The both approaches however contribute to the overall aim of the method (King, 2013).

The testimonies value, according to King, lies not in providing evidence of the actual crimes but rather the evidence of bodily memory linked to committing them. He highlights persistence of such memory in perpetrators even if the moral aspect of the killings is vanished from consciousness. This is an example of the result of full engagement of subject with his past through reenactment. This mechanism eventuates in actual reconnection between subconsciously suppressed guilt of Anwar and his everyday conscious, which we observe by the end of his character’s journey. The method of distancing through stylization allows him to approach this process in a more relaxed and playful way: indeed, Bill Nichols highlights the idea of Bateson, and compares the distinction between reenactment and trauma as a parallel between play and fighting (Nichols, 2013). Oppenheimer comes up with a term “cinematic-psychic scar tissue” which describes precisely this barrier between self and acting self. In one perspective, traumatic reliving and dissociation are opposites, in another one – they both suggest loss of awareness of present moment outside of reenacted scene (King, 2013).

Therefore, identification/distancing dichotomy is one key to reenactment methodology of Oppenheimer. The second key is role exchange.

Throughout the film, Anwar acts in scenes based on his life: at first, he plays a perpetrator, which is the most evident in the rooftop strangling scene. Later he watches the reenactment of the village massacre from aside, thus being just an observer. Finally, in the noir scene, he plays a victim. King (2013) brings up Freudian case from 1919 called “A Child Is Being Beaten” in

order to explain why these three modes of participation are not accidental. In his case, Freud has analyzed a sadomasochistic fantasy of a patient of his, and noticed that said fantasy occupies all the three positions: abettor, victim, and onlooker. Trauma therefore flows through each of these roles. As a result, the parallel between these two cases is impressing. Perhaps, it is exactly the opportunity to approach one's past from the different perspectives was what allowed a fuller integration of his past experiences for Anwar. If he was not able to empathize to his victims in the mode of "fight", he managed, even if for a scarce moment, to do so in the "play" mode.

- Locations

"Assaults, murders, acts of torture, and other corporal violations have always, of necessity, taken place," Walker notices (2013, p. 17). The fact that *The Act of Killing* traces the exact locations of assault and trauma, plays a crucial role. At first, Anwar brings the film crew to the rooftop of the building where he had strangled people to death, it is this place that opens up room for communication of the exact details of his killings. Next, the village massacre scene happened to be filmed in a very close proximity with a mass grave, the fact which became only familiar to Oppenheimer during the very shooting (Walker, 2013). Perhaps, this can explain the striking effect their reenactment made on the local people who agreed to participate in the scene. One of the shots depicts a woman affected by the sight of the reenactment so much that she faints for real. Said scene is very articulate of this muted, silenced trauma the local people carry, this is precisely the moment where authors commentary proves itself not necessary, instead visual evidence is more eloquent than any words could be.

As Caruth importantly highlights, the power of traumatic event lies not just in temporal belatedness of comprehension of what had happened, since the event was not experienced and assimilated at the time, but also in its inability to be simply located (Walker, 2013). Reenactments of TAOK show how space, by triggering specificity of memory, by placing the body, dictating conditions for its movements, position and senses, has a power to "invade the body" (Muntean et al., 2016).

- Character's Journey

It is evident that Anwar Congo undergoes a powerful transformation (McIntosh, 2017), in other words, character's journey is, we believe, a term fully applicable to this documentary. This journey, echoing Precup, is a transformation of the way one sees and assigns value to a human life, a portrait of how humanity and moral orienteers get distorted as a result of living

in political “state of exception”, characterized by Agamben as a “suspension of law”: the order which discriminates humans and reduces life of a certain group to mere biological existence, zoe (Precup, 2017).

Within this paradigm it becomes clear how role swap influences Anwar to understand the value of life of his victims. If before the reenactment their life was a zoe, a "bare life", for Anwar, it only acquires value when he puts himself (a human who in his eyes represents "valuable life") on his victim's chair.

Quite peculiar in this context is the scene where Anwar teaches his grandkids to treat ducks with empathy. Some critics find this scene perplexing if not confusing (Biswas, 2018): is Oppenheimer trying to assure us in ability of Anwar to feel empathy and humane qualities? Is he including the scene to speak about the paradoxical nature of human beings? We suggest one more interpretation here. Relationships between Anwar and his grandkids are an important focal point itself: the said scene perhaps is less about ducks then about a grandfather teaching his grandsons empathy. Even with a lack of conscious awareness or readiness to recognize immorality of his own actions, his suppressed values come across when Anwar educates his grandkids, so that they would not repeat his own mistakes.

Another scene with the grandkids comes close to the final, when Anwar watches himself playing a victim, the experience we know was transformative for him. Why does he insist to have the boys watch this reenactment with him? It seems to be so necessary for Anwar that he insists on waking the kids up, despite Oppenheimer's warning that it might not be a suitable spectacle for them. Of course, there is one way to interpret Anwar's actions as a wish to raise his grandkids in the environment of violence. But in that case, Anwar could have shown them any other scene, not necessarily the one where he plays the victim. But if the reason was actually the opposite, if he intended, either consciously or not, that his grandchildren learn to recognize a human being in an enemy's costume (where ultimate human is their grandfather, and the enemy is the character he plays), then the scene he shown them was exactly an attempt to cultivate empathy in the youngsters, empathy he himself happened to lack at the time.

It is after this scene, Anwar returns to the rooftop, where the last time we saw him cheerfully dancing cha-cha, and this time, if we trust Oppenheimer's claims, the man provides a “bodily testimony” of a genuine remorse (Nichols, 2013).

- Trauma and Memory

An essential claim TAOK makes is that not just victims but also perpetrators carry trauma after committing a crime (McIntosh, 2017). This insight is necessary for us to accept *The Act*

of Killing as a suitable case study for our research on reenacting trauma. It is backed up by a case in practice of Van der Kolk, who described a war veteran suffering from PTSD after killing a child in Vietnam (2015). There is, however, a certain contradiction, according to McIntosh, between the natures of documentary and traumatic memory. Because trauma resists representation, it poses a challenge for documentary (McIntosh, 2017). We argue that artistic reenactment as an approach characterized by features like non-linear storytelling and experimental approach to aesthetics, working with memory through repetition, and testifying through bodily actions rather than words, works as a reflection of unrepresentability of trauma. In TAOK, neither the imagery of Anwar in his role of executioner nor one with him as a victim attempts to reflect the actual truth, unlike in conventional documentary practice. However, what said imagery portrays best is the paradoxical logic of trauma (Walker, 2013), which feature is a complication of memory (McIntosh, 2017), transforming it from a linear ‘timeline’ into a fantasmatic number of disassociated flashbacks, blurring factual with fictional.

According to Freudian theory, traumatic memory is hidden in unconscious instead of conscious, which is why a certain intervention is required in order to access it. Traumatic memories accessible through simple recollection happen to be incomplete and have problems with linear continuity (McIntosh, 2017). Echoing King (2013), in instance of artistic reenactment, fantasy can be a way to access reality.

When attempting to understand nature of the gangster’s crimes, it is essential to deconstruct the notion of agency and ownership of actions. ‘Ownership is the sense that my body is doing the actions, while agency is the sense that I am in control of the action, that the action is willed’ (Protevi 2008, 408, in Reestorff, 2015, p. 22). There is an important connection between ritualistic rhythmic repetition and a sense of loss of agency of one’s actions. Now, in the context of *The Act of Killing*, and in particular killings committed by the gangsters, the element of dance Anwar mentions, and its ritualistic rhythm, becomes a crucial tool for him to help transfer the actions of his own body from agency to mere ownership, therefore let go of responsibility. “Rhythmic chanting is crucial. Rhythms of music and dancing impacted the ways in which the gangsters killed and it plays a role in both the reenactments and their stories about the killings” (Reestorff, 2015, p.22). Anwar begins with moving according to the rules of cha-cha-cha, and proceeds to killing according to the rules of his government. Reestorff highlights that while escaping the ownership and approaching the somatic, Anwar tunes into musical rhythm in his refusal to empathize with his victims. In the same way, reenactment creates a repetition which seems to help the gangsters to transfer agency of their actions into ownership. However, repetition is never a process of creating the identical. Therefore, his transference is illusory: we learn by the end of the film that exactly the opposite happened. It was reenactment that brought

Anwar back from ownership to agency. This very example highlights the importance of ritual in human culture in general, and as instrument of political power in particular.

Political activism

- Historical background

When it comes to political background of the film, and its influence on the situation in Indonesia, more contradictions and disagreements come into play. How much the city of Medan is representative of Indonesia as a state? And how much Anwar and his friends characterize Indonesian elite? According to some, we can presume Anwar's crimes to be constitutive of the state (van Klinken, 2014). Others criticize TAOK in being constructed without necessary research base, and with disregard to previous studies on Indonesian mass killings, including over 25 films dedicated to the topic (Sutopo, 2017).

The 1965 Indonesian massacre which took between 500,000 and one million of human lives, had happened due to internal political situation on one hand, which included a power struggle between local nationalists, Muslims and communists (Sutopo, 2017). On the other hand, the role of external influence cannot be overlooked, where the main player was the USA. The latter detail is never mentioned in the film itself, only in the interviews of Oppenheimer (Precup, 2017).

The political issues covered in the film include corruption, frauded elections, sexism, violence as an instrument of power, poverty, censorship, impunity from crimes, and of course mafia as a power elite close to government. Even though, nowadays, civil society movement is growing in Indonesia, attempting to collect and uncover the traumatic past of the nation, there is a little coverage of the difficult heritage of the country (Wandita, 2014). This is where importance of memorialization comes to foreground as a cultural problem, and it is this problem in particular what TAOK aims to solve. Local audience is unfortunately often remaining pessimistic to possibility of the real impact of the movie on the political status quo: "...watching this film is like rubbing salt into a festering wound. In the absence of the needed antibiotics (and major reconstruction), we are hoping against hope that all this salt rubbing will come to some good" (Wandita, 2014, p.1).

- Film's impact and its mechanisms

Firstly, it is important to distinct two destinations of impact of the documentary: on its participants and on its audiences (Falls, 2015).

We see the main pathways for impact on trauma as creating empathy through witnessing, motivation for change, and last but not least, exhuming stories and their aspects previously unwitnessed, thus memorialization of history. We suggest, TAOK uses all of these pathways. Because the part on impact on participants, particularly on the main character of the film, has been analyzed in the previous parts of the text (Method, Character's Journey), we will focus here on the audience impact. Here we will again need to agree on the division between international and local audiences: the history spoken about in the documentary has obviously a different meaning to Indonesian audience than to the international. The levels of impact are obviously different. Wandita (2014) confesses the film is a difficult pill to swallow for a local viewer. And this is because the movie tells the story by seemingly following the dominant perspective of the state.

At the same time, according to Oppenheimer's experience of screening the film in Indonesia, public felt very emotional by the final of the film, because they experienced a catharsis of seeing how the regime unmask itself (Crichlow, 2013). Klinken (2014) then finds irony in how the regime debunked its glory. Irony is also the fact that by giving voice to the perpetrators, what Oppenheimer actually does is giving voice to the victims (Iversen & Nielsen, 2016): it turns out to be possible to witness the traumatized through the aggressor's actions.

Reestorff (2015) conceptualizes the approach of TAOK as an activist intervention, where the term activism stands for using artistic practice as a tool of political activism. More conventional are media activist productions where distinction between good and evil is clear. This was the approach employed by the predecessors of TAOK: films and other creative works dedicated to the topic of Indonesian genocide (Paramaditha, 2013). *The Act of Killing* blurs such a distinction, which allows instead to delve into ontology of evil. It speaks about how it is framed, formed and understood. Quoting Oppenheimer, "The Act of Killing features only bad people" (Pringle, 2015, p.26). Through them, it addresses the politics of memory in contemporary Indonesian society (Iversen & Nielsen, 2016). As noticed by Dwyer (2014), novelty of artistic method in TAOK manages to break through audience's numbness to violent images created by the globalized contemporary media environment.

Festival circuit and the long list of awards of the film provides evidence of its international success. It has earned the following distinctions: BAFTA for Best Documentary Film, Guardian Film Awards 2014 – Best Film, Cinema Eye Honors Award for Outstanding Achievement in Nonfiction Feature Filmmaking, Cinema Eye Honors Award for Outstanding Achievement in Production, Asia Pacific Screen Award for Best Documentary Feature Film, BritDoc 2013, Puma Impact Award, Gotham Award 2013 for Best Documentary, European Film Award 2013 for Best Documentary, Danish Film Academy Award 2013 for Best

Documentary (Robert Prize). Longer is the list of festival prizes, among which are CPH:DOX 2012 – DOX:AWARD, Berlin Film Festival 2013 – Panorama Audience Award, Berlin Film Festival 2013 – Prize of the Ecumenical Jury, IF Istanbul 2013- Prize of the SIYAD jury (Turkish Film Critics' Association), FICUNAM, Mexico 2013 – Audience Award, ZagrebDox, 2013 – Movies that Matter Award, One World, Prague 2013 – Best Film, Geneva International Human Rights Film Festival 2013 – Gilda Vieira de Mello Prize, Festival de Cinéma Valenciennes 2013 – Grand Prize, Festival de Cinéma Valenciennes 2013 – Special Mention, Critic's Jury, IndieLisboa 2013 – Amnesty International Award, DocsBarcelona 2013 – Best Film Award (Grand Prize), Sheffield Doc/Fest 2013 – Grand Prize, Biografilm Festival Italy 2013 – Grand Prize, Royal Anthropological Institute Film Festival 2013 – Basil Wright Prize, Nordisk Panorama 2013 – Best Nordic Documentary.

While the discourse on political and social impact of the film remains diverse, we consider relevant its ability to raise international awareness of the dark pages of Indonesian history, and give voice to the victims both through artistic expression, production of catharsis and involvement of local activists into the film crew.

Criticism

Together with an overwhelming number of awards, *The Act of Killing* has gathered a fair amount of criticism, both constructive and not so much.

We shall start by mentioning and discussing those which in our view fall into the latter category, and afterwards we move on towards the most serious concerns of the critics. In the point of view of Wandita (2014), there is a problem in absence of representation of military's responsibility in the genocide of 1965. His concern is the current depiction projects a wrong image "as if it were the spontaneous work of mad men" (Wandita, 2014, p.1). In addition, the critic suggests the film might be misunderstood by the local audience who are too used to hearing the 'truth' of the dominant ideology, therefore might not catch the irony. And because the survivors aren't the main figurants of the story, he feels a lack there. Cribb agrees on a lack of research and exposure of military's role in the conflict, and claims this makes the historical events represented in a misleading way painting Indonesians in Orientalist manner. In addition, he doubts on factual testimony by Anwar: has he indeed killed as many as he claims (Cribb, 2014)?

These comments seem to be coming from a perspective of political science and journalistic framework. If we turn to hybrid filmmaking framework, we have to acknowledge limitations of film as a product, and artistic need for focus, which far often means leaving certain important

parts of documentary material aside. Other critics however find an important meaning precisely in this lack of victim's representation: because working with the victims proved itself to be a dangerous practice for Oppenheimer's crew and his testifiers, the film in its final concept in a subtle artistic way communicates the impossibility for these victims to freely speak (Hearman, 2014). In addition to that, it is necessary to see factual information represented by the characters of the film not as data, but as a testimony of a troubled index of oneself (Reestorff, 2015).

Another question is whether the movie with such a narrow focus on violence topic might impact audience in an unintended way, precisely if TAOK can promote or provoke violence (Falls, 2015). Here we have to notice, such a danger might become a concern with any film about violence (ironically, this is precisely what had happened to Anwar and his gang, who were using their inspiration by fictional crimes in American movies in order to commit the real ones). However, this, we believe, must not be a reason for tabooing this very important for artistic practice topic: evil, violence and genocide.

Discussed above are also trust issues the film evokes in some audiences, namely, should they believe in the authenticity of the scenes presented as documentary observation parts (Wandita, 2014)? Should they even trust in its label as a documentary (Tiwon, 2014)? These issues, as already mentioned above, arise from the very hybrid nature of the film, and apply in a bigger or lesser degree to other hybrid productions.

Now, a number of criticisms which are more difficult to debunk goes as follows. Both Dwyer (2014) and Sutopo (2017) talk about an important point: cinematic narrative and press materials of TAOK, while claiming they blur the lines between good and evil, in fact risk constructing an image of "all evil" of the barbaric Southeast, while introducing Western filmmaker as a savior, as a necessary figure in order to help the oppressed society break the silence. Indeed, if there is a "positive" protagonist in Oppenheimer's story, while he claims there is none, this protagonist would be Oppenheimer himself. Thus, it is this lack of self-awareness, in addition to the fact Indonesians have not been completely silent about the genocide, have not forgotten it, and have put a certain effort in order to speak out their truth, is what allows the critics to blame the Western filmmaker in exhibiting "white savior industrial complex" (Dwyer, 2014). Sutopo (2017) warns about the dangers of it: the dichotomy between Southeastern other as 'evil' and the Global North as heroic produces a harmful hierarchy, and it is the same hierarchy that caused Indonesian ultra-right to be obsessed with and inspired by Western culture and politics. Partially, this obsession is exactly what lubricated Oppenheimer's entrance into the Indonesian societal elites.

Another concern is ethical aspect of the film. It has been blamed in aestheticizing violence, commercializing atrocity, and objectifying a victim through creating a safe space between the atrocity and the beholder (Tiwon, 2014).

Ethical aspect of Anwar's participation in the reenactments has also been criticized due to limits of his own awareness in what his participation would result in. In other words, Oppenheimer has been blamed in manipulating his protagonist (Reestorff, 2015). We believe, this criticism is valuable especially because it opens space for debating to which extent ethical norms can apply to an unpunished mass murderer. This door, we believe, has a capability to invite scholars of philosophy and ethics into a serious and necessary discussion.

Ethics

An article by van Klinken carries quite a vocal message in its title: “*No, The Act of Killing is not unethical*” (2014). Especially well this title works in combination with the name of the film, and is characterizing of the discourse intensity around the Oppenheimer's work. In his text, the critic describes transformation of his perception after the second viewing of the film. At first, van Klinken was concerned if working with Anwar, Oppenheimer possibly manipulated a deeply traumatized person, who had not been fully aware of it. Eventually, the critic saw in Anwar something more than a used material for a documentary: he witnessed a transformation inside of him, therefore, he witnessed a human growth, which, we suggest, is the most interesting thing to observe in cinema.

There is however an ethical problem with empathizing to Anwar: in evoking such feelings, Oppenheimer gets criticized for giving moral amnesty to the perpetrators, and that way, creating tension with their victims. The criticism goes as far as to blame the director in unconsciously accepting Anwar's criminal actions as courageous (Crichlow, 2013).

Giving spotlight to the aggressor is another ethically challenging aspect faced by *The Act of Killing*. The discourse however acknowledges possible ethical problems the film would face, should it have focused on the victims instead, since that would not be a safe practice for the protagonists. Reestorff (2015) calls this ethical dilemma a ‘wrong-versus-wrong situation’. “As Derrida and Agamben have pointed out in their readings of Primo Levi, those who experience a genocide cannot bear witness, thus leaving it up to others to bear witness for the actual missing witnesses. In this case – in strange and unsettling ways – the ones who bear witness in place of the true witnesses are the perpetrators themselves” (Iversen and Nielsen, 2016, p. 257). In fact, the innovation of TAOK is precisely in discovering the approach of telling a victim's story without showing the victims directly (Sutopo, 2017), but representing them through reenactments, and by including survivors anonymously into the film crew. Grant Kester warns

that any participatory artistic practice in fact carries a weight of ‘ethical undecidability’ in itself (Kester, 2011, p.2, in Reestorff, 2015).

Now, another issue finds itself in the very method of fictionalizing the real killings, and wrapping them into a softer membrane of Hollywood genres (Reestorff, 2015). This issue applies, we must notice, to every fiction production whenever it is based on real events, since it fashions, stylizes, aestheticizes, and ultimately distorts the reality of someone’s past.

It is that daring approach of Oppenheimer to move beyond traditional documentary normative, both conceptually, aesthetically and ethically, was what characterized his production, in opinion of Iversen and Nielsen, as “unruly activism”, a practice when an artist willingly ‘misbehaves’, transgressing the established tradition (2016, p.250), which is becoming a strong tendency in contemporary artistic practices.

Documentary and Philosophy

Using *The Act of Killing* as a case study, Wartenberg (2017) proves documentary’s capability to make contributions to philosophical knowledge. What TAOK does in his opinion, is serving as an evidence for the theory by Hannah Arendt on the banality of evil. It does so by means of exploration of the very nature of “evil” human behavior through reenactment. Returning to the Oppenheimer’s words, that his film only features bad people (Precup, 2017, p.26), a claim that may sound like a generalization, we actually get invited into the author’s research on the nature of being “a bad person”, and even further so, a research of paradoxicality of a “bad person”. Such practice, we argue, can be seen as an artistic research in philosophy.

The concept of banality of evil, according to Ardent, explains the root of evil behavior as a manifestation of thoughtlessness. It is this thoughtlessness, Wartenberg suggests, blocks Anwar from comprehending his own crimes, recognizing evil within himself, and taking responsibility (2017). Wartenberg highlights a phrase by the other gangster, Adi Zulkadry who explains to Anwar the key to keep living carelessly is finding a way to not feeling guilt. In other words, Adi advocates exactly the thoughtlessness, which is a conscious action, different from unconscious “stupidity” (Wartenberg, 2017). But through the process of reenactment, and more concretely, through role play where the killer assumes the role of the victim, Congo gets encouraged to put a thought into his own actions, and experiences effects of violence from the other side. The actor has to identify himself with his victim, thus the ontological collapse of his mind structure occurs.

Paramaditha agrees on applicability of the ‘banality of evil’ concept for recognizing the mechanisms of grooming ordinary individuals into hateful murderers, which Indonesian

government had applied to citizens like Congo and Zulkadry (Paramaditha, 2013). The logic of “it is better to kill than being killed” proves itself in action until today, using manipulation with human fear as an instrument for hate production. It is however important to highlight that ‘banality of evil’ theory while explaining mechanisms of violence, is not lifting the responsibility for the aggression. “In any event, the vast majority of those who lived through 1965–1966 took part in the creation of the New Order regime and thus share the burden of its crime through involuntary silence. The communist massacre, in other words, is a collective guilt” (Paramaditha, 2013, p. 47).

To conclude, philosophy and documentary are indeed entangled. It proves helpful to apply philosophical knowledge into film analysis, in order to reach understanding of its meaning in greater depth. The process works also vice versa: it is useful to see documentary as a contribution into philosophical knowledge, for documentaries like TAOK produce philosophy through investigation of life, processing it through the lens of their cameras. Oppenheimer’s *The Act of Killing* serves as a powerful example of a contribution into philosophic thought made through artistic research of the filmmaker.

Summary

The first part of this thesis granted us an essential understanding of the state-of-the-art in the field of artistic reenactment as a practice in hybrid filmmaking of the 2010s.

Among the most important conclusions of this part are the following insights.

Digital media changes the way we remember, as well as the way we forget. It happens so because our current society is interconnected with collective memories spread all over the globe. These memories are increasingly digitalized and immaterial. Reenactment plays an important role for memory preservation and recollection. It has been doing so in the past as well being a part of ritual culture. This is why we see reenactment today as a mediatized ritual. We conceptualized our study of reenactment practice by placing it within a certain framework. We schematized reenactment to be the center of a theoretic triangle: between mediatization, trauma, and ritual. We see the artistic practice to be interconnected with memory, individual and collective trauma, and having a strong potential for memory transformation.

Film can work with survivors of trauma, not just portray the trauma. It can help comprehend, represent and even work through traumatic memories by, firstly, enforcing a ritualistic action in collaboration with the community. Secondly, it materializes and externalizes the record of traumatic memory. Thirdly, hybrid film welcomes flexibility and interplay between factual and fantasmatic, which opens a therapeutic possibility for healing the trauma at least to a certain extent. We see hybrid films as archives of personal and collective memory, which can serve as an identity anchor for the communities.

The important finding is that today's artistic processes are forms of ritual culture, where media plays a crucial role. This framework is useful for resolving the problems of originality and conservation: "variable media" do not have to consist of a single material object. Instead, they are works open for reconstructions and reenactments. Each of the manifestations of the work should be considered authentic, just every repeated ritualistic action is as authentic as one before.

We see the core function in reenactment as a cultural practice it is described by not repetition and memorizing, but by transforming the experienced history between members of the community, shifting its perception, and changing the collective memory.

Postmodern philosophy is where hybrid film was born. This climate characterized by the acceptance and accommodation of different experiences, perspectives, and ultimately, 'truths', was crucial for the transformation of the cinematic method. This would be impossible under the gaze of a positivist perspective.

What characterizes hybridity in contemporary filmmaking? First of all, it is the combination of fiction and documentary approaches, as well as the application of the newest technologies such as AI text and visual generation, animation, screen record techniques, and cross-media. Also, relevant is democratization and interactivity. Thanks to its aesthetical and methodological tools, hybrid films can communicate the political in brand new manners. These changes also bring new problems to the researchers' table, for example, media algorithms, info-bubbles, ethical issues, and an abundance of content. However, thanks to the postmodern idea of giving value to the personal experience facilitates communicating trauma: something that can be rather felt than proved. Hybrid reenactment-based documentary, we discovered, can act as a bridge between epochs, generations, and communities to voice such personal traumatic experiences, despite their incoherence and unrepresentability. Importantly, these practices can transform the perception of the experiences for participants and the audience.

Three films chosen to be our case studies share similar dimensions: they have been awarded at A-class festivals, and had a significant impact on audiences, they are hybrid films, where fiction and documentary merged, and trauma caused by the political turmoil was in the center of each project.

All three hybrid films were productions of the decade of 2010s: *The Act of Killing* is a 2012 film, *Horse Money* is from 2014, and *Atlantis* was made in 2019. Geographically, our cases triangulate Eastern, Western, and Northern Europe, while breaking European boundaries, and working in the wider context.

Horse Money case study is represented by the director as a portrait of the traumatized mind, rather than a classical story. It utilizes aesthetics of dark imagery, broken narrative timeline, spatial confinement, solitude and isolation, gaps in memory as well as flashbacks, and zombie-like lifelessness.

This film should not be seen as a reconstruction of reality, but rather as a construction of a fictional mind space in which traumatic memory lives. For reenactments of this film, the important factor is an intimate collaborative and improvisational process between the actors and the director, which is what contributes to the sincerity, the director claims.

The case study of *Atlantis* (2019) is a two-staged work with memory. Firstly, the film embodies personal and collective memories. Secondly, through work with memory, the film creates a projection of the future. This projection is an important function of fictionality applied to the documentary background.

The Act of Killing is a powerful example of a reenactment-based film that explores the narrative construction of the collective memory, and also challenges the dominant narrative by guiding and exploring the character's journey through the reenactment.

This film manifests how dangerous scarcity of media archive can be for a society and its history, it studies propaganda-driven narratives and ways of shifting them.

All three case-studies have proven to make strong political statements and attempted to be agents of change, as well as to contribute to philosophic discourse.

These results are essential for our building of the structure, conceptual base, methodology, and aesthetical and ethical base for artistic research. We apply the knowledge acquired to our own hybrid film production, which is the next step in knowing the subject in depth and gaining our original insights.

PART 2: Artistic Research

This part of our thesis is practice-based artistic research. For it, we developed a methodology for and produced a hybrid film of 30 minutes in length. It is an autobiographic project that uses memories of the family of its authors and participants and includes both documentary and fictional approaches. The project was developed based on the knowledge acquired from our previous research steps. We see this practice-based part as a necessary component for the investigation of reenactment potential as it allows us to work practically with the theories we developed, test our hypotheses, and collect the experience of hybrid filmmaking practice and reenactment of traumatic memories.

It is both the process and the results of this project production that allow us to conclude our hypotheses and answer the questions put at the center of this research: the relationship between hybrid cinema and postmodernity, revisiting the past as a necessity of today's cultural process, role of reenactment in working with trauma, hybrid film's meaning in the contemporary cultural scene, the potential of reenactment for cinema of the previous and current decade.

The first chapter of this part explains and describes the project idea, dimensions, as well as its intentions and methods. The second one includes the documents developed in the pre-production and production stages: scripts, creative process notes, reflections, and the insights the work granted us.

These components serve as the data for combining with the results of the first part of this thesis. In the following third chapter, we will use the results of the artistic research to triangulate them with the previous data. We will be able to then discuss and conclude the obtained knowledge according to our theories proposed.

MOMENTS WHEN WE FREEZE
Artistic research in the form of hybrid film

Chapter 1

Project Description

“It is not unusual to shift through ashes and find an unburnt picture”

Nikki Giovanni

In this chapter, we describe the dimensions, the conceptual basis as well as the evolution of the project *Moments When We Freeze*. We here provide the reader with the technical information about the film. We also explain the reasons behind our choice to include artistic practice-based research in the methodology of this thesis, how we aim to apply the project as a mean for bringing the knowledge to our study, and how we see it contributing to the field in general.



Figure 3: Photo of Maksymchuk family, 1983, personal archive

Production Details

The project was created thanks to support by CICANT, Lusófona University, Lisbon

Duration: 30 min

Genre: Experimental hybrid documentary

Key-words: Hybrid film. Autobiography. Reenactment. Memory. Archive.

- Production date: 2023
- Production Countries: Portugal, Ukraine
- Genres: Drama, Comedy, Experimental
- Language: English, Russian, Ukrainian
- Shooting Format: Digital
- Aspect Ratio: 16:9
- Film Color: Black & White and Color

Artistic research is becoming more and more popular investigation practice in academia nowadays. According to the speakers of the 2021 Lisbon FilmEU Summit (2021), the increasing number of artistic projects show many new possibilities academic research can benefit from. However, it is still somewhat terra incognita for many, a ground where scholars still have more hypotheses to research than answers to give. We believe that artistic research has a great potential as investigatory practice in the field of arts and humanities, and the deliverables of our work can be a valuable contribution for the state-of-the-art in general and for CICANT as a research center in particular.

In this research, we see memory as a learning tool and a repository for one's past. It is also a vulnerable, changeable, and vital component of human cognition. It archives shared narratives and stories that strengthen our bonds, help us live in communities, understand each other, and have an identity. We view hybrid cinema as a medium through which memories can be transferred, manifested, saved, and re-lived.

This project embodies artistic research which investigates the relationship between traumatic memories and the practice of artistic reenactment in contemporary cinema. The memories we are going to work with are of hybrid nature: they are shared between one family and also with the whole society. They witness the lives affected by history, and the history perceived through the lens of individual experience.

Autobiographical component adds a personal touch to the story. This film is aiming to reenact a scene from the past of the author's own family. It questions fluidity, fragility of memories, their capacity to transform and affect individual and collective perceptions of past and present, while subtly altering our future.

All the three family members participating in the film are divided geographically. The reasons are both personal and political. Personal one has to do with the divorce of the author's parents which had happened before her own birth. Political reason is the ongoing war in Ukraine. As long as the father still lives in their hometown, the occupied by Russia city of Donetsk secluded from the rest of the world by the war, the mother has moved to the capital of Ukraine, and the author herself has left homeland and ended up in the most Western country of Europe.

In a setting of virtual gathering, a well familiar by now video conference, we discuss, co-author, conduct a set of rehearsals, and shoot a fictional scene, having the memories owners writing and directing memories from their own lives. The scene chosen for the reenactment left its trace on a family archive photo (Fig. 3). It is a familiar personal memory, which however still keeps in itself a lot of mysteries. The film embedded in itself documentary recordings of the discussions, rehearsals and shootings, while merging with fictional reenacted scenes, thus manifesting its own hybrid nature. It will explore how durable but flexible memory can be, and how it can take the shape of an art piece which acts as a container for a preserved hybrid memory.

Video conference platform with its rectangular division of the frame is not just a necessary practicality for the project. It also carries a strong symbolic meaning, visually conveying the trauma of the divided family, and the divided society. The isolation of every participant in their own rectangle speaks of separation, which takes place due to the reasons of personal detachment, and current Ukrainian political situation.

This film attempts to create a digital bridge between the opposite corners of Europe, and aims to find a connection within the family that had fallen apart.

This project has the following aims:

1. To trace a dynamic and individualistic nature of memory, witness fake memories.

2. To evaluate the role of reenactment as an artistic method, its potential for hybrid film, and its political and personal implications.

The questions we will focus on answering will be about:

- reenactment's artistic value for the project,
- its role in building narrative and aesthetics of the hybrid film,
- its implications for the personal relations to the memory,
- transmitting political meaning through the reenactment of personal past.

3. To research the impact of reenactment on one's memory.

4. To create an art piece which would be a container for a preserved hybrid memory.

Synopsis

After Russia invaded my country (again), making it impossible for me to see my father in person, I began to wonder: can a family, disconnected by the war frontline, traumatic relationships, and thousands of kilometers, create a film together, regardless?

Director's Statement

Moments When We Freeze is a hybrid experimental film which combines elements of documentary and fictional filmmaking in an attempt to tell a story of one broken Ukrainian family, who hasn't yet lost their love for each other, their sense of humor, and the desire to be connected.

And so, we decided to reenact a scene that is rooted in a 40 year old photo found in our family archive.

With the help of video-calls, my parents co-wrote and co-directed their own past using their contradictory memories as a guideline, and I reenacted it while being years and kilometers away from the original event.

Link for the Film

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vkrmPSOUthwO3bJjRBkfEEHhNfru4Bzk/view?usp=sharing>

Crew

Director, Writer, Co-Producer

Anastasiya Maksymchuk

Co-Producer

Carolina Leite Ribeiro

Assistant Director

Anna Korzh

Cinematography

Danilo Miranda Cares

Anna Ter-Gabrielyan

Set Design

Jaime Carretero Trigo

Sound Recording & Design

Tarun Madupu

Lighting Design

Chelsea Soby

Footage from Ukraine

Scott Bryan Urquhart

Music

Folk Ukrainian Song “Whose Horse Is Standing There”

Editing

Anastasiya Maksymchuk

Dogi Vasconcelos

Cast

Anastasiya Maksymchuk

Lyudmyla Maksymchuk

Igor Maksymchuk

Yevheniy Koshin

Elena Shteisel

Roman Nagimov

Viktoria Vozna

Eliza Tetervak

Rouzbeh Akhbari

Film Stills



Figure 4: Stills from the film *Moments When We Freeze*

Scripts and Working Documents

In this chapter, we collect all the production documents for the project, including the scripts and production notes, or as we call it, the creative process diary. The first document is a description of the scene plan of the overall hybrid film. As with any script for a documentary or hybrid film, it was an approximate estimation and projection of the scenes and narrative lines for our project. Certain things changed in the final film in comparison to this script, and we find this difference to be a necessary part of the process in hybrid documentaries. We did not intend to write a more detailed script for the overall project as it could provide too much guidance and control to the practice which we saw as experimental.

Moments When We Freeze

Hybrid Film Script by Anastasiya Maksymchuk

Scene 1

A film studio with the lights on and crew working. The scene being constructed depicts two people, a woman and a man, eating grilled meat and drinking something strong. Some more people are in the group around the main characters. The setting is a simple rural taska-type restaurant. It's winter.

Voice over of the female character, Anastasiya:

“It is so often that we promise to ourselves to not repeat our parents' lives. That's why it is so ironic for me to find myself sitting at this table now”.

A close up of an old black and white photo: it shows a couple in a setting just like the one being recreated by the shoot. Restaurant, pieces of barbecued meat on a stick, drinks, smiles. The girl's face in the photo looks quite similar to the actress at the table.

The film crew uses the photo as a reference for the actor's positions and mood, trying to copy the picture. Preparations for the scene shooting are going on.

Cut to: title on screen “The Moments When We Freeze”

Scene 2

Screen record shows a video call between Anastasiya and her parents, Lyuda and Igor. According to the title, it is the 18th of February 2022. The title also mentions it is 6 days before

the full-scale invasion of Russia into Ukraine. It is Anastasiya's 31st birthday, and her parents are greeting her, each from their own city: the mother from Kyiv, the father from Donetsk. They all are having dinner together over Zoom. In addition to typical birthday wishes, the family members discuss the current political situation in Ukraine, which is being rather unstable. Rumors about the upcoming war are known on each side of the frontline; however, the family treats the worrying prognoses in a light-hearted and joking manner. Nobody believes in the reality of what might happen, and each other's light attitudes clearly calm all the three of them. On the screen, the Zoom program time to time gets wrapped and unwrapped back, as Anastasiya goes to browse some news on the internet while talking to her parents. During the dinner, Anastasiya makes an observation that it is the very first time in her memory that the three of them have a dinner together, even though this is only a virtual gathering.

Her V.O. explains: "I was raised in a divided family. My parents got divorced before my birth. Throughout my life it was an extremely rare case for me to see them together in one space. That's why, as I was turning 31, I realized I would like to do something for the first time: invite both of my parents for my birthday dinner. Clearly, since my father lives in occupied Donetsk, my mother in Ukrainian Kyiv, and myself more than 3000 km away in Lisbon, such a dinner could be only possible by video call."

Scene 3

The war starts.

The scene to represent that moment might be a montage of media images from that time, mixing news media and personal images, old archival images. With the voice over reenacting the phone call between Anastasiya and her mother on that day, and afterwards as Lyuda was evacuating. Alternatively, a digital soundtrack.

It can be an instagram page scroll (which stays online as a part of transmedia concept), it can also be a screen record from the phone gallery.

Scene 4

The video call still featuring the three characters. It's a birthday dinner again, at this time the birthday of Igor. But there is a change, the mother is already in the same physical space as her daughter. The screen title dates this call 27.03.2022, 30 days after the invasion, and the tone of the call is different. The mood shifts quickly back and forth between the birthday congratulations and the war shock. At some point, the father calls the war "civil", and it triggers

both women into defensive anger, they clearly do not support Igor's pro-russian position, and ready to argue despite the birthday occasion. The voiceover talks about the family's political differences and how weird it is to be situated on the different sides of the frontline barricades both physically and intellectually. It is surprising, but the father tries his best to de-escalate the conflict, and highlight that the family bond between the three of them stays unchanged even despite these oppositions. The V.O. contemplates on the fact that both Anastasiya and her mother, just like any pro-Ukrainian person, would have been immediately killed by the people her father supports, if there was such an encounter. The father tells that their common relative from Donetsk is at war now, fighting for Russia. Anastasiya mentions their relative from Kyiv who is in the Ukrainian army.

Afterwards however, they switch to discussing the old photo depicting Lyuda and Igor at the restaurant, eating barbecue. Anastasiya's parents recall the vacation they had together 40 years ago.

Scene 5

V.O. of Igor narrating the story of the vacation. Fictional reenactments are illustrating his speech. They are featuring Anastasiya in the role of her mother, and the actor we saw next to her by the table at the very beginning of the film.

The story had happened in Ukrainian Lviv, and the Carpathian Mountains, but the reenactments are set in Porto and at the Portuguese mountain. The obvious visual and temporal differences are not anything the screen is ashamed of, since the viewer must be conscious about the representational character of the reenactments. The images do not intend to copy but rather to reinterpret the father's memory. It might even be a photo film sequence, rather than the video.

Scene 6

The scene features the same story, but reenacted from the memories of the mother. Some of the shots are identical to those from the father's story, however they pop up in a completely different context and surrounded by very different footage. This scene carries a completely different tone and even genre in comparison to Igor's one.

Lyuda's V.O. is the one narrating it this time.

Scene 7

Videocall where the parents discuss their stories, and the differences in their memories. Luyda is questioning Igor about his memories of the vacation, and why he had left so many details aside. First by hinting, later she talks more directly. Igor is defending himself by saying he did not want to remember the bad things, and tried to focus on the positive episodes. This does not lead to an open argument, but there are things each one disagrees about. They then look at the photo at the restaurant together, and trying to remember the details about it, being fed by each other's memories, whether real or fake, one can never be sure. Meanwhile, the media footage of the political situation in Ukraine takes over the screen: photos, headlines of Instagram posts, protests videos.

Finally, Anastasiya suggests to her parents to write together a dialogue for the restaurant scene. It could feature their real memories, but also could have some fictional elements if they wished.

Scene 8

The studio where the reconstruction of the restaurant scene takes place. It is the setting of the very first scene of the film. It attempts to reenact but not necessarily copy the old photo. Anastasiya playing the role of her own mother, and a casted actor for the role of her father are sitting next to each other at the table. Waiter brings them their drinks. They reenact the dialogue written as a result of Lyuda's and Igor's collaboration. The authors of the memory at times interfere and attempt to direct the scene online. There are also other actors present on set, playing secondary characters. The scene combines footage from both the camera of the fictional story and the backstage camera on set. In addition, the parents of Anastasiya watching the shooting online are seen too.

After a few attempts filled with discussions and arguments between the two "directors", both Igor and Lyuda approve the take, and the scene is finally done. It is the moment when their memory gets transformed, reenacted, and captured. Anastasiya's parents finally have a thing they both agree upon.

As the fictional scene ends, the actors "freeze" in the position their characters got captured by the photo camera. On top of that frozen image, a projection is dropped. It features a montage of the up-to-date news media footage in a mix with personal images captured by the family themselves during the different years of their lives. The mix is at times uncomfortably

contrasting with the actors' smiley faces. But the flow of memory keeps all the bits together, without dichotomizing them as positive or negative.

The V.O. Anastasiya concludes the film. Talks about freezing as a trauma response.

Fade to black.

Credits.

The Two Stories of One Photo

Next, we provide the two texts, which are the two stories written independently by the two different memory owners. The texts are hybrid stories inspired by the photo of our main characters. They wrote the stories without discussing their memories with each other, and only afterward were allowed to exchange and read each other's memory-based stories. These two stories later were discussed with the guidance of the director, and combined in order to create the third story: the hybrid of the both memories and imaginations of the protagonists.



Figure 5: Archival photo of Maksymchuk family, 1982

1. The Story Written by Igor Maksymchuk

November 2022

Aphorism

(the story of one photo that could have happened)

Sometimes it happens that the fulfillment of the biggest and most sincere, but ardent desires are postponed indefinitely. In this case, you have to be content with simple dreams - they come true faster.

That day, after energetically getting acquainted with a mountain slope and a ski track, we just wanted to eat something and warm up. A small restaurant with a modest name "Kolyba" was waiting for us, suggesting a certain flavor, we did not have to wait for long.

As it turned out, the owners of the place were great lovers of urban folklore in the form of modern proverbs and aphorisms. They were hung all over the walls and were framed, just as paintings would. So, right from the entrance, it struck the eye: "Look who's back, and without security!" It was also written: "Eat, dear guests, everything is expensive at the market too." Moreover: "Drink seven times - eat one." It ended with a promising statement: "What is hot cannot be raw". Meanwhile, the rest of our group members also pulled up, just as tired, and hungry. But the food had to be not simply ordered, but won. There was some kind of competition waiting for us right from the start.

Each table should have tried to guess the signature dish of the restaurant, and the answer should have been in a form of aphorism! There was already a sheet of paper and a pen on the table. They decided they couldn't wait longer on an empty stomach, and the work began to boil. We, of course, were also not going to fall behind. Therefore, without hesitation, I suggested: "Alcohol in small doses is useful in any quantities", but Ludmila rejected it right away on the grounds that there were other tourists from Donbass there, and she did not intend to share the prize with anyone.

So, she quickly wrote something on a piece of paper and also quickly handed over the work. Organizers did not delay the announcement of the results either. As Luda expected, our competitors, the countrymen remembered that "Beer without vodka is money thrown away." They were rewarded with stormy prolonged applause. The third place was taken by some Siberians with an aphorism: "All mushrooms are edible, but some only once in a lifetime." Fortunately, there were no mushrooms on the menu. The second place was taken by an aphorism from Odessa: "The best fish is a sausage, and the best sausage is a stocking with money." I had already imagined a whole fried fish in a large plate, surrounded by a ring of fragrant homemade sausage, but neither sausages nor fish were found in their restaurant.

And when it seemed that my dreams to eat anything today were not destined to come true, a little miracle happened. The winner was found. It turned out to be the author of the aphorism "Rams are not invited to barbecue."

By Lyudmila's satisfied smile, I realized that I was also involved in our common little victory. Even though at first I had a suspicion that this pun might mean I was in trouble, the winner was generous. Moreover, as it turned out later, there was no other food on the menu, except for barbecue. And the prize was a free photo of the winners of the contest, excitedly eating the signature dish.

At the end of the banquet, the organizers presented all the guests with their signature aphorism: "Happiness is not the station you arrive at, but the way you travel. So, travel happily!"

As it shows, sometimes Kolybas turn out to be not as simple as they seem at first glance.

2. The Story Written by Lyudmyla Maksymchuk

November 2022

An Old Photo

From this picture two people are watching me: my young self, and my husband Igor. I'm about 30, he's 28 years old. We are in Kolyba, a traditional restaurant in Zakarpattia region. We went skiing that year. It happened that way in our life that we quarreled all the time. And this trip was no exception. I no longer remember exactly the reasons for the quarrels, but apparently the complexity of our characters, and incompatibility. In any case, fights were endless. This made us very tired.

During that trip, the conflict was about one specific situation. It so happened that a young pretty girl from our touristic group fell in love with Igor, and she tried to conquer him in every way. Of course, I was jealous at times, angry at times. But looking at this photo now, I see that I have absolutely calm and happy eyes, and at the same time, I see Igor's surprised eyes. It was painful to begin to recall what had happened, why I was in such a mood; and suddenly, I recalled.

This was the last evening of our holiday in Zakarpattia after skiing. Together with our whole group, we went to Kolyba. Kolyba is a wooden restaurant, round, with a fire burning in the center, and tables around. They grill shashlik and serve house wine there. This was a restaurant for such resorts and for students. It was not expensive, but tasty and fun. Our company consisted of 10 people, these were students as well as just young people. In this group there was a girl named Svetlana who got interested in my husband. And as I understood, she really was into him and kept following him around. And there was another group of guys with whom we were friends. A nice boy, Sasha, athletic, cheerful, and he probably liked me too, cause he treated me well. He sat in front of me at the restaurant, while we had that dinner all together. At some point, I noticed that Igor left the table. Probably went to the bathroom. But then, he disappeared behind the entrance door to Kolyba. I kind of wondered where he went, and walking past the slightly open door, I heard the voice of Svetlana, who told him: "You know what, how about you leave your old wife?" Since me and Igor were two years apart, I

was older than him, I understood why she was saying this thing about me. “I really like you, we’ll be together”, she said. I, of course, boiled with anger and thought about how I should react. Make a scene? Well, it’s probably not appropriate in this place, I thought. And in general, I wasn't sure whether or not to reveal that I had heard them. But after thinking a little, I decided to act as a happy and cheerful girl who was just having fun and didn't know anything. But at the same time, I wanted to take a little revenge on Igor.

There were many young people in our group, and in particular there was one young man, Alexander, who probably felt my suffering. And he somewhat liked me. He tried to support me with jokes and interesting stories, and now, in this photo, I see that the hand opposite of me is his hand. I remembered him very well. I remembered this guy because he has an unusually athletic body, he was very tall, broad-shouldered, with light shiny eyes, and always smiling. I didn’t even think that his image would appear so clearly in front of me now.

Returning to the table, I began to talk with him; as he was sitting in front of me. Igor came back as Alexander kept telling joke after joke. Naturally, I reacted excitedly to all this; in fact, I would call our conversations light flirting. Igor was very surprised by this; and the photo itself captured the moment when I look at Alexander in admiration, and Igor looks at me in surprise. Well, of course, this ended with nothing, of course we then parted with our group, and there were no talks of either Svetlana or Alexander. But the old photo took me back to that time.

I began to remember my life. And what’s interesting is that a similar type of man like Alexander appeared in my life more than once. And that's exactly what it is. I must say that all these people... All these men, I somehow united them into one type in my mind, because they were different from the others. And they have always been very supportive of me in life.

3. Fictional Scene Script as a Result of The Two Stories Combined

Moments When We Freeze

Co-written by Luydmyla Maksymchuk, Igor Maksymchuk, Anastasiya Maksymchuk

Winter of 1982. A Kolyba-type restaurant in Zakarpattia region of Ukraine. It is empty yet, but dinner time is coming and it means Kolyba is not going to stay quiet like this for long. Fireplace in the center of the room throws warm glimpses of light on the wooden walls around. The interior is of a simple wooden hut with bulky heavy wooden tables and benches. Ukrainian folk textile and décor here and there makes the place feel homey, which is how it works in hundreds of similar typical restaurants around this area. One element of the décor is however special to this place only. It is a collection of aphorisms written on plates and hung proudly on the walls around. It includes "The cat who chases honey loses his lunch", "Eat, dear guests, everything is expensive in the market too.", "Drink seven times - eat once." and so on. The food theme of these quotes is clearly a pun appreciated by the owners.

As expected, the door of the Kolyba opens, and the space gets filled with a group of seven young people, three girls and four guys, who are clearly eager to have a good dinner after the day of skiing. Together with the snow on their shoes and jackets, they bring cheerful upbeat energy into the restaurant, the space gets filled with the noise of their conversations.

The people take off their jackets, and sit around the big table. One of the girls, Luydmyla, a brunette with short hair and bright dark eyes, allowed the aphorisms to draw her attention, she is studying the phrases from the walls as everyone sits around the table. Her husband, Igor is clearly interested in one thing only: menu. He is very hungry, and it is getting him a little "hangry" too.

Igor:

Anyone here? Can we see a menu?

Good Evening to the good people!

No reply and no staff members appear. But the restaurant is clearly open and works, Igor can tell by the fireplace on. Clearly, the leader of the group, Igor inspects a sheet of paper, the only item he could find on the table. It is unfortunately not a menu.

Luydmyla joins the table. Her usual seat next to her husband is surprisingly occupied by Svetlana. Luydmyla decides to not make a big fuss out of the weird mise-en-scene however, and uses her kindest tone instead.

Luydmyla:

Would you please move a little, Svetochka?

Svetlana has a perfect excuse to be closer to Igor, as she is reading the note he is holding. But she has to obey Luydmyla's request. She moves further along the bench.

Luydmyla:

What are they feeding us here with?

Igor:

With a wit, it seems.

Luydmyla reads the note from the table:

“Dear guests! We are very happy about your visit. Welcome to our Kolyba!

We do not have a menu. Do not waste your time searching for a QR-code, it hasn't been invented yet. However, our hospitality is endless, and our speciality is famous throughout all Zakarpattya! Yet, in order to taste it, you will have to pass a small challenge, and guess the dish first!

Please write your answer right here on this piece of paper, below. Remember, your answer must be an aphorism.

Good luck!”

Luydmyla:

Indeed we are lucky

Svetlana:

Are we in “What? Where? When?” show?

Igor:

I've always dreamt

Aleksandr:

So do we have any options, ladies and gentlemen?

Luydmyla:

Why all I can think about is “Beer without vodka is a waste of money”?

Igor:

Depending on one`s dinner preferences.

That little wit clearly made Luydmyla uncomfortable. So, Igor tried to fix the situation:

Igor:

"Alcohol in small doses is healthy in any quantities"

Svetlana:

Got one, guys! "All mushrooms are edible, but some - only once in a lifetime".

The group agrees it is a fairly decent option. Svetlana considers her job done, and gets out of the table for a smoke. As she is leaving, behind Luydmyla`s back she touches Igor`s shoulder and makes a sign for him to join her. Igor doesn't give a clear sign to her back, if he will join or not. Svetlana walks out.

Alexandr:

Mushrooms are great, but somehow not very serious.

This is not a vegan place I hope.

Igor:

Luyda, write this down

«The best fish is a sausage, and

the best sausage is a stocking with money!»

With the triumph on his face, Igor condescendingly passes the pen to Luydmyla. He gets up from his seat, and excuses himself.

Luydmyla:

(is about to start writing it down, but hesitates)
I don't understand, do you want fish or a sausage?

She doesn't get a chance to receive Igor's response, her husband has vanished.

Alexandr:
(to himself)
Or a stocking?

Luydmyla looks at Alexandr with confusion.

Luydmyla:
Smells with something fried...
I'm craving a barbeque!

Alexandr takes a tissue from the table and a pen from Luydmyla's hands, writes something on the glassy paper, folds it, and passes it to Luydmyla. She reads it, smiles, and nods to Aleksandr in agreement. She gets up from the table and walks away following her husband.

Luydmyla walks out of the decoration set of the restaurant, and appears in the "behind the scenes" area of the film studio. She passes by the stored equipment, cables, other crew members, and walks behind the wall of the built decoration of the restaurant. This is where she sees her husband and Svetlana smoking and talking. She makes sure she isn't seen as she picks on them.

Svetlana:

Let me be straightforward with you. I never like these games, to hide or hint. I always know very well what I want. And whom I want. Which is why... here is a proposition:
Dump your old wife. Me and you, we match so much better. Also, I am 26, and the rest of advantages you will learn as we go...

Igor:

(lights a cigarette)

It sounds like an offer you can't refuse.

But do you know the postman always rings twice?

Svetlana finds the best is to just laugh, since the point of the joke she did not get anyways. They keep smoking together.

Luydmyla is watching them from the shade by the wall, her heartbeat gets faster and faster as she freezes without being able to move for a few seconds.

On her weakened legs, Luydmyla comes back to the table, and quietly sits down. Her eyes are lost, and she pretends to listen to her friends' lively discussion. There are drinks on the table already, a glass of wine happens to be very useful at this point. The sounds, the textures, the smells are annoyingly exaggerated. The conversation is abrupt, words, words, laughs, words. It's too hot here.

Alexandr distances himself from the conversation. He takes his guitar out of the case, and touches the strings lightly. At first, nobody notices him playing, apart from Luydmyla. She knows the song.

Luydmyla:

(sings along quietly)

Whose horse is standing there,
The one with a silver mane,
I'm really liking that,
I'm really liking that,
That girl I'm seeing here.

Alexandr joins her, and they keep singing together:

It's not the girl herself
As for her pretty face.
Give me your hand, little girl,
Give me your hand, sweetheart,
Hop on my restless horse.

The rest of the group picks up the next verse, and now the power of their voices fills the restaurant. The cast, and the film crew, all sing together, whoever does not know the lyrics, just hum along. The song is vibrating across the film studio.

The girl agreed and came
And gave the man her hand...,
“I wish I never knew,
I wish I never knew,
How loving him might hurt.”

Igor and Svetlana come back to the table, surprised by the change of atmosphere. They take their seats at the table, while trying to not interrupt the song. It would not be that easy though. Luydmyla has a strong voice, which has always had a power to mesmerize Igor.

Sweet loving’s going on
From the evening till the dawn,
When the sun comes up again,
When the sun comes up again
His love would fade away.

Finally, Igor can’t help but joining the singing. The seduction of the song is impossible to resist.

Sweet loving’s going on
From the evening till the dawn,
When the sun comes up again,
When the sun comes up again
Kozak will go away.

As the song ends, the singers applaud to each other and to themselves. Some have tears in their eyes. Igor kisses Luydmyla on the cheek. They look at each other for a moment.

Alexandr:
Finally! Enjoy the meal

As if it was there all this time, a big plate with smoking hot barbecue sits in the middle of the table. Both Igor and Lyudmyla get surprised by the sudden appearance. But it is a happy surprise, so they grab a metal stick each and start eating.

Igor:

But what is the right answer? Who should we be thankful to?

Luydmyla:

To you!

Igor notices that the empty now plate in front of them says : "Rams are not invited to a barbecue."

Igor was about to ask something more, but his confusion got interrupted by one of the friends from the group:

Photographer:

Boys and girls, say cheese!

The photographer flashes his camera in front of the faces of Luydmyla and Igor, and with a click freezes the moment forever.

CHAPTER 2

Creative Process Diary & Insights

The following chapter is written in the form of a diary, which describes the creative process as it went along with its artistic, academic, and personal implications. Many of the insights come at the crossroads of these three dimensions.

Now, it is a kind of a faux pas to use the first-person pronouns in an academic work. This is where my (if I may) first challenge comes from. There is of course an option for a writer to talk about oneself in third person, and use the word “author” instead. But in this project, “I” stands not only for the author, but also for the film character, for the film actress, and for the academic researcher. The project entangles all these roles inside one person which happens to be me. This entanglement is what poses so many challenges, but also opens possibilities to understand the nature of an autobiographical hybrid film with reenactment in the base of its method.

Hence, I, the writer of this text, will allow myself to break the convention and use the first-person pronouns native to the style of diary for sake of sincerity and clarity.

The Idea

The idea of the project first came to me in the beginning of 2020. It was a few “apocalypses” back, before the Covid-19 pandemic, before the full-scale war in Ukraine, and before I started therapy and even realized what my research on reenacting trauma was truly about. Later on, I found, that my ‘apocalyptic’ metaphor is backed by a study on metamodern historical and sociopolitical background (Pipere & Mārtinsone, 2022).

Back then, ‘Moments When We Freeze’ (MWWF) still carried an old name, ‘The Moving Room’, and had a completely different concept behind it. However, the baseline was the same: I wanted to recreate a scene from the past of my family’s life, using the method of reenactment and some family archive footage. The project was planned to be shot in Kyiv, in my mother’s newly bought apartment, which she wanted to fill with the furniture brought all the way from our old home in nowadays occupied Donetsk. The idea of hers, I must mention, to recreate her lost in the war home screamed reenactment. It was clear to me my mother needed badly to bring what had left of her happy life back in Donetsk to her new home in Kyiv, after she had been displaced by the war as it broke out locally in 2014 in Donbas. Not only was her furniture pretty, but importantly, it was a container for her memories, literally and metaphorically. For me however, her choice of such an object was never really fully

understood. I always felt more connection with what was inside those drawers than with the drawers themselves. Let alone the fact her memory container is quite a bulky one.

That is why, before the crew of loaders deconstructed and packed the furniture from my childhood home, my job was to inspect every drawer and every closet to make sure we took all of the important documents, photos, notebooks, drawings and postcards with us. Of course, all that process was done online through a video call. I have not been able to visit my hometown since 2014 and I am not sure I ever will be able to do so. Hence, the trauma of the lost home was the one *The Moving Room* as it was seen back then was aimed to reenact.

Finally, my mother completed her nearly impossible mission, and the furniture from her abandoned apartment has been brought through the borders all the way to Kyiv (which was expensive, risky and very likely semi-legal), and found its new place. She feels very proud of how heroic and irrational that move was. And I feel proud of my little contribution: making sure no valuable object from the drawers has been left behind. I loved searching through the drawers since I remember myself, finding texts, images, objects long forgotten or never known. Unlocking secrets, uncovering memories. Perhaps, it was that moment when I realized my own focus goes inside the furniture, that is where my memories were archived.

Later, Covid-19 happened, and after we survived that trauma, the full-scale war in Ukraine happened. The rescued furniture turned out to be in danger again, together with our archives. In addition to that, the disconnection between myself and my family got broadened by the virus threat, distance and political turmoil.

The Image

One photo from the family archive caught my special attention. That photo, together with the changes in the Ukrainian political arena, has updated the overall concept of *The Moving Room*, and later brought me to change the name to ‘*The Moments When We Freeze*’.

The picture features my mother and my father eating barbeque at a restaurant, it looks like it's their winter vacation. In the photo they look happy. That one was one of a very few of their pictures together that I've seen, and the only one where they looked happy. My mother is my age in that photo, in her early 30s. We look alike. Back then I was not yet born, and my parents were still together.

The Method

The method for ‘The Moments When We Freeze’ is constructed as follows: I intended to ask each of my parents separately to write down everything they remembered about the day when the photo was taken. This way, we would have two narratives: one written by my father, another one by my mother.

I then would compare these stories and analyze the similarities, differences and contradictions. I’d asked them to discuss their texts together, and see how this discussion reveals strengths and weaknesses of their memories. I’d check if this discussion would lead them to connection or disconnection.

All the discussions and rehearsals were held via video call conferences due to several reasons, both practical and artistic ones. All the three of us are divided geographically. There are reasons for our division in the first place – a personal one, and a political one. The personal one has to do with my parents’ divorce which had happened shortly before my birth. The political reason is of course the war which on February 24, 2022 has spread to the whole country. My father still lives in our hometown, Donetsk, my mother keeps moving between Ukraine and the rest of Europe, and I myself live in Portugal.

We can clearly see how this element could have had a huge impact on the production process and outcome, and we do not claim we would obtain the same result, have the participants been present on set in person. However, the online conference platform with its frame partition serves as more than just a project necessity. It has a deep metaphorical connotation as well, since the divided family is in the focus of the film conflict. In addition, today online collaborations and co-creations are another developing trend that need further investigation. Finally, each story (the mother’s and the father’s perspectives) became the scripts for the reenactment. While both parents were supposed to direct the scene online, I myself was planning to participate as an actress for the character of my mother, while we casted an actor for playing the role of my father. This way, both of my parents (the carriers of the memories) had a chance to direct the shoot. The actors became their digital avatars to experiment with. Eventually, the story created as a result, was reenacted and filmed. The whole process at all stages was video-recorded.

The hybrid documentary includes in its narrative both the reenacted scene and the whole process of working on it.

After the reenactment is done and the film is ready, we reevaluated the memories of my parents. We tried to find out if they have transformed as a result of the film creation process.

The Trauma

Now, while the concept seemed very clear to me, I still had a vague answer, which trauma exactly we were working with. I sensed there is a large body of trauma within the family disconnection itself, but could not tackle it. This made me artistically stuck for a while without clearly knowing, why so. I had to begin to take the first steps of the plan before the question got clarified. What I discovered is there was not just one but multiple traumas involved on many different levels. And while the core of the concept is supposed to work with the trauma of the broken relationships between my parents, it involves my own trauma too.

For the research on working with trauma through artistic practice, I find it important to have a clear understanding of the exact traumas involved, and not leave some of them aside, since as we know from Cathy Caruth, trauma thrives when not being noticed and recognized (Bennett, 2005). Hence, I tackle and discuss below the traumas conceptually or circumstantially involved in the production of MWWF project.

The first trauma has to do with the very center of the project, its conceptual and dramaturgical focus. It is the trauma of my parents' broken relationships, and it left its mark on my both parents' lives, their memory and even the photo depicting the two of them in a seemingly happy way (trauma covered under the veil of smiles). I find it to be an interesting phenomenon: family photo and video archives usually attempt to capture, publish and preserve only memories marked with positive emotions, the highlights of happy days. Alternatively, the attempt is to construct a happy image in the absence of one. Whether the case of my parents' photo has to do with the latter or the former was an open question to discover along the way of the practice. As I started the research into the background of the photo, I immediately stumbled on traumatic memories by my mother, and faced the avoidance of mentioning them by my father.

The trauma of a broken relationship is the first reason behind the physical and emotional distance between the participants of the project.

The second trauma has to do with the very physical impossibility to cross the distance between the participants. It has to do with political reasons. Before the war in Donbass started in 2014, both of my parents had been living in my hometown Donetsk. While I already lived outside of my hometown, it was possible of course for me to visit it. This has become dangerous

after 2014, and completely impossible after 2022. As a pro-Ukrainian Ukrainian (tautology is fully intended here), who lived in Western Europe for 5 years now, I would have been immediately targeted as an enemy in my russian-occupied hometown, and killed right away in the best-case scenario. The worst-case scenario would be too traumatic to even describe here. It is a difficult knowledge, however, to carry. Of course, nowadays the border divided by the frontline is one hundred percent not crossable. Now, my father has never attempted to move anywhere outside of Donbas whatever would happen to the region. The whole life as I've known him, he has been living in the same studio apartment in the city center, rarely changing jobs or hobbies. Ironically, the person who loves stability the most, he ended up in probably the most unstable place on Earth. As a consequence, and perhaps as a way to fit into the new regime, my father accepted its ideology fully. He, while being quite an advanced internet user, has accepted russian propaganda. It perhaps fell onto the fertile ground of his memories from the Soviet past, when he was young, and when life promised strength, possibilities, and a bright future. Would that mean that my father would justify my own death, would it ever be caused by russian soldiers? I have never dared to ask such a provocative question, and I am not sure if I should.

The one clear point is the trauma caused by the war in Ukraine is shared between all the three of us: my mother, my father, and me. The trauma of my mother has to do with the life she had to abandon, and start anew in her 60s. My father's one is located in the very fact he has to survive inside the secluded region exhausted by the war, in physical danger for his life every day. My own trauma, as I understand it now, does not have to do with my own physical danger, but with the knowledge of the danger over my parents, loss of my own hometown, and ultimately the loss of hope to ever visit it again, let alone see my father in person. It is the knowledge of hostility of that environment, the unimaginable violence that has taken over the place I grew up at, the abundance of lies and barbarism that has become the law there and conquered so many people's minds, including my father's one.

Will it be possible, and how exactly for the family disconnected by their personal past and political present, to create a film using a participatory method?

There is the third trauma which is important to mention, it has to do with myself as an author only, and it operates on a meta-level, rather than within the film plot or concept. As a result, the trauma attempts to appear insignificant for the framework and elude even the mere description of itself, as I am trying to write about it. [SEP] Filmmaking process for me as an author has become a traumatic practice in the past due to the difficult experiences related to it. Multiple

criticism and self-criticism, in combination with challenges to survive and succeed as an artist existing in a capitalist environment, has led me as a filmmaker to a creative pit. At the moment when I started, for me there was a lot of fear at play to come back to making a serious auteur project. The process has been going very slowly, I have been postponing every step of making it, despite the general positive feedback on the concept. I had plenty of reasoning for it: the war alone is a good enough reason to justify my own inability to be productive. The war has been indeed protecting me from the necessity of taking action, which I find ironic. It was only in the second part of 2022 and with help of psychotherapy and other instruments of self-work, that I was able to tackle the true reason behind my “freeze response” to making the film, and it is the trauma of “failed artist” which I carried.

It is then I recognized that for me the ultimate reenactment of trauma will be making a film again. My diary note from the 10th of July 2022 says: “There is a massive hesitance to this film. I don't want to make it. And I want to make it. There is every reason to work on this, and yet, I keep on postponing even talking to my parents about it. Even thinking about it. Once so inspired, nowadays I get slightly annoyed when people ask me about my next project. I just want to hide, and for them to leave me alone. Is there a trauma hidden precisely inside the act of filmmaking for me?”

The Production Process

- Initial discussion of the photo
- Writing of the main scene separately, and the joint discussion.
- Stories exchange. Joint discussion.
- Combined story development and its discussion.
- Shooting preparation: crew, casting, criteria.
- Rehearsals and the shooting.
- Editing

1. Initial discussion of the photo

The different memories surrounding it from both perspectives. Back stories written separately.

As I am writing this creative diary, I would like to keep the reader aware of the fact I am myself working with my memories at the moment. Even though very recent, they still share all the qualities of human memories: fleetingness, non-indexicality, individual character of information and emotions attached to them. In other words, I cannot guarantee to the reader

that the way I write this chapter accords to the way it happened. What I can guarantee is that the way I write it is exactly the way I felt the process; and this is the lens under which the whole project is framed.

In December 2021 during my annual trip to Kyiv, I conducted an interview with my mother about the photo we intended to work with. It is more precise however to think of it as a talk. We gathered in the living room of her house, as I was setting my camera on the tripod, my mother made sure to change her outfit to whatever felt more presentable to her. I did not mind, she had to feel comfortable after all. We had albums with old family photos lying on the coffee table, and I was going through them as we spoke.

I explained my choice of the photo to her: they both look happy in the picture, it has a playful character with them biting the meat, it looks not staged and sincere.

My mother right away protested my assumption over the happy character of the photo. For her, even if the smiles looked joyful, the memory was not. In her usual fashion, she started her backstory from the very beginning of her relationship with my father. Her story was full of sad memories. This bitter character haunts all of her memories related to my father, I realized later. In case her memory narrative itself doesn't have a bitter component, my mother uses a flashback in order to contextualize the memory within the unhappiness of hers due to that marriage. This was exactly the case with the chosen photo. The dinner itself depicted in the photo did not seem to have strong disappointments for my mother, but the overall trip did, which was explained to me emotionally and in detail. That evening my mother shared with me a memory of domestic violence she had suffered at some point from my father. Throughout my life I have heard a lot of stories about their relationship, and of course I realized I had to take them with a grain of salt since I would only have one sided version of it: my mother's one. We have never been close enough with my father to talk about these things. The memory of physical violence however struck me most during our talk on that day, and made me puzzled about if and how I should be representing it, and none of the ways seemed ethical. Was my father indeed the abuser? Is it my place to represent it or speak about it in the film? Is it ethical to ignore it and be silent? Should my father still be blamed and held accountable for the action he did nearly 40 years ago? If yes, then how and by whom? If not, then is he a different kind of person now? How should this change my own relationship with my father?

As I was listening to my mother's story, I realized that the narrative of the dinner scene to be filmed has to be combined with one of the negative memories of my mother, even if in reality the two memories stood further away from each other on the timeline. This is how the jealousy scene became an important dramaturgical element, chosen by my mother.

After a while, and as I was already back in Lisbon, I repeated the same procedure of recalling the trip with my father through a call. The process with him however was quite different. First of all, my father is not as much of a speaker as a writer. He enjoys writing much more than talking, which is why throughout the latest years that we spent unable to meet, he would rarely choose to call me but often would send me poems, small stories or scripts written by himself, in a secret hope, I tend to believe, that one day his filmmaker daughter puts one of them on screen (alright, dad, let's do it). With my father, we agreed he would write the story of their winter holidays from 40 years ago, it took him just a few days to do that. I was for some reason really anxious to open the document he sent me, to open up his memories.

I should say, I was very reluctant to approach both of my parents even with the idea of this project. With my father however I felt the real fear. The fear was not even about him saying no to the idea of the collaboration, but about the danger of crossing some kind of a boundary I was not supposed to cross, the boundary I was not sure existed. That is why I was delaying talking to him about the project, and in fact, talking to him at all. One day I finally got enough courage, or maybe ran out of the excuses not to do it, and told him. He said ok.

And around a month later I received the message from him with the text I had requested. And as I received that text, I hesitated to read it. My mother seemed to be very hurt about the memory of that day. Does he at all remember it the same?

As I finally got the courage and read the text, I felt a little disappointed. My father did not describe any of what formed my mother's memories. He described the weather, city sites, and my mother herself is barely mentioned in the story at all, and only as an abstract "we".

After reading my father's few paragraphs that resembled to me a school assignment "How I spent my holidays", I got back to my mother's testimonies and watched our 1,5 hour long talk recorded in March 2021. I was back in Ukraine helping her recover from post-COVID-19 symptoms, and during the interview she still struggled with her cough, but kept talking. She remembered very little about the dinner that happened 40 years ago. But she remembered a lot about the events surrounding their marriage and that particular trip.

She has told me everything from the wedding to the divorce, and even my conception (which ironically happened right after the divorce), and felt the necessity to finish with a comparative study of my father versus her last husband. I cannot judge her: my step-father was truly the love of her life, and he had died just a year before.

While watching the video of our conversation, I texted my father to ask about a few details, but still received disappointingly few vague sentences in reply. He had not remembered

them skiing at all during the trip, while my mother told me in detail how she accidentally slid downhill before having learned how to stop. But according to my father, there was no snow that winter.

Having expected a few contradictions from their memories, I still had no expectation of almost full amnesia from my father, collapsing against the multitude of my mother's traumatic memories. After finishing the video, I felt deeply upset, maybe because I could relate to some of the experiences my mother was describing. I was still aware of the fact I could not equalize our different experiences, but perhaps I could feel empathetic.

2. Writing of the main scene separately, and the joint discussion.

Realistic approach from Luydmyla and fictional one from Igor.

Later, as we approached the pre-production stage of the reenactment, we conducted a somewhat similar procedure with my parents but only for the dinner scene. This time, I asked each of them to write the story of the dinner, knowing that we would have to reenact it. I told them openly it was not a problem for me if certain things they could not remember would be fictionalized (such an approach would be sometimes used by my therapist). It turned out that my father is a fiction lover while my mother prefers to stick to the documentary character of her life. My luck, hybrid film is a child of both.

The story of my father had a sort of disclaimer in the beginning: in brackets after the title it said: "the story of one photo which could have happened for real". My father was very honest about his lying. The story has been written in a comedy genre, using a light tone which I knew was typical for my father's writings, and for some reason smacked of Soviet fiction from the 1960s. My father does not speak like that, but he always writes like that.

My mother too stayed faithful to her style, and gave her story in a format of audio message, using the tone of her voice as an artistic instrument. It was a drama by genre, essentially a story of pride and revenge, the story of my mother's character proving her worth which had been overlooked by her husband.

The two stories did not have anything in common apart from the location and characters dictated by the photo. I had a theory, my father used fictionalization as a way to both cover the gaps in memory, but also exchange the inconveniences. The mysterious person he is, he kept it well hidden whether each fictionalization stood for the former or the latter. Maybe even he enjoyed leaving his reader confused. The creative process for him was a way to exercise his storyteller's talent, wit, ingenuity. My mother used the opportunity in a drastically different way though. For her, it was a chance to talk about the pain from her past, and reclaim her dignity.

The genre-like character of memories has become one of the most important insights that this work brought. It revealed that not only do two people remember the same events and experiences differently, they also narrate them by stylizing them and assigning a genre. This way, memories of the same evening carried moods of different genres for the two different people experiencing it.

3. Stories exchange. Joint discussion.

Once the stories from the both parties were ready, having received their permissions to do so, I forwarded their stories to each of them, so they could read their ex-partner's "memories". It was another anxious moment for me which however went much more smoothly than I imagined. After my parents read each other's stories, we set a joint Skype call in order to discuss them, and the way we could combine them into one story for the reenactment.

The jealousy bit written in the scene by my mother was one of the most "sharp corners" for our discussion on that day, I thought. But my father took it with his usual humorous tone, and treated it as if it had no real-life background to the story at all. When my mother reminded him of the moment the scene was based on, he agreed that it could have indeed happened, in his usual jolly tone. My mother sarcastically accepted the jokes and games filling the narrative of my father's story. She claims none of what he described actually happened. My father chose the position of neither confirming nor denying her claims. Essentially, the both of them did not seem to want to argue during the process at all, and it made it quite clear for me that the 40 years younger versions of them were unrecognizably different people from the contemporary ones. My father kept highlighting that the character of his story is just based on his personality, but has to be not identified with himself. He would always use the third person to address the character, not the first. My mother identified herself with the heroine much more. The Luydmyla from the story was an "I" for my mother, and her actions and character were all based on my mother's real life's background.

During the meeting I suggested the way for them to combine the two stories, and they agreed upon the hybrid. We decided to film the scene in black and white, in order to recreate the aesthetics of the photo, and also refer to my father's favorite genre, noir film. As we spoke, I noticed my father tends to use humorous interpretation to every emotionally loaded bit of the script, and as we started combining his comedy with my mother's drama, he tried to turn the jealousy scene from a rather heavy dramatic mode into a shallower farce. As I confronted him about this tendency of his, he agreed that was his creative method. However, we kept my mother's dramatism untouched, as she let us know it was very important for her.

This meeting was eye-opening in terms of understanding how differently each of my parents were dealing with their memories and heavy emotions. If my mother preferred to put those into the center of her narrative, willingly dramatizing them, my father preferred to fictionalize and paint them with more positive tones with help of humor.

4. Combined story development and its discussion.

The task of combining the two stories into one we agreed to make my responsibility. As my father had mentioned, the two different narratives turned out to be quite compatible. In my opinion, the father's original story lacked dramatic depth which my mother's narrative added. And my mother's story had it been left in its first draft, would have risked to appear melodramatic. The humorous tone from my father's story was useful.

The turning point of the scene, the moment when my mother's character witnesses her husband getting seduced, is the key for my mother's memory of that trip. It had to be filmed according to the dramatism inherent to her narrative style, I believed. For my mother, I believe, this moment represents her trauma of feeling betrayed and losing the security of her partnership. It is possible that she lived through it at that exact moment of their marriage, or at a different one but of the same nature. In any case, in her memory map, it was that exact scene that symbolized her shattered trust.

In his most significant work on trauma, Van der Kolk describes three trauma responses: fight, flight, freeze (Van der Kolk, 2015). In the way my mother described her marriage with my father, there has been all the three of them represented. In general, I know my mother as a fighter, which is why it was unusual for me to witness her describing the key moment in her script as stumbling, being confused over what she should do, keeping it quiet, and essentially, I realized, freezing.

Now, the freeze trauma response according to psychiatry is characterized by refusal to take action and dissociation (Van der Kolk, 2015). Does that explain my mother's refusal to flee from her unhappy abusive marriage for 10 more years? I felt it was the freeze trauma response that could also explain my father's refusal to move away from the war zone for 8 years. And in fact, in early 2022, I have to say, my own psychological response to the trauma of the full scale russian invasion was exactly that: to freeze, to not being able to take a strong action and even properly work for a few months. It felt like my body and mind tried to "wait it out", wait for rescue or elimination of danger on its own, to forget, to get distracted, dissociate. It was at that moment that the current name idea "Moments When We Freeze" came up to me instead of the outdated "The Moving Room". This movie is about freezing as a trauma response my

family exhibited at different points in their lives. It is also a good name for a film about a photo, I thought.

Artistically, the moment when my mother's character hears the dialogue between her husband and the other woman, is the moment when she "freezes". This is when the camera switches to slow motion, and the body of Luydmyla stays still in the shot for a significant amount of time, up until she finds strength to break the "frozen" state with help of the song.

While writing the scene, I kept in mind that it is supposed to be filmed at the university studio. Now, the jealousy scene that my mother has suggested, had to take place outside of the restaurant. Recreating that location - a snowy outdoors area - in a realistic manner would be a challenging task in Portugal. Simultaneously, it was never our aim to keep the realistic style for our reenactment. This is how we decided on the alternative and somewhat meta-idea of including a backstage part of the studio into the fictional scene. A few more meta-inspired details of the aesthetics have found their way into the scene. Mentioning a QR-code and a vegan restaurant in the dialogue is aimed to create a moment of conflict in the narrative that was supposed to take place in the 1983 Ukraine, and indicate a torn-like nature of memory (torn between then and now, I and them). A temporal and spatial glitch, I found, serves as a good metaphor for the elusiveness with which we remember the past. The third breakage of the "fourth wall" happens in the scene of freezing, when my mother's fictional character for a short moment glances into the camera, making eye contact with the audience. This moment, I should confess, was not planned. It was in fact a lack of acting training on one hand that made me look at the camera as I was making the first take of the reaction. On the other hand, that shot, which had me as a performer emotionally immersed into the feelings of being threatened, disappointed, scared, angry, feeling like an empty spot - all at the same time - urged me subconsciously to search for a supportive witness. The camera has become the perfect one, and now I understand better what Mereweather (2009) meant by her "husband replacement" term.

The Ukrainian folk song "Ой чий там кінь стоїть" ("Oh whose horse is standing there") came up as a solution for the somewhat bleak final of the jealousy story. In the original narrative line suggested by my mother, her character was supposed to flirt with a friend from the group as a response for my father character's betrayal. In other words, my mother's version of the story was the story of revenge. In my opinion, that version was rather about the attempt, the illusion of reclaiming her strengths and resilience, and in fact was just a sad story of disappointment. I wanted to add more hope into the final, make it richer and deeper, but in a simple way. I felt that the character of my mother deserves more than a humiliation and an attempt of a revengeful come back flirt. I realized a folk Ukrainian song performed by her character and supported by the others can be a more elegant solution and encapsulate many

things: a revelation of her character's strength and beauty, discovery of one's inner power and independence, talent to unite people - in other words, the qualities I knew my mother inherited which helped her succeed in life, and to move on from her sorrows. Perhaps, a decision which marks the need for stepping out of the self-aware and depressive loop of postmodern philosophy and towards ethics of metamodern hopefulness. To my surprise, both of my parents liked the new ending suggestion. My mother did not mind changing the final she authored, even though as she mentioned she was never much of a singer (but I was!). And even more surprisingly, my father did not mind including a product of Ukrainian folklore into the scene. It is possible, I have to say, that I benefited from their special loyalty as a daughter.

The last pun phrase "Rams don't get invited for a barbeque" was suggested by my father, and I would have never agreed to end the scene with a rude exclamation mark of a phrase as it is, if it was not his own humble attempt to punish his character. It was a very strong twist for me when my father during the call explained the final phrase: "It was me whom he called a ram!" he said in his usual joking manner. My father did not need a punishment from my mother's character, I realized. He made sure to humiliate his character himself. And he made sure that me and my mother read it right.

5. Shooting preparation: crew, casting, criterias.

If the actress for the role of my mother was casted from the very beginning of the project development, it was not the case with the rest of the characters. The particular difficulty in the casting was due to the fact the main characters had to be Ukrainian and russian speaking people. Especially difficult challenge was in regard of male actors - because of the war, there are many female Ukrainians in Lisbon. However, male Ukrainians of the age between 18 to 60 are legally not allowed to leave the country, with a few exceptions. It was my pure luck that Eugeny Koshin, filmmaker from Donetsk whom I've known since I was 14, was in Lisbon at the time for his Masters program. Even though he does not share my father's facial features, he does share the way of speaking, light and humorous attitude, and the very accent from the Donetsk region.

It was important to find Ukrainian and russian speaking crew members for certain positions. It was very helpful for me that the 1AD understands the language of the scene, since I was supposed to be both directing and acting. Anna Korzh, who is a Ukrainian film director herself, appeared to be a perfect fit, she was the second pair of director's eyes in the moments when I felt overwhelmed by the amount of work on set. Anna Gabrielyan, an Armenian cinematographer who understands russian and a little Ukrainian could be fully aware of what was happening on set in order to capture the footage of the documentary observations.

The rest of the crew was international. We worked with a Portuguese producer, a cinematographer from Chile, a sound designer from India, a set designer from Spain, a gaffer from the USA. It has been a truly inspiring experience to gather such a diverse group that worked as one team.

It is worth mentioning that the Ukrainian part of the crew and cast has sustained itself as a community for a long time after the shoot, and people who have met because of the shoot, stayed in touch and evolved into a friends group with a tradition of weekly meetings. It felt like there was a strong need in the community for the Ukrainians participating in the shooting, and the film has become a strong team-building catalyst.

6. Rehearsals and the shooting.

With the cast we conducted two rehearsals. The first one was a chance for the cast and the directing team to meet each other face to face, for some of the participants it was the first meeting. It included the table reading of the scene, and also the discussion of the characters. Importantly, during the meeting, Eugeny Koshin and my father, the prototype of his character, had a talk online. This short call confirmed that the casting could work, and it was good for the actor to speak with the memories owner, to ask questions about the memories and the story, and last but not least, to observe the prototype of his character in real life, even if only digitally. As a result of the reading, some dialogues were fine-tuned, and the scene's rhythm became clearer. Also, we were able to see some flaws, like a lack of dialogue for the secondary characters, and later during the pre-production and finally production those dialogues were improvised. From the get-go, the scene carried the humorous tone, partially thanks to the actor's ensemble, mainly the one Eugeny created for his character. The dramatic tone was added to the specific moments of the scene during the shoot.

The second rehearsal was conducted at the studio, we aimed to work through mise-en-scene and acting aspects. In addition to the main cast (Luydmyla, Igor, Svetlana and Aleksandr), two secondary characters joined the rehearsal - one in person and another one online. The cinematographer was present as well, and during that rehearsal we also created a photo-storyboard. This turned out to be a less successful decision - to conduct both the rehearsal where the director acts, and the photo-storyboard at the same time. I felt that the process came out somewhat rushed and shallow, and I failed to dedicate enough focus to all of the actions. As a result, the storyboard was not as precise as it ideally could be, and this in its turn made the shooting more difficult.

The specificity of the cast for this project was that it combined both actors and non-actors on the same set. With actors, or people who had an acting background (Eugeny, Elena,

me) we practiced classical acting, with mild improvisation based on the memorized lines. For Roman, the cast for Aleksandr's role, this method proved to be more difficult, as he had no acting experience earlier. For him and the cast for the secondary roles, on the spot improvisation proved to be much more effective and resultative. This way, secondary dialogues were not pre-written or rehearsed at all. Instead we would give the cast suggestions of what they could speak about, and soon enough after they practiced talking to each other, the dialogue emerged. We made sure to only give them the themes they could relate to their own experiences, that way they could speak about them more easily. For example, the story of an early marriage which Vika and Liza discussed, was a real story of Vika's relative. This approach supported the overall idea of hybridity usage, since documentary and fiction were allowed to merge. In addition, this method proved to give the best results when it comes to working with non-professional actors.

We also had another challenge: Rouzbeh, an Iranian non-actor who played one of the secondary characters, did not speak neither Ukrainian and almost nor russian. The solution was to make him into a very introverted and silent character who only would be interested in pouring alcohol to the others. For almost the whole scene, he had a task of silently observing others, and offering them shots: "Будеш?" ("You want?") By the end of the scene, however, it was decided that his character would gain some confidence, and ask Liza if she was married, which later would provoke the whole conversation about early marriage between Vika and Liza. These parts were improvised on set and, in my opinion, the non-actors succeeded.

Now, it was a crucial aspect of the method that all the co-authors are present on set, even if online. Therefore, my parents made sure to be with us for the most important parts of the scene. They joined for the second shooting day out of two, which is when we filmed a jealousy scene and the final with the singing. My father was not able to join us for the first day, which is why we felt it was better to have both of the memory holders together for the second day only, and film the beginning of the scene without them.

One of the most interesting moments of the participation of my parents happened when they initiated the discussion during the jealousy scene: my mother did not feel happy about the line of Igor's character as a reaction to the flirtation of Svetlana. My mother argued, Igor could not call it "an offer you cannot refuse", in her opinion there was too much acceptance in that line. My father however argued that the phrase could have definitely been said this way, since it was used in an ironic sense anyways. This issue only occurred during the shooting itself, even though the same line has been written in the script my mother had read earlier. It is interesting, I believe, that the line did not bother her on paper, but she felt it differently once

reenacted. We suggested changing the line for her and retaking the shot, but she did not allow us to do that either. Finally, the line stayed the same, but we got that discussion of my parents recorded.

Due to the nature of the shoot, my parents had quite a lot of waiting time between the shots, when they still stayed online, left to speak to each other through Skype while the crew was busy. They spoke about our common relatives, their acquaintances, and importantly, the reality of living under russian occupation for my father, and in immigration for my mother.

Meanwhile as a main cast and director, I experienced the complexities of my multidimensional work on set, which at times felt overwhelming. Directing and acting together was a completely new experience for me. At times, while truly focusing on acting, I would lose the focus on other actors or camera work, and I had to constantly switch between acting, directing, and consulting with my parents for their notes on the shots. However, I am happy to say that thanks to the dedication of the 1AD, and hard work and professionalism of the rest of the crew, the tasks became achievable.

The very moment of reenacting my mother's dramatic reaction on her witnessing the abandonment from her husband, was an essential experience for me. The shot of the close-up reaction to witnessing the flirting scene has become a platform for me to reenact both my mother's experience from 40 years ago, and my own recent one. The immersion was so strong, it has left me inside the state for a long while after finalizing the scene. The difficulty of the method acting however collaborated with the power of seeing and feeling camera's eye as an external witness, so necessary at the times of traumatic moments, when the victim feels alone and isolated. I believe, the stylized fictionality of the setting, which was not realistic at all, contributed to the necessary distantiation, while the intensity of the experience which method acting demands was a factor for living and feeling the emotions through. Acting the memory felt different from living through a similar one precisely thanks to the presence of the empathetic witness of the camera. The camera in fact represented more than just a lens: it was a portal for me to transfer my pain to an empathetic witness and partially redeem it.

Finally, it is essential to say that the folk song, just as I prognosed, has become an important part of the film, since it influenced not only the fictional scene, but also the overall atmosphere on set. That in its turn was captured by the backstage camera. Thus, as a result of the two shooting days, we have unique footage from fictional shoots, documentary observations of the backstage, and the Skype recordings.

7. Editing

The time has come for the editing. The structure of the film was falling apart, more and more details and storylines tried to attach themselves to the film, more options, more ideas messed with my mind, shining to be brilliant for a while, and then fainting back... up until the moment when I realized this was my own subconscious reflex of a filmmaker to “tell all the truth” and “make sense of the story”. That was not at all the aim of the film.

The aim of the film was... to create a film. A film that could re-connect, at least for a short while, the divided family we are. And by reenacting its history, to reconfirm its existence, even if only as a concept. And finally, to construct the reality where our un-family would in fact act as a family. With this realization in mind, I could finally put together the 30 minutes long version of the film.

Humor in the film was one of the least expected features, for me as an author at least. It may be seen as a light-hearted manner with which one dares to approach their own life. It may as well be a defense mechanism of a traumatized psyche, or a national feature. “Щоб не плакати, я сміялась” (“I would laugh to keep from crying”) - the well-known line from one of our most prominent poets Lesya Ukrainka. In any case, for a community like ours, humor has become the way to find strength and connection when times are tough. Hence, the meme-boom in Ukrainian social media tendency following the full-scale war outbreak. Is the laughing desperate, is it a way of dissociation? Is it one thing that can keep us together and afloat?

Summary

Trauma, as an event lacking acknowledgement and conscious attention from the individual and the ones surrounding them, becomes exposed and highlighted through the reenactment. It is the very importance of the event that the act of gathering a crew and camera around it evokes, which was lacking in the traumatized individual's (or communities') consciousness. At the same time, the camera can provide companionship and be a witness for the difficult memories and emotions. Ultimately, the reenacted is never “the same” as the initial, just like a child is never the same as her parents.

The processes and insights discussed in the diary enriched our understanding of artistic reenactment, hybrid, autobiographical, feminist, auteur, trauma-themed postmodern filmmaking. In the next part of the thesis, these insights are combined with the knowledge obtained from our research of the secondary data. This allows us to discuss and conclude on the aforementioned aspects, which is the aim of the final part of this thesis.

PART 3:

Results, Discussion and Conclusion

This part of the thesis examines and sums up insights and conclusions of the chapters above. We discuss the findings in regard to the hypotheses we work with in this thesis. We also bring up to the discussion additional findings approached along the way. We highlight our understanding of what kind of novelty the research brings to the academic table, and explain its implications for the field. We draw the conclusion, and outline suggestions for the future work.

Results

According to our chosen methodology, the first part of the thesis was a thorough review of existing up to date literature on the topics of our field of study. Our first chapter consists of five articles covering topics of mediatization and memory, reenactment history and theory, trauma studies in psychology as well as trauma in artistic practice, culture and tendencies of ritual, and hybrid film in post-modern times. Along the way of the research, we found these themes closely interlinked, and connected with our main topic, which is artistic reenactment in hybrid film. Some of these themes we found to be in need of further academic research, like for example trauma and its representation in art and film, contemporary ritual as well as memory in relation to second wave of mediatization. At the same time, we found it problematic to work with the most recent data on mediatization, hybrid film, and latest tendencies and media technologies: in today's fast-paced environment, the time it takes scholars to analyze the trends is the time it takes the technologies and trends to move on, and the world to change again. Echoing Fisher, the present is slipping away, the past is everywhere, the future is unimaginable. For the next chapter of the first part, we used case study approach, where we collected and analyzed both primary and secondary data. For our literature review and case studies, apart from a few necessary exceptions, we focused on the literature from the age of the second wave of mediatization era, in other words, post-2000s and 2010s decades.

The case studies were chosen to be three films. Each of them had been awarded at A-class festivals, methodology of each included merging of fiction and documentary, and the central theme of each was closely related to psychological trauma caused by the political turmoil. The films also were chosen with regard to their date of production, their geographical

diversity with the focus on the European-based directors and producers, and their festival impact.

All the three hybrid films were produced within the decade of 2010s: *The Act of Killing* is a 2012 film, *Horse Money* is from 2014, and *Atlantis* was made in 2019. The films are therefore from what we here with a note of irony call “pre-apocalyptic epoch”, by which we mean they were made before the Covid-19 pandemic and before the full-scale-war in Ukraine. Geographically the films come from very different places, covering a wide range of political issues: *Horse Money* is a production of Portuguese director speaking of the colonial trauma of Cabo Verdean migrants in Portugal, *Atlantis* is a Ukrainian exploration of the veterans’ war trauma and PTSD. *The Act of Killing* is a peculiar example of an American Denmark-based filmmaker’s work in the South East Asia about the consequences of Indonesian genocide, in which the USA was in fact an active undercover player. Therefore, our examples triangulate Eastern, Western and Northern Europe, but at the same time break European boundaries, and speak of wider geography.

Finally, the three films had a significant impact on audiences through their festival journey. They are all acclaimed at the A-Class festivals, received multiple awards, participated in large scale critical discourse, and took place among the flagman-films of their years. For the Ukrainian and Portuguese films, we conducted semi-structured interviews with the film’s directors. We also interviewed the main cast from *Atlantis* film. Due to unavailability of the crew members as well as the abundance of secondary data of similar nature already available, we did not conduct an interview with creators of *The Act of Killing*.

The second part of the thesis is a practice-based research. Using findings and elements of methodology from our literature review and case studies, we created an experimental 30-minute long film. For this film, we reenacted a scene, which was based on memories of the author’s family. The memory we worked with has left its imprint on a photo from the family archive.

In a setting of virtual gathering we conducted a set of rehearsals and shootings. A special element of the project was its close reliance on contemporary media. Each of the three authors was geographically distant from the others, therefore, the project is also an experiment on working on one film while being present together only virtually, and not physically. Because methodology of the project is as much in focus for us as its topic, the movie has a structure of a film in film, where the process of creation becomes a subject of observation.

Below we discuss main results and insights each part of this thesis granted us. We combine and triangulate the findings from the articles in the first part of the thesis with those

from the case-studies and our artistic-based research, in order to see how they are intertwined and interact between each other.

Mediatized Memory and its links with trauma and ritualistic

We start by discussing the notion of mediatization and in particular, the second wave of mediatization. By mediatization, media scholars Couldry and Hepp mean the interrelation between changes in media and communications on one hand, and the transformation of society and culture on the other hand. In order to analyze trends of mediatization, we must look at global as well as particular tendencies and phenomena. In other words, both personal stories and collective history speak of the times. Second wave of mediatization is seen as a shift from broadcasting to internet era. Some scholars see this process as revolutionary, others as evolutionary. Now, the question of memory in regard to this (r)evolution is what guides our focus in this work. For Hoskins, memory is interconnected with the unconscious of the society. Taking Freud's perspective into account, we see that artistic practice is informed by the unconscious, thus the past is unconsciously reenacted when it isn't recognized consciously, which is what Freud called being stuck in repetition compulsion. Accordingly, unconscious is where traumatic memory is placed. This leads us to the necessity to study memory in relation to artistic practice and their connection with both trauma and the unconscious. We found that perception is a distorting process, and remembering is an active practice. Media, then, is a social produce that can be modified by use, just like memory. It is here that we found ritual culture to be the practice of such nature, cultivated since ancient times. Reenactment practice is exactly what constitutes this usage.

In light of these ideas, our practice-based research *Moments When We Freeze* (further MWWF) is a project based on exploring a media artifact, which is an archive family photo from 1982, thus it belongs to the first wave of mediatization. It is revisited and reconstructed with the help of second wave mediatization tools, like online meetings platform. For this project, we attempted to practice active remembering, and our subjects encountered a number of distortions of perception and remembering along the way. This way, we explored the connection between mediatized memory as an archive and practice of reenactment as ritual of active remembering. Because the memory chosen was traumatic for the participants, or at least reminded them their traumatic experience, we were able include that aspect into our research and trace the implications in the process. This way, work on traumatic memory was conducted

through ritualistic practice of reenactment, which resulted in a media product which is our hybrid film.

It is peculiar that the media artifact from 1982 was in fact an important memory holder for the family. In fact, if not for the photo, we cannot be sure the memory owners would at all remember the event it signified, details or stories involved. At the same time, as the media artifact suggested only one image of the event, it allowed construction of new narratives, thus it gave basic factual details and invited imagination.

Importantly, both media and memory often have a narrative construction. It is narrative structure that contributes to stabilizing the stories and remembering them. Mythologizing is the process of creation of narrative from memory and bringing it to realm of symbolic. Metaphors therefore are important for conceptualization and comprehension, for integrating the narrative collectively. Media with open narrative or no narrative invites to ritualize it, and by doing so, to create the narrative. For example, actively retrieving and discussing the content of a family archive photo contributes to arrangement of a narrative structure behind it, and activating the memory. Remembering thus does not happen in one's mind only, but through communication practices facilitated by media. Moreover, family photo and video archives usually aim to capture, publish and preserve only memories marked with positive emotions, the highlights of happy days. This selectivity serves as a narrative construction method. It can be compared to how a filmmaker selects scenes to film and include in the cut, in order to create a specific narrative. Alternatively, the attempt can be to construct a happy image in the absence of one, like in the case with the picture we chose for MWWF, where happiness was enacted, not just captured. Family becomes a director of their own narrative told through the archive.

Classic narrative construction however is not always the case with either media tools or memory. In the case-study of *Horse Money*, we see an example of post-narrative construction: the movie is not trying to tell a story or even be a story. In this sense, the director uses media to construct and represent the disconnected character or traumatic memory. The film is a representation of a mental landscape, and this way media of film serves as a representation of the fragmented memory nature of the main character. We see that post-narrative in hybrid film can be a good instrument to work with representation of traumatic memories, keeping them open to narrativization and interpretation. *Horse Money* invites repeated viewing, as critics noticed. Indeed, due to the open narrative and blurred lines between fact and fiction, repeated viewing can be a route to acquiring different experiences of the same hybrid film. This is one more quality films of hybrid nature can share with memory, and also with ritualistic. *Horse Money* thus becomes a case study which highlights our insight from the subchapter on ritual in media: the cinematic process allows two stages for practicing ritualistic. The first one happens

within the production phase, and is practiced by the crew and case, the second one is within the exhibition phase, and is practiced by audience. These two levels are of crucial importance for traumatic memory to become an external media memorial: the memory existent outside of the trauma survivor, acknowledged and transformed through repeated reexperiencing.

Important for us is the phenomenon of interconnectivity between personal and collective memories. This tendency has increased, according to the scholars, as a result of the second wave of mediatization. The role of collective memory is in shaping a community. The scholars define a community as a collective with a common vision of their past. Societies with different and conflicting perspectives of the past tend to fight. *The Act of Killing* (further TAOK) case study is a work with memories based on the construction of a specific narrative. This narrative is what made persecutors and executioners of Indonesian genocide to be accepted as heroes of their country. Heroes, as we know, are defined by the winning party. TAOK not just studies such narrative construction of that collective memory, but manages to change the narrative by means of reenactment, and it does so not only in the eyes of audience, but also its subjects. This case shows media can be a weapon in disguise when used together with its other functions. As the case study of TAOK shows, in Indonesia, there is a scarcity of media archive which would be able to uncover the traumatic past and the difficult heritage of the country. This is where importance of memorialization comes to foreground as a cultural problem, and it is this problem in particular what TAOK aims to solve, by creating the missing archive through reenactment. Media here is playing active role for ritualization and memory sharing and shaping.

Interestingly, in our practice-based research, a similar trend happened to the participants, owning their common memory in two completely different ways: the way each party of the divorced couple saw their common past had nothing in common with the way the other ex-partner did. We only managed to reveal this phenomenon thanks to reenactment, in other words, through the practice of active remembering, while the initial archive could not have told us about these differences in the narratives.

At the same time, there is another problem of our digital epoch widely discussed by media scholars. It is the quantity of digital archive: the excess of media of certain type and its omnipresence produces what they call “memory mess”, and as Hoskins highlights, the past surrounds us everywhere. Digitalization also shifted the role of memory preservation and retrieval from oral practices performed by community chain to Google and social media.

At the same time, digital media plays important role for keeping together the communities, members of which are far away from each other geographically. An example if this is a

possibility for interconnectivity between family members of migrant families, where different members are based in different countries. This is an important idea behind the concept of MWWF: the project researches mediatized interconnectivity applied through film. Essential question for us to answer was, if digital media could reconnect people not only through creating a common virtual space, but also, if that space could facilitate personal emotional connection. The answer we obtained was: yes, however, the connection created in this way is fragile and cannot last long without ongoing active practices. Those practices are exactly what contemporary rituals are in charge of. Here comes into play the importance of ritual for keeping the community together. Emotional closeness between the three family members was clearly reached, due to ritualistic revisiting of the common memories through reenactment, which is the result we could see in the film. However, it did not last long after the film was finished, because the commitment to make the ritual repetitive was not made. The opposite result occurred with the Ukrainian part of the crew and cast. It has sustained itself as a community thanks to the tradition of weekly offline meetings and regular engagement through social media.

To further highlight the importance of the role of active remembering, we confirmed that a family photo does not automatically become a memory; rather, it does so through the members' subsequent revisitation and recontextualization of the image. This insight has become a baseline of the methodology for the MWWF film. Two narratives of the photo created by the two participants differed drastically, and had very little in common initially. As the process went on, we were able to merge two of their narratives together, creating the third, unique and different from the “original event”, which is what all of the participants were aware of.

As our *Atlantis* (2019) case study revealed, media can work with memory in two stages. First stage is when the film itself can embody personal and collective memories. For the said case study, it was memories of Andriy Rymaryuk, the main actor who is also a war veteran. In the film, Andriy's memories are used as a base for method acting, and also as a plot and story world building component. Second stage is when through work with memory of what had happened to its character, the film creates a projection of the future. Through the film, the participants reenacted their memories and their mental states, and also enacted the future they were struggling to imagine. In this case, we speak of the collective past and also of the collective future. It is this mental journey to the future, which could have been perceived earlier as ‘canceled’ or unimaginable that gives a possibility to the memory owner to explore ways out of their current mental state, whether the change is for better or for worse. This serves as

an example of narrative projection and construction as a function of memories-based media. This is precisely what film as medium is able to facilitate, we found.

In our study of *The Act of Killing* (2012) shows a similar interconnection between media and memory, and the impact of media culture as a factor affecting the character's mental state and sense of future. It shows through Anwar's testimony how American gangster cinema of the 1960s 'motivated' the participant's style and even methods of violence. The real-life Indonesian gangsters as a matter of fact, reenacted what they memorized as their impressions of the films they watched, while borrowing not just fashion but even the methods for their crimes.

As a second aspect of the case study, the film *The Act of Killing* manages to uncover the hidden pages of Indonesian history, and at the same time, shake the very conflict in the notion of truth, morality and the official vision of the collective past. The film communicates imagined as if remembered, and remembered as if imagined, highlighting the confusion between the both. The second peculiar aspect of interlinkage between memory and the media, is that the scenes of *The Act of Killing* have become a family archive for Anwar's family, through which the head of the family tells his grandkids the story of his own life and even encourages them to not repeat his mistakes. The boundaries between personal archive and public production blur, similarly to what happens to persona and collective memory.

Our artistic research let us discover the genre-like character of memories. We noticed that while two people remember the same events and experiences differently, they also tend to assign a genre to their memories. This is, we believe, an element of intuitive narrativization, and it is something that connects memory with media. In MWWF, memories of the same dinner night archived in the photo, exhibited different genres for the two different memory owners. Even a traumatic memory can be packaged into various genres: drama, comedy, horror, etc, as we observed in the practice-based research.

As we also found, a traumatic memory owner can choose to either associate themselves with the character of their past self, or mentally create the distance, and think of the past self as a different character. We traced a similar phenomenon in *The Act of Killing* case: memories of the participants had a clear genre, in their case, the genre of a gangster movie. Also, there is a clear psychological distancing between the present and the past self that Anwar, the main character, expresses. It is the collapse of this distancing, that causes the character's final cathartic psychological transformation: after the 'I' of the self and the 'I' of the character merged, Anwar expresses recognition of the crimes committed as his own. Genre as well as disassociation helps trauma survival by creating emotional distance from the traumatic event.

Another essential idea found through literature review research is the vulnerability of digital archive, and its opposition to the illusory safety of digital data. Digitalization proved to affect memory as digital memories seem to the owners less “real”.

For scholars like Hoskins, the time acceleration trend is the reason behind memory transience, as well as simultaneous increase in quantity and decrease in quality of digital footage. Some critically call this the “collapse of memory”. There are implications on artistic practice, and it lies in the inability for artists to have the time to create without stress and time pressure. Therefore, they are obliged to produce instead. Failure is unaffordable, according to some like Fisher. This brings new trends in hybrid film, we found: the fast pace of technological and production advance makes each artistic tendency and “wave” shorter, adds to their diversity and transiency. As a result, studying contemporary filmmaking processes means studying the processes which become the past by the time the study is over.

At the same time, our case studies show that digital technologies provided crucial key for those films’ methodology. Digital recording unlike classic film allows to produce and store very big amount of footage, while providing mobility and simple maintenance of the camera. In *Horse Money*, Costa was recording multiple takes aiming to work with memories of his characters through “different repetition”, and also, to remove any melodramatic tone of the scenes. Minimal crew, a possibility given by relative simplicity of the digital recording technologies, allowed him to work closely with his characters and reach higher intimacy in his scenes. In opposition to observations of Hoskins, Costa considers film to be an art form that can fight against excess through aesthetics of minimalism inherent to his *Horse Money*. These factors also apply to the two other case studies. In *The Act of Killing*, the filmmaker was able to spend a lot of time with his main character, and he was able to provide a setting of minimal crew. For *Atlantis*, small crew was not a part of the method, however, the amount of footage and takes was vast exactly thanks to the possibility of digital technologies. Last but not least, in our project *Moments When We Freeze*, it is the post-Covid-19 trending technologies of videocalls that provided a platform for collaboration between the participants who were based thousands of kilometers away from each other. Digital space became a space for sharing and reenacting memories, which was vital in order for the film to be made. It is only in digital space that the said family could possibly have a room to connect and work together despite geographical and political borders between them. We can say with certainty, that methodologies for hybrid films we studied as well as those for our own artistic research project, would not exist without the possibilities given by the digital technologies. Mediatized traumatic memory can be externalized with methods of reenactment, which is a practice of sharing

methods of active remembering with rituals. Such media product then functions as a memorial of the traumatic history told.

Reenactment in between mediatization, trauma, and ritual

Methodology of reenactment is rooted in the 19th century historicisms, which were performed in a form of parades and pageants. Those practices moved to film after the rise of cinema. But it is after the postmodern paradigm shift that the ideas of reenactment had obtained its contemporary meanings and functions in performative and audiovisual arts. It raised the questions of representation, remediation, scripting, documentation, originality and commodification of reenactments.

In the 70s, reenactment as artistic practice was seen as a political counterpoint to capitalist establishment. By the 2000s, it started to be seen by theorists like Derrida and Fisher as “archive fever”: the nostalgic desire to bring back the lost past. The postmodern idea of “different repetition” is what updates the description of today’s reenactment practices. Scholars see recontextualizing the archives as an important practice, which is what reenactment can be utilized for. Hence, the popularity of the method increased in the artistic and cinematic practices of the 2000s-2010s, thus in the era of the second mediatization wave. Importantly, scholars speak of the ability of reenactment to address trauma. Bill Nichols categorizes cinematic reenactments into the types of: realist dramatization, typifications, Brechtian distantiation, stylization, parody and irony. However, the categories merge from one case to another. Our project MWWF uses three of them: realist dramatization, Brechtian distantiation, stylization. Scholars find reenactment to be capable to not just strengthen the narratives, and therefore meanings and memories, but also to transform them. This ability is key for our research since it suggests a potential for reenactment to transform traumatic memories. This transformative potential is what we proved to be taking place indeed, according to the results of our practice-based research MWWF, as well as the case study TAOK.

We found in-person artistic reenactment to be a contemporary mediatized ritual, which opens a door for working with and through memory, communicating individual and collective trauma, and having a transformative potential for the audience and participants. This is something evident in the case studies of *Horse Money* and *Atlantis*. The concept of reenactment as an instrument for exposing the unconscious and the traumatic is essential.

As a result of our research, we found reenactment as contemporary artistic practice is connected to a set of notions and problems. Firstly, it is linked to questions of postmodern

philosophy, problem of original, blur between fact and fiction, issue of authenticity and archive. Secondly, we trace the connection with memory, repetition, identity, collective, history, media and performance. Thirdly, there is a relation to psychology and the notions of repetition compulsion, language, memorialization, unreliable character of memories, trauma responses, flashbacks and distancing.

We systematized these notions, and therefore were able to build a framework in order to theorize and analyze practice of reenactment. If reenactment was a center of the symbolic triangle, then the first angle would point to the field of postmodern media, the second one to ritual culture, and the third one to trauma studies. We found this framework to be a comprehensive representation of the state-of-the-art, and based our further research on it.

The problem of reality reconstruction reveals itself in *Horse Money*. Critics and the director himself do not see the cinematic world of his film as a reconstruction of reality. Rather, it is a construction of a space for his characters to live and re-live their memories in. The director focuses on the participatory approach, where scripting becomes secondary, but creating on set is primary, therefore, giving the characters the time to exist in the constructed world. Costa's realism is called "digital realism" by the critics, and should not be mistaken with indexical one. The core of such realism is not in the aesthetics, but in methodology of collaboration with the memory owners on the personal rather than strictly professional level. This is when we can speak of the originality of Costa's reenactments, for it is the originality of the intimate process of collaboration with the memory owners that contributes to the "realness" of what we see in the film.

For *Atlantis* case study, reenactment as a method is less evident and discussed by critics as in the other case studies. It is because of a special nature of reenactment method: here we should rather speak of the term 'enactment', as its actors use their own memories in order to project the imaginary of their and their character's future, and this is the main concept behind the film's methodology. The main actor's task was to reenact his mental state as a war veteran, and also to enact the future he was struggling to imagine for himself and his country. The director also used the method of capturing long duration scenes in one shot and numerous takes for each, sometimes up to 45. This allowed immersion of the characters into the scene. Unlike Costa, Vasyanovych aimed for pre-scripting and detailed pre-planning of his film. Still, the original storyline has undergone radical transformations after shooting and initial editing stages. There is a certain conflict in the ways the director and the main actor speak of their work on reenactment. Vasyanovych tended to simplify the role of method acting and working with and through memories and feelings for his actors. He sarcastically referred to directing

his actors as to mere choreographing of the bodies. Unlike Costa, he had no intention of building intimate atmosphere for his work based on emotional connection with his participants. At the same time, the main actor Rymaryuk speaks a lot about how important and transformative the immersion into his character's emotional state was for him while working on the film. It is evident that while the director did not intend his reenactments to be transformative or even affective for his actors, the process still brought such result to Rymaryuk: "It doesn't show at all, but there was a tear indeed", he said in the interview.

Importantly, the crew and cast of *Atlantis* shared their important discovery: the very process of making their film was similar to army routine. There was a big team of people, working hard on the same difficult mission, maintaining strict routine and challenging themselves. In this, according to the director, was the ultimate reenactment for the war veterans participating. As we see, reenactment as a method and as a ritual has a lot to do not only with what happens in front of camera, but also with the very production process.

In *The Act of Killing*, the case is opposite: transformative power of reenactment becomes the very subject of observation by the director. It is a story of the interaction between the protagonists and their own media creation based on their memories. However, hybrid genre of the film in this case sabotaged itself, and there is lack of trust from audience in the transformation they see in the main character: what if it is too just an act, critics wonder. This method allows the director to expose a conflict in the notion of truth, morality and differences in vision of common collective and personal past.

Reenactments of TAOK represent memories as personal imaginations built upon biographical and historical events, unveiling the impossibility of the objective self-representation, and offer evidence of time passage.

Similar to TAOK, *Moments When We Freeze* film utilizes the principle in which memory owners recreate and observe their memories on screen, while we as audience observe them do it. It therefore navigates similar issues: ambivalence of truth, ethical and moral issues, differences in perceiving and representing the common memory.

Both in TAOK and MWWF, the crucial moments of the films and the most transformative for their participants, are those where they watch their memories being reenacted on screen. Importantly however, in MWWF reenactment is performed not by the memory owners, but by their daughter, while in TAOK the protagonist acts himself, but assumes different roles in different scenes: perpetrator, observer, victim. The last role become the most transformative for him, while it was never his actual role in the real life. It was this ability to shift the participant's perspective by putting him in his victim's shoes that contributed to his perception transformation.

The characters of *Horse Money* in a somewhat similar way take turns to represent other people and each other's experiences, in addition to playing themselves at different times of their lives. Their characters at times exchange the roles, blend into each other, repeat each other's lines and adopt each other's memories.

In MWFF, such exchange also takes place. Here we can speak of the transformation happening to the memory owners as a result of witnessing the scene being reenacted, and also one that happened to the performers. While in this project, the performer was reenacting her parents' memories, she was also reenacting memories of hers that resembled those by her parents, and the affective power of that reenactment was so strong at times, that she would forget that she was also the director on set. For the parents, who were the memory owners, that reenactment has become a safe space to facilitate the dialogue about their experiences of their marriage. Since they spoke of their "characters", not themselves per se, it was easier for them to make a transference and open up about what those "characters" were feeling. This we believe was exactly what contributed to therapeutic and transformative quality of the reenactment. Similar methodology is also discussed by Van der Kolk as one of the most powerful techniques for working with and through traumatic memories.

Reenactment in all the four case studies, including our own film, manage to work in two opposite ways simultaneously. It offers the actors space to engage with reencountered memories, and at the same time allows emotional distancing from them due to fictional quality of film setting. The both factors however paradoxically contribute to the overall aim of the method – which is to work through real memories in the safe fictional space. The difference between reenactment and living through trauma is similar to the one between play and fighting. As we see, the layer of fictionality over the realism of the memories, is crucial for the method. The dichotomy of identification/distancing is the key to the methodology. Role exchange is another important tool available for utilization in reenactment-based film aimed to reach affect and transformation for its participants. Transformation happens in this case through the shift of perspective, associating oneself with another character, and establishing empathy with that character.

This way, our theory that reenactment used as a ritualistic practice in contemporary hybrid film is well-equipped to address traumatic memory, proved itself right.

Trauma and how it becomes a memorial through ritual

According to Mark Fisher, the reasons behind the hauntological state of “archive fever” and “cancelled futures” are post-Fordist capitalism, mediatization, and collective trauma. We are living in increasingly traumatizing times nowadays, which is why we have to expect the implications to persist, and trauma studies and art to be on the further rise. Still, the amount of research secondary data on the connection between trauma and film was not sufficient for the research, as we discovered. Up until the end of the 1990s, trauma has been researched within the framework of artistic practices mainly through literary studies. Visual and audiovisual art has yet to do a lot of work in order to study the processes of integration of trauma into their field. This is where we see a field for future work.

The idea of psychological trauma was established in the end of the 19th century by Freud; however, the contemporary understanding of what trauma has come to the light of scientific community quite recently. Western interest in trauma was always linked with political and historical events of each epoch. It is not an accident, that the times for trauma studies boom were postmodern times. By the end of 1960s, psychoanalytic film theory emerged, which was focused on investigating the relationship between the spectator and the screen, while feminist film theory criticized the issues of male gaze and the patriarchal domination on the both sides of the camera. These issues are reflected in MWWF in a peculiar way. There is a power dynamic between the main memory owners, since the representation of their common story was supposed to be co-created by them both, as well as their daughter. In our case, we observed how the patriarchal gaze was tending to trivialize female’s emotional response in the story narrative, through stereotyping and application of satire, which is something we felt would be unethical towards the other participant, and did not follow through with. However, the intention was rooted in the male gaze driven cinema, we believe.

The main insights from trauma studies are the following. The vocabulary definition of trauma is “severe and lasting emotional shock and pain caused by an extremely upsetting experience, or a case of such shock happening”. Traumatic memory differs from regular memory in a number of ways. It distorts and fragmentates the memories, breaks the timeline of the memory, and affects the ability to narratively verbalize and articulate it for the survivor, affects the physical body condition of the traumatized, while producing flashbacks long after the trauma happened. The flashbacks are indistinguishable for the rational brain from the original traumatic event. It also produces the compulsion to repeat the traumatic experience, which is an attempt of the psyche to resolve and comprehend what it failed to do so at the

moment. However, traumatic memory cannot be entirely falsified, because fake memories do not produce PTSD. The typical reactions of the psyche for the traumatic trigger are fight, flight, freeze or fawn.

Trauma happens not directly as a result of the experience, but as a result of failure for the psyche to comprehend it. This is where artistic reenactment practices become a tool offering a possibility to safely repeat and comprehend the experience, while offering an option of rewriting the narrative. An external witness becomes vital for the process. It is camera and audience that plays such role in artistic reenactment through hybrid film. Primary affect of trauma differs from the possible secondary affect caused by the images of traumatic events. Therefore, audience cannot be traumatized by the sensitive footage the way the survivor was. The practice of reenactment as a form of ritual is well-equipped to address trauma for a number of reasons. Method of realist dramatization allows to safely cross the gap between the present self and the past self for the survivor, while stylization and Brechtian distantiation helps to keep the awareness that the experiences are acted out but not relived in reality. In *TAOK*, genre of grotesque in stylization plays an important role in distancing characters of the Oppenheimer's movie from their own past. In *MWWF*, the combination of dramatization and distantiation has created a platform to reenact the trauma of abandonment while keeping the safe distance from overly associating with the memory.

Horse Money case acts as a beautiful portrait of the traumatized mind painted by employing reenactment. Elements of aesthetics and narrative such as dark imagery, broken narrative timeline with gaps and repetitions, past time haunting the present, spatial confinement, solitude and isolation, gaps in memory coexisting with vivid flashbacks, ghostly presence of terrifying memories and zombie-like lifelessness, all contribute to the understanding of how trauma is experienced. Reenactment allowed the main character to safely reexperience his memories, and perform a different repetition.

The insight of the case of *Atlantis* lies in the fact that trauma can be reenacted and worked through not only by repeating scenes from one's past, but also from imagining and enacting one's future. The key cast was chosen to be war veterans, who were challenged to enact the future of their country after the victory. The depressive bleak mood of the film prevails due to the awareness that even after the long-sought victory, relief and instant happiness will not come to the people who had been fighting. Vice versa: war veterans as much as many citizens will have to deal with PTSD, feeling lost and not belonging, surrounded by the devastated environment of both geological and mental terrains. These terrains are in the focus of the director's representation, which makes the film a journey through PTSD. The director confesses, he had no intention to make a therapeutic film. However, the decision to bring a hopeful narrative line into the dark story was a late intuitive decision of the director, which

was what made the film work, in his opinion. This phenomenon shows there is a need for transformation of the dark narrative when working with traumatic memories. This narrative shift allowed reenactment to be more than a dark past projection for its participants, and it is essential for therapeutic reenactment. We can align this need with the shift from postmodern to metamodern tendencies: from the gloomy loops of trauma repetition towards the resolution and transformation of the mind. We tried to work in somewhat similar manner in MWWF film. Both of the initial stories of the memory owners had a bitter end, yet intuitively we felt the need to lead it to a somewhat more metamodern hopeful resolution. This is where the final song appeared in the story, which was a way for us to ritually express togetherness and strength, which can fight the helplessness and the abandonment of the main character. We discovered, the intuitive decisions to bring hope into the dark memories, even if this hope is purely fictional, allows a chance for rewriting traumatic memories for the participants. This theory, which reveals itself in our case studies, is also backed by the research of Van der Kolk.

The camera can act as simultaneously a mirror and a window for the memory owner. This differs medium of film from that of theater. On one hand, the protagonist knows they will be able to share their story, on the other, they will be able to watch themselves from aside. This was the experience felt during the reenactment for MWWF. The camera represented more than just a lens: it was a portal to transfer the pain of felt traumatic memory to an empathetic witness, and this offers a possibility of redemption. It also guarantees a possibility to watch oneself from the outside, which puts a symbolic mirror in front of the actor.

The mechanism of transference takes place in the encounter between the filmmaker and the protagonist. In the process of this transference in hybrid film, fictionalization can safely take place allowing the memory owner to stay safe with their memories without the fear of lying: in hybrid film some sort of “lying” is allowed and used as an element of constructing the truth. Objectivity as a concept is not what postmodern cinema trusts. Subjectivity on the other hand is more appreciated as a form of sincerity. Such is the case of the protagonist journey in *The Act of Killing*. But in the case of TAOK, an important question is to recognize that the film speaks of not only the trauma of the victim, but also the trauma of the perpetrator, something very difficult to recognize from the moral perspective. The film functions outside of dichotomy of good and evil, right and wrong, which is what postmodern hybrid film allows. Both the scenes where main character Anwar acts an executioner and a victim, do not attempt to reflect the actual truth. And this is what portrays the paradoxical logic of trauma, complication of memory with its fantasmatic quality, tendency for flashbacks and blurred boundaries between fact and fiction. In addition, by focusing on the perpetrators, Oppenheimer actually manages

to highlight the trauma of the victims. However, for some audience the lack of the victims' voice was felt.

Many scholars highlight the therapeutic functions or artistic practices; however, this is not necessarily the case, and depends of the intentions and methodology of film producers and participants. There are serious ethical implications linked to the problem of film being seen as a therapeutic tool. The issue is in the awareness of the participants of the intentions of the filmmakers, of the power dynamic between the protagonist, the filmmaker, and the viewer; and of the distorted quality of the story represented and perceived.

There is a relationship between the theatricality of aesthetics explored in *Horse Money* and *Moments When We Freeze* cases and that one of therapeutic drama techniques. We found a strong potential of artistic productions like these to become factors for trauma survivors' healing. This ability is shared with the same one of ritualistic practices, where rhythm, repetition, narrativization, role-play, performance, and community participation is involved. Essentially is therefore to see artistic reenactment as a form of contemporary ritual. We see a vital insight in the words by Primo Levi about the necessity for an external witness for those who experience a genocide. We discovered there is a need for a witness in those who experience all sorts of trauma, not only a genocide; and importantly, we found that hybrid reenactment-based film can possibly become a channel for such witnessing. Yet, in order to actually measure how the therapeutic effect takes place, further research is needed.

What we proved is that trauma, as an event lacking acknowledgement and processing, can have a platform for becoming exposed and worked through the reenactment. The camera acts as an empathetic companion who bears witness, and this facilitates the necessary support for the trauma survivor. Hybrid film as a result manifests as an external memorial necessary for incorporating the traumatic experience into survivor's consciousness, a step for working through and healing.

Ritual as a tool for an active remembering of the traumatic past

Because ritual is an action of remembering, film offers a suitable platform to serve as a stage for contemporary ritual.

Latest research updated the knowledge on ritual and liberated it from its ties with theology. Media theorists broaden the notion of ritual and highlight that this phenomenon is relevant to contemporary everyday lives in Western society. The role of rituals for dealing

with loss, death, and grief is essential nowadays, which points out a strong potential of ritual practice to help process traumatic events. The decline of ritual culture by the end of the 20th century in Western society on the other hand is linked to the phenomenon of “fast grief” and this in its turn causes the decline of ability for the survivors to cope with their loss. Rituals are not stable constructs, they disappear, get reshaped, and new ones generate when there is a need for them in the society. Difficult historic times indicated the emergence or reemergence of rituals in society. *Atlantis* case study is exemplary in this lens. This film illustrates and at the same time works as a ritual of redemption from “bad death”, hence improperly mourned death, and unwitnessed trauma. Within the plot of the film, exhumation of dead soldier’s bodies act as a metaphor for a ritual of trauma acknowledgement. And the film itself is a ritual of acknowledgement of the collective war trauma in Ukraine, as it took place even before the full-scale invasion happened.

Another metaphor is encoded into the film’s narrative, in the scene when the main character burns his own skin deliberately in order to repeat, reenact what has happened to his friend who burned himself to death. What he does, is basically a painful ritual of commemoration, which echoes ones like fire walking, where empathy is strengthened by the empathy of witnessing the pain of the other, and reenacting the pain of the other.

It reaches its effect precisely because the central participant of the ritual is not an accidental, but the chosen person: a war veteran.

TAOK is another case of the film that acts as a ritual of trauma acknowledgement, even if in the focal point of this ritual is the perpetrator reenacting his own crime, while at the same time, assimilating the experience and coming to acknowledge his own actions.

In this case, ritual acts as an instrument of political power. It reaches the aim through unveiling the perpetrator’s trauma, shifting the aggressor’s power away towards the audience, raising awareness of the Indonesian genocide, and giving a voice to the victims. This personal connection of the participants with theme and problematic is important for the film which acts as a ritual of commemoration, we found.

The importance of ritual in mediatization studies is being widely discussed in the academic literature of 2000s-2010s. The term “media ritual” emerges thanks to Couldry. His main ideas are: ritual is relevant in the 21st century, and it is tightly connected with media. Today, digital media take up the functions of elemental media such as fire, water, air, which served ancient ritual culture. They do so symbolically and functionally. Therefore, a number of artistic practices, and cinematic reenactment in particular is a form of contemporary media ritual. The essential ritualistic quality which echoes a quality of reenactment is to reshape and re-narrativize themselves through repetition. Rituals both signify the event and are fragments of the event, which contributes to their transformative quality. Moreover, each ritualistic

repetition is as original as the first one. This offers a resolution for the problem of authenticity in reenactment discourse.

There is a relationship between notions of ritual and repetition. Yet, we cannot equalize neither reenactment nor ritual with mere repetition. *Horse Money* uses elements of repetition in the narrative, aesthetics and methodology of the film, and this brings it ritualistic quality. It is similar with the other two case studies and the artistic research project, where the number of takes involved in the reenactment production guarantees the necessary different repetition, the action seemingly the same but evolving with each take. Together with these so-called microlevel repetitions, of course reenactment functions as a macro-level repetition, which is bringing back the distant past to happen again, yet in a different way and in a controlled setting. As MWWF project taught us, ritualistic repetition is never the same as the original, just like children are never the same as their parents.

In film, ritual can manifest itself both as a practice performed within the film plot, and also a practice of making the film itself. We see the ritualistic of the first type in MWWF in the scene of the song performance, which happened to work as a ritual beyond the fictional plot of the film, and became a cathartic moment for the whole crew: a folk song performed by the Ukrainian migrants and refugees during the war time, had a meaning to the crew that went beyond the fictional plot of the film. As we performed the song over and over for several takes, we knew we were doing something more than just acting for the camera. It is not a surprise that the crew developed a strong social bond after the shoot, and we see the singing as an important facilitator of the phenomenon.

Within the second type of the ritualistic, film offers a further two-staged division. The process of ritualization happens two times: during production (numerous takes though produce numerous amounts of performance) and during screening (the second stages happens repeatedly too; each further screening is as valid ritualistically as the one before or after). These two stages are separated in time and space making ritualistic process divided, further distanced, which applies to every case study we focused on.

Rituals, importantly, allow the participants to experience and enact the tabooed: behaviors, emotions or actions. The most prominent example of this we see in TAOK and MWWF. They also allow the time and space for the repressed and self-censored to be expressed. In this relation, traumatic experience which in many instances has to do with fear and shame can be safely communicated and offered for attention and understanding. Trauma of the perpetrator therefore acquires a platform to be expressed. At the same time, as a lot of

times victims also feel shame over their own trauma, it is ritualistic practices that allow to express the suppressed for them, which is the case of examples of *Atlantis* and *Horse Money*.

Both drama and rituals are capable of producing catharsis, hope and redemption. They also facilitate creation of empathic bridge where witnessing pain of the other affects audience and evokes pro-sociality. Simultaneously, expressing the pain of trauma survivor to empathetic other proved to be a necessary step in trauma healing, which is what ritualistic practice has a capability to arrange. This way, ritual culture explains certain trends of contemporary mediatization and enriches our understanding of methodology for reenactment as a tool for working with trauma.

Hybrid Film as a transformative memorial for trauma

Hybrid film tendencies today are closely related to the ideas and philosophic discourses of postmodernism. The issues of representing the past as well as immersion and experience creation are at stake. The concepts of truth and objectivity suffered a paradigm shift in the new postmodern reality. These ideas are imprinted on aesthetics and methodology of hybrid films of the 21st century.

Active artistic practice is given an important role for reshaping the knowledge about the world and perception of history. Copying and repetition acquired new meaning in contemporary discourse, where repeated representation is believed to be a constructor of truth, by means of revisiting, recontextualizing, and questioning the past. Crisis of realistic aesthetics gave way to the new aesthetics and methods for hybrid film. Self-reflexivity, authorship, multiplicity of individual perspectives and experiences, tolerance for incoherence or narrative gaps are valued in contemporary artistic practices more than the rational positivist approaches. This methodology stands in opposition to *vérité* documentary style. Spectator therefore is emancipated and given the freedom to complete the picture and create the meaning for themselves.

Meanwhile, technological evolution offers new possibilities which affects methods and aesthetics of filmmaking, the faster the pace of progress, the shorter is each tendency and fashion of visual language. This accelerates the processes and complicates their studying. Essential insight is that hybrid documentary is well equipped to communicate the political, as well as to be its agent: by visualizing, communicating the political, affecting and addressing audiences. The two essential tools utilized and combined in hybrid film are observation and imagination.

For Pedro Costa, his *Horse Money* stands beyond the labels of fiction or documentary. Working with documentary characters on fictionalizing their memories is what constitutes hybrid form, which according to him is a form of decolonization: liberation fiction from its commercial nature, and removing the false expectation of documentary to represent the truth. His words about how a film is always a documentary of its own making resonates with the approaches in TAOK and MWWF, where this idea is exaggerated due to the observation of the making of a film within film. *Atlantis* however has a much subtler form of hybridity. It is in fact defined as a fiction film. Yet, the methodology of working with documentary characters by using approaches of fiction and using their traumatic experiences for aesthetics, character and narrative building, echoes the method of the rest of our cases. We included *Atlantis* in this study in order to explore the diversity of the hybrid genre.

Basing the narrative on neither factual nor fictional, but rather in what Herzog calls post-fact is a method which applies to each of our case studies, and lies as a central conceptual point of every hybrid film we researched. For the filmmakers, this view helps them to access the truth. This focal point, importantly, only becomes possible outside the positivist approach, in the realm of the postmodern one.

As a work based on the of post-narrative structure, *Horse Money* does not try to tell a story, but to depict a journey through a mental landscape. This applies in a lesser degree to the other case studies where classic narrative structure still plays an essential role. However, Pedro Costa echoes Metz claiming film is not a language and has to be treated and analyzed in a very different way. Here we see a peculiar similarity with the nature of trauma, which as we discover, escapes representation through language. This leads us to suggest that the framework where hybrid film is utilized in order to represent and work through trauma, works well when it applies post-narrative structure.

Hybrid-driven productions in our case studies are used to subvert the established political notions. Hence, there is a way to utilize hybrid film as an instrument of the political transformation. TAOK does so by witnessing the trauma of genocide through the aggressor's reenacted memories. MWWF reaches the aim through facilitating the connection and collaboration beyond the political borders. *Horse Money* exposes trauma of the system's victim. And *Atlantis* paints a bleak portrait of the post-war landscape. Incidentally, the high impact of these films is reached thanks to factor of including documentary elements into the fictional stories. Yet, the method clearly has its ethical implications: in some cases, like with the final scene of TAOK, the trust of some audience got lost due to the very hybridity of the genre. There is another ethical implication dictated by the fact that the memories owned by the

survivor acquire a different shape and version after its mediatization, and perception by audience.

As mentioned above, we see the ritualistic practice in the reenactment-driven hybrid film as a process taking place the first time during the production, and the second time during the exhibition. In the first stage, a memory is reenacted and transformed by the participants. In the second one, it undergoes further transformation thanks to the multiplicity of exhibitions and audience perception. This two-fold process is essential for the film to become a practice of active remembering, in other words, to act as a memorial of the survivor's traumatic history. Such a memorial can have a redemptive quality for the memory owner.

As the case studies and the practice-based research backed, for trauma themed film, hybrid approach opens a number of possibilities.

The first one is to communicate the experience based on personal version of truth. *The Act of Killing* does so by giving the voice to the perpetrator. *Atlantis* works as a way of creating the landscape of imaginary future as the traumatized by the war people saw it, and then creating a ray of hope in the end of the dark imagery tunnel. *Horse Money* paints a mental picture of the traumatized individual, with memory gaps and repetitions, confusion and flashbacks. Finally, *Moments When We Freeze* explore one of the traumatic responses, freeze response, highlighting the connection between family division trauma and the one of the political divisions.

The second possibility is to provide a way to tell the story despite incoherencies and gaps in timeline and narrative structure of the documentary material. None of the case study films claimed the positivist version of truth, but rather allowed the flows of memory to be integrated as a part of this truth. It is especially exemplary in our practice-based research, where the two versions of truth memorized by the different memory owners had almost nothing in common. The third one is to keep the safe distance between the original traumatic event and its representation, and to be able to fictionalize in order to construct the necessary alternative outcome which is a component necessary for healing of the survivor. *Horse Money*, *TAOK* and our *MWWF* stay away from the classical realist aesthetics. We saw that distancing created by means of stylization and theatricality is an important element for keeping the performers safe during their reenactments of trauma. This factor is less prominent in *Atlantis*, where theatrical artificiality does not take place, however highly stylized imagery aesthetics is key.

Finally, hybrid film allows perspective and dynamic dialogue between past and present. It is a starting point for discussion between different generations and communities on our

individual stories and shared history. It is a channel of communication between a protagonist and their audience. This dialogue is what today's postmodern cultural process craves in its transformation towards the new metamodern form.

Discussion

In the current discussion part of this thesis, we come back to our initial questions and hypotheses, so that we can update them with the acquired results. We had five questions, leading to the hypotheses. Here we return to the questions and discuss our initial hypotheses in accordance with the research results in order to confirm, deny, or update them with the acquired knowledge.

1. How is hybrid cinema related to postmodern philosophy and crisis of authenticity?

The initial hypotheses suggested that hybrid cinema and artistic reenactment are linked to the theory of hauntology developed by Mark Fisher. We also suggested to define art as unconsciousness of society, and see ritual as an instrument for memorialization and incorporation of experiences, a transition signifier and a builder of society and identity. We hypothesized that today culture longs for ritual, and is preoccupied with reenactment for this reason.

The research partially confirmed our first hypotheses. Indeed, hybrid film emerged in its form due to cultural and philosophical tendencies of the late 20th – early 21st century epoch, as it is grounded in postmodern ideology. The objectivity/subjectivity dichotomy has undergone a paradigm shift in the new postmodern reality, paving a road for the new understanding of truth. In hybrid film the sense of post-truth is aimed to be reached by merging fact and fiction. Respect for individual experience instead of positivist search for objective truth changed ways documentary is created and perceived, allowing the fanstamatic to take its place next to factual in one artistic production. Crisis of positivist ideas gave path to the new understanding of realism, which contributes to updates in aesthetics and methods for hybrid film. The new realism is grounded in self-reflexivity, authorship, focusing on individual perspectives, tolerance for incoherence or narrative gaps, post-narrative structuring.

Yet, even if the interrelation between methodological and aesthetic trends of hybrid film on one hand and postmodernism on the other proved to be strong, it is only partially the case with its relation to the theory of hauntology. We found that it is not mere nostalgia or collective subconscious repetition compulsion what leads artistic productions to return to past

themes, problems, and aesthetics, and to employ reenactment as its essential tool. Copying and repetition in contemporary artistic practices has a greater meaning: repeated representation is believed to be a constructor of the truth, while revisiting, recontextualizing, and questioning the past reforms the understanding of history.

However, the important insight Mark Fisher and his theory of hauntology brings to the table, is that phenomena of “archive fever” and “cancelled futures” are among the implications of post-Fordist capitalism, mediatization, and collective trauma. Since we are still living in increasingly traumatizing times, we expect the implications to persist globally, and trauma studies and art to be on the further rise. This is why we see the need for future research in the field of trauma-informed artistic practice.

We found that hybrid film is powerful, firstly, as one of the most promising methods for representing and also working through traumatic events on both personal and collective levels. Secondly, it is well equipped to address and subvert the established political notions. As it appears, hybrid film acts as not just an instrument for representation, but also an agent of change. This becomes possible precisely due to method of including documentary elements into fictional stories. We can see the change on the micro level as the transformation of the narratives towards more hopeful resolutions, which is what a traumatized mind seeks through the repetition compulsion. On a macro level, this need for transformation and finding even though imagined, but hope, marks an essential cultural shift from the irony, self-awareness and gloominess of the postmodern ideas towards the aware hopefulness of the metamodern era.

Importantly, we found a strong link between film and ritual. In fact, we confirmed that cinematic process is a contemporary media ritual. Film offers a suitable platform to serve as a stage for the ritual, which is essentially, when liberated from ties with theology, an action of remembering, identity and community building, and dealing with trauma, loss and transition. Rituals are flexible and continually evolving culture of traditional behaviors, which evolve as a result to practicing different repetition. For understanding contemporary ritual culture, the following findings are important:

Digital media serve instead of elemental media for contemporary ritualistic practices. They do so symbolically and functionally.

In film, ritual can manifest itself both as a practice performed within the film plot, and also a practice of making the film itself, and then screening it. All of these are the elements of ritualistic repetitions.

Essential for hybrid film as a ritual is personal connection of the participants with theme and background behind the story.

Rituals are capable of producing catharsis, experiences of hope and redemption for its participants. Its performative aspect provides a platform for sharing experiences and facilitating empathetic witnessing. Through these factors, ritual can be an instrument of representing and working through traumatic experiences.

Defining art as unconsciousness of society, which is an idea suggested by Freud, stays as a suggestion open to be challenged with further research.

3. Is there a cultural necessity for society of today to revisit past in order to find its path of cultural and artistic development?

We hypothesized that in today's cultural scene, reevaluation of past cultural achievements prevails over innovation. We suggested that reevaluation and integration of history is an attempt to correct a path towards future. We noticed that the process is tightly linked to working with individual and collective trauma, and can be compared to a process of psychotherapy.

In order to explore these questions, we created a new theoretic framework for our research. We found reenactment linked to, firstly, questions of postmodern philosophy: problem of original, blur between fact and fiction, issue of authenticity and archive. Secondly, it is connected with notions of memory, repetition, identity, collective, history, media and performance. Thirdly, there is a relation to psychology and the notions of repetition compulsion, language, memorialization, unreliable character of memories, trauma responses, flashbacks and distancing.

We found that reenactment can be understood only if seen interrelated with these problems. This led us to triangulate our research on reenactment with postmodern media, ritual culture, and trauma studies. This new framework has become our important contribution of this work to the field.

We found a strong potential for reenactment-based hybrid films to expose a conflict in the notion of truth, morality and differences in vision of collective and personal past.

We found, reenactment as a method and as a ritual takes place not only in front of camera, or during the exhibition of the ready piece, but also within the very production process.

We also discovered, ritualistically revisiting the past helps reimagining the future, and this is where our research counters Fisher's idea of the dead end of the "canceled future".

Through reenactment, a mental journey not just to the past, but to the future becomes possible. Reenactment reshapes narrative construction of collective memory, and it does so not only in the eyes of audience, but also its subjects. Postmodern philosophy which obtained its value during highly traumatic times we are currently going through. At the same time, its nihilism has exhausted the discourse, and instead, metamodern concepts emerged at the crossroads between modern positivism and postmodern skepticism. In combination to artistic necessity to counter the dominant economic tendencies and political ideologies, these trends prepared the ground for the artistic metamodern trend of revisiting the past instead of/before innovating. This artistic process focuses on finding ways out of perceiving the future as hopeless. It does so by opening a dialogue between past and present, between different generations and communities, and creating dynamic archives out of traumatic history.

3. Can artistic reenactment be a method for reevaluation and integration of collective traumatic memory? What is the process required for it?

We noticed a gap in the knowledge about the potential of artistic reenactment as a method for working with trauma and the need to be investigated within the framework of art, psychology and sociology. This gap we attempted to bridge with this study. We also hypothesized that artistic reenactment had an ability to both strengthen and change individual and collective memories, thus serve as a tool for reshaping and preservation of human cultural heritage.

Our research on trauma led us to several conclusions confirming the hypotheses.

We understand media as a social production that is altered by use, just like memory. Reenactment practice can be used as an instrument for reevaluating and reconstructing memories, it is well equipped to work with memories and address trauma, and has advantages over classical methods of verbal approaches. As trauma is an experience which survivors struggle to verbalize and narrativize, but are able to recall in images and bodily sensations, reenactment serves as a more suitable platform for representation of trauma.

As our findings show, reenactment creates a possibility to the memory owner(s) to explore ways out of their current mental state. The process can apply on the micro level, in case of a personal psychological journey, and also on a macro level involving collective memory. Reenactment in hybrid film creates a way to safely return to traumatic memories, and fictionalize a different, perhaps more hopeful resolution. Even if this hope is purely fictional,

this allows a chance for psychological rewriting of traumatic memories for the participants. It is important for the process, that an empathetic witness is involved during the trauma reenacted.

We found that both the camera and live audience can play this role. Method of combining dramatization with distancing can create a platform to reenact trauma while keeping the safe distance for the participant from overly associating with the memory. A memory owner can choose to either associate themselves with the character of their past self, or mentally create the distance, and think of the past self as a different character, thus finding a balance on the spectrum between association and distancing. An option for fictionalization of the documentary story facilitates safety of the distancing. At some point, we suggest, when the distance shortens or collapses, this creates a transformative effect within the participant. This theory however needs further research in order to study the process and prove the relation.

We discovered that artistic reenactment as of today is among the best practices for working with traumatic memories, memorialization, and potentially, healing. Yet, in order to measure how the therapeutic effect takes place on individual and societal level, further multidisciplinary research is needed. However, we have to stay aware of possible fallibility of the method and a danger of retraumatization. We suggest further research to focus on tracing the exact mechanisms differing the outcomes. We see a possible version of such research including quantitative and qualitative approaches, and conducted in collaboration between artistic, sociological, historical and psychological studies is needed.

4. What is the role of hybrid cinema in the cultural process of reevaluation and reintegration of traumatic memory?

We confirmed our hypotheses that hybrid film which blurs boundaries between fiction and documentary, with its awareness of vulnerability of objective and multitude of subjective, becomes a good field for application of artistic reenactment.

There is number of possibilities hybrid approach creates. Firstly, it allows to focus on representing an experience based on the personal version of truth, rather than the objective reality. This very possibility is essential for working with traumatic memory, where the memories suffer from gaps, inconsistencies and themselves have hybrid character, and where imagination integrates itself into reality. Secondly, it offers a platform for sharing personal stories with audience, hence, it facilitates community-building and memorialization functions, builds empathy and allows trauma to be witnessed. These are the factors essential for trauma integration and healing. Thirdly, hybrid film offers a possibility for a safe distance between the

original traumatic event and its representation. It aims for balance between emotional immersion and necessary distancing.

Trauma is something that emerges as a result of lack of acknowledgment and conscious attention to the overwhelming experience. This lack can be worked on with instruments that artistic reenactment offers. Still, the reenacted will never be a copy of the initial, similar to how ritual can be never repeated in the exact same way. At the same time, we cannot assign a title of the original to one certain manifestation of ritualistic practice, or reenactment. Each reinvention is as original as the previous one. In its turn, this creates the bridge for transition, transformation of experiences, history, and reshaping the meaning. The bridge is vital for the integration of trauma and healing.

Therefore, hybrid film acts as a dynamic memorial. It is a container for archiving of history, a media artifact that offers a story for witnessing, empathy and connection building, and externalization of trauma.

5. What is the role and potential of artistic reenactment in the contemporary film process?

The answer to this question ironically ends with a question mark: if the times we are living through today will not encourage us to look back at our history under a new perspective, will we have the tomorrow to do so?

Just as we expected, artistic reenactment used in film has can be therapeutic practice for both participants of the process and the audience. However, it can be also harmful on the personal and historical level, since transformation of memory can lead to different outcomes.

Reenactment-based hybrid film as a contemporary ritual allows the necessary return and reevaluation of the past, be it a personal story, collective history, or as it often the case, a combination of both. Current tendencies show us how important such reevaluation can be, since it opens a possibility for a resolution, finding ways to move forward, out of the loop of personal and collective trauma, and towards the possibility of hope.

Conclusion

This research reveals and explains how ritualized traumatic memory can become a heritage and a tool of transformation through the method of reenacted mediatized in hybrid film. We found an interrelation between traumatic memory, ritual culture, and contemporary mediatization processes, where reenactment takes place as a central figure in the middle of this triangle. Schematically it looks as shown in the Figure 6.

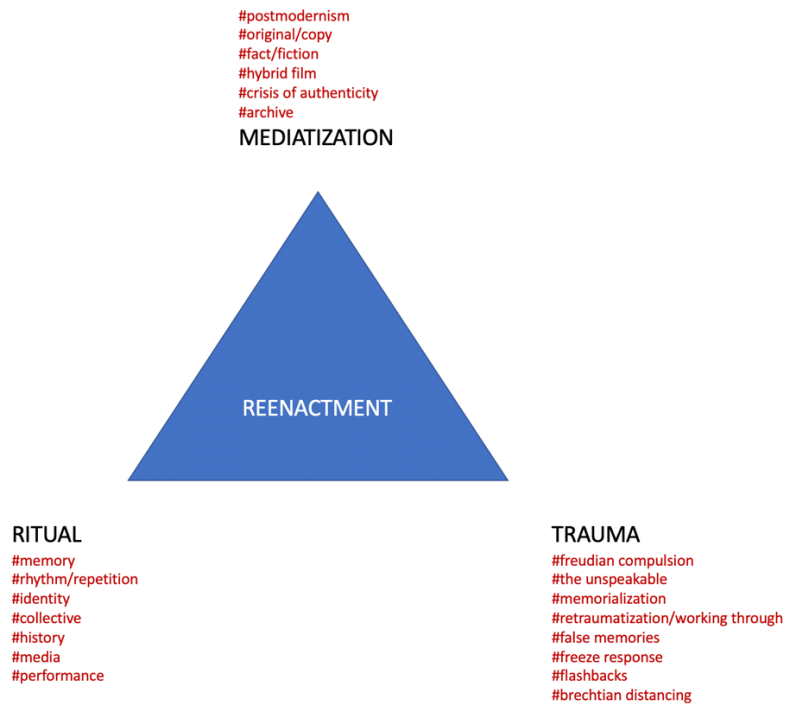


Figure 6: Triangulation between trauma, ritual, and mediatization around reenactment

Without media and the active usage of its practices, in other words, without replaying, memory is subject to erasure. However, traumatic memory operates differently. Without witnessing, archiving, or replaying, it retrieves to the unconscious (this may be the unconscious of one individual, or a collective). Existing within the realm of imagery more than language, repressed trauma manifests from the unconscious through triggers, flashbacks, depression and other symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Unwitnessed trauma lives through unwitnessed repetition with no transformation. But witnessing and transforming the memory allows for healing, and what psychologists call, integration of trauma (never erasure).

Now, ritual is a practical method of conscious transformative repetition. And reenactment, as we revealed in this study, is a practice, based on ritualistic tradition. It aims for the preservation and transformation of memory as well as the communication of collective history and trauma.

The media process today appropriates this practice, making it a tool for postmodern memory archiving purposes. Thus, reenactment-based hybrid film acts as a form of such a contemporary archive. Its unique postmodern quality accommodates open and flexible narrativization, a combination of factual and fictional, stays open for diversity in perception, and therefore creates a possibility for transformation.

Contemporary hybrid film operates on the intersection between performative and digital media practices. It has the immaterial nature of digitality, however, unlike a life performance, benefits from the archival possibility of a record. Such a product builds a bridge between orality (performance) and literacy (recorded media) traditions, combining the elements of both. For a traumatic memory owner, an external media record is an object of crucial importance, as it acts as a memorial located outside of the survivor's psyche.

Importantly, a child of the depressive postmodern era, hybrid reenactment film initially was built upon its aesthetic and narrative trends, where broad skepticism, subjectivism, and relativism dominated discourse, and pessimist perception of the past as omnipresent and the future with no hope was philosophic vogue. However, through its ability to transform the very memory, and fictionalize the factual, it was able to offer a bridge from the postmodern hauntological depression towards metamodern openness for hope. The latest cases of hybrid films with reenactment in their core are aligned with metamodern philosophical discourses, where sincerity, hope for a bright future, and a choice to have faith in progress despite the awareness of the darkness, are of high value. Metamodern media products do not use the tool of irony just to deflect from trauma, unlike the postmodern once did. It rather faces the trauma and stays open for the possibility of healing through sensibility and sincerity. We found that the reenactment practices operating within this paradigm can be an instrument for memorialization and transformation, therefore, healing from the traumas of our history, and finding the way to 'uncancel' our future.

Conclusão

Esta investigação revela e explica como a memória traumática ritualizada pode tornar-se num património e numa ferramenta de transformação através do método de *reenactment*, e da *mediatization* em forma de filme híbrido. Encontrámos uma inter-relação entre memória traumática, cultura ritual e processos contemporâneos de *mediatization*, onde o *reenactment* assume um papel central no meio deste triângulo. O mesmo é representado na Figura 6.



Figura 6: Triangulação entre trauma, ritual e mediatization em torno do reenactment

Sem os meios de comunicação e a sua prática ativa, por outras palavras, sem a repetição, a memória está sujeita ao apagamento. No entanto, a memória traumática opera de maneira diferente. Sem testemunho, arquivamento ou repetição, ela retorna ao inconsciente (que pode ser o inconsciente individual ou coletivo). Existindo mais no campo das imagens do que da linguagem, o trauma reprimido se manifesta através de gatilhos, *flashbacks*, depressão e outros sintomas de transtorno de distúrbio pós-traumático. O trauma não testemunhado sobrevive através da repetição não testemunhada, sem transformação. Testemunhar e transformar a memória permite a cura e o que os psicólogos chamam de conciliação do trauma (nunca chegando ao apagamento total).

O ritual é um método prático de repetição transformadora e consciente. E o *reenactment*, como revelamos neste estudo, é uma prática baseada na tradição ritualística. Ela visa a preservação e transformação da memória, bem como a comunicação da história coletiva e do trauma.

O processo mediático contemporâneo apropria-se dessa prática, transformando-a numa ferramenta para fins de arquivamento de memória pós-moderna. Assim, o filme híbrido baseado no *reenactment* atua como uma forma de arquivo contemporâneo. A sua qualidade pós-moderna permite uma narrativização aberta e flexível, uma combinação do factual e do

fictício, permanecendo aberta à diversidade na percepção e, portanto, criando uma possibilidade de transformação.

O filme híbrido contemporâneo opera na interseção entre práticas próprias dos *media* da *performance* e digitais. Possui a natureza imaterial do digital, no entanto, ao contrário de uma *performance* ao vivo, beneficia da possibilidade de arquivamento de um registo. Este produto constrói uma ponte entre as tradições de oralidade (*performance*) e de literacia (*media* gravados), combinando os elementos de ambos. Para o detentor de uma memória traumática, um registo mediático externo é um objeto de importância crucial, pois atua como um memorial localizado fora do psiquismo do sobrevivente.

É importante destacar que, sendo o produto da era depressiva pós-moderna, o filme híbrido de *reenactment* inicialmente se baseou em tendências estéticas e narrativas, onde um amplo ceticismo, subjetivismo e relativismo dominavam o discurso, e a percepção pessimista de um passado omnipresente e um futuro sem esperança estava na moda filosófica. No entanto, através de sua capacidade de transformar a própria memória e tornar o factual em fictício, conseguiu oferecer uma ponte do pós-moderno assombrado (*hauntologic*) para a abertura meta-moderna à esperança. Os casos mais recentes de filmes híbridos baseados no *reenactment* estão alinhados com os discursos filosóficos meta-modernos, onde a sinceridade, a esperança num futuro brilhante e a escolha de ter fé no progresso, apesar da consciência das trevas, são tidas em alto valor. Contrariamente aos hábitos do pós-modernismo, as obras meta-modernas não recorrem à ironia para se desviarem do trauma. Enfrentam o trauma diretamente e permanecem abertas à possibilidade de cura através da sensibilidade e sinceridade. Descobrimos que as práticas de *reenactment* que operam dentro deste paradigma podem ser um instrumento para a memorialização e transformação, portanto, para a cura dos traumas de nossa história e para encontrar o caminho de "descancelar" nosso futuro.

Contributions

Our study as a whole as well as its different components contribute to the state-of-the-art in academic knowledge as well as artistic practice in several ways. In this study, we found reenactment to be closely interrelated with the three notions: trauma studies, ritual culture, and postmodern media. As a result, we created a framework, which has become our important contribution of this work to the field. It allowed us to theorize and analyze reenactment through the connections with these notions. It also stays relevant for the future research.

The first contribution emerging from working with the established framework is defining the function of reenactment-based hybrid film as a method of representation and working through traumatic memories. This method is applicable to collective and personal memories. We also found that by combining documentary and fictional element, hybrid film becomes a narrative shapeshifter. This is why reenactment in hybrid film can be utilized to address the political issues and subvert the established political narratives. Media, like memory, are social creations that can change in process of usage. Therefore, it should be seen as an instrument for representation and an agent of change. Reenactment practice is well equipped to work with memories, and address trauma, it does so not only in the eyes of the audience but also in its subjects. We suggest that reenactment in hybrid film can heal traumatic memories, thanks to fictionalization, where an alternative resolution of the traumatic event can be replayed, and the story can be “rewritten” in the memory. This indicates the potential for healing trauma survivors, which is a hypothesis to be worked on further in the following research.

The second contribution is related to our analysis of the cinematic process as a contemporary media ritual. We found that for such kinds of rituals, digital media play the same symbolic and functional role as elemental media did for ancient ritualistic practices. When we look at film as a ritual, we see its manifestation in two stages: firstly, as a practice performed on screen, and secondly, as a practice of the filmmaking and exhibiting process itself. Since rituals were proved to be an instrument of representing and working through traumatic experiences, we found reenactment to be able to do the same in hybrid film.

Thirdly, we saw a philosophic evolution that hybrid film is undergoing nowadays: from a postmodern towards a metamodern paradigm. A child of the postmodern time, hybrid reenactment film indicated its aesthetic and narrative trends. On one hand, it granted hybrid film with understanding objectivity as illusory, validating the subjective perspective, using fictionalization as a way to express the individual truth and represent the fragmented character of traumatic memory. Simultaneously, this philosophy is based on skepticism, subjectivism, relativism, and pessimism-dominated discourses. What we found is the processes of transformation of memory, and fictionalization of the factual, which are characteristic for reenactment in hybrid film, offer a bridge from the postmodern towards the metamodern paradigm, with its openness for sincerity, hopefulness, and more optimistic overlook into the future of culture, history, and humanity.

Last but not least, the artistic research we conducted and the film we produced as a result, became a contribution to the field of hybrid filmmaking. The contribution is threefold. Firstly, it provided an additional case that serves as research material into the topics of reenactment, hybrid film, politically driven film, personal archive-based film, and autobiography. Secondly, it has its value as an archival object, the value which will become greater the more time passes. Thirdly, as a case study of film including family trauma which is linked to trauma on the national scale, the film contributes as a work about the topics of war-torn family, ideological differences, post-Soviet heritage, migration, national and cultural identification, mediated memory, and its reconstruction. We believe, our film has a strong potential to represent and move the field forward.

Future Work

As much as this work grants us with the questions answered, it also gives us several problems and challenges for future research. We can outline these problems as follows.

Can artistic practice indeed be seen as a manifestation of the unconscious of society, as suggested by Sigmund Freud? And if so, what does it mean for the field, what implications does this bring, and how does it challenge the established theories and notions in the artistic field of knowledge and practice? The work we suggest to be conducted in order to answer this question lies in the fields of artistic research, philosophy, sociology, and psychoanalysis.

As we mentioned in this thesis, trauma studies are quite a young field of research, and even more recent is its application to performative and media studies. If contemporary times bring new traumas, then trauma studies have to be further developed. Since we discovered artistic practices like reenactment in hybrid filmmaking to offer the possibilities of representation, memorialization, activation, and transformation of traumatic experiences and memories, we see the need for further research on how exactly the methodology can operate in order for therapeutic effect to take place. For such research on in-person trauma reenactment, we suggest focusing on the problems of methodology: questions of dramatization and Brechtian distancing, as well as fictionalization and seeing a camera as a witness; and also, on psychological processes a survivor and their audience go through as a result of the ritualistic practice of reenactment for hybrid film. We suggest future work to take place in the form of multidisciplinary research including a collaboration between artistic, sociological, historical, and psychological studies. For this kind of research, we suggest combining quantitative and qualitative methods.

The problem of zeitgeist and its implications on creative practices like reenactment in hybrid film persists. Our current research was focused on mainly the literature and cases of the 2010s, and the artistic research was conducted in 2022-2023. We already noticed a rapid ontological shift that occurred during the decades. The times we currently live through bring rapid change, acceleration of cultural processes through further mediatization, political turmoil, and new tragedies, hence traumas, occurring and writing themselves into the density of historical archives of the 21st century. We also noticed an ongoing paradigm shift in the current philosophic approaches, and this shift manifests itself in artistic productions and cultural practices of recent years. We suggest seeing this as a transition between postmodern-driven towards metamodern-driven aesthetics and narratives. As much as we are still attempting to observe and comprehend the metamodern processes, we see the need for future research on their implications on reenactment methods for hybrid film in particular, as well as on media processes in general.

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Annex

In the annex part of this thesis, we include additional documents that were obtained in the process of our research and support it. The documents included are following:

- For the first part of the research, we include a table of coherence between the case studies and chosen literature for the review, as well as the full transcribe of the interviews made with the crew and cast members of our case-study films *Horse Money* and *Atlantis*.
- Production report for the practice-based research *Moments When We Freeze*. Among them are an intention note from the director, production and post-production budgets and an expense report sheet, a shooting schedule, backstage photos taken during the production, and of course the link to the artistic research film itself, and the certificate of the presentation of the research at IAMCR 2023 Conference.
- Finally, we include the Curriculum Vitae of the author of this thesis work.

Table of Coherence between the Case Studies and the Literature

Film	Book/Article	Connection
<i>Horse Money</i> (Pedro Costa, 2015)	Film related literature	
	Pantenburg, V. (2010). Realism, not Reality Pedro Costa's Digital Testimonies. <i>Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry</i> , 24, 54–61. doi: 10.1086/655928	Notions of what is “real”, stylized, and realistic-like in the context of Pedro Costa's works, and its aesthetical impact.
	Maimon, V. (2012). Beyond Representation. <i>Third Text</i> , 26(3), 331–344. doi: 10.1080/09528822.2012.679041	Political aspect of representation in Pedro Costa's cinema
	Other literature	
	Margulies, I. (2019). In Person: Reenactment in Postwar and Contemporary Cinema. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.	The book analyses deeply the process and effects of reenactment for film and has contemporary case studies. It argues that reenactment for camera is radically different from other modes of mimetic reconstruction. The discussion concentrated on postwar societies makes the work relevant for <i>Atlantis</i> and <i>The Act of Killing</i> film researches. At the same time, perspective of immersion into reenactment is what relevant for understanding the method of <i>Horse Money</i> .
	Blackson, R. (2007). Once More ... with Feeling: Reenactment in Contemporary Art and Culture. <i>Art Journal</i> , 66(1), 28–40. doi: 10.1080/00043249.2007.10791237	The concept of difference between copying and reenacting. A notion of false memories. Flexibility of memory and the way reenactment shifts meanings and narratives. This article helps to better understand the process of working with the documentary character and the impact of this work on his psyche, memory and behavior.
	Van der Kolk, B. (1989). The Compulsion to Repeat the Trauma: Reenactment, Revictimization, and Masochism. <i>Psychiatric Clinics of North America</i> .	A comprehensive description of psychological mechanism of the repetition compulsion when related to trauma. Relation between trauma and violent behavior. The process subject is going through during reenactment,

		The difference between compulsive imaginary repetition of trauma and voluntary one (as for film).
	Lütticken, S. (2005). An Arena in Which to Reenact. <i>SzenoTest</i> . doi: 10.14361/transcript.9783839430163.116	Reenactment in relation to artworks, artistic reenactment and its political and social influence. Puts the artistic practice in a wider context.
	Freud, S. (2015). <i>Beyond the Pleasure Principle</i> . Dover Publications, Incorporated.	The description of Freud's Thanatos concept, according to which human behavior is not only explained by the pleasure drive, but also death drive. In this essay Freud theorizes repetition, aggression, compulsion, and self-destruction. In the context of the films, it will help analyze the character's initial compulsions the directors chose to work with, and trace how these compulsions were reenacted.
	Corsini, R. (2017). <i>Role Playing in Psychotherapy</i> . Milton: Taylor and Francis.	Analysis of the methodologies of the reenactments in the chosen films will be compared to the methods described in the book, the ones used in psychotherapeutic practice. The methodology for the research-film will be created using this book as a base.
	Fisher, M. (2014). <i>Ghosts of my life writings on depression, hauntology and lost futures</i> . Winchester (UK) ; Washington (USA): Zero books.	Cultural obsession with ghosts and lost future theme. I intend to trace the similar phenomenon in film as Fisher does in music, explain it, and put a critical perspective for his idea on depression. I will argue that depression itself, along with its obsession with the past is itself the signature of the present cultural process, and show the significance of this self-reflective turn the culture has taken.
	Ritzer, I., & Schulze, P. W. (2013). <i>Genre hybridisation: Global cinematic flow</i> . Marburg: Schüren.	The questions of boundaries between fact and fiction, reasons of their blurring in contemporary cinema. Political aspects in relation to hybrid films
	Nichols, B. (2008). <i>Documentary Reenactment and the Fantasmatic Subject</i> . <i>Critical Inquiry</i> , 35(1), 72–89. doi: 10.1086/595629	Theocratization and classification of reenactment. Notion of fantasmatic subject as the ethereal space between past and present which becomes a space for filmmaker, actor and spectator. Fold in time effect creates an interesting resonance with the ideas of hauntology and “stuck in time” position of culture and film actors.
	Krátký, J., Lang, M., Shaver, J. H., Jerotijević,	Ritualistic nature of reenactment, and how are the practices related.

	D., & Xygalatas, D. (2016). Anxiety and ritualization: Can attention discriminate compulsion from routine? <i>Communicative & Integrative Biology</i> , 9(3). doi:10.1080/19420889.2016.1174799	Repetition and its ability to relieve psyche from anxiety. Distinction between ritualized and automated behavior.
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Film	Book/Article	Connection
<i>The Act of Killing</i> (Joshua Oppenheimer, 2012)	Film related literature	
	Brink, J. T. (2012). <i>Killer images documentary film, memory and the performance of violence</i> . London: Wallflower Pr.	A research of the film's effect on memory
	Sweedler, M., Hogan, C., & Marín-Dòmine Marta. (2014). <i>The Dialectic of Truth and Fiction in Joshua Oppenheimer's The Act of Killing</i> . Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.	Discussion of notions of fact, fiction, truth and the method of The Act of Killing.
	Other literature	
	Margulies, I. (2019). <i>In Person: Reenactment in Postwar and Contemporary Cinema</i> . New York, NY: Oxford University Press.	The book analyses deeply the process and effects of reenactment for film and has contemporary case studies. It argues that reenactment for camera is radically different from other modes of mimetic reconstruction. The discussion concentrated on postwar societies makes the work relevant for <i>Atlantis</i> and <i>The Act of Killing</i> film researches. At the same time, perspective of immersion into reenactment is what relevant for understanding the method of <i>Horse Money</i> .
	Blackson, R. (2007). <i>Once More ... with Feeling: Reenactment in Contemporary Art and</i>	The concept of difference between copying and reenacting. A notion of false memories.

	Culture. Art Journal, 66(1), 28–40. doi: 10.1080/00043249.2007.10791237	Flexibility of memory and the way reenactment shifts meanings and narratives. This article helps to better understand the process of working with the documentary character and the impact of this work on his psyche, memory and behavior.
	Lamarre, H. L.; Landreville, K. D. (2009). When is Fiction as Good as Fact? Comparing the Influence of Documentary and Historical Reenactment Films on Engagement, Affect, Issue Interest, and Learning. <i>Mass Communication and Society</i>, 12(4), 537–555. doi: 10.1080/15205430903237915	The article discussed the differences between a documentary and historical reenactment fictional film in terms of how they affect emotional arousal, interest, learning, and narrative engagement. The authors discuss the differences in audience affect between the film narratives perceived as fact and as drama. In “The Act of Killing” both coexist side by side; therefore, the effects are combined. The article helps trace which effects on audience engagement and political impact comes from which techniques involved in the film.
	Kahana, J. (2009). Introduction: What Now? Presenting Reenactment. <i>Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media</i>, 50(1-2), 46–60. doi: 10.1353/frm.0.0030	Presenting overview of the cultural development of the artistic reenactment of two decades. Impact on the documentary film process. Literature review of the discourse of the phenomenon.
	Arns, I. & Horn, G. (2007). History Will Repeat Itself. Strategies of re-enactment in contemporary (media) art and performance. <i>Revolver – Archiv für aktuelle Kunst</i>, pp. 37- 63	Connection and differences between witnessing and participation. Works as a framework for analyzing the main character’s journey through his reenactment and transformative experience. Paradoxical effect: simultaneous removal and creation of distance. Statement that reenactment is very well-suited practice for re-working collective trauma.
	Marvin, C. (2002). Media rituals: Follow the bodies. In C. A. Warren & M. D. Vavrus (Eds.), <i>American cultural studies</i> (pp. 182-195). Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. Retrieved from http://repository.upenn.edu	Connection between ritualistic behavior (including cases of reenactment) and historical and cultural archetypes. The study helps to see the reenactment process in the film as a way to connect aggressor with victim, as well as with his own archetypic self from the past.

	/asc_papers/77 (Marvin, 2002)	Issue of media preoccupation with violence, explained from the perspective of ritualistic sacrifice.
	Corsini, R. (2017). <i>Role Playing in Psychotherapy</i> . Milton: Taylor and Francis.	Analysis of the methodologies of the reenactments in the chosen films will be compared to the methods described in the book, the ones used in psychotherapeutic practice. The methodology for the research-film will be created using this book as a base.
	Kipper, D. A. (1992). <i>Psychodrama: Group Psychotherapy Through Role Playing</i> . International Journal of Group Psychotherapy, 42(4), 495–521. doi: 10.1080/00207284.1992.11490720	Psychoanalytical perspective in order to frame the reenactment process.
	Ross, G. (2003). <i>Beyond the Trauma Vortex: The Medias Role in Healing Fear, Terror, and Violence</i> . Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.	Impact of media on trauma and the power of representation in reshaping memory. Interrelatedness of personal and collective healing through media.
	Ritzer, I., & Schulze, P. W. (2013). <i>Genre hybridisation: Global cinematic flow</i> . Marburg: Schüren.	The questions of boundaries between fact and fiction, reasons of their blurring in contemporary cinema. Political aspects in relation to hybrid films
	Stam, R. (2013). <i>Documentary Variations On a Hybrid Theme</i> . Genre Hybridisation: Global Cinematic Flows, 295-313. doi:10.5771/9783741000416-295	Ancient Greek concept: Fiction viewed as not false but a version of individual perspective. Reconsideration of history as a number of different myths. Connection of these concepts with hybrid documentaries.
	Freud, S. (2015). <i>Beyond the Pleasure Principle</i> . Dover Publications, Incorporated.	The description of Freud's Thanatos concept, according to which human behavior is not only explained by the pleasure drive, but also death drive. In this essay Freud theorizes repetition, aggression, compulsion, and self-destruction. In the context of the films, it will help analyze the character's initial compulsions the directors chose

		to work with, and trace how these compulsions were reenacted.
	Corsini, R. (2017). <i>Role Playing in Psychotherapy</i> . Milton: Taylor and Francis.	Analysis of the methodologies of the reenactments in the chosen films will be compared to the methods described in the book, the ones used in psychotherapeutic practice. The methodology for the research-film will be created using this book as a base. I would like to compare methods of role playing of past self, and the role playing of past other. What are the differences in method and outcome?
	Van der Kolk, B. (1989). <i>The Compulsion to Repeat the Trauma: Reenactment, Revictimization, and Masochism</i> . Psychiatric Clinics of North America.	A comprehensive description of psychological mechanism of the repetition compulsion when related to trauma. Relation between trauma and violent behavior. The process subject is going through during reenactment, The difference between compulsive imaginary repetition of trauma and voluntary one (as for film).

Film	Book/Article	Connection
<i>Atlantis</i> (Valentyn Vasyanovych, 2019)		
	Margulies, I. (2019). <i>In Person: Reenactment in Postwar and Contemporary Cinema</i> . New York, NY: Oxford University Press.	The book analyses deeply the process and effects of reenactment for film and has contemporary case studies. It argues that reenactment for camera is radically different from other modes of mimetic reconstruction. The discussion concentrated on postwar societies makes the work relevant for <i>Atlantis</i> and <i>The Act of Killing</i> film researches. At the same time, perspective of immersion into reenactment is what relevant for understanding the method of <i>Horse Money</i> .
	Thomas, A. K., & Loftus, E. F. (2002). Creating bizarre false memories through imagination. <i>Memory & Cognition</i> , 30(3),	The problem of false memories and mechanism of their generation in human's mind. The work explains enactment as well as reenactment from the perspective of psychology. For <i>Atlantis</i> , enactment was the primary method, and the results of it are known to be not therapeutic for the actors. The study can give a glimpse of what

	423–431. doi: 10.3758/bf03194942	could have been the impact of the enactment in Atlantis for its subjects.
	Fisher, M. (2014). Ghosts of my life writings on depression, hauntology and lost futures. Winchester (UK) ; Washington (USA): Zero books.	Cultural obsession with ghosts and lost future theme. I intend to trace the similar phenomenon in film as Fisher does in music, explain it, and put a critical perspective for his idea on depression. I will argue that depression itself, along with its obsession with the past is itself the signature of the present cultural process, and show the significance of this self-reflective turn the culture has taken.
	Bennett, B. (2010) Framing terror: Cinema, docudrama and the 'War on Terror', Studies in Documentary Film, 4:3, 209-225, DOI: 10.1386/sdf.4.3.209_1	Relation between documentary film and political impact on war and post-war societies, issues of representation. Hypermediation of war. Ethical and political challenges while making film about ongoing war or terroristic conflict.

Semi-structured interview with Pedro Costa, the director of Horse Money film

Questions for Pedro Costa

- Excerpt from Mark Fisher and discussion of amnesiac state of post-modern society.

Method & Memory (Hypothesis 1, 2,5)

- Focusing on memory and past trauma: do you think it characterizes today's cultural state? Or is such a need relevant for every epoch?
- Reenacting trauma by the people who own it – why is this method key for Horse Money, and your latest films? Why do you see it as having such a strong potential for cinema?
- What are the main methodological implications of this method?
- How did you deal with Ventura who at times wouldn't remember things? What did you do after he would say "I don't remember how that was"?
- How would you understand where to push him further to recall and where to stop?
- How do you choose memories to continue working on?
- Have you encounter what clearly was false memories while working with Ventura?
- Do you think the process is therapeutic for Ventura? How do you make sure he does not get retraumatized by recalling, if this concern takes place?
- How has the process transformed him, and Vitalina?

II. Ritual & Repetition (Hypothesis 1, 3)

- What is the role of repetition in evocation of memories and working with them? Do you feel like the memory gets sharper as a result or is it the opposite?
- Do you feel like this repetition has a ritualistic character?
- How is ritualistic in Horse Money connected to its aesthetics and method?
- What do you think of media's role in ritual of nowadays? Film in particular?
- Bureaucratic elements in Horse Money: do you see bureaucracy as contemporary ritual? Or is a death certificate just another media for archiving memory?

III. Mythic and Mystic (Hypothesis 1, 2)

- "It is a mistake to read Costa's films symbolically" (Spectres of Today: The Fractures of History in "Horse Money" (2014) Sérgio Dias Branco). Could you elaborate on this?

IV. Narrative (Hypothesis 4)

- Research, Scriptwriting, Rehearsing, Shooting, Editing: how big of a role does each process have on the construction of the narrative? Do you have a clear vision of the edit before you start and how does it change during the process?
- “The more singular pain is, the more it is political” - does it mean personal memory is connected to collective one? How do you see these two memories in relation to one another?
- Representation: how much does this process depend on the director, and how much on characters? Audience?

V. Hybridity (Hypothesis 4)

- Working with memory has coincided in your filmography with shift to hybridity. Are these two factors connected?
- Would you agree that memory has hybrid nature, and if so, is it connected to hybridity of the film?
- In Horse Money confusion is the element of cinematic reality, is this linked to confusion of the audience related to hybridity?

The interview transcribe

I'm doing the, one of the case studies for my research is Horse money is your film and I describe briefly that I'm trying to work with memory with reenactment as a cinematic method, in art. I'm trying to see why this is relevant nowadays as a trend. And yeah, basically what is the potential of this trend.

Mhm.

And so, I have here a list of questions, but I wanted to start with one thing to make it less... less typical. I'm reading one book. I'm not sure if you know this book. Um It's uh it's called Ghost of My Life by Mark Fisher, writings on hauntology, depression and those futures. So, this is basically the book where he talks about how music scene of contemporaneity of the 21st century has lost the path forward. You know, so how it's stuck in past. And there's a passage that is very interesting that I read yesterday and I was thinking, I really want to start with that. Um, and see what you think about it. Because he's talking about the state that he is called anterograde amnesia. There's an album of Caretaker called anterograde amnesia. And um, so he's basically saying that: “The problem is not anymore, the longing to get to the past, but the inability to get out of it. Let's not imagine that this condition affects only a few unfortunate. Isn't it fact theoretically pure anterograde amnesia the postmodern condition par excellence? The present broken, desolated, is constantly erasing itself, leaving few traces. Things catch your attention for a while, but you do not remember them for very long. But the old memories persist intact, constantly commemorated. Do we really have more substance than the ghosts we endlessly applaud? The past cannot be forgotten. The present cannot be remembered”. So he talks about the condition of the of the society of nowadays. And I was just I think that maybe it would be curious for you to hear it, it was maybe fast the way I read it. But maybe

you can let me know what you think about that. And do you feel that this amnesiac state is something that our like our condition may be?

Yeah. I don't know this author. Um I think but he, for me he suffers from the same problems of contemporary philosophers and as theoretical thinkers. It's... not daring or not being I don't know courageous enough to say the words, the right words. It's not amnesia. It's treason. It's betrayal, betrayal. Yes.

From whom to whom?

From people. Mm... To people?

Okay.

And to the dead to the past. I don't think we are forgetting the past. I think we are betraying the past. That's my opinion. In the film, this film, Horse money, I think that's Ventura's opinion too. It's not that we are forgetting. It's just that every step that some people, I mean on every level, people that have power, people that don't have power, people that have memory, people that don't have memory. And that's something else. And people that have memories and people that have less memory. That's... it's possible. Amnesia - I think it's a soft and too delicate and... to um hmm it's very it's, it's a makeup camouflage word or an idea. I think I think we should talk about... we should say, that we are living in in times, and this for me, my opinion applies to everything - to society, economy, the way people leave and the way people do feel, do cinema, films. The way they experience films, everything. I think people betray the things they should love. That's my opinion.

Do you feel that there's a tendency nowadays with art specifically to revisit the past, to look to our past trauma? Our society, our individual.

Um I don't know. It's very-very big question. I just cannot answer that completely. In cinema, in films, I see that, but it's fake, for me. A long time ago in cinema and maybe in other forms of art. It had the name, it was called retro, was a French word. It was the retro style, not style but fashion. Let's say, you know, all the films that were a sort of remembrance of the past. People in costumes and beards and hats... uh that has disappeared a little bit. It's now on TV, made a series on TV. But...

So, you don't think that this is uh something that characterizes today's uh zeitgeist? Because well I just uh see "Horse Money" as...

Uh but I don't I don't know, I don't know, I'm not sure, I'm not sure about that, that the film...

Okay, okay, we can go on, that's okay. And I actually would like to talk now about reenacting trauma by itself, as a method in Horse Money. And why is this method a key for this film? Yeah, very general question maybe. But uh basically also for your next film for Vitalina Varela, you choose to work not just on traumatic memories, but specifically with the people who own them. So, what does this bring to the films?

Mhm. Um it's not only trauma but okay, I'll accept it's a trauma. Um but you have to accept that the people that are making the film are also traumatized. Let's say. Not the same way. I never, I don't like to project when we are analyzing films. I don't like to project everything on the representation of the people that are in the screen. The people that say things and act. I think there's many more things including the people that are making the film. Me and my colleagues.

So mm hmm. There's a there's a net of stimulation and action – reaction, interaction that produces the film. It's not only Ventura or Vitalina, you know, his ideas or his feeling. In the case of Horse Money maybe it's much more explicit that it's Ventura and myself. It's not him. It's a mix.

I remember how you how you met Ventura and how you describe that you immediately saw in his eyes there's this darkness...

And the situation that the film refers to, the years of revolution and post revolution, and a certain moment in this city and et cetera. It's a... this representation in the film - it's a result of my memories and his memories and so.

And they were combined. You're combining them in.

So it's a combined creation, let's say. It's not a good word – “creation”, but that's it. For Vitalina it's less, it's more on her part. But if the films are what they are, they're form... the form or Horse Money and the form of Vitalina, it's not only because of that subject or I mean Vitalina's suffering or Vitalina's story. It's not only that, the film is.. it's more, it's what we brought to the film and what we decided. But the form would be this one or the process of making it would be a certain number of days or months etcetera. We would have this kind of light.

Did you pre-decide the conditions...

No, no it's not pre-deciding, it is... When we start the film, we start altogether from zero: me Vitalina, more of my friends...

You do not have a period when you just sit with paper?...

No, it doesn't exist... for me. Everything I'm telling you is just for me because, obviously, because a film, what people teach in film schools or universities is something you write, and then you put on... a, you do your mise-en-scene, or you do your casting and or you got these, you here rehearse and in the end you edit the film and then you mix the sound and it's over. In our case it's a bit more or less um divided, let's say. There's no preparation, preparation is shooting.

Because at schools they do not teach how to work with the owners of the memory, I would say. So, this is something very...

I don't know.

That's why this is interesting for me to learn a little bit from you. How...

I don't know. I mean, I know because a few times I've been listening as a guest in film schools, it has been a terrible experience for me. That's why I sent you that mail. But I was a teacher for a moment in the only school that I really loved and that was a good experience for three years. I was teaching for workshops. But that was among colleagues. All the teachers were filmmakers and there were no, I mean there were no programs or, like other schools, and it was a bit more free and... and that theoretical weight of thinking about cinema was less important. And I think it should be because, and I should have said that this first, maybe, I don't think that cinema is a language. I do not believe that. So, I really can't see that in my work and the work of people that I admire. I don't think cinema is a language. I think cinema is just, you know, tool. The camera is an instrument, uh, and then the microphone, to see something.

In this sense, the language...

in the sense that it's not, it has no importance that importance that academics or... try to try to invest. It's impossible because it's not a language. It's yeah, it can be personal, it can be yours, mine, it's not a language, it's not a common language.

Is it a language that every filmmaker invents?

And yeah, I'm sure. It has nothing, I have nothing to do with somebody else, etcetera. And you cannot study it as a language. I mean, I think that's my opinion. So I think it's just an instrument to in my case study, analyze, see discover things that interest me about some people or people and maybe memory, maybe some memories that some people have and that touch my own. So it's when somebody crosses my... somebody's feelings or somebody's memories or somebody's um ideas, even, there's a moment when that crosses or touches my own feelings. And then I think there's a moment, microsecond when you think you can make a film about this, but you have to be in touch with that.

Otherwise you would not be invested in that?

Otherwise I would write a script and call actors, and go, choose locations and do, go there.

You know, people, critics and scholars, they mentioned that Horse Money is a therapeutic film or Vitalina Varela is a therapeutical film. And I'm wondering, is a therapeutic for Ventura, for Vitalina or for you as well, or for the audience, for whom is this therapeutic?

Uh in the in the sense if we're just talking about seeing a film and be comforted to see that cinema still exists, yes. In the sense that it just concerns filmmaking and film. I think filmmaking and films are a bit handicapped, let's say. Or not very strong at this moment. Um for lots of reasons that we could discuss but I think they are not seeing very well or analyzing world what they what they want to see.

Are you talking about audience specifically? Are you talking about...

The films. No, audiences, they don't I mean... film lost their audience completely. Has been losing people each year. Um. There's dislocations to museums. People sometimes prefer museums and installations, videos, other audiences only see series and tv things. Films in films in theaters are made today for very young audiences. And that's special effects, big budget things. The rest is almost not significant, I think. I mean talking in very-very general things.

In this sense, cinema like yours would not be very popular would not be very...

It is not very popular.

Yeah but why would you choose this over the museum? That over the gallery over the installation still?

But the galleries are not more popular, the galleries and museums are not more popular. I think. I think everything that are, I mean, it has to do with art is I mean it's less and less important in society.

Wasn't it like that all the time?

I remember times that were that were a bit more intense for films. I think I lived in a neighborhood in Lisbon, just one neighborhood. So, a very, very small part, and Lisbon is very small. It's not Tokyo. So, in my neighborhood there were seven cinemas. And those theaters were 1000 seats. You had, I don't know 500 m, you had a cinema and then another one. And so yes.

I think here we're talking we're dealing with the problem that we have our own screen.

No, it's I'm not saying it's a problem. I'm not saying it's a problem. I see films here (*points at the computer monitor*) and here (*laptop monitor*) and even in here (*phone*) always, I don't... No no, I don't have no... What I'm trying to say is that probably the opposite but this I don't know if it's understood. I was never a fetishist for film. I in a way I hate films. That's why I think cinemas cannot be the center of a passion of a study. It's not it's not worth it. It's not an art. For me. It's just a way of seeing things. It's a better way to see things. Like anthropology is a very good way to go and discover, archeology is the same, sociology a little bit the same. You can do your work, inquiry, you go with tape recorder or your notebook and you talk with people. For me, cinema is a little bit like that. And then you can also add lots of other... let's say you can... Cinema has to do with justice for instance, for me because if you were a little bit serious you will discover that something is not quite right.

So, cinema would be an instrument for justice.

Could be, it was for me.

But I think cinema lost a lot of its powers of it. It's not powers the world... for instance, what it could do - I think it has been losing, it's like a car that is old and it's not...

Okay, so it needs a reformation?

I don't know if it, maybe it will kill it, the reformation, but I think it's old. I think Mhm. I think the big budget commercial, let's say American films are worse than they were. I think that's what everybody agrees. I think they have targets very specific capitalistic targets. They were not like that before. Before you could say that they were moralistic or moral or you know, that had more to do with that ideological or something like that. Today, there's no ideology, I think there's no morals in a blockbuster. I mean, there's so much violence and other things that there is no more good or evil. And they play on that almost, I think it's more a target. It's corporations doing things, doing products to satisfy needs of people. In my field, let's say, my colleagues, my Mhm, that see film that, our cinema that is, I don't know art films or I don't know all those names. I think we, I include myself in this, we are not strong enough. We do not have the strength or the sometimes we lose interest, we lose the reason to make films. I think there's too many films too. I think there's not we don't need to do that many, perhaps do them shorter and don't waste. I think that's more waste. That's it. And in the film, it bothers me when the film is, you can sense the waste, because waste is what we have in society.

This is interesting, but I just want to come back a little bit to more uh practical part of the method of Horse Money. And we definitely will come back to more general conversation after. Because, so you were mentioning in one of the interviews also that uh Ventura basically he has problems with memory. Sometimes he forgets, sometimes he um does not elaborate on the dialogue. So how specifically is the work with memory go? How what would you tell him when he forgets? Uh and how do you choose them? The memories to work with? A method, as a process?

The way we work or work with, let's say the actors, let's call them actors because I never know how to say non-actors, real people. I mean the people that are there, Ventura, or Vitalina, or Vanda or all the others. It's the same. I mean, it all talking. It's about, it's oral. That's why I refuse a little bit writing and and putting down to words something. It's very dangerous.

Do you not have the script at all?

At all. No, I have notes. Of course, sometimes I'm afraid of forgetting something that I see or that I hear. Of course. I even tried to record with my phone, but then don't work for me. So, I now I am confident enough to talk. So, we begin talking. I don't know what they do. The first thing they do in the film. I don't know. It's probably writing. Yes. It's the script, alone in the bedroom. My thing is, I go to somewhere, normally it's the place where my main actor or actors leave. That's my first step. Then we talk.

And what if he doesn't remember something that you would really like to include in the film?

I don't know if that happens, if it happens, I can't remember something special but it happens surely. But if that happens it's not very important. What's important is to have um something said. I mean a memory explained, told, the story, and then my work or my job with him or Vitalina or the others is to get it to a point to um it's concentrating it, it's getting it the more basic possible. I don't know if it's true or not. You know, you're telling me you're asking if he forgets, but I don't know if his memories are true.

This was actually my further question because there is such thing as fake memories.

Memories are not. Because Ventura mhm sometimes told me things like when I was young that building was red and it was a sex shop, and I said um I don't believe you. Yes. Yes. I mean it's not important.

Would you incorporate the false memory into the film still?

But maybe everything is...[false] is why I don't know. I know some things are factual. I know he came here in a certain year. I know we went to a certain place, but then was it this uncle, was it that house? Did he meet that guy? Because that guy, maybe he's dead. I cannot confirm, but I really don't care. I mean and that's maybe where fact and fiction mix. I don't know. And then there's also a lot of things that I don't want to know, let's say, or discover, because if I feel that he or Vitalina, or Vanda, if they resist, I don't have the need to force it. Force it's a strong word. But if I feel that there is something very important or strong to the film for themselves, for me, maybe I can um, let it go and come back, come back a few days after or something like that. But to force it to the point of, please tell me - it's no, it never happened. But it happens that I feel that sometimes they don't want to reveal something, that happens. But I think that's in the film too, the non-self, the things they don't say are also in the film or I try to find ways to make you, the audience, feel that he is not telling you something.

Yes, definitely. That's the feeling. You know, today just, I was re watching Horse Money and I was... now I start thinking about the method a bit more precisely because I'm planning to do a project with also with reenacting trauma in the future. And so, what strikes me is how uh you work with actors, actors are hearing in some of the scenes, the worst things that they might imagine their heads, right? Um well, there's a scene where Vitalina hears, Ventura tells her "He's not dead, he's with me". And this is something that is was in 2014, right, or 13, was that film made? Uh the shootings were made. It was just very fresh trauma first, right? Just came

to Lisbon. And so, this is definitely a very sensitive and vulnerable um, subject for her. And then on the shoot, she gets hit with “No, no, no, he's not dead” or something that Ventura said. So these things are very painful for them of course. And how do you make sure they don't get traumatized? If you do make sure?

I'm not sure, I'm not sure. Um what I felt in the case of Vitalina is that when I met her, I maybe I thought that that working with her or proposing something to her, a small part in that movie could help her. And yeah it could be like you say, therapeutic. She would go out of the house, she would be with people, she would have to talk to, do things, to even exercise again her senses. Um you know, so I thought about that and it was the first instinct to help just... she's in pain and... of course the dominant, I have to tell it because dominant impulse was - this woman is fascinating. This woman is very strong. She might have a very important story for me for us and for a film that was dominant, but at the same time this helping thing. But it goes always hand in hand because the work we do and you probably read this and interviews, it doesn't it doesn't stop with films. We are there all the time, one way or another. Yesterday or what's with her because she needed to something from a doctor and tomorrow, I will be with Ventura to the just hanging around. But maybe he will ask me if I can do something, it's always... and they helped me too.

Do you think reenactment for them is therapeutic?

I don't know if people, so I'm not very familiar with analytical psychoanalytical process. I don't know if you are. Yeah, I'm more I'm more against it than... from the things I like, I mean the families of people that I like, authors, and I tend to tend to not go into that, but...

But definitely this process does something to them.

No, it was it was, I hope, I think, I don't know all of us, we felt that Vitalina... Um, so you say did her mourning work. I mean, she began to, I don't know, forget or remember her husband and the pain and... and today she's perhaps, I don't know if she's better. I think she's different. She's different. I cannot say if she's better. She cannot say she's better. I've been talking to her and she says it's uhh it's human, I mean pain, it's human, it's not because you're always laughing or doesn't make you a gay person. But during the film, what I, and I've said this sometimes, Vitalina, not the other one, she had a chance of doing a lot of things that she couldn't do, like a sort of prayer for her husband.

So basically ritualistically...

Even the small altarpiece for with the photos and she didn't do that. She did that for the film because she arrived late, she didn't see anything and she was, she had no strength to do anything. She was alone. And the film gave her the opportunity to do this kind of remembrance. And that's useful.

Do you believe the ritual has a bigger meaning?

Yes, because I think cinema is a ritual too, in the same way, not a funerary ritual, but it's a ritual. So while I was, me and my friends, we were, it's the gestures are the same. You know, we are putting our camera and seeing if it were going to shoot from here and what lands. And it's a very delicate for me job, filmmaking. And while we were doing this, she was doing the altarpiece with flowers and the candles. And so something was, you know, happening. So, I think cinema even has to do with this kind of ritualistic way of invoking or conjuring or remembering... or faking.

Mm Yeah. Take interesting. Exactly in this regard I was thinking about repetition, repetition is an element for the film itself. When some phrases get repeated, let's say, or some scenes get repeated. And also repetition as rehearsal, which is the part of the methodology. Do you think this has also linkage to ritualistic nature?

I think all films that are very close to let's say to... It's not a good word, but documentary, films that are more close to reality, let's say. Which is not very good words, but there's no better words. Films that are more concrete, not very abstract or very fictional, films like mine probably, where you see people and dogs and houses and, and they deal with the life of someone or the lives of someone. There's always an element very, very obvious element of repetition, opening the door, closing a window, getting out, going to bed – that's repetition. That's your life. Your life is repetition. I think, I'm not sure if it's rehearsal, but the repetition and my life is, I mean it's a routine. Every day I come to this office, I opened the door. I, I mean Vitalina, Ventura, and all of us. Um, that's very obvious in the films. I think it's, I think it's a wonderful narrative way of involving people. All the films I liked in the past. The classic films, our films where you see people doing normal things and they you see it 3-4-5 times during the film. I mean, he takes a taxi and it goes to the office, and one hour later he will do the same thing. And that's reassuring. For me, yes. Because I mean, it would be very fake to that's what I think it's very fake. I mean to take planes every three seconds and fighting monsters, green and then yellow, and not to have repetition would be horrifying, I think for me.

So yeah, the repetition is a part of realism, maybe?

It has to do, it's not realism, it has to do with it has to do with breathing. I think breathe, just breathing. But I don't know. I think I think some other way would be fake again and even manipulative, I think, because manipulative in the sense that again, when, when, when people talk about cinema there, there's a mm hmm. It doesn't apply to painting or sculpture, but cinema as this romanticism. Yeah, it's very romantic. It's very mysterious. It's very uhh and even in film school still, it's incredible way of living. And that bothers me a lot because it's not true. Of course, it's uh, it's a very industrial job. It's a very hard job. Uh, so I, I now after some films made and this, no, my life doing films with these people, which is already long, has been telling me that the routine of the days lived a life that is passing into films that we do. You know, our films are done, there is one year, one year and a half, two years of shooting of being there. That's not shooting every day. So, it's it's walking with them. So, repetition is theirs, rehearsal is just a way of...

What happens to memories as a result of rehearsing it?

What do you mean memories? There's memories...

Memory of, let's say there is a scene that you rehearse, the scene based on memory of the Ventura or Vitalina. You rehearse it up to 30 times. So what do you think, uh not think, what do you see that happens as a result of this? Does it get sharper, does it get more... abstract?

Um It assumes every form. It's different. But I can only say what is super cliché, that memory is very it's very, it's not factual at all, I mean it's not about dates and numbers and streets, and you're wrong most of the times you're wrong on the numbers and it's very imaginative. There's a lot of imagination in memory, that's good for us because it's bright. It's something that moves, it's not static.

So, it transforms during the rehearsal.

I think we all experience that if we try to remember something that we cannot really remember, we will at a certain moment just to impress someone, we will invent what we do not remember. I did it, you did it at one point of our lives: “ah one day” and then we seek, “I cannot remember this, but I will go on”, and you go into something that is more or less true. It's a re-appropriation of your own feeling of something that was. I don't know, the rehearsal is a repetition of course. And it's a way of improving and concentrating. And I would say even a reduction, bringing it smaller and smaller and smaller, to this form that we, that is very abstract of course, but we want to capture.

You were saying that also it removes melodramatic tone.

Mhm melodrama,

Okay, maybe then it's not that relevant anymore.

it's no, I don't know can be, there's everything, you know? And again, I'm just talking for myself, every day is - you see, every day for me, it's a bit different and special like every life. Uh so I'm absolutely convinced that if you make a film in the normal conventional way, every day will be the same. It's not like they say, tomorrow, we'll have this big scene, love scene to shoot and the day after or next week we'll take a plane and do that famous chase scene, and it's completely fake. They will do the same thing. They will be paid a certain way to be slaves of a certain productivity, productivity. We are immersed and dependent on their lives, reality, whatever word you can... I mean I can get there where we are shooting and Ventura would be I don't know, too sleepy, too sick, too annoyed, too distracted to do what we thought we could do. So, wait, do something else. Go back to something that we thought. I mean you have to I don't know if this is improvising or I think it's more to be, we are in tune with mm we have to be with everything. Actually, we don't have contracts. It's I'm sure you don't like to for me to talk to you like that. But for me, cinema is about contracts. Money. Justice, things like that. Ideas and art that comes later if we're lucky. But I never think about art or ideas or I never have ideas for shots or things. Never, never in my life I had “oh wow. Would be great” No, so much to do. So many problems and we are for, uh each day is 15 hours of I don't know, hammering or and painting and talking and pulling the camera and pulling the camera again, putting lights, doing sound, et cetera. That you don't really have time for ideas. So I don't have contracts with these people. It's very dangerous. It's um mm not that they will betray me. It's possible. Never happened to me but I can get there and somebody might disappear. Not saying dying because that's too much. But I work with people that are really on the margin of the margin. They are junkies or thieves or... you know.

Yes, it's not even very... a contract would not really work even probably.

No, you're right. It would never work. But you know it's again when I say contract - something written, that's what my, what I hate. If I write something, if you write your signature on the paper and says I will interview you and we have, I would not never do that. I've I have this feeling that if you sign something it's the beginning of betrayal. At one point there will be lawyers and people and as you said it would never work. It would never work.

It's dangerous. But in my life in my work I found it. No, I've never signed the contract with no actor. Some technicians ask me, some don't, we get paid more or less the same also. But there's a lot of danger in this, of course. What I'm telling you is that my work is completely founded grounded on one side on something - yes it can be like the same memory, it's oral it's orality, it's something that is there since the beginning of time. It's not mine, it's not yours, it's a voice

on the other side. It's trust. I mean, cinema should be something that... you should trust someone to make a film. It's something so violent to have a camera in front of you that either you have trust in these people or you don't, and if you don't do better you sign a contract.

It's interesting that we were talking about the papers and the contracts because bureaucracy is an interesting element for Horse Money, and I feel how bureaucracy was ritualistic in Horse Money. And uh there is this beautiful shot where Vitalina holds her hands above her documents and then she reads and this is like pure witchcraft in a way, should we read it like bureaucracy is the ritual?

Bad ritual. I don't know if it's a ritual. Ritual when I say ritual, I hear it in the sense of ceremony, ceremonies that you practice in a common in the community. Let's say it's not in common in the community, let's say, all rituals are linked to our life in community. But ritual for me, involves can involve life or death of course, but that's life or death. But it doesn't have a resonance or signification of that kind. Bureaucracy, I don't think it's a ceremony. It's it's a punishment. It's like prison. It's um I mean people that people that suffer, I don't know if you can talk like this, from over excess of bureaucracy, normally are poor people, are people that don't have the means, the ways to get around it. There's no millionaire that ever went to uh an office to get even a passport.

Bureaucracy was exactly what prevented Vitalina from the ritual that she had to attend, right. In this sense it's kind of war of rituals.

Yeah. Bureaucracy in this, at least in this their story and their immigration, immigrant immigration stories, normally are obstacles and to they're coming here to there to being Portuguese citizens to being, it's just barriers and walls and it's a little bit the same for all of us. But but their lives is a hell of bureaucracy, for immigrants. For in general.

Yeah. It brings you to this phrase that I read: "the more singular pain is the more it is political". So it's actually your phrase, "the more individual thing is the more it is political" and that was something that you are staying in the context of it.

It's not actual mine. I'm just repeating something I hear I heard, and that meant that I agree. Okay, the more particular the particular the story, the more general it is for me.

Should it mean that, because this is where we talk about personal memories and connections to collective memories, and in this sense, it doesn't mean that personal memory and collective memory are linked like that.

Sure, I think so. In their case – absolutely. I mean Vitalina's story and parts of Ventura's story, life story, are the life of the mm Cape Verdean immigrants' story. Every woman almost statistically, sociologically, every woman Cape Verdean woman that came to this country or to Holland or France, came after the husband, came many, many, many years after, uh, or stayed behind forever, and normally has this gap, this unknown period of time when the husband probably reformed a new family here, for instance, have affairs had a secret double life that she will never know. So that's the first betrayal. Mhm. That's a cliché for a woman. For a man it's coming, getting lost in a new society, etcetera. So, his memories are the memories of the community. Ventura is always talking about "us". It's very common: "us", "when we got here, when we get here, our neighborhoods, our houses".

So, I mean, uh not specifically people who he was with, but...

No, no, he means the people that came in planes and boats to work here.

Not necessarily my friends.

No, not necessarily friends, enemies too, its actually, he got into a kind of fight that's in the film and it was a super enemy, but also an immigrant guy like him. Same class and age. No, no, it's um mhm. It's um it's a community. So yeah, in the case of it's even more it's more intense with Ventura. Maybe because he's more from the age of the pioneers. He was one of the first to come. Immigration from that country began a bit before him. Beginning of the 60s. He came here in the end of the 60s, 70s, but still he was one of the first. He's called in the neighborhood today one of the veterans. It's like westerns in westerns America. They all say "we".

Mm hmm. Okay, this is very interesting. Uh this is coming to an end very soon. Uh yes, so there's this question of representation. And we've been talking about the collective effort for representation for constructive narrative. And am I understanding it right that the process of representation and what the representation would be like, it does not depend just on the director, right? It depends on the director and actors and maybe the audience, I'm not sure?

It depends on the air that, on the air that morning, that afternoon that you are shooting. I don't know. Um hmm mm. I don't know. Of course. What you see in the screen or the screen, that small world is what I chose you to see, right? Or Eisenstein or Apichatpong Weerasethakul or or someone else. That's what I chose. I choose that you are going to see this woman that size from the back against the wall on that wall etc. But then there's the woman, there's the wall, there's the light, there's the sound.

And there's also my mood as a viewer. Right?

Of course, there's especially your mood, and that's the main problem again with analyzing a film. And that's my, I would say, my battle with university, or film. It's that you cannot have mood seeing a film. You can have a mood, you will have a mood. But that should not go inside the screen because it will, it will not be the film. It's that simple. I'm sorry. No, it can't. A film is a film. It's what we did. Your mood is your mood. And if you put it there, you think: "Oh, this poor woman. I felt this one day when..." - you're not seeing the film, you're seeing yourself.

But are we able to detach ourselves as viewers?

I think so. That's why certain films, certain very great, great films, not all films, can be analyzed and others can't. That's my battle with the university. It's not because cinema is not, you know, an art that is, it's not. Mhm. A film is something very cold. It's not even an object. It's... today it's something electronic. A file. Very cold. It has no emotion or art. No feelings, no substance, no materiality. So, our job, my job, my friends', Vitalina's too, is to give material, materiality to a bunch of emotions and feelings. Nothing more than that. If will succeed, it will be there in the form. Some form, it will be material. You will you will see it or you think about it. That's different from um projecting yourself on the film.

I see what you mean by there and see what the problem you are saying by projecting.

I don't know, there are certain films that you will see 2-3-4-5-6 times and maybe you will see them the same, with the same feelings, with the same as you say, with the same mood. Something that it's probably the same. A film that you absolutely love, loved for the first time, it will probably, you will probably love it today and tomorrow and the next time. Um, mm we

would have to know what was the first that first viewing. There are other films that are more complex, complex in the sense that you don't love them. But there's something there, and those are the films that are more tough, more resistant, let's say. They don't let you in because they're made in a way that it's very strange or the actors or it's very fast or very slow or very, I don't know, there's something that collides with your moods. Whatever mood. Those films you will have to see lots of times. And maybe one time you will see the film. Yeah but you will see the film without seeing yourself or your story or your mood or your life. That's very difficult. And I think that's the danger of yeah of turning film into a language, that's but I don't want to...

And is that something that you mean by saying you should not read my films symbolically? Is that?

No, no, no I'm not saying that, because symbol is not... symbols are... they grow like, it's like the wind blows whatever.

There's a sentence and it's very confusing in that article. It's actually not your quote. It's someone's quote about "you should not read Pedro Costa's films symbolically", and this becomes a bit of a confusion, because if we take the last sequence of Horse Money where he leaves from the hospital and the doctor releases him at this time. Right. And the gates are beautiful and big. And the skies... there's nothing else for us then to read it as a symbolical escape and death or relief.

But there's symbols. Every shot has 30 million symbols. Even if you don't want to, if it's not your intention. It's impossible to for me now to say. I never thought about that. Never think about those kinds of symbols or metaphors or whatever. I don't think about them. But I'm not saying they are not there. I said what I'm saying is they are there in spite of us, of ourselves, in spite of our all of our purity. Let's say if I shoot now something, you or this tv, there will be a symbol there. It's as true as for me, for you, for another viewer.

And what do you say, what do you think about scholars and critics and viewers to find a mythology, Greek mythology in Ventura or...

I think it's exaggerating a little bit, but I'm...

Or religious mythology?

The same, I think. Mhm. I think, yeah, but I'm not against it. I'm just, I think the first, the, the first appreciation, or appreciation of film would be very, very, they could be, they would be very simple and they would be... they would be for me those were the texts that... you know, for me, I was not a big cinephile when I was young. I was not like some filmmakers or some people or you perhaps. I saw some films, but very late, actually when they almost came to film school. Um I liked film, but again, I was not... and so I, when I just by chance when I saw a great film that I liked and I knew it was a great film, it felt like a great thing, I was helped also by some people's teachers too to read about this film and I liked this. I like seeing this great film and then I liked reading about that film. Or about another film from the same director or something else. And these texts I wrote were texts that belonged to no, I want to be delicate, to another age of, I don't know, of film analysis, before. Mhm. Actually, no, but before postmodernism. Yes. But before... it was around that age was a very difficult time for me. In the age where, it was called structuralism, so linguistics applied to... and there was a lot of people saying that cinema is a language, you can... a shot means something and it's part of a grammar, et cetera. If you should like this, it means, if you should like this it means. And I never, I mean I never thought it was right. So, then I found I was given some other texts and I

began to read more and more things that really didn't mm didn't read... Um, they read the forms, they read the forms, perhaps it was more people that came more from painting or from art, art, meaning sculpture, painting, etcetera. And less linguistics and psychoanalysts or philosophers.

We use language when we want to talk about narrative also. Right? Because in the film narrative there is two different schools and one of the schools is trying to apply language narrative, narrative that comes from the novels to film and see if that can work with film. And your films were specifically Horse Money, was called an example of post-narrative. And I don't know if this is related with non-language as well.

I cannot... when I hear those terms I get lost completely. I get lost in the sense that of course because you know, we work and I work with a certain number of facts and concrete things and objects and... I'm not working with intentions or ideas. Of course, you might not believe me. No, no, no, no, it's not you. No one does Today. No one does.

I think it's a little bit tough, I can understand the process and since recently I started being scared actually how I did not have ideas anymore because before you know...

Don't be. It's like opinions, you know, we live in the world I think where more and more people want to express opinions for everything. I mean like in Tv or newspapers, it's just about my opinion about Gaza Strip or I don't know, fashion or film. Everybody has opinions and wants to give opinions. I have lots of opinions and I keep them for myself. I think they are not very interesting. You know, it's not... on the contrary, ideas, I don't think there are, I don't think you need them to make a film, I think you need lots of other things, but not ideas. In the sense of the theory, structured something very, very structured as a method. I don't need that. Maybe some other people need it, but I don't. It can become too symbolic, can charge the film with symbols or can charge the film with a lot of... how do you say, Déjà vu, repetitions of films and film.

This question would probably sound to you maybe confusing because I was thinking about narrative again uh about the narrative of the film. And so, we know that this narrative does not um get built during the preparation or screenwriting, which does not really exist, during the...

Preparation exists. Screen writing, writing doesn't exist.

Yes sure...than shooting. So when would you say that this narrative appears in the film? Is it editing, is it shooting?

But this notion of narration again, I don't you can define it in I don't know, classical, you can define it, there's lots of, but for our purpose here and for the sake of filmmaking, I think narration is... it applies or to everything to everything that happens. It's um mhm. It can be one day or can be... you look at the wall in Vitalina's house and it can be in terms of narration much more important and take a bigger, bigger, much bigger place than what she is trying to mean or to convey or what she told you and... and you think this is, this will narrate, this will tell, this will develop. I don't know what narration does, opens your mind things like that. And narration is if you want to say story, I mean...

I am not. But film schools do. They say that by filmmaking were trying to tell a story which is basically links to narration and then we have to always think about, so what your story is, how are you telling it? How are you saying, are you telling it during the editing?

That excludes me. I think this excludes so many films. So many books or any things. I mean, there's so many films without a story.

Do you consider Horse Money one of them?

No, no, no. The only thing... the only thing what that formed my filmmaking is very, very classic. It's very from the beginning of narration or the American classic scene, and it's the most classical novels, the novel. So, in a sense, yes, I would like. My intention is not to tell the stories but to share some moments with people. I think. If it makes a story - good, but why should it be good? I don't know. I'm not sure if Homer, the Greek Homer, is that the story? It doesn't seem to me like a story, but but you have to...

It's a journey maybe rather.

Yeah, it's a journey. Er... Yeah, it's a collection of mm hmm sketches of different things and moments of his life and life, past, future and present. And anyway, I think one day in my film making it can be a stone becomes very important. I don't know why because then it reveals something later. Right, things like that, because it was a part of the house that crumbled or something that actually belonged to the husband. So it's always very narrative. I'm very interested in narrative and narration. Mhm. But not perhaps in the traditional way.

Okay. Yeah. That answers definitely. Just last one, probably the last question.

(Laughs) Go for it.

You know, I think, well when we talk about the shift uh in your filmmaking style and method, uh to hybridity uh which coincided with work with memory. Should we connect one to another? Should we connect the work on memory and the choice of hybridity? Do you think these things are somehow good for another?

I'm not sure because that's so complex. I cannot answer you that way. I would say that my interest, I, my problem is I'm very interested in certain things in filmmaking. I didn't know how to get them. Um in a way that could be uh how can I say mm hmm... Peaceful, joyful. For me. I don't want to work in certain conditions, big cinema or something else. So, I only saw that film worked that way. Worked in a certain way in a certain convention with certain procedures. And for me those procedures blocked me from seeing, from getting to maybe memory, maybe feelings, maybe emotions, people, things. So, it was a very slow long traumatic process that led me to cut with those procedures. Cut with a certain way of doing and beginning another way which is very it's closer to... yeah. well, something very amateur. Or documentary, or painting even, or sketching or, or anthropology, sociology, or photography. I mean, I was more on my own without crews, without very big budgets and things. And that's what, that crisis let's say, this process led me to a way of working that... Um, I think now I can concentrate and work and see and maybe film and build and construct things that I think are interesting. And that has simply to do with having time, that's all. Time, time. Not having the panic of time. That was...

Which is very complicated nowadays...

It does not exist, a deadline, like for the thesis or the project... that for a film that's... for me, I think it's fatal because... for me no, it's not for me it's for the world I'm filming, Vitalina's world or Ventura's. It's a world where they never had time. You know, they never had time for anything. For anything, they are not allowed anything. Especially time. So, I thought if I came

here to do, to do a film and do it in the rush, I will be like all the other guys exploiting them. Mhm. Let's exaggerate a little bit. But I'm not exaggerating. Let's be like the police. Mhm. The police is very, very like the bureaucracy. It's very present in their lives. All of them - young, old, very present around the house, it's something you feel. Mm hmm. And I mean radically police will cut off your freedom and that's time. Mhm. So, I thought if I come here and I do the same mistakes, I mean, I should I should give them and give myself the time to see this. Yeah, if you want narrative, to see the see this life to see them and have time to work. Of course, think, work. Yeah.

This is very important what you've said.

Thank you so much.

Semi-structured interview with Valentyn Vasyanovych, the director of Atlantis film

Translation from Ukrainian

Questions for Valentyn Vasyanovych

1. Do you think filmmaking is a political act? How does it operate the political change?
2. Why do you think a film using non-actors and based on their life-experiences reaches a stronger impact on audience, on society and political situation?
3. Non-professional cast: do you think, their role is to transmit their trauma through their performance, or to simply signify it conceptually (since the audience knows they are the carriers of the trauma)?
4. Have you aimed to help your non-actors work through their trauma with help of this film? How?
5. Did this actually happen, you think? Thanks to what?
6. Multiple rehearsals and long takes: what did they help achieve? For the film? For the non-actors?
7. You might not wish to disclose details of your method, but could you please, as much you can?
8. Do you think the actors worked acting their future or certain aspects of their present, maybe past? The mental state, is it the state from the future or present?
9. Why did you take over the control over almost every department?
10. Suggest and discuss the metaphoric meaning of the character's journey.
11. Imitation of pain in the iron scene. Do you think certain graphic scenes help audience reach more empathic state?
12. The concept of "bad death".
13. You worked with Rymaruk on your new film. Did the method differ this time? Were there directing mistakes, particularly in regard to work with actors, that you tried to fix in your new film? Did you regret certain decisions in Atlantis?

The interview transcribe

You mentioned that you did not have a similar traumatic experience, that is why you needed the real experiences of actors. How was the research and screenwriting happening? What was based on real stories?

When I was starting, I just had a general structure, not filled one. It would constantly change. Even the types of characters would influence the story a lot. The guys contributed with their personal information regarding the war and PTSD. It affected the story a lot. During the rehearsals, building mise-en-scenes and so on, they would fill in the story, and approve my ideas or change them. It was like an endless collaboration, since I did not have the experience

and I was not a carrier of that trauma, which is important. But if you want to tell the truthful story, you have to listen to the people because otherwise you will have some kind of ersatz fake. So, I was open for that. And thanks to the long preproduction phase, the story has worked. The guys were actively arguing, about the lines for example: “I would never say it this way”, and were suggesting certain solutions.

You did casting way before the script was locked?

That is my method always. I write some kind of a structure, and take it easy in case I'd have to change it, as well as words, and literature. I am always ready to radically change the story. In *Atlantis*, I got very lucky with the main actor, Rymaruk. I saw him, he got interested, I recognized him to be a perfect for the character right away. He is being great with camera, expresses his ideas in an excellent way, his experience in journalism and PR got handy because the guy likes to talk and formulates his thoughts in a clear way, and break down the story... he is an intelligent guy. The same applies to Lyuda who has been through war too, as a paramedic, she has also strong opinions on all the events in the story. It was very curious to observe how these two very different people would launch verbal battles regarding one situation or another. And very often she would win over Andriy, she has a stronger character. After some time that turned into an endless mocking of each other. They tried to always decide who is the “head of the house”, it was interesting to observe. For me as an author the visual component was essential. So after finding a certain beautiful location, I would change everything and start improvising all over again. (Journeys into place – chapter of Empathic Vision). “Look this is a great place, we can do this and that here”.

Which region was it?

It is the East, we had a base in Mariupol. And travelled a lot around, to the direction of Donetsk, towards the frontlines.

That metallurgical story, I understand now.

Yes. It was Mariupol, Azovstal'. However, they did not allow us to shoot inside of the factory, and that made sense, we wouldn't be able to film there properly, due to the safety measures. However, its exterior has made a great landscape for us.

We had to climb every rooftop of Mariupol, and we found two rooftops. We were shooting from one of them onto another with the factory on the background. It was for the scene on the rooftop and the final shot with the birds.

And what about the interiors of the factory? With the jump into melted metal?

The factory interior we built in Kyiv. There is a factory Leninskaya Kuznya, it is working too but there is a lot of free space. So, they let us in and we had a chance to build a set there, added some smoke, the production designers created wonderful decorations. And we could afford stunt tricks that would be unavailable to make in the real factory.

I want to ask about that scene that goes first after the credits, the shooting scene. Was it influenced by actors?

This scene actually appeared after I went to shoot from a gun at a training field. There was this interesting exercise: two people stand back to back to each other, one has a gun and the other one is assumed to have a knife. By a command, one starts running, for about 15 meters away, another one meanwhile has to charge the gun and shoot. If you shoot before your partner had

gotten to an object and hit it, you get a point. The training is about being protected from an attack of a knife armed man. It was not from the veterans, it was a usual training for the guys who like to shoot. I went there a couple of times and thought “how cool visually, people are running around, shooting”, and decided to invent something similar for my characters. Later that transformed as I started collecting information about how special forces are trained and so on, and eventually the scene emerged.

The aggression in that scene seems very real.

That was thanks to endless number of takes and rehearsals and temperature -20 outside. Rehearsals are everything if you work with non-professional cast. You have to exhaust them with rehearsals. Because they don't have the skills to hold on to the emotion, they get confused with text, geography, choreography and they have to learn it well. For me it becomes useful to reach the results. For example, he had to fall by himself, without stunts or grip – he had to do it perfectly by himself. The synchronization of technicalities in shooting scenes and so on. All those choreography and technical issues have to be rehearsed perfectly, otherwise on the shoot it will be a failure. So, by the time shooting starts, they know it all. I have to only direct in terms of “faster-slower, louder-quieter”, that's all. But every single scene takes a whole shooting day, from the beginning to end. Sometimes we go overtime, and make endless number of takes. Since the scenes are long, it takes time to synchronize all this ballet.

Then how about the emotional side of acting?

When you work with non-professional cast you shouldn't expect from them deep emergence into emotional sphere. They do not have acting skills. I had an understanding of their abilities, and worked with the given. Their emotional transformations I would substitute for movement in shots. Just movements. If you need them to act conflict, you have to create a conflict. Fights are about movements that would create the mood. Emotional part and depth, or reflection was out of the question. We used mise-en-scene.

Then when you choose someone like Rymaruk with the war background, and say that his experience is imprinted on his face, then how does that work? Is it important for you for the audience to know they are looking at a real veteran?

Hell knows how that works, I just look at Andriy's face and it seems to me that I can see his trauma without him having to do anything. But that is my feeling, that he does not need to act, showing his face is enough. If I work with a professional actor, like in my last film *Reflection*, it is different. There was Roma Lutsyky, he has a wide spectrum of emotions he can exhibit, so I can focus less on movement and he will do the rest.

Non-professional cast: do you think, their role is to transmit their trauma through their performance, or to simply signify it conceptually (since the audience knows they are the carriers of the trauma)?

We don't know anything. Audience comes into the cinema without knowing anything, for them it is a person in frame, so an actor. For me it was important to create some sort of tension. That is the role of mise-en-scene, location, background. My job is to drive all that to a certain degree. Regarding the shooting scene – that was a scene about how these days spend their weekend. They gather, shoot, and then the trauma manifests, they cannot stop, get carried away, and start destroying things around due to their own unstable psyche. Since I work with wide shots, we don't do close ups for actors to show their emotions. The main thing is it's a scene about two friends who almost get each other killed.

You didn't have a goal to work through their traumas with help of cinema.

Of course, we did not, our aim was to make a film. I'm not a psychotherapist. I don't understand any of this, apart from having read some articles on that, and had some talks with psychologists and the guys themselves. I am not an expert there. In addition, Andriy Rymaruk says he doesn't have a PTSD. A PTSD appears after people come back to civil life, and they get frustrated, since they have no friends, no enemy, no lifestyle, everything is grey and betrayal is everywhere. And he claims he never did come back from the frontline. He still spends most of his time there. And he says once he stops going there, maybe he would start suffering from PTSD. But Vasya, who played the character's friend, after coming back from war right away entered psychology course at Mogylanka university. Nowadays he works at the veteran's support service. Suicidal ones and others call him nowadays to his number to get consultations, he works with them. Maybe that is a way for him to fix his own problems.

Suggest and discuss the metaphoric meaning of the character's journey. The concept of "bad death".

Yes, it works with the concept of Atlantis, he relives all that traumatic story. But it is more accidental, we are just lucky. I have another concept. If you want to cure the PTSD of a soldier, shoot him in a film. You replace one PTSD with another one and that will help replace the first one. Rymaruk is starring already in his third or fourth film, and he wants to be an actor and continue this career. Maybe it is because the shooting process resembles army. You have a mission you go on with around 50 people, it is tough conditions and discipline, you are far away from home and you make close connections with other people, and filmmaking is quite a hard work. You have to wake up at 5 in the morning, go out to the field covered with snow, the whole day you have to work there, freezing in attempts to get the perfect take. On the way home you stop at a gas station and get a bottle of whisky, get back to the hotel, and communication with friends continues. You go to sleep at 2 am, just to wake up at 5 again the next day. And that is your life for 3 months. This is quite a hard, uncomfortable, and maybe that is how it works.

And of course, in Atlantis, the guys had to talk through the themes of war and losing friends. And that resembles what therapists do. They try to make you talk about your trauma, understand and accept it, and after the reunion and acceptance disappears, I guess that is how it works.

In *Reflection*, Andriy played the role of the 'heroic hero' who goes till the end and dies.

Why did you decide to change the method and work with professional cast this time?

It was not really a method, it was a need, since in Ukraine the industry is still quite young, so we do not have a big actor's database, or different types. And a person who worked the whole life in theater has it written on his face: that he did not spend his life in a trench, or in a slaughterhouse, but that he worked in a theater. The face is sophisticated, not weathered, the hands aren't rough, all that shows. And within the framework of the collision between fiction and documentary, the type of character plays a big role. But in my next film, the main character is not a soldier but a surgeon. An educated guy, who reflects a lot. And the story is different, it is based more on the transition of the character's mental state in shots. So, he has to act all that.

Were there directing mistakes, particularly in regard to work with actors, that you tried to fix in your new film? Did you regret certain decisions in Atlantis?

Sure, I did some of those. And it as always had to do with not having a chance to do enough preparations. I know *Atlantis* has some scenes with terrible dialogues. The scene with extras for example, I would have changed everything there now. I see that some things there sound not very convincing. The scene before the suicide as well wasn't worked out properly with the dialogue. It is a bit raw.

I can hear that, but I am aware that non-native speaker will probably not notice anything.

Yes, for sure, they won't. But for a local who understands the intonations, it bothers the ear. I understand that. That's my fail, I did not rehearse it that well. Considering the fact that the actor had to do a stunt at the end of the scene, he had to have the lines perfectly learnt. However, I did not dedicate enough time for that. Should've done 10 of them instead of 3.

On the other hand, it reminds us that in front of us are non-actors.

Indeed.

The iron scene. Empathy. That is a way for the character to get to feel the friend's pain, right?

Yeah, something like that. He wants to feel it, wake up and feel it, since his friend basically burned to death, he is trying to reflect on that event somehow. On one hand, to feel it, on the other hand to lead himself out of this dormitory state, switch with help of pain. That scene was written one of the first, by the way. It just appeared.

I am actually not an analytical person, not a mathematician. I work more with intuitive impulses. Just feel when it's good, when it's bad, get happy like a kid. But by the way, that was the scene I used for checking the guys on the casting. But I guess there was no iron even on the casting, was more of an imaginary one. Or maybe there was one.

Why did you take over the control over almost every department?

I just tried to make my own life easier, because since I am a cinematographer by the main position, since I am not an analytic and not a mathematician, I take a script easy, with no dogmas around it, it is very complicated for me to verbalize certain ideas, and transmit to the crew members what it is that I actually want. It is easier for me to just take a camera, a tripod, a production designer who is my best friend, and do everything myself. Just the people I could speak easily with. We would take some people for the administration, another friend of mine. We just go to a location, I put a camera and ask one of them to get into the shot, so that I can see movement and some simple actions. That makes me see a scheme and can tell if it works or not. I constantly search for scenes this way. And I always look into the camera. My experience of working on documentaries helps a lot. The method there is to take a camera and a tripod, then you have your character in the shot, you press Rec, and you can see if there is a film or not. You wait and wait, up until at some point – boom – and you get goosebumps on your skin. The film has emerged. The main thing is from that moment on to not press pause. "Don't press pause, you idiot! It doesn't matter that the shot is already 10 minutes long!" – that is important to not break and not press pause. I can feel this energy somehow even physically. When I take a camera, I walk around like with a scanner, and I detect certain things that seem to work. This is how I get my ideas and notes one after another, and they grow into something bigger. I already forgot what the question was.

The question was about the incredible amount of responsibilities you put on yourself. Cinematography, directing, writing, producing, editing...

Right, right, so I am primarily a cinematographer. Then, since I have to be also a director, you cannot get away from that too. It is a necessity. The reason why I edit by myself as well is because it is important for me to... try things during the editing. I try it one way, then another. Change rhythm, switch things places. Then I look at the timeline and check how much it is balanced regarding the lengths of the shots. Then I look to see where my turning points are, if the exposition is not too long. All of that I do alone and don't feel the need for anyone else there.

The same process some directors have with editors, but for some reason you don't feel the need for it.

What for would I need one? It is simple to press three buttons and do it all yourself. You can do it anytime, if you want – at night, if you want – early morning. If you have a mood you do it, if you don't – you don't. (Loner artist approach). It makes the process easier and more intimate, you get a chance to make mistakes and nobody will judge you. There is no conflict with a person who would look at you and tell "I told you", the conflict that could make you lose the mood and energy for nothing. In other words, it gives me freedom. It is enough to just watch five YouTube tutorials about how to edit a movie.

It indeed sounds very simple from your words, but I know sometimes it is important to also have another person to consult with.

I have a wife that I sometimes annoy with it. With all the ideas and scripts, but she helps me. She gives me support but if needed she also criticizes me.

Do you think filmmaking is a political act? How does it operate the political change? What about Atlantis in particular?

Maybe a film can reach an impact, but usually what really impactful is some scandalous publications about corruption, offshores etc. Probably documentaries which unveil it have a bigger influence on the political situation. Like the scandals that happen around our president nowadays due to his keeping money in offshores and so on. But as long as mine is an auteur artistic expression, it has a lesser impact. I don't have a concrete aim to do so. But anyways it becomes a reason to speak at the festivals about the war in Ukraine with Europeans or Americans, with the whole world. The main accent is to say that the war exists, these are the sides, Russia attacked Ukraine, so I verbalize it, and show how it might end. So, there is a certain mission, maybe some kind of a change occurs. But in the end of the day, don't like to think of myself as a messiah. But when a number of such films becomes larger, and there is a thematic coverage of the war and tortures, lost territories, of course it can to a certain degree make an impact.

Regarding the perception in Ukraine, a lot of people with the war background came to watch the film, and I did not hear anything negative from them. The most important thing I did hear was they noticed that the film is viscous and heavy, and that feels exactly like PTSD. It feels like a slow, lethargic and pressuring state of mind, which was transmitted by the atmosphere of the film. The state of mind of the characters was precisely captured in regard to this rhythm. In Ukraine the film was perceived very well, the Q&A sessions would turn into open warm conversations even though the film is heavy. It was important for me to hear and know I hit the aim this time. There was empathy and acceptance. For the people it was important that the character was a person impossible to break. There was no weakness in him, unlike in my next film's main character. That one breaks at some point and has to live with it afterwards.

As far as I understand, in Europe the Q&A sessions were more about shocked audience.

Of course. For them it was some kind of an introduction: “Oh, is it true?” – “Yes, it is, there is Isolation [prison], there is war, torture”. So, it was a mission of some kind. Our film fits into the niche of political cinema. And I try to do some politics where I can.

People in the Western Europe are detached from the current situation in Ukraine, aren't they?

Of course, nobody remembers anything. The only ones aware are the countries of the former Soviet Union, and Japan. Because in Japan not a very long time ago there was too many dead bodies, and their war with Russia has still not officially ended. In other words, people who have a similar trauma still fresh, remember. People who had been at war long ago, and buried soldiers long ago, live in a different world. They cannot even properly engage and believe in this story. In Italy we had a funny question from the audience. There was a lot of leftists, and the question was if the character commits suicide because of capitalism and a hard life on the factory (laughs). “No, - I reply, - it's because he carries a PTSD after the war”. Well... it was like that.

Do you think auteur cinema can work differently politically then the mainstream cinema?

Well, look, we have our president Zelensky. He has become a president thanks to a film. *The People's Servant* is a series, three episodes. I guess that means that mainstream cinema is working a bit more effectively then the auteur one. Auteur cinema is a good channel to spread certain ideas for a worldwide audience, only if you are lucky enough to get to A class festival, and participate at the Q&As. And hope they will spread the word further to press and so on. But Ukraine is an example of how a popular show can ruin the country, and it can simply disappear.

We are an incredible case indeed.

It is a horrifying case, and living in this case is scary.

I feel like making a movie about political technologies and how it occupies people's minds. And Ukraine is a country where for hundreds of years they would breed people with no opinion, where the Party or someone else makes decisions. It would be weird to expect wise decisions from a society like that. How it could be changed is not clear. Maybe in the perspective of 50 or 100 years – it is possible, but not faster. Of course, that is something I would like to make a film about, this theme is the most painful, at least for me.

Thank you for the insightful discussion.

Interview with Andriy Rymaruk, the main cast of the film Atlantis

Translation from Ukrainian

Questions for Andriy Rymaruk

1. How did you work on your character, what was the director's role in helping you reach the state of mind of Sergey?
2. Did you use your memories for building Sergey's character? How did this process happen for you?
3. Would you say you had to access the emotions and memories from your background related to war?
4. Shooting: what would happen for you in the process of multiply rehearsing and reshooting the same shot?
5. Did you ever feel like the action/line is coming from Andriy, not from Sergey?
6. Did any memories appeared during the process of the work on the film? Did any disappear? Transformed?
7. Have you encountered what clearly were false memories while working with the director?
8. What was the overall influence of the filming process on your memories of the past? On your mental state?
9. You are working on the next film by Vasyanovych. What does this work mean for you, why do you prefer to keep on working with cinema?

The interview Transcribe

How was the work on the character going? Is the character of Sergey differ from the person Andrey?

A: The hardest thing here was to imagine myself in the future. So, those scenes where the characters are reflecting on their past, it was hard to transfer myself into the future and to pull back again, and to use my own skills and memories from war and so on. No doubts, for me the hardest scene was the one where the character comes back to his own apartment. We even were arguing back then on set because I was asking [the director] to leave those small kid's shoes in the shot, Valentin Vasyanovych was screaming and calling it a manipulation. I was arguing that it was not a manipulation, it was almost the only thing I could hold on to as an actor. He wanted me to cry in the shot, so that would be the only thing to help me do that.

He wanted you to cry?

A: It doesn't show at all, but there was a tear indeed. This one was hard. But in general, the whole filming was hard as well, because it was the first film, I got to act in. So, they took me out from the war, put me in the cinema, and it kept rolling.

What was the time gap between your return from war and the beginning of your shoots?

A: We can say that there was none, because I came back from war in May 2016, and right away I started working for the NGO that helps soldiers. And still, 80-90% of my working time is happening at the front line. I am still spending my time there, even if not as a soldier I still see this blood and dirt, and everything that is going on there. That is why, there was no time gap. It was complicated, and not just for me, practically all the actors there got to be filmed for cinema for the first time.

You were talking about the scene of coming back to the apartment.

Yes, that was one of the most complicated scenes. All the rest of the scenes we of course have been discussing together, I contributed with my experiences. For example, how to hold a gun, how to shoot correctly, to move, to run. Also, when you're under stress, you carry an insured one not exactly the proper medical way, but the way you can at the situation. And a lot of things we had to say. Luda, the other main character, added a lot of details from her medical experience. Then, the guys from "Black Tulip", the evacuation group, they gave to Vasyanovych terabytes of video footage about how the excavations were executed and so on. So, based on this research through knowledge and memories, Vasyanovych at the rehearsals would modify the script. His tactic is rehearsals, rehearsals, rehearsals.

Does this multiple repetition help the actors?

For us it was very cool, because we were all people new to the cinema. We didn't know what to expect in the end, and we were not used to see ourselves on the big screen. Even when you watch a shot on a small screen at the shoot, the impression is still different. I remember, when I saw *Atlantis* on a big screen for the first time, I was shocked, and couldn't comprehend "Wow how beautiful it is". We should pay the tribute for the cinematographic talent of Valentin. His skills are incredibly advanced.

I agree completely. I think this is not just a beautiful film, it is also a very necessary one for today. It is exactly what we should talk nowadays about [in the contemporary Ukraine].

In his new film, I think Valik surpassed himself. There are some scenes that put me in shock. I re-watched all the films of Vasyanovych, even documentaries, and *Reflection* is his new level. The aesthetics is somewhat similar, with its static shots and mise-en-scenes. A couple of scenes, one of them is quite long and quite violent, I can only imagine, how many rehearsals he did for that. It should have been much more than one week. And how could one endure all that... Of course, talking about *Atlantis*, we need to highlight the work of the production designer. He is one of the best professionals in his field, and he worked on many most famous films in Ukraine.

The important role played the assistant director who worked with actors. Tanya has done an incredible job starting from casting and finishing with the shoot itself. And of course, the approach of the director. He realized that working with non-actors would be very difficult for him, but at the same time, the advantage he got was exposing new people in his film, the people who were ready for different physically challenging and stressful situations. For example, the bath in the [excavator] shovel. Damn, it was the 1 April, the temperature was only 5 degrees.

And that fire under didn't warm the water enough during the time of the shot?

No, there was not enough time for it to warm up anything (laughing).

The choreography of that shot was great because the water filled the shovel at the exact timing it had to, the fire got lit beautifully. But the shovel was so rusty, I cannot even imagine how one could touch it, let alone take a bath inside it.

We did not have too much time to work on it. We just had one rehearsing day for the technicalities, and the next day was the shoot. But the cold added the difficulty. And I remember how Valentin would tell me “Andryuha, come on, boxers off, we’re gonna go to Berlin!” (laughing). I would answer him, that even if I took the boxers off, there was nothing to be visible there due to the cold”. Eventually, I left the underwear on and it became kind of a meme for all the festivals, where I’ve been repeatedly asked “Why haven’t you taken the boxers off?”, and my two prepared replies were “At war people wash while staying dressed, so that it is simultaneously a bath and a laundry”, and “That was my way to save the water since there is such a shortage at that region”.

Plus, I think the boxers should be removed only once during the film, and exactly when they should be removed.

True, also. By the way, when we were shooting the scene with the broken car, it was already November, and the temperature was around zero. We even had to sometimes stop the shoot due to snowing. It was raining in the scene, we’ve been watered additionally, and at the same time we only had two sets of costumes, so the third take we started already wet. And when we would start making out with Lyuda in the car, we would be already shaking.

That is tough... We discussed with Valentin that point that film shooting conditions sometimes probably resemble war conditions. Maybe that was it could be familiar for you.

After some time, you stop resisting these difficulties and understand the importance of the process you’re in. Valentin did something smart and simultaneously cunning because the erotic scene was shot the very last. It was needed to finalize the whole plot line. Everything was already shot. And I remember him gathering me and Lyuda, and saying: “I understand you hate each other on set and in life, but there is no way out. You have to act the love scene”. We took it well like adults, acted properly beautifully.

You mentioned “hate”, but you had very important discussions about the characters and details? You helped Valentin with lines for your own characters and some actions?

Yes. All of the dialogues of mine and Lyuda and partially Vasya were rewritten on set during the rehearsals.

So, the phrases were more yours than your character’s ones?

Yes. Because we were writing these dialogues, Valentin would just structure them. Usually it would be when we were at the hotel resting after the shooting day. Valentin would send the texts to me and Lyuda, we would correct them, afterwards meet up and check if it worked or not. But we suggested him to have lines the way we would say them. The first shooting block included the first scene and the garage scene. And when we started the second shooting block, in Mariupol, I had a chance to spend more time by myself and isolate from my family and job. Tanya forced me to read a few books about acting. And I began to “wear” the role, imagining myself in future, and it happened easy and interesting for me.

After we would come back from the rehearsal, I would lock myself in the room and had no contact with anyone at all before I would arrive on set. I guess I succeeded, if I did not, I would

not keep acting after *Atlantis*. And since then I have already starred in 7 films. It is both short and features.

Let's talk a bit more about acting yourself in future. Because you would imagine yourself in future and at the same time, use your experience and memories from the past. How was it, "jumping" back and force mentally? Did you have some new memories you got to access due to the process? Maybe you have noticed some transformations in your memories? In general, I am very interested in memories and their role for the film.

In the scene of coming back home, which was the difficult one, I have imagined my own family, and how it would be if I entered my home and wouldn't see my wife and children. Also, a very traumatic scene for me was the morgue scene. Because that was a real case in my life, I was collecting my soldiers, and there was a lack of medical staff... and I had to drive them directly to morgue, I've seen that happening. How they review the body, then question the people and so on... how they announce the reason of death and all that procedure. Flashbacks. That was my input in that scene, and also, I did my contribution to the dialogues of the scene. It was indeed like that [at the war] when a person would get captivated, and they would learn he'd been a sniper, they would torture him, and would force him to swallow bullets.

So that was a real fact.

All that was real stories. We would spend hours with Vasyanovych and he forced me to tell the truth about that, and about what other things had happened back there.

Which production phase was that?

It was both during the shoots, during the screenwriting phase... While they were location scouting, they would call me and say "We're on the East". And I would join them after couple of hours. I'd come back from the frontline, meet them, we would sit together and I'd consult them regarding locations. Since I knew there everything, I studied every meter at war, I would show them which locations they could work with. In fact, I got to the film thanks to location scouting. I was asked to drive producer Volodymyr Yatsenko and the director of the film *The Wild Field* Yaroslav Lodygin to the frontline. They wanted to put on screen the book by Serhiy Zhadan called *Internat*. They've been searching for locations around Debaltsevo. Volodymyr saw me in November, and in December he sent me to the casting to Vasyanovych. And in January we have started to shoot already.

I am curious about the multiple discussions. Have they influenced your memories themselves?

I cannot say so. The question is about PTSD, and I always reply: I don't know what PTSD is. I still do not feel it, because I am still at war. My only rehabilitation is when they pull me out to the shoots. Meanwhile, I do not try to make a professional career in cinema. I don't have an agent, or a showreel. Sometimes directors just call me and say they offer me a role. So, I agree. Those are moments for me to simply rest from the war, because I got sucked into it so much, that it is very hard for me to get out of it. Cinema is pulling me back from [war] there to civil life, even more effectively than my own family. When I return home, I have to be myself. And when I arrive to a film set, I can be a completely different person. A few weeks ago, we've been shooting a short film, I was starring in a main role there. And I acted a veteran, but that role was so humorous, satirical, that I enjoyed it so much that it keeps my energy up since then. In *Atlantis*, it was a bit different. I would have to come back to the grey reality, I wouldn't leave from war, but still be there mentally. The ecological disaster is already beginning there, Valentyn looked into the future. I am witnessing now how rivers and lakes are disappearing,

water quality is already becoming a problem on the East [of Ukraine]. I was seeing it back then and still seeing now. Therefore, his script was pressuring me even more. However, that was helping me to “jump into the future”. I realized, it is already painful, but in future it will be even more so. Vasyanovych hit the strike.

With *Atlantis* we had a chance to travel around the world a bit. Mostly I liked the audience in Japan. Because they still reflect on the topic of war, they do not need to be told about the consequences of war, what is the scale, what is death, what is enemy, what is weapon, and while they were watching the film, they were very affected by it. It was the only audience who would wait for us in the corridor after the Q&A to keep talking, asking questions to mostly every scene. After the cinema would close down, we would keep talking outside until 2 or 3 am. The translator was already falling asleep while standing, while I was still trying to answer all their questions. So, this is a film about the consequences of war. And they accepted this film. Afterwards, they would make a long queue for an autograph by Vasyanovych, the audience wouldn't let go. For me this is a very high appraisal. Because in Ukraine or in [the other countries of] Europe the reaction was very moderate. The Europeans would wonder: “Oh, is there still war going on?”. In Canada, where we have our biggest diaspora, we've been asked “So how is the war?”, they tried to seem like they supported us, and join the trauma [while not having it]. For me that seemed so fake and disgusting, and I would suggest instead “Let's better talk about sex, fishing or football, about politics, anything but the war”. Because I am so sick of it. I thought I came to a film festival to rest from war, and they were asking me all these questions about it.

I strongly suggest you to watch *Reflection* as soon as you get a chance. We joke between each other that *Atlantis* was a prequel, or maybe *Reflection* was the prequel.

But the method of work with actors was very different in Reflection, wasn't it?

In *Reflection* the main roles were assigned to professional actors. I was there just in two or three scenes. Preparation for shootings, work with dialogue, work on the script, location work before the shoots... Valentyn conducts his rehearsals almost always with the real camera and the whole crew. He has from one to three days of rehearsals, and that method did not change. When I saw *Reflection* for the first time in Venice film festival, I wanted six times to stand up and shake the director's hand.

It was so painful, *Reflection* even more than *Atlantis*, even if I wear the Iron man's face sometimes, but during that film I was crying like a baby.

Thank you very much for this conversation, Andriy.

Production Report of the Artistic Research Project

Moments When We Freeze

I. Director's Intention Note

Format of the project: Artistic-Based research in a form of hybrid film

Duration: 30 min

Genre: Experimental hybrid documentary

Key-words: Hybrid film. Autobiography. Reenactment. Memory. Archive.

For me as a project author, this film is important in the following ways.

Firstly, it constitutes the necessary step in artistic research for the thesis, which aims to contribute as a practice-based application of the acquired knowledge brought up by the research, test the hypotheses of the thesis, and deliver new insights through practical experience. On this level, *Moments When We Freeze* project intends to trace the dynamic and individualistic nature of memory, witnessing fake memories, and working with family archive. We aim to evaluate the role and potential of reenactment as a methodologic instrument in hybrid film, discuss its artistic value, role in the film's narrative and style, its interrelation with archived memory, and as a mirror of the political and social problems of our time.

Secondly, as a filmmaker, I see the film as an instrument for experimenting and also crystalizing my director's cinematic language and methodology for work in the field of hybrid film. During my early career, I have worked as a fictional as well as documentary film director. This first attempt to create a movie of a hybrid nature is challenging, however liberating. It enriches the instrument toolkit I have acquired through my experience with both fiction and documentary. In addition, it offers the possibility to create a work that would combine the best practices from both approaches.

And thirdly, on a personal level, the project is an attempt to strengthen the identity and relationship between my own family. This film aims to be a research in utilizing contemporary digital media and family archive media to build a bridge for connecting my family members, who are otherwise divided by political borders. The goal is to create a media product that functions as a container for a preserved hybrid memory.

II. *Moments When We Freeze Project Production and Integration in the Thesis Schedule*

2022	September October	- Moments When We Freeze (MWWF) Pre-production of reenactments: Crew gathering Budgeting Organization Zoom calls recordings - Written chapters Analysis & Finalization of the three Case Studies (Chapter 2)
	November	- Moments When We Freeze (MWWF) Production: Zoom calls recording
	December	- Moments When We Freeze (MWWF) Reenactment scenes shooting
2023	January	- Moments When We Freeze (MWWF) Editing - Written chapters Chapter 1 writing
	February	- Moments When We Freeze (MWWF) Overall post production Final cut
	March	- Moments When We Freeze (MWWF) Dissemination - Written chapters Analysis of the Artistic research (Chapter 3)
	April	- Written chapters Analysis of the Artistic research (Chapter 3)
	May	- Written chapters Finalization of Chapter 1 Finalization of Analysis of the Artistic research (Chapter 3)
	June - September	Final drafting of Thesis
	October - December	Dissemination, publishing

IV. *Moments When We Freeze*

Production Budget

MOMENTS WHEN WE FREEZE				November 2022	
Film by Anastasiya Maksymchuk					
BUDGET					
	QT	€/1	DAYS	SUBTOTAL	TOTAL
Crew Fees					€3236
Screenwriter and Director	1	€100	3	€300	
Producer	1	€100	2	€200	
1 st Assistant Director	1	€100	2	€200	
Cinematographer	1	€100	2	€200	
2 nd Cinematographer	1	€100	2	€200	
Gaffer	1	€93	2	€186	
Set Designer	1	€100	5	€500	
Sound Operator/Designer	1	€100	4	€400	
Editing and Post-production	1	€50	4	€200	
Post-production Designer	1	€70	5	€350	
Translation and Subtitles	1	€50	1	€50	
Photographer (photoshoot part)	1	€100	1	€100	
Leading Actress	1	€25	2	€50	
Leading Actor	1	€50	2	€100	
Actress	1	€50	2	€100	
Actor	1	€50	2	€100	
Set Design					€500
Set construction materials	1	€400	1	€400	
Props	1	€100	1	€100	
Styling					€80
Costumes	4	€20	1	€80	
Make Up					€10
	1	€10	1	€10	
Catering					€144
Shooting day 1	12	€6,00	1	€72	
Shooting day 2	12	€6,00	1	€72	
Transports					€30
Van (art department)	1	€30	1	€30	
Others					€300
unexpected expenses	1	€300	1	€300	
Conference Presentation					€300
Transports	1	€100	1	€100	
Accommodation	4	€25	1	€100	

Unexpected Expenses				€300
	1	€300	1	€300
Festival Submissions				€100
	1	€100	1	€100
				BUDGET
TOTAL				€5 000

V. Moments When We Freeze Production Expense Reports

INFORMAÇÕES			
DEPARTAMENTO	Produção	DATAS DE FILMAGEM	10 Dez - 11 Dez
NOME	Carolina Leite Ribeiro	DATA DE FECHO	
FUNÇÃO	Produtora	VALE	€ 0

	TOTAL CASH	VALE	DIFERENÇA
TOTAL	€ 431,88	€ 0	-€ 431,88

[illegible]

INFORMAÇÕES			
DEPARTAMENTO	Direcção de Arte	DATAS DE FILMAGEM	9 Dez - 11 Dez
NOME	Jaime Carretero	DATA DE FECHO	10 Dez
FUNÇÃO	Director de Arte	VALE	€470

	TOTAL CASH	VALE	DIFERENÇA
TOTAL	€626,90	€470	-€156,90

FATURAS				
	DATA	DESCRIÇÃO	VALOR	OBSERVAÇÕES
DESPESAS DE PRODUÇÃO	26/11/2022	Adereços	€20,20	Futuro Encantado Lda (argila, prato, esferovite...)
	4/12/2022	Adereços	€24,90	Futuro Encantado Lda (prato, aranha, espetos...)
	4/12/2022	Adereços	€30,12	Leroy Merlin (flocos neve, spray, tampa plástico...)
	8/12/2022	Adereços	€9,25	Futuro Encantado Lda (prato, argila, esferovite...)
	8/12/2022	Adereços	€23,30	Futuro Encantado Lda (papel parede, vela...)
	9/12/2022	Adereços	€4,99	Aldi (biocarvão)
	9/12/2022	Adereços	€11,83	Continente (pão, porco rojões)
	24/11/2022	Construção	€390,21	Leroy Merlin (ripa, tinta, cola, casquinha...)
	1/12/2022	Construção	€25,19	Leroy Merlin (ripa)
	1/12/2022	Construção	€35,26	Leroy Merlin (espuma, corante...)
	1/12/2022	Construção	€51,65	Leroy Merlin (ripa, solho)
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VI. Moments When We Freeze Call Sheets

10.12.2022 THE MOMENTS WHEN WE FREEZE					
Prep: 7:00 Makeup: 08:00 - 9:00 Rehearsal: 9:00 - 10:00 Start Shoot: 10:00 Wrap: Start ca. 19:00					
CREW CALL		7:00			
CAST CALL		8:00			
SHOTS	SET AND DESCRIPTION	CHARACTER #	LOCATION/NOTES	TIME	
5	Dolly out of the other plate, the 7 friends sit down around the table. Luydmyla enters (close up) and looks around. Takes her scarf off, walks up to the wall to hang it and stays by the plate.	all	scarf for Lydmyla	10:00 - 10:45	
6	1 Svetlana meanwhile sits down next to Igor.			10:45 - 11:00	
7	2 CU Igor. PAN to S. sitting closer, trying to read the note. PAN to the note (+ dialog) Luydmyla joins the table. Her usual seat next to her husband is surprisingly occupied by Svetlana. Luydmyla decides to not make a big fuss out of the weird mise-en-scene however, and uses her kindest tone instead.	I, S	notes		
9	3 Luydmyla decides to not make a big fuss out of the weird mise-en-scene however, and uses her kindest tone instead.	I, S, L	bench, notes	11:00 - 11:30	
8	4 CU Lydmyla from over the shoulder - she is reading the note DET Note - L. reads the note: "Dear guests! We are very happy about your visit. Welcome to our Kolyba!"	L	note	11:30 - 11:45	
10	5 LUNCH TIME 12:00 - 13:00	L	note	11:45 - 12:00	
11	6 CU S. Dolly PAN around the table, from the two opposite sides - The group starts the discussion.	all		MASTER 10-14 13:00 - 15:30	
12	7 MS S. tilt up, PAN to I - Svetlana considers her job done, and gets out of the table for a smoke. Alexandr observes the moment, he is the only one who noticed. (Dialog)	L, I, S		15:30 - 16:00	
14	8 The reaction of Alexander on Lydmyla quotes. Alexandr: "Or a stocking?"	A		CU A Static 16:00 - 16:15	
13	9 Igor: - Luyda, write this down... With the triumph on his face, Igor condescendingly passes the pen to Luydmyla. He gets up from his seat, and excuses himself.	A		CU Static 16:15 - 16:30	
	10 BREAK - 15 MIN	I, L		CU Static 16:30 - 16:45	

VII. *Moments When We Freeze* additional documents

1. Shot List link: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1g4EPSEyU5cJiqnEVnEDIf1-asVrK75M/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=106076451163724501591&rtpof=true&sd=true>
2. Contact List of the crew: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pZ9KDLWK2D-0cVmII82VlqrnID013W0S/view?usp=sharing>
3. Videocalls recordings: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1I3jKd8A7d3_2a81Mh2QsolN-1D2nbilz?usp=sharing
4. Footage transcribes: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1iQfChVkmj-FrNfEmUH4hP51H9UOA4ybd?usp=sharing>

VIII. Backstage Photos & Stills

1. Film Stills: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1b7PWLC5pmDFgv4V_yXAYODxj9P29oJx9?usp=sharing
2. Backstage photo & video: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hbAIlCZqoeKTCntRvNpHFkAKXgT1K7PI?usp=sharing>

IX. *Moments When We Freeze* Film Copy

- Link to the video file: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1wvB1xXxvHWP7x5CI_vPBRFbtJoCCxXMo?usp=sharing

X. Conference Presentation Certificates



THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

The Moments When We Freeze: working with family archive through reenactment

BY

Anastasiya Maksymchuk

was included within the programme of the Flow34 (F34) as an Online Conference Paper at the annual conference of the International Association for Media and Communication Research, IAMCR 2023, held in July 2023.


Nico Carpentier
PRESIDENT - IAMCR / AIECS / AIERI


Bruce Girard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - IAMCR / AIECS / AIERI



THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

The Moments When We Freeze: Working with Family Archive through Reenactment

BY

Anastasiya Maksymchuk

was presented as an audiovisual work within the programme of Flow34: Virtual Cinema and Podcasts at the annual conference of the International Association for Media and Communication Research, IAMCR 2023, hosted in Lyon, France by Sciences Po Lyon from 9–13 July, 2023.


Nico Carpentier
PRESIDENT - IAMCR / AIECS / AIERI


Françoise Paquien-Séguy
CHAIR - LOCAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE LYON

Curriculum Vitae of the thesis author



Anastasiya Maksymchuk

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LI: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/anastasiya-maksymchuk>
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1146-7864>

EDUCATION

October 2019 – Ongoing	PhD in Media Art ULHT - Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias Lisbon, Portugal
September 2017 - June 2019	MA degree in Film Directing KINO EYES The European Movie Masters Lisbon, Portugal Edinburgh, Scotland Tallinn, Estonia
September 2008 – June 2013	BA degree in TV & Film Directing I.K.Karpenko-Kary Kyiv National University of theatre, cinema and television Kyiv, Ukraine

LANGUAGES

English (Advanced)
Ukrainian (Native)
Russian (Native)
Portuguese (Intermediate)
German (Beginner)

ACADEMIC PRODUCTION

September 2019 - Ongoing	Reenacting Trauma: Working with Documentary Characters Through Fiction Film. PhD Thesis Project <u>Researcher, writer, artistic research producer</u>
June 2022	PandemiArt: VoxPop Workshop (Lusófona University) <u>Assistant project coordinator & lecturer</u>
September 2021 – February 2022	LusófonAtiva campaign (Lusófona University) <u>Content producer, video producer</u>
March 2022	Stand with Ukraine: film screenings & fundraising (Lusófona University) <u>Project coordinator & event manager</u>
February 2022	Flaherty Revisited Seminar (Lusófona University) <u>Project coordinator & event manager</u>
June 2021	CIIA Precongress of Audiovisual Researchers (Lusófona University) <u>Program coordinator & event manager</u>
February 2020 – November 2021	CEAR research project (Lusófona University) <u>Researcher, content producer</u>
June 2020	The Paradox of Presence (Artistic-based research) <u>Producer, writer, researcher</u>
June 2019	The Cinematic World of Werner Herzog: Between Documentary and Fiction. Masters Thesis Dissertation <u>Researcher, writer</u>

ARTISTIC PRODUCTION

June, 2023	“Moments When We Freeze” Hybrid Film (30 min) <u>Film director, writer</u>
March 2020	“Dogs Don’t Bite Good People” Documentary (90 min) <u>Film director, co-producer</u>
January 2020	“Charcoal” Short Film (18 min) <u>Film director</u>
August 2016	“Refuge” Short Documentary (20 min) <u>Film director, producer</u>
March 2014	«Tenderness», Short Film (18 min) <u>Film director, screenwriter</u>

PERSONAL QUALITIES

Deadline-friendly perfectionist
Obsessed with aesthetics
Communicative
Progressing every day