

## SUMMARY OF ARTICLE

The recurring theme of this conversation with Krzysztof Czyżewski held by Tadeusz Korniś is the presence of folk tradition as an inspiration for artistic, theatrical, and social undertakings. In 1978–1983, Krzysztof Czyżewski was an actor in the Gardzienice theatre, conducted by Włodzimierz Staniewski. This troupe made excursions to villages and regions distant from cultural centres, where it staged performances and sought extant elements of past culture. Traditional culture was also one of the basic fabrics constructing and inspiring the spectacles. *Gusla* (Magic Rites), based on the second and fourth parts of *Dziady* (Forefathers' Eve) by Mickiewicz, resorted to numerous motifs, songs and gestures which Gardzienice encountered while travelling.

At present, Czyżewski conducts the „Borderland – arts, culture and nations” centre in Sejny, a small town near the frontier with Lithuania. The centre encourages assorted educational, artistic and cultural ventures. It also publishes the quarterly „Krasnogrud” and organises interdisciplinary meetings concerning, e. g. Bosnia, Bukowina, Transylvania, and the Romany people.

The interview portrays the evolution of Czyżewski's attitude to traditional culture – from a uncritical fascination with particular elements (songs, tales) to a *sui generis* positivistic stance, disclosed in involvement in the social, political and cultural issues of entire regions.

In her article *On the need for cognition by contact with the sources of regional culture*. The activity of the Borderlands Music Foundation and interviews with *Monika Kamińska* and *Jan Bernad* (We wander across the Earth asking questions), *Beata Wilgaśiewicz* attempts to present the activity of the “Borderlands Music” Foundation (Fundacja „Muzyka Kresów”). Established in Lublin in 1991, the Foundation (directed by Jan Bernad and Monika Kamińska) joined the current of quests concerned with the possibilities, purpose and trends of the continuation of folk tradition. Shaping their own perception of this particular culture, the authors of the Foundation wish to determine which of its elements remain important and vital for contemporary man. Conferences on ethnomusicology and the spirituality of the nations of East-Central Europe, the Continuation of Tradition programme, musical workshops, concerts and assorted meetings aim at creating new forms of a discussion on rural tradition and, thus, at a different presentation of that world and its comprehension. The feature distinguishing the Foundation pursuits from numerous proposals of dealing with folk culture is the question concerning the manner of such activity and not its object. The Foundation is concerned both with discovering keys which would make it possible to reach those „lost” regions of the traditional rural world, and with the possibility of its active cognition. Bernad and Kamińska envisage traditional culture as a stand, together with ensuing questions about ultimate issues: birth, death, illness, and fate.

The Braslav region - a Belorussian Province. Sketches from Symbolic Culture. Articles by *Magdalena Zowczak*, *Dorota Hall*, *Aleksandra Sulikowska*, *Krzysztof Cibor*, *Agnieszka Kamińska*, *Joanna Rak*, *Zuzanna Grębecka-Ćwiek*, *Agnieszka Kirchner*, *Magdalena Radkowska*, *Dagmara Kłosse*, *Kryszyna Gieryszewska*

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Braslav region in Belarus became a periphery, cut off by state frontiers from former centres guaranteeing employment: Daugavpils in Latvia and Ignalina in Lithuania. The region in question is an eternal borderland, inhabited by assorted ethnic and religious groups: Belorussians, both Catholic and Orthodox, Poles, Old Rite Russians, Tatars, Lithuanians, Gypsies, and, before the war, Jews. Cultural differences became obliterated by progressing homogeneity, especially among the young generation. These processes are expressed to a certain extent by a specific rigid metasymbolic of the followers of well established faiths. The maxim: *Boh adzin, tolko wier mroha* (There is one God but many faiths), often repeated by the inhabitants of Vidzy (a small town with a population of 3 000 - the main area of our research), signifies an actual permeation of religions, formulated in the identification of analogous elements of various rites, the borrowing of customs, and participation in different cults. Numerous interlocutors were unable to describe themselves as followers of a concrete creed. Such tendencies existed already in borderland tradition of the past. Atheization (together with accompanying customs, e.g. the dissemination of mixed marriages) reinforced attempts at a meta-religious interpretation of faiths. The *Boh adzin* formula could, however, denote stands different in each generation - the young use it frequently to express their distance from an already unclear and inconvenient tradition. The line of division between the believers (regardless of their faith) and „communists” - the enemies of religion, appears to be growing less distinct; many of the latter take part in religious practices.

The strongest feeling of identity among all the ethnic groups is represented by the Old Rite community which was the only permitted access to its own churches. The preserved old books and icons, the oldest originating in the seventeenth century, are displayed both in churches and the homes of all the

faithful. Rituals associated with the icons testify to the vital prayer function which they fulfil in the spirituality of the Vidzy congregation. All the icons refer to the traditions of Old Russian painting (e.g. images of the Madonna with the Young Christ include icons of the Madonna of Tikhvin, Vladimir, Fiodorov, Kazan and Smolensk).

The stereotype of the alien is applied predominantly to the relatively few representatives of new religious movements, such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Baptists. The absence of own language and the supranational character of these creeds contribute to their perception as „upside down” religions. Extreme opinions include stories about child sacrifices (provoked by the objections made by Jehovah's Witnesses to transfusion), convictions that bloody sacrifices are the effect of rites which drive members of sects to a state of frenzy, and the belief that the followers of new creeds trample images of the Madonna and rosaries. Visions of satanic cults are accompanied by those of a heavenly community, ruled by ideal harmony and brotherhood, whose members speak a pure language, are familiar with the Good Book, recite beautiful prayers, have the power to heal and observe rigid moral principles.

Stories about miracles are dominated by the motif of punishment meted by Providence, usually against the communists for the desecration of holy sites. In accordance with the principles of reciprocity, the destruction of holy images results in the loss of the perpetrators' legs, heads and fingers. Miraculous penalty plays the role of a social sanction, renders the community of the faithful cohesive, and „sets right” contaminated reality. Despite long years of harsh atheization, the community of Vidzy continues to interpret more important events as an expression of an intervention of the sacrum in everyday life. Divine miracles, i. e. punishment and grace, are two opposite and complementary aspects of the same hierophany. This contrast is not concurrent with a division into *fascinosum* and *tremendum*; the sacrum and grace are equally terrifying. Punishment sometimes leads to conversion and fulfils pedagogic functions while revelation, the sign of grace, becomes awesome when the Mother of God whips sinners. Grace is devoid of the value of proof, and is rarely witnessed by the non-believers. Experienced by the worthy, it is conceived as a sign of the Kingdom of God on Earth, accessible to the chosen only after death; on Earth, it exists as a foretoken and a substitute in an unattractive and senseless mundane existence. The Vidzy comprehension of miracles is close to the definition proposed by St. Augustine and contemporary apologetics - a miracle is a dialogue between the world and God, and is not compelled to seek dazzling forms.

The concept of the miracle is wider and encompasses also the supernatural, which is not connected with the traditionally comprehended sacrum; it entails all that is strange: wonders, meteorological and paramental phenomena, and aliens from outer space. Researchers dealing with Russian religiosity maintain that the effects of atheization include the formation of an eclectic consciousness, associated with the concept of „Christians in general”, i. e. believers who do not identify themselves with a concrete creed. A characteristic trait of such attitudes is interest in Oriental religions, spiritualism, parapsychology, mythology built around UFOs, etc. The vision of the world held by the residents of Vidzy is also such a compilation, a typical mixture of elements of magic and religion, with a tendency towards their rationalisation by the mass media. The collapse of communism opened a market for Western and local pop-culture. Previously, the press and television, in their capacity as instruments of propaganda, were universally available and free of charge; the habit of benefiting from them is connected with susceptibility to media authorities. The recorded statements contain a constant reference to the media, and the veracity of the contents expressed by the interlocutors is legitimised by their press or television origin. The latter is also regarded as the best source of entertainment, making it possible to enjoy contact with „heavenly reality” (South American television series); thus, it becomes a sanctified profanum. This combination of activity from various contexts is more radical than in Poland, e. g. a surgeon casts a spell on a rose while a nurse-healer claims that her power comes from the Devil. Diviners are frequently regarded as well-educated, and researchers, especially American ones equipped with omniscient computers, enjoy great esteem. Scientific achievements are, however, associated with Party meetings, held behind closed doors, and conspiracies, in accordance with the traditional comprehension of knowledge as magic, symbolised by the mythical black book, the attribute of the sorcerer. Men of science appear to be the possessors of a great secret, the only truth about each of us and the whole world. They enjoy not only knowledge but also privileges, even those linked with the looming predicted end of the world, and are engaged in constructing a gigantic ship or space rocket which will enable them to survive the imminent new deluge.

The popularisation of information about other planets and the Earth, envisaged as a mere fragment of the universe, changed the image of space. The traditional conception of the other world is associated with a very concrete localisation of Hell, Heaven and Purgatory on other planets. Pseudorationalisation in reference to the religious sphere is an attempt at salvaging the cohesion of the world. The reverse side of this process is the sanctification of phenomena belonging to the category of the profanum. Religiosity, which

constituted a cohesive image of reality, now protects it against disintegration, but itself succumbs to profound metamorphosis.

Religious-magical techniques flourish in the conditions of Belorussian neo-feudalism in which it is difficult to plan anything in a rational manner. Traditional institutions are still sought out: the advice of healers or the protective power of objects consecrated in church (especially the St. Agatha bread and herbs). The religious culture of Vidzy combines religious and magic stands, which in practice are inseparable. The second of the two is expressed in the „at home” administration of the sacrament of baptism, even to the deceased, or in treating sacraments and sacramentalia as medicinal measures, e.g. christening as a cure against epilepsy. The magic employment of religious rites is accompanied by an attitude of religious humility and the acceptance of divine will. It seems worth to draw attention to the links between sacraments and spells. Sacraments are considered as *ex definitione* established by Christ, and their essence is the word; according to universally held convictions, prayers with medicinal properties are the true words of Christ. Several such texts (the majority of which functions also in Lithuania) were recorded in the region of Braslav.

The ethnographer does not have at his disposal instruments which would permit him to examine the range of religious experience but he is able of indicating assorted ways in which such texts function, and different possibilities of interpreting them within the same culture. Folk prayers, which survived despite the inimical attitude of the Church, to say the least, and, generally speaking, outside the Church, appear to be a suitable object for a presentation of such variegated significance. They are simultaneously magic formulas or at least possess features of magic spells. This property is due to the very nature of oral transmission, which applies mnemotechnical measures and grants words a specific existence; the other reason could be described as mystical (understood as a technique aiming at the attainment of direct religious experience). A particular feature of folk prayer is the fact that it is legitimised as a holy text by direct reference to the source of the sacrament; this is why such a prayer is usually expressed in the words of the Lord Jesus (Mother of God) or as a letter written directly in Heaven. The power of holy words is associated with their supernatural origin, understood literally. The living, i. e. holy words must come from the very source of power, and hence, similarly to the Gospel, they carry the injunction of their transition to other people, although only letters by Jesus, *a sui generis* interpretation of the Decalogue, do so under the threat of terrible divine punishment. In the religious context, the concepts of an original, a copy, and especially plagiarism lose their sense. The scheme of recognised revelation becomes universal property. The rewriting of holy words and the attachment of supernatural powers to them do not have to be the expression of a magical attitude. Such behaviour is analogous to the veneration of miraculous images and their copies, universal in religious culture, including that of the Eastern rite Church. Neither Abgar, king of Edessa, nor Veronica were historical figures but they function in the religious tradition recognised by the Church

owing to the significance attached to the true images of the face of Christ. The wish to benefit from the source of the sacrament is not only a trait of „folk” culture, although within the latter it survived in a form least disturbed by empiric attitudes and the culture of print. Authentic images remain on the borderline of spiritual and sensual worlds, and resemble windows open to the heavens above. The role of prayer is similar, and the frequently unskilful forms of apocryphic „little prayers”, recited with difficulty by people unacquainted with the technology of the word, retain this fundamental religious function. To attain this goal, they resort to the imagery of a conciliation of worlds, a temporary unification of Heaven and Earth at a moment of teophany expressed in motionlessness, as well as a transition into the other world and the wanderings of divine words in a reverse direction, towards the Earth. A characteristic feature of folk prayers is a mosaic-like pattern of fragments of texts which frequently contain the most capacious schemes of Old Polish songs. The mystical symbolic, palpable „underneath” the literal meanings of the words, borders with „sensualistic” images of the Madonna carrying the cross or emerging from the Gospel. Folk prayers interpreted in this manner are a religious measure of expression, a realisation of old religious patterns.

#### Danuta Kuźnicka

#### Deconstructivist Strategies in Polish Stagings

For the past twenty years, at the very least, the Polish contemporary theatre presented stagings in which the mechanism of the functioning of meanings appears to resemble some of the deconstructivist categories described by Jacques Derrida. Deconstructivist „strategies”, which the article refers to stagings proposed by e. g. Jerzy Grzegorzecki, Leszek Mądzik and Krystian Lupa, denote an obliteration of the cohesion of the work and its uniformity, the undermining of the opposition, emphasis on the part played by margins, and the leaving of the meanings non-enforced and the context – open. Other features include the multiple functions of „non-resolving” objects as well as intertextuality and associated accents on the process-like aspect of the staging.

In numerous spectacles, the described strategies are counterbalanced by an emergent uniformity of the work, which produces inspiring tension between the disintegrated image of the world, suggested by deconstructivism, and uniformity which, together with cohesion, forms the foundations of well-ordered reality.

#### Bronisław Malinowski

#### A Diary

This issue inaugurates the publication of the early diaries kept by the renowned anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski. The diaries are preceded by an introduction by Grażyna Kubica-Heller and two texts - by Maria Ossowska and Clifford Geertz - discussing the diaries, written only in English during field research conducted on the Trobriand Islands - "The Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term".

## NOTY O AUTORACH

**Jan Bernad** – w latach 1974–76 współpracował ze Stanisławem Ścierskim przy realizacji stażów parateatralnych w Teatrze Laboratorium. W 1977 był w grupie powołującej Teatr „Gardzienice”. Po odejściu z „Gardzienic” w 1984 do 1990 realizował przedsięwzięcia odwołujące się do kultur tradycyjnych. W 1991 wraz z Moniką Mamińską powołał Fundację „Muzyka Kresów”. Pełni funkcję dyrektora Ośrodka Badań Muzykologicznych i Kulturowych Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej powołanego przy Fundacji.

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**Danuta Kuźnicka** – adiunkt w Instytucie Sztuki PAN, wykładowca w Akademii Teatralnej w Warszawie i w Szkołach Nauk Humanistycznych. Zajmuje się teatrem plastycznym i teorią teatru.

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**Magdalena Zowczak** – etnolog, zajmuje się zagadnieniami z pogranicza historii sztuki, formami życia religijnego wsi, kulturą duchową. Adiunkt w KEiAK UW. Autorka książki *Bohater wsi. Mit i stereotypy* (1991).



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