TRAJECTORIES OF MEMORY AND GLANCE: A REFLECTION ON VISUAL CULTURE

Summary

Memory and visuality are two significant trajectories within the present world that have caused a natural culture change. Since the second half of the XX century nostalgia has been interwoven with repentance, recollection with reminding, drawing the glance towards the past, the collective and individual experience. At the same time, the supply of images featuring creative engineering multiplied. Aiming at recovering memories of the faded history, it has long been searched for cultural heritage and testimonies of national identity. In the memory of poignant historical experiences, the withheld and suppressed content was reanimated, and it gave way to fault recognition and repentance and further induced such processes of memorialization as immortalization of memories, outbreak of commemoration, the necessity to rescue and restore heritage, which are nevertheless slowly outshined by mediation and industrialization of memory supported by the globally functioning technoliberalism.

The culture overwhelmed by images has also undergone some critical transformations. The extended limits of visuality have fortified the claims of vision on new horizons of meaning. It seems that the whole world has opened itself up to seeing, which has become a culturally legal form of capital able to bring down the hierarchies of basic human values. Global visuality and visibility have modified the field of culture not merely through drawing public attention and changing the trajectories of glance, but also by affecting memory meaningfulness, institutional activity and cultural reflection. The growing powers of image have turned visuality into an active agent of political combat and the stiffening social and cultural collisions. This way visual culture builds upon memory heritage. It seems that experience and memory expression are placed in the visual culture frame which reinforces aesthetic and emotional performance.

The first chapter of the monograph "The Interplay of Memory and Image" delves into the reciprocal action of memory and image as well as forms of the changing expression of memory and visual culture. The second chapter "Between Longing and

Communication" marks some of the more general tendencies of memory culture development, from the wave of nostalgia in the second half of the XX century that induced an euphoric search for local identity and discoveries of past experiences, to transcultural exchange and mediation processes that intensify the development of memory industry.

The dynamics of change in cultural identity and memory are discussed in the third chapter "The Shifting Topography of Culture and Memory", with the emphasis on features of postmodernity that have determined the multi-directional articulation of memory and the dispersion of the theoretical concepts of multiplicity and volatility. The structure of integral cultural identity and memory created in modernity was replaced with a diversified model. Being based on the visual imperative, postmodernity substituted rational reasoning with spectacularity typical of screen culture. Topographic identity has also undergone change: the meaning of place has been overshadowed by the dynamics of non-place, which have consolidated the global dimensions and visions of memory.

The wide possibilities of reproduction and overproduction of image have conditioned the visible technologies to govern memory formation. Along with the reign of film, television and other media, the sense of sight and practice of watching become superior. That is why the fourth chapter "Memory in Film: between Imagination and History" is devoted to cinematographic representations of memory and reflections, with the focus on both popular and conceptual forms. Lithuanian cinematography, with its films creating memory and efforts to remediate memory, is brought into the spotlight.

Memory reversals have been prompted by the Holocaust memory phenomenon that has crossed the borders of separate countries. The discontinued policy of silence has stimulated the processes of painful past realization and commemoration. Soon after Lithuania regained its independence, Jewish historical and cultural memory returned, too, in a variety of forms of unrepresentability. The fifth chapter "The Regained Memory of the Jewish Nation" inspects these processes, especially the aspect of unportrayability of traumatic experience which stands on guard of the deep essence of tragedy to rescue it from the spectacularity of visual culture. Artists offer their alternatives – interpretations of antimonumental forms. Here the monograph also delves into the development of tourism and heritage industry which includes visitation of Holocaust locations and generates new experiences, behaviours and visual expressions.

The issues of memory institutions and musealisation of past are covered in the sixth chapter "Museum Culture and Choices of Today". Museum culture is changing and oscillating between reflexive models of memory representation and media com-

munication. Museum work is affected by both the general memory policy and visual technologies that invite us to rethink the notion of museum as a culture archive and integrate it into the transcultural networks. The trajectory of institutional criticism drawn by artists and discussed in this chapter also attests the growing power of global industries and the making of integral capitalism, which both require different critical views and creative instruments.

In the following chapters of the monograph the focus is brought to the patterns of visual culture as well as the influence of visuality and visibility on social and cultural life. Visuality guides our glances towards sights, generates forms of physical and mental life and initiates transformations of memory and identity. The seventh chapter "Visual Culture and the Cult of Visibility" provides a deeper analysis of the powers of image, as well as practices of its application and perception, and the field of the sociocultural vision which makes up a more general context of memory culture. Special attention is paid to the conversion of image and memory into specific forms of capital.

The eighth chapter "Global Visuality and Network Culture" presents the global profiles of culture and art. The multi-level ecosystem forms distinctive worldview structures which substitute the postmodern openness of creative work with adaptation to the economy of industries and creativity. It is reflected in the more broadly-analyzed processes of art biennalization that modify art development trajectories in the realm of attention economy.

The last chapter "Image Activism and the New Regimes" offers an exploration of image activism which reveals itself in the field of political conflicts, strategies of the media and the life of social networking. The menacing powers of visuality are disclosed and mercilessly stripped not only by visual culture analysts, but also by writers and directors. Eventually, sharp contours are given to the new trajectories which allocate the main role to communication technologies and the culture of algorithms. The field of global memory is measured in bits, and it is the place where digital human existence is formed, with the representatives of new industries installing psychotechnologies that target not only sociality, experience, senses and eros, but also the memory sphere which has tighter connections with management of behaviour and choices.

The monograph was prepared at Lithuanian Culture Research Institute within the long-term scientific program "Research on the development of Lithuanian culture at the junction of the XX and XXI centuries" (2013–2017), which, among other things, was aimed at revealing the changing trajectories of present. The book is based on the transdisciplinary methodology of research which links the methods and theoretical concepts of human and social sciences.

Both memory culture and visual culture as separate levels of research have been analyzed by Lithuanian scientists from various perspectives, yet little emphasis has been put on their interaction and synergy. On the one hand, the monograph features references to the methodological attitudes and reflections of famous memory researchers: Andreas Huyssen, Svetlana Boym, Aleida and Jan Assmann, Ulrich Beck, Michael Rothberg, Astrid Erll, Marianne Hirsch, Paul Ricouer, Bernard Stiegler and others. On the other hand, it takes its origin in miscellaneous research in visual culture and art criticism, cultural anthropology, sociology, philosophy and media. The research includes works of W. J. T. Mitchell, Jonathan Crary, Nicholas Mirzoeff, Hans Belting, Horst Bredekamp, Nathalie Heinich, André Gunther, Gilles Lipovetsky, Michel Maffesoli, Marc Augé, Paul Virilio, Fredric Jameson, Luc Boltanski, Arnaud Esquerre and others. Thus the authors aim at expanding and complimenting the field of theoretical thought, as well as transferring theoretical concepts into the Lithuanian context.

Such a versatile and branched approach not only unveils the more general structures at the core of the present world which are responsible for the hybridity and ambivalence of visual and memory cultures, but also exposes the capitalism dynamics by expanding the analytical discourse, reinforcing criticism of culture industry and clarifying awareness of change processes. The goal of the present transdisciplinary work is to reveal the essential transformations having an impact on the change of memory and glance trajectories, and to present these forms of change and tendencies in a way that helps to expand the academic discourse and engage a wider group of people interested in sociocultural processes.

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