

Lea Blasko – *Documentary theater in post-war communities: Outlining experiences as a spectator and author in search for narratives*

Supervisor's response

When I was writing my first response on the KATAP thesis, which was Margaret Hannon's piece, I wrote that I was neither supervisor, nor the reviewer – I was a passionate reader invited in her own, independent, self-discovering process articulated in her thesis. I believe that the same phrase could be applied here, reflecting upon Lea Blasko's thesis.

However, there is a crucial difference. While Margaret was a person exploring a new field for her, Lea is re-discovering it while intervening into her own past and memories. Unlike Margaret's, her thesis is not a meditation over her current state of mind. It is rather a precise archeology that strives to reveal a complex palimpsest, i.e. Lea Blasko = an inscribed body, mind, soul – site of memory. What Lea presents is an anthropologically driven exploration that carefully seeks to uncover various scars on the body of her memory. "Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present," as Pierre Nora said. For Lea, an archeology, investigation of her memory, self-documentation of regions of her own experiences is precisely a search for these ties, tissues that create the present. No wonder that her thesis reads as a "Bildungsroman" – a story of formation, education = production of scars that co-create the current state – that culminates in her present, in the piece she presented as her final performance. As if we were invited in the backstage of the piece (of her), as if we were witnesses of Lea's autopsy, a dissection which turns the piece into the living site of memory. Fragments that remain fragments however harmonized into a seeming whole – a never-ending process of re-discoveries of something that might be called identity. Lea as she says is a documentary theatre maker and her thesis is in a way a silent script of her documentary solo performance. Nonetheless, it should not imply that Lea is egotistically obsessed with herself – a reader could learn a very interesting information on documentary theatre in Balkans, Lea's story of this phenomenon in her region. Yes, filtered through the eyes of a passionate viewer – Lea. That's why it's valuable as she is responsible for this message – she's the author. For Lea, these experiences are part of her chronicle that defines her present. As I emailed her after reading the final draft of her work, I felt privileged being invited into the site of her memory.

I strongly recommend Lea's thesis for the defence.

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