



Contemporary Southeastern Europe

An Interdisciplinary Journal on Southeastern Europe

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Essay

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Contemporary Southeastern Europe, 2018, 5(2), 70-79

DOI 10.25364/02.5:2018.2.5

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Haunted Stages, Haunted Countries – How Theatre Remembers an Interrupted Performance

Senad Halilbašić*

On 31 May 1990 the National Theatre of Zenica was staging its performance on the Serbian national hero Sveti Sava on the stage of Belgrade's Yugoslav Drama Theatre. Following controversial protests against the fact that a non-Serbian theatre dares to touch the divine topic of Sveti Sava and portray him as a human being full of flaws, the actors were met with rigorous interruptions while attempting to act on the stage in Belgrade. A nationalist group interrupted the performance, calling it blasphemy and threatening the theatre artists. 25 years later the National Theatre of Zenica staged the production *Sveto S. or how the production Sveti Sava was 'archived'*, which dealt with the memory of the actors of that controversial, pre-war performance.

This paper will discuss the production *Sveto S.* and raise the question, in which way it remembers the referential work past in relation to the Yugoslav Wars, its conditions and consequences.

Keywords: Theatre, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Memory Studies, Yugoslav Wars, Sveti Sava, Zenica

Interrupting an 'S-production'

"Napolje! Napolje! Napolje! Napolje!" A wild and vehement call of protest emerges from the auditorium of the Yugoslav Drama Theatre in Belgrade (*Jugoslovensko Dramsko Pozorište*) on 31 May 1990, demanding the actors to stop performing and leave the stage. Just minutes after the start of *Sveti Sava*, a guest performance from the National Theatre Zenica under the direction of Vladimir Milčín based on a text by Siniša Kovačević, activists of the Serbian Party of St. Sava (*Srpska svetosavska stranka*) under its founder Žarko Gavrilović and the Serbian Radical Party (*Srpska radikalna stranka*) including its leader Vojislav Šešelj demanded its ending.

Shortly upon their arrival, the actors and the rest of the team from the Zenica National Theatre from Bosnia and Herzegovina were met in front of the venue by a group of protestors carrying Četnik symbols on their banners. According to their information, *Sveti Sava* was supposed to be a production that offends not only Saint Sava himself, but the entire Serbian Orthodox Church and the Serbian people as a whole. Immediately after the opening of the performance, some 50 protestors who bought tickets to the show continued their intervention from the auditorium by yelling, shouting and singing Serbian Orthodox songs. The actors stopped playing while the protests coming from the auditorium expanded into a political dispute

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between the furious activists and other spectators who disagreed with their demands. The emerging dispute between members of the audience did not concern itself neither with the performance, nor its peripheral topics. Instead, it turned into a heated dispute on contemporary Serbian national self-conception and pride, all on-going while the actors on stage were waiting for a possible chance to continue performing. Borka Pavićević, then director of the Belgrade Drama Theatre,¹ addresses the protestors, claiming that they will be responsible for future concentration camps in this region – a statement insinuating that the nationalistic demand of eliminating the freedom of expression and art can lead to dreadful consequences since it marks one significant step within the process of dehumanization. Without addressing a concrete issue, one agitated audience member holding what seems to be a program folder of the current theatre repertoire, vehemently accuses actors (or: all theatre artists) to be ignoring the on-going political crisis, demanding: “If you guys don’t know what’s going on, let those who know what’s going on [take over political responsibilities].”² The lead actor Žarko Laušević addresses the audience, first by saying that the ensemble will continue performing the entire play if the audience allows it, and afterwards famously remarking that none of the protesters is a bigger Serb than he or playwright Siniša Kovačević or any other member of this production is. He proclaims that the performance will start again from the very beginning, which it also did – however, it had to be stopped for good after all. While it was performed at Novi Sad’s theatre festival Sterijino Pozorje the other night without any interruption and was received with critical acclaim,³ it now was prevented to be staged in Yugoslavia’s capital, in the only theatre in the region bearing the Yugoslav prefix in its name.

What happened that evening at the Yugoslav Drama Theatre was a crucial moment within the theatre history of the soon to be dissolving Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) which firstly has to be examined within its cultural political context. The processes of politically dismantling foundation myths and narratives of the SFRY and replacing them with new and old nationalist concepts of identity went hand in hand with crucial changes within repertoires of Yugoslav theatres in the 1980s. Most theatres were state-owned and therefore looked back on a history of five decades of following political mainstream and only criticizing Yugoslav statehood within a controlled and sometimes censored manner. Nevertheless, throughout the 1980s, nationalistic narratives managed to gradually penetrate institutional repertoires, ending up in mostly state affirmative institutional theatre productions of the 1990s.⁴ According to the theatre historian Ksenija Radulović the repertoires of

¹ Borka Pavićević left the Belgrade Drama Theatre in 1993 due to political disputes with the government, whose cultural minister Miodrag Đukić advised her to leave. Pavićević, Borka. 2013. *Kratka istorija kulturnog trovanja*. *Vreme*, 19. December 2013 (accessed: 31 May 2019). A detailed testimony by Borka Pavićević on her work during the Yugoslav Wars and the founding of the Centre of Cultural Decontamination (*Centar za kulturnu dekontaminaciju*) can be found here: Pavićević, Borka. 2018. *Testimony Borka Pavićević*, in *Theatre in the Context of the Yugoslav Wars*, edited by Dolečki, Jana, Halilbašić, Senad and Stefan Hulfeld. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 37-43.

² A video fragment of the interruption can be found [here](#) (accessed: 23. December 2019).

³ Žarko Laušević won the festival’s award for best actor. Furthermore, a monograph on the National Theatre of Zenica lists another 13 accolades won within the region. Džafić, Hasan. 2002. *Bosansko narodno pozorište Zenica*. Zenica: Udruženje književnika Zeničko-dobojskog kantona, 187.

⁴ This development and its culmination in the 90s repertoires is analysed in detail by Irena Šentevska in her book: Šentevska, Irena. 2016. *The Swinging 90s – Pozorište i društvena realnost Srbije u 29 slika*. Belgrade: Orion Art.

the 1980s within Serbia started to be dominated by so-called S-productions (s-predstave), meaning performances dealing with Serbian foundation myths and history, focusing especially on traumatic events of Serbian national history from the two World Wars.⁵ A significant part of the theatre artists therefore continued following the mainstream political agenda which was now focusing on replacing Yugoslav themes of identification with Serbian national ones.⁶ Apart from concrete recent historical traumas, another S-production trend staged narratives based on Serbian Orthodox liturgy and church history since they perfectly corresponded with now needed myths of national victimhood and ethnical affiliation. However, those S-productions, whether based on political or liturgical Serbian history, did not always have the same political grounding and ideology. Some of those works also deconstructed the emerging myths or embedded them within a critical contemporary context – and some of those productions were neither clearly situated within the political trend nor in a deconstruction of such. The interrupted performance *Sveti Sava* from Zenica's National Theatre represents an example of the latter. It deals with crucial biographical points of reference from the life of Saint Sava, a Serbian medieval prince and later Orthodox saint. The protest coming from members of a recently founded right wing political party was addressing two levels of the contested, both of which can be considered unique within the discourse of S-productions and their staging in Serbia.

The first point of criticism represents the fact that Kovačević's text aims towards a humanization of Saint Sava, also dealing with his sex life⁷ – some critics of the production, most of whom have never seen it, claim that the artists from Zenica portray Saint Sava as a homosexual – an accusation which can to this date be found on various internet platforms on which the interruption is discussed, one of which was allegedly authored by Šešelj himself.⁸ The other (often unexpressed) point of

⁵ Radulović, Ksenija. 2002. Nacionalni resantiman na sceni, *Teatron* 118, 7.

⁶ Irena Šentevska points out that “[...] the genuine motives and the national resentment of the authors [...] may have been utterly different to ideologies being represented in various “S-ploitation” productions. Examples of such productions from the 1980s are: *Golubnjača* (Serbian National Theatre, Novi Sad); *Seoba Srbalja* (National Theatre, Belgrade); *Propast carstva srpskoga* (Atelje 212); *Tajna Crne ruke* (KPGT); *Kolubarska Bitka* (Yugoslav Drama Theatre). Šentevska, Irena. 2018. *Stages of Denial: State-Funded Theatres in Serbia and the Yugoslav Wars*, in *Theatre in the Context of the Yugoslav Wars*, edited by Dolečki, Jana, Halilbašić, Senad and Stefan Hulfeld. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 47.

To that list of ‘S-ploitation’, Šentevska also adds productions with ‘Kosovo themes’ “which either recounted the events of the famous medieval battle against the Ottomans in 1389 or the plight of contemporary Serbs in the turbulent southern province”. Such examples are *Kosovska hronika* (National Theatre, Belgrade), *Kosovo* (Belgrade Drama Theatre); *San kosovske noći* (Zvezdara Theatre); Šentevska, Irena. 2017. In Search of Catharsis. Theatre in Serbia in the 1990s. *Südosteuropa. Journal of Politics and Society* 65, 607-631.

⁷ In her text analysis Angela Richter points out that the sensitivity of various critics of that time on the portrayal of Saint Sava's sex life is vastly exaggerated. While she points out that the sex on the medieval court is shown in this text as loose and casual, she emphasizes that Rastko Njemanjić's sex life is only touched in the first scene of the play (before the protagonist ventures out into the monastery) as well as in the second one, when he has sex with an anonymous woman before deciding to enter monkhood. The text's main focus is the presentation of Saint Sava's methods of rule, certainly a comment on Yugoslavia's contemporary political elites: Richter, Angela. 2006. *Von Kürbissen und Nationalheiligen und einer gestörten Öffentlichkeit. Beispiele aus der serbischen Dramatik*, in *Geschichte (ge)brauchen. Literatur und Geschichtskultur im Staatssozialismus: Jugoslawien und Bulgarien*, edited by Richter, Angela and Barbara Beyer. Berlin: Frank & Timme, 278-9.

⁸ Nedeljnik. 2017. Polemika Šešelja i Draškovića: Ko je prekinuo predstavu Sveti Sava i ko je kriv za cepanje SPO. *Nedeljnik*, 25. January 2017. (accessed: 23 December 2019).

criticism is aimed at the fact that a production from the Bosnian city of Zenica⁹ with a majority of non-Serbian inhabitants dares to deal with one of the key figures of Serbian Orthodox history.

In 2015, 25 years after the incident at Yugoslav Drama Theatre and 16 years after the end of the Yugoslav Wars, director Tanja Miletić-Oručević revisited the notorious interrupted performance in a new production from the Bosnian National Theatre in Zenica.¹⁰ Two actors – Ištvan Gabor and Ermina Nišić-Kurevija – who were prevented to play in Belgrade on 31 May 1990, reprised their roles, while at the same time being present as their private persona in various scenes, remembering the original event and the way they felt when they were prohibited from continuing to work. In some scenes, the actors also embody the roles of extras and other theatre employees like prompters and stage managers from that time and look back on the incident from their perspective. The performance culminates in a final act, in which horrendous war crimes from Serbian soldiers are being staged, therefore establishing a connection between the theatre incident, the role of the Serbian Orthodox Church within the conflict, and the most brutal acts of the Yugoslav Wars. *Sveto S. or how the production Sveti Sava was 'archived'* (*Sveto S. ili kako je 'arhivirana' predstava Sveti Sava*) connects parts of Kovačević's interrupted play with the memory of actors of that very night, while also dealing with the way that the interruption was remembered within the discourses surrounding the Yugoslav Wars. By using strategies of documentary theatre and combining them with fragments of the interrupted play, Miletić-Oručević's production is much more than a work about one specific evening and its legacy: it also raises the question on how to narrate that memory, and what that re-telling of that specific moment of theatre history can mean for the contemporary post-Yugoslav space. Hereafter, I will first describe and analyse key scenes from Miletić-Oručević's production, specifically focusing on its narratives regarding that specific evening it deals with, as well as the connections it draws between this interrupted performance and the Yugoslav Wars which soon followed. Drawing from Marvin Carlson's theories on theatre as a 'memory machine' arguing that the very core of theatre is based on concepts of memory, I will aim to connect the remembrance on the interrupted production with the way that very remembrance was staged in *Sveto S.* in 2015.

⁹ At the time of writing the play in 1990, Siniša Kovačević was one of the most prominent playwrights in the SFRY. Nevertheless, Belgrade's leading theatres refused to stage the text, already fearing the reactions from the Serbian right-wing parties and the Serbian Orthodox Church. The National Theatre Zenica, back then under the management of Radovan Marušić, took on the challenge and staged it as a costly mega production. The rejection of other leading theatres led to a marketing strategy based on the rumours of a notorious 'scandal' production, only drawing further attention. Those very rejections can be considered as examples of auto-censorship of that times. Miletić Oručević, Tanja. 2016. *Prošlost nikako da prođe. Urban Magazin*, 21. March 2016 (accessed: 17. June 2019).

¹⁰ The attribute 'Bosnian' was officially added in 1994 to the theatre's name based on an initiative by the theatre director. It was legally accepted by the canton of Zenica. To this date it is the only national theatre in Bosnia bearing that national attribute. Begagić, Hazim. 2012. *Kazališna Produkcija u Tranzijiskim Procesima – Primjer Bosne I Hercegovine*. Unpublished dissertation. Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet Sveučelišta u Zagrebu, 135.

Remembering the interruption: Looking back through the memory machine

Sveto S. opens with a scene in complete silence. The performers sit on various chairs, spread over the entire stage. They are quiet. They seem to be preoccupied with themselves, contemplative, thinking about what just happened. Some comfort each other, others are just on their own. A man goes around offering everyone a shot of strong alcohol. As we will realize soon, that very scene shows the actors and the Zenica's theatre company sitting in the dressing room of the Yugoslav Drama Theatre after the interrupted performance on 31 May 1990. One of the men walks up to the microphone on the right side of the stage and starts with his testimony. He is the actor who played Stefan Prvovenčani, the brother of Rastko Nemanjić who would later become Saint Sava. He only states that when they arrived to the JDP theatre that night, they saw a group of protestors from afar. As his testimony ends, the silence on stage is shaken by a single cry, a weeping from a female performer sitting on one of the chairs. Once the memory on that very evening starts to be narrated, the crying begins. A colleague tries to comfort the crying woman, but without success. Later in the performance we realize that the crying woman is the character of the stage manager of that faithful night's performance – however, her weeping also refers to the actress Šefika Korkut Šunje, who was standing on stage in Belgrade in the referential production and who can be seen crying in the quoted video fragment as the quarrels within the audience unfolds.¹¹

The theatre workers start exchanging information on right-wing posters that they saw among the protestors outdoors, before entering the theatre. They reflect on what just had happened, only from time to time interrupted by testimonies directly addressed towards the audience. Therefore, within the opening scenes of *Sveto S.*, the past (the night of 31 May 1990) and the present (the moment of the spoken testimony) emerge on stage at the same time.

The second testimony is given by a person who acts as the prompter who was on duty on that very night. Her testimony begins at that moment in which the previous one has stopped. She remembers how there were rumours that some turbulent times might be approaching, but no one believed those were true. She remembers how actors even tried to change the order of the scenes by starting with a less provocative one, but they were nevertheless stopped by the vehement interruptions coming from the auditorium. A third testimony continues re-telling the events from the point of view of an extra, who on this night played the role of the Ottoman grand general Sinan Paša. Already at the entrance to the theatre, the protestors were awaiting him with signs, saying “we will kill you, Sinan Paša, if you burn our Sveti Sava again”. That threat refers to 1594 when general Sinan Paša transported the mortal remains of Saint Sava's body from the Mileševa monastery to Belgrade, and burned them in order to shame the Serbs for an uprising they committed the year earlier. The character of the extra also points out that most people within the auditorium started defending the actors and their performance after the interruption. However, nobody

¹¹ Borka Pavićević wrote about the new Zenica production in *Danas* where she also interpreted the crying in the opening of the production as a reference to the one by actress Šefika Korkut Šunje in the 1990 interrupted performance. Pavićević demanded in her article that *Sveto S.* shall be staged in Belgrade now, as to be reminded again of the incident in 1990. That demand was not met till this date: Pavićević, Borka. 2015. Svi Sveti. *Danas*, 25. December 2015 (accessed: 4. June 2019).

managed to stop the demands of the furious protesters. As the extra recalls, most of them were people who could not stand the fact that the theatre artists performing a story about the Orthodox prince were of “Turkish” (pejorative for Bosnian Muslim) origin.

The reports by the characters of the prompter and the extra already established that the incident at JDP was not only a moment that shocked the actors and those who had to perform, but also everyone involved in the staging of the production that very night. This back-stage perspective of testimony re-focuses the attention of the discourse surrounding the mentioned theatre scandal from the actors – the stars of the show – towards other workers involved within that production. It therefore expands the attention from the interrupted event and their visible stage protagonists and makes clear that the interruption meant much more: not only were actors prevented to continue playing, but their co-workers were threatened and marginalized as well. Therefore, the whole working ‘theatre’ system was shaken. The interruption meant not only hostility towards what was being re-presented on stage (before it was even performed), but also hostility towards anybody involved in the entire operative work of the production itself.

What is established in the following narrative of *Sveto S.* is a fragmented and highly selective re-telling of Yugoslavia’s bloody breakup with an unambiguous focus on the Serb involvement within the conflict. As the part of the testimonies is over, actors start playing journalists reporting on the interrupted performance. All those reports are giving us the same information, but they are spoken in all the constitutional languages of Yugoslavia, as well as English. This multi-lingual approach of re-telling the same news over and over again on various languages gives the event the importance of an initial starting point of the upcoming wars – all drawn from over 600 media reports on the incident archived in Zenica’s National Theatre to this date. What follows is a dialogue between a Serb autocrat politician (the character is quite simply visually accented by holding a small Serbian flag in his hand) and an Orthodox priest (played by the already mentioned Ištvan Gabor, who was one of the contemporary witnesses of the 1990 incident). The politician and the priest agree immediately that the performance from Zenica was pure provocation. What begins here is a theatrical plot postulating the deep connection between the Orthodox Church and Serbia’s warring politicians. In the following, we will witness scenes of the priest blessing Serbian soldiers going off to war – and those soldiers committing horrendous war crimes in the following scenes. *Sveto S.* therefore establishes a quite clear and linear narrative of recent conflict history: the interruption of the performance marks a peak of the on-going hypersensitivity of national and religious emotions connected to collective identities. This hypersensitivity directly led to a tie between the Serbian Orthodox Church – which was marginalized during the era of the SFRY but which gained significant political relevance at the dawn of nationalism – and practical politics. This tie was based on supposedly hurt religious feelings, opportunism and the instrumentalization of highly tensed and burdened collective emotions. Of course, marking one singular initial starting point of the Yugoslav break-up is a well-aware simplification, and the claim that it might have been an interrupted theatre performance in Belgrade would definitely go too far in terms of simplification. Also, to mark 31 May 1990 as a potential starting point of the bonds between Serbia’s new right-winged leaders and the Orthodox Church is highly problematic, since it neglects the fact that already in the 1980s deep connections between leading figures from political and clerical life

were established within Serbia proper.¹²

Regarding 1990's production it is crucial, however, to point out that the critics of the performance and the present vehement protestors have never seen the product which supposedly aroused them so much. Žarko Gavrilović, one of the heads behind the protest, admitted in 2012 even that he had not seen the performance neither before nor afterwards and he does not plan to do so either. Therefore, the aroused anger within the Yugoslav Drama Theatre as well as in various published texts of that time, should less be considered as a critique towards the production – it is more an eruption of nationalistic sentiments of hypersensitivity of a time in which it was crucial to identify 'one's own' and 'the other'.

With this observation in mind, the metaphor of the interrupted *Sveti Sava* performance established in 2015's production as the crucial point of Yugoslavia's break-up gets even more fierce as it establishes an exchange of opposing opinions, hurtful religious and pseudo-religious emotions, and subsequent heavy violence on the basis of rumours regarding a play its critics have actually not seen. Those opposing opinions leading up to violence are a crucial theatrical motive within the 2015 production found in various scenes. As the character of that specific night's stage manager also appears as a witness on stage, she mentions briefly how a group from the local Zenica judo club was working as extras for that performance. This motive is used again later in the performance, when arguments between people who feel offended in their religious beliefs and people who claim that there must be unconditional freedom of speech exchange their opinions. While doing so, they imitate martial arts moves, therefore showing a close connection between the verbal fights and the physical ones. The exchange of heated arguments regarding the interruption are embedded within sportive fight moves. Words and violence are close by each other, they even condition one other. Those exchanged arguments happening within, but also outside the theatre, are quite familiar to a post-Yugoslav audience, even to those who are less aware of the *Sveti Sava* production of 1990 itself. It reminds one of various theatre scandals of recent times where similar dynamics were put in place. The same year that *Sveto S.* premiered, the MESS theatre festival in Sarajevo for the first time considered to prohibit the showing of Oliver Frljić's production *Our violence, your violence (Naše nasilje, vaše nasilje)* following various threats towards the production from both Orthodox Catholic priests and Muslim representatives.¹³ Arguments were all based on pseudo-religious beliefs, and even though content and context were clearly highly different than in 1990, a common dominator is to be found in the fact that rumours around a show aroused emotions and the most rigorous critics demanding its prohibition have not seen a second of it. As opposed to *Sveti Sava*, Frljić's production was indeed performed – however, the audience of that night's performance at the MESS theatre festival had to enter the national theatre through a metal detector and at its own risk.

¹² Ramet, Sabrina P. 2007. *The Politics of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, in *Serbia since 1989 – Politics and Society under Milošević and after*, edited by Ramet P. Sabrina and Vjeran Pavlaković. Seattle/London: University of Washington Press, 255-85.

¹³ Halilbašić, Senad. 2016. Primitiver Herrscher im Frack. Krisen, Kriege, Theater – und Trump. Zur 56. Ausgabe des Theaterfestivals MESS in Sarajevo. *Theater der Zeit* 2016(12), 31-33.

Haunted stages / haunted countries

The theatre historian and theorist Marvin Carlson claims that the retelling of stories already told and the re-enactments of events already enacted, as well as the re-experience of emotions already experienced, have always been central concerns of theatre in all times and places. No matter if we consider a (dramatic) text, a (an acting) body or physical material (e.g. the stage, the building, the performance space etc.) – each production element needs to be considered in various degrees as a part of material that ‘we have seen before’, as well as the memory of that recycled material as it moves through new and different productions and performance contexts. Therefore, all reception is deeply connected to various concepts of memory, “because it is memory that supplies the codes and strategies that shape reception.”¹⁴ It therefore of course also very much depends on the spectator’s individual experiences.

Audience members encounter in each performance elements they have encountered before, although always in a somewhat different context depending on the situation of reception. Marvin Carlson named this phenomenon *ghosting*. Using a similar wording context, Carlson claims that all theatre is a cultural activity deeply involved with memory and *haunted* by repetition. The question in this specific case however lies not within theatre’s almost natural process of repetition, but in another *haunted* aspect: How does theatre as a ‘memory machine’ in the case of *Sveto S.* deal with the knowledge and experience of an interrupted and therefore never-staged performance? And in which way does the memory of that very incident communicate through the narrative of the new production and create new meaning for a contemporary audience?

In the case of *Sveto S.* the narration of the past via interrupting testimonies interconnects with the represented past of the night itself. While most actors are playing roles of people being present in Belgrade on 31 May 1990, two persons from the *Sveto S.* ensemble are indeed eye witnesses of the referenced production. Tanja Miletić-Oručević draws from the cultural memory on the interruption as well as the communicative memory of the present actors.¹⁵ I propose to call this concept a *theatrical double memory*. Theatrical double memory carries memory A – a memory situated within the on-going performance situation as a new artistic text with new artistic roles but clearly caring the reception history of its predecessor within its stage content. As well as memory B – the concrete and also narrated memory of the acting body who has actually witnessed the point of reference of Memory A. These are not concepts of singular theatrical memories working independently from each other, but they influence, reflect, comment and complement one another in order to create a new meaning based on remembrance. This concept is a key strategy within the production of *Sveto S.* Any staging referring to Sveti Sava works within the discourse following that specific interruption, meaning that there can be no staging of this topic no more without the history of the prevented play. Or in other words: Any stage interpretation of *Sveti Sava* is haunted by a never-staged performance. The concept of theatrical double memory however gets virulent once the testimonies by acting bodies being present in Belgrade on that very

¹⁴ Carlson, Marvin. 2003. *The Haunted Stage. The Theatre as Memory Machine*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 5.

¹⁵ I use these concepts of memory as described in Assmann, Jan. 2013. *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*. München: Beck, 49-66.

night 25 years ago are being presented. In our case, theatrical double memory is not just utilized in order to lend the production an additional legitimization of being 'factual' or 'true' – it rather leads to two specific functions: on the one hand, actors who were victims of the interrupters during the referred performance now receive the chance to play characters who represent key figures of that interruption as well as their ideological framework. This function is especially represented with the presence of the actor Ištvan Gabor, who had no possibility to act on stage in Belgrade in 1990 and now has the chance to play an Orthodox priest being offended by the production back then. On the other hand, the narration goes way further by creating a specific meaning of that very night within the context of the wars of the 1990s: it shows the Serbian Orthodox Church as one of the key perpetrators of the Yugoslav demise. Theatrical double memory therefore functions as an aesthetic and dramaturgical framework, in which two forms of memory (the individual/communicative of a witness on stage and the cultural memory surrounding the referred incident) synthesize in order to create a new, memory-based narrative.

As we have seen, the production operates within a concept of theatrical double memory – the memory of the production *Sveto S.* on the interrupted performance it refers to itself, and the memory of the witnesses of that very night who again now stand in front of an audience. By arranging the interruptive moment and the memories on it in a quite specific context of the armed conflict – meaning the connection between the Serbian Orthodox Church and Serbia's political warring elites – it produces historical meaning. By even visualizing and re-enacting scenes of war crimes towards the end of the show, it aims to provoke similar critics as in 1990 again, since a quite clear connection between Orthodox Church and war crimes is being made – but now voluntarily. This time, however, it is not Sveti Sava as a historical and liturgical figure who is in the attention of the assumed critic, but indeed the Serbian Orthodox Church and its leaders as a whole regarding their responsibility within the Yugoslav Wars. When Marvin Carlson refers to theatre as being *haunted* by its own past in any place and time, we can conclude that the haunted past of the *Sveti Sava* production within its referential successor *Sveto S.* also relegates to a haunted post-Yugoslav space itself: a space which cannot be divided from its haunted past, a space in which artistic narratives can create and establish historical meaning drawing from the various memories at work.

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