

## POLITICAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN TIME AND SPACE: ON SLOVENIAN INDEPENDENCE RITUAL

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**Abstract:** *Nacionalne kulture in politične zgodovine ni mogoče preučevati izven njihovih vsakokratnih časovnih in prostorskih določil. Članek obravnava čas in prostor kot omejena vira. Nacionalna kultura tako postane rezultat kulturnega menedžmenta, pogajanj o strukturi in pomenih v Epizodnem Času-Prostoru. Antropološka analiza vsakoletnih javnih proslav Dneva državnosti od leta 1991 do 2005 razkriva, kako so očetje slovenske nacije, ritualni specialisti in gledališki režiserji v obdobju tranzicije prilagajali preteklost, da bi opisali in opravičili sodobnost ter motivirali državljane za prihodnost. Članek obravnava različne vidike politične mitologije in kulturne dediščine. V procesu družbene in ritualne konstrukcije nacionalnega Časa-Prostora, je posebna pozornost namenjena množičnim medijem in tehnologiji.*

**Key words:** *dejavniki, konstruktivizem, menedžment, množični mediji, mitologija, Slovenija, tranzicija*

### Introduction

In the 1990s, cultural and social anthropologists increasingly started to regard space as the result of imagining, disputes, and negotiations among social agents. The space has been linked with the questions of identity, history and mythology, social stratification, art, and the like. Rather than a physical environment for social events the space became also a result of cultural representations and practices. Locality (locale) is a matter of individual and collective identification processes (Gupta, Ferguson, 1997) that are influenced by the global market and the media (McLuhan, 1995), or rather their involvement in different (ethnic, media, technological, financial, and ideological) spaces (Appadurai, 2003). The space is therefore always multivocal (Kottak, 1999; Rodman 2003).

Historians have increasingly emphasised that temporal concepts and identities were also determined by the society (comp. Repe, 2001; Luthar, 2005). David Lowenthal linked classical historiography with mythology because it conveys more, and simultaneously less, of “the truth”: more because it examines the past through the eyes and minds of contemporary people and within a “logical” historic

continuity (teleologically); and less because it is fragmentary and dependant on individual interest of researchers. Lowenthal blames historiography for teaching and for co-creating principally the “heritage.” Students do not examine procedures applied by the science and only seldom take into account any potentially different views on the same event, which is why classical historiography is one-dimensional and mainly patriotic (Lowenthal, 1998: p. 116-117). Time is optional not only to the selected periods of social and cultural examination but also in relation to the (scientific) society that reconstructs the past (comp. Kuhn, 1998). We shall re-examine Slovenian politics and ritual critically, identifying groups and persons involved.

Immanuel Wallerstein (1998) connected spatial and temporal social conditioning and suggested the following scheme of TimeSpace realities within the Western society (and in social sciences): *episodic geopolitical TimeSpace* (direct context of an event – newspaper story); *cyclico-ideological TimeSpace* (a longer period of time, recent history); *structural TimeSpace* (so-called “rise of the West” and the world system); *eternal TimeSpace* (ethnic, cultural, environmental, timeless); *transformational TimeSpace* (i.e. the arrival of Christianity, agricultural revolution etc.). People, and also scholars, differ with regard to which construction of space and time they favour, and consequently how they describe “reality”. Different Realities are often in conflict. In the process of global exchange and migrations definitions of societies and cultures continuously change. An interpretation of daily movements in time and space, both of an individual and a group, gives an insight into his or her social networks, repetitions and frequencies, which means that it is possible to *measure* TimeSpace coordinates and interactions (Bourdieu, 1977; Gell, 2001: p. 177-178).

The skill of positioning subjects/agents in time and space is necessary for some professions on a daily basis: theatre workers – choreographers, scenographers, stage managers, directors, and all others who are professionally engaged in the staging and production of performances; certainly also politicians and journalists, as well as anthropologists when they describe events appearing within the constructed social and natural TimeSpace. Anyway, when dealing with society and culture, subjects are now epistemologically freer than the structuralism of Claude Levi-Strauss and the structural-functionalism of Alfred Reginald Radcliff-Brown once allowed them to be.

This article shall examine the forces and results of the spatial and temporal positioning of the Slovenian national community in the period of post-socialist transition. The yearly public celebration of the Slovenian Statehood Day (June 25) has been analyzed as a medium of broader social negotiations, adjustments – cultural management.

### **Politics and Ritual in Slovenian Ethnology**

Ethnology and politics have always been interconnected. The establishment of the Slovenian ethnographic Museum (1923) and of the first Slovenian Department of Ethnography with Ethnology at the University of Ljubljana (1940) were based

on the concepts of illyrism, Pan-Slavism, yugoslavism, ethno-nationalism, and also racism (Jezernik, 2009). In the period of socialism and the prevalent Marxist paradigm, Slovenian ethnology intensively examined the question of social inequality, although primarily prior to the Second World War and predominantly in rural areas (i. e. Baš, 1967). A course on political anthropology, taught at the Department of Ethnology and Anthropology, was introduced simultaneously with the constitution of the Slovenian state (1991), which was clearly a political/epistemological act. An anthropological study of (Slovenian) political rituals thus seems to be a rather logical continuation of the self-recognition and repositioning of Slovenian ethnology (cultural anthropology). At the same time, political rituals represents a novelty since a topic could not have been studied before the independent state of Slovenia came into existence (1991).

An interest in political rituals is also a result of long-term methodological aspirations in social sciences and the humanities. The ritual has always been one of the most popular subjects for ethnological and anthropological studies of the community, whether the community of hunters and gatherers, peasants, or of an industrial society. Although the focus of ethnological (and anthropological) research changed through years, the structural-functionalist approach to the research of social behaviour has become more or less methodological constants.

Slovenian traditional/folk “customs” reflected the soul of the nation (see Fikfak, 1985: p. 180-184; an interview with Niko Kuret). Customs have always represented an important element of the “intangible cultural heritage” (as it is generally called today), a bonding emotional net of the national “material heritage” such as its food, dwelling, clothing, and crafts, for example. Slovenian ethnology has long studied principally the customs, manners and performances of the diversified Slovenian *ethnic territory*; ethnology was interested in relics of the past, tradition – continuities and disintegrations of cultural essence that, according to its teachings, were contained in the idioms of the Slovenian peasant (agricultural) community.

Niko Kuret (1965 – 1971) dedicated his entire book *Praznično leto Slovencev* (Slovenian Festive Year), to ethnic and religious rural holidays. His yearly cycle of holidays follows the logic of the traditional Catholic community and popular beliefs, distinguished elements of Slovenian rural environment. In accordance with his convictions, but also due to practical reasons, he left the study of contemporary and urban elements to younger researchers while his particular area of scientific interest focused on the rural world of his youth (Simonič, 2003). In order to preserve the traditional way of life from oblivion this particular area became an ethnological “consensus” and a national project of 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

After Slovenia became an independent state, and in respect to previously mentioned theoretical shifts in social sciences, state academic ethnology (with the help of cultural anthropology) started to eschew this mission, preferring to reflect on the key hypotheses of 20<sup>th</sup>-century society and ethnology. To be precise, even during the socialist era the scientific interest of ethnology gradually, although not exclusively, shifted from the folklore to the mass culture; from rural to urban areas; from methodological collectivism to individualism; from the preservation of the past to an understanding of the present; and also from the emphasis on the

national and the emancipative social processes to market applicability of ethnological knowledge.

Terminology changed accordingly. While Niko Kuret described *manners and customs* Arnold van Gennep (1997), Victor Turner (1970, 1995) and most other Western anthropologists wrote about *rituals* and *ceremonies*. In general, all of them, be it ethnologists, anthropologists, sociologists, historians, or theologians, examined the recurring social plays that helped them identify and (re)create social relations, hierarchies, symbolisms, collective past/present/future, etc. Term *ritual* will be used in this text to denote yearly celebrations of the Slovenian *political community*. Croatian ethnologist Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin stated (2000) that none of the commonly used terms in ethnology (custom, manner, ceremony) involve *political power*. This power is the creative privilege of certain individuals and groups (according to the law of succession or elections) who nevertheless have to act in relation to social and cultural rules.

### **Methodological considerations**

Rather than a sum of symbols (symbolic system) through which we learn about the meanings of culture, the ritual is a mechanism of social competition, control – and cultural management, domain of politicians, organizers, and artists. As a performance for the public, in the case of social specialization of the modern times the ritual certainly represents a “means of livelihood” for its creators. It is their profession and practice. Existential (i.e. social, real) and the interpretative (symbolic, cultural) aspect are present in all areas of social life: the social and the cultural system are intertwined and are but different abstractions of the same phenomenon (comp. Geertz, 1973).

TimeSpace constructions for the study of political ritual should be in my opinion divided into three analytical fields: *social*, *ritual*, and *stage* (Simonič, 2009). The first comprises the society as a state, as civilization, or as a period (Wallerstein’s “cyclic”, “eternal”, and “structural” TimeSpace). In this case, we are interested in social conditions within which the ritual takes place.

In the second one, the ritual TimeSpace, we describe negotiations about the meaning of phenomena in relation to festive time and space (place); we describe political and artistic interventions; presentation of a festive event in mass media; installation of the festive location; and similar direct ideas and pragmatic factors of Wallerstein’s “episodic-geopolitical” TimeSpace. These factors are clearly created according to the prevalent TimeSpace constructions within the broader society. All three methodological spheres are interrelated.

The stage, the third analytical level, is the final result of the *social drama* (Turner, 1995; Lewellen, 1992: 17) that is taking place behind the curtain. In the majority of anthropological studies the stage is an integral part of the ritual; in this text it represents the last phase of the pragmatics. What is presented on stage is a performance that within a limited segment of time and space must focus on certain select mythological and ideological elements; admits to the microphone only certain actors; and – what is of utmost importance – integrates politics and

art. Wallerstein was not interested in this performative level, but I would classify events that take place on stage in the additional Reality: *synchronous TimeSpace*: individuals explicitly determine the final form of the celebration. The planned dramaturgy has to be realized in a single synchronous motion and extension. Protocolary and artistic creations gradually, after a considerable lapse of time, become components of (intangible) heritage.

	<b>Time</b>	<b>Subjects / carriers / factors</b>	<b>Space</b>
<b>Society</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eternal</li> <li>• structured</li> <li>• cyclical-ideological</li> <li>• episodic-geopolitical</li> <li>• transformational</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• authorities</li> <li>• bureaucracy</li> <li>• scholars</li> <li>• cultural workers</li> <li>• producers and merchants</li> <li>• community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• center periphery</li> <li>• Europe-the Balkans-the World</li> <li>• cultural heritage</li> <li>• »real« economy and politics (networks)</li> <li>• living environment</li> <li>• home</li> </ul>
<b>Ritual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cyclical-ideologica, episodic-geopolitical, preholiday, holiday and post-holiday</li> <li>• historic series of holidays</li> <li>• rhythm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• politicians</li> <li>• protocol and producers</li> <li>• directors</li> <li>• technical staff / designers</li> <li>• journalists</li> <li>• spectators / the public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mythological space – Republic Square, Cankarjev dom</li> <li>• urban space – monetary-political complex</li> <li>• Homeland</li> </ul>
<b>Stage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• synchronous, eternal, structured, cyclical-ideological, episodic-geopolitical, transformational</li> <li>• direction</li> <li>• television editing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• army and the President</li> <li>• musicians, actors, and dancers</li> <li>• television cameramen</li> <li>• technical staff, designers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• scenography</li> <li>• performance pragmatics</li> <li>• television excerpt</li> <li>• ramp</li> </ul>

### **The Social TimeSpace**

Each organization manifests and reproduces its specific characteristics and continuity through TimeSpace realities – *mythology* and *ideology*; the first denotes a self-understood commitment to tradition, and the second activism directed toward the future (Velikonja, 1994: p. 156); they both relate to place (territory, home) and time (continuity, performance) (Skušek-Močnik, 1980). Rather than using the term mythology, Lowenthal (1998) prefers “heritage” which, just as mythology does, is based on misrepresentation of “historic facts” and on the creation of “myths” for the purpose and in the context of modern collective and

personal identities. Myths involve the origin and mission of an organization (the nation), are diversified, and have several meanings; they also induce ambivalent reactions. In fact, most political conflicts are the result of disagreement on which myth to employ in order to solve a particular contemporary problem (Kertzer, 1988: p. 12-13).

Klaus Roth claims that western cultural management has three historical epochs; Religious, Enlightenment, and Political. All three strived to form a consistent system of TimeSpace categories and social networks, and what they have in common is the fact that they wished to dispense with old values and rear the imagined community anew (Roth, 2000: p. 86-89; comp. Anderson, 1998). Roth's epochs of cultural management partly correspond to Gross's classification of modernists' collective memories, but Gross (2000) added a peculiar feature of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The mass media had a critical impact on collective memory and is therefore entitled to stand as new paradigm of cultural management.

In the course of the last three decades, Slovenian society experienced various transformations ("transformational TimeSpace"). In addition to social and environmental changes in the global society, particularly to neoliberalism and ecologism, it also experienced technological and demographic changes. The term Slovenian transition loosely denotes the period between Slovenia's secession from Yugoslavia and its proclamation of independence to its accession to the European Union. This transitional period was and still is a sort of social (strategic) liminality.<sup>1</sup> National community shifted from the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia to the European Union; from workers' self-management to neoliberal (joint-stock) capitalism; from the industrial society to the postindustrial one; from the nonalignment movement to joining NATO. Temporal and spatial categories of Slovenian politics, economy, and culture were redefined. Social classes and their interaction transformed, and new power relations altered people's perception of the past and the future. Ethno-nationalism, a characteristic feature of Slovenia in the 1990s, was a means of legitimization and unity in transitional times. Collateral damages were in the form of different socio-phobias and pathologies.

The history and ethnography of social groups teaches us that they have never been static and sealed, but always in contact with the Other, and always in the process of adaptation to social and natural conditions (comp. Netting, 1993; Wolf, 1998 – 1999). The same holds true for the Slovenian society. The so-called third wave of democratization (Huntington, 1991) and the disintegration of the socio-democrat model in Europe (Giraud, 2006) had namely started even before it was possible to speak about the East-European post-socialist transition. Both changes determined Slovenia's transition.

The fact that in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Yugoslavia was a nonaligned country also had a bearing on the transition process in Slovenia. In the 1975 – 1996

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of liminality was defined by Victor Turner in his dissertation *Forest of Symbols* (1970) and discussed in detail in his book *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (1995). Turner elaborated upon the conclusions of French ethnographer and folklorist Arnold van Gennep (1997; orig. 1909). Liminality is thus an 'ambiguous and chaotic interval' between two social statuses. See also special issue of *International Political Anthropology* 2/1 (Horvath, Thomassen, Wydra, 2009).

period, for example, the number of societies and clubs in Slovenia significantly increased (from approximately 6,700 to 14,700; Črnak Meglič and Vojnović, 1998: p. 16). Despite the fact that society was under the control of the Communist Party it nevertheless offered a much wider platform to the civil society, the social circumstances of that time were different from those in the countries of the Warsaw Pact. After the death of Josip Broz Tito in 1980, party control became increasingly weaker. The flourishing societies and clubs extended their interest in many directions, including politics. The 1980s were a time of thriving civil society movements (Bibič, 1997). In the 1990s, this motley of movements became diluted or transformed and integrated into the newly-formed political apparatus of the Slovenian state. Many of the activists became the leaders or members of political parties that endeavoured to exert influence on all levels of social life; since these activists were a product of civil society networks and retained contact with them they possessed all the required conditions for this purpose. Adolf Bibič (1997) has labelled this kind of political arrangement the *partitocracy*.

After Slovenia proclaimed its independence in the 1990s *cultural struggle* flared up again. It was based on TimeSpace interpretations from the 1920s and the 1930s whose roots go as far back as the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the cultural struggle denoted the clash between the supporters of the clericals and the liberals (Luthar et al., 2001). Even prior to the First World War, both sides developed their own political network (management) equipped with its political party, societies, solidarities, and rituals. The “revolution” after the Second World War denoted the formal beginning of the rule of the Communist (labour) Party that rejected both the liberal (the “bourgeois”) and the peasant (the “clerical”) option of social development. In the 1990s, the cultural struggle had a significant impact on the social memory and the national mythology of the (new) state. The struggle was further incited by Slovenian economic and political immigrants in Argentina. They (their ancestors) flee in late 1940s because they were members of the home guard, declared descendants by ruling communists after Second World War. In 1990s some of them returned to independent Slovenia and even took over prominent political positions, for example Andrej Bajuk who acted as Prime Minister (2000) and Minister of Finance (2004 – 2008), and Franc Rode who became Archbishop (1998 – 2004).

The political mythology of independent Slovenia seemed least controversial when referring to far past: the Middle Ages. Yet with notable exception: the Roman Catholic Church and forced evangelization were criticised. Particularly unproblematic for political purposes was the utilization of the proto-state of Carantania. Although historiographers firmly opposed to a revitalization of the cult of Carantania (Balkovec et. al., 2005) it was nevertheless closely connected with the myth about the fulfilment of the “thousand-year-old dream” nursed by some Slovenian public speakers and state ideologists.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century and the memory of it were perceived as the struggle against the German hegemony. Although in the new state uncritical references to “the father of the nation” from the 19<sup>th</sup> century reawakened ambivalent feelings it

was also clear that Slovenia's economic development had always been critically dependent upon the German neighbours.<sup>2</sup>

Another significant factor connected with the geostrategic shifts of the Slovenian state and nation is the detachment from Pan-Slavism, an orientation that had a significant bearing upon the Slovenian politics of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup>-century, resulting also in the establishment of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians (1918) as well as the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (1945). In the 1990s, the Balkans increasingly became imagined as a wild and undeveloped (Jezernik, 2004) and the East was transformed into market opportunity. The move away from the Balkan area was encouraged by the Slovenian elite and public that greatly favoured Slovenia's accession to the European Union. Indeed, Mitja Velikonja has named the omnipresence of "Europe" in all major Slovenian channels of communication the "eurosism". Similar one-dimensional characteristics of social future were perceived in other East European countries as well (see i.e. Buchowski, 2008). During the period of transition, Slovenia thus accepted a semiperipheral position within the neoliberal world system (comp. Wallerstein, 2006). Ideological apparatuses of the state, for instance its cultural, educational, trade union, judicial, adjusted accordingly (comp. Althusser, 1980).

Social stratification increased in proportion with the gross domestic product growth rate (Dragoš, Leskovšek, 2003: p. 38-39). The property that was formerly in state ownership started to concentrate in national capital, media, and political centres, which gave rise to new social elites (comp. Habermas, 1989). Those who entered the period of transition as leaders, or as a part of the nomenclature, generally strengthened their position. The Denationalization Act (Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, 1991b) proved useful also to the Roman Catholic Church, which is presently the largest owner of real estate in Slovenia.

### **The Ritual Space and Time**

No state, and certainly not a new one, appears convincing unless it introduces new symbols and rituals (Kertzer, 1991: p. 87-89) – and unless it connects its ideology with art (comp. Benjamin 1983). These political rituals, in addition to the army and compulsory public education, represent a mechanism of representation and reproduction of a bourgeois state and art (Wallerstein, 2006).

Symbols such as events, speeches, clothing (uniforms), banners, songs, and gestures, are the vessel that enables people to manifest their affiliation with an

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<sup>2</sup> In 2001, when Slovenia celebrated its tenth anniversary of independence, the second key speakers was German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. The public responded to his speech in same manner: while some rejected within the ritual space the presence of a representative from Germany others were more pragmatic and emphasized the necessary economic and political connection between the two nations.

Director Berger's installation then presented a "file of civilization", which corresponded well with the speech given by German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder in the first part of the ceremony. It would be highly inappropriate if the cultural program had been based on the mythology of the 19th century characterized by the struggle against the German domination.



organization. By manipulating symbols, its members become different from others, from non-members (Kertzer, 1988: p. 16-18). Ritual defines the position on the Other, non-member. Symbols enable people to comprehend such an abstract political entity as the nation (Kurtz, 2001: p. 177). Everything is backed up with “facts”, for example with historical references and topographic data. In this manner the ritual resembles rhetoric – both are namely discursive by managing different facts (*topoi*).

The national political ritual may succeed if it manages to establish communality by integrating different segments and levels of social life into state society (comp. Gluckman, 1977: p. 234). It integrates dissimilarities (Augé, 1994), for instance apolitical and official agents, sports and cultural elements, the young and the old, women and men, diverse professional groups, and different regions within the territory of the nation-state. State rituals try establish and renew a nation’s political unity. On the other hand, the ritual in a democratic society demonstrates that individuals are not free of all status ties; their positions within the national milieu are defined vertically as well as horizontally. Creators of a ritual and the public each have their own culturally and politically determined position within the production and reception of the ritual. Members of a political community are aware of social contrasts but behave as if they do not exist, as if there is “perfect harmony” (Lane, 1981; Kertzer, 1988).

### **The Festive Time**

Repetition of holidays and rituals creates the feeling of rhythm and order (Cazeneuve 1986). Since a (political) ritual is a *practical act* performed by a group of people it is internally dynamic and thus constantly evolving through repetitions.

The shaping of and the control over the calendar of rituals is in fact an exclusive manifestation of political power and its territorial reach (Gell, 2001: p. 281-87). In this particular case – Slovenian Independence Day, the significant date is June 25, 1991 when the Slovenian Parliament declared independence and adopted 'The Basic Constitutional Charter on the Sovereignty and Independence of the Republic of Slovenia'. In the Holidays and Days off in the Republic of Slovenia Act the Slovenian authorities did not adopt a new reckoning of years but (merely) fixed symbolic points within the yearly cycle (Skupščina Republike Slovenije, 1991a).

June 25 is a fine summer day, sometimes rainy, but generally warm and pleasant. National holiday is accompanied by bonfires – element of traditional/religious holiday John the Baptist, its pagan origin, and at the same time defence strategy in the times of Osmons (Valvasor, 1969).

In 2005, the government of Janez Janša proclaimed some the new political holidays: Day of Slovenians in Prekmurje Incorporated into the Mother Nation (September 15); Rudolf Meister Day (November 23) (Taškar, 2005: p. 2); and Day of Restoration of the Primorska Region to the Motherland (August 17) (Pušenjak and STA, 2005). Due to the current financial crisis the government of Borut Pahor reduced in 2010 the number of official yearly festivities, deciding to give priority to those that celebrated a round number of anniversaries.

### **The Mythological Space**

The first central celebration honouring the new state of Slovenia (1991) took place at the Republic Square plaza. The ritual place used on Statehood Day is situated in the very centre of Ljubljana, amidst the buildings housing administrative and monetary complex – organizations and services (comp. Habermas, 1989). The most important ones are the Parliament, the two high rises giving domicile to, among other companies, Ljubljanska Banka, then a number of diplomatic missions, National Heroes Square, the National Museum of Slovenia and the Slovenian Museum of Natural History, the Slovenian National Theatre, Opera, and Ballet, and the Maximarket Shopping Centre; the building housing the Slovenian government is but a stone's throw away.

Republic Square does not possess a mythological character merely because it is the place in which a certain reference point from the national past is being repeatedly recreated and experienced, but also because Slovenian architect Edvard Ravnikar designed it for manifestative purposes (of the socialist government). He commenced to draw the plans for this ceremonial space, the Revolution Square, toward the end of the 1950s. One of the provisions of the design contest was to provide a dignified environment for "a monument to revolution." Although Ravnikar altered his winning design from 1958 several times there had never been any doubt that the former extensive gardens owned by the Ursuline Church, the so-called Nuns Gardens, shall be transformed into a political/ritual setting. According to original plans, the large plaza designed for ceremonies in the centre of the "capital of a free nation", across the newly-erected building of the Slovenian Assembly, was to host gatherings of several thousand people; such gatherings had previously been held at the present Congress Square. During the transition period, the Congress Square was primarily used by the Opposition (the so-called Spring Parties) that was thus preserving a symbolic contact with the large national assemblies of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Due to the economic depression in the 1960s Ravnikar started to work for new investors, namely for Ljubljanska Banka and for Iskra Company, who bought the two high rises from previous owners, and for Emona who purchased the Maximarket complex. The original monumental design with the plaza was transformed into a new urban centre of largely business and commercial character (Žnidaršič, 2004). This fact illustrates very clearly the »mixed socialist-capitalist economy« of former Slovenia inside the non-aligned Yugoslavia (comp. Hupchick, Cox, 2001).

The present mythological dimension of this plaza refutes the arguments claiming that the square is actually a monument to socialism; that the statics of the staging area, which is constructed on top of a large indoor parking lot, is statically too weak to withstand the considerable weight of a large crowd and heavy technical equipment; that events like these cause traffic congestions in the area. Ritual specialists and directors solved the problem of static by positioning the heaviest loads above the pillars situated below in the garage, or by installing them in the upper part of the staging area.

Another strong counterargument was the fact that the rent of the parking space, which is the primary purpose of this location, was very high and thus significantly increased the overall costs of the political ritual. In the fall of 2005, The City Municipality of Ljubljana finally lost the litigation about the ownership of Republic Square against the BSL Company: the municipality claimed that the true owners of the parking lot were in fact in Slovenia and had merely concealed the source of their capital through the Cayman Islands and later through Switzerland (Bran-kovič, 2005: 3). Despite possessing mythological characteristics, the Square has not been designated as a protected cultural heritage site.

### **Human Resources and Negotiations**

Protocol of the Republic of Slovenia does not participate in the actual creative process of the central Statehood Day ceremony but merely participates in its professional and advisory capacity. State Protocol Service reserves seats for guests of honour, verifies the passableness of the area and the stage, and together with the state security service verifies the security of the program area. Protocol employees escort honorary guests to their seats, escort the President to and from the scene, arrange a reception for guests, supervise the quality of the catering service, etc. The Protocol also determines adequate time for the national anthem and the President's speech, and an adequate position for the guard of honour.

Government as well as various government offices successively acted on behalf of State Holiday: the Coordinating Committee for the Implementation of Protocol Rules; the State Ceremonies Coordinating Committee; and the State Ceremonies Office of the Republic of Slovenia). The supervised or produced the entire event. The invitation for tenders has always been internal, in the form of invitation. Two months before Statehood Day, several prominent directors were invited, either verbally or in writing, to submit the draft of their script. This process reflected a certain level of centralism as the selected directors generally worked at a cultural facility in Ljubljana, and almost all of them had graduated from the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film, and Television in Ljubljana. The most frequently selected directors were Aleš Jan (in 1996, 1998, and 2000) and Matjaž Berger (in 1996, 2001, and 2011).

Statements made by the directors indicate that the »pressure« on their work was the hardest during the most critical conflicts prior to parliamentary elections. In 1994, the Statehood Day state celebration was exceptionally cancelled because Janez Janša had been banned from the post of the Minister of Defence, which brought about so much tension that no agreement could be reached by the parties involved.

For most of the engaged managers, directors, producers, actors, and television crews the preparation of the central Statehood Day celebration was but another cultural project that they regularly produce on the basis of their interests and work description. It was just another job that helped them earn their livelihood.

Among the more notable dilemmas of the ritual TimeSpace that could be perceived in the mass media were addressing a prolonged and rather chaotic procedure of selecting the state flag and the date for the first official celebration in

1991 (comp. Repe 1999b); rejection of a “morbid script” prepared by Igor Šmid and Roman Končar; the return of state awards by independence leaders immediately before the 1993 celebration; a political rift and the cancelled celebration in 1994; disgust of the political left over the “fascisoid right-wing rally” in Congress Square; the beginning of separate celebrations of the ruling party and of the Opposition (1995); militarization and literary reevaluation of the state in 1996 (Matjaž Berger's *Kons 5* scenario); political demands that the director should include more button-box music in the program (1997); a dispute over Andrej Bajuk, who had at that time become the new prime minister and wanted to give an additional speech to the one made by President Milan Kučan, in 2000; and so on (see also Mekina 2001).

During the initial period of transition the so-called spring coalition (Demos, and later the so-called political right) blamed the ruling »left« for, as they put it, not caring about the new state and national independence. In view of all these events it may be said that of all Slovenian politicians Janez Janša was the one who best utilized the ritual TimeSpace to strengthen his political image and acquire election votes. Since the organization of the central ritual TimeSpace has been supervised by the government, and thus by the ruling political option, it may be inferred that opposition leader Janez Janša systematically attacked and tried to undermine one of the strongholds of the ruling political elite and networks.

### **The Stage**

Just like church ceremonies and ethnographic customs, political rituals create a specific life model on the basis of the Whole (numerous options). Conveying a message through ritual is much more effective than employing merely verbal or textual communication since the ritual simultaneously includes several codes: gestures, words, music, costumes, logotypes, etc. While it is true that the ritual illuminates a series of clear images it is also true that it simultaneously eliminates many (Kerzer, 1988: p. 85). Calling this process “the staging of the world”, Marc Augé (1994) concludes that in this manner, the ritual resembles the drama and the performances in the mass media, particularly television and the internet; let us add that this aspect of the ritual connects it with the Eucharist. Social, political, and moral dilemmas can be dramatized (can be continuously emotionally paraphrased) (McLeod, 1991; Deflem, 1991).

### **Chronogeography**

The fact that the directors and artists are restricted to the space of Republic Square or to the stage of Cankarjev Dom, having but a single hour on the evening of the festive day for their “staging the world”, brings us to the question of the so-called time budget, or chronogeography – of the time and space as resources. Festive activities have to be carried out in specific places, at a specific time, and certain actors (agents). According to Alfred Gell, a person cannot be in two places at the same time, neither can she or he perform several causally incompatible activities, or be instantly teleported from one place to another. These are all logical

physical limitations. In addition there are also the “connecting” limitations when a larger number of participants need to be coordinated. The third limitation is linked with “authority”, which means that individuals are obliged to act in a manner that is socially acceptable (Gell, 2001: 178).

The time and place of the performance are not uniform. An analysis of the celebration of Statehood Day at Republics Square and at Cankarjev Dom Gallus Hall reveals that they are divided in two parts, the protocolary and the cultural-artistic. The protocolary part of the celebrations at Republic Square is richer, more spectacular as the one at Cankarjev dom. With the sole exception of the President’s speech protocolary part takes place beneath the stage while the entire artistic part is performed on the stage. Only in 1996 and 2001, director Matjaž Berger used the entire square as the stage, relegating the spectators to its edge, which caused a certain degree of ill will.

The protocol, the sequences, and the scenography are materialized existences of ideology (Althusser, 1980) – practices of political and artistic aspirations/externalisations (Leroi-Gourhan, 1988 – 1990). Wallerstein’s “eternal TimeSpace” (ethnic, cultural, and environmental factors – primordialisms), “structural TimeSpace” (world system), “cyclo TimeSpace”, and “episodic geopolitical TimeSpace (memory and immediate context of an event) all come together in a unique, irreversible duration. Ideology and possibility are staged within the synchronous TimeSpace of the *performance*.<sup>3</sup>

Between 1991 and 1993, the festivities had a distinctive flavour of the reading societies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They strongly emphasized Slovenian writers who created the very first image of the Slovenian literacy, notably France Prešeren, Miha Kastelic, Luiza Pesjak, Josip Stritar, Anton Martin Slomšek, and Simon Gregorčič. Performers also recited poems written by Slovenian poets at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly Oton Župančič, Ivan Cankar, Fran Saleški Finžgar, Anton Podbevšek, Srečko Kosovel, Edvard Kocbek, Vladimir Bartol, etc. These recitals were emotional and occasionally imbued with pathos. The period between 1995 and 1999 marked the era of the “chamber celebrations” that were taking place at Cankarjev Dom. Their directors Janez Pipan, Barbara Hieng Samobor, Klavdija Zupan, and Aleš Jan focused on the individual’s feelings and personal quest rather than the state. In order to achieve this, they used the works of Slovenian authors from mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, for instance Edvard Kocbek, Igor Samobor, France Balantič, Janez Menart, Dane Zajc, Ciril Zlobec, Tone Pavček, Dominik Smole, Drago Jančar, and others.

In 2002, the mood of the celebration changed perceptibly. The political elite were now aware that Slovenia would definitely become a part of the European Union, and accession was no longer open to question. Mandate of the very first

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<sup>3</sup> According to Deborah Kapchan, performances are aesthetic practices as well as manners of speaking and movement, whose repetition installs the performer in the space and time; structures personal and group identities, and stimulates the beginning of traditions. Performances bring into consciousness the unconscious practices of the daily life and are frequently ritualized or playful. An active and independent choice of agents is of key importance in this process (Kapchan, 1995: 479).

president Milan Kučan also expired that year. A series or tradition of gala, “light” celebrations began. Poem recitals were replaced by dance and music, thus making a shift toward contemporary pop culture. It is possible to read into this an optimistic and supposedly apolitical message of the state that the story about the Slovenian nation has almost reached its desires.

During this social liminal phase a representative of the Catholic Church stepped on the festive stage only once, in 1991, when the linden tree planted in honour of Slovenia’s independence was blessed. Also representatives of Slovenian minorities as well as of the working class were completely absent. In the former, socialist state it would be unimaginable if particularly the latter did not make an appearance (comp. Lane, 1981; Repe, 1999a).

In 2010, the Statehood Day celebration turned the hitherto habitual formula completely upside down. Actor, comedian, and director Jurij Zrnec designed a scenario in which he revealed the banality and the political conditioning of scenarios and their authors. His scenario also questioned the self-evident character of the culture as integral part of the program. As has already been mentioned, the entire production of the ritual is supervised by the Department of State Ceremonies so we may well ask what made its officials to consent to such a satire. The politicians, in the face of the present economic and financial crisis, have been distancing themselves from the state and from themselves?

### **The Mass Media**

The mass media upgrade the achievements of classical ritual specialists who were generally working on the reproduction of religious (animistic, monotheistic) or political (of a clan, territorial) memory (comp. Kurtz, 2001; Gross, 2000). Modern political rituals need to be covered by the media since it is only in this manner that they can reach the national statistical crowd, the homes of the members of the nation, thus territorially encompassing the nation and constructing the Homeland (comp. Anderson, 1998). Newspaper, television, and the internet are able to extend collective events much closer to the national audience (McLuhan, 1995); this is particularly true of the staging of the political ritual that is financed by the state through the program scheme of Radiotelevizija Slovenija, the central Slovenian Public Radio and Television Network. The connection between the 1991 independence ceremony and the media within the framework of Slovenia’s independence project XIII (managed by the then Information Secretary Jelko Kacin and associates) is yet another proof that modern political rituals cannot be conceived without the media.

Newspapers have a significant role in the (re)construction of events that have taken place in the more recent, as well as current, social and ritual TimeSpace (Wallerstein’s episodic geopolitical and the cyclico-ideological TimeSpace). The radio seems to be the least appropriate medium for anthropological research of public holidays since the national radio stations cover similar news as newspapers while commercial radio stations exhibit no interest in politics and its staging.

By far the most significant medium is the television. With the exception of the internet it is the only medium that can transmit living speech and movement

(synchronous TimeSpace) which, according to Cazeneuve (1986), are the principal characteristics of the ritual it-self. In 1991 and 1992, the ritual television broadcast was supervised by a single person, the television broadcast director. Another person, the stage director, was added later, and this number has remained unchanged to this day. However, the same can hardly be said for the number of television cameras broadcasting the yearly events at Republic Square or at Cankarjev Dom, which rose for a whopping 300 %. While up to three cameras were needed in 1991 as many as twelve, including the ones positioned in a helicopter and in a balloon, recorded i.e. the ceremony in 2005.

Selecting the television director by himself, stage director Njogoš Maravič chose his television associate Peter Juratovec. In 2001, stage director Matjaž Berger requested the television network to assign him Stane Škodlar, a skilled sports director, who “seems to be the only person able to cover such a large space” Meta Hočevar, a stage director and a lecturer at the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film, and Television in Ljubljana, who directed the ceremony in 2002, did not think it was possible to produce a celebration that would seem satisfactory both to its participants, i. e. the public sitting in the staging area, as well as the public sitting in front of their television sets. It is the television director who has to decide which of the two is more important, and state rituals have always increasingly favoured the television audience. During the broadcast, spectators in the arena became a part of the ritual scenery and a reference point for television editing.

The viewing of the ritual on television is limited to the size of the television screen. Television broadcasts select fragments in order to present the Reality itself.

## **Conclusion**

Slovenian political mythology is the result of longstanding negotiation processes whose strongest roots are in the 19th century, the period in which national tradition and identity started to be (re)invented by other European nations as well. They tried to create a uniform ideological platform that would correspond to the demands for uniform economic criteria of the bourgeois society and could compete with the hegemony of the British (Hobsbawm, Ranger, 1983; Anderson, 1989; Giraud, 2006). Hobsbawm’s “invented traditions” include ceremonies, monuments, street names, city planning, etc., all of which have been integrated into the institutionalized collective memory. In fact, the invented national traditions include the entire temporal and spatial “logos” of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century industrial society (comp. also Gellner, 1995).

The same occurred during another (liberal) economy crisis in the 1920s and the 1930s. In the same vein, Karl Polany (2001) equalized Soviet Bolshevism, German Nazism, Italian Fascism, and the American New Deal. Western countries implemented collectivized cultural projects; created inner cohesion of the (industrial) society; and defined boundaries and rules of the national communities (the We-Processes; Elwert, 1995). Between mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and the present, a list of Slovenian nation-forming themes has been created. Each socio-political arrange-

ment re-evaluated certain starting-points and rearranged certain elements of the previous national mythologies.

The national culture and political history cannot be examined outside their temporal context nor are they eternal (reified); they are the result of efforts and conflicts over meanings. The creation of temporal and spatial models is the right of those who possess political, economic power and/or knowledge (Foucault, 1991). There were individuals in almost every European country who during the 19<sup>th</sup> or the 20<sup>th</sup> century tried to create a political (mythological) community, for which purpose they suggested and headed political rituals. There were Robert Winthrop in the U.S.A. and, in France, Jules Michelet (Giblin, 1983; Kertzer, 1988). An average European is also familiar with the role of Joseph Goebbels in the creation of the national socialist reality in Germany prior and during the Second World War, and the aid he received in the form of modern technology wielded by movie director Leni Riefenstahl.

It is therefore possible to understand, and not merely in a primordial way, Slovenian rallies (“tabori”) that were taking place between 1868 and 1871, generally along the borders of the “Slovenian ethnic territory” (Granda et al., 2001). These rallies are believed to be the most radical attempt of the Slovenian bourgeoisie to solve the national question in the 19th century (Grobelnik, 1986: p. 142). Managing the mythology and political rituals of that time, very concrete people were involved in this movement, for example Fran Levstik, Matija Prelog, Valentin Zarnik, and others (see Vrbnjak, 1968: p. 68).

Central Statehood Day ceremonies in Slovenia during the transition period were limited by various types of time and space. Contemporary modernization (adjustments) denoted a shift from the mythology of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the introduction of contemporary populist cultural models, for example modern music, dance, etc. It was on this level that an integration of younger generations, as well as political reconciliation, was possible. Transition – the liminal phase (Van Gennep, 1997 ; Turner, 1970) has been symbolically completed.

The process of Slovenian transition included reestablishment of market economy, Europeanization, globalization, private entrepreneurial initiative, commercialisation, re-evangelization, and similar tools of today’s world system. In order to preserve a sufficient measure of social coherence, simultaneously with the restructuring of the national temporal and spatial awareness and organization, the Slovenian political elite carefully monitored the suitability of each ritual of the newly-formed state community.

The history of Slovenian national imagination and emancipation has bestowed upon culture and its representatives a particularly important task, thus firmly connecting them with the establishment. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the power of Slovenian political visionaries was based predominantly on cultural capital. This is still reflected in ritual constructions of the TimeSpace reality in which artists act as transmitters and interpreters of social memory. The tie between politicians and artists, as well as educators and media, has never been loosened (Vogrinc, 2003).

Analysis of the temporal and spatial positioning of significant/authorized individuals enables us to evade essentialism (promordialism, teleology – eternal



time) as well as factography (the merely synchronous time of performance ethnography). The images of culture and ideology are then determined in the context of *cultural management* that presumes that people can consciously shape and control culture – TimeSpace realities. Therefore we don not only answer questions about the origin and structure of (national) ideology, mythology, and intangible heritage but also how they are used, by whom and where.

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