

I. HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL MEMORY IN THE EVOLVING NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN IDENTITY

EXISTENTIAL IDENTITY AND MEMORY OF A NATION

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The author affirms that the phenomena of history are always interpreted in the perspective of our future objectives. So, it is stated that the interpretation of nation's history is the recollection of our future. Projection of the future grants us both creative dynamism (picturesqueness), and possibility of death (existential departure). According to another thesis, creating and existence form two planes of human reality, which create a living environment interacting between each other. The author affirms that this environment is the background of becoming of both individual and the nation, and it changes together with the phenomena emerging in it. According to the third thesis, existential participant's space and time of existential participant – individual or nation – interact as his spiritual environment's components of his becoming. The author follows individual's and nation's analogy, which means rather interaction when creating a living environment than similarity. Additionally, analogy includes aesthetic (sensual) aspect, which appears when talking about existential creativity. So, it is stated, that openness and incompleteness of existence is being supposed by the representation of our bodily (sensual) ending, in other words, by aesthetic tragedy. According to the author, the small individual circle and the big one of a nation are coupled by aesthetic tragedy. According to the fourth thesis, the being of a nation becomes meaningful when a nation becomes a hero in the face of its death. The conceptions of M. Heidegger (being towards death), M. Bachtin (hero, polyphonic interaction), E. Husserl (spiritual environment, phenomenon), Aristotle (dynamism, formation) and Plato (analogy, participation) are used in the research.

Keywords: environment, existence, identity, memory, space, time.

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Introduction

What is nation's existential identity and nation's memory? Can we analyze nation analogically with an individual, whose existence unfolds between birth and death? What is nation's and individual's interaction as a whole and as a part? What is the place of

this interaction in the project of culture as existential creation? As we see, the question of nation's existence supposes certain interaction of the whole and a part: a part here is not only an individual participating in the becoming of a nation, but the nation itself, existing with other nations. The important component of this national coexistence, in which the nation's identity forms, is the time's ecstatic (according to Martin Heidegger) that includes the past, i.e. historical existence, and the future, i.e. hopes and objectives, from the standpoint of which we interpret our nation's historical phenomena. My thesis is the following: *interpretation of nation's history is our recollection of future*. In other words, existential becoming of a nation demands the interpretation of its history in the perspective of vital aspirations to be brought. Vitality includes both creative dynamism (picturesqueness), and possibility of death (existential exit). Therefore, we have another thesis: *creation and existence form two planes of human reality, which create a living environment interacting between each other*. This environment is the whole of becoming of both individual and nation, and it grows together with emerging in it phenomena that expand the space of an existential participant. Therefore, we can formulate the third thesis: *space and time of existential participant (individual and nation) interact as the components of his becoming in a spiritual environment*.

Spiritual and existential environments are analogous: existential participant fills (inspires, spirits) the environment, in which he matures when exiting from it (becoming to death), with his goals, objectives and hopes. Herewith spiritual environment is the creative space of existential participant; he fights it back when becoming the hero of a temporal event. To become a hero means to tangle the time and space with our life in such a way so that this existential section emerges as a phenomenon to other participants of spiritual environment. I use the concept of phenomenon¹ only to name a factor of existential becoming. The price of heroism is closeness of exit: events of life do tangle into one meaningful clod only in the face of death. Following the nation's and individual's analogy, the fourth thesis would sound like this: *nation's being becomes meaningful after a nation becomes a hero in the face of its death*.

In order to unfold the mentioned thesis, firstly, I will investigate the nation's existential memory, using analogy between nation and individual. This analogy presupposes the hypotheses that I will examine. Later I will show how this memory forms while being a part of nation's identity. The environment of memory's and identity's formation leads to investigate politics as a public space of existential cohesion. Cohesion of space (politics) and time (memory) is possible not only if we compare it with an individual (heroism in the face of death), but also following an attitude that nation and individual interact as a part and as the whole influencing each other. So analogy here means not only and not really similarity, but rather a mutual interaction participating in existential creating. Therefore, the theoretic sources of mentioned preconditions include not only thoughts of Heidegger (being to death), Mikhail Bachtin (1996) (hero, polyphonic interaction), Edmund Husserl (spiritual environment, phenomenon), but also of Aristotle (dynamism, formation) and Plato (analogy, participation).

¹ Com p. (Kačerauskas 2006).

The existential memory of a nation

As I mentioned, I will use analogy between the nation and the individual in order to investigate nation's existential memory. Individual existence unfolds under the influence of tension between birth and death of an individual. Elsewhere (Kačerauskas 2007) I analyzed existential birth as renewal of spiritual environment, and existential death – as exit that focuses individual's life story for renewal of his environment. Existence is school of exit as we create the whole of our life, and this whole is inscribed into the spiritual environment thus renewing it. We will see how this inscribing relates to awakening of nation's memory, which I will call existential. It seems we are dealing not only with Plato's *ana ton logon*, whose *logos* I interpret as spiritual environment in the context of existential creating, but also with remembered *eidōs* to be awoken with the help of our sensual body. *Individual dying body as factor of spiritual environment's renewing and the awakening of nation's memory expresses interaction between individual and nation, i.e. analogy.* I will come back to this hastily formulated idea later on.

Let us come back to existential birth and death. If an individual and a nation interact in a spiritual environment (where memory is a part of it) to be created together, the limits of existential birth and death (both of an individual and a nation) include more than a strip of life between physical birth and death. On the one hand, existential death (differently than physical one) demands a life story, which is inscribed into the nation's spiritual whole, which is still being created, that is, inspired. In this existential sense we cannot die any time – only when we embody our life's whole. So embodiment and inspiring here are two interaction poles of existential creation. On the other hand, due to our inspired environment, we are born earlier than we are “thrown” into this world: we are born when our family, our city, nation, i.e. our living environment² appear.

So “throwing into”, differently than in Heidegger's (Heidegger 1993) and Jean-Paul Sartre's (Sartre 1959) interpretation, here means not physical appearance in a foreign environment. On the contrary, we are born in our environment, with which we are grown together since our family, our city, nation appeared. When being born, we are striving to fight back a living space, which would expand spiritual environment of our family, city or nation. That is a fight for our identity, and the more intensive our existential creation is, the fiercer the battle is. So “throwing into” I would interpret as creative scandal, with which we are striving to form our identity, herewith to move our living space limits. The expanding of this existential space is possible due to existential time: individual's life to death is his fight for the identity of his and his environment.

In our temporal life we are striving to expand and to move the space fighting for its new identity, as well. Individual's or nation's life as existential creation presupposes the spatial and temporal eventness, although existential events are inscribed not into a diary or a chronicle, but into a novel. Metaphor “novel” expresses a finished story being a whole of time and space emerges as a phenomenon, which is able to influence our identity. A diary, noting time flow, or chronicle that describe the conquering of space, are not philosophical, rephrasing Aristotle (Aristoteles 1986): time and space here become neither environment for the whole of existential history, nor the factors

² According to E. Husserl (1952), Umwelt.

of existential creation. A diary and a chronicle do not have endings: death actually gives a meaningful whole for existential story, which is inscribed into spiritual environment, thus expanding it. But existential death does not coincide with physical one: our story is created also without us, thus inscribing it into a becoming environment and thus fighting back our long lost time and space.

Existential death comes when our fight is over, when our creations interact as parts and many-layers environment as the whole. Although our environment is not indistinct (layers of home, work, leisure), it becomes the background of our becoming (*Hintergrund*) and factor as a cohesion of these spaces, just like landscape, whose hills do not “cut” out the sights, but unite them into one whole, which is lit up by the light of our reminiscences and objectives. We are creating work plans when having a rest in the nature; and at work those pictures just emerge again; they obtain intimate shades at home, later on maturing for publicity at work. If our different living spaces were not coupled into one whole like a puzzle, it would not become our existential environment, in which our identity would unfold; instead they would be competing for the first plan in the living world, thus drowning our part in it. Then we would have the fragments of these anonymous spaces rather than life story created by us. Our existential spaces are being coupled into a puzzle of life by existential time, i.e. by our time towards death. Existential time unfolds like an interaction of our memory’s work and future’s imaginings. Heidegger calls it temporal ecstatic, which emerges on the conditions of coexistence (*Mitsein*) and being in the world (*Insein*). That allows us to talk about the nation’s memory, which unfolds not as a sum of individuals’ memories, but as interaction in the spiritual environment (*logos*), i.e. analogy. Due to temporal ecstatic our existential death does not coincide with the physical one.

We die when the explosives of our works deplete of their “gunpowder”, that is when they stop participating in any space while the living environment is being renewed, when they are no longer useful (handy, according to Heidegger) for fighting back our (nation’s) new space for unfolding of identity. On the one hand, our being to death (*Sein zum Tode*) gives existential content for process of becoming: we fight for our life from birth to death, also giving dynamism to our environment, in which we become ourselves as catalysts of this environment. On the other hand, our existence does not finish after our death, when our works are still looking for place in a new living space structures. In such a way we continue to exist in the lives of becoming individuals as their space’s agents. Therefore, our beginning and ending are inseparable from our environment, in which we become ourselves changing it.

The hills of our different spaces form a unified picture of life, even if they are separated by physical time. However, temporal ecstatic allows appearing imaginary spaces, which are just as real when forming our existential background towards death. The existential background is obscure and that is exactly why our life’s story is reflected there. Even more, any space is like an imaginary hill in respect of existential whole, i.e. it becomes real as a background of our temporal existence. Time and space form two life’s layers here, which are coupled by our existence towards death. This existential cohesion presupposes the individuals’ coexistence and interaction inside the envi-

ronment created together, as well. In other words, we become ourselves only when we are a part of a nation, on our side forming its time and space.

Neither space nor time is incomprehensible without our bodies inside, i.e. without bodily existence towards death. Bodyness presupposes sensuality, so interaction of existential space and existential time includes imaginative (visual) plane. Imagination here emerges as tension between sensual (first plan) sight and viewing (background), which is nurtured by spiritual environment (*logos*). *Logos* serves as written and visual background³, which we are trying to disturb with help of the history of our sensual life towards death. We are writing our life's story (biography) not on a white page, but on a motley spiritual (nation's) background, which changes when our life's style scratches it. The background does not necessarily harmonize with the scratch, able to make a contrast for the background, which in such a way renews itself. The relation between background and scratch is aesthetic (*aisthētos*) in some senses. Firstly, that is the scratch of a life's novel (not a diary). In the background of a nation it is not any life's events' mishmash⁴ that emerges, but existential events coupled by the whole of tragic life towards death. Diary, as a complete strip of life's hours, is pornographic⁵; therefore, it is not influential. Novel, on the contrary, is influential as much as the linkup of (tragic) events, as well as interaction between the whole of events and the spiritual backgrounds. Secondly, two planes of a background – time and space⁶ – contact thanks to the individual's sensual being towards death. Thirdly, it is analogical relation of the history of a nation and individual's life.

Analogy between individual and nation means not only the similarity (about which I will talk later) from birth till death, but also their interaction, penetrating through various existential (temporal and spatial) planes. Herewith it is interaction of our memory and objectives, observations and imaginations. This interaction allows us to limitlessly expand our existential time and existential space.

Politics and existence

How does it relate with the identity, which a nation cherishes under the conditions of coexistence with other nations⁷? What perspectives do analogy and interaction of an individual and nation give, in other words, existential interpretation of political situation? What does the aesthetic relation of a background and scratch have to do with this?

Politics expresses dependence on the space of a state or a city. City, which inscribes the most of a nation's background (both spatial and temporal), thus changing

³ Com p. historiography as history and *graphē* that means not only a script, but also a picture.

⁴ According to Aristotle, such mishmash is history which, contrary to philosophy, lacks meaningful whole. I shall try to discuss this opinion: nation's history emerges as a harmonic narrative that forms the background for our existential creation.

⁵ There a question arises: whether we have a lot of such fairy diaries that strip all life's occurrences without any selection. Every diary is influenced by the censorship of spiritual background.

⁶ Let us remember I. Kant's (1982) transcendental aesthetics that includes relations of time and space.

⁷ During the integration into the European Unity.

the background itself, is the capital. In this sense capital is the real nation's hero, whose tragedy moves the whole nation's existence. If we take away the belongings of the capital (Rulers' Palace, University, Parliament, and Cathedral⁸) it melts away in the nation's background, shaded by heroes, acting in different backgrounds. If the capital loses its belongings, the nation loses its future; from the standpoint of this the past emerges, in other words, it cannot remember its future. Identity of a nation, that is analogical to individual, emerges thanks to its tragic existence towards death. Any search for the nation's identity is due to fail⁹ if one ignores the capital, even if it is penetrated by the tension¹⁰ of various cultures.

City, especially the capital, marks the nation's many-layer space, in which the nation itself is formed, influenced by both existential aspirations of individuals and objectives of other nations. Hence a question arises: if an individual anxiety, which had become a public affair and in such a way melt away in the nation's background (according to Heidegger, in *das Man*) does not lose its existential dimension. If so, a nation becoming in political space and time is not treated as an existential individual. I will try to ground the thesis that a nation is analogical to an existing individual by analyzing the historical events when a nation was facing death. From this analogy we can derive an idea that our existence unfolds as interaction of various planes (politics, aesthetics). Analogy as *ana ton logon* is inseparable from spiritual (*logos*) background, in which it unfolds and which has been enriched by heroes who awaken the memories of the future.

While treating aesthetics as sensual (*aisthētos*) we can talk about the nation's political body, which moves together with other bodies in a common space¹¹ of the nations. This way of coexistence arises as cohesion of *ethos* and *situs*, influencing the space (*city-state*) of nations' interaction. So the political situation is a space of interaction of nation's bodies, filled with existential goals, which are embodied by nation's heroes: not only individuals, but cities, as well. These goals, on their side, create a new existential situation, where nations behave in one way or another. Nation's objectives, goals and hopes here are fiction, which penetrates into the existential space of the whole nation, creating a new situation for the upcoming actions. Therefore a new cohesion of reality and fiction appears, a coupling, which is realized in an existential space that grows together with our life's fictional components becoming the parts of the existential whole. Herewith other aspects of aesthetics arise: wisdom demands creativity, which on its side is needed for developing of existential space. Additionally, fiction is not arbitrary, it is a part of our harmonic, but dynamic existential project, which is analogical to the novel, has been created by us.

⁸ After the third partition of Lithuania and Poland (1795) tsar ordered (1801) to take down the Ruler's Palace; after the attempt to re-establish statehood during the uprising in 1831 was closed Vilnius University. Soviet government ordered to close the Cathedral, as well. However the first of all Vilnius has lost Parliament that gathered in the second Lithuanian capital Gardinas (Grodno) after the letdown of statehood.

⁹ Com p. J. Balčius (2005).

¹⁰ This tension is essential in the development of nation's identity.

¹¹ In our case this space is EU.

Although the artistic fiction as a secondary imitation of the idea is not handy for Plato, poetical harmony for him is the essential trait that is to be transferred into politics. Existential novel is real when it is fictional: life's events become components of this novel only as the harmonious parts of the whole, directed into the future, parts, which, on their side, allow the living whole to be renewed. Even more, the minor circle of the novel of individual existence is coupled with the major circle of nation's existence, giving creative background (*logos*). Background, as existential space, interacts with remembered time thanks to individual's creative objectives. So *the analogy of individual and nation expresses aesthetical interaction of the part and whole, it allows us to speak about the political body of a nation and its identity.*

Identity of a nation

Historical memory also functions not arbitrarily. It is always coupled with the goals, strivings and hopes of a nation, i.e. with the remembered future. Does our historical memory change after changing of political situation, which, as we told, is inseparable from existential space of a nation? Which facts of our history become phenomena, which are included into our harmonious but dynamic cohesion of the future's objectives and the evaluations of the past, after the existential background of political coexistence has been changed, when we have entered into a new political space (Europe)?

Let us remember Friedrich Nietzsche. According to him, there are no facts, only interpretations (Nietzsche 1978). Historical facts emerge for us only in the light of our goals and aspirations, i.e. as a remembrance of future. Therefore, it would be proper to talk about phenomena of history (not facts), which emerge as nation's existential components of novel, which change the whole political existence. In this sense historical phenomena are fighting without cease against the political background, which they are trying to change. All that makes the political nation's body alive, creatively developing whole. The different picture (fiction) of our future every time allows us to interpret anew historical phenomena, forming the intrigue of our existential novel. Rephrasing Jürgen Habermas¹², existential project (of both individual and nation) is never finished, i.e. directed towards future that emerges every time for us as different whole of goals, hopes and objectives, which is determined in the perspective of our death. There is a paradox that the openness and incompleteness of our existence is being guaranteed by an image of our bodily (sensitive) end, in other words, aesthetic (*aisthētos*) tragedy. That is only an image, destined by the spiritual background that surrounds us, because we as sensitive creatures do not experience death. Therefore, *the cohesion of individual's minor and nation's major existential circles is nurtured by aesthetic tragedy.*

Just as the entrance, when changing the limits of political bodies, environment is not as physical one: neighbors have stayed the same, and the borders have not changed. Here I mean historical memory as a space of the remembrance of future, space, which is developed together with our existential objectives. Can we talk about nation's existential objectives only symbolically? Before coming back to this question, I would

¹² According to J. Habermas (1994), the project of modernity is endless.

like to interpret our¹³ dramatic historical period. I mean The Constitution of May 3. This choice of mine is also not an arbitrary one: the time of Both Nations' downfall (existential death) is much more interesting to us than the romantic stories of the heathen Lithuania's might. Firstly, death gives us the whole of existence, which is further embodied in the background of our goals. Secondly, constitution is a social agreement, which not only limits ethos, but also embodies the new *situs*. The Constitution of May 3 was exactly of such kind, which was to renew the coexistence of the Both Nations, liquidating *liberum veto*, resistance right, confederations and "free" elections, also announcing monarchy to be heritable. Despite the fact that the Constitution did not run any day, i.e. it stayed fiction, a new political situation had formed thanks to it, which evoked not only military reaction from the side of Russia, but also an ethos of resistance that nurtured two uprisings in Lithuania and Poland and also gave rebirth to liberal and patriotic thoughts.

English historian Norman Davies is both right and wrong, saying that the nation of Lithuania and Poland "had fallen due to trying to renew a lot of times" (Davies 1998: 561). The Constitution of May 3 as a fiction disharmonized in the political space became the beginning of the state's destruction: the anarchy of noblemen was cherished by the neighbors Russia, Prussia, and Austria. In other words, it became the beginning of death of the Both Nations' political body. But still it was mentioned that physical death does not mean the end of existence, if it takes part in the space of historical memory or space, which consists of the interpretations of the past and the future's objectives. That is why the Constitution later became the factor for the rebirth of nations. Now it is important to us as paradigm of Both Nations' cohesion, which is very meaningful going in step by the way of Europe.

Having historical paradigm, which is projected in the light of our existential objectives, we remember the future. In such way the objectives of the future demand historical memory, as we expand our nations' existential space. The analogy of individual and nation allows us to talk not only about our nation's living existential space, but also about individual's participation in a dynamic nation's space that needs renewing. Thanks to his existence towards death a hero creates his life's whole, which becomes a factor of renewal of nation's environment. Creating of existence and creating while existing allows analogical treating of the individual and the nation, i.e. as a mutual interaction, which transforms the time and space into the living whole. This whole is open to creative innovations thanks to possibility of the individual's and the nation's existential (heroic) exit. The heroes of existential becoming (individual, capital, and nation) function in a spiritual background, which is renewed by their march towards death.

¹³ When I say "our" I mean not only Lithuanian, but also Polish and Belarusian nations.

Conclusions

The individual and the nation are analogical when interacting as the participants of existence. Existence marks the being towards death, the image of exit, which gathers events into one life's story. Individual's life tying the existential time and space, unfolds in the spiritual background of the nation, background, which is moved by every heroic story. Hero, in the face of death, creates his own existence analogical to a novel (not a diary) i.e. an aesthetic (aisthētos) harmony. Aisthetos as sensual is a factor of individual's background's inspiring. Individual's background, renewing with every heroic story, serves as the environment of existential (individual's and nation's) becoming. That is spiritual background of our goals, desires and images, background that is embodied and in which the nation's historical events emerge. We can call that a remembrance of our future. So the history of a nation is alive for as long as its participants of analogical interconnection exist towards death. The tension of creation and existence allows emerging the dynamic living reality as an environment of our becoming, as we exit it.

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EGZISTENCINIS TAPATUMAS IR TAUTOS ATMINTIS

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Santrauka

Straipsnio autoriaus teigimu, istorijos reiškiniai visada interpretuojami mūsų ateities siekių perspektyvoje, todėl tautos istorijos interpretacija čia suprantama kaip mūsų ateities prisiminimas. Ateities projekcija suteikia tiek kūrybinio judrumo (vaizdumo), tiek mirties (egzistencinio išėjimo) galimybę. Kita tezė: kūryba ir egzistencija sudaro dvi žmogiškos tikrovės plotmes, kurios sąveikaudamos kuria gyvenamąją aplinką. Ši aplinka esanti tiek individo, tiek tautos tapatėjimo fonas, besikeičiantis drauge su jame kylančiais fenomenais. Trečioji tezė: egzistencijos dalyvio – individo ar tautos – erdvė ir laikas sąveikauja kaip jo tapatėjimo dvasinės aplinkos sandai. Vadovaujamosi tautos ir individo analogija, kuri reiškia ne tiek panašumą, kiek sąveiką kuriant gyvenamąją aplinką. Be to, ši analogija apima estetinį (juslinį) aspektą, kuris randasi aptariant egzistencinę kūrybą. Todėl teigiama, kad egzistencijos neišbaigtumą ir atvirumą užtikrina mūsų kūniškos (juslinės) baigties vaizdinys, kitaip tariant, estetinis tragizmas. Individo mažojo ir tautos didžiojo egzistencinių ratų sankiba yra maitinama estetinio tragizmo. Ketvirtoji tezė: tautos būtis įprasminama, jai tapus heroje savo mirties akivaizdoje. Tyrinėjant egzistencinio tapatumo problemą, pasitelkiamos M. Heideggerio (būtis myriop), M. Bachtino (herojus, polifoninė sąveika), E. Husserlio (dvasinė aplinka, fenomenas), Aristotelio (judrumas, formavimas) ir Platono (analogija, dalyvavimas) koncepcijos.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: tapatumas, egzistencija, atmintis, erdvė, laikas, aplinka.

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