

THEATRE AS A PLACE TO DEAL WITH A FAMILY MEMORY (ON THE EXAMPLE OF TWO CONTEMPORARY CZECH PERFORMANCES)¹

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Abstract: The communist era is one of the most explored topics in Czech art and it is showed from different perspectives. Not a very common way is to present the past by studies on a family memory. However, two of the contemporary performances, share this perspective and show how social and political conditions created the identity of the family. I would like to analyze and compare them, because they use completely different means to talk about the history and the memory and, moreover, they are examples of memory and postmemory. The first, more traditional one which premiered in 2007, is based on a classical Czech drama (written by Milan Uhde) about the dilapidated house in which lives authoritarian father, Jewish mother, son dissident, second son collaborator and catatonic daughter. The performance shows them talking about harms they have caused each other in the past, but about which they cannot forget. Through grotesque and black humor theatre presents their attempt to find a solution and restore the family bonds torn by the

ambiguities accumulated in the memory. Unlike the first, the second performance (premiered in 2012) is created by the artist (Veronika Švábová) who was born at the end of communist era and it is based on her personal history. Through an alternative project she is trying to create a picture of her family using different means of preserving the memory: old photographs, letters, music listened with her grandmother, her own body, recipes handed down from generation to generation... She is using new technologies to shorten the distance to her ancestors, to try to understand the family choices and to build her own identity.

Keywords: family memory, postmemory, identity, Czech theatre, communism

Settlement with the traumatic events of the 20th century and highlighting present consequences of past choices is one of the most popular topics in the Czech art. Especially in the theatre we can notice a clear tendency to seek the national identity by the analysis of the past, particularly its communist

part. It is enough to mention such significant theatre projects from the last decade as: the series of theatre performances *Perverze v Čechách* of Vladimír Morávek (Oslzlý, Morávek, Němečková, 2008)², two spectacles based on the book of Mariusz Szczygieł, extremely popular in the Czech Republic, titled *Gottland*³ or the project realised during several seasons titled *Československé jaro* at the Theatre on the Balustrade.⁴ Although the authors of the spectacles usually try to depict the past (ambiguous especially in case of descriptions concerning the communist times) from numerous points of view, they very often make a clear division into black and white figures (Dombrovská, 2012b : 14–16). Thus, the projects described in this article seem to be exceptional and significant for at least a few reasons. Above all, they include the question of ambivalent political choices and their impact on the creation of identity by showing, or even analysing, the memories of the family. At the same time they do it in two completely different ways, not only showing the point of view of two generations⁵ but also representing different treatment of the theatrical substance and transformations present at the stage during the recent decades. Lastly, their value is related to the fact that they struggle to describe this difficult topic in a possibly neutral way, though they are not deprived of strong emotions.

I. CONVERSATION ABOUT THE PAST

The first spectacle analysed, *Zázrak v černém domě* (*The Miracle in the Black House*) directed by Juraj Nvota, had its opening night in 2007 and is still performed by the Theatre on the Balustrade

in Prague.⁶ The drama, which forms basis for the performance, was written in a very traditional way (a draft of it was created in the 80s). According to the author Milan Uhde, he intentionally resigned from the modern form for the Ibsen-like depiction of a conflict going on within a house (Šprincl, 2007b; Kočíčková, 2007). The house is after all a conventional space for the comedy, and its core scenographic indicator are numerous doors and a centric component (Ratajczakowa, 2006 : 562–582). In case of Uhde's drama, the centre is formed by a dining table and while the presence of the doors arranges the actors' moves in order to show isolation of the figures running from one exit to another, the table forces them to confront and stay together between their attempts to run away through one of the seemingly countless corridors. The tiny space of the Theatre on the Balustrade executes perfectly the objectives of the author who requires his figures to continuously enter and leave the stage.⁷

But in Uhde's comedy the house is not only space for acting, but it is also a figure or rather the villain of the drama. During the course of action we discover secrets hidden in its interiors. It is because of the house why the Father married the Jewish girl and he did not leave her during World War II and the persecution of the Jews, while she renounced her religion and family in order to remain in the house with her husband. It was also not sold when her mother's brother needed money to safely cross the border and escape from the persecution. Lies and crimes on which the family history is built burden all its members like a doom in an ancient tragedy, the best example of which is the insane daughter and two conflicting brothers (Švejda, 2007 : 122–123). For the communist system lead to a division in the next generation. The two sons made opposing

choices when they faced the totalitarianism: one of them, Ivan, decided to collaborate with the regime, and the other one, Dušan, author's alter ego (Kočíčková, 2007), chose the route of dissident and now he reproaches his family for all their faults.

The entire performance is based on a discussion, sometimes changing into a quarrel, between the family members who reproach one another for harms inflicted in the past and cannot forgive or forget. However, what also appears here are attempts to find a solution and renew family bonds broken by ambiguities which arose during years of conflicts. It is quite stereotypical that the will to appease the conflicts is presented only by the women who try to influence their partners so that each of them renounces their claims. What is more interesting is another division, the generational one. The choices made by the parents during World War II and just after it are not clearly evaluated. From short discussions full of charging sentences between Dušan and his mother and from her intimate confessions made after years, the reader gets to know different motives leading to choices which at first glance were impossible to accept. The obduracy of the father and his inability to communicate with the closest relatives slowly appears to be a wall preventing them from discovering the painful truth, but it is also a kind of penalty which the father imposed on himself. The mother has also been depicted ambiguously – she renounced her own family because she feared that her husband would leave her. The way of narrating their story (the presentation of a dysfunctional family including two old people who ineffectually try to live normally despite great compunctions and the progressiveness of revealing the dark secrets) makes the reader feel mostly compassion for the generation of the parents

(or grandparents).

The case of the younger generation is quite different. The son, Ivan, who collaborated with the regime appears as an unmannerly, uneducated and heavy-handed man. He has definitely a better contact with his Father but it is only because he never tried to inquire the truth or evaluate the choices of his parents and his own. In contrast, the younger one, Dušan, is the one who tries to tell everyone the truth straightforward, he demands explanations and justice. As the only child, he does not have rights to the “black house” since his parents disinherited him in fear of losing their property during the communist era when Dušan publicly spoke against the regime. In the way the arguments of that generation are depicted, only the version of the younger son is considered positive – even if the way it is communicated is sometimes arrogant and full of anger, his behaviour is justified with the harms he sustained and the respect for his struggle to reveal the truth.

In spite of its conventional form, the drama staged by the Theatre on the Balustrade was evaluated very well by the critics and was even awarded the most important Czech prize named after Alfréd Radok for the best play staged in 2007 (*Ankéta kritiků*, 2008 : 8–10). It is certainly based on many motives. Firstly, the author of the drama, Milan Uhde, is a respected writer in the Czech Republic whose dramas from the 60s and 70s influenced the theatre of that time.⁸ Then all the more surprising is the decision to award the most important prize to *Zázrak*, considering that in a large part it is a replay of the previous topic of Uhde's work, *Velice tiché Ave* from 1981.⁹ Giving grounds for their decision, the critics emphasised mostly that the drama of the black house filled a severe gap in the Czech dramaturgy after 2000 since

it raised a general thought on the communist times while avoiding to use clichés in presenting the past (Švejda, 2007 : 122).

Nevertheless, it seems that the success of the play was mainly based on the theatre.¹⁰ The Slovak-born director Juraj Nvota is already known as a specialist of family dramas (Šprincl, 2007a; Švejda, 2007 : 124).¹¹ Thanks to his artistic intuition and experience, he attached a symbolic dimension to the schematic situation of the drama. An important role there was played by the scenography created by Tomáša Rusína who enclosed the small stage of the Theatre on the Balustrade with high white walls limiting it also from above with a white crooked ceiling which gave the impression as if the house was about to collapse. He placed a white table and a few black chairs in the centre of the stage. Also the costumes of the figures had beige and pastel shades. The sterile white space, contrasting with the black colour of the house included in the play's title, is a metaphor of the relations in the family and the web of pretences cultivated for years: the house, perfectly clean from the outside, hides dark secrets. This is also the reason for the gradual change of the figures' costumes in which the black colour starts to prevail together with revealing the truth (Švejda, 2007 : 123).

The director also elicits the comedy of the drama which is reflected in the texts only by not very successful word jokes. Thanks to the wonderful play of the actors, the drama is overloaded with irony¹², and the continuous entering and leaving of the figures which resembles hide-and-seek makes the situations grotesque. The highbrowed dialogues written realistically by making the whole situation theatrical, unexpectedly become light.¹³ While constantly balancing on the border of realism and

grotesque, the director saves that too classical text by getting closer to the Chekhov-like theatre of inability. The staging does not end with solving the conflict, but just the opposite: nothing changes, even though (similarly to Chekhov's dramas) there is a shot in the decisive moment. When it seems that different family members are close to reaching an agreement, the Father says words which confirm the *status quo*, and the others do not protest any more. The most important is still the tension between the figures and the conflict remaining in themselves – between how they try to live and what they hide from the closest relatives (Švejda, 2007 : 123).

II. MULTIMEDIA FAMILY ARCHAEOLOGY

The other performance, *Mraky* (*Clouds*) had its premiere in 2011 and was created by artists born in the 70s creating an alternative artist group Handa Gote.¹⁴ The play is a collage of personal memories of the main author, Veronika Švábova (being also the only actress in the spectacle¹⁵), kept in old pictures, letters and objects¹⁶, but also in stories which she remembered, the music listened to with her grandmother and recipes transferred from generation to generation, or in the body, in gestures. What is characteristic for the activity of Handa Gote is the use of modern technology thanks to which they create shows being on the border of the theatre, *video-art*, performance and dance (Melichar, 2011; Hulec, 2012).¹⁷ It is similar in case of the staging of *Mraky* where the actress is accompanied by modern devices which record and reproduce her moves on a huge linen, creating a beautiful metaphor of the memory and the lapse of time.

According to the artists, the spectacle *Mraky*, with its subheading *family archaeology*, is a continuation of work on the so-called "little stories"

which by discovering stories of individual persons create a mirror of great history. In one of previous performances titled *Eban*, using minimalistic acting operations and music, the actors tried to reproduce the biographies of the people whose pictures they found at landfills or attics (Sikora, 2012). Whereas, in *Mraky* Veronika Šváblová examines private archives, she “sifts through the history of her family seeking both the fateful moments and seeming trivialities that have survived in family members’ memories to this day, that are the fabric of family community”¹⁸ The audience becomes witness of a ritual played on the stage which aims at founding the identity. The artists presents pictures, fragments of old letters, tells is stories transferred in her family from generation to generation, trying to find herself in all that. The new media used in the performance underline that we have to do with a record of the past, a narration of events, not with the events themselves. The author admits that she presents a very subjective choice of her family’s history (Limon, 2011 : 7–15). The stories of the particular family members (the author presents fragments of biographies of four generations), are not important here, even though they are interesting.¹⁹ Presented in fragments, they are to show how many different (good, bad, tragic and amusing) events from the lives of our ancestors influence the fact who we are:

How did our ancestors influence our own lives? What have they told us and what have they kept secret? What happened in their lives and fates that repeats itself in ours? What mistakes do we make again and again without learning from them, just like they did? Which aspects of our personalities are inherited from them? What information from the past do we carry in the body? And just what will this body look like in twenty years, if it is still here

at all? What results of what actions or events do we carry on into our lives? What do we really remember and what is just our imagination? What does family actually mean today? And who still knows how to bake “mraky”?²⁰

The most beautiful and at the same time the most meaningful are the acts of the spectacle when the artist is dancing on the background of old pictures displayed on a huge linen. From time to time, her move is stopped by a picture taken from a camera recording her and put on the linen. Subsequent layers of picture are made this way, which makes a beautiful poetic metaphor of the present times covering the past, blurring it. Another time the move stopped by the camera perfectly fits the act presented in the old picture. The actress is immortalised in it next to her deceased ancestors, and thus she in a way gets in contact with them. This seems most important in the spectacle: the moment of meeting the people to which she is connected, regardless of what they are like (Král, 2012 : 122). Yet this union is not shown in public, it is rather about a kind of inexpressible, intimate connection which takes place especially through the dance, as if the most ancestors’ stories were recorded in the body, its habits, gestures and rhythm. The body becomes the best reflection of the family’s memories.

According to one of the Czech theatrologists, Karla Král, such a perfect connection of presenting objective facts with private approach to them is a wonderful realisation of the documentary theatre balancing the external truth and the interior truth of the artist (Král, 2012 : 118–127).²¹ Thanks to that, the performance does not seem ideological but just the opposite: it has features of existential considerations on the core of humanity. It is to say that many critics noticed mostly the naturalness and

spontaneity of Švábova's behaviour on stage (Král, 2012 : 118–127) which made the spectator feel he had to do with a one-time performance, not with a theatre play possible to repeat. That intimacy of meeting was additionally highlighted by baking the cake during the spectacle – for *mraky* is also the name of a Czech sweet delicacy. The actress, who got the receipt from her grandmother, puts the cake to the oven at the beginning of the performance and distributes it among the audience at the end.

III. POST-MEMORY VARIATIONS

The topic of both performances is very similar: the family history starting several generations backwards, with various faults of its members who sometimes acted against one another or became victims of one of the totalitarianisms. Both Milan Uhde and Veronika Švábová look into their own archives, record very personal fragments of the history allowing the spectators to universalise the presented events and refer them this way to their own families²² and also to the “great history” of Czechoslovakia. Finally, both authors present just pieces of events. Švábová sometimes does it literally since she presents only fragments of letters, impaired photos, but at the same time her stories about different family members are mostly very short, being just a few sentences. Conversely, in *Zázrak* the gradually revealed pieces create a full grid – the spectator gets to know the motives of Dušan's ancestors and therefore he can judge them. Apart from the form of both performances, it is the principle feature which differs them significantly since it implies consequences in the meaning of both spectacles.

Milan Uhde has chosen the traditional form of comedy, or rather comedy-drama, to be able to show the history in which each action brings

consequences. Even if there are attempts to justify the protagonists, the perspective of Dušan as the only moral one prevails. The spectator evaluates the other characters with him. The drama becomes a separate settlement of Uhde with his family, the internal need to evaluate their behaviour. The only element of surprise is the typically Chekhov-like ending – despite revealing the dark secret nothing changes and it seems like this situation could be repeated many times. Another goal is though achieved: the spectator went out of the theatre convinced (though this conviction is not very innovative)²³ that he should face the complicated history of his own family.

Veronika Švábová does not assess or moralise even a bit. Conversely to Uhde, she did not experience firsthand the wrong decisions of her ascendants, and this is why her play is a very personal way of seeking her own identity built of fragments of her family members' identities. She tries to understand them, both single decisions and the continuity of events of several generations, mostly to understand herself. With humour and distance she puts together what she got to know about them, what she learned from them, emotions which she experienced with them, memories, family secrets and also the thing being most difficult to catch but most important for the artist: what has been written in the body. This is why Švábová cannot like Uhde allow somebody else to tell her story. For she does not seek any generalisation in it, but she points one of the ways to get to know herself and rather encourages to find one's own.

The apparent chaos in the performance of *Mraky* (jumping from one topic to another, breaking stories in unexpected moments, spontaneous changing words into dancing or listening to music) is also a

record of the irregular work of the memory which remembers only fragments of events or speeches. On the other hand, in *Zázrak* the mechanism of reminding prevails. Nevertheless, we can admit that both spectacles result from the experience of post-memory²⁴ and reveal its two aspects: Uhde shows its destructive character, and Švábová just the opposite. *Zázrak v černém domě* is a complete realisation of the metaphor used by researchers of the post-traumatic culture: images of “skeletons in the wardrobe” or “a haunted house”.²⁵ Mraky lacks that “traumatic reminder” (Koronkiewicz, 2011) – here everything appears thanks to the power of imagination: the creative force of memory. In Švábová’s art we can see the structure of the post-memory, which can be described according to M. Hirsh as “the effect of oscillation (...) to some space between the knowledge and the guess”, the result of “impossible empathy on one hand and irremovable backpack of experiences on the other” (Koronkiewicz, 2011). The actress guides us through the process of communication with ancestors using various languages mentioned by the above-mentioned researcher: spoken language, body language, “languages of subjects and images and the language of silence”.²⁶ It is for a reason why the critics always point the same act as the most powerful moment of the performance. In that act, the actress tells how through her entire life her grandmother kept secret the surname of the people because of whom she was sent to a concentration camp. Just on her deathbed she told that secret to the actress’s mother, and the mother told it to her daughter. After a brief introduction, Švábová grabs a loudspeaker and yells: “It was the Cajthamlovis!”. Therefore the granddaughter made a different choice: she decided to reveal the surname and take revenge for her grandmother. But above

all that yell seems to have purifying effects, as if the secret was like the mentioned “corpse hidden in the wardrobe” who finally you have to “release”.

There is a very similar act in Uhde’s drama – at the end of the play we get to know that those who did not help the mother’s brother cross the border since he did not have enough money were their neighbours. However, they are as fictional as the main characters of the drama. Even if we know that Uhde was taking from the history of his own family, he depicts a totalitarian world in which everyone committed a crime, smaller or bigger. In the post-traumatic reality which he created, the people try to live as if the past did not exist, but they are anyway conscience-stricken, they wish to redeem their faults or they close themselves in an imaginary world not allowing the memory or the awareness of evil. And the audience leaves the theatre convinced that even though it is not easy to judge the conduct of somebody who tried to survive in a totalitarian regime, it is important to remember and remind everyone about their faults from the perspective of the present values. Uhde believes that only the truth about the past can be purifying and seems to say that there is only one truth.

At the same time, Švábová – by what she does on the stage – shows how unstable is the situation of the generation which had to make those difficult choices since it grew up in a free country. Does she then shout the surname of her grandmother’s betrayers because she needs revenge? It is difficult to give a clear answer to this question but after all this is only one act. In the whole performance the actress takes some distance to the stories she tells, regardless if they show her family members as national heroes or criminals (Kyselová, 2012). She tries to accept their biographies since only here does she see the

opportunity to fully create her identity. She does not want settlement or fault reproaching, she wants to understand herself through the awareness of her relatives' past and through the memory about them.

Whereas different in many aspects, in the Czech theatre both performances play a very important role of educating that "the nation with no history and the man with no memory are impaired" (Grulich, 2012).

ENDNOTES

- [1] This article was written during a stay in Prague as part of Visegrad Scholarship Programme; unless otherwise noted, all translations into English are by Marcin Mazur.
- [2] The project was realised in 2007–2009 in Divadlo Husa na provázku (Goose on a String Theatre) in Brno. The full title of the series was: *Perverze v Čechách aneb Forman s Havlem u moře aneb Jsou dny, kdy svítá o něco dřív. Trilogie o české identitě, o traumatech našich tatínků a maminek – a o naději* (Perversion in Bohemia or Forman with Havel by the sea or They are days when dawns a little sooner. Trilogy about Czech identity, about the traumas of our fathers and mothers – and about hope). It consisted of three performances based respectively on the film of Miloš Forman titled *Lásky jedné plavovlásky* (Loves of a Blonde), dramas and theoretic texts of Václav Havel (Cirkus Havel) as well as on the contemporary drama of David Drábek *České moře* (Czech sea). In his spectacles Morávek tried to show changes in his nation's identity and moves in the scale of national values. The entire project was accompanied by discussions concentrated on Czech values (Česká vize, 2011; Pokorná, 2012).
- [3] The first directed by Jan Mikulášek, one of the most outstanding directors of the young generation,

was realized in Národní divadlo moravskoslezské (National Moravian-Silesian Theatre) in Ostrava in 2011. The second one, directed by Petr Štindl, had its opening night in Švandovo Theatre in Prague also in 2011 (Dombrovská, 2012b : 14–16).

- [4] The project *Československé jaro* (Czechoslovakian spring) at Divadlo Na zábradlí (Theatre on the Baslustrate) lasted three seasons (Švejda, 2007 : 120–124). Within this project the spectacle *Česká valka* (Czech fight) was also realized, basing on the drama of Miroslav Bambušek (directed by David Czesany, 2011), whose similarity to the play of Uhde is astonishing – here the audience also sees a family history from the communist era about brothers being in two conflicting groups (Dombrovská, 2012a : 17–19).
- [5] Milan Uhde, the author of the drama on whose basis the first analysed performance was realised, was born in 1936. In the communist era, as signatory of Charter 77 and dissident, he was deprived of the possibility to publish. After the revolution of 1989 he was appointed Minister of Culture during the term of Havel and just like him he interrupted his dramatist's career for politics and returned to writing after years. Juraj Nvota, the director of the performance, was born in 1954. Veronika Švabová, the main author and the only actress of the second spectacle analysed, was born in 1974, the big part of her adolescence was after the Velvet Revolution.
- [6] The Theatre on the Balustrade, Prague – Milan Uhde: *Zázrak v černém domě*, directed by Juraj Nvota, scenography: Tomáš Rusín, costumes: Zuzana Štefunková, music: Michal Novinski, dramaturgy: Ivana Slámová. World premiere: 9th March 2007.
- [7] Another dramatist who keenly used the privilege to work on a tiny stage was Havel. His dramas are full of significant leaves and enters of the figures, going through countless corridors, instant moving from one side of the stage to the other. Especially in The

- Memo from 1965 and in *The Increased Difficulty of Concentration* from 1968. Conversely, Uhde did not create considering such a small space as in the Theatre on the Balustrade. At the beginning he wanted to stage his drama in the famous Na Vinohradech Theatre but when for different reasons he did not succeed, he liked the stage of the Theatre on the Balustrade which elicited the intimacy of his play. Unconsciously, he referred to the tradition of that theatre which staged the first plays of Havel in the 60s.
- [8] The following are considered the most important: the satirical and political play titled *Král-Vávra* from 1964 (opening night in 1964 at the theatre Večerní Brno), the ridiculous monodrama *Výběrčí* from 1966 (staged by the group JELO directed by Petr Lébl in 1990) and *Velice tiché Ave* from 1981 (directed by Jana Knitlová, 1990) .
- [9] Similarly to Havel, Uhde tended to place autobiographic components in his dramas (Švejda, 2007 : 120–122). In his previous play he presents the history of Czechoslovakia from the 30s to the 70s of the 20th century. He settles accounts with the Czech history basing on the history of a half-Jewish family in which the fault extends through generations as in an ancient tragedy (Švejda, 2007 : 122). The author himself points the similarity between *Ave* and *Zázrak* (Kočíčková, 2007).
- [10] It is enough to compare the staging of the Theatre on the Balustrade to other unsuccessful realisations, especially directed by the author himself in *Moravské divadlo Olomouc* (Moravia Theatre of Olomouc) – *Milan Uhde: Zázrak v černém domě*, directed by Milan Uhde, scenography and costumes: Rostislav Pospíšil, music: Richard Mlynář, dramaturgy: Miroslav Ondra. Opening night: 1st February 2008 (Erml, 2008).
- [11] Nvota also realised a film basing on another Uhde's drama about his family's past (der, 2009).
- [12] The critic Martin J. Švejda sees a main comedy factor in it but points that the irony is also the way of tyrannising different family members. Moreover he notes that it is thanks to the irony that the director “skilfully unifies laughter with seriousness kept behind”, and the spectacle loses always when “the humour loses that second serious background or when the staging becomes too pompous and at the same time realistic and boring” (Švejda, 2007 : 123).
- [13] Even Uhde himself highlights in one of the interviews the conventionalism of his drama, staying clearly away from the post-modern poetics in the theatre. He considers himself a modernist who is sceptical about mixing times and places on the stage, though he does not think that he writes in the museum way (Sprincl, 2007b).
- [14] Authors: Veronika Švábová, Tomáš Procházka, Jakub Hybler, Robert Smolík, Jan Dörner, production: jedefrau.org, premiere: 20th October 2011.
- [15] Apart from her, on the stage there are also two creators of the performance: Tomáš Procházka and Jakub Hybler who have the role of multimedia operators (they deal with the sound and the pictures displayed on a linen).
- [16] There are many real objects on the stage next to the actress. Apart from letters and pictures, there is a doll-house made by her father, a mask which her grandfather would scare her with and an old record player. All those things have the status of relics in the family where nobody never threw things away (Král, 2012 : 122).
- [17] “Handa Gote is an art group which alternates instrumentation of sound installation, non-verbal and dance theatre, live music, visual theatre and technologies. Their work is influenced by minimalism, eastern philosophy and the DO IT YOURSELF movement. It is a mixture of Czech craftsmanship, recycled objects and technologies and the inspiration by Japanese esthetical categories

- Mono no ware, Wabi and Sabi” – the description taken from the English version of the group’s website: <http://jedefrau.org/en/handa-gote.1/about-handa-gote/>.
- [18] Fragments of the English version of the programme, available on the website: <http://jedefrau.org/en/handa-gote.1/clouds/>
- [19] The different stories sometimes appear in shreds, in different non-chronological order. Moreover, apart from the fact that Švábová tells them on the stage, they are included in the performance programme, together with a schematic genealogical tree. Thanks to that, the spectator has the chance to get oriented in the history of the whole family, but above all the authors prove in this way that the story itself is not the most important thing in the performance (Král, 2012 : 122).
- [20] Fragment of the English version of the programme, available on the website: <http://jedefrau.org/en/handa-gote.1/clouds/>. The last remark concerns the receipt for pasta called “mraky”, given to the actress by her grandmother. The actress puts the cake to the oven at the beginning of the performance, to give it to the audience at the end.
- [21] In the same article the critic simultaneously charges many theatre groups who undertake to create the documentary theatre that they do not do it because of their artistic expression on a given topic, but due to the fact that this type of politically marked or socially involved projects are much better financed.
- [22] Judging by many reviews, but mostly by spectators’ comments on different internet forums, it can be concluded that the similarity to real stories of the spectators of both performances was crucial to the reception of the spectacle (Křobová, 2008).
- [23] It can be seen in the reactions of the spectators who put their comments on the website of the Czech television broadcasting the spectacle. Some of them highlight that the thought of the drama is not original. What is important, those opinions are written in the expression of impatience or even anger at the fact that the Czech art again deals with a topic which according to those spectators is worked out, repeating well known films in the way of narrating difficult topics of the Czechoslovakian history (see: <http://www.csfd.cz/film/249784-zazrak-v-cernem-dome/>). In this context, awarding to Uhde the prize in 2011 for the best Czech staged drama, just because of its innovation. One of the critics defending the value of the art, not denying its classical form, highlights the beneficial comeback to the classical unity of place, time and action in the times when the drama lacks them. He also notes that Uhde exceeds that unity by the gradual reveal of past secrets, and his seemingly clear-cut figures are deepened by the tension created between what is seen and what is hidden (Tichý, 2007).
- [24] “Post-memory (...) is an experience feature of those who grew up in the shade of stories about events which took place before they were born. Their own memories had to give way to the stories of previous generations, shaped in traumatic circumstances, which were never fully understood or recorded” (Tokarska-Bakir, 2003). In that article, the definition of the post-memory is understood in accordance with the extension of this term made by Marta Koronkiewicz: “The concept of Hirsch may be referred not only to the group of people close to direct participants of the events, but to next generations and entire societies” (Koronkiewicz, 2011).
- [25] Those “ghosts of the past” are “motifs which haunt us and which by result of disturbances in the symbolic order, lack of rituals or cases of death, so extremely transgressive and unimaginable that difficult or impossible to overcome during the mourning, loosely penetrate our post-traumatic world. In fact nobody, no individual or group, can claim exclusive rights to

them. If they haunt someone's home (nation, group), they bother all its inhabitants, even those who are them only sometimes" (Tokarska-Bakir, 2003).

- [26] "Post-memory is therefore the result of attempts to unify what is known (the knowledge of facts, so the history) with what is directly experienced: various family taboo, customs and habits in whose shades the children of victims and perpetrators grew" (Koronkiewicz, 2011).

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