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Semenova Elena Aleksandrovna

**Contemporary Street Theatre in Russia:
Genesis, Theory, Practice**

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Scientific Advisers:

Doctor of Cultural Studies, Doctor of Art History,

Professor Konson Grigory Rafaelevich,

Doctor of Philosophy, Professor

Sokolov Evgeniy Georgievich

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Introduction

In the 21st century, philosophers, cultural scientists and sociologists are increasingly talking about the impending global anthropological catastrophe, since humanity is forced to respond to new challenges of the time: dehumanization of human values, escalation of intraspecific aggression, information wars that contribute to the dehumanization of society, which, in turn, is expressed in the transformation of man into a consumer, in the loss of a sense of responsibility for his life and what is happening around him, in a simplified understanding of complex phenomena.

One of society's defensive reactions to such dehumanistic tendencies is an increased attention to archaic forms of culture. Russian psychologist A.G. Asmolov believes that “the unique role of the theatre as a carnival or laughter culture ... in times of crisis,”¹ only increases, because they “open up a world of other possibilities” to man². The French mathematician R. Thom, who developed the catastrophe theory, explained this pattern by the fact that at crucial moments “the lower, archaic layers, which contain ... data that mankind has lost, move to the upper layers, and become relevant”³.

The culture of street theatre has been actively developing since the second half of the twentieth century and has been of great interest in Russia since the 1980s to the present. During this period of time, our country experienced such events as the collapse of the USSR, the “roaring 1990s”, and globalization, which

¹ Dmitrevskaya, M. (2022, July). “Eto dazhe khorosho chto poka nam plokho”: strakh kak podarok evoliutsii i optika teatra. Besedu s Aleksandrom Asmolovym vedet Marina Dmitrevskaia [“It’s even good that so far we feel bad”: Fear as a gift of evolution and the optics of theatre. The conversation with Alexander Asmolov is led by Marina Dmitrevskaya]. *Peterburgskij teatral'nyj zhurnal*, 2. Available at: <https://ptj.spb.ru/blog/eto-dazhe-xorosho-cto-poka-nam-ploxo-strax-kak-podarok-evolyucii-i-optika-teatra/?ysclid=lrd13eo2ov929670890>. (Accessed: October 23, 2023). (In Russ.).

² Ibid.

³ Patsiukov, V.V. (1999). Kontseptualizm i ego istoki [Conceptualism and its origins]. In *Ritual. Theater. Performance: Materials of transcripts of the laboratory of directors and artists of puppet theaters under the direction of I. Uvarova*. Sb. st. / Ed. I. Uvarova. Moscow. P. 11. (In Russ.).

affected many spheres of Russian society. Despite the fact that the development of Russian street theatre began in the second half of the last century, it was only in the 2000s that this phenomenon received responses from Russian theatre critics, previously familiar with street art mainly through literary descriptions of the square theatre of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. After the Third World Theatre Olympics in Moscow in 2001, when the program “Street Theatres of the World” was shown, the theatre theorist V.Yu. Silyunas admitted that it was only then that it became obvious “that theatre is not only drama, opera and ballet performances, but also street and carnival spectacles, performances, installations and clowning”⁴.

Such a long way made by the Russian street theatre to meet the theatrical criticism is natural. Domestic theatre historians “narrowed the concept of “theatre” as much as possible for several decades, reducing it to a theatre of a psychological type and to the tradition of the Russian acting school, formulated by Stanislavsky once and for all.”⁵ An accurate assessment of the Russian theatre was given by the Soviet and Russian culture expert, philosopher and literary critic G.D. Gachev, who noted that “the Russian theatre began as a building at the palace (Alexei Mikhailovich’s court theatre, public theatre set up by Peter the Great) and later tended to squares: from the Volkov Theatre through “Boris Godunov” to the Gorky Theatre. It never reached the square, but invented itself as a chamber theatre of people living in rooms, apartments and dachas) (Chekhov and the Moscow Art Theatre)”⁶.

Relevance of the research topic. The relevance of the appeal to street theatre can be attributed to the fact that while resembling the previous stage of the development of street theatre culture in the 80–90s of the 20th century, this art can

⁴ Siliunas, V. (2001, July 12). Schastlivyi krug igry. K itogam Tretei Vsemirnoi teatralnoi olimpiady [The happy circle of the play. On the results of the Third World Theater Olympiad] (*Kul'tura*, No. 26). Teatral'nyi smotritel'. Available at: http://www.smotr.ru/olimp/olimp_cul_itog.htm. (Accessed: November 22, 2023). (In Russ.).

⁵ Maksimov, V.I. (2013). Formirovanie artodianskoj tradicii v sovremennom teatre [Formation of the Artodian tradition in contemporary theatre]. *Voprosy teatra*, 2. P. 275. (In Russ.).

⁶ Gachev, G.D. (1968). *Soderzhatelnost khudozhestvennykh form (Epos. Lirika. Teatr.)* [The content of artistic forms. (Epic. Lyric. Theatre). Moscow: Prosveshcheniye. P. 208. (In Russ.).

reveal completely new trends in the current wave of popularity. While the founder of the legendary Bread and Puppet Theatre, a representative of the Sixtiers, P. Schumann, had the main task of struggling against the end of the world, and the pioneer of Russian street theatre V.I. Polunin sought to create a dream theatre, a carnival theatre, today it is difficult to determine the super-objective of the current generation of street theatre representatives. The juvenalization of contemporary street theatre culture may signal the growing potential of puerilism, which, according to J. Huizinga, is a sign that culture has lost its playfulness. The cultural historian attributed the cult of children's stereotypes of thinking and behavior in society to the manifestations of puerilism. J. Huizinga considers fanaticism, lack of a sense of humor, inability to get involved in a game, etc. to be characteristic features of infantile and adolescent immaturity. The processes of puerilization can cause far from harmless problems associated with the phenomenon of decarnivalization,⁷ which, in street culture, manifests itself as a blurring of the boundaries between street theatre, protest movements, hooliganism and carnival culture.

However, the manifestations of juvenalization observed in the modern Russian street theatre have a number of features that do not allow us to talk about them exclusively in a negative way, since the ability to create playful representations of children's types and images becomes one of the professional acting competencies in the 20th century. Signs of puerilism in contemporary Russian street theatre may indicate a transitional period in the development of this art from the stage of child-centeredness to agonality. Therefore, the puerilization model presented in contemporary street theatre in Russia can be extrapolated to areas of culture in which such tendencies do not have a pronounced negative character, but signal that the phenomenon is in its formative stage. Taking into account the existence of polar points of view on street theatre, defining its specificity, disassociating it from various types of protest actions, and identifying

⁷ Decarnivalization is defined by A.G. Kozintsev as the process of developing game aggression into genuine aggression.

the uniqueness of its mission in modern society seems timely for Russian and foreign culture. The study pursues the same goals as those set out in paragraphs 4, 5, 7, 8, 12, 14 of the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of November 9, 2022 No. 809 “On approval of the Fundamentals of state policy for the preservation and strengthening of traditional Russian spiritual and moral values” and paragraph 8 of the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 8, 2024 No. 314 “On approval of the Fundamentals of state policy of the Russian Federation in the field of historical education”, since the study of the originality of modern Russian street theater contributes to the preservation of traditional values of the Russian people and “the memory of significant events in the history of Russia”⁸, the protection of the all-Russian civic identity from “a system of ideas and values that is destructive for Russian society”⁹.

The present research may be of interest to Russian theatre studies, as it attempts to elaborate a theory of the development of Russian street theatre, which is in polemical dialogue with institutional theatre culture. The study showing that street theatre, which is a syncretic art, cannot be interpreted within the framework of separate subject areas of knowledge, including theatre studies and art history, can be useful for humanities and cultural studies, since it diagnoses a rather young phenomenon, initially appearing as an autonomous cultural phenomenon. A broad cultural approach reveals how a heuristic understanding of such a phenomenon as contemporary street theatre emerges in the traditional system of knowledge, within the framework of a separate cognitive task. The issues raised by the research in

⁸ Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federatsii ot 8 maya 2024 goda № 314 “Ob utverzhdenii Osnov gosudarstvennoy politiki Rossiyskoy Federatsii v oblasti istoricheskogo prosveshcheniya” [Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 8, 2024 No. 314 “On approval of the Fundamentals of the state policy of the Russian Federation in the field of historical education”]. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/48502>. (Accessed: October 20, 2024). (In Russ.).

⁹ Ukaz Prezidenta Rossijskoj Federacii ot 9 noyabrya 2022 goda № 809 “Ob utverzhdenii Osnov gosudarstvennoj politiki po sohraneniyu i ukrepleniyu tradicionnyh rossijskih duhovno-nravstvennyh cennostej” [Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of November 9, 2022 No. 809 “On Approval of the Fundamentals of State Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values”]. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/48502>. (Accessed: August 25, 2024). (In Russ.).

considering street theatre as an effective tool for extending the creative life of the human species through play and comic creation are of universal significance.

The degree of elaboration of the problem. Until the middle of the XX century, street theatre was not a special subject of study. However, the beginning of comprehension of the theatrical art dates back to the classical works of Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, J.J. Rousseau, D. Diderot and others.

Researchers believe that “the constant ‘All the world’s a stage’ is first found in Greece near Pythagoras ... , in the aphorism attributed to him: Life... may well be compared with these public Games for in the vast crowd assembled here some are attracted by the acquisition of gain, others are led on by the hopes and ambitions of fame and glory. But among them there are a few who have come to observe and to understand all that passes here”¹⁰. The ancient model of the Theatre of the World, in which God watches the actors playing out the dramas of human destinies in front of him, continued to be successful in medieval society and in Baroque theatre. The English historian F. Yates believes that the main idea of Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre was to reconstruct the ancient model of the Theatre of the World¹¹. The French philosopher of the Modern era René Descartes compared the structure of natural phenomena with the backstage mechanics of the ancient Theatre of the World. The echoes of the Theatre of the World can be heard in the works of the Czech Renaissance thinker J.A. Comenius, who called the world the theatre of God’s wisdom.

Ancient Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle had a significant influence on the understanding of the nature of theatrical art. As is known, Plato saw the art as a mere imitation of external signs of something/someone, deception, gross sensuality, not approaching the truth, but, on the contrary, leading away from it. Unlike Aristotle, who considered mimesis to be the essence of the nature of art, Plato defined mimesis as a copy of a copy, where the latter is nothing more than an

¹⁰ Stepanov, Yu.S. (2004). *Konstanty: Slovar' russkoj kul'tury* [Constants: Dictionary of Russian culture] (3rd ed.). Moscow: Akademicheskii proekt. P. 949. (In Russ.) .

¹¹ Yates, F. (2019). *Teatr Mira* [Theatre of the world] (A. Dementyev, Trans., p. 401). Moscow: Tsiolkovskii. (In Russ.).

image of an idea inaccessible to sensual comprehension. Theatrical reformers were painfully sensitive to Plato's definition of the theatre as a place in which “ignorant people are invited to see suffering people”¹².

The history of the theatre evidences many attempts to improve the nature of theatre, but the most convincing of them is considered to be the model of epic theatre of B. Brecht, in which the audience manages to break out of the shackles of identification with the hero through alienation, and the theatre of cruelty of A. Artaud, in which the evaluative distance of the audience in relation to what is happening is completely abolished. The French thinker H. Lefebvre believes that Brecht revolutionized classical theatre by introducing the spirit of poetry of everyday life into it. Despite the fact that the “slogan of the ‘epic theatre’ was first proclaimed ... by the revolutionary innovator of the German scene E. Piscator”¹³, it was B. Brecht who proposed the street scene as the simplest example of epic theatre in which the spectator was a co-participant, a creator, an eyewitness of a street incident, everyday drama or comedy, forced to take sides, to take responsibility for what was happening. This position of the spectator in the theatre fundamentally contradicted the classical emotional empathy with the heroes, suggesting a complete disidentification with them, denying any hint of pirandelloism¹⁴. The alienation effect proposed by B. Brecht, aimed at showing incidents and relationships between people as something unusual, was, according to Lefebvre, designed to philosophically disengage from everyday life through ironic distance. The concepts of the theatre by B. Brecht and A. Artaud demonstrated the undoubted benefit of Plato's anti-theatrical rhetoric, which triggered the processes of rethinking the ideas about the ideal spectator in theatrical art.

¹² Rancière, J. (2018). *Emansipirovannyj zritel'* [The emancipated spectator]. (Originally published in French 2008). Nizhnij Novgorod: Krasnaya lastochka. 128 p. (In Russ.).

¹³ Etkind, E. (1960). *Predislovie. Teatralnaia teoriia Bertolda Brekhtha* [Preface. The theatrical theory of Bertolt Brecht]. In B. Brecht, *On the theater*. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo inostranoi literatury. P. 15. (In Russ.).

¹⁴ Lefebvre, H. (1991). *Critique of everyday life. Vol. I: Introduction*. Verso. P. 17.

Aristotle's theory of mimesis, as set forth in his *Poetics*, provoked an ongoing debate about the legitimacy of considering imitation as the essential criterion of theatrical art. Aristotle's doctrine of genres, on the one hand, served as a basis for attributing comedy, folk theatre and street art to grassroots, rough culture, but, on the other hand, acted as a foundation for researchers' theories of comic art. O.M. Freidenberg, a Russian philologist, folklorist, and antiquity researcher, developed an original theory of parody, taking into account the Aristotelian interpretation of genres. Appealing to the Aristotle's understanding of comedy as "imitation of the worst people", the Russian historian A.G. Kozintsev, the author of the theory of laughter, made an assumption that "the worst people" in comedy are primarily imitated by the author (playwright). The contemporary Slovenian philosopher G. Moder used Aristotle's definition of comedy as a counterthesis and placed comedy at the top of the genre hierarchy, presenting street theatre as an example of manifestation of laughter negativity and materialization of the law of non-ideological interpellation.

A significant contribution to the study of the art of the theatre was made by the French philosophers of the Enlightenment D. Diderot, J.J. Rousseau, F.M. Voltaire. With the help of D. Diderot, "the word 'drama' is used to define ... theatre, where the serious prevails"¹⁵. Diderot's statement that "a 'middle' type of dramatic art is possible between tragedy and comedy"¹⁶ was enthusiastically accepted by Hegel, who saw this idea as a successful opportunity for the coexistence of comedy and tragedy in a dramatic work. No less convincing for theatre theorists and practitioners was Diderot's opposition of the art of experiencing to the art of representation. Even today, the latter usually includes comedy, carnival genres, and street art. In his treatise "The Paradox of the Actor", Diderot indirectly touches upon the topic of street theatre, considering an accidental street incident as a valuable material for the actor's creativity. Soviet

¹⁵ Lehmann, H.T. (2013). *Postdramatisches Theater* [Postdramatic theater] (N. Isaeva, Trans.). Moscow: ABCdesign. Pp. 57–58. (In Russ.).

¹⁶ Anikst, A.A. (1983). *Teoriya dramy ot Gegelya do Marksa* [The theory of drama from Hegel to Marx]. Moscow: Nauka. P. 116. (In Russ.).

psychologist, defectologist, art theorist L.S. Vygotsky continued Diderot's arguments about the paradoxical nature of actor's experiences, focusing on the cultural and historical context of stage emotions. J. Rancière did not put the paradox of the actor first, but the paradox of the spectator, who, in his opinion, usually acts either as an outside observer or an active participant in the performance, but not as a spectator.

In search of improving the theatrical art, J.J. Rousseau came to the conclusion that carnivals and folk festivals represent the ideal examples of theatre. Rousseau's statements about the holiday as a perfect theatrical model were continued in the works of contemporary researchers of French street theatre. F.M. Voltaire made a significant contribution to the development and popularisation of theatrical art, dramaturgy, acting craft, being one of the founders of home, amateur theatre. Voltaire considered the theatre as a herald of morality; however, he believed that at all times people are always hungry for rough entertainment, one of which is a spectacle.

At the end of the 19th century, the authority of the theatre was shaken when F. Nietzsche gave critical assessment of the work of the composer R. Wagner. In his work *Der Fall Wagner*, the philosopher vehemently opposed the theatrocracy of art, calling R. Wagner not a composer, but an actor, being tantamount to a liar and a pretender.

At the beginning of the 20th century in Russia, actors, musicians, and theatrical avant-gardists paid greater attention to the folk theater, the elements of play, the masked comedy, primarily seeking to renew the theatrical art, to breathe new life into it. N.N. Evreinov saw options for expanding the boundaries of theater in the theatricalization of life, V.E. Meyerhold — in the reconstruction of the theater of masks and low farce. The founders of the Factory of the Eccentric Actor G.M. Kozintsev and L.Z. Trauberg comprehended the laws of eccentricity of theatre and cinema during this period. K.S. Stanislavsky, who defended the principles of truth to nature in theatrical art, takes part in life of the *The Bat* cabaret theatre by actors of the Moscow Art Theatre, carefully peering into the

experiments of V.E. Meyerhold in the field of grotesque, representation of the low farce art on the stage. The key position of Stanislavsky's system "I am in the suggested circumstances" became the foundation for the development by M.A. Chekhov of his own method of playing, based on the opposite principle "my character is within the suggested circumstances", on which, in particular, any low farce action, *Petrushka* theatre, masked comedy, etc. were built. However, it was not only the desire to renew the theatre that made theatrical figures turn their attention to street forms of art, but also the desire to make them an effective way of involving the masses in revolutionary processes. In particular, the forms of fit-up, low farce, circus, play, fair, cabaret, and clowning were actively used by V.E. Meyerhold, N.N. Evreinov, S.E. Radlov, A.R. Kugel and others in revolutionary education and enlightenment of the masses¹⁷.

In the first half of the 20th century J. Huizinga noted that, despite the fact that the metaphor "All the world's a stage" is extremely popular, it goes back "to Plato's ideas" about morality¹⁸. Following J. Huizinga, French anthropologist R. Caillois called professional actors artisans rather than players for whom the play represents "free and voluntary activity"¹⁹.

In the latter half of the 20th century, the second, after the 1920s, campaign against the theatrical establishment began in which street theatre took an active part. E. Barba recalls that "in Poland in the early 1960s, the authorities dictated the norms of official art. The number of visits was a sign of the "health" of artistic socialism"²⁰. French stationary theatres became empty dramatically during this period, as former and potential theatregoers rushed to the street where life was in

¹⁷ See: Murray, N. (2016). Street theatre as propaganda: Mass performances and spectacles in Petrograd in 1920. *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, 36(3), 230–241.

¹⁸ Huizinga, J. (2011). *Chelovek igrayushchij: opyt opredeleniya igrovogo elementa kul'tury* [Homo Ludens: A study of the play-element in culture] / Sost., predisl. i per. s niderl. D.V. Sil'vestrova; Komment., ukazatel' D.E. Haritonovicha. SPb.: Izd-vo Ivana Limbaha. P. 28. (In Russ.).

¹⁹ Caillois, R. (2007). *Igry i lyudi; Stat'i i esse po sociologii kul'tury* [Man, play, and games. Articles and essays in the sociology of culture] (S. N. Zenkin, Trans.). Moscow: OGI. P. 45. (In Russ.).

²⁰ Barba, E. (2008). *Bumazhnoe kanoë: Traktat o Teatral'noj Antropologii* [Paper canoe: A guide to theatre anthropology] (M. Aleksandrovskaya, Trans.). SPb.: SPbGATI. P. 151. (In Russ.).

full swing – workers, students, etc. attended protests. Comparison of the spectacle with a form of dead society, which turns a person into a commodity, is becoming popular among the left-wing radical youth of France. Representatives of the theatrical establishment in India called the street theatre “gutter theatre”. Commenting on the phenomenon of the popularity of street theatre in India, N.S. Jain, the founder of the national school of Indian drama, complained about the growing number of theatre practitioners who believed that street theatre was the best form of theatre of the present and the future. At that time, many reformers of the theatre saw an ideal theatre as the theatre of (co)participation, the criteria of which corresponded to the “street theatre”, capable of returning the theatre to its origins, as well as “achieving a direct socio-political effect, and combining cultural animation and social manifestation”²¹. Even the representatives of the “creative opposition”²² of the 1960–70s, such as P. Brook and J. Grotowski, who sought “to preserve the ‘theatre...’ in its sovereignty from reality”²³, went “beyond the profession”²⁴. P. Brook, who believed that “every attempt to revitalize the theatre has gone back to the popular source”²⁵, founded an international troupe of actors to study the archetypal nature of Homo Ludens. J. Grotowski tried to “overcome... – the conflict between life and culture”²⁶. It should be noted that even E. Barba, completely absorbed in the study of the nature of the actor's pre-expressive behavior, did not deny that the main merit of all the innovators of theatrical art is that they gave new meaning to social relations.

²¹ Pavis, P. (1991). *Slovar' teatra* [Dictionary of theatre] (K. Razlogov, Trans.). Progress. P. 361. (In Russ.).

²² Shvydkoy, M. E. (1992). Piter Bruk i Ezhi Grotovskij. Opyt parallel'nogo issledovaniya [Peter Brook and Jerzy Grotowski. The experience of parallel research]. In *Theatre of Grotowski: Theatre, laboratory, experiences, meetings*. Moscow: GITIS. P. 121. (In Russ.).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Brook, P. (1976). *Pustoe prostranstvo* [The empty space] (O. S. Rodman & I. S. Tsybal, Trans.). Moscow: Progress. P. 48. (In Russ.).

²⁶ Shvydkoy, M. E. (1992). Piter Bruk i Ezhi Grotovskij. Opyt parallel'nogo issledovaniya [Peter Brook and Jerzy Grotowski. The experience of parallel research]. In *Theatre of Grotowski: Theatre, laboratory, experiences, meetings*. Moscow: GITIS. P. 133. (In Russ.).

In the 20th century, a growing interest in street forms of theatre art was accompanied by an increasing attention to the problems of street crime, street subcultures, etc. In the first half of the 20th century, American sociologists focused on street gangs, vandalism, homelessness, and juvenile delinquency. F. Thrasher studied street gangs in Chicago. W.F. White analysed street communities and groups and was one of the first to use the participant observation method.

In the second half of the twentieth century, E. Anderson addressed the problems of teenage violence in African-American communities. He considered interpersonal and intergroup respect as a form of street social capital, forming the so-called “code of the street”, thereby preventing and avoiding street conflicts. In 2021, the British International academic publisher Routledge published a handbook on street culture²⁷. J. Ross, one of the co-authors of the handbook, proposes a model of street culture, the components of which are street capital, competition, mass media, popular industries and Internet technologies. T. Frederick argues that social networks are the driving force behind the development of street culture among young people, broadcasting their images to a wide audience and ensuring informal interaction between members of street communities and unions.

The work of M.M. Bakhtin largely stimulated foreign and Russian theatre artists to go beyond the traditionally delineated boundaries of the interpretation of theatrical art. M.M. Bakhtin’s work on the carnival culture of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance did not contribute to the emergence of a theory of the origin and development of modern street theatre in Russia, however, it engendered doubt in the Russian theatrical milieu regarding the primacy of the legitimate drama over the empty entertainment of street art. In addition, Bakhtin’s concept highlighted the caricaturedness of previous attempts to exploit the universal codes of popular laughter culture in the “Soviet carnival”. As is well known, the attempts of Soviet-era directors to use the carnival as a propaganda tool reached the point of absurdity. An example is the incident that occurred during a public meeting of art

²⁷ *Routledge handbook of street culture*. Routledge, 2021.

workers devoted to the artistic design of demonstrations in Russia in 1932. One of the speakers passionately insisted on the need in the future to “ensure that ... in October Days” “there would be more carnival” next to the mausoleum of Vladimir Lenin²⁸. M.M. Bakhtin’s book about F. Rabelais became a reference book of Soviet conceptualists. However, as M. Kantor noted, the conceptualists identified themselves with wandering students, troubadours, and jesters to such an extent that they firmly internalized from Bakhtin's works only what was not in them: to laugh everywhere, always, and at everything.

Events of street theatrical culture in the era of perestroika and the post-perestroika period became the subject of Russian and foreign research at the end of the 20th – the beginning of the 21st century. T.Y. Smirnyagina uses the concept of carnival culture by M.M. Bakhtin to analyze the events taking place in street theater culture and Russian Pantomime Theatre at the end of the 20th century, referring to the work of the theatre groups *Licedei*, *Black SKYwhite*, *Russian Engineering Theatre AKHE*. J. Kim sees the “Street Theatres of the World” program, organized as part of the Third Theater Olympics in Moscow, as a carnival phenomenon. Theatre critic Z. Zaretskaya pays attention to the phenomenon of independent theatres in Russia in the 80–90s of the last century. E.V. Markova’s articles are devoted to the creativity of the plastic theater *Terra Mobile*, which is one of the legendary independent theatres of the 80–90s of the last century along with *DO-Theatre*, *DEREVO*, *Licedei*, *Formal Theatre*, and *AKHE Theatre*, using pantomime, street break-dance, clowning, eccentricity, and rap as expressive means.

A substantive analysis of Russian street theatre is presented in the periodicals *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, *Novosti Podmoskovya*, *Shik magazine*, *Kommersant*, *Afisha*, *Prazdnik*, *Izvestia*, *Teatr*, *Smena*, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, and *Petersburg Theatre Magazine*. Russian street theatre is considered in articles written by N. Tabachnikova, V. Polunin, Yu. Berladin, E. Andrianova, Yu.

²⁸ *O hudozhestvennom oformlenii demonstracij: Itogi obshchemoskovskogo soveshchaniya izorabotnikov* [On the artistic design of demonstrations: Results of the All-Moscow meeting of art workers] (1932). Moscow: OGIZ-IZOGIZ. P. 14. (In Russ.).

Grigoryevskaya, Zh. Zaretskaya, N. Sidlin, I. Terentyeva, A. Filippov, O. Galakhova, R. Dolzhansky, D. Goder, G. Zaslavsky, V. Silyunas, A. Kazarina, Yu. Kleiman, N. Iglamov, A. Shishkina, E. Strogaleva. Articles by V. Novikova, E. Kovalskaya, and Yu. Matveeva are devoted to the Russian fire theatre.

Today, contemporary researchers take an interest in street music culture, which is etymologically justified, since a wandering artist was originally a dancer, clown, magician, musician, and acrobat. The works of L.A. Menshikov, S.P. Sorokina, S.S. Sokovikov, and E.A. Kaminskaya can be highlighted among the works devoted to the study of the carnival-square, parodic nature of street music art.

Russian researchers consider street theatre art as an alternative to institutionalized art in urban space, based on the following foreign concepts: public theatre, street art, outside theatre, location theatre, site specific theatre, infiltration art, theatre in situ. M.E. Vilchinskaya-Butenko considers street theater in the context of street art. E.A. Kartseva analyzes street theatre from the perspective of theoretical trends in urbanism, using the foreign concept of “placemaking”. I. Selezneva-Reder’s articles are devoted to contemporary Russian street theater festivals, noting a certain influence of foreign street theatre culture on them. U.S. Shvindt focuses on the problem of the difference between the perception of street art by experts in the theory and practice of street art and city residents.

E.V. Bastrygina, A.I. Vakhrameeva, and E.P. Tagiltseva emphasize the regional and value aspects of ethno-cultural identity in street theater, considering street theatre as a strategy for preserving cultural authenticity. D.A. Sofina and L.A. Polynova pay attention to the comparative analysis of Russian and foreign street theatre culture. T.N. Fedorenko sees street theatre as an effective tool for preserving the historical and cultural memory of the city.

Interest of theatre critics in borrowing forms of foreign art by Russian street theatre contrasts with a noticeable lack of studies devoted to the analysis of continuity between the generation of Soviet street theatre artists, theatre artists who

worked in perestroika, the post-perestroika period and representatives of the younger generation of street artists.

There is a deficiency in theoretical and methodological works concerning the issues of artistic, play specificity of Russian street theatre art of the beginning of the XXI century, acting techniques of the modern street theatre actor, the influence of street theatre art on the professional and personal development of student-directors and student-actors. The last aspect is represented by the teaching and methodical manuals of A.Yu. Pavlov.

Researchers have been studying a wide range of issues of street culture, including the cultural and historical transformation of theatrical art and the borrowing of forms of foreign street art by the Russian street theatre, however, the authors omitted the fundamental issues related to the mission of the street theatre to preserve a person capable of voluntary laughter self-denial, to protect the species Homo Sapiens from puerile seriousness fraught with decarnivalization, i.e., the outgrowth of the play into genuine aggression.

The object of the research is contemporary culture.

The subject of the research is contemporary street theater in Russia.

Following the topic and problem, the geographical and chronological boundaries of the research were outlined as covering Russia in the 20th – early 21st centuries.

The aim of the dissertation research is to identify the peculiarities of the genesis, theory and practice of contemporary Russian street theatre. The aim of the research determined the following ***research objectives***:

1. to determine direct or indirect effects of philosophical concepts on the author's interpretations of street theatre;
2. to make an analytical review of credible theatrical concepts that have influenced the understanding of the essence of street theatre art;
3. to critically analyze modern concepts of carnival culture applied in the study of street theatre;

4. to identify the potential of research in the field of play, laughter and the comic in the study of the agonal nature of street theatre in Russia
5. to trace juvenile tendencies in contemporary street theatre;
6. to characterize the cultural and historical features of the formation of child-centeredness of street theatre in Russia in the 20th – early 21st centuries;
7. to investigate how the archaic laughter perception of the world manifests itself in street theatre;
8. to determine the contribution of the clown figure in the formation of street theatre in Russia;
9. to select practices that realize the recreational function of street theatre.

The hypothesis of the study implies that street theatre in Russia, formed in the 20th century as a heterotopia, represents the signs of the theatrical system and the symbolism of the institution of childhood, performing an agonal function, generating traditional images of juvenility in order to deconstruct, carnivalize and create neo-juvenile identities.

Theoretical and methodological foundations of the research. The research focuses on contemporary street theatre in Russia; therefore, the main theoretical and methodological approach is cultural. The applied system approach implies the analysis of the essence of street theatre as a system and directions of its development. The complex approach involves the analysis of authentic texts, descriptive and comparative analysis in the study of literary, memoir and Internet sources, photo, audio, and video materials. The axiological approach was used for analyzing the socio-cultural phenomena of street theatre. Studying traditional forms of theatrical art and new tendencies of street theatre was based on the historical and chronological method, the method of reconstruction and retrospective analysis. The ontological approach was applied for exploring objective factors in the development of street theatre in Russia. The phenomenological approach served to analyze specific artefacts of street theatre culture. The synchronicity method used for considering street theatre enabled its

carnival-play constants to be established. Focus on the agonal nature of theatrical art makes an evolutionary approach to the study of play, laughter and the juvenile nature of street theatre preferable for study.

The following theories and concepts were used as the most important methodological guidelines: Aristotle's theory of mimesis; J. Huizinga's cultural concept of play; L.S. Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory; M. Mead's typology of culture; M. Foucault's concept of heterotopia; M.M. Bakhtin's concept of chronotope and theory of carnivalization; Yu.M. Lotman's concept of culture as a secondary modelling system; B.F. Porshnev's theory of the inhibitory dominant; A.G. Kozintsev's metasemantic theory of laughter and humor; N.N. Evreinov's theory of theatricalization of life; J. Ranciere's concept of the emancipated spectator; G. Bachelard's concept of the poetic space.

Source base of the research

The aim and objectives of the research stipulated a diverse range of sources to be used for writing the thesis.

The first group of sources includes the works of philosophers Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, J.J. Rousseau, D. Diderot, L. Althusser, G. Deleuze, M. Foucault, J. Baudrillard, J. Ranciere, M.M. Bakhtin, who had a direct and indirect influence on the formation of ideas about theatrical culture in general and street theatre in particular.

The second group of sources involves the works of theorists and practitioners of the theatre K.S. Stanislavsky, V.E. Meyerhold, M.A. Chekhov, N.N. Evreinov, A. Artaud, B. Brecht, G.M. Kozintsev, A. Boal, R. Schechner, E. Barba, J. Grotowski, etc., whose artistic explorations are valuable in the study of theatrical art of the 20th century. This group includes the works of cultural and theater historians O.M. Freidenberg, P. Pavis, H.T. Lehmann, L. Tikhvinskaya, M.E. Shvydkoy, D. Calder, E. Fischer-Lichte, etc., shedding light on the peculiarities of the genesis of street theatre in Russia and abroad.

The third group of sources comprises studies by J. Huizinga, R. Caillois, H. Plessner, N.V. Ponyrko, Yu.N. Tynyanov, V.B. Shklovsky, B.M. Eikhenbaum,

A.G. Kozintsev and others, whose potential appears essential in the study of the agonial and laughter nature of contemporary Russian street theatre. This group also includes works of K.I. Chukovsky, T.B. Shchepanskaya, L. Abrahamian, L.M. Ivleva, T.A. Bernshtam, Yu.A. Artemova, P. McGee, V.T. Kudryavtsev, who study the play and laughter of children, adolescents and youth to explain the juvenile trends in the development of contemporary street theatre in Russia.

The fourth group of sources consists of official websites, Internet pages, Internet channels, Internet groups of street theatre artists, video and photo materials of street theatre performances, programs of street theatre festivals, posters, press articles, descriptions of performances, questionnaires, interviews, materials from personal archives, instrumental in compiling creative portraits of contemporary Russian street theatres.

This group of sources included official websites and Internet pages containing information about theatres *Licedei*, *Terra Mobile*, *Engineering Theatre AKHE*, etc., which had a significant impact on the development of street theatre art in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, as well as about contemporary Russian street theatres *The State Street Theatre of Kartonia*, *The Theatre Whose Name Cannot Be Named*, *Ognennie Ludi*, *Mr. Pejo's Travelling Puppets*, *Tall Brothers*, *Plasticine Rain*, *Eskizy v Prostranstve*, *Larambla Street Theater*, *AspectR*, *Theatre-EX*, *Antikvarnyy Cirk*, *SoLu Theatre*, *Pampush Clown Theatre*, *WOW Theatre* etc.

The same group of sources includes information from Internet sources about the All-Russian Street Theatre Festival in Arkhangelsk, International Festival of Theatre Art and Creativity "Bright People", Street Theatre Festival "Yelagin Park", Street Theatre Festival "Golden Carousel", Street Arts Festival "Ulitka", street theatre festival "Invasion of the Unusual", street theatre festival "PermInterFest", street theatre festival "FUTUR", street theatre festival "Belgorodsky Arbat", International street theatre and performance festival 'Vnesten', International street theatre festival "Dreams of the streets", street theatre festival "ArtPlaneta", festival of street artists "Aida Fest", International festival of street art "Plastilinovy Dozhd", festival of street theatres "Golden Weekend",

festival of street theatres “Na Karpovke”, International festival of street arts “Teatralny Dvorik”, festival of street art “Live Streets”, festival “UuU”, festival of street theatres “City of Happiness”, festival of street art “Peredvizhnik”, All-Russian festival of street theatres “Light Wings”, All-Russian festival of street theatres ‘Theatres without Roofs’, International festival of street theatres “Fluger”, All-Russian festival of street theatres and outdoor theaters, festival of street theatres “Universal Carnival of Fire”, etc.

The scientific novelty of the dissertation research comprises the following:

1. the need to revise the theoretical approaches used in the study of contemporary street theatre in Russia has been reasoned;
2. studies in the field of laughter, humor and the comic, valuable for exploring contemporary street theatre in Russia, have been analyzed;
3. negative and positive tendencies of puerilization of street theatre have been revealed;
4. it has been proved that the genesis of street theatre is connected with the processes of heterochrony, as a result of which this phenomenon represents heterotopia;
5. the meaning of modern concepts and terms of carnival culture used in the contemporary interpretation of carnival culture has been clarified;
6. the recreational function of street theatre has been demonstrated on the examples of online and offline acting communities, rap battle, fire theatre, the project “Fools on the Volga”, festival, “Village Theater”;
7. the common agonal principle in the genesis of the Russian rap battle and fire theatre has been investigated;
8. the heuristic significance of using the concepts of “carnival potential of street theatre”, and “neo-juvenile nature of images of contemporary street theatre” has been proved.

Main provisions to be defended:

1. Street theatre in Russia, formed in the 20th century as a heterotopia, represents the signs of the theatrical system and the symbolism of the institution of

childhood, performing an agonal function, generating traditional images of juvenility in order to deconstruct, carnivalize and create neo-juvenile identities.

2. Contemporary street theatre in Russia is a nomadic recreation emerging in juvenile-oriented professional communities of actors.

3. Street theatre in Russia, based on serious forms of life and art, exposes them to travesty.

4. Contemporary street theatre in Russia is a recreation that performs a compensatory and sublimation function in theatrical culture.

5. Laughter and humor, located at the intersection of biology and culture, act as the basis of play and imagery in street theatre culture.

6. The contemporary culture of street theatre in Russia is influenced by the processes of cultural puerilization.

7. The subculture of the Russian rap duel, being a part of the street theatre culture, influences it.

8. Textbook examples of the implementation of compensatory-sublimation function in street theatre culture include such recreations as the projects “Fools on the Volga” and “Village Theatre”; online and offline communities of actors; festival; rap battle; fire theatre.

9. The art of clowning contributes to the formation of neo-juvenile tendencies in street theatre culture, restoring the biocultural balance of laughter and seriousness in human culture, directing juvenalization in the direction of humorous meta-reflection.

10. It is the figure of a clown in the contemporary street theatre that is the representative of the agonal essence of man.

11. A voluntary, playful duel with oneself and its representation in clowning is an indicator of the evolution of street theatre culture, which is expressed in the transition from the stage of child-centeredness to atonality.

Main research results:

1. The heterochronic origin of contemporary street theatre in Russia, which led to its heterotopicity, has been proved²⁹.
2. The potential of research in the field of play, laughter and the comic in the study of street theatre in Russia has been identified³⁰.
3. Juvenile tendencies in contemporary street theatre have been recorded and characterized³¹.
4. Philosophical and theatrical concepts underlying the contemporary street theatre have been analytically reviewed³².
5. Modern concepts of carnival culture applied in the study of street theatre have been critically analysed³³.

²⁹ Semenova, E.A. (2023a). Puerilizm v aktyorskoj professii [Puerilism in the profession of actor]. In *Proceedings of the All-Russian scientific and practical conference "Problems of art psychology"*, Moscow. FSC PIR; Lomonosov Moscow State University. Pp. 211–212, 215. (In Russ.); Ochnaya i zaochnaya diskussiya vokrug mezhdunarodnoj bahtinskoj nauchno-prakticheskoj konferencii «Ulichnyj teatr protiv teatra voennyh dejstvij» [Personal and correspondence discussion of international bakhtin theoretical and practical conference "Street Theatre vs. Theatre of the Military Actions"]. *Galactica Media: Journal of Media Studies*, 3(4). Pp. 215, 217. (In Russ.).

³⁰ Semenova, E.A. (2017b). Karnaval'naya priroda addicii [The carnival nature of addiction]. *Pedagogika iskusstva*, 3. Pp. 28–35. (In Russ.); Semenova, E.A. (2018d). Ulichnyj teatr v sovremennom mediaprostranstve kak reducirovannaya forma karnaval'noj ploshchadi [The street theatre in the contemporary media space as a reduced form of the carnival plaza]. *Nauka televidenya*, 14(2). Pp. 67–68. (In Russ.); Semenova, E.A. (2018b). Psychophysiological Aspects of Aggression and Laughter in the Contemporary Culture of Russian Rap Battle. *Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Research*, 10(7). Pp. 1873–1874; Semenova, E.A. (2019d). "Cifrovoj smekh" v XXI veke: pedagogicheskij aspekt izucheniya problemy ["Digital laughter" in the 21st century: A pedagogical aspect of studying the problem]. *Pedagogika iskusstva*, 1. Pp. 51–53. (In Russ.); Semenova, E.A. (2023b). Teorii yumora v izuchenii figury klouna [The theories of humour in the study of the clown figure]. *Art & Culture Studies*, 1. Pp. 36–40. (In Russ.); Semenova, E.A. (2022). Vklad Zh. Delyoza v razrabotku koncepta «umor protiv ironii» [Deleuze's contribution to the development of the concept "humor vs. irony"]. *Logiko-filosofskie studii*, 20(3). Pp. 307–314. (In Russ.).

³¹ Semenova, E.A. (2019a). A clown's laughter specificity: From "anesthesia of heart" to "synesthesia of love". *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 11(2). P. 6, 7; Semenova, E.A. (2019f). Ot balagana do hajpa (problemy sovremennoj internet-kommunikacii) [From farce to hype (issues of modern Internet communication)]. *Nauka televidenya*, 15(2). P. 57. (In Russ.).

³² Semenova, E.A. (2019i). Teatr postupka M.M. Bahtina [Theatre of act of M.M. Bakhtin]. *Yaroslavskij pedagogicheskij vestnik*, 4(109). P.215. (In Russ.); Semenova, E.A. (2020g). Review on the International Bakhtin Conference "Street Theatre vs Theatre of Military Actions" (16–18 October 2019, Moscow) and Collection of scientific proceedings 2020. *Southern Semiotic Review*, 12. Pp. 46–48.

6. It has been proved that the low farce as a form of manifestation of the archaic laughter worldview is actualized in the laughter behavior of the members of the online and offline communities of street theatre actors³⁴.

7. The common agonal beginning in the genesis of Russian rap battle and fire theatre, which are a part of street theatre culture³⁵.

8. The influence of the clown figure in the formation of street theatre in Russia has been investigated³⁶.

9. The puerilist tendencies of contemporary Russian street theatre were traced. It has been proved that the ability to create representations of juvenile types and images is one of the professional competencies of a contemporary actor of street theatre in Russia³⁷.

³³ Semenova, E.A. (2023c). Ulichnyj teatr v kontekste zarubezhnyh koncepcij karnaval'noj kul'tury [Street theatre in the context of foreign concepts of carnival culture]. *National Psychological Journal*, 18(3). Pp. 28, 32. (In Russ.); Semenova, E.A. (2021c). Ochnaya i zaohnaya diskussiya vokrug mezhdunarodnoj bahtinskoj nauchno-prakticheskoj konferencii «Ulichnyj teatr protiv teatra voennyh dejstvij» [Personal and correspondence discussion of international bakhtin theoretical and practical conference “Street Theatre vs. Theatre of the Military Actions”]. *Galactica Media: Journal of Media Studies*, 3(4). Pp. 214–215. (In Russ.).

³⁴ Semenova, E.A. (2019f). Ot balagana do hajpa (problemy sovremennoj internet-kommunikacii) [From farce to hype (issues of modern Internet communication)]. *Nauka televidenya*, 15(2). Pp. 53, 55, 56. (In Russ.).

³⁵ Semenova, E.A. (2018d). Ulichnyj teatr v sovremennom mediaprostranstve kak reducirovannaya forma karnaval'noj ploshchadi [The street theatre in the contemporary media space as a reduced form of the carnival plaza]. *Nauka televidenya*, 14(2). Pp. 62, 66. (In Russ.); Semenova, E.A. (2019h). Smekh v Rossijskoj molodyozhnoj kul'ture rep-battla [Laughter in the Russian youth culture of rap battle]. *Yaroslavskij pedagogicheskij vestnik*, 1(106). P. 237. (In Russ.).

³⁶ Semenova, E.A. (2019c). Carnival in the absence of the actor. *Southern Semiotic Review*, 11(3). Pp. 38, 39, 43–45; Semenova, E.A. (2019a). A clown's laughter specificity: From “anesthesia of heart” to “synesthesia of love”. *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 11(2). P. 6; Semenova, E.A. (2020d). Hospital clowning in the resocialization of adolescent girls and youth with health restrictions revista inclusions. *Revista Inclusiones*, 7. P. 473; Semenova, E.A. (2021b). Kul'turotvorcheskij potencial iskusstva klounady v formirovanii pedagogicheskikh kompetencij epohi massmedia [Cultural potential of the clown art in the formation of pedagogical competences in the mass media era]. *Yaroslavskij pedagogicheskij vestnik*, 5(122). Pp. 252–253. (In Russ.); Semenova, E.A. (2021f). The literary genre of a “Diary of Anorexia”: Aspects of artistic semiotics and the practice of thanatology. *Southern Semiotic Review*, 14. P. 27; Semenova, E.A. (2023b). Teorii yumora v izuchenii figury klouna [The theories of humour in the study of the clown figure]. *Art & Culture Studies*, 1. Pp. 41–42. (In Russ.).

³⁷ Semenova, E.A. (2019a). A clown's laughter specificity: From “anesthesia of heart” to “synesthesia of love”. *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 11(2). P. 6, 7; Semenova, E. A. (2023a). Puerilizm v aktyorskoj professii [Puerilism in the profession of

10. The recreational function of street theatre has been demonstrated on the example of the online and offline communities of actors³⁸, Russian rap battle³⁹, fire theatre⁴⁰, project “Fools on the Volga”⁴¹, festivals⁴², and “Village Theatre”⁴³.

Theoretical value of the research

The theoretical value of the research consists in proving the effectiveness of transposing the terms heterotopia, heterochrony, chronotope, neoteny, exaptation,

actor]. In *Proceedings of the All-Russian scientific and practical conference “Problems of art psychology”*, Moscow. FSC PIR; Lomonosov Moscow State University. Pp. 215–216. (In Russ.).

³⁸ Semenova, E.A. (2019f). Ot balagana do hajpa (problemy sovremennoj internet-kommunikacii) [From farce to hype (issues of modern Internet communication)]. *Nauka televidenya*, 15(2). Pp. 50–56. (In Russ.); Dukov, E.V., Evallyo, V.D., Semenova, E.A., Magidovich, M.L., Gurkina, N.S., Kazyuchits, M.F., Viren, D.G., & Smolev, D.D. (2021). Obrazy mashin i tekhniki Avtorskie interpretatsii [Images of Machines and Technology Author’s Interpretations]. *Art & Culture Studies*, 4. P. 409. (In Russ.).

³⁹ Semenova, E.A. (2020e). Kloun vs reper: (invektivy v onlajn i oflajn rep-poedinkah) [Clown vs rapper: Invectives in online and offline rap battles]. *Nauka televidenya*, 16(3). Pp. 94, 98. (In Russ.).

⁴⁰ Semenova, E.A. (2018d). Ulichnyj teatr v sovremennom mediaprostranstve kak reducirovannaya forma karnaval'noj ploshchadi [The street theatre in the contemporary media space as a reduced form of the carnival plaza]. *Nauka televidenya*, 14(2). Pp. 66–67, 69–70. (In Russ.); Semenova, E.A. (2024c). Istoriya ognevnyh zabav v Rossii s XVI po nachalo XXI veka: ot poteshnyh ognij do ognevogo teatra [The history of fire entertainment in Russia from the 16th to the beginning of the 21st century: from fun fires to fire theater] In *Dvadcatye Denis'evskie chteniya. Materialy mezhdunarodnoj nauchno-prakticheskoy konferencii po bibliotekovedeniyu, knigovedeniyu i problemam bibliotekno-informacionnoj deyatelnosti, g. Oryol, 18-19 dekabrya 2023 g. / Departament kul'tury Orl. obl.; Orl. obl. nauch. univers. publ. b-ka im. I.A. Bunina; Orl. gos. in-t kul'tury; [red.-sost. N.Z. Shahotina]. Oryol, 2024. Pp. 307, 310–311. (In Russ.)*

⁴¹ Semenova, E.A. (2018d). Ulichnyj teatr v sovremennom mediaprostranstve kak reducirovannaya forma karnaval'noj ploshchadi [The street theatre in the contemporary media space as a reduced form of the carnival plaza]. *Nauka televidenya*, 14(2). P. 67. (In Russ.); Semenova, E.A. (2023a). Puerilizm v aktyorskoj professii [Puerilism in the profession of actor]. In *Proceedings of the All-Russian scientific and practical conference “Problems of art psychology”*, Moscow. FSC PIR; Lomonosov Moscow State University. Pp. 214, 215. (In Russ.).

⁴² Semenova, E.A. (2018d). Ulichnyj teatr v sovremennom mediaprostranstve kak reducirovannaya forma karnaval'noj ploshchadi [The street theatre in the contemporary media space as a reduced form of the carnival plaza]. *Nauka televidenya*, 14(2). P. 62. (In Russ.); Semenova, E.A. (2021d). Populyarnost' festivalej ulichnyh teatrov v Rossii kak fenomen molodyozhnoj kul'tury [Popularity of street theater festivals in Russia as a phenomenon of youth culture]. In L.G. Savenkova (Ed.), *Yusov Readings. Socialization of students in the integrated festival and competition space: proceedings of the 21st International Scientific and Practical Conference*. Moscow: IAEaCS RAE. Pp. 58–59. (In Russ.).

⁴³ Semenova, E.A. (2018d). Ulichnyj teatr v sovremennom mediaprostranstve kak reducirovannaya forma karnaval'noj ploshchadi [The street theatre in the contemporary media space as a reduced form of the carnival plaza]. *Nauka televidenya*, 14(2). P. 66. (In Russ.); Semenova, E.A. (2018a). Carnival environment and educational tourism: Ways to develop creative abilities of students attending institutes of art education and cultural studies. *Opcion*, 34(85). Pp. 2029, 2030–2035.

biased activity, puerilism, play aggression, inhibitory dominance, etc., interpreted by culturologists, philosophers, anthropologists, to the humanitarian fields of knowledge. The application of M. Foucault's concept of heterotopia in the study of the genesis of street theatre in Russia showed street theatre as a heterotopic formation that has taken root in the body of theatre culture and performs the neotenic function of travesty adult scenarios of personal development. A.G. Kozintsev's theory of laughter and humor substantiates that the figure of the clown acts as a representative of the agonal essence of street theatre culture. Bakhtin's notion of "chronotope" used in the study of street theatre makes it obvious that street theatre is aimed at poeticizing, novelization of reality, her artistic defamiliarisation through laughter narrative. The narrator in street theater, represented in the mask of a comedian, jester, clown, opens the entrance to a special space and time, characterized by a high concentration of ostensive laughter communication, built according to the laws of comic art. Humor as a double-voiced word is the main language of street theatre. The narrative type in street theatre departs from the classical type of narrative, accumulating the potential for generating laughter narratives. The proposed notion of "carnival potential of street theatre" is instrumental in distinguishing a carnival-play core in street theatre.

The concept of "neo-juvenal nature of images of contemporary street theatre" proposes neo-juvenal tendencies as the reason for the popularity of the clown figure in contemporary street theatre. J. Huizinga's concept of "puerilism", which means a cultural phenomenon that has lost its agonal, play origin, enables the most problematic areas of street theatre culture to be scanned in order to outline a cultural strategy for reducing the risks of developing puerilization of street theatre. At the same time, the application of the criterion of puerilization to contemporary street theatre in Russia requires adjustment, since this art is undergoing a process of transition from the stages of child-centeredness to agonality.

Practical significance of the research

The results of the research can be used in the study of courses “Cultural Studies”, “History of Art”, “History of Theatre” for students of higher and secondary educational institutions, as well as in the compilation of reference books and encyclopaedias. The research materials are applicable for compiling lecture courses on carnival culture and street theatre. The results of the research can be used by theatre critics, art historians, cultural experts, and philologists in the study of modern modifications of square genres.

The “Humor versus Irony” methodology developed by the applicant has been successfully tested at Dostoevsky Omsk State University, Smolensk State Institute of Arts, Oryol State Institute of Culture. The methodology was tested in the framework of the regional cluster of interdisciplinary research “The potential of the art of clowning in the development of actor's and director's skills” (Omsk, February 9–10, 2018). The cluster was attended by students of the Faculty of Culture and Arts of Dostoevsky Omsk State University, Regional College of Culture and Art, Omsk Regional Multidisciplinary College, teachers, directors and actors of street theatres. The methodology was used as the basis for the master class “The potential of carnival in the formation of the personality of the actor and director”, organized within the framework of the International scientific-practical cluster “Theory and practice of continuous art education in modern socio-cultural conditions: Russia – France” (Smolensk, June 19, 2018). Students and teachers of the Smolensk State Institute of Arts took part in the master class. The methodology was also tested during the master class “Principles of clowning, carnival, street theater in the system of education of actors and directors”, organized as part of the International Round Table “Body Culture in Plastic Development and Human Education” (Orel, May 21, 2018). The master class was attended by students and teachers of the Oryol State Institute of Culture. The methodology has demonstrated high efficiency in formation of creative competencies of student actors and student directors in the process of mastering carnival speech genres and can be used in classes on stage speech, actor’s and director’s skills.

The theoretical sections of the research devoted to the history of the development of street theatre in Russia can become the basis for the development of author's advanced training courses for actors, directors of theatrical performances and mass holidays. The creative portraits a basis for the development of pedagogical methods aimed at mastering the specifics of street theatre art by students of universities of culture and art in the process of practical activity.

The results of the longitudinal study of the work of the *Theatre-EX* troupe described in the research can be used in further studies of the anthropology of the profession of "actor of street theatre of fire". The results of the survey of street theatre workers presented in the research can be used in the study of the professional identity of a contemporary street theatre actor in Russia. The materials of the section of the dissertation research devoted to street theatre festivals can be useful in the development of cultural policy strategies for the regions of the Russian Federation on the basis of the formation of festival recreations on their territory.

Approbation of the research findings

The main provisions of the research are reflected in scientific publications and reports, monographs, educational and methodological recommendations, collections of materials of scientific and practical conferences edited by the applicant, expert activities, participation in television programs, performances, implementation of own scientific, cultural and educational projects.

1. The author's publications on the topic of research are as follows:

Monographs:

1. Semenova, E.A. (2017). *Karnavalnyi instinkt v evoliutsii detstva* [The carnival instinct in the evolution of childhood]. Moscow: Sam Poligrafist. 166 p. (In Russ.).
2. Semenova, E.A. (2018). *Ulichnyj teatr kak universal'noe prostranstvo formirovaniya karnaval'noj kul'tury lichnosti: ot detstva k vzroslosti* [Street theater as a universal space of formation of carnival culture of personality: from childhood to adulthood]. Moscow: Sam Poligrafist. 168 p. (In Russ.).

3. Semenova, E.A. (2019). *Potencial karnaval'nyh vidov deyatel'nosti v formirovanii tvorcheskoj individual'nosti mladshih shkol'nikov* [Potential of carnival activities in the formation of creative individuality of junior schoolchildren]. Moscow: Sam Poligrafist. 187 p. (In Russ.).

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All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference with International participation “Continuity in the continuous ethnocultural and ethnoartistic educational system as a condition for preserving the traditions of folk art”, April 5, 2018, Moscow;

Fifth All-Russian Scientific and Practical Seminar “Problems of creative development of personality in the education system”, April 26, 2018, Moscow;

International Round table dedicated to M.M. Bakhtin In “The Heritage of M. M. Bakhtin. Culture—Science—Education—Creativity,” May 22, 2018, Orel;

30th ISHS Conference Humour: Positively (?) Transforming, June 25–29, 2018, Tallinn University, Tallinn, Estonia;

26th Nevel Bakhtin Readings, June 28–30, 2018, Nevel;

16th Pyrrhic Readings “Masks of Privacy, Masks of Publicity. Interpretation of Cultural Codes”, June 28–30, 2018, Saratov;

Scientific and Practical Conference “The Phenomenon of Synesthesia in the Interdisciplinary Space of Scientific Knowledge”, October 22–23, 2018, Moscow;

7th International Scientific and Practical Conference with International Participation “Creative Personality-2018: Life in the Horizon of Mass Culture”, December 20–22, 2018, Yaroslavl;

International Scientific and Practical Conference “Development of Creative Personality in Modern Education”, January 24–26, 2019, Tver;

International Forum “Old and New Media: Ways to a New Aesthetics”, March 26–29, 2019, Moscow;

All-Russian (with international participation) Round Table “M.M. Bakhtin’s Methodology in the Theory and Practice of Modern Theatre: Laboratory Approach”, April 17, 2019, Orel;

All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference “Problems of Creative Development of the Individual in the Education System”, April 25, 2019, Moscow;

International Scientific and Practical Conference “Educational Space in the Information Age”, June 4–5, 2019, Moscow;

17th Pyrrhic Readings “The Beast as a Symbolic Resource. Interpretation of Cultural Codes”, June 27–29, 2019, Saratov;

All-Russian Congress “Smekhotvorets”, September 11–17, 2019, Tver region, Toropets district, Krest village.

International Scientific and Practical Conference “Street Theater vs. Theater of Military Activities”, October 16–18, 2019, Moscow;

International Scientific Conference “Psychology, Literature, Cinema in Dialogue with Theater”, December 3–5, 2019, Moscow;

International Scientific Conference “Culture of Big Cities and Agglomerations”, December 11–13, 2019, Moscow;

7th Scientific and Practical Conference “The Playwright and the Spectator: Acceptable Strategies of Dialogue”, December 17–18, 2019, Moscow;

International Scientific and Practical Conference “Relevance of the ideas of the Burov Scientific School in Art and Aesthetic Education”, December 19–20, 2019, Moscow;

Round table “Emotional education as a new resource for the development, meaning and place of art objects in a modern school”, February 27, 2020, Moscow;

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21th International Scientific and Practical Conference “Socialization of students in an integrated festival and competition space. Yusovskie Readings”, November 19, 2020, Moscow;

7th Russian Scientific and Practical Conference “Herzen Readings ‘Art Education of the Child: Strategies for the Future’”, March 5, 2021, St. Petersburg;

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8th Scientific and Practical Conference “Boring, Strange, Primitive, as well as ... Scary and Funny”, April 29–30, 2021, Moscow;

17th International Bakhtin Conference “Mikhail Bakhtin’s Ideas and Challenges of the 21st Century: From Dialogical Imagination to Polyphonic Thinking”, July 5–10, 2021, Saransk;

Intermediality International Online-Workshop, November 16–17, 2021, Warsaw;

All-Russian Scientific Conference “From ‘Spectacle Plays’ to Film Comedies: the History of Homo Ridens”, June 2–3, 2022, Moscow;

International Conference “Meaning and meaning-making”, June 2-4, 2022, St. Petersburg;

Scientific and Practical Conference (with International Participation) “Modern Educational Environment: Directions and Ways of Development”, June 8–9, 2022, Minsk;

International Conference “Humanities vs Sciences & the Knowledge Accelerating in Modern World: Parallels and Interaction”, October 12–16, 2022, Moscow;

2th All-Russian Scientific Conference “From “Spectacle Plays” to Film Comedies: the History of Homo Ridens”, March 29–31, 2023, Moscow;

Scientific Conference “Carnival Code in Art and Television”, May 17, 2023, Moscow;

All-Russian Scientific-Practical Conference, dedicated to the anniversary of the Battle of Sudbishche, “The Word of a Terrible Time” May 26–27, 2023, Orel;

All-Russian Scientific Conference “Soviet Art: Characters—Performers—Recipients”, September 13–14, 2023, Moscow;

Popular Science Conference of Humor Researchers “HumorCon”, October 8, 2023, Moscow;

All-Russian Scientific-Practical Conference “Problems of the Psychology of Art”, November 9–10, 2023, Moscow;

All-Russian Scientific Conference “Anthroposphere. Hermeneutics. Interaction”, November 16–17, 2023, Orel;

3rd International Scientific and Practical Symposium “Hermeneutics of Childhood in Russia of the 18th–19th Centuries: Interdisciplinary Interactions”, December 8–9, 2023, Belgorod.

All-Russian interdisciplinary conference with International participation “Ontology of Emotionality in the Art of New and Modern Times”, May 21–23, 2024, Moscow.

Scientific and Practical Laboratory “Bakhtin”, October 5–6, 2024, Tver region, Toropets district, Krest village.

All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference “Around Bunin: addresses of the era”, November 14–15, 2024, Orel)

3. Participation as an invited expert:

Discussion “Street Theatre: New Technologies, Prospects and Future” within the Festival of Future Theatre, February 24, 2020, Moscow. <https://festival-budushchego-teat.timepad.ru/event/1240342/>.

Solo Performance Laboratory within the First Online Conference-Laboratory “Pro Street Theatre”, July 28–29, 2020, Moscow

Media program within the framework of the All-Russian Student Scientific and Practical Conference of Higher and Professional Education “Theatre [independent and amateur]: topical issues of theory, practice and pedagogy”, February 16, 2022, Novosibirsk. <https://rutube.ru/video/c40644994bda671940707485f06e31f5/?r=wd>.

4. Participation in television programs:

Night Channel of the TV channel “Stolitsa”, 2009. https://vk.com/video15760029_120718984?ysclid=lrbpuxu261195286367.

Cultural Exchange of the OTR TV channel (July 8, 2012). <https://otr-online.ru/programmy/kulturnii-obmen-s/ulichnye-teatry-gosti-hudruk-teatra-yeks-2706.html?ysclid=lrbpmyhls814679716>.

“Letters from the Province” of the TV channel “Kultura” (June 10, 2022).
<https://smotrim.ru/video/2422181?ysclid=lrbsnxhlm9721673336>.

5. Participation in V.I. Polunin’s projects “Fools on the Volga” (2003), “Pukhovy Sad” (Moscow, 2005), “Snow Show”, 2003-2004); participation in street performances of the Theatre-EX “The Burnt Theatre”, “Haute Couture Fire”, “Alabaster Ballet”, etc.

6. Co-author (together with Yu.A. Berladin) of the Village Theatre project, implemented since 2009 as part of the activities of the Non-Profit Partnership “Theatre-EX” in the village of Krest, Toropets District, Tver Oblast, aimed at studying the creative potential of street theatre in the formation of the personality of the actor and director. The official channel of the Village Theatre in Telegram: <https://t.me/dere127>.

The dissertation corresponds to the following areas of the passport of the scientific specialty 5.10.1. Theory and history of culture, art:

- 8. Cultural genesis and anthropogenesis, evolution of cultural forms.
- 9. Historical continuity in the preservation and transmission of cultural values and meanings. Traditions and innovations in the history of culture.
- 25. Art as a cultural phenomenon.
- 34. Culture and subcultures. Regional, age and social orientations of various population groups in the sphere of culture.
- 89. Concepts of culture as a game and its modern modifications.
- 117. Folk art and folk creativity. Mass and popular art. Classical art.
- 123. Avant-garde and modernist art of the late 19th – early 20th centuries. Russian avant-garde in art. “Silver Age” of Russian art.
- 124. Artistic experiments and trends in the art of the 20th century.
- 126. Underground, avant-garde and postmodernism in the art of the second half of the 20th – 21st centuries.
- 127. Contemporary artistic process.

Chapter 1. The Agonal nature of street theatre

1.1. The influence of philosophical concepts

on interpretations of street theatre

The views of the ancient Greek philosopher Plato⁴⁴ and his pupil Aristotle⁴⁵ had a significant influence on the comprehension of theatre art. However, researchers differ in their assessment of the contribution of these thinkers to understanding the nature of theatre. P. Pavis believes that following Plato, the art of theatre was considered “something external, physical, contrary to the divine idea” for many centuries⁴⁶. Plato indeed deprives an artist of the ability to “see the ultimate truth and ... constantly reproduce it with all possible care, ... to establish ... new laws of beauty, justice and goodness or to protect the existing ones”⁴⁷.

Jacques Rancière, on the contrary, believes that it was Plato who largely contributed to the development of theatre art. Using Plato’s definition of mimesis, the thinker tried to solve the problem associated with the passive position of the spectator in the theatre, drawing attention to the fact that the traditional view of the spectator as an outside observer is fundamentally wrong, because to watch means to act. Relying on Plato's criticism of the theatre, J. Rancière developed his theory of the emancipated spectator, defines a spectator as “both detached ... and an active interpreter of the spectacle offered to him”⁴⁸. Based on the premise that a person is always immersed in an intellectual adventure involving interpretations of “things, actions, and signs”, Rancière concluded that every human being is an emancipated spectator.

⁴⁴ Plato. (1999). *Fileb, Gosudarstvo, Timej, Kritij* [Philebus, The state, Timaeus, Critias] (Vol. 3, S.S. Averintsev, Trans.). Moscow: Mysl. P. 393. (In Russ.).

⁴⁵ Aristotle. (2013). *Poetika; Ritorika* [Poetics. Rhetoric] (V. Appel’rot, & N. Platonova, Trans.). SPb.: Azbuka. (Originally published in Ancient Greek ca. 350 B.C.E.). 346 p. (In Russ.).

⁴⁶ Pavis, P. (1991). *Slovar' teatra* [Dictionary of theater] (K. Razlogov, Trans.). Moscow: Progress. P. 185. (In Russ.).

⁴⁷ Plato. (1998). *Gosudarstvo. Zakony. Politik* [State. Laws. Politician]. Moscow: Mysl. (In Russ.).

⁴⁸ Rancière, J. (2018). *Emansipirovannyj zritel'* [The emancipated spectator]. (Originally published in French 2008). Nizhnij Novgorod: Krasnaya lastochka. 128 p. (In Russ.).

Aristotle took a step towards theatricality compared to Plato; however, his theory of genres attracted apologists as well as critics among philosophers, theatre scholars, and theatre practitioners. Aristotle's definition of genres has served as a methodological basis for theater historians, understanding the development of theater art in the logic of ascending from simpler phenomena to more complex forms. Drama theorists, who adhere to this point of view, include P.G. Bogatyrev, considering origins of theatricality as found in ritual poetry and N.I. Savushkina, attributing theatrical roots to folk festivals. In turn, folklorist and theater scholar L.M. Ivleva considered incorrect the hypothesis inspired by Aristotle's theory of genres, claiming that Russian professional theatre grew out of folklore⁴⁹.

L.S. Vygotsky deduced his formula, correcting Aristotelian definition of the catharsis, in which the aesthetic reaction “contains in itself an affect developing in two opposite directions, which in its final point, as if in a short circuit, finds its annihilation”⁵⁰. On the basis of the Aristotelian definition of comedy, O.M. Freidenberg developed her theory of pre-comedy comicality, arguing that “ancient comicality is broader than comedy”⁵¹, which is “connected with comic-funny” in Aristotle's interpretation. She found the presence of pre-comedy comicality in the ancient Greek street Theater, being, in her view, “brilliantly reviewed by Cornford, put in connection with the rites of dying and resurrecting gods and compared with the comedy of Aristophanes”⁵².

The founder of “Theatre of the Oppressed”, Brazilian drama theorist and practitioner A. Boal⁵³, whose works served as an ideological platform for foreign street theater artists, repeatedly refers to Aristotle's interpretation of mimesis,

⁴⁹ Ivleva, L. M. (1998). *Doteatralno-igrovoi iazyk russkogo folklore* [Pre-theatrical and play language of Russian folklore]. SPb.: Dmitrii Bulanin. P. 30. (In Russ.).

⁵⁰ Vygotskij, L.S. (1968). *Psihologiya iskusstva* [Psychology of art] Obshch. red. Vyach. Ivanova; Predisl. A. N. Leont'eva; Komment. L.S. Vygotskogo, Vyach. Vs. Ivanova. 2-e izd., ispr. i dop. M.: Iskusstvo. P. 272. (In Russ.).

⁵¹ Freidenberg, O.M. (1988). *Mif i teatr* [The myth and the theater]. Moscow: GITIS. P. 74. (In Russ.).

⁵² Freidenberg, O.M. (1997). *Poetika siuzheta i zhanra* [Poetics of plot and genre]. Moscow: Labirint. 448 p. (In Russ.).

⁵³ Boal was greatly influenced by an outstanding Brazilian theorist, psychologist and educator P. Freire, the author of the book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

noting that the word “imitate” usually means “copy”. However, in Boal's opinion, this stands far from the essence of Aristotle's mimesis, who associates imitation with “re-creation”, invention, creative basis. A. Boal believes, the translation of a popular quotation of Aristotle, that art imitates nature, presents a inaccurately translated quotation. According to Boal, by saying “art imitates nature”⁵⁴, Aristotle means that the art is aimed at correcting the flaws of human nature, rather than imitating them⁵⁵. Together with recognizing the undoubted merits of the theory of mimesis, A. Boal opposes the use of Aristotelian theory of catharsis as a criterion of theatrical art. The drama theorist and practitioner argues that if an actor and an audience experience catharsis, the theater will not be able to fulfill its social goals.

A. Boal's critical evaluation of the concept of catharsis provides a theoretical platform for researchers engaged in the study of protest repertoires. In particular, the initiator of protest movements, artist-activist L.M. Bogad⁵⁶, greatly responsible for the terminological apparatus of modern carnival culture⁵⁷, believes that A. Boal's system of theatrical methods, based on Freirian theory, comprises an ideal ground for testing and verifying the effectiveness of strategies and tactics of theatricalized protest. Following L.M. Bogad, S. Agarwal agrees that street theater emerged as an alternative to the Aristotelian understanding of theatrical catharsis⁵⁸. According to the authors, the social model of street theater finds inappropriate a purification of passions through catharsis. Serbian researchers V. Ilić and I. Ristić see no reason to underestimate the socio-political significance of theater art⁵⁹, since

⁵⁴ Boal, A. (1985). *Theatre of the oppressed*. Pluto Press. P. 1.

⁵⁵ Ibid. P. 9.

⁵⁶ Bogad, L. M. (2006). Tactical carnival: Social movements, demonstrations, and dialogical performance. In J. Cohen-Cruz & M. Schutzman (Eds.), *A Boal companion: Dialogues on theatre and cultural politics*. Routledge. P. 49.

⁵⁷ See: Kreicberga, Z. (2022). Political activism as a form of theatre. *Culture Crossroads*, 8. P. 147. (In Latv.).

⁵⁸ Agarwal, S. (2021). Street theatre: From awakening to activism. *IIS University Journal of Arts*, 10(2). P. 204.

⁵⁹ Ilić, V., & Ristić, I. (2016). Dialogue on performative turns: From theater autonomy to the repeal. In I. Ristić & V. Ilić (Eds.), *Theatre within the context... And not just theatre* (pp.10–29). Hop.La!

the poetics of artists such as A. Boal, Guy Debord and others cannot be understood without taking into account its political significance.

A. Boal's theatrical manifestos became the ideological basis of the Indian street theater, whose ambassadors fervently embraced the concept of B. Brecht's "Epic Theater"⁶⁰, the model of P. Brook's "Rough Theater", B. Sircar's "Third Theater, M.M. Bakhtin's theory of carnivalization and laughter culture, and V.E. Meyerhold's agitational and political theater. The onset of nationalism and radical freedom movement in India led to the creation of the Indian People's Theatre Association IPTA⁶¹ in 1943, promoting street theater⁶². An ideologist and leader of street theater in India, S. Hashmi, defined this art as "combative political theater. A. Sidain and M. Faisal believe that a decisive role in the development of street theater culture in India⁶³ was played by the Russian October Revolution of 1917⁶⁴, thereby marking an emergence of a new type of agitprop theatre with performances held on the streets, at factory entrances, in markets, etc. According to these authors, a street theater originated in Russia⁶⁵. L. Bandlamudi, E.V. Ramakrishnan consider carnival practice as rooted in Indian culture⁶⁶ with its open-air theaters, where a comic character traditionally represents the conscience of society. Assumably, street theater in India has historically been an effective way

⁶⁰ See: Brecht, B. (1960). *O teatre. Sbornik statej* [On theatre. Collection of articles]. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo inostrannoi literatury. 363 p. (In Russ.).

⁶¹ Basa, M. (2019). Social impact through polemic street theatre performances of Jana Natya Manch. *Mizoram University Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences*, 5(2). P. 118.

⁶² Syedain, A., & Faisal, M. (2019). A chronological study of origin and evolution of Street Theatre in India. *Journal of the Gujarat Research Society*, 21(9). P. 209.

⁶³ National Street Theater Day is celebrated in India on April 12, the birthday of S. Hashmi, the leader of Indian street theater and founder of JANAM (Jan Natya Manch), who died on January 2, 1984 during a performance.

⁶⁴ Syedain, A., & Faisal, M. (2019). A chronological study of origin and evolution of Street Theatre in India. *Journal of the Gujarat Research Society*, 21(9). P. 212.

⁶⁵ Agarwal, S. (2021). Street theatre: From awakening to activism. *IIS University Journal of Arts*, 10(2), 204–211.

⁶⁶ Bandlamudi, L., & Ramakrishnan, E. V. (2018). Introduction: Intellectual traditions of India in dialogue with Mikhail Bakhtin. In L. Bandlamudi & E. V. Ramakrishnan (Eds.), *Bakhtinian Explorations of Indian culture: Pluralism, dogma and dialogue through history*. P. 12.

for Indian people to assert the boundaries of their own identity, a means of anti-colonial struggle⁶⁷.

The Bread and Puppet street theatre, known for its peace actions and street performances involving giant puppets and masks, is a visible embodiment of Brecht's idea of an anti-sentimental and epic theater, opposing the Aristotelian mimetic aesthetics, with the help of which, founder of the theater P. Schumann believes, illusion and pretense can easily be mistaken for reality⁶⁸.

B. Kershaw, a thinker, actor, and playwright, who considers political theater as a close but dying relative of radical performance art, has gained recognition among researchers engaged in the study of political theater, performance art, theatrical reconstruction, agitprop, namely, A. Filevod, G. St. John and others. According to D. Wilcox, Kershaw demonstrates that “radical performance” accumulated sufficient potential to replace political theater, the commodity of capitalism⁶⁹. B. Kershaw considers performance as a phenomenon that emerged as a result of the cultural paradigm shift in the second half of the twentieth century, finding its roots outside of theater systems and institutions. Kershaw’s ideas are supported by W. Turner’s concept of “liminality”, M. Bakhtin’s concept of carnivalization, the ideas of T. Adorno, W. Benjamin (the Frankfurt School representatives), concepts of M. Foucault, J. Baudrillard, M. de Certeau, R. Schechner⁷⁰. B. Brecht in his concept of epic theatre draws two major conclusions: all experiments in the field of expanding the boundaries of theatrical art, carried out by theatrical figures after World War II, are still perceived by theatrical scholars as marginal practices⁷¹; any attempts to explain social theater, feminist theater, street theater, etc., by the genealogy of already known artistic

⁶⁷ Banerjee, A. (2013). Evaluating the role of street theatre for social communication. *Global Media Journal–Indian Edition*, 4(2), Article 15. P. 11.

⁶⁸ See: Spitta, S.D. (2009). Revisiting the Sixties and Refusing Trash: Preamble to and Interview with Peter Schumann of Bread and Puppet Theater. *Boundary*, 2. 36(1). P. 116.

⁶⁹ Wilcox, D. (2000). The radical in performance: Between Brecht and Baudrillard. By Baz Kershaw. London: Routledge, 1999. 252 p. [Book review]. *Theatre Research International*, 25(3). P. 303.

⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 304.

⁷¹ Kershaw, B. (1999). *The radical in performance: Between Brecht and Baudrillard*. Routledge. P. 60.

experiments erase the unique facets of their aesthetics⁷². Here B. Kershaw directly addresses to the issue of diachronic and synchronic approaches. A characteristic feature of the synchronic approach is claimed to be an interpretation of a new art phenomenon under a classical theory or concept, because, as H.T. Lehmann correctly notes, “contacts between radical theater and those theorists whose thoughts could correspond to the new trends of this theater happen very rare”⁷³.

H.T. Lehmann considers Aristotle’s theory of mimesis as one of the classical theories that cannot be used to explain the performative nature of theatrical art due to its underestimation of the role of audience's enjoyment from recognizing the object in the process of mimesis. Lehmann finds incorrect the Aristotle's very interpretation of mimesis as “a kind of ‘mathesis’, i.e., ... knowledge”⁷⁴. H.T. Lehmann considers Hegel’s judgments that the protagonist of drama is a bodily embodied character⁷⁵, and that drama is a kind of performative self-reflection more acceptable for the interpretation of new phenomena of theatrical art. In order to adequately explain the new theatrical tendencies, H.T. Lehmann introduced the term “postdramatic theatre” into the theatrical vocabulary, denoting the specific quality of postmodernism associated with the germination of its new essence in old structures.

In contrast to the diachronic approach criticized by B. Kershaw, H.T. Lehmann, and others, the focus of synchronic analysis is put on a phenomenon that, commonly, has ended its existence and passed into history. The Comedia de Il’Arte theater, almost disappeared in Europe in the 18th century, is considered to be such an artefact. P. P. Muratov notes, “Nothing has come down to us from the ancient comedy of masks, except a few memories. It could not be otherwise with the art, which existed only in words and movements of the people

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Lehmann, H.T. (2013). *Postdramaticheskij teatr* [Postdramatic theater] (N. Isaeva, Trans.). Moscow: ABCdesign. P. 31. (In Russ.).

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 66.

⁷⁵ Ibid. P. 72.

who created it”⁷⁶. The synchronic approach to cultural phenomena is distinguished by putting the work on a pedestal, making it a fetish. Notably, J. Dewey rebelled against such an attitude to art, indicating an adventurism and adventure in early character of the works to be classical in future. What is now considered a classic used to have adventure and completed it to become a classic, rather than lacks it⁷⁷.

The theater theorist and practitioner R. Schechner, a researcher of “guerrilla theater” and performance, explores a specific of investigating theatre art. R. Schechner agrees that theater requires sociological analysis, since any theater performs certain social tasks⁷⁸. However, he emphasizes that theater is not considered as an agitation, but an art, focusing far from changing social reality. Schechner considers the essence of acting profession in recreating different behaviors by using dramatic identification techniques, trance and Brechtian estrangement effect⁷⁹. According to R. Schechner, the meaning of theatrical creativity lies in “double behavior”⁸⁰. R. Schechner uses K.S. Stanislavsky’s concepts of “super-objective” and “as though”. According to R. Schechner, “as though” behavior⁸¹, means “I behave as though I were someone else”. But this “someone else” is like “I am in another state of feeling/being”, as if each person has got several inner selves. F. Ferdman notes that R. Schechner’s term “environmental theater” emerged under the influence of A. Kaprow’s Happenings and meant a theater with fourth wall absent⁸².

T. Adorno complicated the polemics about the ideological component of theatre art. He paid attention to the relation of art to reality, the unconscious in the artist's work, subjectivity and objectivity of art, constants and processuality of art⁸³.

⁷⁶ Muratov, P. P. (1911–1912). *Obrazy Italii* [Images of Italy] (Vol. 1). Moscow: Nauchnoe slovo. P. 44. (In Russ.).

⁷⁷ Dewey, J. (1980). *Art as experience*. Perigee Books. P. 144.

⁷⁸ Schechner, R. (1985). *Between theatre and anthropology*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* P. 36.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.* P. 37

⁸² Ferdman, F. (2013). A new journey through other spaces. Contemporary performance beyond “Site-Specific”. *Theater*, 43(2). P. 16.

⁸³ Adorno T.W. (2001). *Esteticheskaya teoriya* [Aesthetic Theory]. Per. with German. A.V. Dronov. Moscow: Respublika, 2001. P. 16. (In Russ.).

J. Dewey emphasized the importance of personal aesthetic experience in art and shared the ideas of A. Boal about misunderstanding of the mimesis theory adherents of the essence of art as imitation of nature. He believes that Aristotle meant something radically different from imitation or realistic depiction⁸⁴, close to creativity and art. However, according to J. Dewey, art is one of the alternative ways to bridge the gap “between ... the author and the contemplative observer”⁸⁵, rather than between the self and social reality. Notably, J. Dewey’s ideas inspired the artist A. Kaprow, who understood art as a living through experience, and considered adventurism and adventure of the author as the essence of the work of art.

In Russia, N.N. Evreinov explores the importance of the individual acquiring their own theatrical experience⁸⁶. He suggests the existence of the theatrical instinct to be more specific than the aesthetic sense and broader than a narrow professional understanding of theatricality. According to N.A. Khrenov “N. Evreinov argues that the play is not exhausted by the theater as a kind of art”⁸⁷. N.N. Evreinov finds the rudiments of theatrical art in animals and birds, manifested in the instincts of transformation, decoration and disguise. Through the prism of the concept of theatre for the self, Soviet and American literary critic M. Lipovetsky analyses the forms of theatrical life creation of representatives of the late Soviet underground⁸⁸. Despite the persuasiveness of the arguments given by the researcher to prove the idea that the performative practices of conceptual artists

⁸⁴ Dewey, J. (1980). *Art as experience*. Perigee Books. P. 284.

⁸⁵ Shusterman, R. (2012). *Pragmaticheskaya estetika: zhivaya krasota, pereosmyslenie iskusstva* [Pragmatic aesthetics: Live beauty, redefining art]. Moscow: Kanon+ ROOI «Reabilitaciya». P. 97. (In Russ.).

⁸⁶ See: Evreinov, N.N. (2002). *Demon teatralnosti: sbornik proizvedenii* [The demon of theatricality: collection of works]. Moscow: Letnii sad. 535 p. (In Russ.).

⁸⁷ Khrenov, N.A. (2018). Chelovek igrayushchii v otechestvennom variante zrelishchno-igrovaia stikhiia v situatsii perekhoda k kulture chuvstvennogo tipa [“Man Acting” in the domestic version: The spectacle-playing element in the situation of transition to the culture of the sensual type]. In E. A. Semenova (Ed.), *Proceedings of the International round table in memory of M. M. Bakhtin “The Heritage of M. M. Bakhtin. Culture—Science—Education—Creativity,” May 22, 2018, Orel* (pp. 271–303). Moscow: IAEaCS RAE. P. 281. (In Russ.).

⁸⁸ Lipovetsky, M. (2021). Spektakli svobody. Performativnye praktiki pozdnesovetskogo andegraunda [Performances of freedom. Performative practices of the late Soviet underground]. *Koinon*, 2(2). Pp. 106–141. (In Russ.).

belong to a kind of theatre for the self, it is difficult to agree with this opinion. If we consider performative practices and theatre as phenomena of the same order, it means abolishing the boundaries between theatrical art and its frontiers, which include play, theatricalisation and simulacra of theatricality⁸⁹. It is more appropriate to refer performative practices to a separate area of theatre creativity, in which they either gain or lose their artistic and “cultural status”⁹⁰.

The creative activity of V.I. Polunin, who embodied the concept of the theatricalisation of life in the field of street theatre and the art of clowning, seems close to the essence of Evreinov idea of theatre for oneself. For Polunin, the first place in the theatre is occupied by a person and his laughter, his humorous worldview, the craving for theatrical, festive transformation of everyday life⁹¹. A valuable idea about the aesthetic function of theatre was expressed by the Russian psychologist A.G. Asmolov, who noted that since theatre art destroys “homeostatic schemes of world creation with final ends, which exist in life”⁹², it is not a means of survival, but a means of survival (as ideologists of political, protest theatre usually think), but “the art of life”⁹³.

The French Enlightenment thinker J.J. Rousseau, who played a significant role in the scientific understanding of street theater in France, obtains a peculiar view of theater as a celebration. J. Rousseau believed that since the theater is a form of entertainment necessary for human beings, the question of whether the theater itself is good or bad is too vague. The qualities of theater art can only be

⁸⁹ Zhurkov, M.S. (2019). K voprosu ob osnovnyh frontirah teatra [To the question of the main frontiers of the theatre]. *Kul'turnaya zhizn' Yuga Rossii*. 4(75). P. 17. (In Russ.).

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Semenova, E.A. (2015a). Konceptsiya karnaval'noj kul'tury M.M. Bahtina v ulichnom teatre V.I. Polunina [Concept of carnival culture of M. Bakhtin in street theatre of V. Polunin]. *Kazan Pedagogical Journal*, 5(Pt. 2). P. 398. (In Russ.).

⁹² Dmitrevskaya, M. (2022, July). “Eto dazhe khorosho chto poka nam plokho”: strakh kak podarok evoliutsii i optika teatra. Besedu s Aleksandrom Asmolovym vedet Marina Dmitrevskaia [“It’s even good that so far we feel bad”: Fear as a gift of evolution and the optics of theatre. The conversation with Alexander Asmolov is led by Marina Dmitrevskaya]. *Peterburgskij teatral'nyj zhurnal*, 2. Available at: <https://ptj.spb.ru/blog/eto-dazhe-xorosho-cto-poka-nam-ploxo-strax-kak-podarok-evolyucii-i-optika-teatra/?ysclid=lrd13eo2ov929670890>. (Accessed: October 23, 2023). (In Russ.).

⁹³ Ibid.

determined by its effect on the audience⁹⁴. Rousseau argues that bourgeois theater increases social distance⁹⁵, while the ancient festival, on the contrary, brings people closer. D. Calder, the historian of French street theater, arguing with Rousseau and Aristotle, develops his anti-Rousseau concept of street theater development, opposing himself to those theater scholars who consider street theater in France in the context of Rousseau's festive concept of theater. Calder finds such views erroneous, because Rousseau considers the festival as a specific feature of village life, opposite to urban life. D. Calder considers the model of bourgeois theater, created on the basis of Aristotelian mimesis, as a negative space of street theater in France. The reason for the emergence of theater art on the streets of France in 1968 was seen by D. Calder in empty theater halls rather than in nostalgia of stage artists for democratic spaces and modes of communication. The arguments of scholars that the main difference of street theater is the absence of spectator seats and the fourth wall are found unconvincing by him. He claims the irony of theatrical figures in the address of outdated forms of theater to be the main reason behind their appeal to street art. Calder believes that ironic deception becomes necessary in creating the carnivalesque effect of the street play. D. Calder's analysis is based on the 2CV Théâtre street performance by the French theater company "Théâtre de l'Unité" [Theater of Unity]. According to D. Calder, Théâtre de l'Unité goes beyond the populist understanding of street theater as the antithesis of elitist, institutional, private theater. 2CV Theatre with its ironic play of street theater actors gains a great value for the researcher. D. Calder shares the opinion of D. Rebenitsch, associating the portrait of Rousseau actor with the portrait of an ironist. According to Rousseau, unlike an orator, who fulfills their role speaking on their own⁹⁶, an actor obtains a mimetic gap between himself and his role, thus becoming a pretender. Rousseau believes that the actor's deception can only

⁹⁴ Rousseau, J.J. (1960). *Politics and the arts: Letter to M. D'Alembert on the theatre* (A. Bloom, Trans.). Cornell University Press. P. 17.

⁹⁵ Wihstutz, B. (2013). Introduction. In E. Fischer-Lichte & B. Wihstutz (Eds.), *Performance and the politics of space: Theatre and topology*. Routledge. P. 9.

⁹⁶ Rousseau, J.J. (1960). *Politics and the arts: Letter to M. D'Alembert on the theatre* (A. Bloom, Trans.). Cornell University Press. P. 80–81.

entertain the audience in the theater, since an actor cultivates a talent for deception anywhere else. D. Calder argues that a 2CV Théâtre performance offers a self-ironic model of street theater's relationship to itself. Initially, he notes, 2CV Théâtre used to be an “announcement show” a kind of teaser for the play “Dernier Bal”⁹⁷. Ironically, 2CV Théâtre, being initially conceived as an elitist performance for a large audience, turned into a popular theater for a few spectators.

Unlike France, where many concepts of theatre are based on the philosophy of J.J. Rousseau, in Russia the thinker who gave the key to the interpretation of various phenomena of theatre art is the philosopher M.M. Bakhtin and his work on the carnival culture of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. I.P. Uvarova recalled that Soviet painters, poets, and actors were ... *irradiated* by this book⁹⁸. The theater and film director G.M. Kozintsev admitted a role of M.M. Bakhtin's book on Dostoevsky for his defining the genre of King Lear movie as a carnival-mystery. J. Kim believes that almost immediately after the publication of Bakhtin's book on Rabelais, in which the author unwittingly suggested to theatre practitioners such an alternative form to dramatic art as carnival, its influence on definitions of theatre and on theatre practice itself became noticeable. For example, the chief director of the Taganka Theatre, Y. Lyubimov, did admit to incorporating Bakhtin's ideas into his productions⁹⁹. However, despite the popularity of M.M. Bakhtin's works among theatrical figures¹⁰⁰, his definitions and concepts of carnival culture fail to fit into Russian theater thesaurus for a long time. As illustrated in L.M. Ivleva's PhD thesis, suggesting certain prospects for applying Bakhtin's concept of carnival

⁹⁷ Calder, D. (2017). 2CV Théâtre: Transgression, nostalgia, and the negative space of French street theatre. *Theatre Journal*, 69(1). P. 11.

⁹⁸ Uvarova, I. P. (2020). Paradoks Rable [The paradox of Rabelais]. In E. A. Semenova (Ed.), *Proceedings of the International Bakhtin Theoretical and Practical Conference “Street theatre vs. the theatre of military actions”, October 16–18, 2019, Moscow*. Moscow: IAEaCS RAE. P. 299. (In Russ.).

⁹⁹ Kim, J. (2012). *International Theatre Olympics: Exchanging national traditions and leading new trends in theatre* [Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation]. The University of Georgia. P. 77.

¹⁰⁰ See: Semenova, E.A. (2019i). Teatr postupka M.M. Bahtina [Theatre of act of M.M. Bakhtin]. *Yaroslavskij pedagogicheskij vestnik*, 4(109), 212–218. (In Russ.). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.24411/1813-145X-2019-10473>. (Accessed: May 2, 2023). (In Russ.); Semenova, E.A. (2019a). Carnival in the absence of the actor. *Southern Semiotic Review*, 11(3), 33–48. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.33234/ssr.11.3>. (Accessed: December 24, 2023).

in the study of the pre-theatrical and play language of Russian folklore. However, during the examination of her dissertation, the committee members evaluated the playful nature of mumming according to the criteria of play of K.S. Stanislavsky's system rather than according to the carnival principles of play¹⁰¹.

M.M. Bakhtin's ideas stand behind the concept of the "Street Theaters of the World" program, organized within the Third World Theatre Olympiad in Moscow in 2001. The Olympiad appears unique due to the artistic director of the "Street Theaters of the World" program, world-famous Russian clown V.I. Polunin, who defines street theater as a theater without boundaries, as a theatre that gives an ordinary person the opportunity to get tuned to his or her own theatrical creativity. M.M. Bakhtin's ideas about carnivalization as a flexible form of artistic vision, as a heuristic principle of cognition of reality, and comic catharsis achieved their unexpected artistic rethinking and manifestation in the carnival space of Polunin's street theatre. Polunin considers rethinking the tradition of carnival, presenting it as a festival "theater for yourself", turning everyday life into a fantastic reality of dreams, fantasie, laughter and freedom, a definite step towards the development of modern street theater culture¹⁰². J. Kim quite rightly believes that V.I. Polunin wanted to revive carnival traditions through theatricalisation, poeticisation of everyday life¹⁰³. In his interviews, V.I. Polunin says that every time he creates a world closer to his dreams, he becomes a kind of protest against ordinariness and

¹⁰¹ Semenova, E.A. (2021c). Ochnaya i zaohnaya diskussiya vokrug mezhdunarodnoj bahtinskoj nauchno-prakticheskoj konferencii «Ulichnyj teatr protiv teatra voennyh dejstvij» [Personal and correspondence discussion of international bakhtin theoretical and practical conference "Street Theatre vs. Theatre of the Military Actions"]. *Galactica Media: Journal of Media Studies*, 3(4). P. 214. (In Russ.). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.46539/gmd.v3i4.227>. (Accessed: October 2, 2024). (In Russ.).

¹⁰² See: Semenova, E.A. (2015a). Konceptsiya karnaval'noj kul'tury M.M. Bahtina v ulichnom teatre V.I. Polunina [Concept of carnival culture of M. Bakhtin in street theatre of V. Polunin]. *Kazan Pedagogical Journal*, 5(Pt. 2), 395–399. (In Russ.)

¹⁰³ Kim, J. (2012). *International Theatre Olympics: Exchanging national traditions and leading new trends in theatre* [Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation]. The University of Georgia. P. 78.

¹⁰³ Ibid. P. 78.

everyday life. Therefore, any creative action of V.I. Polunin is “emphatically not political, but aesthetic”¹⁰⁴.

At present, the film director Y.V. Muravitsky¹⁰⁵, inspired by M.M. Bakhtin’s work on carnival culture, attempts to compensate the acute deficit of the carnival component in dramatic theater by using the potential of square, street theater, carnival, and clowning.

Some foreign theorists have shown interest in considering narrow professional issues of stage art in the light of the concept of carnival culture. Although the theater historian and theorist P. Pavis avoids drawing a direct parallel between street theater and carnival, he significantly expands the range of interpretations of theatrical phenomena placing them in the context of Bakhtin's ideas about intonation, dialogic utterance, carnivalization, grotesque body, and others.

D. McCaw, a lecturer at the Royal College of Theatre in London, has defended his dissertation, which represents the first study of the possibilities of applying M.M. Bakhtin's ideas to theatre practice. Following the ideas of M.M. Bakhtin, D. McCaw confirmed the importance of the actor’s method acting. The researcher considers Bakhtin’s principle of the author’s “outsidedness” (“vnenakhodimost”) in relation to the hero as universal for theatrical art, because in the process of method acting an actor should not cross the line beyond acting and living; otherwise, the hero will overshadow and enslave the actor. Meanwhile, D. McCaw believes that the carnivalesque grotesque body described by Bakhtin in his F. Rabelais book cannot be represented by the means of acting, because its embodiment requires a different philosophy and organics of existence on stage.

D. McCaw polemizes with M.M. Bakhtin about the absence of ramp in

¹⁰⁴ Zaretskaya, Z. (2014, July 13). “Karavan mira”: kak eto bylo 25 let nazad [“The Peace Caravan”: What it was like 25 years ago]. Fontanka.ru. (In Russ.). Available at: <https://calendar.fontanka.ru/articles/1655/?ysclid=lor5cn9fwv194965382>. (Accessed: November 9, 2023).

¹⁰⁵ Chulikova, E. (2023, February 6). Recenziya na spektakl' v Teatre na Taganke “Chyornaya koshka, belyj kot” [Review of the play “Black Cat, White Cat” at the Taganka Theater]. *INC NEWS*. (In Russ.). Available at: <https://inc-news.ru/cultures/2:93205>. (Accessed: February 6, 2023).

carnival only, referring to the theatrical figures who found stage performance as destroyed rather than created by a ramp. D. McCaw indicates that already at the end of the XIX century the theater finally matured to expand the boundaries of a ramp instead of abandoning it. According to McCaw, it is far from a destruction of theatrical convention, as M.M. Bakhtin puts it, but a step forward to revealing its new possibilities of theater. E. Zola demanded to remake the stage until it becomes a single space with the audience. In D. McCaw's view, E. Zola anticipated the requirements of Stanislavsky, who rebelled against the theatrical declamation in the early XX century. Both, the English actor, film director, artist E.G. Craig and the Swiss drama theorist, stage designer A. Appia¹⁰⁶ insisted on the abolition of the ramp.

M. Barsony, a Hungarian culturologist and literary scholar, applies M.M. Bakhtin's theory of carnival for the study of English Renaissance theater, paying special attention to the carnivalization and decarnivalization of the clown figure in the plays of W. Shakespeare. According to the researcher, a carnivalesque dimension of Shakespeare's plays is revealed only through playing out on stage¹⁰⁷. The researcher's idea that carnival is ontologically spiritual¹⁰⁸ appears particularly important in terms of discussion about the socio-political mission of carnival. In particular, Barsony considers W. Turner's comparison of carnival with liminality incorrect, pointing out, that in case of impossible reconciliation of life and death, life becomes the only "conscious" sphere of carnival, which, carnivalizing an individual, linear reality of life only, ends up in imminent death¹⁰⁹.

A. White and P. Stallybrass, authors of "The Politics and Poetics of Transgression", interpret the collisions in the relationship between carnival culture and theater art in the history of England. From the perspective of Foucault's theory

¹⁰⁶McCaw, D. (2015). *Bakhtin and theatre: Dialogues with Stanislavsky, Meyerhold and Grotowski*. Routledge. P. 51.

¹⁰⁷ Bársony, M. (2016). *Shakespeare's clown the decarnivalization of the World in three of his dramas* [Doctoral dissertation, Eötvös Loránd University]. ELTE Digital Institutional Repository. P.15.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. P. 235.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. P. 234.

of transgression used by the authors, carnival culture is interpreted as being gradually displaced from society and acquiring other, sometimes deformed forms. M. Foucault believes that modern human being lives “among crowded scenes” with their deficit in individuality. In his work “Language, Counter-Memory, Practice” M. Foucault notes that historical feeling implies three types of its use. The first type, parodic, is directed against reality and opposing history as reminiscence. The second type, destructive, is opposing history in the form of continuity or tradition. The third type, sacrificing truth, is opposing history as knowledge¹¹⁰. Based on his understanding of the modern world as overflowing with alien traditions, knowledge, and the memory of history, M. Foucault introduces his concept of space with a heterotopia as its main category. Foucault distinguishes three types of heterotopia: crisis, deviant, mixed (i.e., combining several incompatible spaces). The thinker outlines crisis heterotopias as “places ... reserved for individuals in a state of crisis”¹¹¹. Heterotopias of deviation account for places “where we place individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the average or to the required norm”¹¹². Theater belongs to the third type of heterotopia, combining “several spaces, several locations in one single place.”¹¹³

D. Rebentisch involves the theory of heterotopia in the study of J.J. Rousseau’s heterotopology of theater. G. Pefanis notes an ambivalent attitude of urban residents to the street, consisted of both trust and fear, influences the perception of street theater as a deviant heterotopia¹¹⁴; thus, he refers to an important issue of opposite interpretations of street theater as a result of different interpretations of the street.

K. Malone believes that streets in cities, with their names on road maps, constitute ways of organizing our social space, maintaining our personal security.

¹¹⁰ Foucault, M. (1977). *Language, counter-memory, practice*. Cornell University Press. P. 160.

¹¹¹ Foucault, M. (2006). *Intellektualy i vlast izbrannye politicheskie stati vystupleniia i interviu* [Intellectuals and power: Selected political articles, speeches and interviews] (B. M. Skuratov, Trans.; V. P. Bolshakov, Ed.; Part 3). Moscow: Praksis. P. 197. (In Russ.).

¹¹² Ibid. P. 198.

¹¹³ Ibid. P. 200.

¹¹⁴ Pefanis, G.P. (2014). The streets belong to the people: Scenes and heterotopias in the city. *Gamma: Journal of Theory and Criticism*, 22(2). P. 180.

The modern city structure is organized by symbolic markings in the form of names of streets, dead ends, squares, avenues, residential buildings, park zones, etc. However, the borders are drawn quite strictly in downtowns to prevent the penetration of objects or people destroying the urban cultural landscape, while the outskirts do not observe the clarity of the borders. Therefore, streets and squares, in a broad sense, represent a public zone of urban space¹¹⁵ and potentially remain a place of mass disturbances¹¹⁶ with a high deviation potential¹¹⁷. N. Fife believes that “streets are the territory of social meetings and political protests, places of dominance and resistance, places of pleasure and anxiety¹¹⁸. Notably, criminology defines the street as a potential or actualized place of committing a crime. Street culture represents a connecting artery between the individual and collective identity in a person, the shelter (fortress, private territory) of a person, and a street as a passable courtyard (public space). According to J. Jacobs, a theorist of urban planning, citizens associate the city with the front stage, “where the lead roles are played by noise, dirt, begging, souvenir trade and loud aggressive advertising”¹¹⁹. In this context, it is appropriate to refer to J.A. Comenius, who used streets and squares as a metaphorical description of barbaric society. In his book *Labyrinth of the World and Paradise of the Heart*, Comenius describes the square and streets of the city as a real Babylon, the embodiment of hypocrisy¹²⁰. J. Baudrillard focused

¹¹⁵ Belousov, A.B., Davydov, D.A., & Kochukhova, E.S. (2020). V postmaterialisticheskom trende: motivaciya uchastnikov protesta v skvere u Teatra dramy v Ekaterinburge [In the post-materialist trend: Motivation of protesters in the square at the Drama Theater in Yekaterinburg]. *Monitoring of Public Opinion: Economic and Social Changes*, 6, 53–72. (In Russ.). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.14515/monitoring.2020.6.1694>. (Accessed: May 11, 2023).

¹¹⁶ L. Abramian examines the transformation of an archaic ritual that occurred in the ceremonial square and then moved to the theater square, taking the form of modern rallies and protests. See: Abramian, L.A. (1990). Archaic ritual and theater from the ceremonial glade to theater square. *Anthropology & Archeology of Eurasia*, 29, 45–69.

¹¹⁷ See: Whyte, W.F. (1943). *Street corner society: The social structure of an Italian slum*. The University of Chicago Press; Thrasher, F. (1963). *The gang: A study of 1,313 gangs in Chicago*. University of Chicago Press.

¹¹⁸ Malone, K. (2002). Street life: Youth, culture and competing uses of public space. *Environment and Urbanization*, 14(2). P. 157.

¹¹⁹ Dzhekobs, D. (2011). *Smert i zhizn bolshikh amerikanskikh gorodov* [The death and life of great American cities]. Moscow: Novoe izdatel'stvo. (Originally published in English 1961). P. 34. (In Russ.).

¹²⁰ Comenius, Y.A. (1997). *Sochineniya* [Essays] (Trans. from Czech, Latin). Moscow: Nauka.

attention on the problems of the city, noting that modern civilization produces a huge amount of waste, and, as a result, many people live on the outskirts of big cities or in the suburbs, being literally born in a landfill. As a consequence, people living near landfills develop a hatred for everything related to civilization and the urban center. According to J. Baudrillard, hate stands for “an excessive form of expression of indifference and rejection of this undifferentiated world”¹²¹. Street art¹²², street music, and street children¹²³, to be often addressed with humiliating language¹²⁴, also cause aversion, if not hatred, among many citizens.

Indicatively, until the 80s of the 20th century in Europe the term “street art” was applied to illegal interventions in public space¹²⁵. The American Heritage dictionary of the English language¹²⁶ defines the word “street” as a roadway homeless, unemployed; a person released from prison; a street incident; street fights; a street vendor; street people; street clothes; a place where a street musician performs, etc. The modern scientific discussion devoted to street culture¹²⁷ is aimed at describing a character of street artist's creativity¹²⁸.

The word “street” in the Russian language reveals a certain negative attitude of a speaker: street vendors, singers, artists (*a person working in the street – not very professional, not very serious*), street boy (*spending considerable amount of*

P. 24. (In Russ.).

¹²¹ Baudrillard, J. (2006). Gorod i nenavist' [City and hate]. *Project Baikal*, 3(9). P. 26. (In Russ.).

¹²² Boero, G. (2018). Banksy and the image of London: brief analysis of the British street artist's work and its socio-cultural consequences in the UK capital. *Altre Modernità*, 20, 70–88. (In Italian).

¹²³ Pietkiewicz-Pareek, B. (2021). Street children during COVID-19 pandemic in India. *Dialogo*, 7(2), 263–270.

¹²⁴ Watt, P. (2021). Street performers and street culture. In J. I. Ross (Ed.), *Routledge handbook of street culture*. Routledge. P. 38.

¹²⁵ Bengtsen, P. (2014). *The street art world*. Almendros de Granada Press.

¹²⁶ *The American Heritage dictionary of the English language* (5th ed.). (2016). Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

¹²⁷ Pefanis, G.P. (2014). The streets belong to the people: Scenes and heterotopias in the city. *Gramma: Journal of Theory and Criticism*, 22(2), 179–187.

¹²⁸ Bengtsen, P. (2016, May 30). Street art studies: Some thoughts on an emerging academic discipline. *Inchiesta Online*. Available at: <https://www.inchiestaonline.it/arte-poesia/peter-bengtsen-street-art-studies-riflessioni-su-una-disciplina-di-ricerca-emergente/#EN>. (Accessed: November 9, 2023); Bengtsen, P. (2018). Street art and the nature of the city. In P. Bengtsen, M. Liljefors, & M. Petersén (Eds.), *Bild och natur Tio konstvetenskapliga betraktelser* (pp. 125–138). Lund Studies in Arts and Cultural Sciences.

time on the street – uncontrolled, unsupervised ... satisfying the tastes, demands of inhabitants; vulgar)¹²⁹. V.I. Dahl's Dictionary defines the street as adjoined the house, acting as the face of houses, the space outside the house¹³⁰. The S.I. Ozhegov and N.Y. Shvedova explanatory dictionary of the Russian Language gives several definitions of the word "street": "1. In settlements: two rows of houses and the space between them for passage and driving through, as well as the space itself. 2. Space, a place outside of dwellings, in the open air (colloquial). 3. A company (usually spending time outside), by its negative influence on children, teenagers – opposed to a family"¹³¹.

The above statements indicate the reasons why the street theater is often considered through the concept of heterotopia. Foucault's concept reveals a dimensionality of this art¹³². S. Khedike considers heterotopia as an aesthetic strategy of the street theater "Opera Pagai", aimed at simulating other worlds and giving different social functions to the space. G. St John, a cultural anthropologist, relies on M. Foucault's concept of heterotopia when analyzing the "Burning Man" phenomenon¹³³, defining it as an eventual, transformational festive heterotopia.

H. Lefebvre distinguishes a carnival heterotopia along with other three types of heterotopia identified by M. Foucault. H. Lefebvre relates fairgrounds,

¹²⁹ Mao, Y. (2017). Kachestvennye znacheniya odnositel'nyh prilagatel'nyh s prostranstvennoj semantikoj [Qualitative meanings of relative adjectives with spatial semantics]. *Philology. Theory & Practice*, 12–4. P. 113. (In Russ.).

¹³⁰ Dal', V.I. (2006). *Tolkovyj slovar' zhivogo velikoruskogo yazyka* [Explanatory dictionary of the living Great Russian language]. Vol. 4. R–Ya. Moscow: RIPOL Classic. 672 p. (In Russ.).

¹³¹ As cited in: Bitsadze, G.E. (2018). Ulica kak mesto soversheniya prestupleniya [Street as a crime scene]. *Bulletin of the Kaliningrad branch of the St. Petersburg University of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia*, 4. P. 133. (In Russ.).

¹³² Sokovikov, S.S. (2019). «Perekhodnost'» i «raznomestnost'» ulichnogo teatra v kul'turnom prostranstve ["Transitivity" and "multiplacement" of street theater in the cultural space]. In *Proceedings of the All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference "Art—Education—Culture: Traditions and modernity"*, April 21–22, 2019, Moscow (pp. 324–330). Institute of Modern Art. (In Russ.).

¹³³ See: St John, G. (1999). *Alternative cultural heterotopia: ConFest as Australia's marginal centre* [Unpublished Doctoral dissertation]. La Trobe University; St John, G. (2001). Alternative cultural heterotopia and the liminoid body: Beyond Turner at ConFest. *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 12(1), 47–66; St John, G. (2020). Ephemeropolis: Burning Man, transformation, and heterotopia. *Journal of Festive Studies*, 2(1), 289–322.

caravanserais, and suburbs to a separate group of archetypal heterotopias¹³⁴. Actually, H. Lefebvre's works are referred by Russian street art researchers, including U.S. Shvindt¹³⁵ and Y.A. Kuzovenkova¹³⁶, but remain unclaimed in the study of street theater. H. Lefebvre's arguments about the images of a vagrant and a child (baby) in the films of Ch. Chaplin as the underside of capitalist society appear neglected in the studies of street theater¹³⁷.

Referring to the G. Deleuze's category of "differential presence" and the concept of difference and repetition¹³⁸, L. Cull finds a character of performance in the processes of movement and formation that dissolve the spectator in the theatrical event. L. Cull uses these concepts of Deleuze in the study of the nature of performance, referring to the "Living Theater"¹³⁹, arguing that the movement from the theater to the street is a gesture inviting people to the theater, where the street challenges biases to it¹⁴⁰.

The theoretical works of G. Moder deserve attention, in which the ontological status of the frivolity of street theatre is proved. G. Moder considers Aristotle to be the culprit of the fact that for many centuries comedy has been considered a low genre¹⁴¹. The researcher uses in his analysis the concepts and notions of J. Lacan, J. Deleuze, M. Bakhtin, A. Zupančič, which, from his point of view, allow us to see comedy as a phenomenon of the highest order.

Contrasting the non-ideological interpellation of street theatre with L.

¹³⁴ Lefebvre, H. (2003). *The urban revolution* (R. Bononno, Trans.). University of Minnesota Press. (Originally published in French 1970). P. 79.

¹³⁵ Shvindt, U. S. (2021). Esteticheskaya i problemnaya orientaciya strit-arta v vospriyatii gorodskogo naseleniya (na primere Ekaterinburga) [An aesthetical and problem-plagued orientation of street art in the perception of the urban population (on the example of Yekaterinburg)]. *Koinon*, 2(1), 100–115.

¹³⁶ Kuzovenkova, Yu. A. (2013). Chronotope of the city in subcultures of street art practices: On the materials of graffiti and street art in Samara. *Aspirantskiy Vestnik Povolzh'ya*, 3–4. P. 32. (In Russ.).

¹³⁷ Lefebvre, H. (1991). *Critique of everyday life. Vol. I: Introduction*. Verso. P. 12.

¹³⁸ Deleuze, J. (1998). *Razlichie i povtorenie* [Difference and repetition]. SPb.: Petropolis. (Originally published in French 1969). 384 p. (In Russ.).

¹³⁹ "Living Theater" was founded in America in 1947 by D. Malina and D. Beck.

¹⁴⁰ Cull, L. (2009). *Differential presence: Deleuze and performance* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Exeter]. University of Exeter Repository.

¹⁴¹ Moder, G. (2013). Comedy and negativity. *Stasis*, 1(1). P. 204.

Althusser's law of ideological interpellation, usually applied to the criteria of theatrical art, which generates in the spectator the “effect of ideological recognition”¹⁴² of himself in a situation that seems familiar to him, G. Moder allows the idea that if ideology “‘transforms’ individuals into subjects”¹⁴³ through interpellation, that is, the constitution of individuals as subjects, then “in the situation of street theatre, the actions of a passer-by ... are devoid of ideological content ... The passer-by not only does not recognize himself as the subject who was called out, but can also participate in the performance with an alternative identity, a pseudo-identity, simply as someone else. (...) This means that even in situations where spectators play out their own subject positions, for example, when they are asked to play themselves, their actions are mediated; this is a game in the strict sense”¹⁴⁴. The researcher suggests that if ideological interpellation “is analogous to *faith*, an illusion that has a possessor”¹⁴⁵, then “the interpellation of an innocent passerby by a street actor ... is a case of illusion of others: the passerby knows perfectly well that all this is nothing more than a silly play, and the strange guy in front of him is an actor. But this very knowledge does not make the play impossible for the passerby, on the contrary! Precisely, because the passerby understands perfectly well that it is all about playing, he or she can get even more pleasure”¹⁴⁶.

At the same time, the researcher draws attention to a paradoxical moment: the more the actions of a street actor are devoid of ideological content, the higher the probability that they will be perceived as subversive acts. In response to the question of why this happens, Moder puts forward a hypothesis about the error that the philosophy of ideological interpellation itself, proposed by Althusser, allows, suggesting that subversion, which transfers the actions of street actors from an

¹⁴² Pavis, P. (1991). *Slovar' teatra* [Dictionary of theater] (K. Razlogov, Trans.). Moscow: Progress. P. 437. (In Russ.).

¹⁴³ Moder, G. (2014). Chemu Al'tyusser mozhnet nauchit' nas ob ulichnom teatre — i naoborot [What Althusser can teach us about street theater—and vice versa] (I. Matveev, Trans.). *Stasis. EUSPb*. 2(1). P. 95. (In Russ.).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.* P. 94–95. (In Russ.).

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.* P. 96.

addressless, non-subjectively directed comic game into the category of subversive acts, appears when “the interpellation of an innocent passerby into an active participant in a street performance ... is a blind spot of ideological interpellation. (...) is the point at which street performances can become subversive in relation to the dominant ideology”¹⁴⁷.

Slovenian philosopher A. Zupančič argues along the same lines, believing that Hegel as a pioneer in presenting comedy as the alienation of substance from itself to become a subject¹⁴⁸. Due to the Hegel’s arguments A. Zupančič associates comedy with the dwelling of the actor's “I” in the “I” of the character rather than with the coincidence of the “I” of the actor and the character. In comedy, according to the philosopher, it is not the subject-actor who presents the comic character to the audience, but the subject-actor acts as a gap where character relates to himself, “representing himself”¹⁴⁹.

Hegel made a number of arguments, extremely relevant for current understanding of the pragmatics of comic phenomena in street theater; he shares the M.M. Bakhtin’s opinion that “the vices of people, ... are not comical”¹⁵⁰, and “when comedy becomes only a means of ridicule from the outside, it (...) tends to become a caricature”¹⁵¹. Actually, the division of comical and satirical made by G. Hegel and by M.M. Bakhtin fail to be taken into account by researchers of carnival culture and street theater. B. Shepherd, L.M. Bogad, C. Duncombe dwelled only on one statement of Hegel that “history repeats itself twice: first in the form of tragedy and then in the form of farce”¹⁵².

To summarize the observations above we can conclude that all interpretations of street theater are based on theatrical and cultural concepts underpinned by the works of ancient philosophers Plato and Aristotle. The most

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. P. 99.

¹⁴⁸ Zupančič, A. (2007). *The odd one in: On comedy*. The MIT Press. P. 27.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. P. 36.

¹⁵⁰ Anikst, A.A. (1983). *Teoriya dramy ot Gegelya do Marksa* [The theory of drama from Hegel to Marx]. Moscow: Nauka. P. 111. (In Russ.).

¹⁵¹ Ibid. P. 115.

¹⁵² As cited in: Borev, Yu.B. (2004). *Estetika* [Aesthetics]. Rostov na Donu: Feniks. 704 p. (In Russ.).

popular concepts in the interpretations of street theater include A. Boal's model of the Theater of the Oppressed, M.M. Bakhtin's theory of carnival culture, B. Brecht's epic theater, and N. Evreinov's concept of the theatricalization of life. The category of important studies includes scientific research by D. Calder, considering street theater as a result of ironic self-reflection of theatre artists. The direction away from studying the socio-political potential of street theatre art is represented by articles of G. Moder, presenting an interpretation of street theatre as a playful, non-ideological interpellation. The work on carnival culture by M.M. Bakhtin is most widely referred by street theater researchers. Due to the fact that the concept of carnival culture did not become a trigger for the emergence of interpretations of the development of street theatre art in Russia, its provisions, widely used in foreign studies of street theater¹⁵³, need to be reviewed in order to explore their potential as a methodological basis for the theory of development of contemporary street theater in Russia.

1.2. Carnival culture and street theatre

For more than half a century, M.M. Bakhtin's theory of carnival culture has inspired researchers to develop their own scientific notions and concepts. Today, the scientific vocabulary includes such new terms as tactical carnival, carnivalesque protest, carnivalesque humor, laughter resistance, laughtivism, post-carnival¹⁵⁴, protestival. The concept of carnival is an effective tool for analyzing the repertoire of carnival and theatrical practices in former postcolonial countries.

Along with growing interest in the protest potential of carnival culture,

¹⁵³ See: Semenova, E.A. (2023d). Zarubezhnaya «karnaval'naya» kul'tura: mezhdru idiomoj i virusnym konceptom [Foreign “carnival” culture: Between idiom and viral concept]. *Experience industries. Socio-Cultural Research Technologies (EISCRT)*, 4(5), 19–47. (In Russ.); Semenova, E.A. (2023c). Ulichnyj teatr v kontekste zarubezhnyh koncepcij karnaval'noj kul'tury [Street theatre in the context of foreign concepts of carnival culture]. *National Psychological Journal*, 18(3), 25–34. (In Russ.).

¹⁵⁴ Thejaswini, J. C., & Shuaib Mohamed Haneef, M. (2020). Intersections of protest, art and networked space: Analysis of the artistic protest Post Carnival. In S. Sui-kwong Lam (Ed.), *New media spectacles and multimodal creativity in a globalised Asia* (pp.77–93).

scholars draw wider attention to street theater as a theater of conflict¹⁵⁵. Studies into carnivalesque protest involve the theory of transgression by P. Stallybrass, A. White¹⁵⁶, the concept of “Repertoires of Contention”¹⁵⁷ by Ch. Tilly, as well as the concept of “performing memory”¹⁵⁸ by D. Taylor¹⁵⁹. The theme of the formation of theater culture under the influence of informal carnival institution was considered in detail by M.D. Bristol. He refers to the concepts of M.M. Bakhtin¹⁶⁰, and traces an elusive influence of the spirit of carnival on the institution of theater. According to K. Hirschkop, the theoretist of popular laughter culture underestimated the role of political processes in history.

Modern foreign authors, in their turn, enable carnival to be used as a means of social protest¹⁶¹. Researchers believe that such countries as Nigeria¹⁶², Brazil¹⁶³, Kenya¹⁶⁴, Zimbabwe¹⁶⁵, Syria¹⁶⁶, use carnival and street theater as forms of

¹⁵⁵ Erickson, B. (2020). Grottesque logic: Catalan carnival utopias and the politics of laughter. *Visual Studies*, 36(4–5), 507–523.

¹⁵⁶ Stallybrass, P., & White, A. (1986). *The politics and poetics of transgression*. Cornell University Press.

¹⁵⁷ Snyder, A. (2020). Politicizing carnival brass bands in Olympic Rio de Janeiro: Instrumental protest and musical repertoires of contention. *Latin American Music Review*, 41(1), 27–58.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.* P. 29.

¹⁵⁹ Taylor, D. (2003). *The archive and the repertoire: Performing cultural memory in the Americas*. Duke University Press.

¹⁶⁰ Bristol, M. D. (1985). *Carnival and theater: Plebeian culture and the structure of authority in Renaissance England*. Methuen. Pp. 6; 19–24; 38–39; 66; 135; 138; 200.

¹⁶¹ Semenova, E.A. (2020g). Review on the International Bakhtin Conference “Street Theatre vs Theatre of Military Actions” (16–18 October 2019, Moscow) and Collection of scientific proceedings 2020. *Southern Semiotic Review*, 12. Pp. 23–24.

¹⁶² Ezeugwu, C. A., Omeje, O. V., Erojikwe, I., Nwaozuzu, U.-C., & Nnanna, N. (2021). From stage to street: The #EndSARS protests and the prospects of street theatre. *IKENGA: Journal of African Studies*, 22(2), 128–145.

¹⁶³ Neto, E. V., & Gastal, S. A. (2021). Tourism and culture: Carnival in the city of Maceió-Al (Brazil). *Revista Lusófona de Estudos Culturais*, 8(1), 221–239.

¹⁶⁴ Kebaya, C. (2023). Street art and the reconfiguration of civic advocacy in Nairobi City. *English Studies in Africa*, 66(1), 95–108.

¹⁶⁵ See: Sibanda, N. (2021). Staging the Zimbabwean ‘revolution’: ‘Carnivalising’ the November 2017 demonstration. *Critical African Studies*, 13(2), 129–144;

Mangosho, T., Chivandikwa, N., & Mlenga, T. (2016). Radical acting techniques in Zimbabwean street theatre: Implications on audience criticality. *Journal for Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences*, 5(2), 37–52.

¹⁶⁶ Elshazly, D. (2022). (Im)possibilities of integration in Ashtar, REACT and street theatre: the Syrian Condition. *Journal of Scientific Research in Arts (Language & Literature)*, 1, 76–95.

defending their own identity and independence¹⁶⁷. The researchers' attention is shifting from art history analysis of street theater towards sociology and political science¹⁶⁸.

In particular, A.Y. Eldhose considers street theater as a means of enhancing political literacy¹⁶⁹. M. Basa attributes the mission of street theater to reforming society rather than entertaining citizens. The increasing popularity of the social theme in the studies of street theater culture can be applied to a number of reasons. The first is related to the dominant view in foreign academic studies of carnival as a culture of nonviolent theatricalized resistance and protest. Political scientists, medievalists, and sociologists, who consider the protest, subversive nature of carnival, fail to take into account that M.M. Bakhtin investigated the carnival model of culture on the artistic works, rather than actual reality. This tendency to view carnival and carnivalesque humor as a political act¹⁷⁰ can be explained by certain "theoretical ... myopia"¹⁷¹.

Due to another, less obvious reason, researchers of the protest potential of carnival culture and street theater left M.M. Bakhtin's discourse on humor, irony, satire and parody unattended. Instead of dwelling M.M. Bakhtin's definitions of carnival culture further on (due to their excessive citation in foreign studies), we will further consider M.M. Bakhtin's ideas about parody, humor, irony and satire.

M.M. Bakhtin did not initially plan "more detailed study into negative use of

¹⁶⁷ Gugolati, M., & Klien-Thomas, H. (2022). The im/possibilities of digitising Caribbean Carnival. *Makings*, 3(1); Jackson, R.O. (2022). Atlanta's carnival as cultural and spatial practice. *Contexts*, 21(2), 57–59.

¹⁶⁸ Semenova, E.A. (2021c). Ochnaya i zaohnaya diskussiya vokrug mezhdunarodnoj bahtinskoj nauchno-prakticheskoy konferencii «Ulichnyj teatr protiv teatra voennyh dejstvij» [Personal and correspondence discussion of international bakhtin theoretical and practical conference "Street Theatre vs. Theatre of the Military Actions"]. *Galactica Media: Journal of Media Studies*, 3(4). P. 214. (In Russ.). Available at: <https://galacticamedia.com/index.php/gmd/article/view/227>. (Accessed: October 2, 2023).

¹⁶⁹ Eldhose, A.Y. (2014). Political conscientisation through street theatre: A study with reference to Kalyanasaugadhikam. *RiDE: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 9(4), 340–354.

¹⁷⁰ Sombatpoonsiri, J. (2021). Carnivalesque humor, emotional paradoxes, and street protests in Thailand. *Diogenes*, 63(1–2), 76–88.

¹⁷¹ Serbino, M., Panchi, M., & Karpova, A. (2015). Youth and violence: "Street art" as a method of conflict resolution. *Bulletin of Udmurt University. Series Philosophy. Psychology. Pedagogy*, 25(4). P. 60. (In Russ.).

transgredient moments of excess (mocked by being) in satire and the comic, as well as the peculiar position of humor”; however, he introduced a number of fundamentals, underpinning modern science of laughter and art of the comic. The theme of humor is already present in M.M. Bakhtin's early work “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity”. He writes about the *humorous-parodic tones* used by A.S. Pushkin in the artistic characterization of Lensky¹⁷².

In “Discourse in the Novel” M.M. Bakhtin reveals a specific character of humorous style, that “requires such a lively movement of the author towards and away the language, such a continuous change of distance between them”¹⁷³. In “Problems of Speech Genres”, Bakhtin considers parodic-ironic accentuation as manifestation of free-creative mixing, re-forming of speech genres¹⁷⁴. Exploring parody in F.M. Dostoevsky's texts, the scientist notes that such artistic and speech phenomena as stylization, parody, narrated story and dialogue obtain similarities together with certain differences. According to Bakhtin, each of them implies discourse with a “twofold direction – both to the subject of speech as an ordinary word and to another word, to someone else's speech”¹⁷⁵. Bakhtin calls these phenomena “dual-planned words (taking into account someone else's word)”¹⁷⁶.

M.M. Bakhtin relates Menippean satire to an “area of the serious-laughter”¹⁷⁷, and emphasizes the “carnivalistic nature of parody”¹⁷⁸. Referring Menippean satire to the serio-comical genre, M.M. Bakhtin explains that this genre has nothing to do with an ambivalence of the serious and the comical: Menippean

¹⁷² Bakhtin, M.M. (2000). *Avtor i geroj: K filosofskim osnovam gumanitarnyh nauk* [The author and the hero: Toward the philosophical foundations of the humanities]. SPb.: Azbuka. P. 25. (In Russ.).

¹⁷³ Bakhtin, M.M. (1975). *Voprosy literatury i estetiki. Issledovaniya raznykh let* [Literature and aesthetics. Studies of different years]. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura. P. 115. (In Russ.).

¹⁷⁴ Bakhtin, M.M. (2000). *Avtor i geroj: K filosofskim osnovam gumanitarnyh nauk* [The author and the hero: Toward the philosophical foundations of the humanities]. SPb.: Azbuka. P. 273. (In Russ.).

¹⁷⁵ Bakhtin, M.M. (2002). *Sobranie sochinenij v semi tomah*. T. 6. [Collected works in seven volumes]. Vol. 6. Moscow: Russkie slovari; Yazyki slavyanskoi kul'tury. P. 207. (In Russ.).

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. P. 208.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. P. 123.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. P. 144.

satire is inherent in carnivalized forms with strong self-parody. M.M. Bakhtin conceptually divides the areas of humor and irony when he excludes the possibility of “negative use of transgredient moments (excess of vision, knowledge and evaluation)” in humor and attributes irony to the same level as anger, distrust, cynicism and defiance¹⁷⁹.

Foreign researchers of street theater pay slight attention to M.M. Bakhtin’s reasoning about parody, similar to that uttered by the Formalists Yu.N. Tynyanov and V.B. Shklovsky¹⁸⁰. M.M. Bakhtin and V.B. Shklovsky point out the rejuvenating function of parody in the novel. Like Yu.N. Tynyanov, M.M. Bakhtin argues, that parody creatively reformulates various genres. According to Bakhtin, the Menippean genre is “characterized by a wide use of inserted genres”, presented “with varying degrees of parody”¹⁸¹. Yu.N. Tynyanov gives examples of Dostoevsky's works, where the author parodies Gogol's texts and techniques, keeping the names of the characters “to play with them”¹⁸², paying special attention to the similarity and difference between parody and stylization. According to Tynyanov, “stylization, comically motivated or stressed, becomes parody”¹⁸³.

The explorers of Bakhtin’s carnival concept used in the study of street theater, neglect Schiller’s ideas about comedy, aimed at “being free from passion”, followed by B.M. Eikhenbaum, who believed that “comedy is the quintessence of art, where the idea of content destruction by form finds its full embodiment”¹⁸⁴.

While Bakhtin’s interpretation of parody remains outside the direct studies into protest potential of carnival culture and street theater, it is thoroughly

¹⁷⁹ Bakhtin, M.M. (2000). *Avtor i geroj: K filosofskim osnovam gumanitarnykh nauk* [The author and the hero: Toward the philosophical foundations of the humanities]. SPb.: Azbuka. P. 167. (In Russ.).

¹⁸⁰ Shklovsky, V.B. (1983). *O teorii prozy* [On the theory of prose]. Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel'.

¹⁸¹ Bakhtin, M.M. (2002). *Sobranie sochinenij v semi tomah*. T. 6. [Collected works in seven volumes]. Vol. 6. Moscow: Russkie slovari; Yazyki slavyanskoj kul'tury. P. 133. (In Russ.).

¹⁸² Tynyanov, Yu. (1929). *Arhaisty i Novatory* [Archaists and Innovators]. Priboi. Pp. 416, 429.

¹⁸³ Ibid. P. 416.

¹⁸⁴ As cited in: Kozintsev, A.G. (2022a). Unichtozhenie soderzhaniia formoi [Destruction of content by form]. In T. V. Chernigovskaya & T. E. Petrova (Eds.), *St. Petersburg Seminar on Cognitive Research: papers and transcripts: Vol. 1. 2012–2015*. SPbU Press. P. 97. (In Russ.).

investigated by Bakhtin scholars¹⁸⁵; researchers of laughter, perception psychology of the comic, and theorists of theatrical art. In particular, the author of the theatrical dictionary P. Pavis refers to M.M. Bakhtin, when defending the parodic nature of comic burlesque, emphasizing its relevance as a modern dialogical genre.

A poor interest of researchers in M.M. Bakhtin's arguments on humor, irony, satire, and parody can be explained by the fact that the first edition of M.M. Bakhtin's work on Rabelais appeared in the United States in 1968. The publication of the first edition of Rabelais in America coincided with the student revolution; thus, it implies the reasons for understanding Bakhtin's carnival as an instrument of protest¹⁸⁶. However, followers of such an understanding of the carnival culture appear not fully involved in the theoretical study of differences in the nature of humor and irony. However, the second assumption appears less obvious when considering that popular Western theorists remain meticulous about semantic theories of humor and irony of V. Raskin and S. Attardo. In addition, issues related to the study of functionality of laughter and humor in education, communication, rhetoric, medicine, political discourse, and art remain in high demand in foreign science. Perhaps due to the popularity of applied topics, M.M. Bakhtin's fundamental, metalinguistic analysis of the carnivalization phenomenon attracted slight attention of laughter foreign science. Indeed, S. Attardo, a recognized expert in humor research, considers Bakhtin's concept to be just one of the theories of literary studies, based on the psychological ideas of S. Freud and K. Jung¹⁸⁷.

An analysis of the reasons behind spreading hybrid concepts in foreign science that merge protest and festivity requires taking into account the traditional views on street theater in European culture as a culture of popular justice and

¹⁸⁵ Rose, M.A., & Semenova, E.A. (2021). Bakhtin on parody. *Bakhtinsky Vestnik*, 2(6). Available at: <https://bakhtin.mrsu.ru/2021-%e2%84%966/>. (Accessed: February 5, 2024).

¹⁸⁶ Grübel, R.G. (2022). Carnival, carnivalism and Bakhtin's culture of laughter. In M. Mrugalski, S. Schahadat, & I. Wutsdorff (Eds.), *Central and Eastern European literary theory and the West* (pp. 887–898). De Gruyter; Kowalewski, M. (2014). Carnivalization of protest. *Stan Rzeczy*, 2(7). P. 199.

¹⁸⁷ Attardo, S. (1994). *Linguistic theories of humor*. Mouton de Gruyter. P. 51.

rebellion. M. Gluckman's theory of social catharsis¹⁸⁸ contributes significantly to the study of the spectacular side of popular uprisings. N. Rogers focused his attention on the Georgian era of British history with its popular revolts erupting in the holiday season¹⁸⁹. Le Roy Ladurie E., a French historian, explores the Roman carnival in 1580 and distinguishes the similarity between carnival and peasant revolts¹⁹⁰.

Charivari¹⁹¹ studies occupy a special place among the works that have influenced the understanding of foreign street theater. Charivari refers to a form of popular condemnation of immoral behavior that is not subject to judicial sanctions (adultery, unequal marriage, etc.). According to one version, shariwari dates back to the tradition of theatricalisation of trials¹⁹², which over time transformed into a parodic attribute of the holiday.

E.P. Thompson's attempt to explain the difference between entertaining and punitive charivari looks reasonable. In the first case, the charivari performs the function of parodic framing of a collective holiday. Laughing behaviour of the participants of such charivari performs a carnival function similar to that performed by nativity scenesters, skomorokhi¹⁹³, folklore theatre actors and modern street actors performing at festivals, city and corporate holidays.

In the second case, theatrical and parodic, laughter techniques are used to expose the accused to public condemnation and ostracism¹⁹⁴. Despite the fact that historical evidence suggests that punitive charivari provoked an increase in street

¹⁸⁸ Gluckman, M. (1963). *Order and rebellion in tribal Africa*. Free Press of Glencoe.

¹⁸⁹ Rogers, N. (1998). *Crowds, culture, and politics in Georgian Britain*. Clarendon Press.

¹⁹⁰ Le Roy Ladurie, E. (1980). *Carnival in Romans*. Scolar.

¹⁹¹ In English, charivari means cat concert, noise.

¹⁹² See: Frank, R.M. (1989). Singing duels and social solidarity: The case of the Basque *Charivari*. In W.A. Douglass (Ed.), *Essays in Basque social anthropology and history* (pp. 43–80). Reno: Basque Studies Program occasional papers series, 4.

¹⁹³ See: Belkin, A.A. (1975). *Russian skomorokhs*. Nauka. (In Russ.).

¹⁹⁴ Thompson, E.P. (1981). "Rough Music" et charivari. Quelques réflexions complémentaires. In J. Le Goff & J.-C. Schmitt (Eds.), *Le charivari: Actes de la table ronde organisée à Paris (25–27 avril 1977) par l'Ecole des Etudes en Sciences Sociales et le Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* (pp. 273–283). De Gruyter Mouton. P. 274. (In French).

crimes¹⁹⁵, some researchers insist on their similarity to street theatre¹⁹⁶. This, in turn, provides grounds for critical analysis of the scientific direction studying the protest potential of carnival and street theatre. An analysis of the studies published from 2006 to 2022 in foreign periodicals and non-periodicals on protest potential of carnival culture are presented further. The studies were selected and analyzed to demonstrate that when irony and satire are considered within the category of humor in the analysis of carnival phenomena, carnival culture equals to carnivalesque protest with street theater as one of its form.

The term “protestival” was introduced by D. Jacobson, an active participant of anarchist and artistic projects in Australia in the 1990s. However, this notion entered the scientific application due to academic research activities of G. St. John, a cultural anthropologist, an expert in anti-globalization actions, political theater and Burning Man phenomenon¹⁹⁷, and a research fellow at the Center for Critical and Cultural Studies at the University of Queensland. The author uses the concept of *protestival* in relation to the protest movements, including Carnival Against Capital; Occupy Wall Street (Ill. 1), Reclaim the Streets (Ill. 2)¹⁹⁸. The author connotes festal hacktivism, festal realms festival used to describe night rallies and carnivalesque protests as subversive laughter. According to the protestival concept, a theatrical character of protest makes it distinguishable from pure carnival. Protestival, in the researcher's understanding, represents an autonomous

¹⁹⁵ Uvarov, P.Yu. (2021). Kto glagolet ustami mladenca? Deti i religioznoe nasilie vo Francii [Who speaks through the mouths of babes? Children and religious violence in France]. Review of Crouzet, D. (2020). *Les enfants bourreaux au temps des guerres de Religion*. Paris: Albin Michel. 336 p. *Izvestiya Uralskogo federalnogo universiteta. Seriya 2: Gumanitarnye nauki*, 23(1). Pp. 295–296. (In Russ.).

¹⁹⁶ Forsdyke, S. (2008). Street theatre and popular justice in Ancient Greece: Shaming, stoning and starving offenders inside and outside the courts. *Past & Present*, 201(1), 3–50; Magalhães de Oliveira, G.C. (n.d.). *Popular justice and street theatre in late Roman cities* [Conference paper]. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/14884954/Popular_Justice_and_Street_Theatre_in_Late_Roman_Cities. (Accessed: January 3, 2023).

¹⁹⁷ St John, G. (2021). Sherpagate: Tourists and Cultural Drama at Burning Man. In M. Nita, & J. H. Kidwell (Eds.), *Festival Cultures: Mapping New Fields in the Arts and Social Sciences* (1st ed., pp. 169–193). Palgrave Macmillan.

¹⁹⁸ St John, G. (2008). Protestival: Global days of action and carnivalized politics in the present. *Social Movement Studies*, 7(2). P. 168.

cultural heterotopia created by youth groups in America in the 60–70s of the 20th century¹⁹⁹. Referring to W. Turner, a representative of the Manchester scientific school, French thinker M. Foucault, and M.M. Bakhtin's Rabelais, he authorizes the fusion of festival, carnival, and protest.

L. Bogad suggests the concept of “tactical carnival”²⁰⁰ to be implemented in the theory of protest movement. According to his assumptions, an attempt to eliminate the division between actors and spectators in a street protest action, like a carnival, will never create a carnival situation in the Bakhtin's view. However, the use of irony and humor as carnival tactics enables a modern version of tactical carnival to be created. L. Bogad believes that clowning, irony, satire and humor, as varieties of laughter provocation, are able to undermine the firm authoritarian regimes, and, moreover, to support the laughing people in overcoming the tension they feel towards these authorities. Therefore, according to L. Bogad, an effectiveness of demonstration can be promoted by humor due its relaxing, entertaining, and festive component. Whereas, sarcastic satire provides an effect of novelty and surprise, irony offers a variation of meanings and senses, provoking passers-by to their own interpretative work²⁰¹. However, L. Bogad warns that using irony in a tactical carnival can be accompanied with the audience responding to irony with irony. Bogad proves that an effectiveness of carnival tactics of nonviolent resistance is indicated by the complete absence of police aggression towards the actions of rebel clowns (Ill. 3, 4).

However, Bogad's reliance on the effect of nonviolent resistance resulted opposite. During one of the clown army's street performances, the police arrested several of clowns, disregarding their dedication to the principle of non-ideological interpellation. The author fails to define the very concepts of irony and humor,

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. P. 169.

²⁰⁰ Bogad, L.M. (2006). Tactical carnival: Social movements, demonstrations, and dialogical performance. In J. Cohen-Cruz & M. Schutzman (Eds.), *A Boal Companion: Dialogues on theatre and cultural politics* (pp. 46–58). Routledge.

²⁰¹ Ibid. P. 53.

thus, irony in this interpretation remains a semantically rich form of humor²⁰².

L. Bogad's ideas of tactical carnival as a modification of medieval carnival inspire the study into carnivalesque protests, political theater, clownfrontation, as well as public diplomacy as a socio-political phenomenon. D. Chernobrov, a researcher at the Sheffield Institute for International Development and a senior fellow at the Higher Education Academy (SFHEA), when exploring the role of verbal humor in public diplomacy, applies the term "*strategic humour*" as a simplified, entertaining interpretation of a political event. According to Chernobrov, humor defends a particular point of view, and, moreover, it can create post-reality, where geopolitical issues are presented through their imitation, fictional scenarios. Humor appears to be a way of telling a "good story"²⁰³. Notably, the author rarely and delicately supports his assumptions with theoretical data in the field of laughter and humor, once referring to D. Morrell and K. Gruner²⁰⁴.

B. Shepard, S. Duncombe, and L. Bogad jointly reflected on the problem of increasing the effectiveness of carnival resistance actions and wrote an article devoted to the peculiarities of play and carnival in the conditions of protest activity. Clowning, humor, prank, and carnival are characterized by the authors according to the definition of play by J. Huizinga; however, he fails to provide a detailed definition of comic play and disorderly play²⁰⁵. In a separate article, B. Shepard thoroughly analyses the play, distinguishing five of its varieties. The researcher refers social and cultural play to the first type of play, where culture is a dependent variable that can be and should be manipulated. The second type of play is creative, where elements create conditions for improvisation. The third type of play is performance, spectacle, the Shakespearean metaphor "All the world's

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Chernobrov, D. (2021). Strategic humour: Public diplomacy and comic framing of foreign policy issues. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 24(2), 277–296.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Shepard, B., Bogad, L. M., & Duncombe, S. (2008). Performing vs. the insurmountable: Theatrics, activism, and social movements. *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies*, 4(3). P. 7.

a stage.” The fourth type is serious play. The fifth type is healing play, rehearsal of freedom of action, playful overcoming of life barriers²⁰⁶. It can be noticed that B. Sheppard does not mention humor and comedy in any of the listed types of play.

J. Hammond interprets the term “tactical carnival” by L. Bogad as a combination of communal and intentional carnival²⁰⁷. The author focuses on a number of textbook examples of carnival protest actions including “Carnival Against Capital”²⁰⁸; actions of Rebel Clown Army (CIRCA) and “Occupy Wall Street”. The author criticizes the attempts to combine carnival with political action, distorting Bakhtin’s idea of carnival, revealing no instrumental purpose, unlike the practices of carnival protest with an explicit political agenda. However, D. Hammond translates these examples as both a manifestation of carnival in the Bakhtinian sense and an intentional carnival. From his point of view, the participants of such hybrid carnivals experience the same medieval carnival humor, intended to convey an actual political statement to society²⁰⁹.

M. Kowalewski makes an attempt to theoretically link M.M. Bakhtin’s concept of carnival culture with street theater, introducing the category of carnivalesque protest. He understands carnivalization of protest as using the heritage of carnival forms in protest tactics²¹⁰. According to the, a playful arsenal, including fire dance, masks, costumes, puppets, music and acrobatics is turned by protesters into dangerous political tools. The author draws attention to the theatricality of the props of participants in carnivalesque protests, as well as such historically recurring carnival-theatrical forms of expression as parodies of sermons, acting out a fake wedding, and carnival duels²¹¹.

M. Kowalewski attempts to divide the semantic space of street theater into

²⁰⁶ Shepard, B. (2005). Play, creativity, and the new community organizing. *Journal of Progressive Human Services*, 16(2). P. 51.

²⁰⁷ Hammond, J.L. (2020). Carnival against the Capital of Capital: Carnavalesque protest in Occupy Wall Street. *Journal of Festive Studies*, 2(1), 78–101. P. 78.

²⁰⁸ Bogad, L.M. (2010). Carnivals against Capital: Radical clowning and the global justice movement. *Social Identities*, 16(4), 537–557.

²⁰⁹ Hammond, J.L. (2020). Carnival against the Capital of Capital: Carnavalesque protest in Occupy Wall Street. *Journal of Festive Studies*, 2(1), 78–101. P. 79.

²¹⁰ Kowalewski, M. (2014). Carnivalization of protest. *Stan Rzeczy*, 2(7). P. 201. (In Polish).

²¹¹ *Ibid.* P. 203.

entertainment and political street theater. Basically, political street theater uses puppets depicting caricatures of figures of capitalists, imperialists, and politicians. Political street theater carnival obtains attributes, including a mask that hides the face, enabling a subject, like a carnival participant, to become part of the general political body²¹². According to the author's main conclusion, the tactics of carnivalesque protests, contrary to expectations, begin to significantly weaken the protest mood of participants, causing the opposite effect.

J. Sombatpoonsiri examines the concept of “laughter resistance” using the example of the protests by “Otpor” Serbian group and depicts forms of laughter resistance, including carnival rallies, witty slogans and satirical street theater²¹³. According to the researcher, parody became a key form of humor used by activists to co-opt national symbols and historical narratives.

According to J. Sombatpoonsiri, satire, parody and carnival comprise manifestations of humor²¹⁴. He believes that satire as the most ferocious type of humor is widely used in a deliberate attack on the enemy, since the political statement underlying satire is more explicit than in other genres of humor, mimesis and distortion are considered to be the two main weapons of satire, effectively overthrowing authority. Whereas the satirical joke *works to defeat* by destroying the opponent in their own territory of delusion²¹⁵, parody, more delicately weakens an object of attack through imitation. The parody is usually targeted at a work of art where parody seeks to destroy its unity of form and content²¹⁶.

S. Popovic and S.A. McClennen consider laughtivism as a key to success of nonviolent resistance²¹⁷. They followed the concept of M. Sorensen, who devoted a number of studies into the role of humor and laughter in political activism²¹⁸.

²¹² Ibid. P. 204.

²¹³ Sombatpoonsiri, J. (2015). *Humor and nonviolent Struggle in Serbia*. Syracuse University Press. P. 99.

²¹⁴ Ibid. P. 4.

²¹⁵ Ibid. P. 8.

²¹⁶ Ibid. P. 9.

²¹⁷ Popovic, S., & McClennen, S. A. (2020). *Pranksters vs. autocrats: Why dilemma actions advance nonviolent activism*. Cornell University Press. P. 37.

²¹⁸ See: Sørensen, M. (2016). *Humour in political activism: Creative nonviolent resistance*.

According to S. Popovic and S.A. McClennen, using humor and irony to undermine the superiority of a race oppressing another race dates back to the Third Reich, the jokes and cartoons used by Norwegians against the Nazi occupation, Ch. Chaplin's speech in *The Great Dictator*. The authors consider such a phenomenon as the Rebel Clown Army as a manifestation of laughtivism, capable of undermining someone else's authority through its comic representation²¹⁹.

The concepts developed in the study of carnivalesque protests become a scientific basis for Russian researchers, inclining to foreign developments in the study of carnival culture and humor. Y.N. Alisieich, analyzing the concept of "laughter protest", refers to the works of M. Sorensen and other foreign studies of the potential of humor and laughter in the practice of nonviolent protest. However, the researcher is significantly confused about such terms as laughter, humor, satire, and joke, stating that "the comic manifests itself in a multitude of types, genres, and forms: from the traditional division into humor, irony, satire, and sarcasm to the vast field of online humor (e.g., memes, trolling, hashtags, etc.), as well as performative formats (e.g. pranks, guerrilla theater, carnival rallies)"²²⁰, thereby demonstrating terminological negligence in dealing with these concepts.

The concepts and notions of Russian researchers, developed on the basis of Bakhtin's concept, contrast humor and irony more often than in foreign studies, however, they often contain terminological inaccuracies and conceptual gaps. For example, according to A.G. Kozintsev, humor for L.E. Pinsky "as well as for most aestheticians of the past, ... is ... a personal receiver of an impersonal ancient type of comic"²²¹. The majority of Russian aestheticians believe that the comic manifests itself "in a variety of forms – from anecdote and caricature to sarcastic

Palgrave Macmillan; Sørensen, M. (2017). Laughing on the way to social change: Humor and nonviolent action theory. *Peace & Change*, 42(1), 128–156.

²¹⁹ Popovic, S., & McClennen, S. A. (2020). *Pranksters vs. autocrats: Why dilemma actions advance nonviolent activism*. Cornell University Press. P. 37.

²²⁰ Alisieich, Yu.N. (2022). «Smekhovoj protest»: komicheskoe v sovremennom aktivizme [Laughter protest: The comical in contemporary activism]. *Galactica Media: Journal of Media Studies*, 4(4). P. 163. (In Russ.).

²²¹ Kozintsev, A.G. (2019). Leonid Pinskiy i filosofii komicheskogo [Leonid Pinsky and the philosophy of the comic]. In L. Pinsky, *Why God sleeps: L. E. Pinsky's Samizdat tract and his correspondence with G. M. Kozintsev*. SPb.: Nestor-Istoriya. P. 94. (In Russ.).

outbursts and outright insults”²²². The defense of M.M. Bakhtin’s thesis is known to have shifted from the scientific to the political level²²³. He was suspected of excessive enthusiasm for analyzing the laughter that is entertaining and non-ideological²²⁴.

For example, the famous Soviet and Russian aesthetician Y.B. Borev, who highly praised Bakhtin's book on Rabelais's work for the fact that its author gave “a theoretically deep and accurate characterization of folk carnival laughter”²²⁵, had an internal polemic with Bakhtin on a number of issues. Yu.B. Borev noted that “in his general conception of the comic, ... the author overhistoricized, overdialectized. (...) Behind the fluidity and changeability ... he lost sight of the historical stability and colossal conservatism of life, which every time, no matter how you change it, returns in a different form to some similar, initially strong systems, constructions, principles”²²⁶. Initially, Yu.B. Borev advocates for the rights of satirical laughter, which, in his opinion, no less than carnivalesque laughter, “is able to analyze the state of the world”²²⁷, and to execute imperfections of the world. However, he gradually recognizes that “a satirist only knows a denying laughter and puts himself outside the ridiculed phenomenon, thereby destroying the integrity of the laughter aspect of the world, making the ridiculed a private phenomenon”²²⁸.

Notably, an evolution of Yu.B. Borev’s views on laughter appears to be very rare event, since Russian aesthetics tends to see laughter culture as a tool of criticism. Today, the topic of political humor continues to be one of the scientific

²²² Gurova, E. K., & Lomykina, N. Yu. (2020). Network carnival: How the protest formula was a meme and came back. *Media Linguistics*, 7(3). P. 319. (In Russ.).

²²³ Dubrovskaya, S.A. (2017). Bakhtinskaia kontsepsiia smekha N V Gogolia v sotsiokulturnom kontekste 1940-1950-kh gg. [Bakhtin’s concept of laughter of N. V. Gogol in the socio-cultural context of the 1940s–1950s.]. In E. A. Semenova (Ed.), *Proceedings of the International Round Table dedicated to M. M. Bakhtin “The Problem of Chronotope in Modern Scientific Studies”*, April 19–20, 2017, Moscow). Moscow: IAEaCS RAE. P. 270. (In Russ.).

²²⁴ Ibid. P. 276.

²²⁵ Borev, Yu.B. (1970). Komicheskoe ili o tom, kak smekh kaznit nesovershenstvo mira, ochishchaet i obnovlyaet cheloveka i utverzhdaet radost' [Comical, or how laughter executes the imperfection of the world, purifies and renews man and affirms joy]. Moscow: Iskusstvo. P. 40. (In Russ.).

²²⁶ Ibid. P. 42.

²²⁷ Ibid. P. 41.

²²⁸ Borev, Yu. B. (2004). Estetika [Aesthetics]. Rostov na Donu: Feniks. P.313. (In Russ.).

trends in Russian and foreign studies²²⁹. Researchers pay wider attention to political tricksterism²³⁰, humor as a component of activist interventions²³¹, offensive humor as a modern form of carnivalization²³². Due to such studies, humor moves from the category of a secondary modeling system to the status of a primary modeling system. However, if we exclude the main sign and symbolic function from human privileges, humor will return to the animal level of playful aggression, without ever rising to the level of laugh denying signs and symbols of culture.

As a result, the authors, trying to pass off satire and irony as humor and clowning, recognize the opposite effect of laughter strategies, which begin to significantly weaken a protest spirit of the participants, leading to the unexpected result. A biased approach of theorists to politicization of theater and carnival, erasing the distinction between carnival, political theater and street theater art²³³, leads to the vulgarization of Bakhtin's concept of carnival culture, leading to

²²⁹ See: Noderer, S. (2020). No laughing matter? The potential of political humor as a means of nonviolent resistance: A case study of Syria. *Zeitschrift für Friedens- und Konfliktforschung*, 9(3), 255–277.

²³⁰ См.: Il'in, A.A. (2022). Politicheskoe triksterstvo v kontekste kommunikativnoi politiki [Political tricksterism in the context communication policy]. *Issues in Elitology*, 3(4), 30–40. (In Russ.); Oskina, O. I. (2022). Karnaval'nost' kak marker sovremennoj deviantnoj politicheskoy kul'tury [Carnival as a marker of a modern deviant political culture]. *Issues in Elitology*, 3(2), 115–128. (In Russ.).

²³¹ See: Milohnić, A. (2015). Artivistic interventions as humorous re-appropriations. *European Journal of Humour Research*, 3(2/3), 35–49.

²³² See: Graefer, A., Kilby, A., & Kalviknes Bore, I.-L. (2019). Unruly women and carnivalesque countercontrol: Offensive humor in mediated social protest. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 43(2), 171–193.

²³³ In particular, these and other issues were the focus of the International Bakhtin Theoretical and Practical Conference “Street theatre vs. the theatre of military actions”, October 16–18, 2019, Moscow, co-sponsored by the Institute of Art Education and Cultural Studies and the NP “Theatre-EX”. The conference participants discussed the problems of politicization of carnival culture and contemporary street theater in Russia and abroad. See: Materialy mezhdunarodnoj nauchno-prakticheskoy konferencii «Ulichnyj teatr protiv teatra voennyh dejstvij» (Moskva, 16–18 oktyabrya 2019 g.). / Programma i tezisy [Program and abstracts of the International Bakhtin Theoretical and Practical Conference “Street theatre vs. the theatre of military actions”, October 16–18, 2019, Moscow. (2019)]. Moscow: IAEaCS RAE. 91 p. (In Russ.); Semenova, E.A. (2019j). Street theater vs. theater of military activities ... (On the historical peculiarities of the formation of modern street theater in Russia). *Akademicheskie tetradi*, 19, 132–159. (In Russ.).

a theoretical dead end²³⁴. Despite the fact that such foreign terms and concepts as tactical carnival, laughter resistance, laughter activism, etc., used in the study of carnival culture, are formally synonymous with such concepts as play aggression, laughter negativism, at the semantic level they act as their antagonists.

“Based on the above, we can conclude that foreign practices, described by these concepts, are more correctly considered in the context of decarnivalization and political theater. These words and phrases deserve to exist in the theoretical field of studying carnival culture if they are perceived as idioms or viral concepts aimed at filling the carnival form with decarnivalization. As a result, we return to the conclusion that C. Emerson made more than twenty years ago, when she said that only madmen would think of organizing a carnival around a revolution. The researcher points to a misconception popular in the United States that carnival can be used as a tactic of permanent revolution or a battlefield (in the USA, ironically, the field of laughter research is developing quite successfully). Unfortunately, this assertion is still relevant”²³⁵.

An analysis of the nature of street theatre and carnival culture demonstrates the similarities and differences between them at the functional and semantic level. In terms of semantics, street theater can be a manifestation of serious play, found in the manipulative mechanisms of protest actions, where street theater is used as a technique. Indeed, in order to increase the resume of street theater, foreign theorists suggest either raising it to the level of tragedy, increasing its semantic load, or assigning street theater with a socio-political mission. If carnival culture can only emasculate into a social role-playing game, then street theater, being at the stage of social role-playing game, can build up its carnival potential. Only those deviant heterotopias, which, taking root on the soil of street theater, try to change its function to a decarnival one, disguised as carnival, cannot be interpreted

²³⁴ Semenova, E.A. (2023c). Ulichnyj teatr v kontekste zarubezhnyh koncepcij karnaval'noj kul'tury [Street theatre in the context of foreign concepts of carnival culture]. *National Psychological Journal*, 18(3), 25–34. (In Russ.).

²³⁵ Semenova, E.A. (2023d). Zarubezhnaya “karnaval'naya” kul'tura: mezhdru idiomoj i virusnym konceptom [Foreign “carnival” culture: Between idiom and viral concept]. *Experience industries. Socio-Cultural Research Technologies (EISCRT)*, 4(5). P. 42. (In Russ.).

in the logic of carnival theory.

1.3. The potential of play, laughter and humor research in the study of street theatre

In one respect, studies of play, laughter and humor can significantly contribute to exploring the mechanisms of street theater transformation into veiled forms of aggression combining laughter and seriousness²³⁶. In another respect, they provide an opportunity to reveal the ludicrous, carnivalesque potential of contemporary street theater. In light of contemporary interdisciplinary research on laughter and humour, the veiled tendency of protest carnival theorists to view laughter and humour as tools of manipulation becomes more apparent.

Homo Ludens by J. Huizinga

J. Huizinga made a significant contribution not only to the development of the game theory of culture, but also to the study of the evolution of cultural forms, convincingly showing in his work “Homo ludens” how, as a result of human progress in the sphere of conquering nature, serious games begin to prevail in society. The Dutch culturologist's reasoning about the regression from play to seriousness was further developed in the works of anthropologists, cultural scientists, and philosophers studying the game concepts of culture, the nature of laughter and humor. Today, most researchers share Huizinga’s point of view that “The concept of play as such is of a higher order than the concept of serious. For seriousness tends to exclude play, but play easily includes seriousness”²³⁷. In turn, we agree with the anthropologist and researcher of the nature of laughter A.G. Kozintsev that the *Homo Ludens* metaphor can be perceived as a scientific concept through understanding that, as A. G. Kozintsev accurately noted, “laughter is by no

²³⁶ Artemova, Yu.A. (2015). *Ipostasi smekha. Ritual, tradiciya i yumor* [The hypostases of laughter. Ritual, tradition and humor]. Moscow: Smysl. P. 201. (In Russ.).

²³⁷ Huizinga, J. (2011). *Chelovek igrayushchij: opyt opredeleniya igrovogo elementa kul'tury* [A person playing: the experience of determining the play element of culture] / Sost., predisl. i per. s niderl. D.V. Sil'vestrova; Komment., ukazatel' D.E. Haritonovicha. SPb.: Izdatel'stvo Ivana Limbakha. P. 79. (In Russ.).

means a metaphor! The reason for its special status became clear (however, only to a few) in the twentieth century, when the gap between physiology, psychology and philosophy was removed due to the emergence of ethology, a biological science of behavior”²³⁸.

Due to the fact that J. Huizinga does not delve into specific cases in which laughter accompanies play, researchers believe that he is not interested in the non-serious hypostasis of play. Meanwhile, it follows from the text of the book “*Homo Ludens*” that Huizinga considers fun, amusement, jocularity and non-seriousness of the game action as an integral part of it. The researcher finds that “the *aardigheid* [amusement] of play resists any analysis, any logical interpretation”²³⁹. J. Huizinga pays substantial attention to laughter, even though, in his opinion, as a secondary, optional component of play, rightly noting that if “purely physiological ability to laugh is inherent exclusively to humans”²⁴⁰, then the play function in humans is “common with animals”²⁴¹. J. Huizinga draws two major conclusions concerning the relationship between play and the comic, laughter and play. Heisinga's first conclusion states that “everything that concerns laughter also concerns the comic”, that “the comic ... falls under the notion of the non-serious”²⁴². The second conclusion asserts that “the comic stands in undoubted connection with laughter, ... excites laughter, ... its relationship to play is of a secondary nature”²⁴³.

To axiomatic judgements we can refer to the opinion of Huizinga that everything that relates to the comic has to do with the non-serious. From the perspective of modern scholarship on laughter, Huizinga's claim that the comic

²³⁸ Kozintsev, A.G. (2024). *Iazyk — realnost — igra — smekh Antropologicheskie fragmenty* [Language — Reality — Play — Laughter: Anthropological fragments]. Moscow: Izdatelskii Dom IASK. P. 185. (In Russ.).

²³⁹ Huizinga, J. (2011). *Chelovek igrayushchij: opyt opredeleniya igrovogo elementa kul'tury* [A person playing: the experience of determining the play element of culture] / Sost., predisl. i per. s niderl. D.V. Sil'vestrova; Komment., ukazatel' D.E. Haritonovicha. SPb.: Izdatel'stvo Ivana Limbakha. P. 25. (In Russ.).

²⁴⁰ Ibid. P. 29.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

always elicits laughter seems debatable. Despite the fact that the culturologist did not develop this idea, he touched upon important issues related to the difference between play and comic, laughter, joke, amusement; the significance of form and content in comic art; the specificity of play in the art of clowning; the relationship between laughter and humour, and others.

Huizinga refers cultural immaturity to puerilism²⁴⁴. In Huizinga's theory of the playful nature of culture (in contrast to the concept of *paidia* used by R. Caillois), puer becomes a symbol of adult culture imitating the world of childhood, but became an expression of the apotheosis of culture's loss of its agonal beginning. "The fate of the term puerilism is similar to such concepts as *neoteny*, *heterochrony*, *heterotopia*, *chronotope*, originally intended to characterize biological phenomena, later transposed to various cultural processes"²⁴⁵.

J. Huizinga admitted that he did not immediately come to the conclusion that puerilism was not a playful phenomenon. His difficulties in recognising non-game features in puerilism were due to the difficulty that arose in trying to distinguish the childishness and naivety from genuine play, since at first glance puerilism seems to have a playful mood. Huizinga originally saw puerilism as the result of playful activity, which "gives rise to social groups that prefer to surround themselves with secrecy or emphasise their difference from the rest of the world by all sorts of disguises"²⁴⁶. This controversial point in Huizinga's definition of play was pointed out by R. Caillois, who suggested that 'when a secret, a mask, a disguise fulfil some sacramental function, we can be sure that we are not facing a game, but a social institution. Everything that by nature is a mystery or a simulation is close to a game; but it is necessary that a fictitious and entertaining

²⁴⁴ The concept of "puerilism" was established in psychiatry thanks to the French neurologist and psychiatrist E. Dupré, who proposed this term in 1903 as a characteristic of the psychopathological state of an adult exhibiting the features of a child.

²⁴⁵ Semenova, E.A. (2023). Puerilizm v aktyorskoj professii [Puerilism in the profession of actor]. In *Proceedings of the All-Russian scientific and practical conference "Problems of art psychology"*, Moscow. FSC PIR; Lomonosov Moscow State University. P. 211. (In Russ.)

²⁴⁶ As cited in: Caillois, R. (2007). *Igry i lyudi; Stat'i i esse po sociologii kul'tury* [Man, play, and games. Articles and essays in the sociology of culture] (S.N. Zenkin, Trans.). Moscow: OGI. P. 44. (In Russ.).

beginning prevails in it as well”²⁴⁷.

However, in a detailed analysis, Huizinga pointed out that the childishness is not manifested in playful needs, but in the “banal amusements”²⁴⁸. Moreover, Puer is characterised by excessive suspicion, fanaticism, intolerance of anything different from him, “susceptibility to any illusion if it flatters self-love or group consciousness”²⁴⁹. Huizinga considers the main cause of the growing puerilist potential in culture to be “the weakening of moral standards”²⁵⁰ in society. As a result, the cultural historian began to use the term ‘puerilism’ to characterise non-game culture, convinced that a culture in which humanity voluntarily sacrifices “its maturity (...) lacks the essential signs of true play”²⁵¹.

Huizinga’s reasoning is in line with the ideas of his contemporary, the German philosopher M. Scheler, who explained society's obsession with the cult of youth through the processes of de-sublimation and de-reflection. According to Scheler, at the beginning of the 20th century Europe was seized by the idea of the revival of the Dionysian man, who was entirely absorbed in vital development. Scheler saw manifestations of the cult of youth in society in large-scale sports movements, oblivion of Puritan morality, dance and revolutionary youth fever, “childish contempt for science in favour of ideologies of different orders and circles”²⁵² and others. Later the term ‘puerilism’ was used by social philosopher K. Lash to describe the ‘culture of narcissism’ of American society in the 60-70s of the 20th century, finding in the average American consumer spiritual immaturity of the puerilist and narcissist, manifested in indifference to the great achievements of science and culture, comparable to spiritual barbarism.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Huizinga, J. (2011). *Chelovek igrayushchij: opyt opredeleniya igrovogo elementa kul'tury* [A person playing: the experience of determining the play element of culture] / Sost., predisl. i per. s niderl. D.V. Sil'vestrova; Komment., ukazatel' D.E. Haritonovicha. SPb.: Izdatel'stvo Ivana Limbakha. P. 283. (In Russ.).

²⁴⁹ Ibid. P. 284.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid. P. 285.

²⁵² Scheler, M. (1994). *Izbrannye proizvedeniya* [Selected Works]. Per. with German. / Per. Denezhkin, A.V., Malinkin, A.N., Phillipov, A.F.; Under rets, Denezhkin, A.V. Moscow: Gnosis. P. 111. (In Russ.).

J. Huizinga made valuable judgments about the difference between a rogue and a *spielbrecher*, which are important for understanding the strategies for simulating a carnival, laughing game. The strategy of cheating, in his opinion, is that the participants pretend that they are playing, creating the illusion of a game in its complete absence. The *spielbrecher's* strategy is aimed at breaking the game itself, threatening the gaming community in which the game takes place with its actions. The second strategy is the most dangerous for the gaming community, since it can be used to create duplicates of it, in which, although externally similar, different game rules apply.

J. Huizinga significantly expanded the horizon of cultural anthropology, looking at competitive play as the foundation of culture. Such elements of competition and performance as “fight, display, challenge, panache, pretense, restrictive rules,” which, according to Huizinga, are “species-wide qualities”²⁵³ that “do not stem from culture as entertainment, but precede it”²⁵⁴. The researcher noticed that “all the main features of play are already embodied in animal games. One has only to watch how the puppies frolic to notice all these features in their cheerful romp. (...) They pretend to be extremely angry. And most importantly: they clearly perceive all this as a highly humorous activity and experience great pleasure at the same time”²⁵⁵. J. Huizinga pointed out that in Latin the area of play and play actions is denoted by the word *ludus*. The term “*ludere*” is used when talking about frolicking fish, fluttering birds, indicating the area of the frivolous. If we take into account that the game arose much earlier than a person had a childhood, one can understand why the etymology of the game is associated with birds, wild animals, hunting, zoomorphic totems, and why the representation of zoomorphic images is so popular in Russian street theater today.

H. Plesner's concept of laughter and crying

We consider the work *Laughing and Crying* by the German anthropologist H. Plesner as valuable due to the author’s detailed descriptions of laughter. In his

²⁵³ Ibid. P. 81. (In Russ.).

²⁵⁴ Ibid. P. 82.

²⁵⁵ Huizinga, J. (1950). *Homo ludens: A study of the play-element in culture*. Beacon. P.1.

philosophical work, the first edition of which dates back to 1941, Plessner sets forth his theory of human expression through laughing and crying. The author reveals his desire to escape the influence of two dogmatic systems: idealism and positivism in order to enable science to observe a man through his own eyes. It is a question of anthropology. In his theory of laughter, the philosopher touched debatable issues, many of which remain relevant to this day. H. Plessner notes the discussion about motives of laughter to be difficult to define and often obscure for understanding. Plessner considers the specific character of laughter expression and the problem of limited ideas about laughter as an indicator of this or that reaction²⁵⁶.

The philosopher was not unaware of the controversial assertion that exists not only among ordinary people, but also among psychologists and ethologists, according to which animals are capable of laughing. H. Plessner categorically opposed the anthropomorphization of laughter in animals²⁵⁷, arguing that a creature unable to laugh cannot be a human being²⁵⁸. The philosopher's remarks that laughter is associated with joy²⁵⁹ and close to such autonomic reactions as blushing, vomiting, coughing, and runny nose²⁶⁰ remain relevant. Plessner believes that the main difference between man and animals is the perception of themselves as species of *Homo Sapiens*, which is consistent with the metasemantic theory of humor by A.G. Kozintsev. Plessner correctly assumes that bringing oneself into a state of free swinging is a source of joy and fun. According to Plessner, the principle of swing, the balance that must be observed in a game so that it does not turn into a serious struggle, is the basis of laughter²⁶¹. In Plessner's theory, laughter represents a reaction²⁶² to the impossibility of responding seriously²⁶³.

²⁵⁶ Plessner, H. (2003). *Laughing and crying: Studies on the limits of human behavior* (A. Zwolińska, Z. Nerczuk, Trans. & Eds). Wydawnictwo Antyk. P. 11. (In Polish). (Originally published in German 1982).

²⁵⁷ Ibid. P. 19.

²⁵⁸ Ibid. P. 5.

²⁵⁹ Ibid. P. 72.

²⁶⁰ Ibid. P. 69.

²⁶¹ Ibid. P. 78.

²⁶² Ibid. P. 93.

“*Games and People*” by R. Caillois

The monograph *Man, Play and Games* by the French anthropologist R. Caillois can be considered as a direct proof of the delayed effect of J. Huizinga’s book. It was published in 1958, twenty years after the publication of *Homo Ludens*; the monograph provides a concept and classification of play, largely contributing to an adoption of the Homo Ludens metaphor as a scientific concept. Paying tribute to the work of his colleague, R. Caillois, however, believes that this “book is not a study of play, but rather a study of the productivity of play spirit in the field of culture, especially the spirit of one special kind of play – orderly competitive games”²⁶⁴. R. Caillois explores a number of details in terms of play, left unattended by the Dutch cultural critic. Caillois considers gambling²⁶⁵, which is absent in animals, to be one of such details missed by Huizinga. Notably, R. Caillois supplements J. Huizinga’s work with consideration of spectacularity of the game. R. Caillois emphasizes that there are games that can be enjoyed only if they are strictly limited by rules. The stricter and more complex the rules are, the more skillful the game, the higher its cultural value, and the stronger the pleasure it brings.

The researcher's position is based on Aristotle's concept of mimesis, which gives the author grounds to see in mimicry the same interspecific play root, manifested in animals and birds, which N. Evreinov spoke about at the beginning of the 20th century.

While recognizing Caillois's undoubted contribution to the development of the theory of play, one cannot help but note several extremely controversial positions of the researcher, one of which is the belief that play is the transformation of serious activity into frivolous activity²⁶⁶. The researcher's second statement is the recognition of role-playing behavior in animals and birds. The researcher

²⁶³ Ibid. P. 81.

²⁶⁴ Caillois, R. (2007). *Igry i lyudi; Stat'i i esse po sociologii kul'tury* [Man, play, and games. Articles and essays in the sociology of culture] (S. N. Zenkin, Trans.). Moscow: OGI. P. 43. (In Russ.).

²⁶⁵ Ibid. P. 56.

²⁶⁶ Ibid. P. 91.

suggests that “insect mimicry suddenly appears to be an unusually accurate match to the human passion to transform, to dress up, to wear a mask, to play someone else's role. [...] In vertebrates, the tendency to simulation manifests itself primarily in purely physical, almost irresistible contagion, as happens with yawning, running, limping, smiling and movement in general”²⁶⁷. From the point of view of modern ethology, R. Caillois's idea that insect mimicry is similar to human role behavior²⁶⁸ does not stand up to criticism. According to modern anthropological and linguistic data, role behavior is exhibited only by humans, who “not only have a separate game of life from life, but whose life itself is highly reminiscent of a theatre”²⁶⁹. This is due to the linguistic Rubicon, due to which animals and humans are at different levels of the evolutionary ladder.

“Flat animal” by G. Deleuze

In order to see the dynamics in the evolution of scientific views on play in philosophy and cultural studies, we will refer to the metaphor of the French thinker G. Deleuze. Deleuze called a human-being a “flat animal”, which is equivalent to an animal having humor. The superficiality of depth in the definition of humor is present in the philosophical concepts of laughter introduced by G. Deleuze, who defends the antireferential function of humor and believes that, despite “the whole logic of meaning is located on surfaces,”²⁷⁰ the meaning here has only a superficial effect. Following Deleuze, characters of humor represent a certain number of corporeal (virtual) beings frolicking on the surface of being. Humor and the whole sphere of laughter element could look like a conjugation of effects, like a phantom of empirical experience, like a fog rising from bodies. This appears very reminiscent of the parasitic nature of laughter, which superstructures itself on the foundations of the serious and corresponds to a vibrational theory of humor.

²⁶⁷ Ibid. P. 57.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Kozintsev, A.G. (2024). *Iazyk — realnost — igra — smekh Antropologicheskie fragmenty* [Language — Reality — Play — Laughter: Anthropological fragments]. Moscow: Izdatelskii Dom IASK. P. 9–10. (In Russ.).

²⁷⁰ Deleuze, J. (2011). *Logika smysla* [The logic of sense]. Moscow: Akademicheskii proekt. (Originally published in French 1969). P. 127. (In Russ.).

I. Kant, believed that the pleasure given by humor and laughter is connected with the play of ideas, thoughts through which nothing is actually thought. In this case, the Kantian laughing nothingness and revolt against reason is the Deleuze's effect of fog, caused by sliding of laughter along the surface of matter.

From the perspective of Bakhtin's concept of carnivalization, Deleuze's discussion of Carroll's nonsense appears to be nothing but carnivalization, or the scrambling of humor from the depths of serious genres to the surface of laughter literature. According to Deleuze, any meaning allows an individual to regress infinitely²⁷¹, informing both "the complete impotence of a speaker and the omnipotence of language"²⁷², which sounds close to A.G. Kozintsev's anti-semantic theory of humor to be discussed below. Deleuze approaches the Kozintsev's idea of the ludicrous self-denial of man as a species. Even though Deleuze fails to rely on ethological data, he falls precisely into the division of serious and non-serious play when talking about depth, which is equal to the seriousness of animals and adults²⁷³.

G. Deleuze refers the philosophy of S. Kierkegaard and F. Nietzsche to the theater of future, because both philosophers go beyond philosophy, building the theater of philosophy on irony and humor. The theater of future for Deleuze, obeys the laws of difference and repetition, which obey the laws of aesthetic repetition. "Deleuze bases his original analysis of the theatrical nature of Nietzsche's and Kierkegaard's philosophy on the differences between humor and irony. Deleuze calls Kierkegaard's philosophy *the theater of humor and faith*", "since history is a theater, repetition, the tragic and the comic in repetition form a state of movement in which the 'actors' or 'heroes' accomplish something truly new in history". According to Deleuze, Kierkegaard introduces a theater of faith where

²⁷¹ Deleuze, J. (1998). *Razlichie i povtorenie* [Difference and repetition]. SPb.: Petropolis. (Originally published in French 1969). P. 194. (In Russ.).

²⁷² Deleuze, J. (2011). *Logika smysla* [The logic of sense]. Moscow: Akademicheskii proekt. (Originally published in French 1969). P. 44. (In Russ.).

²⁷³ See: Semenova, E.A. (2022). Vklad Zh. Delyoza v razrabotku koncepta «yumor protiv ironii» [Deleuze's contribution to the development of the concept "humor vs. irony"]. *Logiko-filosofskie studii*, 20(3), 305–316. (In Russ.).

“he can also invite us to overcome aesthetic repetition, to overcome irony and even humor, painfully aware that in doing so he offers us only an aesthetic, ironic and humorous image of such an overcoming.” He calls Nietzsche’s philosophy a theater of faithlessness, where “humor and irony ... are irresistible, acting in the depths of nature”²⁷⁴. Deleuze’s idea that the true theater, in which actors and characters truly accomplish something new, is based on the substances of humor and irony, appears very close to the Bakhtin’s understanding of a carnivalesque worldview as a creative strategy for transforming the world, based on the act of laughter self-denial.

Metasemantic theory of laughter and humor by A.G. Kozintsev

The study into relationship between play and laughter was continued in the works of A.G. Kozintsev. Following foreign biologists and ethiologists, he defines laughter as a metacommunicative signal of play observed in animals and humans. A.G. Kozintsev’s theory of laughter based on ethological research and M.M. Bakhtin’s philosophical concept of carnivalization, appears to be a link between studies of the nature and culture of human laughter. Most researchers believe that primate laughter, as a metacommunicative signal of play and friendliness, is somehow connected to the origin of humor. Kozintsev takes into account the strangeness of laughter in terms of biology, as well as the actions it provokes and is evoked by. Indeed, when we laugh, we violate social conventions: we exaggerate emotions we do not feel; we insult people close to us; we lie²⁷⁵. Delving deeper into the relationship between laughter and seriousness, the researcher emphasized the common interspecies biological root of play. While J. Huizinga pays attention to laughter as a minor and impermanent, optional component, a product of play, Kozintsev strictly differentiates orderly play and disorderly play, underpinning his arguments about the evolution of laughter with a theoretical basis from ethology, art psychology, ethnography and philosophy. In particular, I. Kant’s definition of

²⁷⁴ Ibid. P. 309.

²⁷⁵ Morreall, J. (2009). *Comic relief: a comprehensive philosophy of humor*. John Morse a Foreword by Robert Mankoff, Cartoon Editor of The New Yorker A John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., Publication. P. 2.

laughter as “an affect of the sudden transformation of intense expectation into nothing”, is used as the basis of A.G. Kozintsev’s theory, which stipulates that humor turns the semantic part of linguistic signs into nothing, paralyzes the referential function (load) of language. Unlike Yu.M. Lotman, who understands communication structures located above the natural-linguistic level (myth, religion) as secondary modeling systems, Kozintsev refers humor to secondary modeling systems. A.G. Kozintsev refers serious art and serious play, in particular theatrical play, to primary modeling systems.

A.G. Kozintsev takes irony and satire out of the comic. The researcher sharply disagrees with the idea that the comic can be combined with anger and criticism²⁷⁶. Differentiating irony and humor, he proves that “an association of two types of language game – irony and humor – within one generic concept *comic* is erroneous, because irony is an orderly play. Like serious fantasy and lying, it is based on full-fledged signs. Irony changes the modus of an utterance, leaving reference and proposition intact. Humor, on the other hand, is a disorderly play.”²⁷⁷

By defining humor as “a person’s attitude to his own attitude changing in time rather than his attitude to the world and to another person”²⁷⁸, and highlighting the antireferential function of humor²⁷⁹, A. Kozintsev puzzled foreign linguists and theorists traditionally engaged in the study of humor’s external objects. According to A.G. Kozintsev’s theory of the third referential world, the difference between the world of humor and the world of art and the world of the

²⁷⁶ Kramer, C.A. (2020). Parrhesia, humor, and resistance. *Israeli Journal for Humor Research*, 9(1), 22–46. P. 27.

²⁷⁷ Semenova, E.A. (2022). Vklad Zh. Delyoza v razrabotku koncepta «yumor protiv ironii» [Deleuze’s contribution to the development of the concept “humor vs. irony”]. *Logiko-filosofskie studii*, 20(3). P. 309. (In Russ.). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.52119/LPHS.2022.60.67.011>. (Accessed: October 15, 2023).

²⁷⁸ Kozintsev, A.G. (2013). Raznonapravlennoe dvugoloso slovo estetika i semiotika iumora [Divergent double-speak: Aesthetics and semiotics of humor]. *Antropologicheskii Forum*, 18. P. 158. (In Russ.).

²⁷⁹ Kozintsev, A.G. (2008). Ob antireferentivnoi funktsii iazyka Logicheskii analiz iazyka [On the antireferential function of language]. In N.D. Arutyunova (Ed.), *A logical analysis of language. Between lie and fantasy* (pp. 55–66). Moscow: Indrik. (In Russ.); Semenova, E.A. (2019d). “Cifrovoy smekh” v XXI veke: pedagogicheskij aspekt izucheniya problemy [“Digital laughter” in the 21st century: A pedagogical aspect of studying the problem]. *Pedagogika iskusstva*, 1. P. 51. (In Russ.).

real is that humor is an impossible world, one that does not exist either in the world of the real or in the world of art. A.G. Kozintsev considers humor as descending to earlier evolutionary stages of development and argues that “sticking out the tongue... , grimaces, masks and mumming in general, apparently, go back to archaic forms of imitation of animals or spirits of the dead, rather than to pre-cultural behavior”²⁸⁰.

A.G. Kozintsev compares human play and laughter with neoteny²⁸¹. In biology, neoteny comes from Greek *neos* (immature, young) and *teino* (stretching, lengthening). It is an ability of an individual that has not reached biological maturity to reproduce. Neoteny is generally believed to emerge in living nature as an adaptation mechanism. Neoteny is associated with bizarre phenomena, such as childish features in adulthood. In fact, neoteny is pronounced in humans. In terms of species giftedness, human neoteny obtains unique features. A.G. Kozintsev draws parallels between neoteny in humans and animals, arising the question: “Why do adolescent monkeys tend to laugh rather than adults, for whom the problem of aggression is especially relevant?” He answers: “The principle of neoteny is to be recalled here: in relation to laughter, man as if *retarded* at an early stage of ontogenetic development of his ancestors”²⁸². In humans, neoteny is manifested at the physical level: in the absence of hair on the body and face throughout life; at the level of behavior: in playfulness, humor and laughter.

A.G. Kozintsev’s theory of humor may diminish the approaches to clowning and street theater as the art of ridicule and satire, which were described in the previous paragraph, because the researcher proved that in non-serious art the form denies the content, that carnivalization traces its lineage back to peaceful archaic play of disorder. By this theory we can test the theories of clowning and comedy,

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Semenova, E.A. (2017b). Karnaval'naya priroda addicii [The carnival nature of addiction]. *Pedagogika iskusstva*, 3. P. 36. (In Russ.).

²⁸² Kozintsev, A.G. (1999). Smekh, plach, zevota: psikhologiya chuvstv ili etologiya obshcheniia? [Laughter, crying, yawning: Psychology of feelings or ethology of communication?]. In M.L. Butovskaya (Ed.), *Human ethology on the threshold of the 21st century: new data and old problems* (pp. 97–121). Sankt-Peterburg: MAE (Kunstkamera) RAN. (In Russ.).

which are based on a different theoretical foundation. In particular, A.G. Kozintsev's theory of laughter reveals that G. Moder significantly complicates his task when he tries to prove the law of the blind spot in street theater and the techniques of repetition and excessive acceptance²⁸³, bypassing metalinguistic studies of humor. Excessive acceptance, elevated by G. Moder into the principle of nonviolent resistance, would be more convincingly explained by the principle of inhibitory dominance of sociologist and historian B.F. Porshnev, underlying the process of mutual inhibition²⁸⁴ of the second signal system and primary signal systems used by A.G. Kozintsev in his study of the nature of laughter and humor. The principle of "inhibitory dominance" clarifies the reason for emergence of ultra-paradoxical²⁸⁵ activity in conditions where the previous tactics of goal achievement prove to be ineffective.

In the context of the inhibitory dominance theory, clowns' humor and policemen's laughter are simultaneous manifestations of attack and defense. The same principle of inhibitory dominance perfectly explains the spontaneous laughter of the audience and the attacker (in this case, a rebel clown parodying a policeman). The laughter simultaneously attacks (infects) and defends (blocks-inhibits) the policeman's speech and thought. In this case, the inadequate reflex (interdiction) provokes involuntary imitation by inhibiting the adequate reflex, and, moreover, enables the clown to use his own interdictive inhibition, affecting the inhibition of interdiction in the other²⁸⁶ (the policeman). Thus, interdiction in the situation with rebel clowns is, to use Moder's words, excessive acceptance used for defense and attack.

The phenomenon of "displaced activity"²⁸⁷ described by ethologist N.

²⁸³ Ibid. P. 99.

²⁸⁴ Porshnev, B.F. (2007). *On the beginning of human history (Problems of paleopsychology)*. Aleteiya. (In Russ).

²⁸⁵ Ibid. Pp. 186–206.

²⁸⁶ Ibid. Pp. 231–240.

²⁸⁷ Tinbergen, N. (1963). On the aims and methods of ethology. *Zeitschrift für Tierpsychologie*, 20, 410–433; Tinbergen, N. (1969). *Povedenie zhivotnyh* [Animal behavior] (O. Orlov & E. Panov, Trans.). Moscow: Mir. 192 p. (In Russ.); Tinbergen, N. (1993). *Social'noe povedenie*

Tinbergen, used in characterizing the nature of laughter by A.G. Kozintsev, is quite applicable to the reaction of police laughter to the actions of clowns, manifested as “excessive motivation” blocked for satisfaction. The comic techniques of rebel clowns used in communicating with police officers act as a kind of social releases, which were initially displaced actions that arose “on the basis of an aggressive reflex”, but in the process of ritualization they began to perform a peacemaking function²⁸⁸.

A.G. Kozintsev’s theory is confirmed by the German philosopher T. Adorno, who believes that “The similarity between clowns and animals highlights the similarity between humans and apes: an animal-fool [or court jester Narr]-clown tandem constitutes one of the foundations of art”²⁸⁹. Due to A.G. Kozintsev’s theory of laughter and the inaccurate definitions of the clown phenomenon made by other researchers, a clown figure can be demonstrated as a representative of the agonal beginning. For example, G. Moder analyzes the art of clowning referring to the professional experience of Russian clown V.I. Polunin and his *coat scene in Slava’s Snowshow*. The researcher identifies such techniques in the clown's play as status play, dialogue of doubles, imaginary identity, exchange of identities²⁹⁰, voluntary alienation of one part of the clown's self from the other, pretend play. He proves split subjectivity²⁹¹ in clowning, where we are only authentic inasmuch as we can become what we pretend to be²⁹². This specific feature of Polunin’s clowning G. Moder compares to ventriloquism in mime and the portrayal of jesters talking to a mirror. The researcher concludes that the greatest comic effect is

zhivotnyh [Social behaviour in animals] (Yu. L. Amchenkov, Trans.). Moscow: Mir. 149 p. (In Russ.).

²⁸⁸ See: Kozintsev, A.G. (1999). Smekh, plach, zevota: psikhologiya chuvstv ili etologiya obshcheniia? [Laughter, crying, yawning: Psychology of feelings or ethology of communication?]. In M.L. Butovskaya (Ed.), *Human ethology on the threshold of the 21st century: new data and old problems* (pp. 97–121). Sankt-Peterburg: MAE (Kunstkamera) RAN. (In Russ.).

²⁸⁹ As cited in: Pavis, P. (1991). *Slovar' teatra* [Dictionary of theater] (K. Razlogov, Trans.). Moscow: Progress. P. 31. (In Russ.).

²⁹⁰ Moder, G. (2019). Comedy as performance. In J. Mascat & G. Moder (Eds.), *The object of comedy* (pp. 231–246). Palgrave Macmillan. P. 237.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.* P. 240.

²⁹² *Ibid.* P. 239.

produced when a clown begins to doubt his own identity, rather than others are confused about the clown's identity²⁹³. Similarly, G. Moder defends the ontological status of non-serious acts of the Rebel Clown Army²⁹⁴ by pointing out that the actors “are just copying the police formation ... do not threaten anyone, do not attempt any particular movement”²⁹⁵ and considering such actions as non-ideological interpellation, opposite to L. Althusser’s ideological interpellation.

G. Moder correctly argues that the essence of clowning consists in pretending. Nevertheless, his arguments contain no concept of a voluntary incongruity of a person with his self, determining specificity of humorous introspection. The author's arguments of the non-ideological interpellation of the Clown Army appear convincing, however, they contradict scientific data on humor, which has no external objects, unlike the actions of rebel-clowns in the style of laughter and clowning. However, the clowning nature is mainly supported by the provisions of A.G. Kozintsev’s theory, rather than G. Moder’s arguments; claiming that “a clown is a clown, he represents no one, he does not and cannot have any concrete prototype in the real world. His only prototype is “a man in general” – Homo Sapiens”²⁹⁶.

The seriousness of the clown's representations in art is underpinned by the serious “meta-attitude of the artist/author to his seriousness”²⁹⁷. In this connection, A.G. Kozintsev writes that “In Chaplin’s case, frivolous clowning was ennobled over time by adding antagonistic components of lyricism (*The Kid, The Gold Rush, The Circus, Limelight*), social protest (*City Lights, Modern Times*), political pathos (*The Great Dictator, The King in New York*) and tragedy (*Monsieur Verdoux*). Nevertheless, the comic component weakened to the same degree as any of its

²⁹³ Ibid. P. 233.

²⁹⁴ Moder, G. (2014). Chemu Al'tyusser mozhnet nauchit' nas ob ulichnom teatre — i naoborot [What Althusser can teach us about street theater—and vice versa] (I. Matveev, Trans.). *Stasis. EUSPb*. 2(1). P. 100. (In Russ.).

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Kozintsev, A.G. (2007). *Chelovek i smekh* [Man and laughter]. SPb.: Aleteiya. P. 29. (In Russ.).

²⁹⁷ See: Semenova, E.A. (2023b). Teorii yumora v izuchenii figury klouna [The theories of humour in the study of the clown figure]. *Art & Culture Studies*, 1, 30–67. (In Russ.).

antagonists strengthened”²⁹⁸.

J. Morreall suggests that it was laughter, producing noise, inappropriately expending energy, originally intended for the survival of *Homo Sapiens*, that made our ancestors more vulnerable individuals, available prey for predators. P. McDonal²⁹⁹ postulates that human evolution of the humorous ability developed by analogy with the development of cognitive ability. J. Morreall also suggests that the humor of early humans may have developed in the process of moving an external play into the internal – the play of thoughts. He believes, this is precisely what animals are incapable of doing.

Due to the theory of exaptation introduced by paleontologists S. Gould and E. Vrba, C. Goddard and D. Lambert³⁰⁰, who studied the function of laughter in biological evolution, consider laughter as a cascading effect of the development of adaptive functions. Given that a function can produce a cascade or series of effects that do not fulfill any adaptive function, the authors deprive laughter of serving an exclusively beneficial function for the adaptation of a species. Following exaptation theory, we can conclude that all types of laughtivism, clownfrontation, and carnivalesque protest are resulted from transformation of laughter function, bringing possibility to unite the signs of pure aggression and laughter play. In the context of A.G. Kozintsev’s theory of decarnivalization, exaptation comprises “an outgrowth of mock aggression into pure aggression connected with everyday life or ritual, rather than with play and friendliness”³⁰¹.

In turn, R. Provine has shown in a series of experiments that voluntary laughter is an unnatural phenomenon, sharply different from spontaneous laughter.

²⁹⁸ Kozintsev, A.G. (2022b). Unichtozhenie soderzhaniia formoj: ot komicheskogo k tragicheskomu cherez ekstsentrizm formalizm i totalitarizm [Destruction of content by form: From comic to tragic through eccentricity, formalism and totalitarianism]. *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*, 116/117. P. 6. (In Russ.).

²⁹⁹ McDonald, P. (2012). *The philosophy of humour*. HumanitiesE-Books.

³⁰⁰ Goddard, C., & Lambert, D. (2022). Laughter, bonding and biological evolution. *The European Journal of Humour Research*, 10(2). P. 17.

³⁰¹ Kozintsev, A.G. (2002a). Karnavalizatsiia i dekarnavalizatsiia [Carnivalization and decarnivalization]. In A.G. Kozintsev (Ed.), *Laughter: Origins and functions*. SPb.: Nauka. P. 214. (In Russ.).

According to the researcher's observations³⁰², spontaneous laughter most often comprises a reaction to non-verbal clowning, jokes, laughter in a playful social situation³⁰³. The researcher came to interesting conclusions regarding the cultural and social mimicry of laughter, depicting its variability as a social message. According to R. Provine, laughter reproduced in a recording, for example, produces such a negative or ostracizing effect³⁰⁴.

The G. Miller theory of sexual selection by humor provides ground for analysis of the laughter nature of street theater art. According to this theory, humor was useful to our ancestors for hereditary transmission of higher level of intellectual, metabolic reactions to descendants. Since, humor is hard to falsify, it became a reliable indicator of genetic adaptability in hominins able to benefit from this adaptive ability.

According to hypothesis of M. Hurley, D. Dennett, and R. Adams, humor encourages a process that maintains the integrity of our perceptions and knowledge, ensuring a decrease in a risk of erroneous conclusions and a fatal error. This hypothesis appears to be far from ideal due to a number of its weak points, including distorted ideas about the evolutionary dynamics of natural selection, however, it is considered to be quite useful for studying semantics of the clown's red nose to compare humor with redness, i.e., a product of natural selection, underpinned by the need to interpret a certain type of information. In this case, redness acts as an indicator of the maturation of a person's humorous ability.

The evolutionary theory of superiority of Ch. Gruner finds aggressive roots in modern humor, formed when our ancestors after defeating the enemy in a brutal fight were forced to bare teeth and raise shoulders (as a sign of demonstration of dominance), combining breathing with quiet laughter.

³⁰² Provine, R.R. (1996). Laughter. *American Scientist*, 84, 38–47.

³⁰³ Provine, R.R., & Yong, Y. L. (1991). Laughter: A stereotyped human vocalization. *Ethology*, 89(2). P. 116.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.* P. 117.

C. Molineux's theory of prelinguistic development of humor deserves to be referred to³⁰⁵. The researcher believes that humor, functioning as an autocatalytic system, played an important role in the emergence of language³⁰⁶. He suggests that humor emerged at the stage of using gestures to elicit laughter³⁰⁷; the idea appears valuable in the context of considering humor as a subject's reaction to his own spontaneous actions and gestures. In general, according to the hypothesis of C. Molineux and A.G. Kozintsev's theory of laughter, humor played a major role in the biosocial evolutionary development of hominids.

A.G. Kozintsev's works analyze scientific data that mock aggression manifests itself in early childhood. Children are known to still retain sensitivity close to archaic thinking. This theory postulates that "one of the main features of carnival, folk theater, clownery, balagan, farce and any anti-behavior is mock aggression"³⁰⁸ can explain the popularity of zoomorphic images in contemporary street culture in Russia, which is rapidly developing in collaboration with children's theater³⁰⁹. According to A.G. Kozintsev and M.L. Butovskaya, children's play aggression ascends to its higher forms as humor, "humor is anti-behavior"³¹⁰, and "shock games are the first step to humor". They are commonly provoked by

³⁰⁵ Molineux, C. (2019). *The role of humour in the evolution of hominid cognition and the emergence of language* [Doctoral dissertation, Brunel University]. Brunel University Research Archive. P. 249.

³⁰⁶ Ibid. P. 83.

³⁰⁷ Ibid. P. 251.

³⁰⁸ Kozintsev, A.G. (2003). Karnavalizatsiia i dekarnavalizatsiia na grani prirody i kultury [Carnavalization and decarnavalization: On the edge of nature and culture]. *Kunstkamera: Etnograficheskie tetradi*, 13. P. 125. (In Russ.).

³⁰⁹ An example of such a collaboration is the joint project of creating a street interactive fairy tale for children "The Mystery of the Time Keeper" by the Obraztsov Puppet Theater and the independent theater and circus company "Antique Circus", whose heroes are the Wolf, Goat, Bear, etc. See: The Mystery of the Time Keeper. Available at: <https://puppet.ru/performances/tayna-hranitelya-vremeni?ysclid=lrbmij6ymn843470802>. (Accessed: January 9, 2023).

³¹⁰ Semenova, E. A. (2020a). Bullying in a laughter subculture for children [Bullying v detskoj smekhovoj subkul'ture]. In E. M. Akishina & L. G. Savenkova (Eds.), *Emotional education: Problems and disputes: Proceedings of the Round Table "Emotional education as a new resource for the development, meaning and place of art subjects in the modern school"*, February 27, 2020, Moscow (pp. 149–162). IAEaCS RAE. (In Russ.).

the mother's anti-behavior by the age of two³¹¹. Then, developing a platform for symbolic play “indicates the emergence of imaginative thinking.”³¹². The researchers consider the ideas of M. Wolfenstein as the most successful in demonstrating the sequence of humor development in children. She formulated the following stages of humor development in childhood: “first: *I am doing it*, then: *It is not me who is doing it*, then: *It is not me who is saying it*, and, finally, *It is not me who is thinking it*”³¹³. The maturation of the age-related psychological and biological ability to perceive and generate humor demonstrates the formation of the child need for development in the *not-me* logic. A.G. Kozintsev notifies the essential contradiction here, highlighting “that over time the forms of carnival, which used to be natural for a child, become more and more alien to an adult (at least at first glance): carnival forms are being displaced by its increasingly adaptive forms (pragmatic). The quick ways in and out of carnival serve as the most convenient ways of responding to the environment. Such quick, truncated forms of intellectual reactions include jokes, sarcasm, satire, which are becoming more familiar, convenient, corresponding to the society needs”³¹⁴. If satire separates man from his ‘evolutionary past’, comic creativity, on the contrary, brings the child “closer to archaic forms of culture where play was a living creative factor”³¹⁵. It's no coincidence that children often protest against the regulated nature of play,

³¹¹ Kozintsev, A.G., & Butovskaya, M.L. (2017). O detyah, bogah i obez'yanah (otvet opponentam) [About children, gods and monkeys (answer to opponents)]. *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, 3. P. 112. (In Russ.).

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid. P. 114.

³¹⁴ Semenova, E.A. (2016a). Cul'turotvorcheskaya priroda karnaval'noj refleksii detstva [Cultural and creative nature of carnival reflection of childhood]. *Kazan Pedagogical Journal*, 2(Pt. 2). P. 315. (In Russ.).

³¹⁵ Huizinga, J. (2011). *Chelovek igrayushchij: opyt opredeleniya igrovogo elementa kul'tury* [A person playing: the experience of determining the play element of culture] / Sost., predisl. i per. s niderl. D.V. Sil'vestrova; Komment., ukazatel' D.E. Haritonovicha. SPb.: Izdatel'stvo Ivana Limbakha. P. 285. (In Russ.).

spontaneously deviating from the imposed order set by the rules of story-role-playing games³¹⁶, turning to comic games and laughter.

There are psychological and age-specific features of children's sense of the comic that influence children's perception of laughter culture. A longitudinal study of foreign psychologists, which recorded moments of playful interaction between infants and parents, showed that the first clowns for children are themselves, not an adult. The infant begins consciously, as a clown, to repeat the movements that caused laughter in adults. In the process of communication with children of younger and older school age living in rural areas, we came to the conclusion that children do not associate the figure of a clown with themselves, but imagine themselves in the role of a person who is laughed at, perceiving this fact in a joyful tone, seeing nothing offensive in it³¹⁷. It is possible that the early childhood experience of seeking to ridicule an adult serves as a future defence for the individual against the evaluative laughter (directed at objects from the outside) present in anecdotes, satire and sarcasm.

Let us remind you that in the work *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* S. Freud describes the desire of an adult to experience the euphoria that he experienced in childhood. Adults try to reconstruct that childish state in which they used to be “not aware of comic, not able to create jokes, need not humor to feel happy in life”³¹⁸. In the theory of comic S. Freud gives a special status to the concept of *infantilism* as the physical and mental preservation of person of the features inherent in the previous age stages. S. Freud believes that we often do not even catch those traces of “infantilism still preserved in most of our joyful experiences.” Some “pleasures of a child are lost to us, adults”³¹⁹. He noted that the *comic imitation* presents the greatest difficulty for our understanding,

³¹⁶ See: Kudryavtsev, V.T. (1998). Kul'turno-istoricheskij status detstva: eskiz novogo ponimaniya [The cultural-historical status of childhood: A sketch of a new understanding]. *Psychological Journal*, 19(3), 17–33. (In Russ.).

³¹⁷ See: Semenova, E.A. (2024a). Chyornyj yumor belogo klouna [Black humor of the white clown] In *Issues of film dramaturgy. Materials of scientific and practical conferences 2015-2021*. Moscow: VGIK.. P. 209.

³¹⁸ Freud, S. (2005). *Ja i ono* [Me and it]. Moscow: Eksmo. 859 p. (In Russ.).

³¹⁹ *Ibid.* P. 238.

because we do not take into account its infantile nature.

A.G. Kozintsev is ready to accept S. Freud's idea of "returning to the childhood of the mind" in case of removing *psychic energy* from it, which is nothing but pure fiction, and of unlimiting ourselves to our own individual childhood; we should consider childhood in a generalized way, as belonging to the entire human race. In

P. Ricoeur agrees with Freud's idea about the chronic aspiration of an adult to return to childhood and concludes that culture "is this epigenesis, orthogenesis of the 'images' of a person becoming an adult"³²⁰, where "symbols seem to have two directions: on the one hand, they repeat our childhood ..., on the other ... explore our adult state"³²¹. Although P. Ricoeur argues that dreams rather than laughter are leading us into childhood³²², he highly appreciates the ideas expressed by S. Freud in *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, noting its deep analysis of the pleasure experienced by a subject from laughter. S. Freud's followers E. Kris, R. Loewenstein, and H. Hartman "developed the notion of *regressive progression* as a process when the psyche produces new conscious meanings that give new life to overcome unconscious phenomena. A process of *regressive progression* can be compared in many respects with the world of laughter, which helps everything ordinary and habitual to find new life"³²³.

Later, A.G. Kozintsev drew attention to S. Eisenstein's all but forgotten theory of the comic. The director saw the comic as an opportunity for an artist to make an "evolutionary escape"³²⁴ or a "leap into infantilism"³²⁵. A viewer, infected by this infantilization of the artist, gets the opportunity to regress to "the golden

³²⁰ Ricoeur, P. (2008). *Konflikt interpretatsii ocherki po hermenevtike* [The conflict of interpretations: Essays in hermeneutics] (I. S. Vdovina, Trans.). Moscow: Akademicheskii proekt. Pp. 177–178. (In Russ.).

³²¹ Ibid. P. 183.

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Semenova, E.A. (2017b). Karnaval'naya priroda addicii [The carnival nature of addiction]. *Pedagogika iskusstva*, 3. P. 33. (In Russ.).

³²⁴ Kozintsev, A. G. (2011). Evoliutsionnoe begstvo: S.M. Eizenshtein i estetika komicheskogo [Evolutionary escape: S. M. Eisenstein and the aesthetics of the comic]. *Studia Culturae*, 12, 7–29. (In Russ.).

³²⁵ Ibid.

age of the infantile paradise of childhood”³²⁶. A.G. Kozintsev’s theory of humor explains the cultural significance of M.M. Bakhtin’s carnival concept for understanding the pragmatics of humor as a result of the transformation of primitive disorderly play into their aestheticized forms.

Given the above, A.G. Kozintsev’s theory received a high scientific attention among Russian as well as foreign researchers – supporters and opponents. C. Molineux shares a number of Kozintsev arguments³²⁷. In particular, the researcher accepts Kozintsev’s reasoning about a share of subjectivity in humor, though he suggests introducing the concept of “humorous recall”. C. Molineux totally agrees with the Kozintsev’s idea that laughter goes back to the pre-cultural past, located at the junction of biology and culture³²⁸. Following Kozintsev and analyzing such stimuli as tickling, play and humor, Molineux notes that they are listed in certain order, thereby indicating their hierarchical ascending structure: to do, to say, to think. Notably, A.G. Kozintsev and M.L. Butovskaya concluded earlier that “Having gone through a huge historical path, anti-behavior in its socially sanctioned form came to that miniature, safe and aestheticized version, which is called humor.” Similarly, P. McGhee states that “smiling, laughing and playing should be excluded as indicators of humor in animals”³²⁹, because humor is an exclusively human privilege³³⁰.

In his review of the expanded English version of *Man and Laughter* (2007), published in 2010 under the title *The Mirror of Laughter*, translated by R. Martin, the humor theorist D. Morrell acknowledges A.G. Kozintsev’s obvious innovation and indicates the significant shortcomings of his theory. Morrell considers classical the theoretical foundation of Kozintsev’s theory of laughter as based on ethological data on the play behavior of primates, however, Morrell fails to relate Kozintsev’s

³²⁶ Eizenshtein, S.M. (2002). *Metod* [Method]. Vol. 2. *Secrets of the masters*. Moscow: Museum of Cinema: Eisenstein Center. P. 503. (In Russ.).

³²⁷ Molineux, C. (2019). *The role of humour in the evolution of hominid cognition and the emergence of language* [Doctoral dissertation, Brunel University]. Brunel University Research Archive. P. 53.

³²⁸ Ibid. P. 40.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ See: McGhee, P. E. (1979). *Humor, its origin and development*. W.H. Freeman.

theory of humor to any theory of humor of the past and present. According to Morrell, Kozintsev's revolutionary idea consists in considering humor as a kind of disorderly play with a subject regressing mentally to a small child, a drunk, or a mentally retarded person. However, Morrell disagrees with Kozintsev's idea that humor has no external stimuli, considering that in this case humor becomes completely self-intentional with no objects in reality or fantasy³³¹.

We have to admit that A.G. Kozintsev's theory of laughter and humor has not become a subject of interest for Russian and foreign researchers of contemporary street theater. Nevertheless, reasoning by A.G. Kozintsev give the opportunity to look at street theater as a frivolous art, perceiving which the viewer experiences comic catharsis. Studies of agonality as the oldest interspecies feature of the metacommunicative signal of mock aggression prove agonality to be the basic foundation of street theater, dating back to peaceful forms of disorderly play.

The analytical review of philosophical and theatrical concepts in the context of street theater has shown that the agonal nature of street theater resists interpretation within theories of carnivalesque protest and theater of the oppressed model. As a result of the fact that the specificity of comic catharsis in the art of street theatre remains outside the attention of authors who consider street theatre within the framework of the social model of the theatre of the oppressed, this type of street art falls into the frontier area of theatrical culture, finding itself in an intermediate position between play and subversion. The attempts to ideologize street theater and use the concepts of decarnival culture as its characteristics further emphasize the pronounced differences between carnival, protest practices and street theater. Due to the contemporary laughter research, we are able to adequately assess the potential of Bakhtin's theory of carnival in the study of street theater, which, unlike carnival culture, represents second-level play (laughter play) and obtains a potential to ascend to carnivalesque play. The interdisciplinary theories of

³³¹ See: Semenova, E.A. (2023b). Teorii yumora v izuchenii figury klouna [The theories of humour in the study of the clown figure]. *Art & Culture Studies, 1*. Pp. 39–40. (In Russ.).

laughter play, laughter, and humor make enable street theater to be introduced as a heterotopia that generates recreational zones for Homo Sapiens to rejuvenate human species through peaceful disorderly play and comic creativity, thereby indirectly reducing the level of intraspecies aggression in culture and society

Chapter 2. Cultral and historical features of the formation of child-centeredness of street theatre in Russia in the 20th – early 21st centuries

2.1. Mumming in maintaining the balance between post-figurative and pre-figurative models

Preserving the balance between post-figurative and pre-figurative models features the formation of street theatre in Russia in the 20th – early 21st century, thereby providing inheritance of traditional forms of culture, as well as their modifications as a result of the influence of the younger generation. This balance in contemporary Russian culture is largely maintained due to the interest of modern youth in mumming.

M. Mead's characterization of the main types of culture enables the post-figurative nature of the mumming to be discussed. According to Mead, culture obtains three types: post-figurative, co-figurative and pre-figurative. M. Mead refers to the post-figurative culture as a culture in which "children first of all learn from their predecessors"³³². Postfigurative culture is characterised by the fact that in it "children's future is formed in such a way that everything experienced by their predecessors in their adult years becomes also what children will experience when they grow up"³³³. In a post-figurative culture, "adults cannot imagine any change and therefore pass on to their offspring only a sense of the unchanging continuity of life"³³⁴. Finally, the eldest serve in such cultures as "the finished pattern of life as it is"³³⁵. The oldest representatives of the family, clan, community in the Russian culture of the 19th – early 20st centuries became the spirits of the family, totems. It is this attitude to the oldest representatives of the clan that we find in the culture of mumming.

³³² Mead, M. *Kul'tura i mir detstva. Izbrannye raboty*. [Culture and the World of Childhood. Selected Works]. Per. with English and commentary. Y.A. Aseev. Composition and afterword by I.S. Kon. Moscow: Nauka. P. 322. (In Russ.).

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Ibid.

³³⁵ Ibid. P. 323.

The researcher calls cofigurative culture a culture “where both children and adults learn from their peers”³³⁶. Despite the similarity of the cofigurative system with the postfigurative system, which consists in the fact that in these types of culture “the elders still dominate”³³⁷, M. Mead believes that the cofigurative system of culture differs from the postfigurative system in that the younger generation is oriented not on the experience of parents, but on the experience of their contemporaries. Co-figurative culture is born when the post-figurative system is in crisis³³⁸. In this type of culture the risk of loss of traditional values increases.

The emergence of the “prefigurative culture of the future”³³⁹, according to M. Mead, we owe to technological progress, as a result of which modern children have an experience that their parents never had. It is this fact that makes the situation in which “adults learn ... from their children”³⁴⁰ largely justified. At the same time, it is precisely in such a situation that there is an urgent need to hold the balance of the innovations and traditions.

The postfigurative nature of traditional Russian culture is confirmed by the attitude of youth to the world of ancestors. According to ethnographic studies, youth in archaic societies played the role of mediator between the living and the dead. Researchers note that “if someone of the young died in the Russian community, then in the last journey (carrying the body, up to lowering it into the grave) he was accompanied by people of his age”³⁴¹.

According to L.M. Ivleva, mumming serves to ignite a special game in which a person can join the mythological world of the ancestors. Ivleva considers it not accidental that the faces of cassocksmen are devoid of ‘personhood’. The characters of the mumming deliberately immerse those present in an atmosphere of

³³⁶ Ibid. P. 322.

³³⁷ Ibid. P. 342.

³³⁸ Ibid. P. 343.

³³⁹ Ibid. P. 361.

³⁴⁰ Ibid. P. 322.

³⁴¹ Semenova, E.A. (2016b). Karnaval kak pedagogicheskaya forma otechestvennogo vospitaniya molodyozhi: tradicii i sovremennost' [Carnival as a pedagogical form of domestic education of youth: traditions and modernity]. In *Proceedings of the All-Russian Conference “Actual problems of teaching art in general educational organizations of the Russian Federation”*. Moscow: IAEaCS RAE. P. 186. (In Russ.).

“laughter and fear”³⁴². In Russian mumming “cheerful animation, festive looseness, stimulated laughter are ... in undisturbed unity with the expectation of fear, suppression, with the involvement of each some kind of eeriness, compulsion of a number of actions”³⁴³. Ivleva draws attention to the complexity of the role-playing game, in which reincarnation can both exclude the external designation of role acceptance, when the participant in the game does not enter the role, but only designates entering it, and completely take possession of the player. In addition, in ritual games of dress-up participants can be forced to reincarnate into the role depending on age and gender.

I.P. Uvarova shares the idea of the worlds of mumming, balagan and carnival as worlds in contact with the infernal world and sees the common evolutionary origin of the ancient carnival and its younger successor, the balagan, in the evolving ability of Homo Sapiens to experience the death of loved ones. Relying on the studies of C. Levi-Strauss and A. Nazaretyan, Uvarova concludes that the fear of the death of a loved one turned into a human desire to “attribute to the dead the properties of the living”³⁴⁴ and the fear of the return of a dead person to the living. I.P. Uvarova believes that the time of the European carnival and Christmas Russian mumming are associated with periods when the dead can meet the living under masks. According to I.P. Uvarova, “the mask is originally a dead person, the face of the dead, the preservation of the face from rapid decay, a ‘prosodezhdenie’ in which the shaman has the opportunity to penetrate into the domain of death in order to take back the Khanty Eurydice, who died prematurely. The mask is a pass received in the other world for a furlough to this world, for visiting the earth in its harvest spring and winter holidays”³⁴⁵. The mask is for the soul of the deceased an entrance ticket to the feast of the living, with whom he can meet, physically touch them in the guise of the living. The festive communication

³⁴² Ivleva, L.M. (1998). *Doteatralno-igrovoi iazyk russkogo folklore* [Pre-theatrical and play language of Russian folklore]. SPb.: Dmitrii Bulanin. P. 87. (In Russ.).

³⁴³ Ibid. P. 88.

³⁴⁴ Uvarova, I.P. (2018). *Povest' ob odnom domike* [A story about one house]. Moscow: A. A. Bakhrushin State Central Theatre Museum. P. 28. (In Russ.).

³⁴⁵ Ibid. P. 75.

of the living and the dead during the Christmas holidays is proof of the postfigurative culture of Russian mumming.

In contrast to A.V. Gruntovsky, who considers the games of mumming as a part of folklore theatre along with ritual-dramatic action; dramatic parables; petrushka theatre; folk theatre; balagananny theatre, L.M. Ivleva is sure that mumming does not parody life does not depict typical characters, but is a ritual associated with the expression of “the idea of social inversion as a ritual-carnival idea”³⁴⁶.

The ethno-theatrical approach to pre-theatrical forms of Russian folklore used by L.M. Ivleva allows us to establish “structural-typological relations”³⁴⁷ between such phenomena as modern street theatre and the culture of Russian mumming, which are not chronologically deducible from each other, but have a common essence. In connection with the mosaic of highlighted signs and criteria of modern street theatre, it seems significant to conclude Ivleva that the entire diversity of folklore texts is permeated by the invariant of play, the universal properties of which are reincarnation and action.

J. Deleuze argues in the same vein, believing that “the mask, the disguised and the travesti reveal themselves as the truth of the nude. Necessarily, since repetition is not hidden by something else, but is formed by disguising itself, does not pre-exist its own disguises, and, in forming itself, constitutes the naked repetition in which it envelops itself”³⁴⁸. J. Deleuze calls such repetition authentic, which “holds the secret of our deaths and lives, constraints and liberations, the demonic and the divine, (...) wearing a mask, changing clothes”³⁴⁹. Deleuze's concept of repetition provides a key to explaining the reasons for preserving the rituals in mumming culture unchanged. Deleuze believes that “repetition as a conduct and as a point of view concerns non-exchangeable and non-substitutable

³⁴⁶ Ibid. P. 92.

³⁴⁷ Ivleva, L.M. (1998). *Doteatralno-igrovoi iazyk russkogo folklore* [Pre-theatrical and play language of Russian folklore]. SPb.: Dmitrii Bulanin. P. 36. (In Russ.).

³⁴⁸ Deleuze, J. (1998). *Razlichie i povtorenie* [Difference and repetition]. SPb.: Petropolis. (Originally published in French 1969). P. 40. (In Russ.).

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

singularities. (...) To repeat is to behave in a certain manner, but in relation to something unique or singular which has no equal or equivalent. And perhaps this repetition at the level of external conduct echoes, for its own part, a more secret vibration which animates it, a more profound, internal repetition within the singular. This is the apparent paradox of festivals: they repeat an ‘unrepeatable’³⁵⁰.

T.A. Bernshtam considers the phenomenon of ‘laughter-crying’³⁵¹ as one of the main invariants, which, according to the researcher, represents “two equivalent emotional categories”, forming “the phenomenon of oppositional unity”³⁵². T.A. Bernshtam proposes this concept as an alternative to the concept of ‘folk laughter culture’ by M.M. Bakhtin, insisting that when using the phrase ‘laughter folk culture’ in relation to Russian peasant culture, it is necessary to take into account the ethnographic definition of the word ‘people’. T.A. Bernshtam cites the definition of the term ‘people’ used in relation to the Russian ethnos from the 18th to the first third of the 20th century. The first meaning of this term is all strata of the Russian population. The second is the peasantry (75-80 per cent) from the 18th century to 1930. In this case, the popular culture is understood as peasant culture³⁵³. The researcher comes to the conclusion that laughter-crying as ritual complexes rooted in archaic, finally formalised in antinomy in the period of Christianity, reflecting “the two-worldliness of being, ... co-operation, or

³⁵⁰ Ibid. P. 13.

³⁵¹ Using the term ‘laughter-crying’ in the analysis of spectacular-playful Russian culture, A.F. Nekrylova notes that the rapid changeability of the comic and tragic is a peculiarity of Russian folklore theatre. See: Nekrylova, A.F. (2021). Sootnoshenie smekha i placha v russkoj zrelischno-igrovoj kul'ture [Ratio of laughter and crying in Russian spectacle and play culture]. In *Proceedings of the 7th International School of Young Folklorists “Laughter and crying in traditional culture”* (pp. 19–28). SPb.: Russian Institute for the History of the Arts. P. 19. (In Russ.).

³⁵² Bernshtam, T.A. (2008). Fenomen «Smekh-plach» v russkoj narodnoj pravoslavnoj kul'ture [The phenomenon of “Laughter—Crying” in Russian folk Orthodox culture]. In T. A. Bernshtam, & A. I. Teryukov (Eds.), *Christianity in the regions of the world* (Iss. 2). SPb.: Nauka. P. 303. (In Russ.).

³⁵³ Ibid. P. 301.

interaction, ... incompatible phenomena belonging to two worlds - earthly and heavenly”³⁵⁴.

Along with postfigurative rituals and ceremonies in Russian traditional culture there are cofigurative and prefigurative socio-cultural practices. This is evidenced by the special attitude of Russian society to youth. T.A. Bernshtam emphasises the special status of youth in traditional rural society, which was singled out as a special age group. Youth in the ritual life of the Russian community of the in the 19th – early 20st century was “a conductor of ‘changing’ (transforming) tendencies in the mechanism of functioning of group experience, through the confrontation of such antinomies as tradition -innovation ... ultimately contributing to the evolution of folk life and culture”³⁵⁵.

Cofigurative manifestations of Russian traditional culture include the fact of creating a separate space for youth, in which peers could learn from each other, “openly display themselves and their problems ... realise themselves”³⁵⁶. Researchers note that “in South Russian traditions the places of spring festivities and the festivities themselves were called the *street*”³⁵⁷, ‘the expansion of the sphere of spatial movement of the round dance - from the street of the village to the “wild” places behind the village or several, the increasing active role of guys in the games and, finally, the merging in a single round dance of the youth of many villages, making the maximum communal unity, — that is, the organisation of the game macro society — occurred as the summer solstice approached”³⁵⁸. This variant of the use of the word ‘game’, associated with the places where rural youth hang out in spring and summer, gives a key to explaining the reasons for the

³⁵⁴ Ibid. P. 365.

³⁵⁵ Bernshtam, T.A. (1988). *Molodyozh' v obryadovoj zhizni russkoj obshchiny XIX – nachala XX v.* [Youth in the ritual life of the Russian community in the 19th – early 20th centuries]. Leningrad: Nauka. Pp. 6–7. (In Russ.).

³⁵⁶ Mamardashvili, M.K. (2014). *Soznanie i civilizaciya* [Consciousness and civilization]. SPb.: Lenizdat. P. 77. (In Russ.).

³⁵⁷ Bernshtam, T.A. (1991). Sovershennoletie devushki v metaforah igrovogo fol'klora (tradicionnyj aspekt russkoj kul'tury) [Female adulthood in metaphors of game folklore (traditional aspect of Russian culture)]. In A. K. Baiburin & I. S. Kon (Eds.), *Ethnic stereotypes of male and female behavior*. SPb.: Nauka. P. 235. (In Russ.).

³⁵⁸ Ibid. P. 236.

ignition of pockets of Russian street theatre art in informal communities, subcultures, and the musical underground.

T.A. Bernshtam writes that “by virtue of the folk idea of the elemental-natural, semi-wild properties of the youth age it was attributed a closer connection with the ‘dark’, unclean forces”³⁵⁹, the otherworld, with something inhuman.

G.L. Tulchinsky gives a succinct definition of the phenomenon of the non-human, according to which the non-human — is, “first of all, otherworldly forces and characters. (...) These are almost everyday characters like phantoms, spirits of diseases, ghosts, house spirits, wood spirits, water spirits, mermaids. ... animals, plants, elements (wind, storm, frost, sea), objects and things (stones, mountains, mills, peas, etc.) — they could all become objects of magical actions, spells, and even worship. But the deceased is also non-human; the corpse is non-human, but still resembling such, becoming mysterious and endowed with supernatural qualities³⁶⁰ .

For youth games were allocated ‘non-human’ places - places “associated with the dwelling of various supernatural beings - outside the *village* (*by the river, in the forest, on the paddocks*), as well as in barns, baths, etc”³⁶¹. Therefore, Bernshtam believes, “a number of names of well-known in Russia round dance figures speaks about the symbolism of the space delineated by the youth for their games, similar to the pasture fencing of cattle: hedge, slash, vegetable garden, wattle”³⁶². Taking into account this peculiarity of youth age, the Russian “community reasonably understood the signs and properties of youth age: it was given the opportunity during the game - transition - to discharge the excess of vital

³⁵⁹ Bernshtam, T.A. (1988). *Molodyozh' v obryadovoj zhizni russkoj obshchiny XIX – nachala XX v.* [Youth in the ritual life of the Russian community in the 19th – early 20th centuries]. Leningrad: Nauka. P. 246. (In Russ.).

³⁶⁰ Tulchinsky, G.L. (2003). Nechelovecheskoe [Inhuman]. In G.L. Tulchinskii & M.N. Epshtein (Eds.), *Projective philosophical dictionary: New terms and concepts*. SPb: Aleteiya. P. 223. (In Russ.).

³⁶¹ Bernshtam, T.A. (1988). *Molodyozh' v obryadovoj zhizni russkoj obshchiny XIX – nachala XX v.* [Youth in the ritual life of the Russian community in the 19th – early 20th centuries]. Leningrad: Nauka. Pp. 246–247. (In Russ.).

³⁶² *Ibid.* P. 246.

energy, to show aggressive (destructive) tendencies, to try mating forces - in a word, to mature and excess its biological and social uncertainty”³⁶³.

The prefigurative element of Russian traditional culture owes to the human need to escape from predetermined ancestry, cosmosocial cyclicity and predetermination by means of symbolic antinomy, reincarnation, parodying each other, etc. The rudiments of prefigurativity are found in the androgyny of culture, archaic festivals (the first holiday), twin cults, trickster plots and motifs, festive shuffling of generations³⁶⁴, the nature of duality. Prefigurativity arises when there is ambivalence of social and age statuses. Young people in the Russian community were included in the following antinomic situations: biological, social and symbolic. It is in the symbolic antinomic situation that old age and youth could temporarily change places, reincarnate into each other. This was expressed in youth games, where there was invariably a “division into ‘young’ and ‘old’”³⁶⁵. In youth games “old men represented the bride and groom and dressed up as personifications of young elements, and young people - in various old men”³⁶⁶. Thus, in the games of youth was realised “the cycle of cosmoprudic antinomy ‘youth - old age’”³⁶⁷. G.G. Gadamer rightly considers childhood and old age as festive forms of time, explaining it by the fact that “Time, bringing youth or old age, (...) is discrete”³⁶⁸, that any ‘holiday is connected ... with some kind of return’”³⁶⁹.

It seems successful to use the concept of *habitus*³⁷⁰ in relation to folklore theatre phenomena, not only inherited with the help of tradition, but also ignited in

³⁶³ Ibid. Pp. 247–248.

³⁶⁴ Abramian, L. (1983). *Pervobytnyj prazdnik i mifologiya* [Primal feast and mythology]. Izdatel'stvo Armyanskoi SSR. P. 33. (In Russ.).

³⁶⁵ Bernshtam, T.A. (2000). *Molodost' v simvolizme perekhodnyh obryadov vostochnyh slavyan: Uchenie i opyt Cerkvi v narodnom hristianstve* [Youth in the symbolism of transitional rites of the Eastern Slavs: Teachings and experience of the Church in folk Christianity]. SPb.: Peterburgskoe Vostokovedenie. P. 9. (In Russ.).

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Gadamer, G. (1991). *Aktualnost prekrasnogo* [The relevance of the beautiful]. Moscow: Iskusstvo. Pp. 309–310. (In Russ.).

³⁶⁹ Ibid. P. 309. (In Russ.).

³⁷⁰ In Latin *habitus* means external appearance.

spite of it. V.G. Pushkaryov believes that “folk (folklore) theatre preserves not only the stability and repetition of elements of stage action, keeps the ‘memory of the genre’, but also a special corporeality of the play, which can be called the habitus of the action-performance, meaning that this concept denotes the incorporation of social experience in the manner of speaking, gait, gesticulation”³⁷¹. The researcher defines “the style of folk theatre-action ... as an inseparable unity of ethos (permeated by mythological syncretism of ritual and ritually transformative laughter) and habitus (special playful and laughter body)”³⁷².

Mumming is equally turned towards the traditional culture of adults and the innovative culture of youth. Svyatniye sit-ins, for example, became the centre of a general festive, playful anti-world “not only of youth, but also of adults”³⁷³. The culture of mumming continues to play an important role in preserving the balance of postfigurativity and prefigurativity in Russian culture, allowing not only to preserve humanity's memory of its past within the framework of traditional culture, but also to manifest itself in innovative forms of street theatre art.

Taking into account that “fading away, mimicry never became theatre in itself”³⁷⁴, since “masks and mimicry in general ... go back to archaic forms of imitation of animals or spirits of the dead”³⁷⁵, it can be seen that this ritual-mythological form of communication with the world of ancestors mimicry in the sphere of modern Russian street theatre under the faces of zoomorphic images and white masks of clowns, although, having lost, as once human memory displaced the understanding of the primary function of laughter, its original meaning

³⁷¹ Pushkarev, V.G. (2010). Fol'klornyj teatr kak osobaya zrelishchnaya forma v kul'ture Rossii [Folklore theater as a special spectacular form in Russian culture]. *Society. Environment. Development (Terra Humana)*, 3. P.137. (In Russ.).

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Bernshtam, T.A. (1988). *Molodyozh' v obryadovoj zhizni russkoj obshchiny XIX – nachala XX v.* [Youth in the ritual life of the Russian community in the 19th – early 20th centuries]. Leningrad: Nauka. P. 247. (In Russ.).

³⁷⁴ Ivleva, L.M. (1994). *Ryazhen'e v russkoj tradicionnoj kul'ture* [Mumming in Russian traditional culture]. SPb.: Russian Institute for the History of the Arts. P. 10. (In Russ.).

³⁷⁵ Kozintsev, A.G. (2003). Karnavalizatsiia i dekarnavalizatsiia na grani prirody i kultury [Carnavalization and decarnavalization: On the edge of nature and culture]. *Kunstkamera: Etnograficheskie tetradi*, 13, 125–129. (In Russ.).

2.2. Institution of childhood in formation of theatrical art in the 20th – early 21st centuries

To date, childhood institution is a separate scientific field of research in child psychology and pedagogy, studying such phenomena of children's culture as "oath rituals, slang, ... children's secret informal tradition"³⁷⁶, games, the image of childhood in various cultures, the transformation of the status of childhood, etc. Despite the progress made in the study of the childhood institution, the phenomenon of childhood itself and its connection with the nature of theatrical art remain the least studied today. No unanimous opinion has been formed on whether to consider the theatre as a children's art, or to see it as an opportunity for adults to regain their childhood.

Literary scholar A.I. Beletsky, for example, believed that in some cases children's and folk plays can say more about the nature of theatre "than the work of a great playwright"³⁷⁷. Professor N.I. Pirogov was categorically against the participation of children in theatrical performances, believing that this type of art corrupts the immature mind and soul. For example, N.I. Pirogov's opinion, set forth by him in the article "To Be and to Appear" (1858), is opposed with N.N. Evreinov's book *What is a Theater* (1921), featuring the dialogue that the author conducts with children about the difference between children's play and the play of a professional actor. Evreinov initiates children into professional secrets (playing for a salary, winging, etc.), thereby opening to the child a wide range of techniques used in the acting profession to create and maintain the illusion of the

³⁷⁶ Rodina, N.A. (2016). Molodezhnyi sotsium kak sreda bytovaniia sovremennykh prozvishch [Youth society as a medium of modern nicknames use]. In A.M. Mezenko (Ed.), *Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference "Regional onomastics: Problems and prospects of research"* (pp. 190–192). VSU named after P.M. Masherov. (In Russ.).

³⁷⁷ As cited in: Ivleva, L.M. (1998). *Doteatralno-igrovoi iazyk russkogo folklore* [Pre-theatrical and play language of Russian folklore]. SPb.: Dmitrii Bulanin. P. 16. (In Russ.).

game, organically adjacent to the sacrament of reincarnation in acting, without diminishing the dignity of this art anyhow³⁷⁸.

Modern psychologists tend to see similarities between the social-role play of a child and an actor, believing that when “an actor reflects a certain representation of events, he unfolds the position of the role in certain circumstances, thereby strengthening this position, and enabling the viewer to see the mental content of the other and relate to him. The child does the same, repeatedly playing a role and revealing his feelings and his attitude to events and characters”³⁷⁹.

But does not such a comparison of the actor’s play and the child’s social role-playing indicate that they are limited to the first (serious) stage of the game play? Recall in this regard the definition of puerilism given by Huizinga, who speaks negatively about adults trying to take the form of a child.

A certain paradox lies in the fact that in those periods when childhood as such did not yet exist either at the level of social institution or artistic reflection, there were already such phenomena as carnival, parody culture, and fun science, through which humanity periodically returned to the ecstatic state of freedom, becoming “hominibus ludenis”³⁸⁰.

In this regard, the question arises: do we have enough grounds to assume that the seriousness of theatrical play is due to its emergence at a time when the concept of childhood did not yet exist? It would be probably more logical to assume that the reason for washing out the playful beginning from theatrical art is connected with the emergence in society of an artificially created, privileged institution of childhood, in which the primacy was given to social-role play rather

³⁷⁸ See: Semenova, E.A. (2023a). Puerilizm v aktyorskoj professii [Puerilism in the profession of actor]. In *Proceedings of the All-Russian scientific and practical conference “Problems of art psychology”*, Moscow (pp. 210–216). FSC PIR; Lomonosov Moscow State University. (In Russ.).

³⁷⁹ Ryabkova, I.A., & Sheina, E.G. (2023). Ob igre rebenka i aktera k voprosu o prevrashcheniiakh perezhivaniia [On the play of a child and an actor: To the question of the transformations in experience]. *National Psychological Journal*, 18(3). P. 144. (In Russ.).

³⁸⁰ ³⁸⁰ Ivleva, L.M. (1998). *Doteatralno-igrovoi iazyk russkogo folklora* [Pre-theatrical and play language of Russian folklore]. SPb.: Dmitrii Bulanin. P. 76. (In Russ.).

than to laughter play? In order to establish a connection between the attention of society to childhood since the late 19th century and the development of theatre art, let us turn to the theories of psychology, pedagogical thought and the development of theater art in Russia, being popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The first theatres for children appeared at the beginning of the 20th century. At this time, the Russian drama theatre was rapidly developing³⁸¹. During this period, “dozens of pedagogical journals were published, numerous congresses of pedagogues, psychologists, and psychiatrists were convened. (...) The social and pedagogical movement of this period is associated with the emergence of new, previously unknown forms of preschool education (kindergartens, playgrounds, centers, nurseries, etc.) and education of tutors (clubs, circles, courses, etc.)”³⁸². In the 1920s–30s of the last century, the state supports theatres for children and youth along with national theatres and studio theatres, theatres for collective farms and the army³⁸³.

At the beginning of the last century, soviet pedagogy favored the biogenetic concept, actively using the experience of American developmental psychology, in which the age category as the main unit of analysis of child development was still absent. At the beginning of the 20th century, preschool age in Russia was defined from birth to 10–12 years of age. In 1918, in Moscow, N. Sats began working on the creation of a children's theatre in the children's section of the theatre and music

³⁸¹ Semenova, E.A. (2005). Vliyanie teorii detskoj igry na rabotu akterov russkih teatrov dlya detej s 1915 po 1938 g.g. [Sputnik Influence of the theories of children’s play on the work of actors of Russian theaters for children from 1915 to 1938]. *Sovremennye gumanitarnye issledovaniya*, 5(6). P. 360. (In Russ.).

³⁸² Chmeleva, E.V. (2019). Istoriya pedagogiki: pedagogika doskol'nogo detstva v Rossii konca XIX – nachala XX vekov: ucheb. posobie dlya bakalavriata i magistratury [History of pedagogy: pedagogy of preschool childhood in Russia at the end of the 19th – beginning of the 20th centuries: textbook. manual for bachelor's and master's degrees] (2nd ed.). Moscow: Yurait. Pp. 14–15. (In Russ.).

³⁸³ See: Stanislavsky, K.S. (1974). Oktyabr' i teatr [October and the theater] In *Moscow Art Theater in the Soviet era. Materials and documents* (2nd ed.). Moscow: Iskusstvo. P. 71. (In Russ.).

department of the Moscow City Council³⁸⁴. From 1920 to 1922, a theatre was created in Moscow under the artistic direction of H. Pascar. Soon, after a certain period of the work of the theatre, people began to speak negatively about it. In particular, P. Novitsky sharply reproached the theatre for imitating children, for artificially playing naivety³⁸⁵. H. Pascar herself wrote that “there is no actor for the child-spectator yet. And the child-spectator is insufficient for the creative imagination of an actor who needs the atmosphere of an adult spectator. The child-spectator does not intoxicate his fantasies, the child-spectator creates a series of frames...”³⁸⁶ In 1922, the Workshop of Pedagogical Theatre was opened in Moscow. According to its artistic director G.L. Roshal, the main feature of the workshop is that all actions in it are a spontaneously arising game, using the accessories at hand, an improvisational game³⁸⁷.

In those years, K.S. Stanislavsky posed question about the essence of the actor's play, “For what?” Like J. Huizinga, Stanislavsky believed that the game is not for material gain. However, Stanislavsky put the question much more categorically than J. Huizinga, when he excluded the possibility of the game for the sake of success in the audience or applause. The main thing, according to Stanislavsky, is that an actor, while playing a role, should go to a super-objective. And this task requires the actor to reckon with the intent of the playwright, the director’s interpretation, to seek a permanent answer to the agonizing question “For the sake of what am I going on stage today”. During this period, K.S. Stanislavsky studied a serious stage of acting associated with getting into and reincarnating into a role. The second stage of the game is still to be developed at this time. It involves a moment of mystery *of the carnival negation* of oneself

³⁸⁴ Dolgov, K.M. (2019). Nataliia Ilinichna Sats demiurg detskogo muzykalnogo teatra [Natalia Ilyinichna Sats: Demiurge of the children’s musical theatre]. *Concept: Philosophy, Religion, Culture, 1*. P. 233. (In Russ.)

³⁸⁵ Semenova, E.A. (2005). Vliyanie teorij detskoj igry na rabotu akterov russkih teatrov dlya detej s 1915 po 1938 g.g. [Sputnik Influence of the theories of children’s play on the work of actors of Russian theaters for children from 1915 to 1938]. *Sovremennye gumanitarnye issledovaniya, 5*(6). P. 360. (In Russ.).

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Ibid. P. 364.

through the transition to a new, deep level of the relationship between a person and his laughing cover. It is no coincidence that K.S. Stanislavsky considered childish naivety to be the most important criterion of an actor's existence in a role. The master advised aspiring and established actors to learn openness, spontaneity, and improvisational feeling from children. But how to reconcile the desire for super-objective with the childly absent-mindedness, inability to keep attention for a long time, etc.? Studies by L.S. Vygotsky, A. Freud, N.S. Leites and others show that childhood is, first of all, a period of incredible psychophysiological unfreedom. S. Dali wrote in his memoirs that he never wanted to become a child again. He always dreamed of being an old man. No wonder that the crutch, with which he never parted, later became a multifaceted symbol in his works. Soviet psychologist A.N. Leontiev, for example, considered the evolution of children's game not from social role-playing to anti-behavior, but the transition of game into the form of reveries, considering the latter as the second, more mature, stage of development of the child's psyche. Leontiev regarded the reverie as a revolutionary qualitative change in mental development, signalling that the game as such is already going to the stage of its collapse, and the game activity is fading.

It can be noted that children's laughter play remains one of the underestimated phenomena in the history of studying the nature of theatrical play and pre-theatrical-play forms of folklore, which explain a lot in the genesis of street theatre culture. While progress has been made in the study of children's sense of the comic and humour, the integral components of which are scary stories as a child's reaction to counter-sign information from the adult world, theatre researchers have underestimated the connection between children's humour and interest in 'scary' places³⁸⁸.

The second important point consists in the relationship between street theater and the nature of children's dreams. G. Bachelard outlined two fundamental human dreams: of peace and of the road. Following G. Bachelard, the laws of

³⁸⁸ See: Osorina, M.V. (2021). *Sekretnyj mir detej v prostranstve mira vzroslyh* [The secret world of children in the space of the world of adults]. Moscow: Piter. (In Russ.).

psychological integration are built on the principle of the house. The house is the topography of our intimate being, according to which the soul is the lodging. The house is considered by G. Bachelard as a tool for analyzing the human soul. In the image of the house, the phenomenon of “elusive freedom” can be somehow fixed in the categories of laughter, carnival space, comic, thought, love. These components of elusive freedom constitute the topography of *the intimate being*. This figurative comparison brings us closer to understanding a rather complex and really elusive phenomenon, which we have tried to lure into the den of the hut, the soul-house³⁸⁹. According to G. Bachelard, remembering different houses, different “rooms”, we learn to live inside ourselves. This is the “aesthetics of the hidden”, the aesthetics of the house of cabinets with drawers that are full. The whole aesthetics of G. Bachelard’s house is built on the principle that “only those who managed to get into some cosy hiding place can live. And for this purpose, we have a whole storehouse of images and memories inside, which we do not really like to share”³⁹⁰.

A child’s dream of peace alternates with a dream of the road as an adventure. That is why, on the one hand, children are drawn to basements, attics, closets, i.e. to places excessively saturated with information of danger and adventure. On the other hand, these same places are the prototype of a dwelling, a house, a den, a hut, a shell, in which one can take refuge and indulge in innermost dreams. This idea resonates with O. Freidenberg’s reasoning about the origin of the theatre, who pointed out that “the idea of a box – a cupboard – a coffin goes in parallelism with the idea of a dwelling – a cart – a temple – a stage – a bed or a table. And that the idea of the puppet is parallel to the idea of

³⁸⁹ See: Semenova, E.A. (2016c). Smekhovoj transfer ili «neulovimaya svoboda» v detskom vozraste [Humorous transfer or “elusive freedom” in childhood]. *Uchitel’ muzyki*, 4, 16–22. (In Russ.).

³⁹⁰ Bashlyar, G. (2014). *Poetika prostranstva* [The poetics of space]. Moscow: Ad Marginem. P. 36. (In Russ.).

the deity – the actor – the deceased”³⁹¹. It can be noted that children are no less attracted to such local play spaces as a sandbox, a children's playground, etc.³⁹²

A paradoxical situation arises in which the private theatre created by a child for himself in the “post-culture”³⁹³ of the second half of the 20th century acquires a global scale in the form of public performances on rooftops, walls of houses; street performances on abandoned factories; installations on islands in the oceans, graffiti on mountain peaks, etc.³⁹⁴

The children's theme was clearly manifested in the art of land-art, which emerged in the 1960s in the United States as part of the global environmentalist art movement. It was during this period that the art of land-art took a course to return to nature, striving to return the fantasy and purity of children's worldview to the world. Today, the children's theme is clearly manifested in the activities of the representative of the Russian trend of land-art, artist N. Polissky, who is the author of the idea of creating the *Nikola-Lenivets* art park, which hosts the festival “Arhstoyanie detskoe”. The festival space recreates the world of children's games and fantasies, where you can, for example, ride a train made of sofas, jump on a bed made of hay, meet fairy-tale ghosts, look into a well, take part in the carnival procession and so on.

A certain attention to the common interspecific play root in humans, animals, and birds is observed in modern theatrical pedagogy. The training program for first-year acting students includes sketches on the theme of “Circus”, observations of animals and children. Representation of children's culture or its simulation is often found in Russian and foreign street theatre. For example, an extensive, international community of rebel clowns, professing the idea of non-violent resistance, creates the illusion of toy protest by using laughter, clowning,

³⁹¹ Freidenberg, O.M. (1988). *Mif i teatr* [The myth and the theater]. Moscow: GITIS. P. 19. (In Russ.).

³⁹² See: Semenova, E.A. (2009). “Karnaval'naya revolyuciya” i “Ulichnaya pedagogika” [“Carnival revolution” and “Street pedagogy”]. *Pedagogika iskusstva*, 3, 109–117. (In Russ.).

³⁹³ Term by V.V. Bychkov.

³⁹⁴ See: Semenova, E.A. (2013). Detskoe karnaval'noe mirovospriyatie — nasledstvo vzroslogo soobshchestva [Children's carnival worldview is a heritage of the adult community]. *Problemy sovremennoi nauki i obrazovaniya*, 3, 207–211. (In Russ.)

street theatre, and children's paraphernalia. The street theatre *Bread and Puppet* by P. Schumann also uses the image of a puppet, papier-mâché. In foreign culture, the image of children's games formed the basis of such a movement as Fluxus, which George Maciunas characterised as a mixture of vaudeville, lies, children's games and Duchamp.

Fluxus is nothing more than an artistic formula of comic art, the components of which are children's games, deception, ostensibility. Today, child-centeredness is observed in contemporary Russian street theatre culture. Russian groups developing in a similar way include such street theatres as *State Street Theatre of Cardboardia*, *Mr. Pejo's Travelling Puppets*, *Kotorogo Theatre*, *Around the Corner Theater* and others.

The childhood institution played an important role in the formation of theatrical art in the 20th and early 21st centuries. At the beginning of the 20th century, all official institutes launched campaigns for studying the phenomenon of childhood. During this period, actors increasingly concentrated on the elements of childishness in their performance, thereby promoting a kind of acting puerilism. The ability to create playful representations of children's types and images formed a new professional competence of the dramatic theatre actor in the 20th century, especially demanded in the contemporary street theatre, where child-centeredness is associated with the search of the street theatre actor for his identity and his audience.

2.3. Revival of the archaic laughter worldview in low farce forms

The beginning of the 20th century was a period when theatre actors not only devoted themselves to children's entertainments, such as playing with puppets, puppet theatre, and shadow theatre, but also became fascinated by such a rude, fairground spectacle as low farce. The low farce becomes an object of scientific reflection. O.M. Freidenberg compares the *fabula palliata* with a low farce,

considering that “this is the only kind of literary drama that grew out of focus and prestidigitation³⁹⁵, a theatre of things. It is no younger than the puppet theatre, another artery of inanimate drama. No wonder puppeteers³⁹⁶ can be seen in the market, at the fair, at Palm Sunday festival, near every rare show and show-booth. In all nations, the puppet theatre came along with the shadow theatre³⁹⁷. This genre, as well as the comedies of Aristophanes, were almost not preserved, because it was based on folkloric, pre-psychological comicism.

Low farce “epidemic” captured Russia at the beginning of the last century. During this period, Russian theatre professionals turned to the ancient theater, medieval carnival, mystery, music hall, cabaret, variety and circus. The measure of true theatricality is not the theatricalization of life, but the low farce, the formula of which theatrical professionals sought “to transfer from the fairground to the stage of the theatre of the future”³⁹⁸.

Theatre historians note that “in addition to festive show-booths, numerous circus artists, magicians and simply enterprising people demonstrated “siren”, “giant”, “albino girl”, “chemical performance of a fireproof person”, stereoscopes, children's “mechanical theatres”, “various Malabar, Indian and equilibrium games”³⁹⁹ and other performances in private houses, in the streets and courtyards of Moscow. The main object of attention of the spectators in the low farce were two types of bodies. Bodies with deviations with a minus sign and bodies with deviations with a plus sign. Bodies with a minus sign are abnormal bodies. The second part of the low farce consisted of individuals with “deviations from the norm with a plus sign”: “acrobats, strongmen, riders and tightrope walkers”⁴⁰⁰. The

³⁹⁵ Magician, entertainer, stuntman, illusionist, etc.

³⁹⁶ Puppet actor.

³⁹⁷ Freidenberg, O.M. (1988). *Mif i teatr* [The myth and the theater]. Moscow: GITIS. P. 66. (In Russ.).

³⁹⁸ Uvarova, I.P. (2018). *Povest' ob odnom domike* [A story about one house]. Moscow: A.A. Bakhrushin State Central Theatre Museum. P. 37. (In Russ.).

³⁹⁹ Zograf, N.G. (1960). *Malyj teatr vtoroj poloviny XIX veka* [Small theater of the second half of the 19th century]. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR. P. 15. (In Russ.).

⁴⁰⁰ Uvarova, I.P. (2018). *Povest' ob odnom domike* [A story about one house]. Moscow: A.A. Bakhrushin State Central Theatre Museum. (In Russ.).

main instrument of deception in the in low farce and carnival comedy was the pretend play violation, to which children are sensitive.

P. Florensky captured the connection of childhood with the Petrushka Theatre, devoting enthusiastic lines to the puppet show of N.Ya. Simonovich-Efimova, comparing it with a childhood paradise suddenly found by an adult, and believing that “Puppet theatre is a hearth, fed by our innermost childhood and, in its turn, awakening in us the palace of children's fairy tale, which has fallen asleep”⁴⁰¹.

J.M. Lotman accurately explained the phenomenon of the cult of the puppet⁴⁰² at the beginning of the last century, noting that “cultural consciousness formed two faces of the puppet: one beckons to the cosy world of childhood, the other is associated with pseudo-life, dead movement, death, pretending to be life. The first looks into the world of folklore, fairy tales, primitive, the second reminds of machine civilization”⁴⁰³.

In addition, the researcher noted an extremely important difference in the functionality of the puppet in the world of adults and in the world of children. Lotman believes that a puppet for a child is an immovable puppet, since the child himself plays an active role in reviving the puppet. The child performs various acting manipulations with the puppet (he twists, spins, voices it, etc.). This observation of Lotman explains a lot in the two extreme points of view on the low farce art. According to the first view, low farce puppets are like a statue that can only be looked at, but not touched. Such a puppet “reminds us of ... duality”⁴⁰⁴. According to the second view, the puppet represents a way to return to the

⁴⁰¹ Florenskii, P.A. (1996). *Sochineniia v chetyrekh tomakh*. T. 2. [Works in four volumes]. Vol. 2. Moscow: Mysl. P. 536. (In Russ.).

⁴⁰² See: Butkova, O. (2012). Volshebstvo i mekhanika. Skazochnye geroi i temy sredi kukol i marionetok serebryanogo veka [Magic and mechanics: Fairy-tale characters and themes among puppets and marionettes of the Silver Age]. *Voprosy teatra*, 3–4, 154–165. (In Russ.).

⁴⁰³ Lotman, Yu.M. (1992). *Stat'i po semiotike i tipologii kul'tury. Izbrannye stat'i v trekh tomah*. T. 1. [Articles on semiotics and typology of culture Selected articles in three volumes] (Vol. 1). Tallin: Aleksandra. P. 379. (In Russ.).

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

conventionality of children's play, when the player himself plays an active, creative role.

How can one explain the desire of theatre workers to revive the buffoonery in theatrical forms of acting during the period when epochal political events took place in Russia, including the birth of the October Revolution of 1917, birth of the Soviet Union, death of Lenin? It is possible that interest in the buffoonery, the comic forms of culture, arises at those moments when “theatrical life, losing its traditional nature, becomes unusually diverse”⁴⁰⁵.

That time was rich in authorial and artistic manifestos. In this period, Dada was already pronouncing its manifestos about “active simplicity,” “Dadaist disgust,” and that Dada “means nothing”⁴⁰⁶. By the 1920s, I. Goll wrote his work on superdrama and mask. P. Claudel left a legacy of his reflections on the understanding of the theatrical space, living according to the laws of dreaming in reality, memory and expectation⁴⁰⁷.

At the beginning of the 20th century “the artistic elite of St. Petersburg sought in the theater a source of energy capable of transforming the world, so it seemed reasonable to comprehend the experience of the past: European mysteries, Thracian rituals, and, of course, the grandiose ancient theater, and the Japanese theater ...”⁴⁰⁸.

This historical period reveals the incredible desire of Russian poets, writers, artists to epater and shock random street passers-by with absurd images and behavior. One of the OBERIU members, K. Mints, recalled: “The year 1928. Nevsky prospect. Sunday evening. The sidewalk was absolutely packed. Suddenly,

⁴⁰⁵ Semenova, E.A. (2019j). Ulichnyj teatr protiv teatra voennyh dejstvij... (Ob istoricheskikh osobennostyah formirovaniya sovremennogo ulichnogo teatra v Rossii) [Street theater vs. theater of military activities.... (On the historical peculiarities of the formation of modern street theater in Russia)]. *Akademicheskie tetradi*, 19. P. 138. (In Russ.).

⁴⁰⁶ *Kak vseгда — ob avangarde: Antologiya francuzskogo teatral'nogo avangarda* [As usual — about the avant-garde: Anthology of the French theatrical avant-garde] (S. Isaev, Trans.). (1992). Moscow: TPF “Soiuzteatr”: GITIS. Pp. 28–36. (In Russ.).

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid. Pp. 41–51.

⁴⁰⁸ Lotman, Yu.M. (1992). *Stat'i po semiotike i tipologii kul'tury. Izbrannye stat'i v trekh tomah*. T. 1. [Articles on semiotics and typology of culture Selected articles in three volumes] (Vol. 1). Tallin: Aleksandra. P. 26. (In Russ.).

there came sharp car horns, as if a drunken driver turned off the sidewalk directly into the crowd. The walkers scattered in different directions. But there was no car. A small group of very young men were wandering on the empty sidewalk. The tallest, lanky man, with a very serious face and a cane topped with an antique automobile car horn with a black rubber “pear” stood out of the crowd. He walked imperturbably with a smoking pipe in his teeth, wearing short pants with buttons below the knees, grey woollen stockings, and black boots. He wore a plaid jacket. His neck was propped up by a snow-white hard collar with a child's silk bow. The young man's head was adorned with a cap with “donkey ears” made of cloth. This was the already legendary Daniil Kharms⁴⁰⁹.

May the outbreak of theater professionals' interest in the low farce in Russia be caused by their service in the theater, which could not be combined with the rude, street art? Recall that historical sources give reason to believe that foreign street actors interacted with the European theater more actively than Russian actors of dramatic art. In Europe, the demand for fit-ups grew since the 15th century, since public holidays and carnivals were increasingly held in cities. It is noteworthy that actors from prestigious theaters performed in the squares during the St. Bartholomew's Fair in England. The fair enabled actors to earn money during the period when the theaters were closed, as well as to gain popularity and to master the outdoor acting. P. Stallybrass and A. White cite the story of the famous actor H. Woodward, who, before joining the Lilliput theater troupe, successfully played the role of Harlequin at the St. Bartholomew's Fair for a long time, which earned him a reputation as a good comic actor⁴¹⁰.

The history of European street art is distinguished by the fact that, following the destruction of the institution of carnival, street comedians validated on the theatrical stage, leaving a mark on the history of dramatic art. In particular, in Shakespeare's plays, clowns first appeared as actors. Despite significant

⁴⁰⁹ Zucker, A. (2011). Daniil Harms i sovetskij rok-absurdizm [Daniil Kharms and the soviet rock-absurdism]. *South-Russian musical anthology*, 2. P. 11. (In Russ.).

⁴¹⁰ Stallybrass, P., & White, A. (1986). *The politics and poetics of transgression*. Cornell University Press. P. 111.

differences in the development of theatrical culture in Russia and abroad, there is a general tendency of institutionalization of theatrical art, which eventually makes it a textual, dramatic art.

Due to the absence of carnivals in Russia, as well as the parallel development of folk theater and dramatic art, the venue for street artists' performances was mainly open festive or closed (private) spaces, including fairs, show-booths. S.S. Klitin noted, "A special world of low farce arose inside the fairs and festivities – a theater, joining ideas of various kinds"⁴¹¹. In this case, we have no reason to underestimate the influence of folk laughter forms on actors and directors of the Russian dramatic stage, as well as the inclination of actors towards carnival liberties.

Extensive evidence of the influence of square art on theatrical personalities can be seen in memoir and scientific literature. In his autobiographical book *Mask and Soul*, F. Chaliapin recalled that he received his first theatrical "burns" at the age of seven, when he saw actor Ya. Mamonov performing "under the name of Yashka, as a fair singer of satirical songs and clown"⁴¹². It is known that V.E. Meyerhold's parents did not allow him to visit the low farce performances, which probably sparked his interest in this phenomenon.

N.A. Khrenov explains the interest of theatrical personalities in archaic forms of culture by a crisis in the development of the theater. Among the most frequently mentioned reasons for this crisis, Khrenov names the emergence of the cinema to compete with a theater⁴¹³. According to the researcher, the first strategy

⁴¹¹ Klitin, S.S. (2002). *Estradnye zavedeniia piatnadtsat ocherkov dlia professionalov i liubitelei estradnogo iskusstva* [Variety establishments: Fifteen essays for professionals and amateurs of the variety arts]. Moscow: GITIS. P. 24. (In Russ.).

⁴¹² Shaliapin, F.I. (1989). *Maska i dusha: Moi sorok let na teatrah* [Mask and soul: My forty years in theaters]. Moscow: Soyuzteatr. P. 5. (In Russ.).

⁴¹³ Khrenov, N.A. (2020). Teatr XX veka vykhodit iz krizisa ili reabilitatsiia arkhaiskikh form kommunikatsii [Theater of the 20th century comes out of crisis or rehabilitation of archaic forms of communication]. In E. A. Semenova (Ed.), *Proceedings of the International Bakhtin Theoretical and Practical Conference "Street theatre vs. the theatre of military actions", October 16–18, 2019, Moscow*. Moscow: IAEaCS RAE. .). P. 228. (In Russ.).

for the theater's recovery from the crisis “implied assimilating the opportunities, techniques and forms brought by the cinema”⁴¹⁴.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the comedy genre became the most popular mass entertainment, dominated by clowning and comic art. Such names of silent movie comedians as Ch. Chaplin, B. Keaton, H. Lloyd, H. Langdon, etc. rose at that time. According to L. Trauberg, silent movies promoted the emergence of “the mysterious term ‘sea of laughter’”⁴¹⁵. The crowd idolizes clowns, which fool people “by deliberate stupidity”. It is no coincidence that “glupysh” (little silly) is one of the most affectionate names in the Russian language⁴¹⁶. Movie comics firmly established fundamental principles of clowning: nicknames, soubriquets, falls, chases, slaps, masks in their images. The status of comedians was growing.

The answer to cinematography comprises the reconstruction of the low farce by V.E. Meyerhold, who “contrasted the routine of inexpressive ‘everyday life’ with the ‘histrionic artist’”, with an emphasis on artistic mastery of stage skills. Students of the Meyerhold Studio on Borodinskaya street were referred to by the rehabilitated term “comedians”, which was also an appeal to the heyday of theatrical professionalism, not hidden by naturalistic “forms of life itself”⁴¹⁷.

The second strategy was aimed at “expressing the rhythms of modernity, but using techniques that would be organic for the theater. (...) It was, for example, partly expressed by V. Meyerhold, instilling the techniques of biomechanics in the theater”⁴¹⁸.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ Trauberg, L. (1984). *Mir naiznanku: Soc.-kritich. motivy v amer. kinokomicheskoy 1910-1930-h godov* [The world inside out: Socio-critical motives in the American comic films of the 1910s–1930s]. Moscow: Iskusstvo. P. 12. (In Russ.).

⁴¹⁶ Ibid. P. 21.

⁴¹⁷ Mironova, V.M. (Ed.). (2015). *Teatralnye terminy i poniatia. Materialy k slovari Vypusk III Sankt-Peterburg* [Theatrical terms and concepts: Materials for the dictionary]. Iss. 3. SPb.: RIII. P. 28. (In Russ.).

⁴¹⁸ Khrenov, N.A. (2020). *Teatr XX veka vykhodit iz krizisa ili rehabilitatsiia arkhaiskikh form kommunikatsii* [Theater of the 20th century comes out of crisis or rehabilitation of archaic forms of communication]. In E. A. Semenova (Ed.), *Proceedings of the International Bakhtin Theoretical and Practical Conference “Street theatre vs. the theatre of military actions”, October 16–18, 2019, Moscow*. Moscow: IAEaCS RAE. .). P. 228. (In Russ.).

The third strategy involved “creating a language consistent with industrial dynamics”⁴¹⁹. FEKS Studio was a “truly modern expression” of engines, technical progress, everything that is “compressed, sprung into a brief consonance, full of energy: FEKS”⁴²⁰. FEKS Studio, founded in 1921 by G.M. Kozintsev, L.Z. Trauberg and S.I. Yutkevich, stands as an example of a real breakthrough of the element of the low farce, carnival in the theater and cinema. FEKS Studio presents a vivid example of how the carnival and laughter literally stormed the Russian cinema and theater. The creators of the Factory of the Eccentric Actor community (FEKS) showed interest in foreign silent cinema from the very beginning. In 1922, on the basis of Gogol's “Marriage”, the FEKS Studio staged a comic performance called “Gogol's Electrification”.

Interestingly, the founders of the FEKS Studio not only practically professed eccentricity and carnivalization, but also theoretically comprehended it. FEKS actors characterized their studio as a “depot of eccentrics”, a “factory of an eccentric actor”. Silent films of the studio include “The Adventures of Oktyabrina”; “The Ferris Wheel”; “The Overcoat”, “Little Brother”, “S.V.D.”, “The New Babylon”. The plays of the FEKS factory “Farce Performance of Four Clowns”, “Genie-Gentleman and ... The Dissolute Bottle”, “The American Performance”, “The Foreign Trade at the Eiffel Tower”, as well as “The Marriage” by Gogol as “A Trick in Three Acts of the Absolutely Incredible Adventures of N.V. Gogol” involved such characters as Einstein, Ch. Chaplin, Albert, Professor, Steam Bridegroom, Mr. Bill, 1st Villain, 2nd Villain, Bridegroom, N.V. Gogol, Electric Bridegroom, Radioactive Bridegroom, Mam'zelle Agatha, I. Podkolesin, Crocodile, Banker, Four Americans, Steam Locomotive, Mary, Delegate, Three Bankers, Miss FEKS etc.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

⁴²⁰ *Ot balagana do Shekspira: Khronika teatralnoi deiatelnosti G.M. Kozintseva* [From farce to Shakespeare: Chronicle of the theatrical activity of G. M. Kozintsev] (V. G. Kozintseva & Ya. L. Butovsky, Comp.). (2002). Dmitrii Bulanin. P. 46. (In Russ.).

A.G. Kozintsev divides the work of FEKS into several periods. The first period the founders of the FEKS studio were filled with inner optimism, while in the second period of creativity the FEKS actors were growing tragic notes, which precluded them from creating works in the genre of pure comedy. In fact, the tragic component of the authors' worldview, according to Kozintsev, leads to the appearance of clowning as a mixture of the tragic, the lyrical and the funny.

The fourth strategy, according to N.A. Khrenov, was “generated by the aggravated problem of the reception of the theater in the new conditions, namely, in the situation of massification. (...) The aesthetic needs of such a spectator determined the theater's focus not on experiments related to the creation of a new language or, if we refer to Y. Lotman, “grammar”, but on those forms of theater that were displaced from the professional theater and were peripheral”⁴²¹. The fifth strategy was aimed at “overcoming the cultural isolation of the Russian theater.” The sixth strategy, according to the researcher, was related “to the political context of the era”⁴²². The most constructive strategy, according to N.A. Khrenov, uses “inner speech” as an artistic device⁴²³.

Such agony of the theater in its attempts to get out of the crisis once again confirms that J. Huizinga and R. Caillois were right when they refused to see the acting as a true play. A symptom of unhealthy theatricalization is R. Wagner's slogan, in which tragedies should be transformed into universal folk festivities, in which tragedies must be transformed into universal popular festivals, cannot do this. The utopia of R. Wagner can rather give birth not to the carnival, but to the Saturnalia, during which a free, strong man ... will sacrifice his death to love with dignity and majesty⁴²⁴. A. Lunacharsky expressed something similar in these years:

⁴²¹ Khrenov, N.A. (2020). Teatr XX veka vykhodit iz krizisa ili reabilitatsiia arkhaiskikh form kommunikatsii [Theater of the 20th century comes out of crisis or rehabilitation of archaic forms of communication]. In E. A. Semenova (Ed.), *Proceedings of the International Bakhtin Theoretical and Practical Conference “Street theatre vs. the theatre of military actions”, October 16–18, 2019, Moscow*. Moscow: IAEaCS RAE. .). P. 229. (In Russ.).

⁴²² Ibid.

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ Wagner, R. (2001). *Kol'co Nibelunga: Izbrannye raboty* [The ring of the Nibelung: Selected works]. Moscow, SPb: Eksmo; Terra Fantastica. (In Russ.).

“And think of the character of our festivities when ... we will create rhythmically moving masses, ... really embraced by one idea, an ordered peaceful army”⁴²⁵.

At the beginning of the last century, the processes of aestheticization of politics, in which art and life merge, reached their apocalypse. Many street theatrical performances dedicated to revolutionary events were meant to be reconstructions of one or another moment in history. For example, on November 7, 1920, a large-scale reconstruction of “The Storming of the Winter Palace” was reproduced on Palace Square in Petrograd and involved 8,000 people. The stage directors of this global reconstruction were N.N. Evreinov, N.V. Petrov, and Yu.P. Annenkov. I. Chubarov considered this production to be the prototype of modern political PR technologies, the forerunner of artistic performances⁴²⁶.

Russian experiments in the field of street theater practices at the beginning of the last century were unprecedented in the scale of involving the public in the playful action, but was it a play in J. Huizinga’s cultural understanding? C. Bishop suggests that the participatory art of the 20th century originated in the environment of Russian left-wing radical art. Bishop bases his arguments on the historical facts of the development of collective theatrical creativity in the 20th century, referring to the work of V.E. Meyerhold⁴²⁷ and the ideas of P.M. Kerzhentsev⁴²⁸ and A.V. Lunacharsky⁴²⁹ as key figures in the development of participatory art.

According to C. Bishop, P.M. Kerzhentsev was one of the first to propose an alternative to bourgeois dramaturgy in the form of mass dramas, calling for the involvement of citizens of proletarian society in their performances. Many theater groups responded to this call, and as a result began to function as communes where

⁴²⁵ Lunacharskij, A.V. (1982). *Ob iskusstve: V 2-h t. T. 2.* [About the art: in two volumes] (Vol. 2). Moscow: Iskusstvo. 391 p. (In Russ.).

⁴²⁶ Chubarov, I.M. (2014). *Kollektivnaya chuvstvennost': Teorii i praktiki levogo avangarda* [Collective sensuality: Theories and practices of the left avant-garde]. Moscow: Higher School of Economics. Pp. 125–126. (In Russ.).

⁴²⁷ Bishop, C. (2012). *Artificial hells: Participatory art and the politics of spectatorship*. Verso. P. 53.

⁴²⁸ Kerzhentsev, P. M. (1920). *Tvorcheskii teatr* [Creative theater]. Peterburg: State Publishing House, St. Petersburg Branch. 172 p. (In Russ.).

⁴²⁹ Lunacharskij, A.V. (1965). *Pochemu nel'zya verit' v boga?* [Why one cannot believe in God?]. Moscow: Nauka. Pp. 359–362. (In Russ.).

all theater workers, including cleaners and lighting technicians, participated in the production of the play.

S. Radlov and K. Mardzhanov's well-known global production of "To the World Commune" was staged on the steps of the Stock Exchange building in Petrograd in July 1920. The creators of this large-scale action resorted to posterity, caricature, as well as to the monumentality of late antique festivals. In the same year, the theatrical spectacle "Blockade of Russia" was created, which used the language of political eccentricity.

Memories of theatre critics, art theorists and writers suggest that the true playful element raged not in squares where theatrical spectacles were staged, but in carnival worlds, one of which were Russian cabaret theatres. K.I. Chukovsky left many impressions of the theater in his reviews and diaries at the beginning of the last century. In particular, the writer did not like the play "Mystery Bouffe" by V.E. Meyerhold⁴³⁰, in which he lacked real vulgarity and puns, was disappointed by the performance of the First Studio of the Moscow Art Theater after his translation of "Hero" by Sing, in which he was frightened by "red and blue wigs, clown jumps, squeals, grunts, circus tricks!"⁴³¹.

M.M. Bakhtin was rather restrained in his assessment of the theater when he was sharing with V.D. Duvakin his memories of the literary cafes "Halt of Comedians" and "Stray Dog"⁴³²; Gaideburov's Mobile Drama Theatre, productions by V.E. Meyerhold; M. Chekhov's role of Khlestakov⁴³³; Reinhardt's theater and his production of "Oedipus Rex"⁴³⁴. One reason for Bakhtin's restrained estimates of theater can lie in the fact that he was involved in unofficial intellectual circles where a carnivalesque play of the mind reigned. His first circle was "Omphalos",

⁴³⁰ As cited in: Yarosh, K. (2020, October 27). Kornej Chukovskij: "Ya ne lyublyu teatra" [Korney Chukovsky: "I don't like theater"]. *Teatr*. (In Russ.). Available at: <https://oteatre.info/kornej-chukovskij-ya-ne-lyublyu-teatra/?ysclid=lr44icul5o218495634>. (Accessed: December 12, 2023).

⁴³¹ Ibid.

⁴³² *Besedy V.D. Duvakina s M.M. Bakhtinym* (1996). [Conversations between V.D. Duvakin and M.M. Bakhtin]. Moscow: Progress. P. 64. (In Russ.).

⁴³³ Ibid. P. 200.

⁴³⁴ Ibid. P. 201.

which means “navel” in Greek⁴³⁵. It continued the traditions of circles that previously existed in England (D. Swift came out of such a circle) and Poland. M. Bakhtin compared his circle with Pushkin’s “Arzamas”. Such circles included “scholarly jokers, jokers from science ... jesters from science...”⁴³⁶ In the 18th century, they were called Swabrians. Each of the participants could reveal a “carnival...⁴³⁷ gone deep” in personality, taking root in it. These circles demonstrated lampooning of “high philosophical style”⁴³⁸. Parodies and stylizations had a funny, easy, ironic-humorous character and did not make fun of specific historical events, scientific phenomena, etc. M.M. Bakhtin found carnival signs in literary circles and theatrical bohemia, increasingly interested in cabaret. The Russian cabaret flourished at the beginning of the 20th century mainly due to the actor's parties⁴³⁹, during which the participants acted out parodies, improvised, and performed “hastily assembled jokes from intra-theatrical folklore”⁴⁴⁰. As a rule, performances in Russian cabarets “Stray Dog”, “Die Fledermaus”, “Halt of Comedians”, “Lukomorye”, “Crooked Mirror” were in line with “the character of performances ... of Parisian street theatres”⁴⁴¹, combining refinement and a rude farcical style.

Theatre critic N.E. Efros, who witnessed the rise of cabaret theatres in Russia, sympathetically recalled the process of transforming cabaret theatres from closed, informal theatres into commercial theatre enterprises. The Russian cabaret “The Bat”, for example, was conceived “as an intimate circle, as a cozy place for mutual amusement and fun of the actors of the Art Theatre after the performance”⁴⁴². Since, as N.E. Efros noted, “the actors of this theatre have ... a

⁴³⁵ Ibid. P. 51. (In Russ.).

⁴³⁶ Ibid. P. 52.

⁴³⁷ Ibid. P. 115.

⁴³⁸ Ibid. P. 52.

⁴³⁹ Tikhvinskaya, L. (1995). *Kabare i teatry miniatyur v Rossii. 1908—1917* [Cabarets and miniature theaters in Russia, 1908–1917]. Moscow: Kul'tura. P. 16. (In Russ.).

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid. P. 26.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid. P. 124.

⁴⁴² Efros, N.E. (1918). *Teatr “Letuchaya mysh” N. F. Balieva: 1908 – 1918: Obzor desyatiletnej hudozhestvennoj raboty pervogo russkogo teatra-kabare* [Theatre “The Bat” of N.F. Baliyev:

great love of humour”⁴⁴³, the cabaret “The Bat” was “a kingdom of free but beautiful jokes”⁴⁴⁴.

The cabaret theatre demonstrated not only historical and cultural, but also psychophysiological patterns of the formation of the carnival potential of the acting profession. Using modern approaches to the nature of comedy and laughter, we can say that the source of play in cabaret theatres was professional acting humour, based on an in-depth knowledge of the theatrical profession and a virtuoso mastery of acting techniques, which distinguished the cabaret theatre from the theatre of miniatures.

Attempts by Soviet-era directors to use farce and cabaret forms as propaganda were unsuccessful. Excessive aestheticization of folk laughter forms when transferred to the stage, the desire to turn the image of a child's toy, a puppet into an automatic machine, to deprive it of its archaic, primitive function led to the fact that the farcical fever was replaced by disappointment and alienating of theatrical personalities from the folk laughter play. Nevertheless, such phenomena as Russian cabaret, FEKS Studio, and the reconstruction of the low farce on the theatrical stage went into the subsystem of theater culture and continued to give “side shoots”⁴⁴⁵ in the form of new laughter recreations in the space of contemporary theatre art.

2.4. Street artist: between puerilist and kidalt

The 1960s of the 20th century saw a surge of activism, social unrest, mass demonstrations and protests around the world. It was during this period that the second, after the 1920s, burst of theatricality in society took place in the world. The 1960s were held under the motto “city to citizens”. Street art sought to assert

1908 - 1918: Review of ten years of artistic work of the first Russian cabaret theatre]. Petrograd: Hudozhestvennye masterskie zhurnala “Solnce Rossii”. P. 11.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ Tikhvinskaya, L. (1995). *Kabare i teatry miniatyur v Rossii. 1908—1917* [Cabarets and miniature theaters in Russia, 1908–1917]. Moscow: Kul'tura. P. 382. (In Russ.).

its rights in megacities by making art interventions in the central areas of major cities. Theater, music, dance, puppetry, circus, fine arts and cinema were again taking over the public space from which they were ousted by the authorities, police, academies and other state institutions after the era of fairs⁴⁴⁶.

However, “despite all the radical changes taking place with the theater, the concept of drama continued to persist as a latent normative idea of the theater itself”⁴⁴⁷, expressed in the audience's identification of the concepts of “play” and “production”. In these years, it became popular to try out radical philosophies in street theater. The philosophy of “orgiasm” by M. Maffesoli and the concept of “immediatism” by H. Bey entered the mainstream.

In the 1970s of the 20th century, the leader of the Brazilian theater group Oficina Theatre⁴⁴⁸ Z. Celso began to experiment with countercultural practices, which later became part of the tropism movement that revived the anthropophagic manifesto of the Brazilian writer, founder of the Anthropophagy movement O. de Andrade by applying it in integrated forms of theater, music and poetry. Anthropophagy served as the source material and genetic code for the theatrical language of the Oficina Theatre group⁴⁴⁹. Theatrical stage designer, architect L.B. Bardi relied in her work on Marxist philosopher A. Gramsci, Brazilian teacher P. Freire and theatrical theorist and director A. Boal⁴⁵⁰.

In Argentina, the artwork of V. Tellas,⁴⁵¹ who experimented with such genres as cabaret, one-man show, ecological theater, and space theatre, flourished in the mid-1980s. V. Tellas's theatrical experiments included productions of

⁴⁴⁶ Calder, D. (2017). 2CV Théâtre: Transgression, nostalgia, and the negative space of French street theatre. *Theatre Journal*, 69(1), 1–20.

⁴⁴⁷ Lehmann, H.T. (2013). *Postdramaticeskij teatr* [Postdramatic theater] (N. Isaeva, Trans.). Moscow: ABCdesign. P. 54. (In Russ.).

⁴⁴⁸ Santos, F., Israel, H. (2022). City and spatial dynamics: Teatro Oficina in the NIMBYs' Perspective. In *Proceedings of the 10th FAU Mackenzie Research Forum*.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid. P. 6.

⁴⁵⁰ Usakli, H. (2021). Inner sound or forum theater to resolve communicational problems. *International Journal of Education and Science*, 4(1), 26–32.

⁴⁵¹ Fuentes, M.A. (2017). Theater as event: The politics of interruption in Viv Tellas' documentary theater. In J. Hamou (Ed.), *Calling out of context* (pp. 14–35). Paraguay Press. P. 16.

intentionally poorly written plays, which turned into the Festival de Teatro Malo (Festival of Bad Theaters). The area of V. Tellas' experiments during these years was close to clowning and street theater, since it was based on genuine admiration for the unskilful play of non-professional performers. The works of V. Tellas are like a carnival, since they connect art and life by "breaking" the predictability of theatrical conventionality⁴⁵².

In 1967, M. Trajlović, together with J. Ćirilov, founded the Belgrade International Theater Festival BITEF, where artists from both sides of the Iron Curtain could meet. Over the decades, the programs covered various areas, from the experiments of such directors as Yu. Malina, J. Grotowski, R. Schechner, T. Kantor, P. Schumann to the director's interpretations of the classic works of P. Brook, P. Stein, I. Bergman, O. Krejčí, P. Zadek, P. Chéreau, C. Pijman, R. Planchon, Yu.P. Lyubimov.

Peter Schumann's Bread and Puppet Street Theater appears as a symbiosis of street theater and political protest. It can be attributed to both the provocative theater and peace-making art direction. Schumann refers to himself as a "rebel of papier-mâché, cardboard and garbage", having a "frivolous appearance, a tolerance peculiar only to madmen". He saw his mission in confronting the "pipe of death" and helping the "little rye loaf" to fight the big white bread, symbolizing America and the power of money.

As a representative of puppet theater, Schumann believes that this art does not seek to broadcast on behalf of government or civilizations, preferring to have its own secret and self-deprecating place in society. Schumann emphasizes the frivolity of puppet theatre. Those who are ashamed of its "ridiculous status", according to Schumann, either disrespect this kind of theater or make feeble attempts to pass it off as so-called serious art. Schumann considers impossible for art a situation in which it "drags itself obediently in the caravan of the entertainment business," doing "the will of the powerful." Schumann's philosophy of action implies that if we build a house, make soup, and Big Foot decides to

⁴⁵² Ibid. P. 17.

trample it all down, we simply will not let this black deed happen. The Bread and the Puppet Theater displays a “theater of struggle against the end of the world.” As a negative example, Schumann cites modernism, believing that its political and social failure consisted in the fact that it failed to use its discoveries in a historical situation. The process of postmodern emancipation, in his view, was limited to art and its associated production.

For many of his performances, Schumann published postcards (Figure. 5–7) and booklets in the style of hand-drawn comics (Figures 8–10). All of Schumann's manifestos, set forth on the pages of the booklets, were aimed at awakening people's consciousness and stirring up their obedience to the political system. Schumann's resistance is directed against the ever-growing capitalist empire; the submissive consumer who is made to believe in freedom of choice; the meaninglessness of the mechanistic nature of our lives. Schumann considers it necessary to teach children to resolve conflicts with words rather than with weapons. On the one hand, Peter Schumann opposes authority, the system⁴⁵³. On the other hand, he emphasizes the “puppetry” of his tools of struggle (papier-mâché, cardboard, clay), thereby approaching the post-war international association “Fluxus” and the carnival protest practices of the early 21st century. Schumann's manifestos “Bread and puppet” were not veiled or disguised as carnival.

P. Schumann represents an example of an artist primarily creating archetypal, artistic images imbued with love and sympathy of their creator. Despite the fact that Schumann talked tough in his booklets, comics, pictures, performances on the theme of injustice, inequality, poverty, capitalism in America, etc., he won the people's love, first of all as a street artist. It should be noted that P. Schumann influenced the artists of our country. In particular, the Bread and Puppet

⁴⁵³ See: Semenova, E.A. (2020f). Manifesty ulichnogo teatra XX veka ili myatezhnikam pap'e-mashe posvyashchaetsya [The manifestos of 20th century street theater or dedication to the papier-mâché rebels]. In E.A. Semenova (Ed.), *Proceedings of the International Bakhtin Theoretical and Practical Conference “Street theatre vs. the theatre of military actions”, October 16–18, 2019, Moscow* (pp. 310–316). Moscow: IAЕaCS RAE. (In Russ.).

Theatre toured Moscow (Figure 11). I.P. Uvarova, a theater critic and puppet theater designer, was friends with P. Schumann, participated in the procession of him theatre in Moscow on Old Arbat in 1988 (Figure 12). In her memoirs, I.P. Uvarova characterizes Schumann as an artist who took “responsibility for the fate of the world”⁴⁵⁴. According to Uvarova, Schumann's goal “was strategic: by organizing an artistic action, he hoped to pacify the world's evil, if not to destroy it altogether”⁴⁵⁵.

In the 1970s of the 20th century, a laboratory of directors and artists of puppet theaters was created under the leadership of I.P. Uvarova. The laboratory included artists from Penza and Izhevsk, Novgorod, Ufa, Krasnodar, Chelyabinsk, Nizhnevartovsk, Voronezh, Kharkov, Magnitogorsk, Stavropol, Mogilev, Abakan, Arkhangelsk, Tyumen, Kurgan, Pushkin, St. Petersburg. I.P. Uvarova described the laboratory as “a gathering of puppeteers or a seminar bearing the alchemical name ‘Laboratory’”⁴⁵⁶, which traces its history back to the 70s of the last century, starting in the Urals. According to I.P. Uvarova, this is not a coincidence, since it was there that “the processes of an avant-garde nature began to quietly boil, which soon took on the character of scandalously bright theatrical events. Frequent festivals were held there, they concentrated the energy of innovations (...) The laboratory seemed to have spontaneously arisen in this cauldron of seething and boiling, where absolutely everything from world culture ended up, everything that the wind could carry to those remote places”⁴⁵⁷. The laboratory discussed such topical and at the same time new, bold topics as the avant-garde of the 20s of the XX century; the artist-demiurge as the creator of a new universe; conceptualism and scenography. The questions were about what is Theatre and what is Non-Theatre; what is the difference between theatre and conceptualism; the nature of

⁴⁵⁴ Uvarova, I.P. (2014). *Daniel' i vse vse vse* [Daniel and everybody and everybody and everybody]. SPb: Izdatel'stvo Ivana Limbakha. P. 288. (In Russ.).

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid. P. 290.

⁴⁵⁶ Uvarova, I.P. (1999a). O laboratorii [About the laboratory]. In *Ritual. Theater. Performance: Materials of transcripts of the laboratory of directors and artists of puppet theaters under the direction of I. Uvarova. Sb. st. / Ed. I. Uvarova*. Moscow. P. 4. (In Russ.).

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

performance and its difference from a play were analyzed. Within the framework of the laboratory, meetings were organized with art historians, artists, doctors of science, directors, actors. The collections published the works of culturologists, ethnographers, theatre scholars Ya. Chesnov, I. Uvarova, T. Bernshtam, L. Ivleva, O. Kuptsova and others. During the laboratories, discussions of the performances were held. Based on the results of these laboratories, such collections, which have already become classics, were published as “Ritual. Theatre. Performance” (1999), “Myth and Mystification” (2000), “Balagan. Part 1” (2002), “Balagan. Part 2” (2003), “Mask. Doll. Man” (2004), “Artist's Theatre” (2006), in which special attention was paid to carnival culture and comic genres of theatrical art. It can be said that “this laboratory greatly influenced the process of understanding and popularizing M.M. Bakhtin’s concept of folk-laughter culture, the peak of popularity of which came at the beginning of the 90s of the 20th century”⁴⁵⁸.

In the 1960s-70s of the 20th century, foreign theatre culture showed an increased interest in performative practices, which were centred on the postmodern body - the unpredictable, epathetic and performative body, which is an expression of ‘deviant subjectivity’⁴⁵⁹. Performativity in these practices was not a speech action represented in D. Austin's earlier interpretation of performativity, but a bodily non-referential action⁴⁶⁰. By performativity D. Butler understands the dramatic nature⁴⁶¹. Dramaticity gives the performer's bodily acts a special quality. D. Butler notes that although philosophers often draw associative parallels between action, theories of performativity and acting, they do not consider the culturally conditioned identity that requires the individual to have a certain stylisation in body and behaviour. Performative acts involve the stylization of non-verbal and

⁴⁵⁸ Semenova, E.A. (2019j). Ulichnyj teatr protiv teatra voennyh dejstvij... (Ob istoricheskikh osobennostyah formirovaniya sovremennogo ulichnogo teatra v Rossii) [Street theater vs. theater of military activities.... (On the historical peculiarities of the formation of modern street theater in Russia)]. *Akademicheskie tetradi*, 19. P. 150. (In Russ.).

⁴⁵⁹ Burke, E. (2003). *Celebrity anorexia: A semiotics of anorexia nervosa* [Unpublished Doctoral dissertation]. Monash University. P. 75.

⁴⁶⁰ Fisher-Likhte, E. (2015). *Estetika performativnosti* [The aesthetics of performativity] (N. Kandinskaya, Trans.). Moscow: Play&Play; Kanon+. P. 46. (In Russ.).

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.* P. 47.

verbal means of expression (bodily gestures, movements, appearance, voice, speech, etc.), creating the illusion of an “ideal” identity⁴⁶². The dramatic nature of the body lies in the fact that culture demands from it cyclically repeated performative behavior, subjecting it to the laws of fashion and style. As a result, the dual, masquerade existence of the body becomes the norm in society⁴⁶³.

E. Fischer-Lichte cites M. Abramović’s performance “Lips of Thomas” as an example of such dual performative behavior, in which, on the one hand, the audience found themselves in a situation of voluntary complicity in self-torture, the so-called excess of the performance artist's behavior. On the other hand, the spectators experienced anguish at the sight of such self-torture. Something similar can be observed in those theatrical performances where pathological corporeality inspires horror and at the same time has an incredible appeal. In this case we are not talking about the technique of desemantizing the action and deconstructing the performer’s character⁴⁶⁴, nor about transforming the performer's body with the help of artistic and non-artistic means, but about using the body as a sign that is distinguished by its otherness. The performances of Societas Raffaello Sanzio Theater Company serve as a vivid example. In 1998, in the performance “Julius Caesar”, the troupe of the Hebbel Theater in Berlin attracted the attention of the audience through the phenomenality of the actors' bodies, hypernaturalism, destroying the perception of the character⁴⁶⁵. Such postmodernist experiments with the body are extremely serious, as is the desire to fit the pathological body, far from the carnivalesque grotesque body, into the fabric of performance. In the language of J. Huizinga, this is a manifestation of the very puerilism inherent with youthful exuberance and infantilism.

⁴⁶² Butler, J. (1988). Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay phenomenology and feminist theory. *Theatre Journal*, 40(4), 519–531.

⁴⁶³ See: Semenova, E.A. (2020i). Ya ne hochu imet' kuklu — YA sama hochu byt' kukloj. Social'naya semiotika [performativnoj] anoreksii [I don't want to have a doll — I want to be a doll. Social semiotics of [performative] anorexia]. In G. L. Tulchinsky (Ed.), *Social semiotics: Points of growth* (pp. 63–67). Skifiya-print. (In Russ.).

⁴⁶⁴ Fisher-Likhte, E. (2015). *Estetika performativnosti* [The aesthetics of performativity] (N. Kandinskaya, Trans.). Moscow: Play&Play; Kanon+. P. 154. (In Russ.).

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.* P. 156.

The manifestation of puerilism includes the interlinking of art and the protest movement, which eliminates “differences, territorializes, segments and marks space, achieving uniformity among the masses through art”⁴⁶⁶. Examples of puerilism include the actions of the Viennese performance artists “on the eve of the May events in Paris, the Situationist International”⁴⁶⁷; the Austrian student movement SOS, representing the “organizational center for love-ins, sit-ins, street theater and Marxist, Freudian, Biblical and Hegelian circles”⁴⁶⁸. Activists of the SOS movement, who went on demonstration on May 1, 1968, were subjected to ill-treatment by the police⁴⁶⁹. Puerilism can be attributed to the Zock-fest held in Vienna on April 21, 1967, where incompatible artistic principles and actionist attitudes came into collision, leading to “a clash between the actors themselves and between the actors and the public”⁴⁷⁰. A type of puerilism includes “aggressive, provocative theater, political action theater and happening theater, ... street and square theater that broke down the walls of theater buildings”⁴⁷¹ in the form of such groups as SNCC Freedom Singers, The Living Theatre, Diggers, Guerrilla Art Action, etc., through which street theater began to take on political meaning. Such an aggressive introduction of street theater⁴⁷² into the public space often led to its rejection by citizens. The reason for the rejection of the street spectacle included “mistakes in direction or perception (although we can talk about a kind of interference, when the codes of a conventional performance or, conversely, a

⁴⁶⁶ Raunig, G. (2012). *Iskusstvo i revolyuciya: hudozhestvennyj aktivizm v dolgom dvadcatom veke* [Art and revolution — Transversal activism in the twentieth century] (A.V. Skidan & E.A. Shragi, Trans.). SPb: Izdatel'stvo evropejskogo universiteta v Sankt-Peterburge. P. 14. (In Russ.).

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid. P. 178.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid. P. 181.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid. P. 183.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid. P. 186.

⁴⁷¹ Shvydkoy, M.E. (1992). Piter Bruk i Ezhi Grotovskij. Opyt parallel'nogo issledovaniya [Peter Brook and Jerzy Grotowski. The experience of parallel research]. In *Theatre of Grotowski: Theatre, laboratory, experiences, meetings*. Moscow: GITIS. P. 112. (In Russ.).

⁴⁷² Calder, D. (2017). 2CV Théâtre: Transgression, nostalgia, and the negative space of French street theatre. *Theatre Journal*, 69(1). P. 6.

public action are superimposed on another type of practice)”⁴⁷³, as well as the fact that street theater culture was losing its laughter “negativity”.

To a greater extent, it is the seriousness of theatrical culture, and not laughter, as is commonly believed, that causes theatrical art to be “invited” into public spheres of life, and often to be ousted from them. What but the seriousness of the theater result in a situation where during the heyday and collapse of the Roman Empire⁴⁷⁴, “majestic theatrical buildings turned into sinister ruins”⁴⁷⁵? Why, when in 1564 in England the Bishop of London demanded the closure of theaters, the British government patronized street comedians, treating them quite loyally⁴⁷⁶?

In contrast to the provocative, aggressive, militant direction of street theater, represented by the work of peurilists, kidult artists show a predominantly ironic view of art and reality, representing a more mature psychological and age type. Kidults⁴⁷⁷ reflect on themselves. Their self-irony combines the features of “natural playfulness” and “psychological naivety”⁴⁷⁸; arising from the pleasure experienced from complex intellectual work. The self-reflection of kidults becomes the subject of creativity and the object of observation of the viewer. Kidults do not risk neurosis when they look at themselves from the outside. A similar disengagement,

⁴⁷³ Gordienko, E.I. (2022). Mezhdru vtorzheniem i sovместnym opytom k voprosu o vzaimootnoshenii spektaklei v publichnom prostranstve so sredoi [Between intervention and sharing: On the relationship of performances in public spaces to the milieu]. *Steps*, 8(1). Pp. 44–45. (In Russ.).

⁴⁷⁴ Dzhivelegov, A., & Boyadzhiev, G. (1941). *Istoriia zapadnoevropeiskogo teatra ot vozniknoveniia do 1789 goda* [History of Western European theater from its origins to 1789]. Moscow-Leningrad: Iskusstvo. P. 10. (In Russ.).

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid. P. 12.

⁴⁷⁶ Various sources evidence that in the first half of the 17th century in Russia, there was a struggle against skomorokhs. However, an essential detail should be mentioned here. This struggle was mainly waged by the church.

⁴⁷⁷ In the Oxford English Dictionary, the term Kidult means an adult who likes to make or buy things that are generally considered more appropriate for children. See: See: Daszykowska, J. (2018). Od kultu mlodości do stylu życia kidult. *Spoleczeństwo i Rodzina*, 54(1), 58–84. (In Polish)

⁴⁷⁸ Leites, N.S. (2008). *Vozrastnaia odarennost i individualnye razlichii: izbrannye trudy* [Age-related giftedness and individual differences: selected works]. Rossiiskaia akad. obrazovaniia. Moskovskii psikhologo-sots. in-t - 3-e izd. ispr. i dop. Moscow: Moskovskii psikhologo-sots. in-t; Voronezh: MODEK. P. 19. (In Russ.).

an ironic distance from one's mask, is found in clowns. On the one hand, the childish side of the kidalt reveals itself at the moment when he puts on an almost “clownish costume”; on the other hand, his guilty irony forms a sign of reflexion typical of an adult. Kidalt’s “two expressions of guilt and irony are merged, and it gives the impression of an adult's smile and a child’s smile at the same time: a child's smile is shy and guilty, while an adult's smile is ironic and condescending”⁴⁷⁹.

Kidalt demonstrates that “he is self-assessing”⁴⁸⁰. Kidalt's ludicrous debunking of himself organically completes the creative process. We observe a similar reflection in a child at the stage of growing up⁴⁸¹. Unlike the humorous self-denial of the kidalt, the self-denial of the puerilist is fraught with catastrophe, because at this moment the personality argues and seriously rejects itself.

The European theater culture was influenced by the work of the legendary European community “Fluxus”, whose manifesto stated that art was an extension of life. This community represents an unprecedented ironic attitude of an international association of artists of various art directions who have found the key to updating the art through self-irony and humour. Fluxus was an art movement that emerged after World War II in the West. Such famous artists as D. Higgins, W. Vostell, C. Freedman, A. Knowles, R. Watts, B. Vautier, Y. Ono, etc. worked in Fluxus. It is believed that Fluxus engendered such phenomena as happening, performance, action, and environment in modern art of the 20th century. During their actions the artists of this art direction intentionally put the audience in unusual situations: they could ask them to leave the theatre at the most interesting moment of the performance or invite them to take part in the creation of unique musical works, etc.⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ See: Kennedy, D. (1990). Fools, young children and philosophy. *Thinking: The Journal of Philosophy for Children*, 8(4), 2–6.

⁴⁸² See: Semenova, E.A. (2010). Anarhiya lyubvi v iskusstve. Uroki smekhovej kul'tury [The anarchy of love in art. Lessons of laughter culture]. *Pedagogika iskusstva*, 4, 305–316. (In Russ.).

To the direction of Kidalt artists can be attributed the work of Komar and Melamid, who committed a huge number of ironic actions, installations in the spirit of “social art”. One of their famous projects was the foundation of Komar and Melamid Inc. that bought and sold souls. Thousands of American souls were “sold” through this company. E. Warhol himself donated his immortal soul⁴⁸³ to the company. Characteristically, all souls were offered for sale in bird cages at this auction. Each soul had a certificate of authenticity.

Among the famous artists of the same direction can be distinguished T. Tezhik installed a four-meter high glass pyramid on Arbat, representing the construction of four pianos, with a building inside symbolizing socialism. A. Petlyura is known for such ironic actions as “One-on-one with capitalism”, “Snow Maidens do not die”, “Red Cross”. In the 1990s, A. Petlyura collected an impressive collection of clothes, things he got from rubbish dumps and disposal sites, believing that by driving these Old things through performances, installations, theatrical performances, he gave them a new life. The creative work of the group “Zvuki Mu” reflects the manifestation of self-irony, as one of the characteristic features of post-Soviet performance artists.

Engineering Theater AKHE, founded by “participants of the legendary Yes/No Theatre Group of Boris Ponizovsky: Maxim Isaev, Pavel Semchenko and Vadim Vasiliev”⁴⁸⁴ can be attributed to the intellectual, elitist direction of artists-kidalts, whose work is imbued with the spirit of postmodern irony. Of particular note is the work of the Terra Mobile Theater under the artistic direction of V. Mikheenko, who used in his work foreign street genres popular among teenagers and young people, such as rap and breakdancing, combining them with clowning and pantomime⁴⁸⁵.

⁴⁸³ In 1979, artists Komar and Melamid sold the soul of E. Warhol for thirty rubles at an auction in Moscow.

⁴⁸⁴ About AKHE. (In Russ.). Available at: <https://akhe.ru/ru/about/>. (Accessed: December 22, 2022.).

⁴⁸⁵ Terra Mobile – House streets (original, 1989). (In Russ.). Available at: https://vk.com/video-19636097_456239041?ysclid=lrbqz56ev4147334719. (Accessed: December 31, 2023.);

At this time, young representatives of the Russian theater acquainted with foreign street theater art. Director A. Moguchy admits that the “Mir-Caravane” was, of course, the real shock for him⁴⁸⁶. The director recalls: “The summer of 1989. I saw the Footsbarn Theatre of John Kilby, Theater of the Eighth Day, Dogtroep, and “Kosmos Kolei”... And it was already a powerful European injection – these traveling troupes, street theater, which we all fell ill with later (we all somehow went through the street). And we, as an amateur theater, were attached to the “Mir-Caravane” by The Leningrad Inter-Union House of Amateur Culture, according to Polunin's instructions, ... to fill the empty spaces. ... That is, the entire Central Park of Culture and Leisure was occupied by cool European and Russian theaters, and where the cool ones did not reach, there were us, young no-one-known people. And all this created the feeling of an incredible and universal holiday⁴⁸⁷.

In general, street theater culture of the second half of the twentieth century was in a state of transition from puerilism to kidaltism, developing in such directions as irony, humor and clowning. If the beginning of the 20th century was filled with naïve, almost childish enthusiasm for folk art forms, the second half of the 20th century was characterized by the accumulation of ironic potential in theatrical culture, as a consequence of the theatrical art’s disillusionment with itself, like a teenager expressing protest against adult norms and restrictions of their freedom.

The humorous and ironic direction of street art represented by the kidalts appears to have more points of intersection than with the serious art of the puerilists. Unlike the puerile artists, the kidalt artists were distinguished by the absence of “social infantilism”, freely shuffling and representing various age models, including childhood, adolescence, maturity and old age. In the second half

Markova, E.V. (1988, July 7). Strana dvizheniya [Country of movement]. *Smena*, 157, 4. (In Russ.).

⁴⁸⁶ The phenomenon of St. Petersburg independent theater of the 90s. *Theater*. Available at: <https://oteatre.info/fenomen-peterburgskogo-nezavisimogo-teatra-90-h/?ysclid=lub2masjik764972126>. (Accessed: December 12, 2023). (In Russ.).

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

of the last century, the street artist was in a position between a puerilist and a kidalt, because having gone through an unfortunate experience of combining a play and a serious provocation, he entered the phase of a laughing play with theatrical systems. The stage of irony can be considered a transitional stage from puerilism to kidaltism, which paved the way for the development of new neo-juvenile trends in street theater art, manifested in Russia at the end of 20th – beginning of 21st century as integration of the art of clowning and street theater.

2.5. The figure of the clown in the formation of neo-juvenal trends

In the 1980s, the number of experiments in street clowning was rapidly increasing in the world. Clowns J. Edwards, L. Bassi work on the street. At the end of the 1980s, the Licedei Theater began its creative career in Russia. The development of modern Russian street theater was significantly influenced by the art of clowning, represented by the work of V.I. Polunin. His numerous cultural and educational projects, including the school “Licedei-Lyceum” (1987), the “Street Theatres of the World” program (2001), the international traveling festival “Mir-Caravane”, the project “Fools on the Volga” (2003) and many others provoked a wave of interest among young people in the art of clowning.

The work of V.I. Polunin can be viewed from several positions. At the beginning of his career, Polunin was engaged in pantomime. Then, when he moves to the meta-professional level of mastering the art of pantomime, he becomes interested in the art of clowning, revealing the limitations of the first art form and the richness of the second one. Further, Polunin moves to the meta-level of ludicrous denial of clowning itself, equipped at that time with gags, prioritizing the inner world of his hero, for whom his dreams and fantasies are more important than the reality of today⁴⁸⁸. The same technique of professional metatheatrical

⁴⁸⁸ As cited in: Semenova, E.A. (2019g). Potencial karnaval'nyh vidov deyatel'nosti v formirovanii tvorcheskoj individual'nosti mladshih shkol'nikov [Potential of carnival activities in

humor is applied by Polunin to theatrical culture. Polunin turns to street theater, rejecting the classical canons of theater in a closed box. The theater opens up new areas in contemporary carnival to V.I. Polunin.

While the influence of clowning on contemporary street theater culture in Russia seems to be quite significant, a noteworthy detail is that this phenomenon is understood as different levels of its manifestation. It seems relevant to distinguish two main levels within one phenomenon: the level of art and the level of play. Adhering to this gradation, the role of clowning in modern street theatrical culture in Russia will be considered as a specialized, professional phenomenon (art) and a universal sign of ludicrous self-denial of the personality, inherent in all representatives of Homo Sapiens.

In various cultures, the word “clown” is often used as a derogatory or insulting term (“don't be a clown”, “you're a clown”), used as a negative characteristic of politicians, celebrities, entertainers and theater artists⁴⁸⁹. In “the community of professional clowns, on the contrary, the word 'fool' is the highest evaluation of skill and talent”⁴⁹⁰. The ambivalence of the clown figure can be exemplified in its presence in the sphere of hospital clowning⁴⁹¹ as a therapeutic

the formation of creative individuality of junior schoolchildren]. Moscow: Sam Poligrafist. P. 82 (In Russ.).

⁴⁸⁹ Caballero Vega, J.A. (2020). *Los dramas del Clown. Un acercamiento teórico a la dramaturgia del Clown* [The dramas of Clown. A theoretical approach to the dramaturgy of Clown]. National Autonomous University of Mexico. P. 18.

⁴⁹⁰ Semenova, E.A. (2020e). Kloun vs reper: (invektivy v onlajn i oflajn rep-poedinkah) [Clown vs rapper: Invectives in online and offline rap battles]. *Nauka televidenya*, 16(3). P. 92. (In Russ.).

⁴⁹¹ Vagnoli, L., Brauer, K., Addarii, F., Ruch, W., & Marangi, V. (2022). Fear of being laughed at in Italian healthcare workers: Testing associations with humor styles and coping humor. *Current Psychology*, 42, 18971–18981; Semenova, E.A. (2020d). Hospital clowning in the resocialization of adolescent girls and youth with health restrictions revista inclusiones. *Revista Inclusiones*, 7. P. 473. Available at: <https://revistainclusiones.org/pdf12/40%20VOL%207%20NUM%20ESPECIAL%20EUROASI A.pdf>. (Accesed: June 8, 2023); Semenova, E. A. (2021f). The literary genre of a “Diary of Anorexia”: Aspects of artistic semiotics and the practice of thanatology. *Southern Semiotic Review*, 14. P. 29, 35. Available at: https://www.southernsemioticreview.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Semenova_Issue-14_2_2021-SSR.pdf. (Accesed: June 5, 2023).

and prophylactic tool and a trigger for coleurophobia⁴⁹²; its embodiment in the image of a monster in cinema and a touching crank in the circus arena.

In films “Joker” by T. Phillips; “Terrifier” by D. Leone; “Killer Klowns from Outer Space” by S. Chiodo; “Payasos” by M. Vega; “ClownTown” by T. Nagel; “It” by A. Muschietti; “Clown” by J. Watts, “Gacy” by C. Saunders, “In the Presence of a Clown” by I. Bergman, the image of the clown shocks the viewers with its unpredictability, contradiction, and infernality. In the films of F. Fellini, Ch. Chaplin, the clown, on the contrary, causes affection, sympathy and love of the audience.

In autobiographical books⁴⁹³, memoirs and fiction, the image of the clown is often tinged with lyrical, nostalgic notes of subjective experiences of the authors. Such is the image of the clown in the books “My Amazing Life” by Ch. Chaplin, “The Alchemy of Snow” by V.I. Polunin and N.E. Tabachnikova, “Total Clowning” by T. Terentyeva, “The Invisible Clown: How to Not Be Afraid of Being Yourself” by M. Usov, “The Way of the Clown. History of Laughter Therapy” by V. Olshansky, “The Heart in Sawdust” by V.A. Kulakov and others. In cultural and philosophical studies, the clown is very diverse. Clown is called the successor of the carnival jester and heir to the trickster; the spirit of disorder; the disturber of the peace; the proto-human; the personified stage of death; the sign of aristocratic acting vocation; the peacemaker-outsider; the artist who entertains the public with jokes, and so on.

Before proceeding to a more detailed consideration of the role of the clowning art in contemporary street theater culture in Russia, let us turn to the history of the origin of the word “clown” itself. The lexeme “clown” comes from the Latin words “colonus” and “clod”. Both terms mean a peasant, a villager, as well as a person who came to the city from the countryside. R. Croft-Cooke and

⁴⁹² Meiri, N., Schnapp, Z., Ankri, A., Nahmias, I., Raviv, A., Sagi, O., Hamad Saied, M., Konopnicki, M., & a Pillar, G. (2017). Fear of clowns in hospitalized children: prospective experience. *European Journal of Pediatrics*, 176(2). P. 270.

⁴⁹³ Garin, M. (2022). On Nintendo’s visual humour: Slapstick cinema and comic theatre in Super Smash Bros. In K. Bonello Rutter Giappone, T. Z. Majkowski, & J. Švelch (Eds.), *Video games and comedy* (pp. 93–112). Palgrave Macmillan.

P. Cotes connect the origin of the word “clown” with the Scandinavian word ‘klunni’, which means rude. The term “clown” is a relative of the Danish word ‘kluntet’, meaning a clumsy, incapable of doing anything, person who came from the countryside to the city and become a laughing stock for city dwellers⁴⁹⁴.

The first circus clowns parodied the villagers. In English, one of the meanings of the word “clown” is associated with an actor prone to acting out comedy scenes. M. Garin notes that the Japanese drama of sarugaku developed from casual entertainment, close to humor. Sarugaku is usually written in hieroglyphics and means “monkey”, that is, entertainment related to the more ancient Chinese term “sangaku” (casual entertainment), which included various circus numbers and genres of street theater (walking on stilts, juggling, eating fire). At the Japanese court at the end of the 9th century, sangaku began to include comic acts. By the mid-tenth century, the comic element became dominant, as sarugaku denoted foolish behavior that made people laugh against their will. According to Miyamoto, sarugaku may have originated from fun games in which humor is a mood and opportunity rather than a predetermined goal⁴⁹⁵.

J. Caballero draws attention to the fact that all existing definitions of the clown to one degree or another focus on the comic psychophysics of the actor, similar to the facial expressions and plasticity of the character presented by him⁴⁹⁶. Shakespearean scholars who study the actors of the Globe Theater Armin and Kemp consider them to be prototypical clown types in Shakespeare’s plays. In the Dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy, the word “clown” is associated with the Italian word “payaso” and its two meanings. The first meaning is a frivolous person who is inclined to laugh at his statements or actions. The second meaning

⁴⁹⁴ Caballero Vega, J.A. (2020). *Los dramas del Clown. Un acercamiento teórico a la dramaturgia del Clown* [The dramas of Clown. A theoretical approach to the dramaturgy of Clown]. National Autonomous University of Mexico. P. 14.

⁴⁹⁵ Garin, M. (2022). On Nintendo’s visual humour: Slapstick cinema and comic theatre in Super Smash Bros. In K. Bonello Rutter Giappone, T. Z. Majkowski, & J. Švelch (Eds.), *Video games and comedy* (pp. 93–112). Palgrave Macmillan.

⁴⁹⁶ Caballero Vega, J. A. (2020). *Los dramas del Clown. Un acercamiento teórico a la dramaturgia del Clown* [The dramas of Clown. A theoretical approach to the dramaturgy of Clown]. National Autonomous University of Mexico. P. 17.

refers to the circus artist, who, with his play, causes the audience to laugh. The British Encyclopaedia defines clown as an actor who specializes in performing comic characters. It is noteworthy that the dictionary of V.I. Dahl does not contain the word “clown”, but it contains the word “jester”, one of the definitions of which, along with the amuser, mentions a clown, acting as a type of jester's professional activity. The word “clown” began to be used in Russia as a whole relatively late, in the 19th century. In Russian dictionary, the definitions of the word “clown” feature its connection with buffoonery. In the dictionary of S.I. Ozhegov, this phenomenon is understood as an art of acting based on comic techniques, jokes and buffoonery, “as a transformation of the classical form of acting behavior.”

Summarizing the above definitions of the clown can reveal its main characteristics. *The first characteristic* is associated with the definition of a clown as a native of the countryside, who becomes an object of derision by urban dwellers. *The second feature* indicates a professional quality, a comic gift distinguishing a person in a professional acting environment by his ability to depict comic characters. *In the third case*, we are dealing with a person inclined to ridicule others. Another valuable characteristic of a clown refers to a person who tends to laugh at himself. Next, using a cross-cultural method of analysis, consider the connotations of the figure of a clown, tracing their consistence with or divergence from its etymological characteristics.

To date, no single version regarding the time of occurrence of the clowning phenomenon has been formed. D. Fo believed that clowns were found everywhere in different cultures since ancient times. D. Townsend argues that shamanic characters similar to clowns already existed in the ancient Chinese and Egyptian empires around 2000 BC⁴⁹⁷. According to the professor of the University of Strasbourg, the mythologist B.L. Ogibenin, the ritual clown belonged to the “society of opposers”, whose anti-normative actions were considered almost shamanic, priestly in their status, possessing healing properties. The word “clown” was first used in the 16th century in England during the time of Shakespearean

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid. Pp. 45–46.

theater to refer to an actor playing a comic character in the plays of the time, whose character was based on stupidity and the ability to get into trouble⁴⁹⁸.

M. Bársony believes that clowns, jesters – comedians are found in almost all cultures. It was clowns and jesters, in his opinion, who made a significant contribution to the development of early theater and literary drama⁴⁹⁹. In particular, Hamlet features two clowns (like a pair of White and Red) playing the role of gravediggers. According to Bársony, the word “clown” is apparently not a suitable term for a historian, since it resists any normative-historical classification, valorization and hierarchization⁵⁰⁰. M. Barsony proposes to see in the clown a mediator between the theatrical and carnival worlds; the embodiment of one of the main signs of the theatrical semiotic system; a figure creating sources of bifurcation in the theatrical space; a transfer capable of transporting us to the world of laughter, that is, into the space of nonsense⁵⁰¹.

G. Litsziun in the study devoted to the analysis of the peculiarities of lexical representation of the image of “laughing man”⁵⁰², comes to the conclusion that the meaning of the word clown is much wider than the definition offered in explanatory dictionaries, in which it is defined as “a circus artist performing comic and satirical numbers”⁵⁰³. Having turned to the analysis of contexts found in the national corpus of the Russian language, in which the word clown appears, the author concludes that they show “the loss of one of the semantic components limiting professional activity to a specific place of work”⁵⁰⁴. G. Litsziun proposes to expand the dictionary definition of clown, add to it the definition of a person who professionally entertains people.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid. P.13.

⁴⁹⁹ Bársony, M. (2016). *Shakespeare's clown the decarnivalization of the World in three of his dramas*. Doctoral dissertation, Eötvös Loránd University. ELTE Digital Institutional Repository. P. 55.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid. P. 53.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid. P. 60.

⁵⁰² Litsziun, G. (2019). “Chelovek, kotoryj smeyotsya”: reprezentaciya obraza v russkom yazyke [“Person that laughs”: Representation of the notions in the Russian language]. *Bulletin of Moscow Region State University. Series: Russian philology*, 4. P. 23. (In Russ.).

⁵⁰³ Ibid. P. 25.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

J. Baudrillard draws an analogy between jesters, dead people and village fools, who “have all played, relatively speaking, the same role as agents of symbolic ferment”⁵⁰⁵. A. Hocart believes that “buffoonery and harlequinade are so often associated with death in different parts of the world that whenever we encounter ritualized buffoonery, it is necessary to find out whether death (real or mystical) is somewhere nearby, and whether the spirits of the dead are involved in what is happening”⁵⁰⁶. Indeed, the entire mythology of the clown’s ancestors preserves the memory of him as a dead but constantly rising hero. These are the myths about Trickster, Dionysus, Petrushka, Harlequin. R. Hornback finds a combination of two hypostases in a fool: a clown as a person laughed at by a jester, and a jester⁵⁰⁷ who laughs at a clown. This point of view is largely shared by I.P. Uvarova, believing that like jesters, “showmen, not subject to disease or any abnormality, often imitated their sick colleagues”⁵⁰⁸.

According to S. Ivanov, the sacred Indian clown is close to the holy fool by his excessive behavior, since “he evokes ambivalent feelings – like the holy fool... he acts in reality”⁵⁰⁹. D.S. Likhachev, A.M. Panchenko, N.V. Ponyrko in their work “Laughter in Ancient Russia” consider the phenomenon of foolishness in the categories of carnival culture, buffoonery. However, this interpretation met with serious criticism from N. Rostova, who insisted that “the laughter of the holy fool consists not in laughter, not in foolishness and buffoonery, ... but in something

⁵⁰⁵ Baudrillard, J. (2000). *Symbolic exchange and death*. Dobrosvet. (Originally published in French 1976). (In Russ.). P. 298.

⁵⁰⁶ As cited in: Kozintsev, A.G. (2002b). Foma i Erema Maks i Morits Bivis i Batkhed triksterskie shutovskie klounskie pary v trekh kulturakh [Foma and Eryoma; Max and Moritz; Beavis and Butthead: Trickster (jester, clown) pairs in three cultures]. In A. G. Kozintzev (Ed.), *Laughter: Origins and functions* (pp. 186–210). SPb.: Nauka. (In Russ.).

⁵⁰⁷ Hornback, R.B. (2004). The Fool in Quarto and Folio King Lear. *English Literary Renaissance*, 34(3). P. 309.

⁵⁰⁸ Uvarova, I.P. (2018). *Povest' ob odnom domike* [A story about one house]. Moscow: A.A. Bakhrushin State Central Theatre Museum. P. 22. (In Russ.).

⁵⁰⁹ Ivanov, S.A. (2005). *Blazhennye pokhaby: Kulturnaia istoriia iurodstva* [The blessed lewd men: A cultural history of the holy foolishness]. Moscow: Yazyki slavyanskikh kul'tur. 448 p. (In Russ.).

else, namely, in the ontological foundations of the feat of foolishness”⁵¹⁰. In M. Lipovetsky’s concept of tricksterization of the Soviet and post-Soviet era, the clown, like the jester and the holy fool, acts as a later cultural type of the folklore model of the trickster. Each of these cultural models differs from the others and from its source – the trickster as a mythological hero – and yet they are all united by a certain set of “common signifiers” (marginality; cunning; homelessness; ambivalence of status and actions resulting from their liminality; lack of social identity; mimicry and alienation from the socio-cultural context through parodic and transgressive theatrical (artistic) gestures⁵¹¹. In general, Lipovetsky considers the trickster in the plane of oral folklore (in particular, anecdote); in the example of real personalities; and in the mythology created by Soviet cinematic art, emphasizing internal artistry as the main distinguishing feature of the Soviet and post-Soviet image of the trickster. Yu.G. Akopian, like M. Lipovetsky, places the clown on a par with tricksters, jesters and fools, considering it as a stage of “the genesis of comic characters in the cultures of the world”, but reveals some related signs based on “imitation of physical and mental insufficiency and failure for the purpose of grassroots testing of culture”⁵¹². R. Weihe refers jesters, tricksters, zannies, comedians, buffoons, vagabonds, circus artists to clowns⁵¹³. B. Otto sees the jester as a figure close to clowns, fools, histrions⁵¹⁴.

⁵¹⁰ Rostova, N. (2010). *Chelovek obratnoj perspektivy (Opyt filosofskogo osmysleniya fenomena yurodstva Hrista radi)* [Experience of philosophical comprehension of the phenomenon of foolishness for Christ’s sake]. Moscow: MGIU. Pp. 81–82. (In Russ.).

⁵¹¹ Lipovetsky, M. (2011). *Charms of the cynical reason: The trickster’s transformations in Soviet and post-Soviet culture*. Academic Studies. Pp. 18–19.

⁵¹² Akopian, Yu.G. (2005). Stroenie smeshnogo [The structure of humorous]. In Y. K. Chistov (Ed.), *Proceedings of 6th Congress of Ethnographers and Anthropologists of Russia, St. Petersburg, June 28–July 2*. SPb.: MAE RAS, 2005. P. 82. (In Russ.).

⁵¹³ See: Blanche, B. (2017). Richard Weihe (Hg.): *Über der Clown: Künstlerische und theoretische Perspektiven* Bielefeld: transcript 2016 (Edition Kulturwissenschaft, Bd.77). 284 p. *MEDIENwissenschaft*, 2. P. 232.

⁵¹⁴ Otto, B. (2001). *Fools are everywhere: The court jester around the world*. University of Chicago Press.

O.M. Freidenberg sees clowns as doubles of the hero, who is in a symbolic stage of death⁵¹⁵. Mime, as Freidenberg notes, “is an archaic form of folklore theater, which is ‘much older than the new comedy’”. “The main actor in the mime is a jester, wearing a harlequin robe of motley patches, with a cape thrown over the top, with a red phallus attached; he is a fool and a glutton, with a bald skull, uttering, like a circus fool, political witticisms and personal attacks”⁵¹⁶. A.N. Veselovsky speaks similarly to O.M. Freidenberg, noting that the Greco-Roman mimes “were organized in troupes, collegia, headed by the archimime (a title mentioned since the time of Sulla) with the main actor and the amuser who mimicked words and actions, like a contemporary clown”⁵¹⁷.

M.M. Bakhtin noted the immortality of comic heroes (Pullicinella, Harlequin, Petrushka), who, unlike heroic-tragic masks, have the right not only to choose fate, but also to change fates and their scenarios. In “Epic and Novel,” Bakhtin reflects on comic heroes who are in an eternal phase of becoming, rebirth, and dying. Such are the performers of the lazzi in Commedia de l'arte, in which the comic hero was not constrained by the plot. It was the clown who was allowed “laughter excesses” to reveal “his uncomplicated, but inexhaustible human face”⁵¹⁸. P.L. Murray believes that as a result of the destruction of the institution of carnival, and the failure to fit into the confines of the theatrical box, clowns once looked for the street. Therefore, according to Murray, in the 21st century the contemporary clown seeks to arrange a carnival in the street, treating real places as stages⁵¹⁹. V.I. Polunin believes that historically, clowns developed in three

⁵¹⁵ Freidenberg, O.M. (1997). *Poetika siuzheta i zhanra* [Poetics of plot and genre]. Moscow: Labirint. P. 53. (In Russ.).

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.* P. 179.

⁵¹⁷ As cited in: Vlasova, Z.I. (2001). *Skomorokhs and folklore*. Aleteiya. (In Russ.).

⁵¹⁸ Bakhtin, M.M. (1975). *Voprosy literatury i estetiki. Issledovaniya raznykh let* [Literature and aesthetics. Studies of different years]. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura. P. 479. (In Russ.).

⁵¹⁹ Murray, P.L. (2016). The contemporary fool: Facilitating participation and resistance in the 21st century. In I. Ristić & V. Ilić (Eds.), *Theatre within the context... And not just theatre* (pp. 102–109). Hop.La! P. 106.

directions: jester, skomorokh and god's fool. Yu.E. Berezkin considers the trickster as a series of episodes and motifs present in folklore texts⁵²⁰.

Therefore, the clown takes an intermediate position between a real person, a folklore hero and an artistic image. While all the interpretations of the clown figure emphasize its laughter essence, they do not provide a provable explanation of the specifics of the clown's laughter. The authors do not explain the main difference between the clown as an artistic image in art pieces and the clown as a sign of the playful self-denial of the personality at the behavioral and psychological level. This gives reason to take a closer look at studies with the figure of the clown considered in the context of theories that are not limited to the framework of art. Such theories include theories of laughter, revealing the primary meaning of the phenomenon of "clown" and its subsequent deconstruction and decarnivalization in the system of works of art. Before analyzing them, it should be noted that they are numerically insignificant.

The array of autobiographical and fiction literature devoted to clowns significantly exceeds the number of studies of the laughter nature of the clown. Such studies include the book *The Semiotics of Clowns and Clowning: Rituals of Transgression and the Theory of Laughter* by P. Bouissac published in 2015, which attempts to analyze the phenomenon of clowning on the basis of theories of laughter⁵²¹. The review of this book by V. Tsakona reveals advantages of the book as well as its significant drawback. The reviewer finds unconvincing the author's attempts to link the analysis of the clown figure with theoretical approaches to laughter, since it fails to explain which aspects of laughter are related to the nature

⁵²⁰ Berezkin, Yu.E. (2014). Zoomorfnye trikstery: zakonomernosti areal'nogo raspredeleniya [Zoomorphic tricksters: Patterns of areal distribution]. In M.A. Rodionov (Ed.), *Bestiary III. Zoomorphisms in the traditional universe* (pp. 29–42). SPb.: Muzei antropologii i etnografii im. Petra Velikogo (Kunstkamera). SPb: RAN. (In Russ.).

⁵²¹ Bouissac, P. (2015). *The semiotics of clowns and clowning: Rituals of transgression and the theory of laughter*. Bloomsbury. 218 p.

of the clown⁵²². In his review of this book, A. Sampietro notes some inconclusiveness of the review of laughter theories presented in the book⁵²³.

More recently, in 2020, a book by J. A. Caballero Vega was published on the styles of clown drama. The author devoted a separate chapter to the consideration of clowning in terms of laughter theories. Unfortunately, we consider this chapter as perhaps the weakest place in the book theoretically, since the author lists the concepts of H. Bergson, Ch. Baudelaire, S. Freud, being quite outdated from the perspective of contemporary laughter researchers, and also gives subjective points of view on the laughter of clown practitioners⁵²⁴.

Individual books, chapters and articles by authors devoted to the laughter of the clown, for all their merits, do little to clarify the specifics of the laughter nature of the clown and fail to explain the role of the figure in the formation of neo-juvenal tendencies of contemporary street theater. Research that examines the origins, the evolution of human humor from primitive forms of game aggression to individualized aestheticized forms of comic art can probably answer this question. Humor have come a long way of evolutionary development but was nevertheless attacked by serious art forms which promoted such varieties of clowning as anarchic, poetic-romantic, political, tragic, tragicomic, etc.

With this in mind, we turn next to a review of studies on the humorous nature of the clown. Despite the fact that Jean Paul considered a jester, not a clown, he was one of the first to give the jester the status of humor personified⁵²⁵. L. Pesok makes a convincing attempt to consider the clown figure with respect to the nature of humor. The author even puts in the title of his book *Paper Clown or*

⁵²² Tsakona, V. (2016). Bouissac, Paul (2015). *The Semiotics of Clowns and Clowning: Rituals of Transgression and the Theory of Laughter*. Bloomsbury Advances in Semiotics. London: Bloomsbury, 218 p. [Book review]. *European Journal of Humour Research*, 4(1). P. 124.

⁵²³ Sampietro, A. (2016). The semiotics of clown and clowning: Rituals of Rituals of Transgression and the theory of laughter. Paul Bouissac (2015) London and New York: Bloomsbury [Book review]. *Sociolinguistic Studies*, 10(3), 497–498.

⁵²⁴ Caballero Vega, J. A. (2020). *Los dramas del Clown. Un acercamiento teórico a la dramaturgia del Clown* [The dramas of Clown. A theoretical approach to the dramaturgy of Clown]. National Autonomous University of Mexico. P. 81.

⁵²⁵ Jean Paul. (1981). *Preparatory school of aesthetics*. Iskusstvo. (Originally published in German 1804). (In Russ.). P. 179.

the Fourth Person Singular a formulation of humor from “The Logic of Sense” by G. Deleuze. However, the author’s narrative is closer to a fictional work than a theoretical study.

Adherents of the popular semantic approach to humor try to explain the connection between the clown and the nature of humor. An article by A. Jürgens, devoted to a review of articles in a specialized issue of the journal *Comic Studies*, can serve as evidence. The authors of the articles discuss the ways in which clowns break the boundaries of art and reality, adhering to the traditional view of clowns as relatives of the trickster which embody the energy of transgression, personifying the ambivalence of the sacred and the temporal, the sublime and the grotesque, the terrible and the hideous. A. Jürgens argues that the humor and horror caused by a violent clown reveal structural similarities and can be equally well interpreted with the notion of mismatch. The author relies on the semantic theory of humor⁵²⁶ generally accepted in foreign studies, believing that it clarifies how humor and violence are combined in a clown⁵²⁷.

A brief review of the studies devoted to the clown's humor shows that humor is either mentioned but not theoretically conceptualized, or it is considered within a very limited semantic paradigm. In light of all the above, the previously discussed interdisciplinary theory of laughter and humor by A.G. Kozintsev not only exposes the problem of the impossibility of interpreting the clown figure within the framework of traditional semantic⁵²⁸ theories of humor, but also challenges many theatrical studies of the clown figure, giving substantial grounds to doubt the legitimacy of limiting the phenomenon of clowning to the framework of a work of fiction or classical definitions of comic and comedy. In this case, the figure of the clown acts as a non-serious meta-relationship of the subject to his/her attitude to something/someone, with the clown acting as a sign of non-seriousness.

⁵²⁶ Attardo, S. (2020). *The linguistics of humor*. Oxford University Press.

⁵²⁷ Jürgens, A.-S. (2019). Violent clown artists between Science & Art. *w/k—Between Science & Art Journal*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.55597/e5248>. (Accessed: August 1, 2023).

⁵²⁸ Attardo, S. (2020). *The linguistics of humor: An introduction*. Oxford University Press. P. 136–156.

The thesis that humoristic reflexion is based not on the confrontation between the real world and the artistic world, but on the voluntary “total self-denial of the subject”⁵²⁹, in which “the object of the humorous meta-relationship is not reality, but the subject’s feelings, thoughts, and words relating to this reality”⁵³⁰ gives reason not to limit the clown to the framework of the theatrical art image. That is why any creative process associated with the identification of oneself with the object of attention, love, etc., should be alternated with disidentification – a temporary “anesthesia of feelings”, due to which the personality begins to “reflex over their reflexion”.

Taking into account the theoretical provisions of the evolutionary theory of laughter and humor, we conducted an anonymous pilot questionnaire aimed at studying the peculiarities of the use of imagery and clowning techniques by street theater actors in their professional activities. The questionnaire enrolled actors and heads of Russian street theaters. The list of questions in the questionnaire included the following: Did you have any nicknames as a child? If yes, please name the ones you liked. Do you have any nicknames now? Has the comic image ever helped you in your professional activities? If you were called a clown, would you take it as an insult; take offense; take it condescendingly; take it as a compliment, etc.? The answers of street theater actors who have professional acting education and experience as clowns reveal a desire to associate a clown with the highest evaluation of their professional activity. At the same time, respondents discern no difference between a clown as an actor's mask and a clown as a fictitious image generated by humorous reflection. Many respondents are confused by other people's representation of a clown, while their own representation of a clown is protected from external eyes, being in the innermost zone. The concepts of character, mask and clown are highly correlated in the responses of street theater

⁵²⁹ Morreall, J. (2010). Alexander Kosintsev. The mirror of laughter. New Brunswick NJ: Transaction, 2010. 220 pp [Book review]. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 26(1). P. 191.

⁵³⁰ Kozintsev, A.G. (2007). *Chelovek i smekh* [Man and laughter]. SPb.: Aleteiya. P. 40. (In Russ.).

actors. The peculiarity of the reaction of street theater actors to clown figure implies that the clown is considered by them as an invisible, frivolous interlocutor.

To the question “Did you have any nicknames as a child?” 50% of respondents answered that they had or have nicknames, invented by their relatives and friends. The question “Do you have moments in your life when you want to feel like a child?” divided opinions. Some answered that they often feel the desire to return to childhood. Others, on the contrary, consider childhood to be a tedious period. Still others believe that they feel like a child all the time. To the question “Have you had situations in your life when you were subjected to malicious ridicule by your peers, colleagues?” some respondents answered that they practiced using supportive jokes that lowered their own status. Some responses to the question “Who is a ‘Hospital Clown’ for you?” implied that a hospital clown is understood as a creative person, as well as someone who hides behind the red nose of a clown without being one. Most of the respondents’ answers to the question “Have you ever had a desire to commit an act that would surprise you?” were positive. The respondents named Panurge, Till Eulenspiegel, Puss in Boots, Murzilka, etc. among their favorite comic characters. One of the artistic directors of the street theater explained that figurative personification for him is an effective method of overcoming problems by realizing that everything that happens is not happening to you. The respondent noted that the character (the invisible mask) always turns out to be smarter and braver than you yourself, since it exists in a certain archetypal situation in which courage and play perform a protective function. Respondents were asked to answer the question “If you were called a clown, would you (a) take it as an insult; (b) take offense; (c) take it condescendingly; (d) take it as a compliment, (e) your option?” The answers of drama teachers were very different from the answers of the street theater managers. The former preferred not to consider themselves clowns, favoring jesters, explaining that clown is a profession, and jester is a fatality. To the question “Have you ever watched a circus clown communicate with children during his performance (act)? What characteristic features of this communication could you

highlight?” the most critical answers were received from the street theater managers, who noted such negative aspects of the circus clown’s communication with children as an abundance of clichés and stamps, falsity, lack of real interest in playing with a child, mechanically learned performance.

The respondents attributed the immediate reaction to what is happening, charm and paradoxical thinking to the positive manifestations of a clown. Among the most professional clowns were L. Réber, L. Brusco, C. Mo, V. Polunin, L. Bassi, J. Edwards, etc. Most often clowning techniques are used at the visual level (objects, makeup, costume, masks). In creating an image, street actors use clown masks, one of the stylistic artistic means of expression. Russian street theaters working in a clowning style include *Theatre-EX*, *Kotorogo Theatre*, *Comic-Trust Theatre Company*, *Mikos Clown Theatre*, *Pampush Clown Theater*, *Tall Brothers Street Theater* and many others. V.I. Polunin’s creative initiatives contributed to the formation of neo-juvenile tendencies in the Russian street theater culture, guiding street theater towards humorous metareflection. Theater critics and circus historians reasonably note that “the acuteness of social and political statements peculiar to street theater”⁵³¹ abroad is almost completely absent in modern Russian street theatre.

In the process of studying the cultural and historical features of the formation of modern street theater in Russia, five main factors that influenced its genesis were identified. *The first factor* involves the culture of mummering, tracing back to archaic forms of imitation of animals and spirits of the dead. Mimicry into the sphere of street theater in the form of zoomorphic characters and infernal masks, the mummer’s play contributes to the balance of post-figurativity and pre-figurativity in contemporary Russian street theater. The institution of childhood,

⁵³¹ See: Selezneva-Reder, I. (2023b, August 26). Ulice zakon ne pisan. O festivale ulichnyh teatrov “Elagin park”, prohodivshem s 28 po 30 iyulya v Sankt-Peterburge [The law does not apply to the street. About the festival of street theaters “Elagin Park” held from July 28 to 30 in St. Petersburg]. *Peterburskii teatral’nyi zhurnal*. (In Russ.). Available at: <https://ptj.spb.ru/blog/ulice-zakon-ne-pisan/>. (Accessed: October 8, 2023).

which was actively formed in Russia throughout the 20th century, forms the second *factor* that influenced the child-centered play of the actor of contemporary street theater in Russia. *The third factor*, which contributed to a certain carnival potential in the theater culture, is connected with the steady interest of theater actors in popular laughter, farcical forms of culture. *The fourth factor* is associated with the transition of Soviet-Russian street artists in the later 20th century to the stage of kidaltism, when street theater art entered the phase of laughter play with theatrical systems. *The fifth factor*, which promoted neo-juvenile tendencies in Russian street theater culture, consists in the art of clowning, restoring the biocultural balance of laughter and seriousness, lost in the second half of the last century, directing street theater towards humorous and carnival metareflection⁵³². Passing through the stages of puerilism, agonality, and laughter self-denial comprise the peculiarities of the genesis of contemporary street theater art in Russia.

⁵³² See: Semenova, E.A. (2019a). A clown's laughter specificity: From "anesthesia of heart" to "synesthesia of love". *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 11(2). P. 6. Available at: <http://rupkatha.com/V11/n2/v11n220.pdf>. (Accessed: December 12, 2023); Semenova, E.A. (2023b). Teorii yumora v izuchenii figury klouna [The theories of humour in the study of the clown figure]. *Art & Culture Studies*, 1. Pp. 41–42. (In Russ.).

Chapter 3. Street theatre as a recreational space

Recreation in the broad sense is currently understood as “compensatory recovery of stamina used up by a person in the process of labor activity, as well as the building of a certain reserve of stamina for further activity in the interests of preserving and increasing physical and intellectual potential”⁵³³. Recreations are subdivided into cultural, social, rehabilitation, health-improving, sports and others.

3.1. Laughter recreation (online and offline communities of actors)

A separate group of recreations includes laughter recreations. M.M. Bakhtin refers “school and university recreations” to this group. They were a subject to “all the festive privileges established by tradition for laughter, jokes, material and bodily life”⁵³⁴.

According to a work hypothesis, communities of street theatre actors are predictors preventing possible negative scenarios of street theatre culture development by carnivalising regional images of the professional identity of a street theatre actor. These communities of street actors can be classified as laughter communities, as they are subject to festive privileges. Contemporary street actor communities represent recreations that create “practical forms of street theatre in everyday and festive life”⁵³⁵. Due to the fact that street theatre in Russia forms a new festive chronotope, its creators receive certain preferences in the field of their

⁵³³ Kolesnik, E.L. (2013). Sotsialno-kulturnaia sushchnost i osnovnye funktsii rekreatsii [Socio-cultural essence and main functions of recreation]. *Historical and Social-Educational Idea*, 1, 191. (In Russ.).

⁵³⁴ Bakhtin, M.M. (1990). *Tvorchestvo Fransua Rable i narodnaya kul'tura srednevekov'ya i Renaissance* [The works of François Rabelais and the folk culture of the Middle Ages and Renaissance]. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura. 541 p. (In Russ.).

⁵³⁵ Fedorenko, T.N. (2016). Opyt prochteniiia traditsii srednevekovogo ulichnogo teatra v kontekste gradoobrazovaniia i upravleniia gorodskimi poseleniiami v perevode A. Gazo [Medieval street theatre traditions in the context of hail formation and urban settlement management in A. Gazost's interpretation]. *Theatre. Fine Arts. Cinema. Music*, 2, 59–64. (In Russ.).

professional activity, part of which is laughter behaviour. Communication among members of street theatre actor communities allows rather harsh, offensive forms of teasing, ironic, *ironic reworkings of self-names*, slang, cross-dressing, pranks, vibe-producing jokes. T.B. Shchepanskaya characterizes the quasi-family matrix of youth culture as a nuclear structure⁵³⁶ with the father-leader in the center; the keeper as a *concentration of symbols*. Ethnographers and historians identify a family matrix when exploring the phenomenon of banter-avoidance between relatives, as well as normative (banter relations, ritual laughter behavior, ritual clowning), spontaneous laughter behavior in traditional societies and in contemporary urban cultures (interpersonal and intergroup banter).

T.B. Shchepanskaya's theory of anthropology of professions suggests that the profession of street theater actor strictly requires gaining knowledge, mastering the norms and acquiring skills in a casual way, in the process of communication with colleagues – mentors, teachers, employees. Professional and personal development of a street theater actor involves an informal component in transmitting knowledge, skills, experience, i.e., elements of everyday life, personally related to their professional activities, being relevant and reproduced in the context of this activity. Presumably, informal tradition of street theater actors is not based on the structure of professional environment as a whole (including a structure of official street theater organizations), but, rather, on informal structures within it. According to T.B. Shchepanskaya, “an indicator of belonging of this or that observed phenomenon to the *field of tradition* consists in the sign-related character (i.e., recorded cases of its interpretation as a sign in the studied environment) and stereotypization (which indicates reproducibility, i.e. inclusion in the scope of tradition as a mechanism of reproduction of cultural forms)”⁵³⁷.

“Professional culture is assimilated in the process of training, and its content

⁵³⁶ Shchepanskaya, T.B. (1993). *Simvolika molodyozhnoj subkul'tury: Opyt etnograficheskogo issledovaniya Sistemy, 1986-1989 gg.* [Symbolism of youth subculture: Experience of ethnographic study of the System, 1986–1989]. SPb: Nauka. 340 p. (In Russ.).

⁵³⁷ Shchepanskaya, T.B. (2004). *Sistema: teksty i traditsii subkul'tury* [System: texts and traditions of the subculture]. M.: OGI. P. 34.

comprises the norms, officially broadcast and proclaimed to constitute the ideology of the profession”,⁵³⁸ accordingly, the professional tradition of street theater in this case will be understood as the subculture of street theater, contradicted in a certain way with the professional culture. It is leading to its emergence as a laughter recreation within the professional (official) culture of street theater.

In the course of the study, a comparative analysis of two types of laughter recreation of acting communities was carried out: online recreation and online/offline. In one case, laughter online recreation is created in the process of humorous Internet communication of street theater figures. In the other case, laughter online recreation is a product of comic digital creativity of street theater figures in the field of their Internet presentation. Online/offline laughter recreation involves participation in communication of street theater representatives in live and virtual communication. The presentation of theater groups in this type of recreation also appears in a mixed format: digital and offline.

Despite the fact that studies of the role of Internet communication in the formation of street theater culture are few⁵³⁹, today there is no doubt that Internet technologies and social networks have an impact on the development, popularization and transformation of street theater culture. Due to the fact that the Internet presentation is not only a form of advertising among representatives of street theater art, allowing them to broadcast their creativity to a wide audience⁵⁴⁰, but also a valuable product of the entertainment, spectacular Internet industry, there is a danger of premature virtualization of street theater art, which is forced to compete not with dramatic art in a closed box, but with Internet self-presentation. In addition, a serious competitor of street theater is the Internet humor segment,

⁵³⁸ Ibid.

⁵³⁹ See: Semenova, E.A. (2019). Ot balagana do hajpa (problemy sovremennoj internet-kommunikacii) [From farce to hype (issues of modern Internet communication)]. *Nauka teledidenya*, 15(2), 44–64. (In Russ.); Semenova, E.A. (2018). Ulichnyj teatr v sovremennom mediaprostranstve kak reducirovannaya forma karnaval'noj ploshchadi [The street theatre in the contemporary media space as a reduced form of the carnival plaza]. *Nauka teledidenya*, 14(2), 59–76. (In Russ.).

⁵⁴⁰ See: Campos, R. (2021). Youth street cultures. Between online and offline circuits. In J.I. Ross (Ed.), *Routledge handbook of street culture* (pp. 59–70). Routledge.

which performs a recreational function. Today, researchers agree that the Internet is a vast stage not only for parodic statements⁵⁴¹, the spread of fakes⁵⁴², the generation of competition⁵⁴³ and social inequality⁵⁴⁴, but also for humorous creativity⁵⁴⁵.

Scientific literature on carnival and laugh on the Internet is redundant⁵⁴⁶. According to the first, rather common, view of researchers, carnival is possible in the virtual environment as well as real. According to the second view, the virtual world obtains individual carnival components only. The third view makes carnival totally untransferable to the Internet, as it lacks *the most important carnival component – corporeal matter*. Adherents of the first attitude commonly overestimate the possibilities of virtual communication. They consider anonymity and carnivalization to be the main characteristics of the Internet. Advocates for the second view appear to have more convincing arguments. In general, these experts' interests involve linguistic, verbal, visual expression of the elements of laughter, humor, and carnivalization.

The third, the most categorical view declares that carnival cannot be transferred to the Internet without certain losses. S. Petrilli shares the third position, referring of M.M. Bakhtin's thoughts of carnival interaction to "interbody dialogue" that interconnected with a grotesque, dialogic body. She considers a

⁵⁴¹ Boxman-Shabtai, L. (2019). The practice of parodying: YouTube as a hybrid field of cultural production. *Media, Culture and Society*, 41(1). P. 5.

⁵⁴² Brodie, I. (2018). Pretend news, false news, fake news: The Onion as put-on, prank, and legend. *Journal of American Folklore*, 131(522). P. 452.

⁵⁴³ Abbots, E.-J., & Attala, L. (2017). It's not what you eat but how and that you eat: Social media, counter-discourses and disciplined ingestion among amateur competitive eaters. *Geoforum*, 84, 188–197.

⁵⁴⁴ Rovisco M. (2016). A new 'Europe from below' Cosmopolitan citizenship, digital media and the indignados social movement. *Comparative European Politics*. 14(4), pp. 435–457.

⁵⁴⁵ Kanuck, S. (2019). Humor, ethics, and dignity: Being human in the age of artificial intelligence. *Ethics and International Affairs*, 33(1). P. 7.

⁵⁴⁶ See: Semenova, E.A. (2019e). Distancionnyj karnaval (problemy kommunikacii v cifrovuyu epohu) [Carnival in distance (Problems of communication in the digital epoch)]. In S.V. Ivanova (Ed.), *Proceedings of the International Conference "Education Environment for the Information Age (EEIA 2019)", June 4–5, 2019, Moscow* (pp. 467–485). Institute for Strategy of Education Development of the Russian Academy of Education. (In Russ.).

virtual dialogue as characterized by monologism with voices merging and identifying with each other, and non-verbal signs associated with the grotesque body disappearing.

Following the polyphonic model of M.M. Bakhtin, S. Trausan-Matu developed educational methods based on the technology of artificial intelligence. S. Trausan-Matu deprives artificial intelligence of an ability to create a carnival due to its lack of empathy. The researcher concluded that carnivalization in chat rooms can be created in two ways. Under the first way, carnivalization is generated spontaneously, within short periods of time, during serious communication. Under the second way, a carnival process is consciously superimposed on serious dialogue to trigger the creative process. For instance, four students failed to solve an arithmetic task individually, but succeeded when collaborating with each other in a chat room. The solution emerges after a series of alternating carnival utterances. One student used mathematical terminology when discussing the solution to the task, ending his sentences with a text (*ho-ho*) frankly implying a prank.

According to S. Trausan-Matu, the process of carnivalization is possible on the Internet, rather than carnival⁵⁴⁷, which require a joint group activity, communication on behalf of a physical and symbolic carnival mask, etc. Direct physical interaction is not necessary for the process of carnivalization, as this process can take place remotely, indirectly. It complies with the rules of polyphony. This process is greatly facilitated by mediating properties of media environment (diatopicity, simultaneity, etc.) to be accelerators for all these processes. Thus, according to S. Trausan-Matu, carnivalization is a polyphonic play of centrifugal-centripetal/dissonance-consonance, which is similar to the divergent-convergent stages of creative action⁵⁴⁸.

⁵⁴⁷ See: Semenova, E.A. (2019d). “Cifrovoj smekh” v XXI veke: pedagogicheskij aspekt izucheniya problemy [“Digital laughter” in the 21st century: A pedagogical aspect of studying the problem]. *Pedagogika iskusstva, 1*. P. 50. (In Russ.).

⁵⁴⁸ See: Semenova, E.A. (2019b). Carnival in distance (Problems of communication in the digital epoch). In S. K. Lo (Ed.), *Education Environment for the Information Age: Proceedings of the*

The media environment properties as replication, diachrony, simultaneity, diatropy, multiplication are found to modify recreational properties of street theater to various degrees. Replication (from Late Latin *replicatio* – repetition) comprises a property of the media environment, manifested when the speaking of a certain interlocutor alternates with the speaking of another or others in a character of change or interruption. Diachrony refers to the most powerful communicative property of virtual environment (from Greek *dia* – through, and *chronos* – time) able to reduce the need for personal, physical participation and presence. Diatopicity and simultaneity (simultaneousness) provide access and delivery of information resource in the virtual environment at any moment. Multiplication (permanence of a message that is multiply repeated) deprives street theater of its spontaneity. The nature of street theater is most accurately conveyed by non-verbal communication channels (paralinguistic sound codes, kinesthetic, oculus, auscultation channels), popular in virtual communication⁵⁴⁹.

2020 was a record year for the number of humorous videos⁵⁵⁰ created on the Internet, allowing users to create millions of “brave... ghosts to chat and laugh with”⁵⁵¹.

Artificial intelligence, on the basis of which various Internet platforms are created, not only “monitors” the user’s activity on the Internet, but also creates an individual recommendation feed for him.

“Persona-centric” machine learning algorithms are capable of generating products of the world of laughter due to a vertical video camera equipped with

International Conference Education Environment for the Information Age (EEIA 2019), June 4–5, 2019, Institute for Strategy of Education Development of the Russian Academy of Education, Moscow, Russia (pp. 742–753). Future Academy.

⁵⁴⁹ See: Semenova, E.A. (2018d). Ulichnyj teatr v sovremennom mediaprostranstve kak reducirovannaya forma karnaval'noj ploshchadi [The street theatre in the contemporary media space as a reduced form of the carnival plaza]. *Nauka televidenya*, 14(2), 59–76. (In Russ.).

⁵⁵⁰ Dukov, E.V., Evallyo, V.D., Semenova, E.A., Magidovich, M.L., Gurkina, N.S., Kazyuchits, M.F., Viren, D.G., & Smolev, D.D. (2021). Obrazy mashin i tekhniki Avtorskie interpretatsii [Images of Machines and Technology Author’s Interpretations]. *Art & Culture Studies*, 4, Pp. 407–409. (In Russ.).

⁵⁵¹ Nitsche, F. *Chelovecheskoye, slishkom chelovecheskoye: Kniga dlya svobodnykh umov* [Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Minds]. M.: Akademicheskii proyekt, 2007. P. 15–16. (In Russ.).

comic special effects. Any user material, being processed by such an editor even to a minimal degree, can acquire a comic tint. Artificial intelligence is capable of recognizing humorous text. Allowing users to post the most free humorous videos on the platform, it seems to be guided by the rule that “when they try to establish some clear limits and rules for foolishness, laughter and satire, then the false friends of humanity, its Regans and Gonerils, act here: they dig a grave for it, which is no longer fraught with a new birth”⁵⁵². However, a person still deceives artificial intelligence, acting according to the “classical scheme”: “aggression is the content, and laughter is the form”⁵⁵³.

On the Internet, one can hear the polyphony of individual carnival pictures of the world. Social networks abound in wordplay, “oral anecdote, rumor (instant message about an event, action and its version...); improvisation on the occasion of... ; legend... ; denigration... ; funeral oration (cf. obituary); invective...”⁵⁵⁴, self-deprecating humor.

All humorous statements in comic Internet challenges, (if they are humorous) reveal “an *impossible world* that is entirely fictitious, no matter how realistic it looks”⁵⁵⁵. Internet users choose lightweight content for their humorous creativity in order to save efforts on humorous processing of serious content. This can explain the mass fascination with creating a parody of a parody. In addition, the Internet allows everyone to be not anonymous, but a visibly embodied author of a humorous statement. Internet users often translate popular sharp, object-oriented statements into humor, thus returning once illegally taken sovereign

⁵⁵² Gachev, G.D. (1968). *Soderzhatel'nost' khudozhestvennykh form (Epos. Lirika. Teatr.)* [The content of artistic forms. (Epic. Lyric. Theatre). Moscow: Prosveshcheniye. P. 68. (In Russ.).

⁵⁵³ Semenova, E.A. (2020a). Bulling v detskoj smekhovoj subkul'ture [Bullying in children's laughter subculture]. In E. M. Akishina (Ed.), *Emotional education: problems and disputes. Proceedings of the Round Table “Emotional education as a new resource for the development, meaning and place of art subjects in the modern school”, February 27, 2020, Moscow* (pp. 149–162). Moscow: IAEaCS RAE. (In Russ.).

⁵⁵⁴ Gachev, G.D. (1968). *Soderzhatel'nost' khudozhestvennykh form (Epos. Lirika. Teatr.)* [The content of artistic forms. (Epic. Lyric. Theater)]. Moscow: Prosveshcheniye. P. 80. (In Russ.).

⁵⁵⁵ Kozintsev, A. G. (2012). Iumor na puti k obshchei teorii [Humor: On the way to a general theory]. In *Proceedings of the International School-Conference “Folkloristics and cultural anthropology today”, April 27–May 2, 2012, Moscow—Pereslavl Zalessky* (pp. 390–393). Moscow: RGGU. (In Russ.).

subjectivity to humor, therefore, humor will not be taken seriously.

However, following M.M. Bakhtin, we will complain that the Internet segment of laughter is interpreted somewhat “distortedly, since completely alien ideas and concepts are applied to it”⁵⁵⁶. Trying to look for “a reflection of individual or social conflicts in humor”⁵⁵⁷, researchers rarely take into account that satire differs from humor in that in it “the subject’s meta-relationship to his seriousness gives way to a serious attitude toward the object”⁵⁵⁸.

Let's pay tribute to the foresight of the developers of various mobile applications, who satisfied the public demand that arose in 2020 for publicly available “carnival and capacious” technologies for the global involvement of humanity in the process of laughter creativity. The humoristic Internet segment in 2020 was like a recreation in which you can find the necessary amount of security and the right to laugh creativity. The Internet in 2020 can be compared to a “mirror hospital”, in which anyone could not only receive life-saving “heart anesthesia”, but also try themselves in the role of a clown doctor.

The theater artists in the lockdown period began actively practicing the play resource, used by bloggers and street performers long before the pandemic. These methods involve carnivalesque, interactive methods of communication between actors and the public online, including face-to-face communication, close-ups, challenges, flash mobs, lifehacks, vines, memes, etc.⁵⁵⁹ In 2020, an impressive number of conferences, roundtables, discussions, informal meetings dedicated to current issues of street theatre in Russia were held in remote and hybrid format.

⁵⁵⁶ Bakhtin, M.M. (1990). *Tvorchestvo Fransua Rable i narodnaya kul'tura srednevekov'ya i Renessansa* [The works of François Rabelais and the folk culture of the Middle Ages and Renaissance]. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura. 541 p. (In Russ.).

⁵⁵⁷ Kozintsev, A.G. (2012). Iumor na puti k obshchei teorii [Humor: On the way to a general theory]. In *Proceedings of the International School-Conference “Folkloristics and cultural anthropology today”, April 27—May 2, 2012, Moscow—Pereslavl Zalessky* (pp. 390–393). Moscow: RGGU. (In Russ.).

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁹ See: Semenova, E.A. (2021e). Teatr v postpandemicheskoy perspektive [Theater in the postpandemic perspective]. In O.V. Galchuk (Ed.), *Proceedings of the International Scientific and Practical Conference “Russian classical literature on stage and in the cinema: socio-cultural and educational aspects”* (pp. 47–55). Moscow: IAEaCS RAE. (In Russ.).

Scientific and practical events such as *Pro street theatre* (online conference); *Pedagogical potential of clowning and street theatre in the socialisation of children and teenagers in difficult life situations* (all-Russian cluster) took place.

Creative portraits of Russian street theaters posted on the website of the Russian Union of Street Theatres and Artists (RUSTA) as well as of the other theaters were considered as an online laughter recreation. The organization “Russian Union of Street Theatres and Artists” consists of more than thirty theaters, including monogenre theaters, multi-genre, for example, using fire and pyrotechnics as means of artistic expression; theaters of mixed, synthetic type using visual theater, circus genres, LED equipment, etc. We analyzed official webpages and presentations of Russian street theaters, including *Kotorogo Theatre*⁵⁶⁰, *Cardboardia*⁵⁶¹, *Ognennie Ludi*⁵⁶², *Mr. Pejo’s Traveling Puppets*⁵⁶³, *Tall Brothers & Visokiye Bratya*⁵⁶⁴, *Plastycine Rain*⁵⁶⁵, *Eskizi v Prostranstve*⁵⁶⁶, *AspectR*⁵⁶⁷, *Theatre-EX*⁵⁶⁸, Mechanical Experimental Theater *Zlye Ribi*⁵⁶⁹, *VAU Theater*⁵⁷⁰, *SoLu Theater*⁵⁷¹, *Pampush Clown Theater*⁵⁷² and others.

⁵⁶⁰ Kotorogo Theatre. Available at: <https://kotorogo.ru>. (Accessed: December 21, 2023).

⁵⁶¹ Workshop. Made in Cartonina. (In Russ.). Available at: <http://madein.cardboardia.info/events>. (Accessed: December 21, 2023).

⁵⁶² Ognennie Ludi. Available at: <https://www.fireshow.ru/main/>. (Accessed: December 21, 2023).

⁵⁶³ Theatre “Mr. Pejo’s Traveling Puppets”. Available at: <http://new.pejo.ru>. (Accessed: December 19, 2023).

⁵⁶⁴ Theatre “Tall Brothers & Visokiye Bratya”. <https://vk.com/tallbrotherscircus?ysclid=lrbrgmampz377662624>. (Accessed: December 21, 2023).

⁵⁶⁵ Theatre *Plastycine Rain*. Available at: https://katalog.streetrussia.com/street_theatres/tproduct/231978888-813113238181-teatr-plastilinovii-dozhd?ysclid=lrbriz7bmw150837131. (Accessed: December 17, 2023).

⁵⁶⁶ Theatre *Eskizi v Prostranstve*. Available at: <https://vk.com/eskizi?ysclid=lrbrm07vai625466168>. (Accessed: December 19, 2023).

⁵⁶⁷ Theatre *AspectR*. Available at: https://katalog.streetrussia.com/street_theatres/tproduct/231978888-767486367511-teatr-aspektr?ysclid=lrbrophuam542018433. (Accessed: December 21, 2023).

⁵⁶⁸ Theatre-EX. Available at: <http://katalog.streetrussia.com/tproduct/231905700-311896581594-teatr-eks>. (Accessed: December 19, 2023).

⁵⁶⁹ Zlye ryby. Mechanical Experimental Theater . Available at: <https://www.angryfish-fire.com/>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁵⁷⁰ VAU Theater. Available at: https://t.me/vau_theatre. (Accessed: December 21, 2023).

⁵⁷¹ SoLu Theater. Available at: <https://vk.com/solutheatre>. (Accessed: December 21, 2023).

The RUSTA catalogue lists *Mr. Pejo's Traveling Puppets*, founded in 1993 in St. Petersburg and claimed to be “the oldest street theater in Russia”, where “all actors wear masks and play in a specific manner created by many years of work”. This information is followed by a list of awards received in international theater festivals as well as the information about performances, artistic director, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, websites, and Internet pages⁵⁷³. *The State Street Theatre of Cardboardia* describes itself as “a state without territory, ... uniting the Characters of *Cardboardia*”,⁵⁷⁴ and presents the theater's performances, namely: “The Official Orchestra of Cardboardia”, “Tamagotchi Live!”, “Entrance”, “Cardboard Tube Fights”, “Cardboardia Parade/Carnival”, “In Search of Creative Energy”.

The third number in RUSTA catalogue is occupied by the legendary *AKHE Engineering Theatre*, where “creative activity is based on... performances, inscribed in the urban space of St. Petersburg”,⁵⁷⁵. The *Plastycine Rain* theater is introduced as a world famous theater⁵⁷⁶, followed by an impressive list of international festivals of street theater, street and contemporary art with the theater as a participant. The Mikos Clown Theater calls itself “the most eccentric clown theater in Russia”, “madmen who ingeniously complicate simple things”,⁵⁷⁷.

The founders of *Trickster Theater* begin their presentation on the RUSTA website with the following phrase: “one of the most successful independent

⁵⁷² Pampush Clown Theater. Available at: <https://m.vk.com/teatroclownspampush>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁵⁷³ Theatre “Mr. Pejo’s Traveling Puppets”. Available at: <http://katalog.streetrussia.com/tproduct/231905700-626767208119-teatr-stranstvuyuschie-kukli-gospodina-p>. (Accessed: March 9, 2023).

⁵⁷⁴ The State Street Theatre of Cardboardia. Available at: <http://katalog.streetrussia.com/tproduct/231905700-867235721718-gosudarstvennii-ulichnii-teatr-kartonii>. (Accessed: March 8, 2023).

⁵⁷⁵ AKHE Engineering Theatre. Available at: <http://katalog.streetrussia.com/tproduct/231905700-654313436121-inzhernii-teatr-ah>. (Accessed: March 9, 2023).

⁵⁷⁶ Theatre *Plastycine Rain*. (In Russ.). Available at: <http://katalog.streetrussia.com/tproduct/231905700-813113238181-teatr-plastilinovii-dozhd>. (Accessed: March 7, 2023).

⁵⁷⁷ Mikos Clown Theater. (In Russ.). Available at: https://katalog.streetrussia.com/street_theatres/tproduct/231978888-176981998554-klounteatr-mikos?ysclid=lrbszr93i411708951. (Accessed: March 10, 2023).

theaters in Russia”. Then they talk about the genre and repertoire of the theater, including “productions of different formats from chamber mono-performances to large-scale street shows. (...) Trickster’s creative portfolio includes operas, street performances, choreographic and dramatic productions of large scale”. The theater’s professional cooperation with Russian state theaters and major festivals such as Golden Mask and Territory is emphasized. The catalogue further lists the Mimicry theatre with the repertoire including both stage and street performances, etc.⁵⁷⁸

Following a brief review of the theater groups presented on the RUSTA website, we note a number of points. On the one hand, there is a serious desire of street theater artists to fit into state institutions, to achieve legitimacy for their art. This is evidenced by the detailed list of participation in festivals, grants and competitions. On the other hand, there is a noticeable desire to emphasize their involvement in the *light* genre of comic art. This is most often confirmed by photographs of theatre performances, on which actors are represented either in make-up and clown costume or in zoomorphic images. In particular, Noah and representatives of the bestiary, including “beavers, giraffes, hares, ... lions”⁵⁷⁹, were at the centre of the street action “People and Fishes”, which became the culmination of the jubilee festival of street theatres in Arkhangelsk. It is characteristic that the appearance of zoomorphic heroes was accompanied by music and the performance of comic verse rhymes (“‘Beaver-dobr’, ‘Hare-wolf, pelts soft as silk’, ‘Roe deer-beautiful’, ‘Giraffes are important counts’, ‘You are wrong, lion, and now the refrain: lion, lion, lion’”)⁵⁸⁰.

The desire to emphasise the comic component of his work is also expressed in the names of street theatres and performances *Cabaret-Chapito*, *Mollusk-*

⁵⁷⁸ Mimicry Theatre. (In Russ.). Available at: <http://katalog.streetrussia.com/tproduct/231905700-885622930908-teatr-mimikriya>. (Accessed: March 10, 2023).

⁵⁷⁹ Selezneva-Reder, I. (2024, July 27). Posle nas [After us]. *Peterburskii teatral'nyi zhurnal*. (In Russ.). Available at: <https://ptj.spb.ru/blog/posle-nas/?ysclid=m2wxwzjrna774356281>. (Accessed: September 10, 2024).

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

Review, Lysaped-show and others. For example, the RSUTiA member *The theatre whose name cannot be called* is collective which its name sets a certain playful tone of self-presentation in the professional community of street theatre artists.

However, it is extremely rare for a street theatre that positions itself in the Internet space as a laughter recreation to actually be one. As an exception, we can cite the “Theatre Whose Name Cannot Be Named” from St. Petersburg, which positions itself on the web as “The Gentlemen of Fortune's Gang of Art”, which is a synthetic street theatre, which has such genres as puppet theatre, “pantomime, clowning, fire show; film, music, animation, literature”, etc., at its disposal. The actors of the troupe “The Theatre Whose Name Cannot Be Named” announce their upcoming or past tours as adventures, accompanied by texts and pictures of humorous tone “I am in the boot of a bus. I've been stolen by some clowns. ... Help!!!!”. Fans, members of the theatre company are eager to get involved in this internet game, responding to the message “Don't lie. You're not in the boot! You can see the comfort and convenience. And the window. And you're bald. ... Clown!!!”⁵⁸¹.

The words ‘clown’ and ‘stupid’ are both code words of this theatre community and criteria of professionalism. The composition of street theatre posts is characterised by a deliberately pathos beginning and a deliberately reduced ending, which meets the law of comedic plot structure (On Friday evening at the site of the House of Scientists there was an extravaganza show performed by the street “THEATRE whose name cannot be called” from St. Petersburg. The only performance based on the fairy tale about Little Red Riding Hood and the grey wolf. And, of course, everything ended in a fight! Love is all you need!). The street theatre troupe ‘The Theatre Whose Name Cannot Be Named’ regularly announces a series of improvisational performances called “Stupid Cabaret” on social networks. In addition to the humorous presentation of their work on the Internet, the troupe of this theatre implements such offline projects at the intersection of

⁵⁸¹ See: Semenova, E.A. (2023c). Ulichnyy teatr v kontekste zarubezhnykh kontseptsiy karnaval'noy kul'tury [Street theatre in the context of foreign concepts of carnival culture]. *National Psychological Journal*, 18(3), pp. Pp. 25–34. (In Russ.).

clowning, musical eccentrics and street theatre as “Duratsky's Chorus” (Fig. 31), “Whose Street Circus”, “Whose VIA”, children's studio “Katyshki”, “Gluposobiye”⁵⁸². Among the themes of cabaret there are such as fashion, insects, theatre, etc. The theatre team creates performances in the form of joint improvisations of actors and audience, calling this form “Vykrutasy”. The pedagogical process organised in this theatre allows students to comprehend in theory and practice the art of clowning, circus, street theatre, building their own perspective of development in this field of art. It must be admitted that the actors of the *Theatre Whose Name Cannot Be Named* flawlessly maintain a clownish style in their work, in intra-group communication and internet presentation. However, this example is a rarity. More often the opposite happens: the internet presentation of a company whose work has a carnival character does not reflect it. As an example, street theatres, academically presented in the catalogue of RSUTiA as a theatre troupes consisting of theatre and circus artists, graduates of Moscow theatre schools and a circus school⁵⁸³.

The desire of street theatre practitioners to achieve legitimacy for their art through comic creation is pronounced. An example is the two-day discussion of members of the Russian Union of Street Theatres and Artists (RUSTiA) in the official chat created on the Telegram platform. During the discussion, a contemporary street theater performer was suggested to be defined with “one (decent) word” in order to keep the historicity of the very concept of “street artist” and to be understandable to a potential customer, the employer of street theater. About 70 percent of the participants express the desire to preserve traces of etymology, suggesting to “dance” from the Russian word *ulitsa* (street). In the brainstorming, the most bizarre abbreviations, words and word combinations were created, implying the first attempt to create a conversational dictionary of Russian

⁵⁸² Kotorogo Theatre. Available at: http://katalog.stretrussia.com/street_theatres/tproduct/231978888-668027604271-teatr-imeni-kotorogo-nelzya-nazivat. (Accessed: October 2, 2023).

⁵⁸³ Theatre-EX. <http://katalog.stretrussia.com/tproduct/231905700-311896581594-teatr-eks>. (Accessed: March 10, 2023).

street theatre.

The notion of a street theater actor was suggested to be replaced with: UToshnik, Ulichitelnik, Ulovka, Udeyatel, UloShnik, Totuttotam, Utya, Ulkomaster, Utochka, Ulochnitsa, Ulochniki, pereulochniki, ploshadnyaki, skverovye, priskvernye, ULI tribe, Pribautnik, pozornik, laughing man, Teatrul, TeatUl, Utrist, ulichist, ulichisty, ulichist, Skomorezh, actressULI, Ulak, AU, actressUli, Udeyatel, NaUlichnik, outdoorsman, nalitchnik, Gulyona. Curiously, words derived from the root “ul, ula, uli” (from Russian *ulitsa* – street) provoked laughter communication in the chat resulted in the verbal and semantic carnivalization of the “street theater actor” notion. Someone parried: “Oh, poor sad street performer, I was a laughing stock from the beginning... We won’t reach Khlebnikov”. The suggested notions *ulichist* and *ulichisty* were also responded with rhymes: “Ulichista uluchali uluchali, no ne viuluchali”. The initiator of the discussion at some point exclaimed: “Demand... a closed meeting... artistUlov! A meeting of the Ducklings! A plenum of the laugh-mongers. ... artists of the theater of public spaces. A meeting of the ulichistov!”.

The attempts to combine the English “street art” with the Russian word “ulichnyi” fail to promote comic puns. The participants responded ironically to the opinion considering word *street* as inappropriate for characterizing street theater due to its connotation with low genres, something that is not taken seriously. Did not receive support from the group members and suggested organizing a duel *Public Space Artist VS Street Artist*.

Next, we will move on to considering the second type of online/offline laughter recreation. This type of recreation was considered as live and online communication of actors of several street theaters in a group created by actor to solve problems that arise during the preparation of street, theatrical performances; creating props, script; discussing the rehearsal schedule, etc.⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸⁴ See: Semenova, E. A. (2019f). Ot balagana do hajpa (problemy sovremennoj internet-kommunikacii) [From farce to hype (issues of modern Internet communication)]. *The Art and Science of Television*, 15(2), pp. 44–64. (In Russ.).

The communication in this group involved everyday, Internet communication and stage interaction. An inclusive observation method was used. Performances photo and video materials shared by the participants in the group, correspondence were analyzed.

The S. Trausan-Matu polyphonic model was used to analyze the Internet messages. They refer to I.P. Uvarova and Y.V. Chesnov interpretation of the carnivalesque, corporeal essence of low farce, which is based on “the state of the human body”. Low farce is understood as a form of interaction that takes place “between fear and laughter”, in a situation of metamorphosis, when a person at any moment can turn spiritually and physically into another character, a mask. The low farce represents “temporality”, a temporary booth “for theatrical folk shows”. It is a localized space (barn, shed, booth etc.). According to I.P. Uvarova, the mystery of show-booth is connected with its being far beyond the real carnival square. The analysis of the texts was based on V.I. Karasik's semiotic model of humorous texts classification.

The analysis of Internet messages revealed that, most often, the participants launch carnival processes in online communication, using phrases-jokes “I will not be there tomorrow (just kidding, probably). Good night, everyone! AND GOOD MORNING! If it happens”, “I'll get traditions and games! I may be late! but I'll try to remain a fan of my work and come back by 11”. A comic rejoinder often accompanies an unsuccessful or strange statement (“You are not reflected in my mind, you are not identified. Give me your full name!”, “Job position, weight, tests, shall I carry? Or shall we do with nonsense?”). Code words and phrases appear popular in the community of street theater actors, as follows: “Normal. I think. Thing”; they were born within the communication in the dressing room. Code words gradually form a specific slang of a given community, emphasizing a certain private tone of communication.

Parodic, self-deprecating statements of participants in online communication are used in order to show that the speaker is well aware of his or her mistakes,

tardiness, etc. In order to be less vulnerable to criticism, it is necessary to sparodize oneself prior to other group members. The same technique is basic for the art of clowning and rap battle. This principle was the main when creating own stage character-mask, positively influencing the general friendly and cheerful atmosphere in the group (in the dressing room and on the stage). Each day, the role of “clown”, i.e., the most delinquent, was played by someone in the group. The rest of the group was united “into banter families”.

Internet communication often symmetrically reflects events of the dressing room like a successful performance or an unexpected incident. The largest number of messages is indicated in the days of preparation for the performance and after the most successful performances. On those days when only one part of the group worked on the street platform, the non-working part of the group acted as its Internet audience, critic and teacher, instantly responding to the photos and videos from the platform posted in the online group with family, fatherly murmurs, advice, encouragement, code words, emojis, etc. It is indicating a desire to continue and strengthen carnival relationships.

Notably, a backstage communication is considered to be a “symbiosis of humorous and ironic play, expressed in pseudo-aggressive, carnivalesque communication techniques (tactile touching, kissing, pinching, hugging, friendly playful patting, carnivalesque praise and swearing)”⁵⁸⁵. The least number of photos and videos, posted in the group by participants, was made in the dressing rooms; presumably, in the moments of carnival communication everyone is immersed in the process of the play mystery and rarely obtains a camera in their hands and has time to capture these moments. During the most intense days of performances, online communication appears to be purely informational and functional.

At the very beginning many people in the group did not know each other, icons and emojis dominated in the communication, then by the middle of the project, communication turned to be more informal, thereby promoting more detailed suggestions. In the closed Internet group “Balagan” of street theater actors

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid. P. 54.

was indicated with a strong positive correlation between banter and secure attachment. Due to the V.I. Karasik classification, the texts were diagnosed for the content of humorous algorithm.

The results highlighted three conditions for the emergence of humorous communication: intention to “escape from a serious conversation”; humorous tone as a way to reduce the distance and approach discussion of serious issues more productively and delicately; use of laughter behavior models typical for the group. The main “communication keys” or communicative manners⁵⁸⁶ in this community are found to be friendly banter, often ended up with an ironic crescendo. The most “free”, borderline, ironic-humorous banter is allowed among those who partner with each other. This particular strategy enables dissatisfaction or resentment to be expressed in an ironic, laudatory, or teasing manner.

Very often such phenomenon as “laughter debut”⁵⁸⁷ is observed in the group, which V.I. Karasik characterizes as a transition from a serious tone of communication to a laughing one. In the group of street theater actors, this phenomenon signals of an expansion of the farce community with the involvement of another colleague, a kindred spirit, into the group. Verbal irony in the “Balagan” recreation is built on video and photo-presentation to a much lesser extent, whereas means of syntactic and morphological distortion of code words or phrases are used most often.

According to our previously formulated hypothesis, the carnival component, being based on bodily contact, when translated into the language of Internet communication will inevitably suffer losses; however, it has not been fully confirmed. The live, informal spirit of the community of street theater actors contributes to creating an atmosphere of friendly banter in the online group, outside of the virtual world in the sphere of bodily contact and easily fades without constant bodily carnival-play interaction. The more intense and captivating the life in the community, the shorter the social media posts of street theater actors.

⁵⁸⁶ Karasik, V. I. (2018). Algorithms of comic texts construction. *Russian Journal of Linguistics*, 22(4). P. 901. (In Russ.).

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

It can be concluded that the relationship moves into a category of quasi-related as the community develops friendly relations, and obtains history of joint improvisations, numbers, overcoming difficulties on the street or theatrical venue, lived together in one laughter recreation (dressing room) of busy days associated with performances, common meals, make-up, image search, improvisations, dressing up, etc.

The participants of the Internet group 'Balagan' currently apply the principles of carnivalisation in their joint projects and performances, in live interaction and online communication. In this laughter recreation, the first and foremost role is played by familiar contact, humour, and the balagan style of communication, which create a trusting atmosphere in the group, contributing to its transformation into a street theatre troupe.

In fact, the transfer of knowledge and skills of the profession of street actor is carried out in the street underground, closed communities of street theater actors. Laughter recreations of street theater actor communities represent hybrid juvenile-oriented heterotopias, in which participants indulge in neotenous activities that travesty adult behavior patterns, using live communication and Internet technologies. The latter, in turn, make it possible to maintain a humorous tone of communication in offline communities of street theater artists, contributing to the transformation of street theater troupes into laughter recreations that increase the carnival potential of modern Russian street theater culture.

3.2. Agonal recreation (rap battle)

The first argument, which gives grounds to attribute the phenomenon of subculture formed around the art of rap duel, called 'rap battle', to the phenomenon of street theatre culture, is related to J. Huizinga's definition, according to which agon is a competitive game that prepares the transition to culture. In turn, rap duels are verbal contests, built "according to the laws of dramaturgy and theatrical

performance”⁵⁸⁸. *The second argument* is based on O.M. Freidenberg’s opinion that the ancient pre-comedy is based on the playful “duel of two opponents (a struggle of light and dark beginnings), the new and old year, summer and winter, new fertility, with these opponents to be multiplied into a whole series of heroes”⁵⁸⁹. *The third argument* in favor of the possibility of classifying a rap battle as an agonal recreation of street theater culture is connected with the genesis of comedy, which originated from people sitting on carts ridiculing each other. *The fourth argument* is based on the remark of A.G. Kozintsev that all types of folk theater contain playful aggression, and that irony goes beyond the comic. *The fifth argument* is based on the position of M.M. Bakhtin's concept of carnival culture that parody turns a serious genre into a funny “monster”, which in a rap duel is an invective that goes beyond the category of literal insult if used in a carnivalized key. In this case, a carnival-charged invective is not an insult, but a playful signal of pseudo-aggression, serving to enhance the “culture of conflict-free group interaction”⁵⁹⁰.

The sixth argument in defense of the agonal principle of rap battle is based on the observation of how subcultures that retain their competitive spirit become legislators of a new artistic direction of activity, style, etc. It is important to emphasize that “modern street subcultures demonstrate “their play potential ... in various areas, one of which is the sphere of theatrical play. Evidence of this is the communities of street artists, musicians, actors of fire theaters”⁵⁹¹.

⁵⁸⁸ Semenova, E.A. (2019h). Smekh v Rossijskoj molodyozhnoj kul'ture rep-battla [Laughter in the Russian youth culture of rap battle]. *Yaroslavskij pedagogicheskij vestnik*, 1(106). P. 237. (In Russ.). <https://doi.org/10.24411/1813-145X-2019-10305>. (Accessed: May 27, 2023).

⁵⁸⁹ Freidenberg, O. M. (1997). *Poetika syuzheta i zhanra* [Poetics of plot and genre]. Preparation of the text, reference and scientific apparatus, introduction, afterword by N.V. Braginskaya. Moscow: Labirint. (In Russ.). P. 170.

⁵⁹⁰ Semenova, E.A. (2020b). Carnival'no-igrovyje formy kommunikacii v profilaktike detskoj rechevoj agressii [Carnival-play forms of communication in the prevention of children’s speech aggression]. In T.P. Skvortsova (Comp.), *Proceedings of the All-Russian network scientific-practical conference "The potential of art in the socialization of children in difficult life situations: theory and practice", May 18–31, 2020*. Moscow: IAEaCS RAE. (In Russ.). P. 132.

⁵⁹¹ Semenova, E.A. (2024b). Evolyutsiya rossiyskoj bayk-kul'tury: ot “Bezumnogo Maksa” do “Nochnogo Volka” [Evolution of Russian bike culture from “Mad Max” to “Night Wolf”]. *Experience industries. Socio-Cultural Research Technologies (EISCRT)*, 2(7). (In Russ.). P. 160.

A striking example of the implementation of a subculture's playful, agonal potential in the field of theatrical activity is the Russian biker culture “Night Wolves”, which began to take shape in the 80s of the last century in Soviet Russia, experiencing significant influence of “foreign bike/rock culture”⁵⁹². However, its intra-group identification has undergone colossal changes. In the “Night Wolves” “there was an evolution of the hero's image: from a warrior driven by personal revenge to a folk hero”⁵⁹³. Today, the Night Wolves serve as the brightest “example of the transformation of biker culture into a legitimate, heroic-patriotic community”, being the authors and creators of the theatrical-poetic genre of the “biker fairy tale”. For fifteen years, representatives of the biker culture “Night Wolves” have been creating and implementing street performances of New Year's fairy tales for children with the participation of a street fire theater troupe, which supports a special agonal, competitive, theatrical-playful spirit in this culture⁵⁹⁴.

Let's move on directly to the phenomenon of rap duels. The direct predecessors of rap battles are considered to be Dozens, an African-American competitive game when two rivals try to insult each other by means of rhyme⁵⁹⁵. This form of verbal jousting (agon) is found already in early societies. The transition to the status of communities can be observed already in children, accompanied by bickering with each other. Today, one of the most popular verbal games of young people refers to a punch, which replaces the act of aggression with verbal witticisms⁵⁹⁶. In many ways, this can be explained by an instinctive need of youth to express their aggression and fear through laughter.

In most rap battles, the main cementing force – the parody of the battle – is

⁵⁹² Ibid. P. 160.

⁵⁹³ Ibid. P. 188.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid. P. 173.

⁵⁹⁵ See: Semenova, E.A. (2018b). Psychophysiological Aspects of Aggression and Laughter in the Contemporary Culture of Russian Rap Battle. *Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Research*, 2018.10(7). P.1873.

⁵⁹⁶ Semenova, E.A. (2019h). Smekh v Rossijskoj molodyozhnoj kul'ture rep-battla [Laughter in the Russian youth culture of rap battle]. *Yaroslavskij pedagogicheskij vestnik*, 1(106). P. 236. (In Russ.). <https://doi.org/10.24411/1813-145X-2019-10305>. (Accessed: March 10, 2023). (Accessed: May 27, 2023).

retained. Rap battle rivals appear to be like archaic twins with one to be necessarily worse than the other. As a rule, it was preferred to get rid of the worse. One of the archaic twins, now one of the opponents on the field of rap battle must be destroyed, according to the rules of the fight. Not physically. What is destroyed is his parodic double. In order to be as less vulnerable to the opponent as possible, one must parody oneself before the opponent does, or parody the opponent better than him. To maintain the playful tone of battles, usually, participants send each other non-verbal signals “I was just playing”, “I didn’t mean hurt”. When the situation at the battle appears extremely heated, the audience soften it by jokes. We are interested in the moment indicating a connection of this genre with street theater culture when it transitions from a serious game to a non-serious battle. This precedential transition from the plane of seriousness to the plane of humor and clowning gives grounds to consider it as a phenomenon of street theater culture.

In what follows, our focus will be on self-incestive and the mixed effect of banter observed in contemporary youth rap battle culture. Before addressing this issue, let us first consider the definition of invective.

The concept of invective obtains many interpretations. The Russian Dictionary of Borrowed Words, The Dictionary of Linguistic Terms, The Newest Philosophical Dictionary, The Great Soviet Encyclopedia explain the term “invective” as translated from Latin as a curse word, swearing expression.

Cicero, globally known for his oratorical eloquence, systematically used angry invectives throughout his movement towards the Olympus of oratorical fame. The great rhetor could use invective to decide the fate of a lawbreaker, disregarding his privileged status. In many cases, invective is interpreted somewhat one-sidedly from the position of aggressive speech communication.

V.I. Zhelvis defines invective as “an existing way of verbal aggression, perceived in a given social group as rude and taboo ...; verbal violation of ethical taboo, carried out by non-codified means ...; any verbally expressed manifestation of an aggressive attitude to an opponent”. The researcher defines invective as “any

verbally expressed manifestation of an aggressive attitude to an opponent”⁵⁹⁷. A.V. Kuryanovich considers the invective in the perspective of extralinguistic criterion of speech communication, following the M.M. Bakhtin theory of speech genres and the modern theory of speech genres⁵⁹⁸.

S. Matyash suggest considering the invective “in a narrow (genre) sense” and “in a broad sense ... (as a type of speech)”⁵⁹⁹. In the first case, the invective “represents a direct address of the subject”; in the second case, it “can be addressed to both present and absent persons”⁶⁰⁰. Self-invectives are found among the high, pathos-denouncing invectives devoid of everyday orientation. S. Matyash considers *low* and *square* to be diametrically opposite types of high invectives. According to the researcher, an epigrammatical invective occupies an intermediate place between the high and the square invectives⁶⁰¹.

T. Jay believes that a range of emotions and emotional expressions, from instinctive exclamations to propositional speech constructions, can only be conveyed using curses. They can be triggered by loss of control, fright, disgust, tension, pain, illness (coprolalia, hebephrenia, Tourette Syndrome)⁶⁰², or sexual gratification. Curse can be non-propositional (non-factual), i.e. not based on facts, and propositional, i.e. being a speech reflection of a real situation. In the first case, invective is aimed at deriving some benefit from aggressive speech, for example, to cause admiration of peers for appearing able to verbally insult and humiliate or intimidate an innocent victim. In the second case, verbal aggression may be a response to the victims in relation to the actions of the offender. Bullying reveals propositional and non-propositional aggression, thereby representing a certain

⁵⁹⁷ Zhelvis, V.I. (2008). *Pole brani: skvernoslovie kak social'naya problema* [Field of scolding: Swearing as a social problem]. Moscow: AST. P. 35. (In Russ.).

⁵⁹⁸ Kuryanovich, A.V. (2005). Invektivnye rechevye zhanry v prostranstve sovremennoj mezhlichnostnoj kommunikacii [Invective speech genres in the space of modern interpersonal communication]. *Tomsk State Pedagogical University Bulletin*, 3. P. 108.(In Russ.).

⁵⁹⁹ Matyash, S.A. (2007). Zhanr invektivy v poezii F.I. Tyutcheva [Genre of invective in the poetry of F. I. Tyutchev]. *Vestnik of the Orenburg State University*, 77. P. 36. (In Russ.).

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid. P. 42.

⁶⁰² Jay, T. (2000). *Why we curse: A neuro-psycho-social theory of speech*. John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/z.91>. P. 3, 5.

speech aggression when semantic laws of communication are violated between the participants of a dialogue (face-to-face or extramural, indirect), resulting in communicative failure. The failure can be caused or lead to the use of a joke as a tool of verbal aggression in friendly communication, when in response to good-natured teasing the interlocutor meets an insult in their address⁶⁰³.

Invective is not an expression of hostile intentions only⁶⁰⁴. During Roman triumphs, soldiers were allowed for so-called “ritual, ragtag scolding”. At such moments, invective against the leader was officially authorized, as it fulfilled a positive function. According to the ritual, warriors had to swear at the ruler, or, in other words, “yapping for the last time” before returning to the mundane life⁶⁰⁵.

The Russian poems of A.S. Pushkin, M.Y. Lermontov, N.A. Nekrasov, and F.I. Tyutchev demonstrate complex invectives. According to the study by S.A. Matyash, “invective as a genre comprises 5.8%”⁶⁰⁶ in the poetry of F.I. Tyutchev, appeared to be much higher in comparison with Pushkin (1.5%) and even Lermontov (4.6%)⁶⁰⁷. Invective in F.I. Tyutchev’s lyrics is found intricate due to its shifting from a *peripheral* to a central genre and, moreover, because it represents an ambivalent transition from high invective to square (low)⁶⁰⁸.

M.M. Bakhtin attributed ambivalent abuse-praise to the area of laughter culture, in which “a new mode of human-human relationships is being developed...”⁶⁰⁹. From the perspective of modern theories of laughter, “swearing,

⁶⁰³ Ibid. P. 137.

⁶⁰⁴ Shcherbinina, Yu.V. (2020). Rechevaya agressiya vs zlorenchie: sootnoshenie ponyatij i granicy issledovaniya [Speech aggression vs malice: Correlation of concepts and boundaries of research]. In *Scientific School of Professor T.A. Ladyzhenskaya: Proceedings of the scientific and practical conference dedicated to the 95th anniversary of the scientist’s birth, April 3–4, 2020*. Moscow: Yazyki Narodov Mira. P. 217. (In Russ.).

⁶⁰⁵ Mikhailin, V.Yu. (2010). Russkij mat kak muzhskoj obscennyj kod: problema proiskhozhdeniya i evolyuciya statusa [*Russian swearing as a male obscene code: The problem of origin and evolution of status*]. Saratov: Izdatel’stvo Laboratorii istoricheskoi, sotsial’noi i kul’turnoi antropologii. P. 33. (In Russ.).

⁶⁰⁶ Matyash, S.A. (2007). Zhanr invektivy v poezii F.I. Tyutcheva [Genre of invective in the poetry of F. I. Tyutchev]. *Vestnik of the Orenburg State University*, 77. P. 38. (In Russ.).

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid. P. 43.

⁶⁰⁹ Bakhtin, M.M. (1979). *Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo* [Issues of Dostoevsky’s poetics] (4th ed.). Moscow: Sovetskaya Rossiya. P. 141. (In Russ.).

oaths and... curses”, which are integral components of carnival familiar-market speech, perform the same function as humor, the purpose of which is “desemantization, rejection of language”⁶¹⁰.

In Russian culture, a typical example of the desemantization of language is the buffoon Petrushka, who pronounces swear words with the help of a voice modifier (a squeaker), thereby transferring them from the “philistine”⁶¹¹ sphere to the realm of the impossible, that is, to the world of laughter.

Of particular interest are playful mockeries, nicknames, emphasizing the individual, personal qualities of the addressees of familiar addresses, which are attributes of intimate, friendly communication⁶¹². B.A. Uspensky believes that one of the functions of Russian expressive phraseology is a friendly greeting⁶¹³.

K.I. Chukovsky notes that A.P. Chekhov, “when talking to his relatives, replaced their usual names with familial nicknames. (...). Chekhov called himself in his letters as Guniyadi Janos, Dostoynov-Blagonravov, Bockle, Count Chernomordik, Povsekakiy, Arkady Tarantulov, Don Antonio, Academician Toto, and Schiller Shakespearevich Goethe. The nicknames were attributed to relatives and buddies, so to speak, on the basis of reciprocity. (...). The point here is not so much in the nicknames, but in the *bacchanalia* of fun that gave rise to them”⁶¹⁴. The complex invectives constructed by Chekhov appear significant because they provide an ambivalent transition from high to square (low) invective⁶¹⁵. The desire

⁶¹⁰ Kozintsev, A. G. (2007). *Chelovek i smekh* [Man and laughter]. SPb.: Aleteiya. P. 185. (In Russ.).

⁶¹¹ Gref, A., Penskaya, D., & Slonimskaya, E. (2019). Traditsionnyi teatr Petrushki i politicheskoe vyskazyvanie [Traditional Petrushka theater and political speech]. In E. A. Semenova (Ed.), *Proceedings of the International Bakhtin Theoretical and Practical Conference “Street theatre vs. the theatre of military actions”, October 16–18, 2019, Moscow*. Moscow: IAEaCS RAE. P. 27. (In Russ.).

⁶¹² Kalbermatten, M.I. (2018). The role of verbal irony in conflict talk among relatives and friends in an Argentinian community. *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict*, 6(2). P. 300.

⁶¹³ Uspenskij, B.A. (1994). *Mifologicheskij aspekt russkoj ekspressivnoj frazeologii* [Mythological aspect of Russian expressive phraseology]. *Izbrannye trudy*. Vol. 2. Moscow: Gnozis. P. 55. (In Russ.).

⁶¹⁴ Chukovskii, K.I. (1990). *Sobranie sochinenii v 2 tomakh*. Vol. 2. [Collected works in two volumes] (Vol. 2). Moscow: Pravda. P. 214. (In Russ.).

⁶¹⁵ Matyash, S.A. (2007). Zhanr invektivy v poezii F.I. Tyutcheva [Genre of invective in the poetry of F. I. Tyutchev]. *Vestnik of the Orenburg State University*, 77. P. 43. (In Russ.).

to create their own informal language is observed at different times among representatives of various subcultures.

The known Internet subcultures *Padonkaf*, *Upyachka* are characterized by a special jargon and slang. The word *durack* (a fool) is recognized as the highest evaluation of skill and talent in the professional community of clowns, since the clown laughs at himself rather than at someone. “Today, the invective in Russian subculture is a platform for constructing the core identity of new communities, intuitively striving not to lose touch with carnival consciousness. (...) Characteristically, these subcultures gravitate towards theatrical manifestations, ... the use of invective metaphors as complementary, friendly game signals of communication”⁶¹⁶.

In this case, the specificity of humorous invective is important to us. Let us recall that Kozintsev claims that humor encroaches not on the mode, but on the reference⁶¹⁷. By virtue of the “voluntary suspension of disbelief”, we refer such a message to one of the possible worlds, the metaphorical world of hyperreality, which can affect us even more than reality itself. We refuse to take a humorous message seriously not because its referents are presented less realistically (in fact, the opposite may seem to be the case), but because the referent is fictitious, as is the entire message. Accepting or rejecting a humorous message does not mean the same thing as accepting or rejecting an invective message. In invective we are dealing with a bona fide accusation, although its modus may be dishonest, as in lying, irony. In humor we are dealing with a pseudo-accusation aimed at amusing us. The weaker the adversary and the sillier he behaves, the better. A humorous accusation is largely playful, therefore, it is far from being a real accusation. According to the most important conclusion of the researcher, a meta-message of

⁶¹⁶ Semenova, E.A. (2021a). Karnaval'naya ambivalentnost' invektivy v sovremennoj rossijskoj subkul'ture [Carnival ambivalence of invective in modern Russian subculture]. In N. I. Voronina (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 17th International Bakhtin Conference “The ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin and the challenges of the 21st century: From dialogic imagination to polyphonic thinking”*. National Research Ogarev Mordovia State University. P. 317. (In Russ.).

⁶¹⁷ Kozintsev, A. (2015). War propaganda and humour: World War II German, British, and Soviet cartoons. In D. Demski, L. Laineste, & K. Baraniecka-Olzewska (Eds.), *War matters: Constructing images of the other (1930s to 1950s)* (pp. 84–107). Editions L’Harmattan.

humor, which is absent in pure invective, overrides the message by saying, “It is a game.” Such a quasi-message refers to the world of impossible, despite its outward realism. Humorous characters when resembling real people are merely clowns to be taken seriously. Therefore, we accept or reject a humorous quasi-message on a meta-level rather than on invective level.

On the surface, the dramaturgy of the invective texts of rap battles looks like pure invective. However, when the audience intervenes, everything goes according to a different scenario in which are series of a duel of nicknames that are immortal in nature. The battle sets a precedent for the emergence of the comedy in Aristophanes' spirit where masks and nicknames are struggling. In order to produce a laughing effect, participants often create pseudonyms-self-inventives, pseudonyms-puns, use techniques of two-word pseudonyms-masks, multiple masks as well as invectives built on foreign words.

However, comic, diminutive pseudonyms-self-invectives with a potential for humorous bickering, similar to the war of words between a white clown and a ginger-haired clown, appear rarely used for humorous purposes in reality. Frustrated expectations of the public can be proved by the Internet community of viewers formed as a kind of viewer Internet subculture and characterized by the desire to compensate a dose of humor short-received at rap battles by means of their own amateurism, composing humorous and fantastic stories based on wordplay with the pseudonyms of opponents⁶¹⁸.

Interestingly, this phenomenon of compensation of humor by viewers vividly manifests the absorption process of irony by humor. A vast majority of rap duels unfold as a battle of personalities (in compliance with the rap duel rules), the participants try to strike a blow to the opponent's ego, whereas the audience, instead of personalities of the opponents, attacks “the speech itself”, absorbing the

⁶¹⁸ See: Semenova, E.A. (2020e). Kloun vs reper: (invektivy v onlajn i oflajn rep-poedinkah) [Clown vs rapper: Invectives in online and offline rap battles]. *Nauka televidenya*, 16(3), 89–104. <https://doi.org/10.30628/1994-9529-2020-16.3-89-104>. Available at: https://gitr.ru/data/events/2020/semenova_16.3.pdf?ysclid=lu4dq5ye9123495429. (Accessed: January 23, 2024). (In Russ.).

semantics of words with humor, thus making them entirely meaningless.

Most of the analyzed studies devoted to rap duels consider invectives based on the real facts in the opponent's biography. The reason behind it is the fact that rap battles fail to deal with humor, but rather with phenomena located "on the border between laughter and seriousness". We have selected a number of battles contributing to humorous verbal creativity of commentators of their video recordings, who transform the invectives used by rap performers into the names of comic book heroes, characters of anecdotes or clown couples. Of particular interest are the previously unanalyzed comments left under the video recordings of battles posted on the YouTube video hosting site; their authors often "disarm" a decarnival beginning in the invective, completing the missing comic details in the pseudonyms of rap performers, enabling them to be perceived as characters of comic books, popular theater, jokes or as clown masks⁶¹⁹.

Rap duel opponents make a lot of invective against each other's pseudonyms. The following most common moments were noted, causing general laughter: 1) the use of invective combining the opponent's real name and his pseudonym; 2) making verbal puns with the pseudonym; 3) diminutive and affectionate addresses to the pseudonym; 4) comparing the pseudonym with the name of an animal, bird ("Ernesto the Bird"); 5) doubling the pseudonym by comparing with a famous comedian or humorist ("You grimace like Garik Kharlamov", "this Arkady Raikin tells stories"); 6) accusing the opponent of committing a shameful act, like a trickster doing "something forbidden and indecent in a place where no one can see him"; 7) a humorous parody of a pseudonym, as a result of which the comic effect arises from the fact that the opinion of the narrator does not coincide with the opinion of the characters he parodies, and also because the invective is directed as a whole at the fictional comic hero; 8) rhymed pseudonyms reminiscent of the doubled names of members of "circus clown couples (Dick and Doff, Grock and Brick, Dario and Bario,

⁶¹⁹ Ibid.

Harlequin Fat (Fat Man) and Harlequin Bat (Bat)”⁶²⁰. The authors of the comments build relationships between the pseudonyms, find similarities with famous comic characters (“Even Beavis remembered”). In written comments left under the video broadcasts of battles, the authors often establish family ties between the pseudonyms.

Laughter is caused by the facial reactions of the opponents accompanying the utterance of invectives. The audience is impressed by the self-irony of the performers. The audience laughs at moments when opponents use parody and references to literary works. The comic effect arises from the immersion of the opponent in the artistic space of a famous literary work (“now you will be battled by Gogol MC, ... You were put in a box at the battle by that same Gogol story”). In the comments to such battles, viewers openly make it clear that the most important criterion for a successful battle is its humor, which is born on the basis of “fictional figures of speech” and parody: “These are the kind of battles I like, and they are funny, and there are jokes about family, and they shake hands at the end. Not like ... battles based on ‘facts’... :)))))))). (...) we all want a good mood from the battle) ... humor and rap together are a cool property (...) a clear parody of the opponent - a prediction of the opponent's gloomy future - a collection of verbal mosaics-punches from names”⁶²¹. These comments serve as clear evidence that verbal sparring and insults are not what viewers watch battles for. Viewers are much more interested in the spontaneous humor of the opponents, artistry, non-verbal nuances, apart lines, improvisation, parody. Even when viewers notice that their opponents are going beyond the genre, their comments serve as a sign of approval for such stylistic deviations.

Let's sum up the above. In rap battles, an ironic statement reflecting the rapper's true conviction is more common than a humorous. On the contrary, a humorous interpretation, in which the figurative meaning is opposite to the author's opinion, dominates in the comments left by viewers under the videos of battles.

⁶²⁰ Ibid.

⁶²¹ Ibid.

This can be explained by the fact that the strict rules of this genre cause a deficit of humorous situations that arise during rap battles, since in this culture “a moratorium is imposed on carnival laughter”⁶²². However, the authors of the comments amplify the targeted invectives with humorous content, willingly invent fantastic stories about the origin of the opponents' pseudonyms, distancing themselves as much as possible from the prototype of the pseudonym. The invectives, without the burden of ideological content, are perceived by the audience like carnival nicknames or clown names⁶²³.

Participants in battles, using the techniques of clowning, buffoonery, self-parody, transform this genre into a frivolous street-square art, like clowning, canceling the “need for a serious reaction” in relation to him. No less important in this process is the audience, or carnival square, defending with their humorous comments the victory of a profound statement over a serious (superficial) judgment, acting as anonymous authors of popular prints or satirical texts, treating the heroes depicted by them as non-existent representatives of the world of laughter. With their unconscious laughter reaction, similar to the immediate reaction of the theatre-goer, who “from himself adds to the performance ... the missing angle of cosmic laughter”⁶²⁴ each of the authors of the comments exposes the seriousness of the battle, seeing it as “a pretence, a temporary mask, the face of the game”⁶²⁵.

The transition to self-parody has been brewing in rap battle for a long time. The entire path of the formation of rap battle from a street subculture to professional art testifies to the transformation of street agon into a carnivalized genre of street culture. Using the provisions of the theory of humor of A.G. Kozintsev in the analysis of Russian rap battle allowed us to look at this phenomenon as an example of the carnivalization of the genre of street culture, in

⁶²² Ibid. P. 98.

⁶²³ Ibid.

⁶²⁴ Gachev, G.D. (1968). *Soderzhatel'nost' khudozhestvennykh form (Epos. Lirika. Teatr.)* [The content of artistic forms. (Epic. Lyric. Theatre). Moscow: Prosveshcheniye. P. 226. (In Russ.).

⁶²⁵ Ibid. P. 227.

which what was serious has lost its meaning. If at the first stage of the development of rap battle, invective was used to create a conflict situation, then at the second stage, invective began to perform an agonistic function, and at the third - a carnival function. The culture of rap battle serves as an example of the subculture's implementation of its play potential within the framework of theatrical and playful activities. Russian rap battle as an agonal recreation has transformed into a carnivalized genre, going into the subsystem of street culture, demonstrating the passage of stages of development of this street subculture from a serious (puerilist) game to agone and carnivalization.

3.3. Compensatory recreation (fire theatre)

In the first quarter of the current century, the industry of fire shows and pyrotechnic performances has been rapidly developing in Russia, which, on the one hand, are a complex of acculturated elements of the foreign entertainment industry⁶²⁶. As you know, games, mummers, booths, folk festivals in Russia were invariably accompanied by incendiary amusements and “funny lights”⁶²⁷.

The national specificity of our culture is that “the element of fire is associated with two spheres of human existence: physical, where fire is perceived primarily as a symbol of danger threatening destruction, and spiritual, where fire symbolizes internal, to a greater extent creative heat”⁶²⁸. The attitude to fire as to a living person is also a distinctive feature of the fire culture in Russia. For example,

⁶²⁶ Semenova, E.A. (2024c). Istorija ognnykh zabav v Rossii s XVI po nachalo XXI veka: ot poteshnykh ognej do ognevogo teatra [The history of fire entertainment in Russia from the 16th to the beginning of the 21st century: from fun fires to fire theater]. In *Dvadcatye Denis'evskie chteniya. Materialy mezhdunarodnoj nauchno-prakticheskoy konferencii po bibliotekovedeniyu, knigovedeniyu i problemam bibliotechno-informacionnoj deyatel'nosti, g. Oryol, 18-19 dekabrya 2023 g. / Departament kul'tury Orl. obl.; Orl. obl. nauch. univers. publ. b-ka im. I.A. Bunina; Orl. gos. in-t kul'tury; [red.-sost. N.Z. Shahotina]. Oryol: [b.i.], 2024. P. 305–311. (In Russ.)*

⁶²⁷ Vedmin, O. (2011). «Poteshnye ogni» dlya Petra III [“Fun fires” for Peter the Third]. *Rodina*, 12. P. 131. (In Russ.).

⁶²⁸ Balonkina, O.V. (2018). Frazeologicheskoe predstavlenie stihii ogon' v russkoj lingvokul'ture [Phraseological representation of the fire in Russian linguoculture]. *Communication Studies*, 1. P. 118. (In Russ.).

in the ritual life of the Udmurts⁶²⁹ and Khanty, fire is perceived as a spirit, perfection, plays exclusively the role of a talisman, keeper of the hearth⁶³⁰. The playful hypostasis of fire brings Russian culture to some extent closer to countries where fire is an integral part of festive, festival culture⁶³¹.

However, despite the fact that fire theater is one of the oldest genres of street theater culture, today it looks like a background for such popular forms of street theater culture in Russia as puppet street theater, carnival procession, street clowning, etc.

The certain distance at which the fire theatre is located from the general movement of street theatres in our country may be a consequence of the underestimation of its role in the formation of the modern festive chronotope. Existing studies examining modern Russian fire theater either mean fire show, or try to integrate it into the traditional context of fire fun and performances, or apply to it the theoretical optics used in foreign ethnography in relation to the fire subculture. The essence of the fire theatre itself in Russia as a phenomenon of contemporary street art in the context of such approaches remains undisclosed.

Observation of the development of fire theatre in Russia over the last quarter of a century allows us to assume that it was this direction that became the main driving force that overcame the inertia of street theatre culture that arose as a result of the deep economic crisis in the late nineties of the last century. From our point of view, the opinion that fire theatre owes its appearance to a foreign fire subculture, formed on the basis of the youth's fascination with poi spinning,

⁶²⁹ Minniyakhmetova, T.G. (2014). Ogon' v normativno-obryadovoj praktike udmurtov [Fire in the normative and ritual practice of the Udmurts]. *Ezhegodnik finno-ugorskih issledovanij*, 2. Izhevsk: Udmurtskij universitet. P. 64.

⁶³⁰ Karchina, V.V. (2020). Kul't ognya u sovremennykh khantov Surgut'skogo rayona (po materialam polevykh issledovaniy) [Fire Cult among the Modern Khanty of the Surgut Region (based on field research materials)]. *Kul'tura i tsivilizatsiya*, Vol. 10(3A). P. 231. (In Russ.).

⁶³¹ Titova, Ye.V. (2020). Kul't ognya i ochaga v kul'ture korennykh narodov Amuro-Sakhalinskogo regiona [The cult of fire and hearth in the culture of indigenous peoples of the Amur-Sakhalin region]. *Vestnik Primorskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta imeni Sholom-Aleykhema*, 2(39). P. 140. (In Russ.).

requires clarification⁶³². According to our hypothesis, fire subculture was only a prerequisite for the formation of fire theatre in Russia at the beginning of this century, since the decisive role in the emergence of modern Russian fire theater was played by informal associations of representatives of the Russian fire subculture and theater figures experimenting with genres of street theater art.

The opinion that Russian fire performers belong either to the subculture of object manipulation⁶³³ or to the subculture of posters⁶³⁴ seems unfounded. It is important to take into account that poi came to Russia already fiery. At the beginning of this century, Russian youth gathered in Moscow, on Bolotnaya Square, for a “pokruton” of fire poi. Let us recall that poi is an entertainment that originated among the indigenous Maori people of New Zealand, quickly gained popularity in European countries in the second half of the last century and came to Russia at the end of the last century. Poi, according to researchers, is both the name of an object (a ball on the end of a cord) and its rotation. Researchers believe that poi develop plasticity, physical and mental flexibility, increase human adaptability to difficulties, and activate compensatory mechanisms that art possesses⁶³⁵. It is believed that long Maori poi were not originally fiery. Their transformation into fire poi ones occurred under the influence of the actively developing tourist industry in the 1940s and 50s of the 20th century⁶³⁶.

The emergence of the genre of fire theatre in Russia was indeed facilitated by the street fire subculture. However, only after the fire subculture was joined by

⁶³² Phillips, S. (2009). Phenomenologies of Fire: Exploring Combustive Ethnography and the Articulating Sensorium. *Platform: Journal of Graduate students in Anthropology*, 10(1). P. 19.

⁶³³ Aleksandrova, Ye.A., Trofimova, D.A. (2019). Subkul'tura ob'yektnoy manipulyatsii kak sotsial'naya gruppya [Subculture of object manipulation as a social group]. *Sotsial'naya psikhologiya: teoriya i praktika. Materialy IV Yezhegodnoy nauchno-prakticheskoy konferentsii pamyati M.YU. Kondrat'yeva (13–14 maya 2019 g.)*. M.: FGBOU VO MGPPU. P. 16. (In Russ.).

⁶³⁴ Bakhtina, M.B. (2008). Zhargon plakatnoy subkul'tury [Poister subculture jargon]. *Vestnik Omskogo universiteta*, 1. P. 88. (In Russ.).

⁶³⁵ van West, K. R. (2018). *The effects of International Poi on physical, cognitive, and emotional health in healthy older adults* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Auckland]. University of Auckland Research Repository. P. 32–33.

⁶³⁶ Watt, J. (2024). *The Whakapapa of Contemporary Fire poi*. Confirmation Report Doctorate in Social Anthropology Massey University. P. 1.

theater figures seeking to experiment at the intersection of theater, circus, street and pyrotechnic art, and amplified it with theatrical imagery, this subculture began to transform into the genre of street theater art. Pyrotechnicians who were part of such creative artels, who were representatives of the oldest profession associated with the arrangement of fireworks and fire fun⁶³⁷, successfully developing in Russia for more than six centuries, significantly enriched this genre of street theater with pyrotechnic elements.

It should be noted that if “the word ‘fun’ in the Russian language ... defined a wide range of activities from hunting to theatrical performances”⁶³⁸, including “street performances of various kinds: scuffles between men, family or neighbourhood quarrels, the local fool”⁶³⁹, then “funny lights” were popularly called exclusively fireworks⁶⁴⁰. There are significant differences between salute and fireworks. If “a salute is a greeting, designated and accompanied by shooting from a combat weapon, usually blank charges”, then “Fireworks (German Feuer-Werk) is a fiery creation or deed, ‘amusing fire’ — burning of standing and moving ‘fiery figures’”⁶⁴¹. Salutes are recognized as an earlier invention than fireworks, since “they do not require long special preparations”⁶⁴².

As usual, “‘fiery amusements’ ... were arranged using club moss. Club moss is a creeping herbaceous evergreen plant, its mature dry spores give an instant

⁶³⁷ Sarieva, E. (2005). Poteshnye ogni Feiervarki Petrovskoi epokhi [Fun fires. Fireworks of the Peter the Great era]. *Rodina*, 3. P. 82. (In Russ.).

⁶³⁸ Shamin, C.M., Dzhensen, K.R. (2018). Inozemnyye poteshniki pri dvore pervykh moskovskikh tsarey [Foreign entertainers at the court of the first Moscow tsars]. *Rossiyskaya istoriya*, 1. P. 32. (In Russ.).

⁶³⁹ Bernshtam, T.A. (2008). Fenomen «Smekh-plach» v russkoj narodnoj pravoslavnoj kul'ture [The phenomenon of “Laughter—Crying” in Russian folk Orthodox culture]. In T. A. Bernshtam, & A. I. Teryukov (Eds.), *Christianity in the regions of the world* (Iss. 2). SPb.: Nauka. P. 308. (In Russ.).

⁶⁴⁰ Vedmin, O. (2011). “Poteshnye ogni” dlya Petra III [“Fun fires” for Peter the Third]. *Rodina*, 12. P. 131. (In Russ.).

⁶⁴¹ Zagorsky, V.V. (2000). *Ogni poteshnye: Fejervark: istoriya, teoriya, praktika* [Fun fires: Fireworks: History, theory, practice]. Shkola imeni A. N. Kolmogorova: Samoobrazovanie. P. 8. (In Russ.).

⁶⁴² Ibid.

lightning-like flash without smoke when ignited”⁶⁴³. As is known, under Tsar Mikhail Fedorovich, a “amusing chamber” was created to organize pyrotechnic performances and special effects for the royal court. It was then that fireworks rockets began to be used in Russian fire extravaganzas. Until the end of the 16th century, the traditional furnace show remained, and even the royal couple came to see it⁶⁴⁴.

In the 17th century, Russian pyrotechnic masters were no longer inferior to their “European colleagues in ... ingenuity”⁶⁴⁵. Fireworks theater first appeared in Russia during the reign of Peter the Great. Fireworks theater performances were as long as drama theater performances. It is noteworthy that before the start of the fireworks, the public was given programs with a list of the actors, who were fireworks figures⁶⁴⁶. It should be noted that under Peter I and Peter III, decorating city buildings and streets with lights was not only permitted, but even mandatory. All city residents had to take part in the festive illuminations. Wealthy city dwellers completely “illuminated their homes”⁶⁴⁷. The more modestly living part of the city population limited themselves to lighting fire bowls in front of the windows of their homes. During the reign of Catherine II, the military theme of fireworks, pomp, metaphor, glorification of the victorious empress, the mother-protector, began to wane, being replaced by theatrical conventionality, imagery, and a shift in emphasis from a state, ceremonial holiday to a folk festival and spectacle for the people.

Thanks to V. Polunin's initiative to implement the “Square Theatres of the World” program within the framework of the Third World Theatre Olympiad in

⁶⁴³ Sarieva, E. (2005). Poteshnye ogni Feierverki Petrovskoi epokhi [Fun fires. Fireworks of the Peter the Great era]. *Rodina*, 3. P. 82. (In Russ.).

⁶⁴⁴ Zagorsky, V.V. (2000). *Ogni poteshnye: Fejerverk: istoriya, teoriya, praktika* [Fun fires: Fireworks: History, theory, practice]. Shkola imeni A. N. Kolmogorova: Samoobrazovanie. Pp. 157–158. (In Russ.).

⁶⁴⁵ Platov, G.A. (2005). *Pirotekhnika. Iskusstvo izgotovleniya fejerverkov* [Pyrotechnician. The art of making fireworks]. M.: Izdatel'stvo Knizhnyj dom, Izdatel'stvo Eksmo. P. 7. (In Russ.).

⁶⁴⁶ Aronova, A. (2018). Triumf Minervy: voennye prazdniki v Rossii (1730–1770) [The triumph of Minerva: Military holidays in Russia (1730–1770)]. *Iskusstvoznanie*, 4. P. 107. (In Russ.).

⁶⁴⁷ Vedmin, O. (2011). «Poteshnye ogni» dlya Petra III [“Fun fires” for Peter the Third]. *Rodina*, 12. P. 133. (In Russ.).

Moscow, the Russian public was able to see for the first time the Russian theatres “Theatre-EX”, the Arkhangelsk Regional Youth Theatre “Bolero”; foreign teams “Carabos” (France), “Pan Opticum” (Germany), “Alarm! Theater” (Germany), “Nucleo” (Italy), using fire and pyrotechnics; to get acquainted with the traditions of Eastern, Italian, Russian and Venetian carnivals.

The period of V.I. Polunin's initiatives in the field of revitalizing street theatre life in the capital coincided with the heyday of the corporate, festive industry. For almost the entire first decade of this century, the theatre of fire was in a privileged position. On the one hand, it was in the thick of the theatrical events of the capital, having emerged from the underground thanks to the initiatives of V.I. Polunin in the field of holding street theatre festivals. On the other hand, theatre of fire was at the epicenter of corporate events. Thanks to the simultaneously flared up interest in street theatre culture in the official space and the private sphere of corporate culture, the theatre of fire did not sink into oblivion.

The lack of information about the fire theatre in Russia was compensated by articles in the press covering important theatrical events. Articles in the journals the magazines “Ves’ Mir”, “Afisha”, “Prazdnik”, the newspaper “Kommersant”, the publication “Jalouse” and others allow us to get an idea of how the work of the actors of the fire theater was perceived by the Russian public. In an article by E. Kovalskaya in the journal “Afisha” in 2003, a colorful description was given of a fire show shown during the Chekhov Festival, allowing us to get an idea of how “Moscow burned” at the beginning of this century. The author of the article recalls how the Chekhov festival ended spectacularly with a performance by the “spirits of fire”, whom the audience took for real Italians. In fact, the Italians were actors from the Russian street theatre “Theatre-EX”, who by that time had already visited foreign festivals and taken part in the Theater Olympics in 2001. E. Kovalskaya summarized that such a theater “on our streets ... you will not meet (...). crazy dedication and complete harmony with fire; they do not act, they are simply carried

away”⁶⁴⁸.

In 2003, the *Kommersant* newspaper published an article about the Fifth International Chekhov Theatre Festival in Moscow, which noted the high percentage of participation by Russian and foreign theatres using fire and pyrotechnics.

V. Novikova describes the performance of the Theatre-EX at the Third All-Russian Festival of Performances for Teenagers “On the Threshold of Youth” in Ryazan in 2004, comparing its style with the *Kin-dza-dza* film in the article “Fire and Copper Pipes”. The author recalls that in this performance, “The grimy patsaks and chatlans, spewing fire from every part of their bodies, dressed in black leather, draped in soft velvet, with the painted black-and-white faces of sad clowns, were silent: no welcoming “ku” or sharp “ku” for you”⁶⁴⁹. However, “the audience (...) like children, tried to squeeze forward, to the front rows”⁶⁵⁰.

V. Novikova's article “The Actors Went Wild. The Firefighters Were Silent”, written on the occasion of the II International Forum of Ancient Cities in Ryazan in 2019, gives an idea of how the audience and theater culture of perception of the fire theater of art in our country has evolved over 15 years. The article provides a description of the street performance of the Theater-EKS in which the seven-meter paper theater, “anticipating a fabulous finale, ... solemnly towered over ... the square, sparkled with lights, and at some point burned down”⁶⁵¹. At the end of the street performance, the actors continued to dance selflessly and joyfully, acting precisely in the carnival logic of “clownery and buffoonery”, acting as heralds of the “wide carnival ramp of the theatrical performance”⁶⁵². The image of the theater in this artistic interpretation refers us to the humorous self-reflection of theatrical

⁶⁴⁸ Semenova, E.A. et al. (2017). Pohozhdeniya ulichnogo teatra [Adventures of the street theatre]. In E.A. Semenova (Ed.), *Proceedings of the International Round Table dedicated to M. M. Bakhtin “The Problem of Chronotope in Modern Scientific Studies”, April 19–20, 2017, Moscow*. Moscow: IAEaCS RAE. P. 262. (In Russ.).

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁵¹ Novikova, V. Aktery bezumstvovali. Pozharnyye bezmolvstvovali. (In Russ.). Available at: <https://ryazan-news.net/culture/2019/08/25/27377.html>. (Accessed: June 26, 2024).

⁶⁵² Gachev, G.D. (1968). *Soderzhatelnost khudozhestvennykh form (Epos. Lirika. Teatr.)* [The content of artistic forms. (Epic. Lyric. Theatre)]. Moscow: Prosveshcheniye. P. 224. (In Russ.).

culture. The culmination of this street spectacle is the symbolic transformation of the theater in a closed box into a general carnival celebration, proving that the theater and its “pathetics and seriousness always return to that humorous frame of the goat song of the satyrs from which it arose”⁶⁵³.

We conducted a survey, which included questionnaires and interviews with actors of the troupe of the Moscow Fire Theatre, which has existed for over 15 years. The respondents were asked the following questions: "Your nickname, a name for your people; the story of coming to the fire theatre; What has happened dramatically during the years of being in the fire theatre (at least three events); If you had not come to the fire theatre, what would not have happened in your life; Your philosophical reflection on the topic "Clown in clowning; What tones are colored in your stay in the theatre?; Earnings - is the main thing for you in the theatre or not?; Your usual food during an away performance?; What do you expect from each performance?; What are you unhappy with in the theatre?; Has at least one of your dreams come true since coming to the theatre?; Why did you choose to work with fire?; Do you have a higher education?; What does the fire theatre mean to you?; How do you feel when in contact with another subculture?; Do you see yourself in the street theater of fire and beyond?

Conducted survey showed that the actors' stories of coming to the theatre are steeped in romance. Most respondents had higher theatre education when they came to the theatre. The age of the main troupe members was in the range of 30-37. The actors believe that drama theatre does not provide an opportunity to implement what can be tried in street theatre. The criteria for skill are built in accordance with the criteria of the acting profession, but improvisation comes first. From the memories of those who came to the theater at the beginning of this century, it becomes clear that neophytes perceived experienced theatre actors as mentors, authorities in the field of fire skills. However, at the time of the survey, respondents noted that for them, possession of any technical skill in working with fire is not the main thing, since it provides an opportunity to undergo initiation, to

⁶⁵³ Ibid. P. 226.

enter the community. Actors noted that over the years spent in the theater, the scale of requirements for neophytes has been steadily moving towards buffoonery, the search for their own carnival mask (Fig. 13–23), the manner of existence in the performance space, the creation of a comic image and their own art objects.

Longitudinal analysis showed that about 3% of respondents who were participants in V.I. Polunin's projects “Fools on the Volga” (2003), “Aquarium Garden” (2005), “Snow Show” (2003, 2004), “Snowmens on the Arbat” (2006) are founders of their own fire theaters.

Several troupes were singled out that position themselves as a theatre of fire. The following groups were noted, including “Fire People” (Moscow), the “Ferro” fire theater (Moscow), “Theater-Ex” (Moscow), the “Agnivo” fire theater (Moscow), the “Igri plameni” fire theater (Perm), the “Zlye Ryby Mechanical Experimental Theater” (Moscow), and the “Salamandra Fire Legends Theater” (Moscow). The smallest subgroup of fire theaters is carnival-oriented theaters. We included three Moscow troupes in this group: “Theater-EX”, the *Zlye Ryby Mechanical Experimental Theater*, and “Fire People”.

It can be said that the *Theatre-EX* is a pioneer in the field of modern carnival direction of fire theater in Russia, which is one of the first to start creating large art objects, among which are a organ, a cart, a clock, a theater, a mill, a charabanc, etc. (Fig. 32, 34, 35). All the actions in the performances of this theater are built around some carnival object (Fig. 33). From the depths of Theatre-EX workshop came independent street theaters “Fire People”, “Mechanical Experimental Theatre”, inheriting the features of the carnival-eccentric style. The *Fire People* theatre calls itself “Traveling Theater”, whose artists are a sailor, a strongman, a gypsy, acrobats and a man in a burning top hat. The theater's fire show unfolds “to the accompaniment of a brass band of firefighters, in the entourage of its own scenery, the heroes act out scenes with various types of lights and fountains, perform tricks”⁶⁵⁴.

Today, *Zlye Ryby Mechanical Experimental Theater* is developing in the

⁶⁵⁴ Ognennie Ludi. Available at: <https://www.fireshow.ru/main/>. (Accessed: January 3, 2023).

carnival directionis. In performances of this theatre is involve “Mechanical art objects with levers and motors, roaring, spewing fire and sheaves of sparks, fire-breathing fish, a huge ‘Krakoznyabla’ stage with moving paws, a cryo locomotive, ... , a fire ship ‘UKHA’”⁶⁵⁵.

The qualitative similarities and differences between communities formed around the fire theatre (carnival) and fire show (brutal) trends are revealed. The similarities include professional taboos on throwing trash and cigarette butts into the fire; professional slang (motalki, pirka, korporat, kerik, keros, etc.); code expressions (“Zazhzhem”, “s ogonikom”, etc.); stages of performance preparation (editing, make-up costume, performance, dismantling). The difference is seen in the fact that if the brutal community emphasizes the sacredness of fire, and the criterion for the success of acting is assessed by the level of technical performance, then in communities claiming the status of carnival, the unspoken criterion is improvisation, courage, play, etc. The peculiarity of the fire show subculture is that it most often mobilizes as a group on the occasion of fulfilling a commercial order. Members of fire theatre troupes have a common collective history, myths that arose on the basis of common commercial and creative activities. The isolation of fire theatres from the fire-show subculture is explained by the difference in artistic preferences and professional education. Despite the fact that the brutal direction of fire shows is more widespread than the carnival one, it is the latter that requires higher performing and technical skills.

The modern carnival direction of fire theatre serves to preserve and transmit the cultural practice of preserving the playing person in a person. In this regard, we note that ethnographers, folklorists, cultural scientists, and philosophers once drew attention to the humorous nature of fire. Ya. Chesnov saw a trickster nature in Prometheus. The researcher believes that Prometheus is a “trickster, similar to the northern ambivalent hero” the deceiver Loki. The trickster is not a demiurge, not a creator, but a redistributor of goods, often by means of Sacred theft. The gods

⁶⁵⁵ Mechanical Experimental Theater “Zlye ryby”. Available at: <https://www.angryfish-fire.com/>. (Accessed: December 13, 2023).

create these goods from themselves, or in a word, which is the same thing. As for the tricksters ‘redistributors’, they are God-fighters by virtue of their essence (...) They realize themselves in a risky situation. Prometheus also takes risks. (...) He behaves aristocratically”⁶⁵⁶.

O.M. Freidenberg saw in the fire gods a connection with pre-comedic comedy and laughter, believing that “the lameness of fire represents an iambic trait. The lame Hephaestus evokes the smile of Hera, as Iambic the smile of Demeter; in the laughing scene of the gods, both the Iliad and the song of Demodocus emphasize, as a funny trait, precisely the lameness of Hephaestus”. “Zeus-father and other blessed eternal gods! – cries Hephaestus in the song of Demodocus. Come here to see the funny and obscene deeds, how I, lame, am always dishonored by Zeus’s daughter Aphrodite! (...) And further. The gods, bursting into laughter, say to each other: “He caught up the slow, the fast, as now Hephaestus, being slow, seized Ares, the fastest of all the Olympian gods: he, lame, took by tricks” (...) Chthonism, comicism, is connected with lameness. Fire is lame in a certain phase, like a month; and consequently the devil is lame”⁶⁵⁷.

N.V. Ponyrko gave a detailed description of the oxymoronic image of fire⁶⁵⁸, referring to its carnival function. According to N.V. Ponyrko's hypothesis, "the playful dousing with water at Easter is a gesture of folk culture that translates the basic idea of Christianity about the unification of the divine and the human into the language of a common game. This language is based on the same oxymoronic image of fire emitting water, which is present in liturgical hymnography: the fire of the Lord's Last Judgment is quenched by the water of human repentance, or, conversely, the fire of human sin is doused with the water of God's mercy, which is

⁶⁵⁶ Chesnov, Y. (2007). Mif o Prometee i vital'nye osnovy lichnosti [The myth of Prometheus and the vital foundations of personality]. *Razvitie lichnosti*, 2. P. 96. (In Russ.).

⁶⁵⁷ Freidenberg, O.M. (1988). Mif i teatr [The myth and the theater]. Moscow: GITIS. Pp. 75–76. (In Russ.).

⁶⁵⁸ Ponyrko, N.V. (2017). “Paskhal'nyj smekh»” na Rusi v kontekste liturgicheskoy gimnografii [“Easter laughter” in Russia in the context of liturgical hymnography]. In *Proceedings of the Department of Old Russian Literature* (Vol. 65, pp. 243–251). Dmitrii Bulanin. P. 251. (In Russ.).

essentially the same thing”⁶⁵⁹. “The Chaldeans” can be considered among the first street actors of the fire theater, “who were simultaneously both participants in the church Furnace action and street Christmas mummers. (...) throughout the Christmastide they ran along the streets in their ‘Chaldean’ attire, with a funny fire in their hands, setting on fire the oncoming carts of hay and the beards of passers-by. This running was accompanied by an atmosphere of liberty, unbridled freedom”⁶⁶⁰.

The philosopher G. Bachelard identified several noteworthy versions of the origin of fire, among which fire appears as a substance associated with the comedic principle, which best meets the aesthetic and intellectual needs of homo sapiens. Despite the fact that G. Bachelard did not set himself the task of highlighting the laughing function of fire as the leading one, in the process of debunking various myths and superstitions associated with the worship of fire, the philosopher considered the version of the amusing origin of fire to be quite realistic. The researcher cited as an example a legend of one Australian tribe, about how “a deaf asp was the only owner of fire, keeping it in his womb. All attempts by the birds to seize the fire were unsuccessful until a small falcon appeared. He launched into such funny pranks that the asp could not hold back from laughing. As soon as he laughed, the fire flew out and became their common property”⁶⁶¹.

Today, researchers increasingly consider festivals and fire holidays from the perspective of M.M. Bakhtin’s theory of carnival culture. G. St. John uses M.M. Bakhtin's concept of carnival culture in studying the phenomenon of “Burning Man”. At the same time, the researcher considers it insufficient to consider “Burning Man” from the perspective of festival studies, focusing on the festive nature of this phenomenon. Instead, the researcher suggests seeing in the carnival

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁰ Ponyrko, N.V. (2017). “Paskhal'nyj smekh»” na Rusi v kontekste liturgicheskoy gimnografii [“Easter laughter” in Russia in the context of liturgical hymnography]. In *Proceedings of the Department of Old Russian Literature* (Vol. 65, pp. 243–251). Dmitrii Bulanin. P. 244. (In Russ.).

⁶⁶¹ Bachelard, G. (1993). *Psychoanalysis of Fire* [Psychoanalysis of Fire]. Moscow: Progress Publishing Group. P. 59. (In Russ.).

component of the “Burning Man” phenomenon a reflection of intentional cultural tribalism⁶⁶², directed against the commodification of art⁶⁶³, a consumerist view of culture. G. St. John calls the philosophy of the “Burning Man” phenomenon Promethean, since the initiators of this event are Prometheus in spirit, filled with the desire to creatively transform the world, having the courage to live the future in the present⁶⁶⁴.

Employees of the University of California at Berkeley G.S. Rausser and V. Strielkowski believe that new artistic ideas and trends are born in the “Burning Man” space, and creative communication between representatives of various art movements takes place⁶⁶⁵. K.M. Matheson and R. Tinsley apply the concept of carnival culture by M. M. Bakhtin in studying the Edinburgh Festival of Lights in Beltane, which, in their opinion, has gone through all the main stages: from birth, growth, maturity to carnival reincarnation⁶⁶⁶.

To sum up, we note that the reason for the paradigm shift in the development of fire and pyrotechnic art in our country can be considered the carnivalization of street theater art, which was provoked by the work of V.I. Polunin in the field of reviving Russian street theater in the 2000s. In particular, the *Universal Carnival of Fire*, which has traditionally been held on the territory of the *Master Panin Film Adventure Park* in Moscow since 2006, initially had the status of a championship. However, later, in 2009, the *Prometheus* championship was renamed the *Universal Carnival of Fire street theater festival*, which is not a competition, but a festive competition of fire theaters in such nominations as the best street performance, the

⁶⁶² St John, G. (2017). Civilised tribalism: Burning Man, event-tribes and maker culture. *Cultural Sociology*, 12(1). P. 11.

⁶⁶³ St John, G. (2021). Sherpagate: Tourists and Cultural Drama at Burning Man. In M. Nita, & J. H. Kidwell (Eds.), *Festival Cultures: Mapping New Fields in the Arts and Social Sciences* (1st ed.). Palgrave Macmillan. P. 179.

⁶⁶⁴ St John, G. (2017). Civilised tribalism: Burning Man, event-tribes and maker culture. *Cultural Sociology*, 12(1). P. 15.

⁶⁶⁵ Rausser, G., Strielkowski, W. (2023). An Economic Analysis of the Burning Man Festival's Marketing Evolution. *Marketing and Management of Innovations*, 4. P. 177.

⁶⁶⁶ Matheson, C.M., Tinsley, R. (2016). The carnivalesque and event evolution: a study of the Beltane Fire Festival. *Leisure Studies*, 16(1). P. 3.

best fire show and pyrotechnic show, the best visual special effects show, the best solo performance, etc.

The socio-cultural analysis carried out in the study allows us to state the obvious advancement of the development of fire theater as a compensatory recreation in comparison with other genres of street theater culture. The results of the study confirmed the correctness of the hypothesis that the emergence of modern fire theater in Russia as a genre of street culture was facilitated by the commonwealth of theater figures and representatives of the Russian fire subculture, formed in the late 20th - early 21st centuries on the basis of experiments in the field of synthesis of theater and pyrotechnic, fire art.

The entire path of the formation of fire theater in our country from a street subculture to professional art shows similarities with the development of such a street genre as rap battle, transformed from a street agon into a carnivalized genre of art. Having lost its original serious meaning, fire in the fire theater began to perform not a brutal, but a carnival function. At the beginning of this century, fire theatres were one of the first popular forms of street theatre, stimulating the further development of this art in our country.

The specificity of the formation and development of fire theatre in Russia consists in its continuity with traditional carnival-spectacle forms of culture, in the integration of the latest experience in the field of pyrotechnic art. The genre of fire theatre embodies the agonal, carnival and festive beginning of contemporary Russian street theatre culture.

3.4. Carnival recreation (Fools on the Volga)

V.I. Polunin can be called the main ideologist of the creation of carnival recreations for clown artists in our country and in the world. He realized a huge number of practical, educational, cultural projects in the field of clown art, street theater, carnival, and circus.

The project “The 20th Century through the Eyes of a Clown” within the framework of the Third World Theater Olympics in Moscow⁶⁶⁷ brought together the greatest clowns of our time: J. Edwards (initiator of the Festival of Fools in Amsterdam), who believed that “the only thing that a cheerful person needed was freedom and honesty”⁶⁶⁸; the hereditary juggler, ferocious provocateur, clown-anarchist L. Bassi; B. Polivka; D. Shiner. Polunin, on the one hand, plunged the viewer into the individual worlds of clowns, on the other hand, united all of them in a single multi-faced carnival.

In 2010, Polunin initiated “Mir-Caravane” (International Festival of Itinerant Theaters), which travelled through Brno, Frankfurt on the Main, Villeneuve-lès-Avignon, Namur and Moscow. In 2010, the audience could see “Mir-Caravane” in the Kolomenskoye Museum Reserve in Moscow. The “Mir-Caravane” program involved such troupes as Buchinger's Boot Marionettes; La Compagnie du Hasard; Divadlo Husa na Provazku; L'Artmada; Les Arts Nomades; Ton und Kirschen Wandertheater; Teatro Nucleo di Ferrara; Antigon Theater AKTion; Ósmego Dnia et al.

For several years, Polunin headed the section “Street Theater and Circus” within the framework of the Cultural Forum in St. Petersburg. The 2015 section was dedicated to clowning and street theatre. The section discussed the issues of hospital clowning; convergence of theory and practice of circus and street clowning; specifics of clowning and street theater, and others.

The 2016 “Street Theatre and Circus” section was dedicated to the art of juggling and innovations in this field. In 2017, the section included the subsection “New Circus and Street Theatre”; conference “Contemporary Street Theatre: Specifics of the Art Form and Its Implementation in Russia”. The plenary session was dedicated to circus festivals and street theater as a way to educate and improve the artistic level in these areas of art. Against the background of Polunin's numerous initiatives, the 2003 project “Fools on the Volga” is little known to the

⁶⁶⁷ *The Third World Theater Olympics in Moscow. IV International Chekhov Festival* [Booklet]. (2001). International Committee of Theater Olympiads. (In Russ.).

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

general public. Meanwhile, this project comprises a serious attempt by Polunin to create an analogue of carnival recreation with students. The “Fools on the Volga” project arose as a result of the failed course of clowning at the Russian University of Theatre Arts (GITIS). The students who passed the qualifying rounds took part in V.I. Polunin's project “Fools on the Volga”. For a month, the students sailed on the ship “Don” along the Volga. Every day various master classes, and film screenings were organized with the participation of the world's great comedians. Themes for evening improvisations involved Natasha Rostova's ball, Gogol painting, Tolstoy left home. And all these characters had to be clownish. Kharms' anecdotes were the thematic staple of the cabaret in which the students took part. A month before the departure, the students were assigned to read a certain amount of literature. There was a costume room on the ship. The most interesting characters, plots born during improvisations on the ship were tried out in public. Sometimes, the characters invaded cities and tried to take passers-by out of the rhythm of everyday existence, using the principle of art intervening in the infrastructure of the city.

The basis for training students in the atmosphere of daily carnival was the “Vsyaki-Byaki” rehearsal system, in which holiday life was the formula for rehearsing in a holiday atmosphere. Every day on the ship was festive. They celebrated 29 different holidays, one holiday per day, from New Year to Ivan Kupala (Figure 30).

The similarity of the system of clown education with the system of Russian cabaret consists in the closedness, selection of participants, humorous tone of communication of the project participants, concentration of creative activity in a limited space and time, where “the spirit of artistic competition, ... the excitement of merry rivalry” reigns⁶⁶⁹. “Light improvisations – the companions of actors' parties and feasts – not designed for strangers were preferable there. Here, everyone – or almost everyone – did not think about their own performance, even

⁶⁶⁹ Tikhvinskaya, L. (1995). *Kabare i teatry miniatyur v Rossii. 1908—1917* [Cabarets and miniature theaters in Russia, 1908–1917]. Moscow: Kul'tura. P. 23. (In Russ.).

a second before it, since they were electrified by the previous performer. They shot up to a stage slightly raised above the floor, and later, after their improvisation, they returned to the common table”⁶⁷⁰.

Polunin's cabaret within the “Fools on the Volga” project and the Russian cabaret of actors of the Moscow Art Theater reecho in the system of preparation and demonstration of acting etudes, which were not prepared, but improvised. The whole point of the performances consisted in the spontaneity of their appearance and demonstration. Vsyaki-Byaki – Polunin's rehearsal technique, a creative celebration of ideas, puns, various improvisational themes, “the merits of which are discussed in detail, selected, and weaknesses are instantly directed in unexpected areas or corrected by the inclusion in the situation of “byaki” (something bad, unpleasant) of someone willing to try to develop it in a new direction. Everyone is absorbed in the process of forming an ‘idea’, no one is in a hurry”⁶⁷¹.

Yu.A. Berladin, the artistic director of Theatre-EX, one of the teachers of acting and stage movement, was invited to the “Fools on the Volga” project. He sees in Polunin's rehearsal system a similarity with preparing performances of the provincial enterprise theater of the late 19th – early 20th century. The immersion of students in the daily carnival, implying existing at the peak of their creative abilities, finding sources of inspiration in the conditions of everyday “holiday routine”, turns into a serious test, which actors of enterprise theaters were subjected to more than a century ago. On the one hand, the actors acutely felt the lack of new dramatic material. On the other hand, they were in dire need of techniques that help them work under the conditions of the game race. We are talking about an impeccable mastery of the technique of theatrical cliché, as an integral competence of an actor of an enterprise theater. “Gilyarovsky wrote about how the wise master sends a promising actor to work in the provinces for several years, ... After serving for about three years in a provincial enterprise theater

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁷¹ Actor improvisation at Licedei Theater. Available at: https://pikabu.ru/story/akterskaya_improvizatsiya_v_teatre_litsedei_9871143. (Accessed: November 9, 2023).

(playing about 200 premieres a year), the young actor returned to the capital and conquered it”⁶⁷².

On the ship, students were offered themes for carnival improvisations, based on the works of Russian classics A.S. Pushkin, N.V. Gogol, F.M. Dostoevsky, L.N. Tolstoy and the representation of their images in the anecdotes of D. Kharms. Particular attention was paid to the principle of “not to make laugh, but to live”; to the difference between a dramatic clown and an eccentric; to the concept of a “joyful soul”. On the ship, students watched video recordings of performances “Dreamers”, “Churdaki”, “Asisyai-Review”, “Catastrophe”, “Show 01”, “Snow Show”, silent comedies of Ch. Chaplin, H. Lloyd, H. Langdon and others.

The skill of the clown was examined on the examples of *commedia de l'arte*, traditional oriental theater Kabuki, White pantomime by J. Debuoro, Christmas pantomime by Grimaldi, and technique by M. Chekhov. Students attended classes on the stage movement. Participants got acquainted with the techniques of R. Laban, M. Feldenkrais, the system of F. Delsarte, the pantomime of E. Decroux, the technique of Wushu, Hatha Yoga, biomechanics of V.E. Meyerhold, and others. Aspects of the medieval theater, fairs, show booths, and carnival were theoretically sanctified.

This closed structure of carnival recreation is a model of carnival for the self, which combines the function of laughter, agonal and puerilist recreation. The carnival form of immersion of actors in searching for a character outside the presence of the spectator as such absorbs the mumming principle, featuring evening or night gatherings, which became the center of the carnival anti-world.

The puerilist function of this recreation was manifested in the use of the clown's education system “Vsyaki Byaki”, formed by V.I. Polunin in the late nineties of the 20th century. This system was built on the attempt of the actor-

⁶⁷² Berladin, Yu.A. (2018). Ot teatral'nogo shtampa do psihologicheskogo zhesta [From theatrical cliché to psychological gesture]. In *Proceedings of the International round table in memory of M. M. Bakhtin “The Heritage of M. M. Bakhtin. Culture—Science—Education—Creativity,” May 22, 2018, Orel* (pp. 357–361). Moscow: IAEaCS RAE. P. 359. (In Russ.).

clown to realize his childhood dream, creating a beautiful story (fairy tale), childlike quality of surprise (the first experiences of traveling under the bed, in the closet, in the attic), multiplied by the theatricalization of life and a joyful worldview. The similarity of the clown's education system with a child's game of disorder lies in the humorous tone of communication, the concentration of creative activity in a limited space and time, where the “spirit ... of merry rivalry” reigns⁶⁷³. V.I. Polunin himself created this system in order to find a child in an adult⁶⁷⁴.

The practical experience of immersion in multi-day carnival acting practice showed the need for students to have significant intellectual, creative potential, which is the building material of carnival creativity. The lack of professional knowledge and skills of individual students prevented them from holding the necessary level of inclusion in the carnival, educational process. The agonal function in this carnival structure was significantly deformed. As soon as students began seriously competing to see who was funnier, the agonal function left each of them. The agonality was predominantly of a friendly nature, since the participants in the project were not professional comedians, but representatives of a wide variety of fields: musicians, street actors, directors, circus performers, artists, theatre teachers, and others. This is proof that carnival does not tolerate the presence of serious competition.

This project is a legend in the street theatre environment, which has been passed down of actors from mouth to mouth for twenty years. It is largely due to this project that the professional continuity of clown artists and street actors of the older and younger generations is realized.

The participants of the “Fools on the Volga” project became a kind of living totems of street theater. *The historical and cultural function* of this project lies in its a prolonged carnival effect, which manifested itself in a radical restructuring of

⁶⁷³ Tikhvinskaya, L. (1995). *Kabare i teatry miniatyur v Rossii. 1908—1917* [Cabarets and miniature theaters in Russia, 1908–1917]. Moscow: Kul'tura. P. 23. (In Russ.).

⁶⁷⁴ Slava Polunin: I want to find a child in an adult. (In Russ.). Available at: <https://tass.ru/interviews/8697437?ysclid=lrbsch87p208192987>. (Accessed: December 31, 2023).

consciousness that occurred in the studio members after being on the ship at the peak of their creative abilities. Some students subsequently initiated the creation of their own street theaters, with clowning as the main expressive means.

3.5. Puerilist recreation (festival)

The term “festival” comes from the Latin words ‘festivus, festum’. Festival in English means a day or period of celebration for religious reasons. The second meaning of the festival is associated with an organized series of concerts, performances or films. The etymology of the word “festival” is closely intertwined with the word ‘theater’, which comes from the Greek word ‘théatron’, meaning ‘a place for watching’. Théatron has its roots in the word ‘théomai’, meaning ‘to see’ and ‘to observe’. The Festspielhaus, created as a result of the joint work of “the Swiss choreographer Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, the stage designer Adolphe Appia and the architect Heinrich Tessenow”⁶⁷⁵ at the beginning of the 20th century in the German garden village of Hellerau, is the prototype of the modern festival space. Today it is considered to be the prototype of a contemporary festival space. D. McCaw believes that this stage space makes an attempt to rebuild the theater into a carnival, with the human body as the main unit of measurement of the world. “Big, small, wide, narrow are terms that refer to the human body. For this reason, the artist A. Appia called the human body *Massgebend*, or the means for judging the size of the stage space”⁶⁷⁶. D. McCaw believes that “echoing Bakhtin's notion of a theater without a ramp, Appia developed the idea of festive culture (festculture ... Fest is a close relative of the carnival”⁶⁷⁷. The use of the word festival as a noun

⁶⁷⁵ Vasilieva, I.G. (2016). Transformaciya modernistskoj modeli teatral'nogo prostranstva v nemeckoj kul'ture [Transformation of the modernist model of the theatrical space in German culture] [Unpublished Bachelor's thesis]. SPb: Saint Petersburg State University. P. 38. (In Russ.).

⁶⁷⁶ McCaw, D. (2020). Telo v rabotah M.M. Bahtina [The body in the works of M.M. Bakhtin]. In E.A. Semenova (Ed.), *Proceedings of the International Bakhtin Theoretical and Practical Conference “Street theatre vs. the theatre of military actions”, October 16–18, 2019, Moscow* (pp. 123–138). Moscow: IAEaCS RAE. P. 137. (In Russ.).

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid.

was not recorded until 1589. Latin words ‘festus’ – ‘festus dies’ passed into the German ‘das Fest’ and into the French ‘la fete’. There are other words in French used to distinguish between these two aspects. One aspect means solemnity⁶⁷⁸.

Despite the fact that festivals have been widespread in the world since ancient times, they appeared as an object of scientific study in European humanities only in the second half of the twentieth century. The Italian anthropologist A. Falasi emphasizes such ritual aspects of festival events as birth, purification, transition, exchange, and return, which create conditions for encountering the beyond and overcoming the numerous limitations that accompany everyday life⁶⁷⁹. The festival is considered today as a tool for actualizing the historical and cultural memory of the city⁶⁸⁰; commemorative, ritual practice⁶⁸¹; space for dialogue and interaction of various types of art⁶⁸²; enculturation⁶⁸³.

The festival serves the development of intercultural tolerance⁶⁸⁴, inclusion; branding of the city⁶⁸⁵ and festivalization of culture⁶⁸⁶; contributes to the

⁶⁷⁸ Bogdanov, B. (1996). The holiday in the traditional and modern cultures. In *Holidays and spectacles in the European cultural tradition during the Middle Ages and the Revival: Proceedings of the international and scientific meeting dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Varna Music Festival, July 1–2, 1995, Varna* (pp. 5–12). (In Bulgarian).

⁶⁷⁹ Kutin, L. (2018). *The world of festivals. Theory and practice of aesthetic holidays*. Morski sviat. P. 11.

⁶⁸⁰ Beruin, L. (2021). Pandemic festival celebration: Some reflections for Buhayani Festival. *Academia Letters*, Article 1027.

⁶⁸¹ Talluru, V. (2018). Gond festival; the ritual theatre. *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 6(11), 480–484.

⁶⁸² Zhukova, O.M. (2017). Osobennosti vzaimodejstviya iskusstv v hudozhestvennom prostranstve festivalya [Features of interaction of arts in the art space of a festival]. *Art and Culture*, 1. P. 17. (In Russ.).

⁶⁸³ Pavlov, A.Yu. (2015b). Festivali ulichno-ploshchadnykh teatrov kak sposob inkulturatsii sovremennogo obshchestva [Street-square theater festivals as a way of enculturation of modern society]. In L.V. Sekretova (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 2nd All-Russian Scientific and Practical Seminar with International Participation “Development of leisure industries: History, theory and practice of Russian regions”, May 19th, 2015, Omsk* (pp. 111–117). Dostoevsky Omsk State University. (In Russ.).

⁶⁸⁴ Pavlov, A.Yu. (2015a). Deiatelnost ulichno-ploshchadnykh teatrov kak sposob razvitiia mezhkulturnoi tolerantnosti u Sibiriakov [Activity of street-square theaters as a way to develop intercultural tolerance among Siberians]. In P. P. Vibe & T. M. Nazartseva (Eds.), *Third Yadrintsev Readings: Proceedings of the 3rd All-Russian scientific-practical conference dedicated to the 300th anniversary of Omsk, November 26–28, 2015, Omsk* (pp. 365–367). Omsk: OGIK muzei. (In Russ.).

development of sustainable tourism⁶⁸⁷; acts as a space for the transfer of traditions and the translation of cultural values⁶⁸⁸; forms a competitive strategy of the city, a way of gamification of⁶⁸⁹ urban space and secularization of traditional festivals⁶⁹⁰; possesses political potential⁶⁹¹. G. Richards observes a curious dynamic towards the shift of urbanists' focus of attention from the cities where festivals are held to the festivals themselves and the phenomenon of urban space festivalization.

The idea of “festivalization” is believed to date back to the 1930s and even earlier. J. Gold and M. Gold distinguish between top-down and bottom-up ways of organizing festivals, with the former often associated with business programs and the latter used to support different identities. This distinction is not irrefutable, because even in the case of carnival, which ostensibly celebrated the inversion of the legal order, the true role of such events in cities like Venice was to reinforce existing power structures. The combination of different types of festivals and events supporting the programs of various groups in the city contributed to the rapid expansion of festivals after World War II, leading to the subsequent

⁶⁸⁵ Işikli, H. (2020). Tourism, arts festival and memory. In A. S. Markou & M. Zlatkova (Eds.), *Post-Urbanities, cultural reconsiderations and tourism in the Balkans* (pp. 375–398). Herodotos.

⁶⁸⁶ Booth, A., & Johnson, H. (2021). Diwali in Dunedin: A case study of festivalisation and intervention in Indian cultural performance in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, 23(1). P. 12.

⁶⁸⁷ Rosilawati, Y., Daffa, N., & Ariyati, S. (2021). Promotion strategy of Dieng Culture Festival (DCF) as sustainable tourism based on local community. *E3S Web of Conferences*, 316, Article 04012. P. 9.

⁶⁸⁸ Penoni, I. (2018). Cilende: The mask dance at the Iuvale culture festival (Angola). *São Paulo*, 3(1). P. 254.

⁶⁸⁹ Berti, F., & Gasperini, N. (2021). The city at play: The case of S'cianco game in Verona and the origin of Tocati—International Street Games Festival. In *Academic Mindtrek '21: Proceedings of the 24th International Academic Mindtrek Conference* (pp. 33–40). ACM. P. 33.

⁶⁹⁰ Ogheneruro Okpadah, S. (2018). A study of festival theatre to Flekstival Theatre: Emuodje flekstival of Ekakpamre in Southern Nigeria as a paradigm. *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 12(1), 42–55.

⁶⁹¹ Sözen, U. (2019). Culture, politics and contested identity among the “Kurdish” Alevis of Dersim: The case of the Munzur Culture and Nature Festival. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, 6(1). P. 69; Abrahamian, L., & Shagoyan, G. (2013). Rallies as festival and the festival as a model for rallies. In S. Voell & K. Khutsishvili (Eds.), *Caucasus conflict culture: Anthropological perspectives on times of crisis* (pp. 65–90). Curupira.

emergence of the term “festivalization.” From 1947 to 2019, the number of festivals in Edinburgh increased from 1 to 24⁶⁹².

In terms of anthropology, festivals are divided into high culture festivals; traditional, experimental and avant-garde festivals. Festivals are categorized into national, international, annual, informal, private and public projects. Aestheticians divide festivals into mono-artistic, poly-artistic, synthetic, amateur and professional. L. Kutin proceeds from the understanding of art festivals as a celebration of the triumph of human abilities. Some festival events undermine conservative stereotypes of art. Festivals represent an internally contradictory phenomenon. On the one hand, they are instrumental in conceptualizing local, national identity⁶⁹³. For example, in the Philippines, a festival dedicated to the life and work of the national hero José Rizal⁶⁹⁴ contributes to enhancing the country's reputation and strengthening its ethno-cultural identity⁶⁹⁵. On the other hand, festivals form a kind of diplomatic methods of resolving religious, ethnic, ideological and political conflicts. Often art festivals are the result of entrepreneurial activities and territorial branding. Some festival-commercial centers combine leisure and consumption of goods. As a rule, such festival malls are located around or in the center of the festive events area. According to researchers, festival malls constitute the epitome of consumption of the post-Fordist era, when planned shopping events, thanks to developers, revitalized depressed urban centers. Festival shopping centers serve as an indicator of the consistent implementation of new activities focused on the commodification of the city brand in the tourism industry.

⁶⁹² Richards G. *Festival Cities: Culture, Planning and Urban Life* by John R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold, London, Routledge, London, 2020. 336 p.

⁶⁹³ Ogunkoya, N.J. (2019). Nigeria's theatre audience and Calabar carnival floats. In T J. Iorapuu & F.O. Idoko (Eds.), *Nigeria's theatre and drama: Audiences, communities and constituencies. A Festschrift in honour of Professor John Sani Illah* (pp. 197–208). Jos University Press.

⁶⁹⁴ Beruin, L. (2021). Pandemic festival celebration: Some reflections for Buhayani Festival. *Academia Letters*, Article 1027. P. 1.

⁶⁹⁵ See: Balogun, B. K., & Nkebem, V. (2021). Host community's perception on the socio-cultural effects of Carnival Calabar festival and tourism development in Calabar City, Nigeria. *International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Studies*, 2(2). P. 151.

A theater festival can be part of the event map of a city as a tourist center⁶⁹⁶; it can contribute to the preservation of cultural uniqueness and authenticity⁶⁹⁷, independence of art⁶⁹⁸. In many European cities, theatrical festivals, depending on the goals and objectives, perform different functions. Some festivals aim at acquainting the audience with the best theatrical performances from around the world, as well as uniting the theater community itself, and raising the level of theater culture in the world⁶⁹⁹. This goal is pursued by the Shanghai International Experimental Theater Festival, which was first held in 1998. Throughout the history of the festival, the best theater practitioners from all over the world have participated in the festival. The organizers strive to preserve the spirit of Shanghai at the festival, encourage inclusiveness and openness. Experimental theater in China played a leading role in the development of contemporary Chinese theater. Xiaojuchang, Chinese experimental theatre, is revolutionary. Most avant-garde drama practices first appeared in small experimental theaters. The festival organizers aim to raise a generation of people who are willing to devote themselves to theatrical innovation.

Today, street art festivals fill the streets of the city with a special atmosphere, returning to them the once lost trust of citizens⁷⁰⁰ due to the aesthetic component⁷⁰¹. Street theater festivals represent a synthetic genre that includes

⁶⁹⁶ Gomez-Casero, G., Jara Alba, C. A., Jiménez Beltrán, J. , & Roldán Nogueras, J. (2018). Cultural events: Case study of a theatre. Festival as an element of tourist attraction. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 9(4), 177–185.

⁶⁹⁷ Ogheneruro Okpadah, S. (2018). A study of festival theatre to Flekstival Theatre: Emuodje flekstival of Ekakpamre in Southern Nigeria as a paradigm. *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 12(1), 42–55.

⁶⁹⁸ Eckford, C. (2019). *Interactions and exchanges: How 'Frequent Fringers' select shows at the Edmonton International Fringe Theatre Festival* [Unpublished Master's thesis]. Royal Roads University.

⁶⁹⁹ See: Piazza, M., Schnoke, M., Zingale, N. F., & Lendel, I. (2018). *Feasibility analysis: BorderLight International Theatre Festival* (Report). All Maxine Goodman Levin School of Urban Affairs Publications.

⁷⁰⁰ Birdir, S., & Birdir, K. (2021). Comparison of perceptions of destination image before and after participation in carnival. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education Research*, 7(3), 274–284. (In Turkish).

⁷⁰¹ Fedorenko, T. N. (2016). Festivals and street theater as their component part in the aesthetic environment of contemporary culture in Europe and Russia. *Proceedings of Voronezh State University. Series: Philology. Journalism*, 2, 144–146. (In Russ.).

various art forms, including dance,⁷⁰² music, visual arts and others. Festivals influence the institutionalization of street theatre culture in Russia. Russian theater scholars believe that street theater in Russia “is experiencing a kind of renaissance – street festivals of recent years have been springing up one after another like mushrooms after rain”⁷⁰³.

The movement towards financial support of street theaters by the state is connected with Russia's entry into FECC (Foundation of European Carnival Cities) in 1992. FECC was founded in 1980 and renamed into the Association of European Carnival Cities in 1985. The main task of the association lies in uniting various cities to consolidate efforts in order to preserve carnival traditions in the world, as well as in developing international carnival tourism. Both positive and negative aspects of Russia's entry into the FECC should be noted. If in Europe the carnival industry develops gradually towards organic building up of educational and scientific carnival potential, in Russia this industry develops rather spontaneously. Russia's integration into the FECC has led to premature commercialization of theater groups that has not yet gained strength.

O.N. Orlova calls street festivals large urban laboratories, which consolidate “diverse cultural practices, activate the activity of many people to interact with urban space”⁷⁰⁴, suggesting that street festivals should be considered as a tool for citizens to settle in urban space⁷⁰⁵, which depends on street scenes. The researcher identifies three characteristics of the street scene, which increases the share of

⁷⁰² Harris, S. (2004). “Dancing in the streets”: The Aurillac Festival of Street Theatre. *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 14(2), 57–71.

⁷⁰³ Selezneva-Reder, I. (2023a, July 20). Ulitsa = svoboda. O XXIX Vserossiiskom festivale ulichnykh teatrov v Arkhangel'ske prokhodivshem s 21 po 25 iunija [Street = freedom. About the 29th All-Russian Street Theater Festival in Arkhangel'sk, held from June 21 to 25]. *Peterburskii teatral'nyi zhurnal*. (In Russ.). Available at: <https://ptj.spb.ru/blog/ulica-svoboda/>. (Accessed: February 20, 2023.).

⁷⁰⁴ Orlova, O.N. (2016). Festival' ulichnoj kul'tury kak sposob obzhivaniya gorodskogo prostranstva (na materiale festivalya ulichnoj kul'tury v Samare) [Street culture festival as a way of settling urban space (on the material of street culture festival in Samara)]. *Herald of Tyumen State Institute of Culture*, 2. P. 103–104. (In Russ.).

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid. P. 104.

citizens' inhabitation of urban space: performativity, spontaneity, dialogicality⁷⁰⁶.

With the existence of various views on the festival, the researchers agree that this recreation distance a person from a consumption culture, giving the opportunity to acquire a new emotional, reflective experience in a festive space, rich in the atmosphere of creativity.

In particular, the 2001 Theatre Olympics was held under the sign of clowning and carnival. As is known, in 2001, Polunin organized the program "Street Theaters of the World" within the framework of the Third World Theater Olympics in Moscow. The Russian audience then first saw such famous foreign theaters as *Bodytorium*, *Strange Fruit*, *PAN.OPTIKUM*, *Theater of Silenzio*, *Studio Festi*, *Urban Sax*, *Trans Express*, *Deschamp & Deschamp*, *Dadadang*, *Dogtroupe*, *DO-Theater*, *Natural Theatre Company*, *Malabar*, *Teatr Biuro Podróży*, *5 Angry Men*, *Sound and Cherries*, *Karabos*, *Comedians*, *Nucleo*, *Passengers*, *Red Elvises* and others. Polunin's project "The 20th Century through the Eyes of a Clown"⁷⁰⁷ within the framework of the Third World Theater Olympics in Moscow brought together the greatest clowns of our time.

Mapping of street theater festivals in Russia revealed an expansion of festivalization into Russian cities and towns. In 2016 alone, more than 16 international festivals of street theaters, supported by state funding, were held in Russia, including the Forth Festival of Street Theaters of UR FUTUR, Izhevsk; Sixth International Festival of Street Theaters "PermlInterFest", Perm; Fifth Festival of Street Theaters "Invasion of the Unusual" in Yaroslavl; Fifth Festival of Street Theaters "Theater Square", Kemerovo; Second Festival of Street Theaters, Cherepovets; 22nd International Festival of Street Theaters in Arkhangelsk; 8th Festival of Street Theaters "Theater Yard", Tula; 11th International Festival of Street Theaters "Street Dreams", Tyumen and many others⁷⁰⁸. In Pushkin, the

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid. P. 105.

⁷⁰⁷ *The Third World Theater Olympics in Moscow. IV International Chekhov Festival* [Booklet]. (2001). International Committee of Theater Olympiads. (In Russ.).

⁷⁰⁸ Semenova, E.A. (2021d). Populyarnost' festivalej ulichnyh teatrov v Rossii kak fenomen molodyozhnoj kul'tury [Popularity of street theater festivals in Russia as a phenomenon of youth

traditional urban festival “Street Theater”⁷⁰⁹, “Universal Carnival of Fire” is held in Pushkin with the support of the Center for Patriotic Education of Youth “Dzerzhinets”. In 2019, from May 18 to 19, the City Art Festival “Nikolin Den” was held in Moscow. It involved such famous theaters as the *Oposito Theater* (France), *Cana* (Poland), *Les filles du renard pale* (France), *the Engineering Theater AKHE*, etc. On June 15, the opening of the International Theater Olympics 2019 in St. Petersburg was attended by the Russian street theaters *Ognennie Ludi*; *Eskizy v Prostranstve*, *Mr. Pejo’s Travelling Puppets* and famous foreign theater; *KTO*; *Titanick* (Germany); *Close-Act* (Netherlands); *Gajes* (Holland); *Transe Express* (France).

It can be stated that between 2020 and 2022, outdoor theaters were a significant competitor to indoor theaters. This is confirmed by the demand for street spectacles, open-air theaters in these years. In 2022, the street theater laboratory⁷¹⁰ took place at the Platonov Arts Festival. In Gubkin, a festival of street theaters “Illusion” was held with the support of the local administration. 2022 saw such street theater festivals as the First All-Russian Festival of Street Theaters “Treasure Map” in Suzdal; the International Street Theater Festival “Elagin Park” in St. Petersburg; the Street Theater Festival “Bez Kulis” in Novgorod; the International Street Theater Festival “Fluger” in Perm; the 28th Street Theater Festival in Arkhangelsk; the Traveling Festival of Non-State Theaters in St. Petersburg; the “Peredvizhnik” Festival in Gelendzhik; the 6th Street Theater Festival in Cherepovets; the “Ida Fest” in Ufa; the First Street Theater Festival in Nalchik; the “UuU” Festival in Ulyanovsk; the Street Theater Festival “Theaters without Roofs” in Chelyabinsk, the Street Theater Festival “Faces of Street” in Yekaterinburg, etc.

culture]. In L. G. Savenkova (Ed.), *Yusov Readings. Socialization of students in the integrated festival and competition space: proceedings of the 21st International Scientific and Practical Conference*. Moscow: IAEaCS RAE. P. 59. (In Russ.)

⁷⁰⁹ The traditional autumn city festival “Theater of Streets” is held in Pushkin. Available at: <https://peterburg.center/event/v-pushkine-tradicionnyy-osenniy-gradovedcheskiy-festival-teatr-ulich-2021.htm>. (Accessed: April 24, 2022).

⁷¹⁰ Platonov Arts Festival is organizing the street theater laboratory and staging a play. Available at: <https://smotrim.ru/article/2673761?ysclid=lrbsk0iitp27162943>. (Accessed: May 12, 2022).

In 2024, street theatre festivals such as the *Elagin Park Street Theatre Festival*, the *Tavrida-ART Festival*, the *Arkhangelsk Street Theatre Festival*, the *Weather Vane Street Theatre Festival*, *Aida Fest*, the *Universal Carnival of Fire* and many others were held in various cities of Russia once again.

Today, largely due to the activity of representatives of street theaters, the word “street” is filled with new meanings. The very names of street theater festivals (“Theater Yard”, “Invasion of the Unusual”, “Peredvizhnik”, “Street Dreams”, “Street Theater”, “Ulitka”, “Theater Square”, “Bez kulis”, “Faces of Street”, etc.) indicate the desire of the festival organizers to spiritualize streets and squares by means of theatrical art, as well as the desire to invite the audience to go beyond the usual theatrical space.

The development and popularization of street theatre art in Russia is facilitated by the Russian Union of Street Theatres and Artists, founded in November 2018 which is an “informal organization” with the following goals: “to create and develop a culture of street theater in Russia, to form the status of street theater, both in the professional and public environment; to form a demand for Russian street theater in Russia and in the world; to increase the professional quality of street performances in Russia”⁷¹¹.

The analysis of internet sources about festivals showed that these forms fill regional event recreations. The following festivals were included in the analysis: Russian festival of street theaters in Arkhangelsk⁷¹², International Festival of Theatrical Art and Creativity “Bright people”⁷¹³, Street Theater Festival “Elagin Park”⁷¹⁴, Street Theater Festival “Golden Carousel”⁷¹⁵, Street Arts Festival

⁷¹¹ Russian Union of Street Theaters and Artists. Available at: <http://streetrussia.com/>. (Accessed: April 24, 2023).

⁷¹² Festival of street theaters in Arkhangelsk. Available at: <http://streetfestival.tilda.ws/>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷¹³ International Festival of Theatrical Art and Creativity “Bright people”. Available at: <https://mr.moscow/pyatyj-mezhdunarodnyj-festival-yarkie-lyudi-dva-dnya-10-ti-chasovoe-teatralnoe-shou-i-glavnye-kulturnye-institutsii-goroda/>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷¹⁴ Street Theater Festival “Elagin Park”. Available at: <https://elaginfest.tilda.ws/>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷¹⁵ Street Theater Festival “Golden Carousel”. Available at: <https://artuzel.com/content/festival-ulichnyh-teatrov-zolotaya-karusel>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023)

“Ulitka”⁷¹⁶, Street Theater Festival “Invasion of the Unusual”⁷¹⁷, Street Theater Festival “PermInterFest”⁷¹⁸, Street Theater Festival “FUTUR”⁷¹⁹, Street Theater Festival “Belgorodsky Arbat”⁷²⁰, International Festival of Street Theaters and Performances “Vnesten”⁷²¹, International Festival of Street Theaters “Street Dreams”⁷²², Street Theater Festival “ArtPlanet”⁷²³, Festival of Street Performers “Ida Fest”⁷²⁴, International Street Art Festival “Plasticine Rain”⁷²⁵, Street Theater Festival “Golden Weekend”⁷²⁶, Street Theater Festival “On Karpovka”⁷²⁷, International Festival of Street Arts “Theater Yard”⁷²⁸, Street Theater Festival in Suzdal⁷²⁹, Street Theater Festival “Live Streets”⁷³⁰, Festival “UuU”⁷³¹, Street Theater Festival “City of Happiness”⁷³², Street Art Festival “Peredvizhnik”⁷³³,

⁷¹⁶ Street Art Festival “Ulitka”. Available at: <https://m.vk.com/ulitkapolzi>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷¹⁷ Street Theater Festival “Invasion of the Unusual”. Available at: https://m.vk.com/yar.fest_pr. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷¹⁸ International Street Theater Festival “PermInterFest”. Available at: <https://reiproductions.livejournal.com/>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷¹⁹ Street Theater Festival “FUTUR”. https://m.vk.com/futur_fest. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷²⁰ Festival of Street Performers “Belgorodsky Arbat”. Available at: <https://m.vk.com/arat31>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷²¹ Festival of Street Theatres and Performances “Vnesten”. Available at: <https://m.vk.com/vnesten.omsk>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷²² Street Theater Festival “Street Dreams”. Available at: <https://m.vk.com/streetdreams2023>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷²³ Street Theater Festival “ArtPlanet”. Available at: <https://m.vk.com/streetfestartplaneta>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷²⁴ Street Theater Festival “Ida Fest”. Available at: https://m.vk.com/aida_fest. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷²⁵ Street Art Festival “Plasticine Rain”. Available at: <https://vk.com/festpd>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷²⁶ Theatrical performances “Golden Weekend”. Parade of Street Theaters in Gatchina Park. Available at: https://m.vk.com/wall-140063603_5997. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷²⁷ Street Theater Festival “On Karpovka”. Available at: <https://allfest.ru/festival-2023/nakarpovke.m>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷²⁸ Street Theatre Festival “Theater Yard”. Available at: https://m.vk.com/teatr_dvorik. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷²⁹ Street Theatre Festival in Suzdal. Available at: <https://m.vk.com/suzdalfut>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷³⁰ Street Art Festival “Live Streets”. Available at: https://m.vk.com/album-26391480_221731203. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷³¹ Festival “UuU”. https://streetrussia.com/uuu_22. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷³² Street Theater Festival “City of Happiness”. Available at: <https://m.vk.com/futnalchik>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

Russian Street Art Festival “Light Wings”⁷³⁴, Russian Street Theater Festival “Theaters without Roofs”⁷³⁵, Street Theater Festival in Cherepovets⁷³⁶, International Street Theater Festival “Fluger”⁷³⁷, Street Theater Festival “Universal Carnival of Fire”⁷³⁸, Street Art Festival in Sudak⁷³⁹. The concept of the street theater festival can be understood by the style of presentation of the material, the tone of Internet announcements, the peculiarities of the dialog with potential and real audience.

Whereas in 2006 media emphasized that “street theater is popular in Europe, but not in Russia,” today, on the contrary, some newspaper and magazine articles claim that Russia is experiencing a rise and even a renaissance of street theater.⁷⁴⁰ Theatre critics show interest in street theatre festivals, as evidenced by the appearance of the street theatre newspaper, which, along with reviews by street theatre practitioners, contains texts about street theatres by professional theatre critics. Street theaters actively interact with government agencies, scientific institutes, municipal authorities, and drama theaters.

⁷³³ Street Art Festival “Peredvizhnik”. Available at: <https://vk.com/festgelenjik>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷³⁴ Street Theater Festival “Light Wings”. Available at: <https://m.vk.com/@karakuzfest-teatry>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷³⁵ Street Theater Festival “Theatres without Roofs”. Available at: <https://m.vk.com/event215421339>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷³⁶ Street Theater Festival in Cherepovets. Available at: <https://m.vk.com/theaterche>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷³⁷ Street Theater Festival “Fluger”. Available at: <https://center-projects.ru/event/festival-ulichnyh-teatrov-2022/>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷³⁸ Street Theater Festival “Universal Carnival of Fire”. Available at: <https://m.vk.com/karnavalfire>. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷³⁹ Street Art Festival in Sudak. Available at: https://m.vk.com/wall-29007530_20303. (Accessed: December 25, 2023).

⁷⁴⁰ See: Selezneva-Reder, I. (2023a, July 20). Ulitsa = svoboda. O XXIX Vserossiiskom festivale ulichnykh teatrov v Arkhangel'ske prokhodivshem s 21 po 25 iyunia [Street = freedom. About the 29th All-Russian Street Theater Festival in Arkhangel'sk, held from June 21 to 25]. *Peterburskii teatral'nyi zhurnal*. (In Russ.). Available at: <https://ptj.spb.ru/blog/ulica-svoboda/>. (Accessed: October 2, 2023); Selezneva-Reder, I. (2023b, August 26). Ulice zakon ne pisan. O festivale ulichnykh teatrov «Elagin park», prohodivshem s 28 po 30 iyulya v Sankt-Peterburge [The law does not apply to the street. About the festival of street theaters “Elagin Park” held from July 28 to 30 in St. Petersburg]. *Peterburskii teatral'nyi zhurnal*. (In Russ.). Available at: <https://ptj.spb.ru/blog/ulice-zakon-ne-pisan/>. (Accessed: October 2, 2023).

The article on the International Forum of Ancient Cities in Ryazan in 2019 stated that the result of the forum was the creation of the street theater of the Ryazan Drama Theater. In 2022, the Platonov Arts Festival involved a competitive selection for the new Voronezh Academic Street Theatre. In 2023, more than 20 street theater festivals were held. Events of street theater culture are covered by print and Internet publications and federal television channels. In 2024, a procession of Russian street theatres took place as part of the *Golden Mask* theatre awards⁷⁴¹. This same year, Russian street theatres took part in the *Theatre Boulevard* festival.

Street theater festivals are beginning to be funded by government programs. In particular, the 18th Street Festival in Arkhangelsk was supported by the Presidential Grants Fund. The festival “Bez kulis” in 2021 was also supported by the Presidential Grants Fund. From June 28 to 29, 2020, with the support of the Presidential Grants Foundation, members of the Russian Union of Street Theatres and Artists initiated an online conference “Pro Street Theater”. In 2022, a theater laboratory in the genre of clowning “BalagurLab” was organized in Kazan, which became the winner of the Presidential Fund for Cultural Initiatives competition. In 2019, declared as the Year of Theatre in Russia, during the street procession in Sochi, members of the Russian Union of Street Theatres and Artists carried signs saying “Carnivalization”, “Year of Street Theatre”, “Mikhail Bakhtin is alive”, thereby testifying to the search of street theater artists for their genius loci.

The current wave of public interest in street theater is significantly different from the enthusiasm of young people for street art in the 1980s, when there was a flourishing of studios, amateur theatrical performances and pantomime, when street theater culture developed from agonality and passion. Street theater today represents a legitimate art form. Modern initiatives in popularization of street art

⁷⁴¹ Vladimir Mashkov priglasil moskvichej na shestvie ulichnyh teatrov na Arbate [Vladimir Mashkov invited Muscovites to a street theater procession on Arbat]. (In Russ.). Available at: https://www.1tv.ru/news/2024-06-24/479306-vladimir_mashkov_priglasil_moskvichej_na_shestvie_ulichnyh_teatrov_na_arbate?ysclid=Iz01fcepos559728978. (Accessed: July 24, 2024).

through the organization of annual street theater festivals look like the results of high-quality art management in the field of cities and town branding.

The juvenalization of modern street theater festivals signals the growing potential of puerilism. However, we are not talking about the puerilism described by J. Huizinga, who considered it a sign of the lost cultural principle of play. We are talking about puerilization as an indicator of the transitivity of the period experienced by street theater in Russia, moving from child-centeredness to agonality. In our interpretation, puerilism moves from the category of age-related, ideological immaturity to a professional object of study. The festival recreation “Street Theater” of the last five years reveals a mosaic from fragments of play with the stages of ontogenesis and phylogeny of childhood. The make-up, costume, and behavior of street theater actors can be compared to children playing adult games or adults playing children's games. Hence arises the desire of street theater actors to occupy children's spaces, to behave like children, using children's toys, playing with the semantics of adult culture, or, using images of the animal world, clowning, the semiotics of children's culture, to intervene in adult heterotopias (Figures 24–29).

Animals, children, comic heroes, puppets, cartoon act as characters of street performances. This testifies to the fact that the main subject of professional interest of street theater is not the person, personality or its psychological portrait, but the human species in its relationship with the world of nature and culture in the stages of “regression” to earlier stages of development.

Contemporary street theater festivals present a playground where all generations are given the opportunity to be a puer, that is, a child. This opportunity is realized through the immersion of the human spectator-participant in the puerile recreation of “street theater”. This, in turn, speaks of the street theater festival as a modification of carnival space, a certain progress achieved in the understanding and representation of the phenomenon of childhood in theatrical art.

3.6. Socio-cultural recreation (Village Theatre)

At present, there is an increasing demand for socio-cultural recreations in society, in which the individual not only gets acquainted with cultural heritage, but also contributes to the multiplication of cultural values. In this regard, regional socio-cultural projects aimed at studying the history of street theatre and raising the level of street theatre culture in our country are of particular value.

The recreation *Village Theatre* simultaneously acts as a permanent research laboratory for studying the nature of street theatre art; a workshop for creating street art objects; a rehearsal hall; a space for showing street theatre performances; a place for holding scientific conferences, master classes. ‘Village Theatre’ was founded by the artistic director of the Russian street theatre “Theatre-EX” Y.A. Berladin together with the theatre actress E.A. Semenova in the village of Krest, Toropets district, Tver region⁷⁴².

One of the functions of the *Village Theatre* is commemorative, as the creators of this recreation not only preserve the history of the development of street theatre in Russia, but also preserve the memory of the events of the Toropets region by dedicating various street events (street performances, historical reconstructions) to its historical events. The name of the village “Krest” (meaning ‘Cross’) testifies to the fact that here two paths converged and crossed, which influenced not only the development of this region, but also the formation of Russia as a whole. The village of Krest arose at the intersection of the Great Moscow Road and another important route “from the Varangians to the Greeks”, which passed directly through the village. Krest Village represents the crossroads of two ancient paths. In 1245, Alexander Nevsky defeated the Lithuanians on the Great Moscow Road. Then, in 1580 the Toropets citizens defeated the army of Stephen Báthory near the village of Rechane. On May 15, 1609, the first major

⁷⁴² Letters from the province. Toropets. Available at: <https://smotrim.ru/video/2422181?ysclid=lrbsnxhlm9721673336>. (Accessed: December 12, 2023).

battle was won near the village of Kamenka, which marked the beginning of the liberation of Russia from the invaders in the Time of Troubles. In 1706, Peter I himself inspected this road. In the autumn of 1812, a provision train for the Russian army was formed in Toropets and travelled along this road. Finally, in January 1942, the 249th Rifle Division under the command of Colonel Tarasov repeated the manoeuvre of Alexander Nevsky (with an interval of almost 700 years) and delivered a crushing blow to the fascist invaders⁷⁴³. The Village Theatre dedicated two historical reenactments to these events.

The Village Theatre can be compared to art spaces created in the buildings of abandoned factories, factories and former industrial zones. *The Village Theatre* has settled down not just in a village, but in a former town built at a military unit, now disbanded, in the building of a sports hall. It took more than fifteen years to convert the sports hall into a theatre space (Figures 37, 38). As a result, “aestheticised ‘cultural rubbish’ — everything that had been forgotten or could have been or already is in the landfill - has found a new life here. Here such art objects as *Sharaban*, *Ship* and *Clock* were created from scrap metal. All the objects created in the workshop of the *Village Theatre* turned out to be in demand in the entertainment industry of the megalopolis, probably because they were a plume of spiritualised space, free in impulse — something that is in short supply in the modern city”⁷⁴⁴, which is capable of spiritualising the urbanised spaces of the city streets, saving the world from indifference, melting the “profane world” into cultural value⁷⁴⁵.

On the other hand, the emergence of the *Village Theatre* is a consequence of the cardinal change of art direction observed in the 70-80s of the 20th century, when artists rushed not to the centre, but to the periphery of cultural and social life, fascinated by the idea of ecological theatre. W. Staniewski, a Polish theatre and

⁷⁴³ See: Semenova, E.A., & Berladin, Yu.A. (n.d.). Derevenskij teatr (d. Krest). [Village theater (Village Krest)]. (In Russ.). Available at: http://www.independent-academy.net/about/life/derevensky_t.html. (Accessed: December 28, 2023).

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁵ Ibid.

film director, founder of the Gardzienice Centre for Theatre Practices in 1976 a broad artistic and research program based on rural, festive traditions. At the congress of the International Theatre Institute (ITI) (1979) Staniewski delivered his program manifesto, claiming that the new theater is rooted in life, we must fight for the natural environment of theater and for the environmental theater originated in our experience. One of Staniewski's programs included a series of multi-day walking expeditions to the eastern regions of Poland, when his team presented evening performances to local residents, consisting of etudes based on *Gargantua and Pantagruel* fragments (F. Rabelais).

This intervention of street theatre in the hinterland is fully justified by the genesis of street theatre, which has a nomadic and sedentary origin in its nature. Given that the archetype of the clown as a 'rustic', 'backward', 'funny', carnival person is formed in the depths of rural, village culture at the earliest stages of the formation of the collective, the village was chosen for the creation of the recreation 'Village Theatre' to study street theatre art and the carnival potential of the acting profession. The name of the recreation 'Village Theatre' was born from the need for its creators to try out the way of educating the actor on carnival principles. This desire is due to the fact that in the acting school the technique of serious acting, aimed at getting into the role, is more developed than the technique of comic acting. It is no accident that outbreaks of carnivalisation and carnivalesque behaviour in the acting profession are rarely independently transferred by young people into meaningful professional activity. As a rule, it happens only as a result of positive pedagogical influence of a mentor, an authority - *the* personifier of the carnival world, drawing them into the space of carnival culture, unfolding the rolled-up carnival symbols, hiding the acts of significant human carnival-creative activity. The idea of carnival culture and street theatre not only as a spectacle art or part of the tourist entertainment industry, but as an integral component of professional and personal formation of students of universities of culture and art, moved the founders of the Village Theatre to an in-depth study of the correlation of the concepts of 'clown', 'street theatre', 'low farce', 'carnival culture'.

Y.A. Berladin and E.A. Semenova admit that they named their project *Village Theatre* not because they wanted to purposefully develop the traditions of village theatres, whose history is quite impressive and venerable, but because ... there was an inexplicable purely logical need to ‘show ... in a different way, even if not with due completeness and success, but in contrast to ... overly benign and overconfident succession’ the way of educating an actor in a different way, even if not with due finality and success, but as a counterbalance to ... overly benign and overly presumptuous continuity’ the way of educating an actor on carnival principles. It is likely that such a desire to take a step away from overly presumptuous and artificial theatrical continuity has been the reason why we have shifted the focus of our attention to theatre activities from the city to the countryside. And we were not, as the examples show, alone in this. At various times, many actors, directors, artists, writers, musicians have gone to the provinces, backwoods, and villages for inspiration”⁷⁴⁶. In particular, E. Grotowski believed that only away from civilisation, being in maximum proximity to nature, it is possible to approach the origins of theatrical art.

The peculiarity of this recreation is that it was created by street theatre artists and functions as a stationary scientific and practical laboratory⁷⁴⁷ of street theatre art. This is its conceptual similarity with V.I. Polunin's centre *Yellow Mill*. The main idea of the *Yellow Mill* is to “Make theatre out of life ... Not just to live - but to play, to transform ourselves and others”⁷⁴⁸. The directions of scientific and practical activities of the *Village Theatre* centre have points of intersection with the laboratory of directors and artists of puppet theatres under the leadership of I.P.

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁷ See: Liderman, Yu.G. (2022). Theater studies of laboratory discourse: Concepts, history of ideas, Russian context. *Steps*, 8(1), 161–175. (In Russ.)

⁷⁴⁸ *Yellow Mill*. A wonderful garden and creative laboratory of Slava Polunin. Available at: <https://moulinjaune.com/ru/>. (Accessed: December 12, 2023)

Uvarova, in which all were united by the desire to “search for a new language of art”⁷⁴⁹, “to increase the angle of view of art, modernity and ultimately life itself”⁷⁵⁰.

The model of the *Village Theatre* combines the image of a pilgrim theatre and a theatre-house, living according to the village life, but making the villager feel the presence of something that goes beyond his everyday life. Within the walls of the village theatre you can see a mono-performance, a recitation programme, a clown's *Entre*, listen to a violin concert, learn to walk on stilts. Such a theatre, which does not call you to its guests, but attracts you with that inescapable human dream of peace and the road, is like a scientific laboratory, where a hidden but important process for mankind takes place. In her time, O.M. Freidenberg drew attention to the fact that “theatre in the form of a house”⁷⁵¹ has become familiar to us relatively recently, because the image of the theatre-house is archetypal. For example, in antiquity “all performances took place in the open air. (...) all the games in the balagan, went directly in the streets, squares, groves, (...) the public stood, walked, moved from house to house ... only in the theatre it sat”⁷⁵². It can be said that the model of village theatre integrates “the theatre of space and the theatre of the room”⁷⁵³, or the image of the theatre-house and the house performing the function of theatre.

Next, let's move on to the description of individual educational, scientific, creative programmes and projects of the Village Theatre⁷⁵⁴, among which there are specialised, professional programmes for students of universities of culture and art, street theatre actors.

⁷⁴⁹ Uvarova, I.P. (1999b). Vstupitel'noe slovo [Introductory remarks] In *Ritual. Theater. Performance: Materials of transcripts of the laboratory of directors and artists of puppet theaters under the direction of I. Uvarova. Sb. st. / Ed. I. Uvarova*. Moscow. P. 10. (In Russ.).

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁵¹ Freidenberg, O.M. (1988). *Mif i teatr* [The myth and the theater]. Moscow: GITIS. P. 61. (In Russ.).

⁷⁵² Ibid. P. 61–62.

⁷⁵³ Gachev, G.D. (1968). *Soderzhatelnost khudozhestvennykh form (Epos. Lirika. Teatr.)* [The content of artistic forms. (Epic. Lyric. Theatre)]. Moscow: Prosveshcheniye. P. 210. (In Russ.).

⁷⁵⁴ See: Komandyshko, E.F., & Semenova, E.A. (2017). Educational tourism: Adoption of management technologies in the activity of universities. *Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism*, 8(6). P. 1183, 1185–1186.

In the period from 2009 to 2015, a practical model of formation of carnival culture of future directors and actors was developed and tested, including four stages: acquisition of carnival experience; initiation into children's laughter culture; search for their carnival mask; creation of carnival environment (space)⁷⁵⁵. In the course of approbation of the model it was revealed that most actors feel the need to use carnival methods in their independent creative professional activity⁷⁵⁶.

The initial object of professional study of carnival culture by student-directors of theatrical performances and holidays in the recreation 'Village Theatre' was the children's play of disorder or 'Binom of fantasy' (D. Rodari's term). Fantasising stories in playful form was the key to creating and entering students into the carnival space. The development of clown worldview was carried out in the process of fantasising stories. Travelling through the village surroundings as a mysterious, fantastical world was used as mastering the technique of playing a street actor; treating the toy as a character. The section 'Searching for a clown mask' was devoted to mastering the skills of including one's clown character in the space of real and paradoxical objects; acting in an ordinary situation in the logic of alogism, paradox, absurdity; creating speech puns, paradoxes, nonsense; the psychological gestures (fig. 36, 39). In the field of attention were such phenomena as comic imagery of the clown mask, eccentricity, trickster as a carrier of mythological consciousness, ritual clown; types and forms of comic creativity, the total world of the clown; types of clowning (eccentric clowning, poetic clowning, metaphysical clowning, absurdist clowning).

Scientific activities are implemented in the Village Theatre. From 2017 to 2020, the Village Theatre actively cooperated with FGBNU 'IHOiK RAO' as a pilot site, where conferences, seminars, scientific and practical clusters, round

⁷⁵⁵ See: Semenova, E.A. (2018a). Carnival environment and educational tourism: Ways to develop creative abilities of students attending institutes of art education and cultural studies. *Opcion*, 34(85), 2026–2037.

⁷⁵⁶ See: Semenova, E.A. (2018c). *Ulichnyj teatr kak universal'noe prostranstvo formirovaniya karnaval'noj kul'tury lichnosti: ot detstva k vzroslosti* [Street theater as a universal space of formation of carnival culture of personality: From childhood to adulthood]. Moscow: Sam Poligrafist. Pp. 105–118. (In Russ.).

tables dedicated to street theatre, the art of clowning and carnival culture were held. One of the scientific and practical events held in the ‘Village Theatre’ is the All-Russian Congress “Smekhotvorets” (v. Krest, Toropetsky district, Tver region, 11-17 September 2019)⁷⁵⁷ dedicated to the study of the carnival potential of the acting profession. The convention was attended by theorists and practitioners of street theatre, local residents of the village of Krest. The congress included the opening of the scientific and practical laboratory ‘Bakhtin’, during which master classes on acting, modern dance, juggling, stilt walking, theatrical mask, stage movement, shows of plays and street performances; lectures on carnival culture, street theatre were held. Master classes and lectures were conducted by street theatre actors and staff of the Laboratory of Literature and Theatre of the Institute of Art Education and Cultural Studies of the Russian Academy of Arts. The congress events were attended by residents of the village of Krest, Toropets and neighbouring villages⁷⁵⁸.

The concept of “Smekhotvorets” was chosen as the symbol of the congress. The name of the congress, like a noun, serves as an identifying image of the street theatre community, a code word, an image of recreation and a trigger for comic play. The organisers understand the ‘laugh maker’ as a collective image of a street actor who creates the world of the ‘third reference’. Unlike the creator of the world of art and the world of the real, according to A.G. Kozintsev, the world of laughter, i.e. the world of the third reference, is an impossible world. The smekhotvorets creates a ludicrous reality, which does not exist in the real world or in the artistic world.

⁷⁵⁷ Village Theater: Congress “Smekhotvorets”. (In Russ.). Available at: <https://xn--80arbcimq.xn--80aaccp4ajwpkgbl4lpb.xn--p1ai/news/kultura/derevenskiy-teatr-sezd-smekhotvorets/?ysclid=lrpxacwxb474356090>. (Accessed: December 12, 2023).

⁷⁵⁸ See: Berladin, Yu.A., & Semenova, E.A. (2020). Verifikaciya konceptov M.M. Bahtina v laboratornoj rabote s aktyorami ulichnogo teatra na s"ezde «Smekhotvorec» [Verification of M.M. Bakhtin's concepts in laboratory work with street theater actors at the “Smekhotvorets” convention]. In E. A. Semenova (Ed.), *Proceedings of the International Bakhtin Theoretical and Practical Conference “Street theatre vs. the theatre of military actions”, October 16–18, 2019, Moscow* (pp. 211–226). Moscow: IAEaCS RAE. (In Russ.).

In 2020, the All-Russian scientific and practical cluster ‘Pedagogical potential of the art of clowning and street theatre in the socialisation of children and adolescents in difficult life situations’ was held on the basis of the Village Theatre (Tver region, Toropetsky district, v. Krest, 11 August-11 September 2020). The cluster included events dedicated to exploring the potential of the art of clowning and street theatre in working with children and adolescents in difficult life situations⁷⁵⁹. The monitoring of teachers of general education institutions, teachers of supplementary education institutions, and specialised institutions in the Tver region of the Russian Federation⁷⁶⁰ was conducted, which made it possible to draw a picture of the perceptions of clowning among teachers in the Tver region. The monitoring showed that 80% of teachers do not see in themselves and their relatives the manifestations observed in clowns. At the same time, 70% of teachers mentioned the names of their favourite comic characters, most often including characters from Soviet film comedies. At the same time, the respondents' answers show a dominant attitude towards clowning, either as something alien, extraneous, or as a creative person with a great resource of joy and freedom. When asked, ‘What colour do you associate the word “clown” with?’ 80% of teachers answered that the clown is associated with ‘cheerful colours’, yellow and red. This, on the one hand, fits into the traditional interpretation of the clown's colour palette, on the other hand, it can be interpreted as a result of the impact of mass media culture (advertising, social networks) exploiting this colour palette in the clown's costume and make-up. To the question ‘how does a clown differ from an actor?’ the majority of teachers answered that a clown is called to amuse, to bring joy, to show

⁷⁵⁹ See: Semenova, E.A. (2020h). Rezul'taty monitoringa socializacii detej, nahodyashchisya v trudnoj zhiznennoj situacii, sredstavmi iskusstva na primere Tverskogo regiona [The monitoring results of socialization of children in difficult life situations by means of art on the example of the Tver region]. In M. S. Savina (Ed.), *Socialization of children in difficult life situations by means of art* (pp. 121–135). IAEaCS RAE. (In Russ.).

⁷⁶⁰ See: Semenova, E.A. (2020c). Diagnostika rezil'entnosti pedagoga, rabotayushchego s det'mi i podrostkami, nahodyashchimisya v trudnoj zhiznennoj situacii (metod anketirovaniya) [Resistance diagnostics of a teacher working with children and teenagers in difficult life situations (questionnaire method)]. In M. S. Savina (Ed.), *Socialization of children in difficult life situations by means of art: collection of scientific articles and scientific-practical materials* (pp. 68–85). IAEaCS RAE. (In Russ.).

freedom, unlike an actor, limited by the framework of the author's idea of the playwright, director⁷⁶¹. Criteria of diagnostics of activation of students' aspiration to independently include carnival-art activities in their academic work were: increased attention to comic phenomena in art, life, communication with colleagues; desire to independently create a playful, artistic environment.

In the *Village Theater* recreation, the technique “Humor versus Irony” was developed, aimed at forming the professional competencies of actors and directors in the process of mastering carnival speech genres. The technique is based on a model of a joking battle between an ironic and humorous statement, found in the communication of a white and a red clowns. In brawls, ostentatious, farce scandals-games of a red and a white clowns, as a rule, invective and scold serve to defuse the conflict situation, relieve tension and maintain the festive tone of communication, being a signal of invitation to the game. The technique is based on a representation of a clown with the nature *of the other*. This other is not a real person, not someone who can displace my external image, take my own place, not someone who is able to introduce some “fabulous uncertainty into my dream”, like its (dream's) participant who performs a certain role in it. The main non-verbal opponent of irony in such a verbal agon was humor, the function of which consisted in destroying the semantics of irony, disarming its manipulative mechanisms associated with verbal aggression, lies and simulation, with a serious socio-role position. The exercise results in the dramaturgy of opposing super-objectives: humorous and ironic rather than in the dramaturgy of a literary work and a play. In the exercises of the irony technique, an intermediate, subordinate function was assigned, which it performs in the process of creating a friendly, carnival environment based on building a quasi-family matrix in the educational environment of students.

⁷⁶¹ Semenova, E.A. (2021b). Kul'turotvorcheskij potencial iskusstva klounady v formirovanii pedagogicheskikh kompetencij epohi massmedia [Cultural potential of the clown art in the formation of pedagogical competences in the mass media era]. *Yaroslavskij pedagogicheskij vestnik*, 5(122). Pp. 250–252. (In Russ.).

The main exercise of this technique shows the whole degree of unarmed irony in front of the non-verbal power of humor, as a signal of friendliness and play. The exercise represents a carnival, laudatory battle between two students. One of the students performs the task of “praising another” partner or “to praise by scolding”, using irony, and the second performs the task of neutralize opponent's irony with humor. Then the partners change roles. Indirectly, the technique of “Humor versus Irony” reduces the need to use obscene vocabulary, since its household, incriminating function is replaced by a game, carnival, artistic and fantasy function (“ambivalent praise-scold”). The methodology was tested in OmGU named after F.M. Dostoevsky, SGII, FGBOU VO ‘OGIK’, showing high efficiency in the field of formation of creative competences of student-actors and student-directors in the process of mastering carnival speech genres.

From October 5 to 6, 2024, the scientific and practical laboratory “Bakhtin” was held in the Village Theater (Tver Region, Toropetsky District, Krest village), the purpose of which was to attract the attention of theorists and practitioners of street theater art to the scientific concepts of M.M. Bakhtin, with the help of which it is possible to comprehend the prospects for the development of modern street theater art. Topics related to the genesis, history, definitions of street theater in Russia were proposed for discussion⁷⁶². The focus of the participants of the current *Bakhtin* laboratory was the concept of “philosophy of action” by M.M. Bakhtin, which allows to concretise the artistic and genre specificity of street theatre art. The laboratory included lectures on the history of Russian dramatic and street theatre, focusing on such phenomena as serf theatre, Russian theatrical enterprise of the second half of the XIX century, cabaret theatres, collective and state farm theatres.

As a result, we can say, that The Village Theater socio-cultural recreation represents the existing scientific and practical laboratory for the study of street theater culture in Russia and the development of methods for the formation of the

⁷⁶² Village Theater (Theater-EX Project). (In Russ.). Available at: <https://t.me/dere127>. (Accessed: October 12, 2024).

creative personality of the actor on the principles of carnivalization, the art of clowning, theatricalization of everyday life, creating opportunities for professional and personal growth of students, indirectly accumulating the carnival potential of theater culture. This recreation affects the microclimate of the village by its actual presence. The *Village Theatre* hosts scientific and practical laboratories, conferences, open lectures on the art of clowning, carnival culture, street theater, performances and street performances are shown. Children attend classes in circus skills development. *The Village Theatre* represents an outpost for Russian street theaters that visit the theater, giving performances for residents of villages. This center carries out an educational mission, popularizing street theater culture and contributing to raising the level of street theater art.

As a result of studying the contemporary Russian street theater as a recreational space, such functions as laughter, agonal, compensatory, carnival, puerilist and socio-cultural were identified. Textbook examples of the implementation of the recreational function by the street theater culture include the communities of street theater actors; the rap battle genre; the fire theater; the “Fools on the Volga” project; the festival; the *Village Theater* project. Online and offline communities of street theater actors present *laughter recreations*, which are subject to festive privileges, since they include actors professionally engaged in street and festive culture. In the laughter communities of street theater actors, professional knowledge and skills are transferred between the participants. These communities of street theatre actors act as predictors, preventing possible negative scenarios in the development of street theatre culture, subjecting the rigid images of the professional identity of a street theatre actor to laughter debunking and carnivalisation. *Agonal recreation* implies such a phenomenon of Russian street theater culture as the rap battle genre, which demonstrated the passage of all stages of development from serious play, to agonality and carnivalization. Theater of Fire represents *compensatory recreation*, testifying to the passage of this genre of street theater in Russia from agonality to carnivalization, enriching the street theatre of

the carnival component. *Carnival recreation* is exemplified by V.I. Polunin's project "Fools on the Volga", dedicated to the carnivalization of various acting techniques of the play, as a principle of professional education of a street theater actor and a clown artist. Street theater festivals present *puerilist recreational spaces*, where all generations are given the opportunity to be a child by immersing themselves in the art of street theater. *Socio-cultural* function is carried out by the *Village Theater* recreation, representing a permanent scientific and practical laboratory for the study of cultural and historical features of the formation and development of street theatre in Russia.

CONCLUSION

Against the background of the growing global trends of juvenalization of culture and society, the focus of the younger generation on pragmatic models of behavior is paradoxically increasing. Such a situation causes a risk to draw the wrong conclusions regarding the juvenalization of modern society. We are possibly facing a phenomenon of de-juvenalization, when the young generation seeks plays with rules rather than disorderly plays. The present study constitutes a timely reference to the problem of puerilism of contemporary street theater art in Russia, manifesting itself in the desire of street theater actors either to occupy children's spaces using children's symbols or to intervene in adult spaces in children's images. Despite the fact that the representation of children's culture or its simulation is often found in Russian and foreign street theater, the quality of juvenile processes in the space of street theater culture significantly differs. Following the logic of researchers of children's play, comedy and laughter, it can be assumed that manifestations of such a children's retreat from social role-playing can be observed in the play of street actors who seek to violate these rules using comic and clownish images, the logic of the child's behavior, gestures, accessories, etc. If children and youth pop culture, theaters for children, children's fashion, cinematography, and the children's food industry cultivate the institutional image of childhood, then street theater may not have all of this recognizable children's symbolism. The only sign of childhood that distinguishes it as a phenomenon from the image created by childhood institutions is a comic play or a disorderly play devoid of content and seriousness. The profession of street theater represents an example of the transformation the non-serious hypostasis of comic play into a serious labor (routine, stamp), nevertheless, giving the human spectator an opportunity to approach the level of a child's worldview, to feel the state of non-seriousness in relation to serious things.

The research has proved the hypothesis that street theater in Russia, formed in the 20th century as a heterotopia, performs an agonal function, represents the

signs of the theatrical system and the symbolism of the institution of childhood, generating traditional images of juvenility their deconstruction, carnivalization and creation of neo-juvenile identities.

Being a heterotopia, street theater stimulates the transition of individual street theater representatives from the stage of vulgaristic child-centeredness to the level of agonism, contributing to the growth of neo-juvenile tendencies in street theater culture. These tendencies are obliged to kidaltism developed within the juvenile paradigm of society, as a manifestation of the transformation of puerilism. The agonal principle, in turn, contributes to the transition to the stage of development associated with the act of laughter self-denial. At this stage, the culture is renewed, passing through the necessary cycle of development from the stage of seriousness of the puer play to the laughing play of kidalt, manifested as the figure of the clown, popular in contemporary Russian street theater.

In contrast to foreign street theater, with prevailing political and protest sentiments, Russian street theater is child-centric. No attempts to elaborate a theory of the development of contemporary Russian street theater have been reported in Russian cultural studies. This fact proves the viability of the present phenomenon. Numerous examples of the study of art phenomena show that their scientific comprehension began not at the peak of their activity, but when they either disappeared or began to translate into a tradition. This provides grounds to assume that contemporary street theater in Russia, having passed through the stages of child-centrism and puerilism, has entered the phase of kidaltism and is currently on the way to laughter self-denial, which is equivalent to entering the phase of maturation, prepared by the development of street theater in the second half of the 20th century, when the street artist was in a position between the puerilist and the kidalt, having undergone the unsuccessful experience of combining play and serious provocation, entering the phase of laughter play with theatrical systems. The stage of irony can be considered a transitional stage from puerilism to kidaltism, which paved the way for the development of new neo-juvenile trends in street theater art, manifested in Russia at the end of 20th – beginning of

21st century as integration of the art of clowning and street theater. The prerequisites for the theory of development of contemporary Russian street theater arise with the appearance of the figure of the clown in street theater, indicating the result of street theater in Russia passing through a certain stage of development, including the phase of social role-play, agonality and laughter self-denial.

The hypothesis put forward in the study supported the originality and uniqueness of the genesis, theory and practice of contemporary street theater in Russia, questioning the appropriateness of applying to it the theatrical inventory and dictionary definitions traditionally assigned to Street Art Studies.

The revision of foreign concepts of carnival culture used in the study of street theater reveals the inappropriateness of their use in the study of contemporary street theater in Russia. The demonstrated tendentiousness of practicing theorists in politicization of theater, laughter, humor, and carnival leads to the vulgarization of Bakhtin's concept of carnival culture, and leads to a theoretical dead end, where the distinctions between carnival, protest, and street theater art are eliminated. Despite the fact that foreign terms used in the study of carnival culture are formally synonymous with such concepts as playful aggression, laughter negativism, and carnivalization, at the level of semantics they act as their antagonists.

The presence of phenomena in theater culture, resisting interpretation within the carnival concept, gives reason to see them as deviant heterotopias that have taken roots in the carnival culture, trying to change its function to the opposite one.

For the first time in the study of street theater art, the emphasis from theatrical concepts was shifted to interdisciplinary scientific research of play, laughter and humor, thereby proving the heterochronic origin of contemporary street theater in Russia, concluding that contemporary street theater in Russia represents a heterotopia that generates recreational zones where the for Homo Sapiens to rejuvenate human species through peaceful disorderly play and comic creativity, thereby indirectly reducing the level of intraspecies aggression in culture and society.

Modern street theater comprises the result of the evolutionary development of mankind, including the ability of *Homo sapiens* to inhibit the processes of maturation in the forms of comic art. Street theater can be compared to neoteny, manifested in humans as the preservation of the features of childhood and adolescence in adults. Given that the period of developed childhood lasts only less than two centuries, the rapid development of pre-figurative street theater culture in the 20th century, up to the present day, directly correlates with the increased time period allotted by mankind for childhood and adolescence.

The genesis, theory and practice of modern street theater in Russia have a number of features, including the following:

- contemporary street theater in Russia was formed as a heterotopia that performs a juvenile function of violating adult scenarios of personal development;
- having emerged as a crisis heterotopia, street theater has degenerated into deviant (borderline) recreation, masquerading as theater and childhood, performing an agonal function in their space, representing traditional images of juvenility through theatrical means, with the aim of their further deconstruction, carnivalization and creation of neo-juvenile identities;
- contemporary street theater in Russia is a nomadic (migrating) recreation emerging in juvenile-oriented communities;
- street theater in Russia is a level of theatrical culture where serious forms of art and life are travestied;
- the culture of mumming as a ritual and playful form of imitation of animals and the world of ancestors has taken root in contemporary Russian street theater;
- local laughter heterotopias, created by communities of street theater actors, accumulate the carnival potential of theatrical culture;
- the psychological and physiological playful human need for humorous reflection forms the basis for the street theater culture;

– laughter and humor, located at the intersection of biology and culture, act as the basis of play and imagery in street theater culture, performing a recreational function;

– the theater of fire represents recreation that performs a compensatory function in street theater;

– the art of clowning, on the one hand, stimulates the transition of individual street theater artists from the stage of vulgar child-centricity to the level of agonality and laughter reflection, contributing to the growth of neo-juvenile tendencies in street theater culture; on the other hand, it comprises a trigger for the puerilization of contemporary street theater.

As a result, Russian contemporary cultural thought urgently requires updating the conceptual inventory used in the articulation of the processes of contemporary street theater culture. The inability to explain the cause of the phenomenon of puerilization of contemporary street theater culture with the help of theatrical theories and theatrical concepts signals the need to develop new strategic approaches to the study of the genesis of contemporary street theater in Russia and its practical sphere. The application of the evolutionary theories of laughter and humor, undertaken in this paper as a methodological basis for elaborating a theory of the development of contemporary street theater in Russia, opens up additional opportunities for studying the comic nature of Russian street theater in subsequent studies of street theater culture. The study of street theater as a multifunctional recreational space, performing laughter, compensatory, agonal, socio-cultural functions and organizing a new carnival chronotope, is considered to be a promising research direction.

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Available at: <https://mr-7.ru/static/records/5c27c768bcdb4ce6a7a68a8ede3b3734.jpeg>.

APPENDIX

Figure 1. An action of Occupy Wall Street movement, 2011⁷⁶³



Figure 2. An action of Reclaim the Streets movement⁷⁶⁴



⁷⁶³ The image is freely available on the platform: Available at: <https://roarmag.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Occupy-Wall-Street-Webf.jpg>. (Accessed: December 8, 2023).

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Figure 3. Rebel clown army representatives are embracing a policeman⁷⁶⁵



Figure 4. Rebel clown army female representative is speaking to a megaphone held by a policeman⁷⁶⁶



⁷⁶⁵ The image is freely available on the platform: Available at: <http://www.radioscanner.ru/uploader/2009/climatef.jpg>. (Accessed: December 8, 2023).

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Figure 5. The pictures on the postcards belong to the theater
*Bread and Puppet*⁷⁶⁷



Figure 6. The picture on the postcard.
 Copyright of the Bread and Puppet theater⁷⁶⁸



⁷⁶⁷ Source: author's archive.

⁷⁶⁸ Ibid.

Figure 7. The pictures on the postcards. Copyright of the Bread and Puppet theater⁷⁶⁹



Figure 8. Cover photo of a 1999 flyer titled "Fiddle Sermons from insurrection masses with funeral marches for rotten ideas".

Copyright of the Bread and Puppet publishing house⁷⁷⁰



⁷⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid.

Figure 9. Cover photo of a Bread and Puppet flyer titled “Woman without gloves”. Copyright of Peter Schumann, 1992⁷⁷¹



Figure 10. Flyer spread⁷⁷²



⁷⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷⁷² Ibid.

Figure 11. Bread and Puppet theater, Moscow, Old Arbat, 1988⁷⁷³



Figure 12. I.P. Uvarova on the photo, actors of the Bread and Puppet theater, Moscow, Old Arbat, 1988⁷⁷⁴



⁷⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid.

Figure 13. Theatre-EX musicians in make-up before the performance⁷⁷⁵



Figure 14. A Theatre-EX musician in make-up before the performance⁷⁷⁶



⁷⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁶ Ibid.

Figure 15. Theatre-EX actress in make-up⁷⁷⁷



Figure 16. Theatre-EX actors in make-up after the performance⁷⁷⁸



⁷⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid.

*Figure 17. Theatre-EX actress in make-up during the performance*⁷⁷⁹



*Figure 18. Theatre-EX actress in make-up before the performance*⁷⁸⁰



⁷⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid.

*Figure 19. Theatre-EX actor in make-up before the performance*⁷⁸¹



*Figure 20. Theatre-EX actors in make-up before the performance*⁷⁸²



⁷⁸¹ Ibid.

⁷⁸² Ibid.

*Figure 21. Theatre-EX actress during the performance*⁷⁸³



*Figure 22. Theatre-EX actress before the performance*⁷⁸⁴



*Figure 23. Theatre-EX actor before the performance*⁷⁸⁵



⁷⁸³ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid.

Figure 24. Street theater Mr. Pejo's Traveling Puppets⁷⁸⁶



Figure 25. Ulitnaya Rapsodia by Comic-Trust Theatre Company at the Street Theater Festival “Elagin Park” in St. Petersburg⁷⁸⁷



⁷⁸⁶ The image is freely available on the platform: Available at: https://ya.ru/images/search?from=tabbar&img_url=https%3A%2F%2Fbel.cultreg.ru%2Fuploads%2Fc56e6af61decd5f343a6629111daa2e6.jpeg&lr=141813&pos=22&rpt=simage&text=уличный%20театр%20яндекс%20картинки. (Accessed: December 8, 2023).

⁷⁸⁷ The image is freely available on the platform: Available at: <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/J95FjFaYV58/maxresdefault.jpg>. (Accessed: December 8, 2023).

Figure 26. Zliye Riby theater at the Street Theater Festival “Elagin Park”⁷⁸⁸



Figure 27. Street Theater Festival “Ida Fest” in Ufa, 2023⁷⁸⁹



⁷⁸⁸ The image is freely available on the platform: <https://mr-7.ru/static/records/5c27c768bcd4ce6a7a68a8ede3b3734.jpeg>. (Accessed: November 15, 2024).

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Figure 28. Street Theater Festival “Ida Fest” in Ufa, 2023⁷⁹⁰



Figure 29. Street Theater Festival “Ida Fest” in Ufa, 2023⁷⁹¹



⁷⁹⁰ The image is freely available on the platform: Available at: <https://storage.myseldon.com/news-pict-45/4582D3D0FA5CB3D87F50CF15A5D60C96>. (Accessed: December 8, 2023).

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Figure 30. “Fools on the Volga” project, 2003⁷⁹²



Figure 31. Kotorogo Theatre project “Duratskogo Choir”⁷⁹³



⁷⁹² The image is freely available on the official website of the V.I. Polunin Center and can be accessed by clicking here: Available at: http://shipoffools.ru/school/volga_fools.php. (Accessed: December 8, 2023).

⁷⁹³ The image is freely available on the platform: Available at: https://avatars.dzeninfra.ru/get-zen_brief/6919982/pub_626960cb47fe2703e5f1e310_626960cb47fe2703e5f1e311/scale_1200. (Accessed: December 8, 2023).

Figure 32. Photo of the art object “Sharaban. Author Y.A. Berladin⁷⁹⁴



Figure 33. Fragment of Theatre-EX street performance
“Fire haute couture”⁷⁹⁵



⁷⁹⁴ From the personal archive of Yu.A. Berladin.

⁷⁹⁵ Ibid.

Figure 34. Theatre-EX street performance⁷⁹⁶

VI Street theater festival “Universal Fire Carnival”, Moscow, 2015



Figure 35. Theatre-EX street performance “Clocks”⁷⁹⁷



⁷⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁷ Ibid.

*Figure 36. Students of Moscow State Art and Cultural University
in Village Theater⁷⁹⁸*



Figure 37. Photo of the former sports hall in the village of Krest, 2008⁷⁹⁹



⁷⁹⁸ Source: author's archive.

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid.

Figure 38. Photo of the sports hall in the reconstruction process⁸⁰⁰, 2009



*Figure 39. Students of Moscow State Art and Cultural University
in Village Theater, 2010⁸⁰¹*



⁸⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁰¹ Ibid.