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From State Security to Security State: Performing Control and Claustrophobia in Hungarian Theatre

This article examines how the exchanges of archival and artistic practices in Central European and, more precisely, in Hungarian theatre and performance can create performative sites calling attention to the continuities and recurring reflexes of pre- and post-1989 realities. The genre of re-performance allows performance artists to comment on their own experience with the communist regimes, as well as to enact the continuing political and aesthetic potentials of past performances. In 1986, a recently founded performance group, the Collective of Natural Disasters, premiered its piece *Living Space* in Budapest, considered to be an iconic production in the history of Hungarian dance theatre, and earning international success. The solo performer (Yvette Bozsik) was set in a small glass box, suggesting the claustrophobic atmosphere of the 1980s in the country. In 2012, the group re-interpreted the 1986 production with considerable critical changes under the title (*In*)*Finity*. The new solo performer (Rita Góbi) was locked in a similar glass box. However, the group refashioned the main question about freedom by offering a mediatized landscape on stage where the recurring experience of claustrophobia was seen through technical innovations forming new regimes and forms of surveillance. Kornélia Deres is a Humboldt Research Fellow in the Institute of Media Culture and Theatre at the University of Cologne. Between 2015 and 2018 she was an assistant professor at Károli University (Budapest), and since 2017 has been a lecturer at ELTE University in Budapest. She is co-editor of five books and the author of *Hammer for Images* (2016), as well as two volumes of poetry.

Key terms: Collective of Natural Disasters, dance theatre, re-performance, performance as archive, oppression.

DURING THE LAST decade there has been a rising interest in dealing with the experience of young democracies in the contemporary Hungarian theatre and performance art scene.¹ The ongoing inner reflexes and social frameworks of dictatorial regimes, as well as a continuing experience of subordination, seem to be the focus of creative examination. In addition, the topic of surveillance societies and their claustrophobic nature, including observation, security, and state protection, offers a unique historical bond between more than four decades of communism and the current situation in the country, or, in a broader sense, in the region of Central-Eastern Europe.

Although after 1989 the changes of the political system suggested further social and cultural turns for the former countries of the Eastern Bloc, a remaining and sometimes even

strengthening mentality of learned helplessness can be grasped in the various fields and mechanisms of social and cultural organizations. Even though in Hungary, from the first free elections in 1990, citizens were given a chance to form their own country after a very long time, many of the social, political, and cultural apparatuses – including methods, mentalities, and leading figures – remained almost the same.

Moreover, since Hungarian society seems to have missed the chance to process and analyze the long decades of oppression (partly because it was more than beneficial for the elite), certain rhetorical gestures and learned reactions to them have easily and conveniently recurred in the post-communist period, especially regarding the questions of security, defence, and the hierarchy between

the state and its citizens. Therefore, it is not at all by chance that, during the last years, both young and old artists of the region have started to investigate why citizens are facing a new crisis of surveillance and security, and how this experience can be linked to the period between the 1960s and 1980s.

For instance, in 2013, the Nitra Theatre Festival in Slovakia initiated a special project titled *Parallel Lives: The Twentieth Century through the Eyes of the Secret Police*. The festival invited theatre artists from the region, including the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Romania, Germany, and Hungary, to create performances on the communist past and the operation of the secret police in Eastern Europe. These productions included, for example, Romanian director Gianina Cărbunariu's *Typographic Capital Letters*, which focused on the operations of the Securitate towards a teen street artist deserted by his neighbours; Czech director Petr Zelenka's opera piece on a priest who was tortured to death by the communist authorities; German director Clemens Bechtel's documentary piece *My File and I*, staging nine civilians who were either observed or hired by the Stasi; and Hungarian director Dániel D. Kovács's *Reflex*, posing questions about the mental health of society through the story of a psychiatrist pursued by the State Security. Outside of this project, but also in 2013, the acknowledged Hungarian theatre director Béla Pintér also premiered *Our Secrets*, touching upon the individual tragedies of both secret agents and observed citizens in the communist era.

More recently, in 2019, the emerging young director and dramatist Kristóf Kelemen and his collective took a sharper look at the continuities of pre- and post-1989 realities at the Trafó House of Contemporary Arts in Budapest. Also written by Kelemen, the play *Observers* is based on real secret agent reports and files from the 1960s, and it investigates the various motifs, aims, and circumstances of informers and agents who, on the order of the secret police, reported on certain 'suspicious' individuals. The production deals with the invisible net of anxiety, secrets, betrayals, dependencies, and survivals that successfully

built up a society of fear. However, it does not present the 1960s in Hungary as openly aggressive but highlights the disingenuousness of the era, indicating how toxic dependency of citizens and state security normalizes the claustrophobic atmosphere of suspicion, tension, and guilt.

Although the piece is centred on a case in 1965, when many of the informers were becoming targets because of their sexual identities, there are also further associations with the present, such as the topic of accessing data. In his opening speech, one of the main characters, Lieutenant Horváth, touches upon the methods of data collection by the secret services as something that was enforced in the 1960s, and promises a bright future of voluntary data-sharing in exchange for security. This is the exact point where another layer of dependency between the state and its citizens has risen as a unique Central-Eastern European historical experience, since the grand network of the communist secret police is being replaced by a network of information technologies used by modern democracies.

Using the previous argument as a basis for further examination, this article presents a case study of two joint Hungarian dance productions by the Collective of Natural Disasters (CND), divided by almost three decades. However, the pieces are connected through the genre of critical re-performance as well as a subversive aesthetics of social and personal claustrophobia. Together, *Living Space* (1986) and *(In)finity* (2012) call attention to the uneasy transition from a dictatorship to a democracy, and the lasting experience of confined habitats in Central-Eastern Europe.² They also point out the continuities of the 1980s into the present time by enacting archived materials and past events.

Similarly to Kelemen's *Observers*, these pieces by the CND also show the interconnected nature of archival and artistic thinking, urging us to reconsider the notion of the archive. Exchanges among live art, performance history, and archival methods have been a relevant subject of performance and theatre theory during the previous decades. Researchers such as Diana Taylor and Rebecca Schneider have argued powerfully for a

re-evaluation of the concept of the archive as a mere holder of dead materials in terms of corporeal and embodied practices fuelled by the material energies of live bodies.³ The performative and political potential here challenged the limits and practices of bodily engagement and entanglement in the archival processes and, consequently, the body was no longer seen as a mere co-operator in archiving processes (through reception, interpretation, and so on), but as the very enactor of remains carrying different modes of remaining than the so called enduring materials had maintained.

Bodies accessing, engaging with, or re-enacting remains posed further questions as to how these remains assisted in continuing and altering the life-cycle of past events, and how the collaboration of various bodies constituted evidence and interpretation.⁴ This perspective was undertaken in various ways and, as a consequence, much has been discussed recently about how the body of, and in, the archive could be addressed in relation to performance and, more interestingly, to performance art. As Nick Kaye points out regarding the rising number of live art performances as archival practices:

The widespread re-staging and re-use of the material, documentary, and textual remains of live art signals a self-consciously archaeological turn in recent and contemporary performance. Such tactics are now established as integral to the circulation and discourses of performance art.⁵

The case of the Collective of Natural Disasters proves that remembering and re-performing the events of banned or non-supported artistic practices from the past can open up new ways of situating and contextualizing current social and cultural events. In their productions, the Collective examined how citizens and, more precisely, artists were not able to escape the system that surrounded them. In addition, as a critical re-interpretation of former works, the genre of re-performance allowed the artists to comment on their own experience with, and under, communism, as well as to enact the continuing political and aesthetic potentials of past performances. The two pieces by CND thus both point out that, even in the post-communist era, a glass wall of subordination

underlies everyday existence, as both a reminder and a remainder of censorship.

Re-performing Claustrophobia

In 1986 Hungarian artists György Árvai and Yvette Bozsik premiered their piece *Living Space* with the Collective of Natural Disasters.⁶ The company, founded in 1984, is known for productions challenging the boundaries between various art forms, genres, and media, such as dance, performance, film, video, and music. Although *Living Space* can be regarded as an iconic production in the history of Hungarian performing arts, merging elements of body art and experimental dance, it had for a long time been understood as an urban legend rather than a distinct chapter in Hungarian performance or dance history.

After the Communist Ministry of Home Affairs banned all forms of modern dance education in 1948 – then placed ballet schools under communist control – a binary structure of Hungarian dance theatre was introduced in the 1950s, according to which there were supported ‘professional’ and non-supported or even banned ‘amateur’ dance. As a result, in the 1970s and 1980s so-called amateur or independent groups often served as important fields of experimental dance movements within the country, an eminent example of which was CND.⁷

Living Space focused on a solo female performer (Yvette Bozsik), who was set in a small glass box, a terrarium, during the whole performance, suggesting the claustrophobic atmosphere and space of the country, which at the time of the premiere was still under communist control.⁸ Although there were only a few performances in Hungary, it had more evident international success and was performed in Europe almost fifty times at various festivals.⁹ The work’s gendered politics pointed out the regime’s power hierarchy: an eighteen-year-old female dance student was locked up in an inhumanly cramped place by a male director in his late twenties. Whereas the latter had the power to manipulate the box throughout the performance, the female dancer was considerably deprived of agency,



Figure 1. Yvette Bozsik in *Living Space*. Photo: Róbert Gábor Szabó.

thereby embodying a captured and exhibited creature (Figure 1).

Twenty-six years later, the Collective of Natural Disasters re-approached *Living Space* with a different team except for the director Árvai. The 2012 production (*In)Finit*y re-performed the situation of the 1986 production by placing the solo performer in a similar glass box. However, it revised its main question about human freedom by offering a mediatised landscape on the stage where the dancer's body was rewritten not only through a new female artist, Rita Góbi, but also by approximately three decades of social and medial change.¹⁰ Although the production did not label itself as a re-enactment or a piece of self-documentation, it explored the exchanges of archival and artistic thinking, since there was a clear intention to evoke the basic situation of the former production of a performer locked in a box, together with its political and aesthetic layers. Claustrophobia was revisited through new regimes and surveillance systems produced by technical innovations. As a consequence, *Living*

Space (1986) and (*In)Finit*y (2012) together addressed the change in thinking about the manipulation of the human body and just how restricted lives are from cultural, historical, and medial perspectives.

Although *Living Space* could be seen in Budapest only a couple of times, it was regarded as an anecdote among young artists and intellectuals, involving the director who had 'enclosed the rebellious ballet dancer in a cramped terrarium'.¹¹ The production had limited access, and the first Hungarian reviews were only published several years after the premiere, after the group had already earned international success and prizes. In these early publications, *Living Space* was either interpreted from an ontological perspective as a ritual-like performance about the limits of human existence,¹² or from a political perspective as a piece that questioned established traditions of staged bodies and static (theatrical, cultural, political) systems.¹³

Living Space subverted many existing Hungarian dance and theatre conventions in the

1980s by placing the almost naked, seemingly vulnerable female body in a physically and mentally challenging situation. Bozsik later admitted that she had suffered a great deal during the rehearsals in that confined space: 'When I first entered that space I said OK, maybe this is too much . . . It looked fantastic from the outside, but from the inside . . . I felt terrible in it, I could not even move. I suffered a lot: I could neither lie nor sit up in it. Its height was the most terrible'.¹⁴ No special attention was given to the unequal gender dimensions of creating and producing the piece at the time of the premiere. The reason for this could be found in the Hungarian theatre system during the Cold War, which centred on a male director/choreographer and manager. The common power arrangement of a female actress or dancer (without agency) and a male director (with full agency), recognizable in the theatre, dance, and performance art scene of the era, was mirrored in *Living Space*.

As noted above, the 1986 production was only performed a few times in Budapest. Thus, apart from spectator witnesses, the

afterlife of the production, which included international tours, helped to keep the event within Hungarian cultural memory. Although the first video recording of the performance only became publicly available in 2020, some scenes had been integrated into a documentary film, *Mister Frick and the Living Space* (1989), directed by Zoltán Kamondi. The film's aim was to combine some parts of the dance piece with a true story about a man living on the periphery of society, who manages a public toilet in a small village and later becomes a journalist. Kamondi's film about the invisible social and cultural walls of the 1980s can contribute to a greater understanding of the aesthetics of the dance piece; the role of a fellow artist becomes a considerable one in keeping the memory of the performance alive (Figure 2).

Based on the memories of artists, contemporary audiences, and the documentary film, the opening scene started with the director Árvai cleaning the dirty surface of the glass box. Following this, the production focused on the struggle of the captured performer, offering a story of an (anti-)utopian being on



Figure 2. The lack of space in *Living Space*. Photo: Róbert Gábor Szabó.

the edge of animality, with long artificial fingernails and peeling skin, gaining consciousness through certain recursive, dynamic, ritualistic movements. Even though the prisoner seemingly recognized her limited space and perspective after a while, she was never able to escape from the terrarium during the performance.

The claustrophobic situation was further highlighted by the materials that appeared in the box: sand, water, and such human discharge as spit, sweat, and breath. The dramaturgy was based on the forced and convulsive movements and noises (rattle, breath, scream, whine) of the performer's body, which was solely defined by the space offered for its existence. Not only did this situation challenge the performer's limits by questioning the ownership of her body, but the spectators were also challenged, with instances of audience members trying to free the performer but being stopped by other spectators.¹⁵ Furthermore, watching the performer in her glass prison, positioned like a laboratory rat, staged the oscillation between the regulating gaze of the authorities and the paranoid gaze of society. The piece thus pointed out how the conventions and habits of the human body were repressed and reformed by its habitat, integrating literal and metaphoric understandings of space.¹⁶

When Árvai restaged this piece in 2012, together with dramaturg and theatre historian Zoltán Imre, and Rita Góbi, they wanted to reflect on the historical context as well as the decades of social and cultural change that followed.¹⁷ This creative team built on the experience of a mediatised society and the new ways of manipulating and networking human bodies and identities.¹⁸ For instance, they consciously played with certain cross-medial and intertextual aspects of *Living Space* such as its relation to Luc Besson's cult movie *The Fifth Element* (1997).¹⁹ As a result, *(In)Finity* offered a hyper-mediated space and time, as described by Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, by opening multiple windows on other representations and other media (live streams, pre-recorded footage, well-known films, songs, theatre events), all generating intermedial circulations (Figure 3).²⁰

The repertoire of the Collective of Natural Disasters includes examples of re-performing

well-known pieces of performance art history such as *Blood Reflex* (2009), in which a solo performer enacted scenes from performances by Hermann Nitsch, Rudolf Schwarzkogler, Jackson Pollock, and Tibor Hajas.²¹ However, the creators of *(In)Finity* did not aim to repeat the 1986 production, nor did they want to present it primarily as a self-archiving gesture.²² In its description of the production, the collective used terms such as 're-interpretation', 'self-confrontation', and 'reshape', suggesting a critical relation to the previous production.²³

Nevertheless, by evoking, remediating, re-contextualizing, and enacting the memory of *Living Space*, the new production modified the life cycle of the earlier production and created a transformative circulation, which powerfully affected the represented historical experience as well.²⁴ Moreover, highlighting the collapse of separate public and private spaces, *(In)Finity* called into question the false opposition between surveillance structures in communist regimes and contemporary capitalist democracies. The advantages of modern technologies and the past experience of security practices come together in the recent production, staging a complementary relationship.

This was further highlighted by the fact that in 2012 the artists organized a joint conference titled 'Interferences: (Counter-) Culture in the 1980s', as well as an installation, *Manipulated Spaces*, which was created by Anna Czékmany and János Szirtes.²⁵ While the conference focused on the cultural practices of the 1980s in Hungary, its European dimensions, and (re-)activated remains in the present context, the installation offered a collection of performance remains, political documents, reports, interviews, film extracts, newspaper articles, background reports by the Radio Free Europe, or advertisements from the Kádár era (1956–89). Since it became a vital part of the production, it is important to examine the installation further.

Taking place between the auditorium and the performance space, the installation, which remained in the dark until the end of the performance, made use of several remains of the 1986 performance, such as Kamondi's film, an interview with Árvai, and, most interestingly,



Figure 3. Montage: (left) *Living Space* (1986); (centre) *The Fifth Element* (1997); (right) *(In)Finitly* (2012): Photos courtesy of Dávid Drucker.

the iconic glass box. Whereas in *(In)Finitly* Góbi was locked in an almost identical replica of *Living Space's* box, the actual material remains only appeared in the installation. Media artist Szirtes re-used the old box by putting parts of school chairs into it and thus resisted handling it as part of a museum-like past. Instead, he positioned it in a new context with transformed elements. Although the audience was only confronted with the installation after the performance, the two events were combined in a mode that called attention to *Living Space* and presented it in new contexts through enactment, re-use, and re-performance. In the light of the conjoined performance and installation, *(In)Finitly* and *Living Space* together underline crucial questions about the politics of security and control in various social systems, opening a discursive and affective field where the former communist State Security blurs with the modern security state through their relation to citizens.

Control (of) Remains: Security and Surveillance

Giorgio Agamben presents the image of the Security State in its relation to democracy and state control as follows:

American politologists, who have tried to analyze the constitutional transformation involved in the Patriot Act and in the other laws which followed September 2001, prefer to speak of a *Security State*. But what does security here mean? It is during the French Revolution that the notion of security – *sureté*, as they used to say – is linked to the definition of police. . . . The Security State, whose name seems to refer to an absence of cares (*securus* from *sine cura*) should, on the contrary, make us worry about the dangers it involves for democracy, because in it political life has become impossible, while democracy means precisely the possibility of a political life.²⁶

The regulations and controlling practices of a similar form of state address the limits of citizens who are to be handled as observable

elements of the system. This logic, however, also echoes the paranoid operations of the communist State Security, where potential enemies were to be detected and eliminated. When reshaping their previous dance piece, the Collective of Natural Disasters addressed the recurring situation of a human being exposed to the cruel and controlling eye of various authorities.

As noted above, *(In)Finity* started with the situation of a dancer who was the prisoner of a confined space. In this way, the glass box seemed like a reflection of a specific archive – the box of the 1986 production, together with its political and social contexts. Góbi was connected to the glass box through prosthetic supplements (tubes), and her eyes were taped shut at the beginning, forming a post-organic body. Monitors above the box offered live streams of the performer from a bird's eye view as well as pre-recorded images of wars and terror attacks. An ongoing companion of white noise, moving images, and prosthetics created a post-human landscape where the human body was defined through physical and virtual cages (Figure 4).

Whereas in 1986 Bozsik was first seen as an animalistic being, and her female attributes were emphasized through a symbolic scene of childbirth, in 2012 Góbi presented a rather robotic, asexual, red-eyed creature. This creature was portrayed as someone who tried to encounter human society through various impulses: technological aids, as well as artificial props, which were the material remains of a time that had passed – a red rose, a doll, a newspaper article, high heels, a camera, a bit of meat, a gun, and so forth. She could not handle the objects that were found beneath the ground of the box properly: they seemed to be mere traces of a distant past, to which, without specific knowledge, she could not give any meaning. In this way, the production pointed out possible ways of accessing the past with the help of material fragments moved out of their context to enter new cultural, historical, social constellations. It also created a meta-reflective space of entanglement in which the performer engaged with the remains in the box as well as with the echoes of the basic situation of *Living Space*, thereby staging exchanges and connections between artistic and archival practices.



Figure 4. The post-organic body in *(In)finity*. Photo: László Dineá.

Accordingly, these objects, technical prostheses, and even the gestures and movements of the human body could be seen as remains from a different time. This double, or rather multiple, nature of the relation between the human body as a remainder itself, and the various materials that are accessed through the body, highlights the fragmentary, persistent and incomplete nature of preservation. At the same time, it points to a practice where the past is not only kept alive, addressed and remembered with the help of various objects as archive materials, but is also alive through the recurring bodily gestures, poses, and movements of the past. In *(In)Finity*, the layering of time was presented through Góbi, whose gestures evoked and reanimated Bozsik's 1986 performance. As a consequence, it opened an intermedial field where the bodies, the bodies of work, and the memories of them – and certainly, their socio-cultural contexts labelled as past or present – existed in a continuous, circular flow of commutability.

In addition, *(In)Finity* presented the terrarium not only as a limited space, but also as a closed circuit, which contributed to the operation of the human body through different

(medical) technologies. Therefore, through the mediatized and technologized space, *(In)Finity* unambiguously expressed the image of the performer's body as biologically, physically, and mentally inseparable from the glass box, thus challenging organic-physiological images of the human body. Patricia T. Clough identifies a possible interpretation of the body outside the body-as-organism perspective through the term 'affect' (Figure 5). Based on Brian Massumi's arguments, Clough described affect as:

an openness understood more generally in terms of non-organic life, where there is no prejudging of what constitutes the character of open living systems. Affect is machinic, where the distinction between the physical and the biological is a matter of degree and where the difference between the vital and non-organic is being reconstituted in the technological context of the biomediated body.²⁷

Following this perspective, while the notion of claustrophobia in *Living Space* was mainly understood from a philosophical (existential) and politico-historical (oppressive communist regime) perspective, *(In)Finity* staged a claustrophobic relation of the human body to biotechnologies, offering a critical view of



Figure 5. Rita Góbi in *(In)Finity*. Photo: László Dineá.

inherently artificial modes of being. Consequently, the relation of these two productions shows how claustrophobia as a social and personal experience under the communist regime in Hungary has been intertwined and rewritten by claustrophobia as a mode of being in a young democracy; a democracy that nevertheless controls human bodies through various (bio)technologies and regulations by deciding who can enter the country and who is welcome, which could be seen, for instance, in the handling of the refugee crisis and its various political utilizations in Hungary during the last decade.

An important feature of the intermedial space opened by both productions can be found in the fact that, despite the distance of their historical contexts, they captured the human body in an almost identical glass box. Seen as a rather radical statement made by the artists, the similar forms of oppression signified the absence of systematic changes in a post-communist society during its conversion from a dictatorship into an allegedly free democracy. The image of the glass box is to be handled, then, as a site of archived claustrophobia, which is enacted through entanglement and engagement.

Apart from the performer, the structures of observation (both in terms of observing and being observed) and the position of the audience as deprived of any interactive possibility were also called into play. The authoritative presence of the director situated *Living Space* in the context of an authoritarian leader figure, which could easily be interpreted as characterizing centralized communist regimes with personality cults.²⁸ However, the authority in *(In)Finity* did not appear as a person, but rather stayed in the dark, bodiless and unreachable.

In spite of their differences, the shared thread of controlling humans in both productions suggest an interpretation of recent Hungarian history as a mutation from communist State Security into a modern Security State. Both are seen as oppressive systems that handle humans as mere biodata. Yet, whereas huge communist networks of state police, agents, and civil informers turned the whole of society into a network of reports on both

public and private activities that could be a threat to socialist ideology, modern states use biometric data to control their citizens.

This link has been further accentuated in Hungary during the last decade, where an obsession with the refugee crisis characterized the political rhetoric of the Hungarian government, integrating the topic of 'migrants' and Hungary's role as the guardian of the EU into its political credo. Accordingly, recent elections were successfully reduced to a matter of national security, demanding a government capable of keeping a tight hold on the potential enemies of the nation, on both social and cultural levels, by strengthened borders, for instance.

According to Agamben, with the rise of new technologies, biotechnical apparatuses – characteristics of police stations, immigration offices, or prisons – spread across everyday life, blurring the distinction between private and public identities in a biologically based social identity.²⁹ Agamben's conclusion on modern democracies is strikingly similar to the experience of communist regimes: 'We should not be astonished if today the normal relationship between the state and its citizens is defined by suspicion, police filing, and control.'³⁰ As a consequence, while the logic of communist informer networks was based on the idea that everyone was a potential enemy of socialist ideology, contemporary democracies often see their citizens as potential terrorists who, therefore, should be controlled and observed.

Living Space and *(In)Finity* addressed a shift in controlling apparatuses from an ideology that was expressed through an authoritative figure towards an ideology expressed through the techno-medial surrounding itself. However, what remained was the glass casket of learned helplessness and the repression and control of human beings. The staged spaces of claustrophobia in the 1980s and in the 2010s offered an overview for audiences of their own oppressive cages, and it also highlighted the various (social) structures of observation. Nevertheless, there was a significant difference between the endings: while Bozsik's closed box was simply moved off the stage at the end of the show by two men, Góbi's box

opened at the end (after being filled with white smoke), offering a possibility of free escape. Yet the performer did not take this opportunity: she did not leave the space designed for her, which can be seen as a perfect symbol of the aforementioned helplessness that seems to characterize the experience of post-1989 realities in the country.

In 2012, the Collective of Natural Disasters created a reminder of the confined political and, consequently, existential situation of the 1980s and, more importantly, it pointed out its offspring in the 2010s. The archive of claustrophobia, a social and personal experience shared by the pre- and post-1989 period, manifested itself through the (re-)performed situation of a glass box with a female performer. In addition, *(In)Finity* was itself situated in a series of artistic and scholarly events that called attention to the collaborative nature of remembering, re-using, archiving, enacting, and re-performing. Thus, the relationship of Hungary's past and present, and the continuity between dictatorship and democracy, were shown to be a pure bodily experience of lack of space, lack of air, and lack of recognized history.

Notes and References

1. Special thanks to the members of the workshop 'Materiality of Performance – Performance Residues', held in 2018 at the Theatre Collection (TWS) in Cologne for their helpful and valuable comments: Tracy C. Davis, Aoife Monks, Hanna Korsberg, Ruthie Abeliovich, Indu Jain, T. Sofie Taubert, Nora Probst, and Sascha Förster. I would also like to thank Beáta Barda, Dávid Drucker, and Róbert Gábor Szabó for their kind help with the production photos, and Zoltán Imre for recollecting his memories of the creative process. I am also grateful to the following colleagues for their help: Jeroen Coppens, Katalin Cseh-Varga, Bryce Lease, and Gabriella Schuller. The article was completed during my Alexander von Humboldt Postdoctoral Research Fellowship.

2. Collective of Natural Disasters, *Living Space (Eleven tér)*. Director and stage designer: György Árvai; choreographer and performer: Yvette Bozsik. Premiere: Szkéné Theatre, 14 November 1986. Collective of Natural Disasters, *(In)Finity (Végtelenbe zárva)*. Director: György Árvai; choreographer and performer: Rita Góbi; dramaturg: Zoltán Imre; visual effects designers: Zsolt Korai, László Dinea, and Tünde Lenz; lighting: Attila Szirtes; music: Parabryo, mask: Balázs Károlyi; costume designer: Edit Szűcs. Premiere: Trafó House of Contemporary Arts, 21 March 2012.

3. Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Re-enactment* (New York:

Routledge, 2011); Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003).

4. See, for instance, Heike Roms, 'Mind the Gaps: Evidencing Performance and Performing Evidence in Performance Art History', in Claire Cochrane and Joanna Robinson, eds., *Theatre History and Historiography: Ethics, Evidence and Truth* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 163–81; André Lepecki, 'The Body as Archive: Will to Re-Enact and the Afterlives of Dances', *Dance Research Journal*, XLII, Issue 2 (Winter 2010), p. 28–48; Paul Clarke, Simon Jones, Nick Kaye, and Johanna Linsley, eds., *Artists in the Archive* (London: Routledge, 2018).

5. Nick Kaye, 'Liveness and the Entanglement with Things', in Clarke et al., eds., *Artists in the Archive*, p. 25.

6. György Árvai was born in 1959, and has been engaged in experimental music since 1982. After founding the experimental theatre Collective of Natural Disasters in 1984, he finished his MA studies in Stage and Costume Design at the Hungarian College of Fine Arts in 1988. He is known for his work as a visual and stage designer, as well as a director. Yvette Bozsik was born in 1968. She finished her studies as a ballet dancer at the State Ballet Institute in 1988, and founded her own dance company in 1993. Since 2000 she has been teaching at the Hungarian Dance Academy. She is known for works as dancer, choreographer, and director.

7. Livia Fuchs, *Alternatívak: az első száz év. Interjúkötet (Alternatives: The First Hundred Years. Interview volume)* (Budapest: Beszt Egyesület, 2011), p. 8.

8. The terrarium was 52 cm (20 inches) high, 155 cm (61 inches) long, and 85 cm (33 inches) long. See also Petra Péter, 'Árvai György: Eleven tér (1986)', *Philter Project*, <<http://www.philter.hu/link/play/eleven-ter/section/2/>> (accessed 10 August 2018).

9. According to the memories of the creators, the production ran in Hungary between four and six times, first in 1986 at Szkéné Theatre, then in 1988 at the First Meeting of Hungarian Dance Theatre. See also István Sándor L., 'Klausztofóbia: Eleven tér; Végtelenbe zárva: Természetes Vészek Kollektíva' ('Claustrophobia: Living Space; (In)Finity: Collective of Natural Disaster'), *Ellenfény* XVII, No. 4 (2012), p. 7–14; and Péter, 'Árvai György: Eleven tér'.

10. Rita Góbi was born in 1983. She finished her MA studies as a dancer in 2004, as a choreographer in 2008, and as a dance pedagogue in 2012 at the Hungarian Dance Academy. She founded her own company in 2006 and is known for her work as a dancer and choreographer.

11. 'His [Árvai's] work with Yvette Bozsik (*Living Space*, 1988) was (in)famous from the beginning, and even [for] those who did not see it, [it] still spread like an urban legend that the director enclosed the rebellious ballet dancer in a cramped terrarium': Sisso Artner, 'Performansz' ['Performance'], *Magyar Narancs* XXI, No.11 (2009), <http://magyarnarancs.hu/zene2/performansz_-_termeszetes_veszek_kollektiva_es_gergye_krisztian_ver-reflex-70949> (accessed 10 August 2018). All translations by the author.

12. 'The entrance of the performance space was framed by slender candelabra: from their plates smoke of pale light enters and disappears in the dark. As fountains of holy water at the gate of churches, they represent the border: from now on we are in a sacred space. The seats emerge on two sides, just like church aisles. In the middle, instead of an altar, there is an aquarium in a mysterious circle of light: we cannot see what is darkening inside it', András Rényi, 'A térlhiány botránya' ['The scandal of the lack of space'], *Mozgó Világ* XIV, No. 2 (1988), p. 100–1.

13. Dance blog of reviews and interviews: 'Eleven tér: A magyar meztelenség' ('Living Space: Hungarian Nakedness'), <<http://tanc.reblog.hu/cimke/1986>> (accessed 10 August 2018).

14. András Rényi, 'Természetes vészek: Beszélgetés Árvai Györggyel és Bozsik Yvette-tel' ('Natural Disasters: Interview with György Árvai and Yvette Bozsik'), *Mozgó Világ* XIV, No. 2 (1988), p. 113.

15. See Ágnes Andrea Gyimesi's interview with György Árvai, 'A felelősséggel kérdező ember' ('Asking Responsible Questions'), *Ellenfény* XVI, No. 8 (2011), p. 13.

16. The Hungarian word for 'habitat' (*élőhely*) is echoed in *Eleven tér*, the title of the production translated as *Living Space*.

17. Zoltán Imre was born in 1965. He received his PhD from Queen Mary College, University of London (2005), and is now a reader in the Department of Comparative Literature and Culture, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest. His publications include various books and articles on Hungarian and European theatre. He is also a member of the Collective of Natural Disasters.

18. For a short analytical summary of (*In*)*Finitude*, see Kornélia Deres, 'Performing (the) Future in Central Europe: In-between Media and Time', *Global Performance Studies*, 2.2 (2019), <<http://gps.psi-web.org/issue-2-2/future-now-a-forum/#entry1>> (accessed 1 February 2019).

19. *Living Space* supposedly inspired Milla Jovovich's performance in the glass box in *The Fifth Element*. According to György Árvai, Luc Besson attended a performance of *Living Space* at a theatre festival in France.

20. Following the suggestions by Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, the term, hypermediacy, is examined as 'a heterogeneous space, in which representation is conceived of not as a window on the world, but rather as windowed itself – with windows that open on to other representations or other media': Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (London and Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), p. 33–4.

21. Collective of Natural Disasters, *Blood Reflex (Vér-reflex)*. Creators: György Árvai, Krisztián Gergye, Zoltán Imre, Tünde Lenz, Parabryo, Attila Szirtes, Edit Szücs,

and Simon Heath / Atrium Carceri. Premiere: MU Theatre, 21 February 2009.

22. '[The production] did not call itself a re-enactment because it was not one. The situation was re-enacted, merely being in the box/confined space, altogether with its physical and symbolic elements, but confronted by the cultural, political, and technological milieu of the 2010s' (email interview by the author with Zoltán Imre, 11 February 2019).

23. See the description of the performance, available at <https://trafo.hu/programok/vegtelenbe_zarva> (accessed 11 February 2019).

24. Paul Clarke, Simon Jones, Nick Kaye, Johanna Linsley, 'Introduction: Inside and Outside the Archive', in Clarke *et al.*, eds., *Artists in the Archive*, p. 15.

25. Trafó House of Contemporary Arts, 22 March 2012

26. Giorgio Agamben, 'For a Theory of Destituent Power', public lecture, Athens, 16 November 2013, <<http://www.chronosmag.eu/index.php/g-agamben-for-a-theory-of-destituent-power.html>> (accessed 10 August 2018).

27. Patricia Clough, 'Political Economy and the Biomediated Body', paper presented at the University of Leicester, <<https://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/management/research/documents/research/research-units/cppe/seminar-pdfs/2005/clough.pdf>> (accessed 10 July 2016).

28. In the Hungarian context, among such infamous political figures may be counted, for example, Mátyás Rákosi (General Secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party between 1945 and 1948, and then of the Hungarian Working People's Party between 1948 and 1956); János Kádár (former Head of State Protection Authority, then General Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party between 1956 and 1988); or György Aczél (Deputy Minister between 1958 and 1967, then Minister of Culture between 1967 and 1971, a formal and informal leader of cultural life between 1956 and 1988).

29. Agamben, 'For a Theory of Destituent Power'.

30. *Ibid.*