

# The Reflections on Different Lithuanian Artists on an International Scale

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Jūratė, Baranova, Laura, Junutytė, Lilija, Duoblienė, *Rhythm and Refrain: In Between Philosophy and Arts*. Vilnius: Lietuvos edukologijos universiteto leidykla, 2016, ISBN 978-609-471-079-7, 336 pp.

Gilles Deleuze (1925–1955) is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable and influential French philosophers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1960s, he was considered as left-wing Nietzschean metaphysician in France. In the 1980s and 1990s – after being translated – Deleuze became influential in the Anglo-Saxon world, mainly in the field of literary theory. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, such thinkers as Žižek, Sokal, Badiou and Descombes discussed fundamental topics with the French coryphée. The book of Baranova, Junutytė and Duoblienė marks a new step in the reception of Deleuze, turning to the Eastern part of Europe.

In his works, Deleuze discusses main philosophers of the western tradition such as Leibniz, Nietzsche, Kant, Spinoza, Bergson and others. On the other hand, he is a great reader of literature: Proust, Sacher Masoch, and Kafka. Deleuze found in Guattari an intellectual friend and co-writer for a lot of books. Deleuze's main philosophical project can be summarized as an inversion of the traditional metaphysical relationship between identity and difference. In this sense, he inscribes himself in the tradition of French deconstructionism that reflects on Heidegger's *Identität und Differenz*. Traditionally, the difference is seen as a declination of identity. For Deleuze, on the contrary, identity is the result of differences. A second mark of his thought is the uni-dimensionality of being (the so-called immanent ontology rooted in the univocity of being).

The book of Baranova, Junutytė and Duoblienė is a result of the participation at the *Deleuze Studies* – conferences in Europe. Intellectually, it relies on the *Deleuze Studies* and a lot of secondary literature. Structurally, the book is a result of the project *Gilles Deleuze: Philosophy and Arts*, financed by the *Research Council of Lithuania*. A lot of texts were discussed with students, which results in peculiar nuances and intellectual gestures.

The scope of the book is interdisciplinary: Deleuze is presented as a philosopher and a literary criticist, navigating from philosophy to arts and back, as well through different forms of arts: literature, painting, cinema, and music. The originality of the project, compared with the existent secondary literature, is the focus on the concept of rhythm and refrain. Deleuze and Guattari broadened the limits of the classical concept of rhythm, which is not only applicable to music, poetry and dance, but also to every form of conversation. Conversation is marked by rhythm and absence of sequence of ideas, rather on the contrary, by strange associations and reminders that differ from the classical dialogues in novels and plays. Rhythm is a movement of variation characterized by recurrence. It unites three heterogeneous fields. The world of nature is a common rhythm of the sequence of regularly recurring functions and events: cosmic movements, the change of the seasons, and the rhythm of ovulation. The social world is organized by its own rhythms, not grafted on nature. The realm of arts is very visible in societies with dumb experiences and voodoo practices. It is the rhythm of dance, language and speech. Refrain is different, but the difference is subtle. Rhythm stems from refrain. Every milieu is as vibratory as chaos; it is a block of space and time constituted by the periodic repetitions of the components. Rhythm is the milieu's answer to chaos. Rhythm and refrain are in-between of chaos. The thesis shortly evoked here is present in a lot of Deleuze's books, albeit in different words and contexts – f. i. *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie* – but is thematized here as an original interpretation key for reading Deleuze.

Jūratė Baranova has written the first three chapters. First of all, she reflects on Rhythm as a philosophical concept. The root is to be found not in art but in mathematics and psychoanalytical sources. Art has to do with repetition. What can the connection between repetition and rhythm be? Deleuze is mainly interested in the differences. The Freudian concepts of Eros and Thanatos are the two drives of different rhythm and amplitudes. The creative and destructive forces allow to differentiate between different types of rhythm and repetition. Starting from these distinctions, Baranova develops fascinating pages on the calm and stable centre in the heart of chaos. There are three steps on the way leading to the centre surrounded by chaos: singing the little song of those lost in the dark, and creating a wall of sound by sonorous and vocal components to resist chaos. Rhythmic vowels and consonants correspond to the interior forces of creation. The third step has the tendency to open the last circle onto the future in order to join the cosmic forces. A very rich suggestion is elaborated by Paul Klee. But for Baranova, the experimental reflection can be applied to the creative work of the Lithuanian modernist Vincas Kisarauskas (1934–1988).

Baranova's second chapter is mainly dedicated to Proust and Levinas. After the genealogical search for the origins of the concept of rhythm in Deleuze, Baranova indicates that in Proust's novels the concept of rhythm emerges from reality, passes to arts, steps further, leaves arts and returns to reality. In this dynamic movement, rhythm is the meeting point between the narrator and the pulsation of the surrounding world. For Proust, deciphering the different worlds of signs results in listening to different rhythms. But the geniality of Proust is not only to decipher the signs of the world, but also the signs of the complex interchange of inter-human love. The interchanging belief and disappointment is the very essence of the signs of love. Interesting is the second part of the chapter in which Baranova confronts Deleuze with Levinas, the Lithuanian philosopher who emigrated to France and became world famous. Deleuze did not write on Levinas and *vice versa*. Both authors are convinced of the fact that rhythm transcends the sphere of music and has something to do with ontology. Deleuze looks for the possibility of transcending representation. More than Levinas, Deleuze stresses that rhythm has something to do with time: the time of the radical beginning as the essence of the time of the beginning of the world in general. Deleuze stresses that for Proust time contains more dimensions than space. Baranova, in her sharp analysis, notices that rhythm can also be connected with space.

In the third chapter, attention is focused on Deleuze's philosophy of cinema. Classic cinema prefers rhythmic montage (f. i. Eisenstein); modern cinema arrhythmic montage (f. i. Godard). Montage is not a technical activity, yet it has something to do with philosophy. It is a connection between time and rhythm. With Deleuze, Baranova differentiates between different cinematographic schools and formulates intriguing hypotheses: Andrei Tarkovsky's writings on rhythm have had influence on *Cinema 2: The Time* – the image of Deleuze is necessary to understand.

The interplay between Philosophy and Painting is evoked by Laura Junutyte. She concentrates on Deleuze's book on Francis Bacon. The consistency and suggestibility of sensation depend on rhythm. This becomes evident in the diagram that creates effects of movement from one level of sensation to another, but also in the Fold, the metaphor of Baroque Art and Leibniz. Folding is a modulation of rhythm. Painters such as Mikalojus Čiurlionis, Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky are included as sources. The Fold has to do with the in-between, the indiscernibility where there are no strict limits. In the interplay between rhythm and refrain, as well as the play between colours and lines, milieus and territories, lines and musical, it becomes impossible to discern interiority and exteriority, the beginning and end. In this way, Paul Klee maybe is the baroque painter par excellence. For Bacon, different rhythms become a figure.

The last chapter, written by Lilija Duoblienė, is dedicated to the problem of Philosophy and Music. She starts from the text '1837 – De la ritournelle' in *Mille plateaus*. The English translation of the French term is 'Refrain'. Duoblienė elaborates how the musical concept becomes a philosophical one in the process of moving from territorialisation

towards deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation. Rhythm marks the territory by distinguishing one-type element from others and keeping them at a distance. Melody shows the position of different sounds or motifs in a moment. Both have to do with the possibilities of becoming cosmic. The author elaborates her thesis with original interpretations of Lithuanian creators, such as Maciunas, Tarasov, Umbrasas and Šarapovas. She concludes that using the Deleuzian perspective on overstepping the personal, cultural and geographical borders in music makes it possible to extend the idea of artistic performance to become music.

The publication is important for different reasons. First of all, it is a highly scientific reflection on the fascinating but sometimes difficult writings of Deleuze. The texts are not only characterized by an adequate reading of Deleuze, the approach itself is original and new. It is fascinating to read the book. The edition meets the requirements: the introduction, different chapters, a list of bibliography and an extended index of names. The book itself is an important contribution to the Deleuze research. Besides, Baranova realizes the presence of Deleuze on the Lithuanian intellectual scene. As everyone knows, she helped reintroducing Levinas in Lithuania. With this last book, she proves to be one of the important actual Lithuanian philosophers. Last of all, the reflections on different Lithuanian artists give this book a fine *couleur locale* on an international scale.