

Rhetoric of Space and Poetics of Culture

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Steven Mullaney, one of the authors often associated with New Historicism, in his book The Place of the Stage proposed certain type of analysis of the English Renaissance theatre which he described as Rhetoric of Space. The paper points out how Mullaney's Rhetoric of Space and reading of the city could be seen as one of the exemplary instances of the application of Poetics of Culture conceived by notable new historicists such as, in the first instance, Stephen Greenblatt.

Keywords: literature and space / rhetoric of space / New Historicism / culture / English literature / Renaissance / theatre / Mullaney, Steven / Greenblatt, Stephen

Twentieth century humanities have witnessed many “turns”, in fact so many that scholars in humanities might become fed-up with yet another one every few years. Since the beginning of the century that opened with a “linguistic” turn, which in hindsight proved to be the most enduring, humanities have, by the end of the last and the beginning of a new century, survived other sweeping turns like performative, cultural or geographical-spatial turn. After that methodologically turbulent century, to say the very least, one is becoming accustomed to wait new turns like those awaiting a storm – prepare for the worst, but hope for the best. It is as if humanities’ scholars have become used to expect something, as if they know that the storm is coming to give them a good shake just to make sure they won’t doze off into a dormant dogmatism, they just do not know what the outcome will be when they resurface from their shelters onto the fields of their respective disciplines.

This article deals with part of the tide during 1980’s which falls roughly between two of those just mentioned turns, namely cultural and spatial. At that time being tired with ever new turns every few years probably was not yet so widely spread sentiment as it might be nowadays, in the era of different “post’s” that started at the close of that decade, and the imminence of the dramatic turning point which will profoundly change the very base of the discipline has not lost its convincing appeal.

At the beginning and during 1980's, while French poststructuralism's grip on the international humanities was in its heyday, also started a process that will later be recognized as a turn to culture and history. In the literary studies, especially in the English speaking world, that meant that after many decades of textualist approaches under the influence of aesthetics, linguistics, and with dominance of stylistic analyses, prevailing interests of scholars in literary studies, and generally in humanities, have turned to the questions of historical conditions and social forces which frame and mould identity. These approaches introduced, or rather reintroduced, issues of ideology and politics involved in the interpretation of literature.

Cultural studies could serve as one example. After decades of quiet work away from the spotlights of the big literary theoretical stages, cultural studies - that were evolving in UK in the broader frame of materialist criticism - were being slowly discovered at the universities in the USA. At the same time the whole new generation educated during 1960's (Greenblatt, *Learning* 167, Montrose, "Professing" 25) was coming of age to take literary studies in their hands and to either enter into it and become the establishment of the discipline or to question its state through the confrontation with the tradition (or to do both in reverse order and within a reasonable time span).

The identity issues of race or gender which were placed high on the research agenda under the tags of new disciplines, implied dealing with questions for which previous literary criticism was just turning a blind eye and offering tightly sealed-off ears (and noses, it might be added). The questions were too sweaty and too concrete for close reading in the manner of New Criticism, for these questions involved not just inspiring *belles lettres* for cultivated spirits, but issues of dominance and questioning of dominant values in past and in present in the interpretation of literature. The literary studies - among other disciplines in the humanities - have become a battlefield in which there was a constant campaign between old and new, conservative and progressive, seemingly neutral liberal conservators and openly politicized supposed destructors of that same heritage, between those that claimed that ideology has no place in literary studies and those who were pointing to highly contradictory and precisely ideological nature of that seemingly neutral gesture of their opponents.

Part of these broader changes during the 1980's was New Historicism. While it can be seen as an extension of the kind of critique defined in literary theory under the decisive influence of poststructuralism and in broadly conceived cultural studies into the field of English Renaissance Studies or literary history of the English Renaissance (Montrose, "Professing" 19-20, 24-25), New Historicism is by no means easy to define. But to come

closer to Rhetoric of Space in the somewhat broader context of Poetics of Culture, it is necessary to take a little detour through New Historicism.

In an article entitled “Towards a Poetics of Culture” and published by the end of 1980’s, Stephen Greenblatt, one of the authors most closely associated with New Historicism, revealed that he used term New Historicism almost by accident. As he stated in “Towards a Poetics of Culture”, New Historicism was something he coined out of trouble while he was trying to come up with appropriate common denominator for the articles he brought together as a guest-editor in a 1982 special issue of journal “Genre” in which they were to be published: “[...] out of a kind of desperation to get the introduction done, I wrote that the essays represented something I called a ‘new historicism’” (Greenblatt, *Learning* 146).

While these works had clear literary historical interest, they were all to represent something new and different in comparison with older criticism in the field of English Renaissance literary history. History is the reason why it became historicism and distinction from older forms of literary history in that area is the reason why there appeared adjective “new”. The fact that a polemical overtone was heard in the focus on history might seem strange, but it becomes more understandable in the context of the apogee of literary theory in 1980’s and 1990’s.

In that very same article – article that originated from a lecture given in 1986 and published in two slightly different versions during few subsequent years in the second half of 1980’s¹ – from the vantage point of the distance in time after that special issue and when New Historicism was already term with wider circulation, Greenblatt expressed his surprise that the term New Historicism caught such attention in the aftermath of these early usages, and proved to be resistant to all his attempts to replace it with the names he saw as more suitable for describing his literary critical project (Greenblatt, *Learning* 146).

That accidental naming illustrates very well another point, something which is becoming more and more characteristic of the dynamics of literary studies in the past twenty or thirty years. That is the need to come up with a name, to give something a tag (preferably with the prefix new) even in a situation when there is questionable what contents is implied or can be defined under new name.

But that is not just a problem of names and terms. Terminology here points to an additional and broader problem that could be formulated as the question whether or not New Historicism could be defined as a method or school. Although it was often seen as such, the possibility to define it in such a way is very doubtful for several reasons, and not just in the light of statements by notable New Historicists, like Greenblatt

or Louis Montrose, in which they usually stressed that New Historicism does not, at least in their vision, represent doctrine or yet another methodological school in literary studies (Greenblatt, *Learning* 146; Montrose, "Professing" 18-19). In fact, Greenblatt expressed his amazement at the fact that there are articles about, attacks on and dissertations that refer to New Historicism (Greenblatt, *Learning* 146).

But there are more substantial reasons that preclude or appear as an obstacle in defining New Historicism as a unified scholarly project. One of them is that New Historicism might be seen as overly heterogeneous since "those identified with it [New Historicism] by themselves or by others were actually quite heterogeneous in their critical practices" (Montrose, "Professing" 18). The other is that methodological or literary theoretical foundations upon which New Historicism rests are all too common and anything but distinguishable or reserved just for one approach that could be defined as a school or programme, and as Montrose admitted there were "eclectic and empiricist tendencies that threatened to undermine any attempt to distinguish a new historicism" (Montrose, "Professing" 18).

That is probably why Montrose insists in the end, that New Historicism is nothing more than a "terminological site of intense debate and critique, of multiple appropriations and contestations within the ideological field of Renaissance studies itself, and to some extent in other areas of the discipline" (Montrose, "Professing" 19).

Be that as it may, it seems that the name preceded the program while usually it is, or should be, the other way around. It is as if the need to name new approach was not the consequence of the declared intentions and previous efforts of the group of critics with unified goals materialized in their works, but more of a need to find coordinated programme, new paradigm in famous "paradigm shifts", that lies beneath the name after the name was already announced. To such problems, which are too complex to be dealt with at present circumstances and therefore must be put aside,² Montrose cleverly pointed when he alluded to "commodifying cult of 'the new'" and passing intellectual fancies in something that might be called academic marketplace (Montrose, "Professing" 18).

Returning to the question of terms, it might prove more fruitful to analyse some other terms which Greenblatt or others have used to describe their literary historical interpretations. As opposed to that declared randomness in the choice of the term New Historicism, one of these more conscientious efforts to capture characteristic traits of his approach to literature in one phrase is the term "Poetics of Culture" that Greenblatt has also been using. "Poetics of Culture" or "Cultural Poetics" is the phrase which Greenblatt started using interchangeably with New Historicism

from very early on and one which seems, as Montrose observed, as more adequate and accurate name than New Historicism (Montrose, “Professing” 17).

The term Poetics of Culture appears in Greenblatt’s works even before that special issue of the journal “Genre” which could be taken as one of chronological marks for the beginnings of New Historicism. Even in the introduction to the special issue of “Genre” he used that term together with New Historicism. Before that, in his book *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* – the book that attracted much attention when it was published in 1980 – he was already using the term “Cultural Poetics”.

Poetics of Culture can be explained and defined by taking into account not only meanings of the single words in that phrase, but also their combination. And as a combination of terms, Poetics of Culture points to a certain transposition of common or usual meanings of these words.

Poetics can be taken very literally as a term used traditionally to describe literary studies which are based on reading and interpreting.³ Culture on the other hand, should be, from all that can be inferred in Greenblatt’s writings, taken in its broader meaning akin to meaning it has in anthropology which is, for Greenblatt, one of the most important influences from other disciplines. That is a culture not just as a body of intellectual, artistic and spiritual achievements, but also culture in its materiality of everyday practices and texts. What Greenblatt is doing with the transposition of meaning in that phrase is in fact redirecting literary interpretation towards broader, loosely defined context of culture.

The culture is therefore signal of the interdisciplinary nature of such a project which purposefully combines influences from various disciplines in humanities, and at the same time that interdisciplinary interest for the culture, not just for literature, is a sign of the distance from the traditional modes of literary history. Interdisciplinary nature of Poetics of Culture is not a goal in itself, but a necessity, precondition, since study of literature within the frame of Poetics of Culture opens itself to the study of culture which was traditionally domain of cultural and social anthropology.

If then Poetics of Culture, as a defining phrase, can be taken to mean simply **“reading of culture”**, then that points to one preceding methodological requirement. The assumption on which Poetics of Culture is based would be the possibility to use techniques developed for interpreting texts and apply them in interpretation of culture.

Greenblatt openly admitted to that when he described his project, whether it is called Poetics of Culture or New Historicism, as an effort to read all the textual traces of the past in a manner derived from literary studies: **“If there is any value to what has become known as ‘new histori-**

cism', it must be here, in an intensified willingness to read all the textual traces of the past with the attention traditionally conferred only on literary texts" (Greenblatt, *Learning* 14).

At the same time that opens up the possibility to deal with the shortcomings of the older literary criticism and history through combination of historicist and formalist analytical techniques. Montrose defined New Historicism and Cultural Poetics in such a fashion:

Stephen Greenblatt, [...], has himself now abandoned it [New Historicism] in favour of 'Cultural Poetics', a term he had used earlier and one which perhaps more accurately represents the critical project I have described. [...] As the conjunction of terms in its title suggests, the interests and analytical techniques of 'Cultural Poetics' are at once historicist and formalist [...] (Montrose, "Professing" 17).

But the assumption that it would be possible to read cultures as literary texts and to combine formalist and historicist techniques in interpretations depends upon supposition that there is some basic analogy between text and culture or that culture can be viewed as a large text. Poetics of Culture rests upon such an equation between culture and text that enables new historicists to approach culture as if it were a text.⁴ Literary text is considered as one unit of that broader cultural text, just one of the discourses in the larger discourse of the whole cultural epoch.

That is something Greenblatt explains paying its debts to anthropology and Clifford Geertz in particular: "[...] the notion of a distinct culture, particularly a culture distant in time or space, as a text – a notion we got more from Geertz and structuralists than from historicists – is powerfully attractive for several reasons" (Gallagher – Greenblatt 8).

One of the reasons for attractiveness of the idea of a culture as a text is that: "[...] **it vastly expands the range of objects available to be read and interpreted.** Major works of art remain centrally important, but they are jostled now by an array of other texts and images" (Gallagher – Greenblatt 9).

Montrose also insists on the broadening of perspective which includes consideration of literature in the socio-cultural field "**within which canonical Renaissance literary and dramatic works were originally produced;** upon resituating them not only in relationship to other genres and modes of discourse but also in relationship to contemporaneous social institutions and non-discursive practices" (Montrose, "Professing" 17).

Such interpretational procedure which combines reading of literary text with interpretation of other elements of culture, be they material or textual, Greenblatt used very often and that might be one of the typical elements of otherwise not that distinguishable project. Among many possible examples one that should be mentioned is Greenblatt's article "Invisible Bullets".

In that article, through comparison of two different genres, he demonstrates how similar mechanisms were at work in two seemingly distant areas of Renaissance culture. One of them is represented with report written by Thomas Harriot who was sent to American colonies and who recorded his impressions and described the conditions in the colonies. The other set of examples comes from the interpretation of some of the historical plays, chronicles by William Shakespeare (two parts of *Henry IV* and *Henry V*).

What is important about that example in present context of the discussion about Poetics of Culture is not so much the content and the outcome of the Greenblatt's analysis – which, it must be mentioned, stirred much water – but his procedure. And that interpretational procedure is at once dealing with fictional literary genre and clearly non-fictional account, something which is combination of political, bureaucratic and diplomatic report, travelogue and diary.

That Greenblatt's article is exemplary instance of detailed literary critical reading – that is the component of poetics - of various traces of the past in almost anthropological manner – that is the component of culture – given that Greenblatt deals with the attitudes and with the worldview as recorded in Harriot's account and Shakespeare's dramas. And as different from the older forms of historicism in Renaissance literary history, different genres are treated equally as a historical source and as a text with all of the qualities of fiction. As was already mentioned, there are other possible examples for such analyses with broadened scope of objects that can be read and interpreted.⁵ One which, as it will be argued, also fits into the frame of Greenblatt's Poetics of Culture is Steven Mullaney's analysis of the marginality of English Renaissance theatre.

Mullaney departs from Muriel Bradbrook's "commonplace" definition of the theatre as a "poetry of the city" which, on the one hand, points to the ties between theatre and urban community, and on the other to spatiality, or territoriality of the drama as a form of poetry that not only depends upon word, but is directed towards space. To analyse that space – quite in accordance with mentioned traits of Poetics of Culture – he devised a concept of Rhetoric of Space.

Mullaney's Rhetoric of Space is based upon assumption that hierarchy of ideals and values of certain culture – although they are immaterial – is very concretely projected, literally inscribed in space (Mullaney 9–10). That opens up the path for interpretation which in one stroke defines literal meaning in the location of certain practice (such as theatre) and takes into consideration figurative meaning of that location. Rhetorical, figurative meaning is in fact formed through that interplay between position in a physical space in relation to the imaginary space formed by the immateriality of the very ideas and values of the culture in question.

Therefore, as Mullaney defined it, Rhetoric of Space is a combination of “tropology” as a study of rhetorical figures, tropes, and “topography” as a study of space, or with one word, “topology” in which locations are read as “loci communes” or “topoi koinoi” of culture (Mullaney 16, 18).

There is no room to recapitulate all of Mullaney’s deductions, but just to briefly summarize some of the conclusions about Elizabethan theatre seen from the perspective provided by the Rhetoric of Space.

Mullaney finds, in the case of Elizabethan theatre, a sort of incongruence between two spaces – physical and imaginary:

Popular drama in England got under way by occupying or taking up a place in the cultural landscape that was not quite proper to it. [...] Born of the contradiction between Court license and city prohibition, popular drama in England emerged as a cultural institution only by materially embodying that contradiction, dislocating itself from the strict confines of the existing social order and taking up a place on the margins of society (8).

That peculiar form of English Renaissance commercial and professional theatre, with dramatic plays and performances that partly developed from and then supplanted civic and communal rituals (Mullaney 8, 10, 20, 27) was, as something new, marginalized in a number of ways (Mullaney 31). That is the conclusion of literary scholars and historians of theatre whose analyses bear certain similarities with conclusions reformulated by Mullaney who refers to them.

Most visibly theatre was marginal by its position in space - and that is what attracts Mullaney’s attention the most - since most of the so-called public theatres were located on the fringes of the city boundaries, in “Liberties”. All the new theatres which were finding their fixed position in the space during 1570’s – as opposed to itinerant professional actors in medieval times - were on the outer brim of the city of London whose jurisdiction was marked with the confines that were extension of city walls. First buildings permanently and purposefully used for theatrical performances were built in the northeast periphery, while subsequently few of the theatres concentrated in the opposite direction in the southwest suburb over the river Thames.

Additionally, as historians of English Renaissance theatre have shown, positioning outside the city meant, quite literally, that theatre was marginal legally because “Liberties” were out of juridical reach of city authorities. Even in the case of those theatres that were inside the confines of the city, outlined by the former city walls, legally they were not under the authority of city fathers but of the sovereign.

Morally theatre was perceived as a constant source of worries which continually provoked attacks from religious moralists, and socially as a

place that attracted all sorts of persons but mostly socially marginal groups and provided opportunity for experiencing social marginality. And as a new form of artistic and commercial activity with doubtful reputation for educated contemporaries it was marginal aesthetically too.

Outcome of Mullaney's analysis is that theatre was in a marginal position in space, it was located on the margins of society and in many ways on the margins of imaginary order of English Renaissance culture, but theatre was still at the intersection of different – political, ideological, religious, ritualistic – interests and authorities. As a stake in social relations and political conflicts, especially those between Crown and the City (Mullaney 51, 53), theatre became embodiment of the contradictions of society.

Incongruence between symbolic and physical order in which theatre becomes material embodiment of contradictions between political authorities, enables Mullaney to compare theatre with the figure of oxymoron (33). Like a leper who inhabited the space of Liberties since medieval times, the theatre was a living oxymoron, embodied contradiction between sets of oppositions that frame fundamental codes of culture (country-city or rural-urban, work-leisure, internal-external, intimate-foreign).

One could go on and give further examples which all point to certain similarities with Greenblatt's procedures in interpretation of Renaissance literature. Just a few of them will be briefly evoked here. These few examples will serve to outline some basic similarities between Greenblatt and Mullaney on which the conclusion that Mullaney's interpretations in its essential traits could be explained as an application of the core principles of Poetics of Culture is based.

In the first place should be mentioned main assumption behind Mullaney's approach which is similar to Greenblatt's idea of culture considered as a text. That is the base of his analysis and that enables the application of interpretational techniques used for analysing texts to interpret objects and practices of the past cultures.

Comparison of the theatre's place with a rhetorical figure might serve as just one of the illustrations in what sense Mullaney's analysis might be described as an instance, on a particular level, of basic characteristics of Poetics of Culture mentioned before. Mullaney's comparison of theatre's position with rhetorical figures is enabled by his attempt "to read the city", to approach the city as if it were a text which is literal inscription of ideological and cultural values, just as Greenblatt proclaims Poetics of Culture to be reading of the elements of culture as a text.

Mullaney's *Rhetoric of Space* is in a way a renewal of Renaissance perception of the space as inhabited with meaning, of the city as a symbolic, enlarged text (14). Mullaney finds contemporary predecessor for his read-

ing of the city in *Survey of London* written by John Stow in sixteenth century (14-17). Commenting on Stow's book Mullaney mentions city as a text that can be read:

The social order he [Stow] records in passing is a ceremonial one, and the city that unfolds before us is as much a dramaturgical creation as a juridical or political one, a cultural text both composed and performed by ritual processions and ceremonies. [...] In an entirely literal sense, the *Survey* is a reading of London [...] (15).

Stow's guide through Renaissance London is a common-place book, repository of figures: "Stow's *Survey* is the closest thing we have to a commonplace book for such a city. The common places of London are Stow's topics" (17).

At the same time the other important element is visible, and that is broadening of the scope of objects interesting for interpretation which is also the consequence of the idea of culture as text. Gallagher and Greenblatt, in describing culture as text, pointed to the texts which supplement the literary canon. Some of them were regarded as minor and of less aesthetic value compared with the masterpieces of the few selected poets and playwrights of the time. Others that have not even been considered as literary might become even more interesting, like Harriot's report in Greenblatt's interpretation, as a source of information on values, judgments and perception of the men and women in the Renaissance.

With Stow's reading of the city Mullaney proceeds in a similar fashion and includes in his broad interpretation of literary dimensions and artistic forms of theatre text which is not literary, but more like an anthropological source, informant on the rituals of the Renaissance city which Mullaney terms "**ceremonial**" city (10), marked by the **periodical processions** in which theatre and ritual merged into one (10-14).

Along with non-literary texts Mullaney's analysis links elements of the broader socio-cultural field, as Montrose has termed it, which generated canonical literary works. That field includes the other artistic forms or objects of other (fine) arts, like engravings,⁶ with which Mullaney starts. At the very beginning, as a cue to depart into interpretation, Mullaney gives description and analysis of an engraving based on *Panorama of London* by Anthony van den Wyngaerde (1543).⁷

Precisely in a manner suggested by Montrose in previously quoted passage, Mullaney's interpretations consider social institutions and non-discursive practices within which canonical literary works were originally produced, but with the slight change in the accents since main objects of his interpretations are not genres of canonical literary works but theatre and the city as non-discursive practices and institutions.

And as Mullaney slightly realigned accents of the analyses from literary works to socio-cultural practices and institutions, so considering Mullaney's *Rhetoric of Space* in the context of Greenblatt's *Poetics of Culture* also rests upon reversal of tradition. While in the tradition of the study of literature rhetoric and poetics went together hand-in-hand with priority of a broader discipline of the rhetoric over the poetics, here *Poetics of Culture* became broader context for *Rhetoric of Space*.

NOTES

¹ The text was first delivered as a lecture in Australia and published in the journal *Southern Review*. Shortly after that, under the title "Capitalist Culture and the Circulatory System" and with modified sections – mostly in the introductory parts – the article appeared in *The Aims of Representation* in 1987 (ed. Murray Krieger). That was in fact collection of proceedings from the conferences held at Irvin University in the mid 1980's. Under present title Greenblatt published the article again – reworked in comparison with previous version – in the collection *The New Historicism* edited by H. A. Veenser (1989) and next year in the first edition of his book *Learning to Curse* which is collection of articles written in the span of more than a decade (Greenblatt, *Learning* 159, n. 1).

² This question is beyond the scope of this paper, but it was necessary to point to that broader problem.

³ Poetics is certainly the term with the long history and diverse definitions. But ever since – not just structuralist adoption and usage of that term – Aristotle's times, and certainly since late Medieval and Renaissance rediscovery of his writings on the subject, poetics has gradually become equated, in the Renaissance and later poetic treatises, with the effort to treat fictional literature (not historical or philosophical writings) either more technically in conjunction with rhetoric (from XV-XVIII century) or scientifically (since XIX century). Culture, discovered as a methodological topic gradually since XIX century, is studied in various modern disciplines (sociology, anthropology and cultural studies) with the whole plethora of possible approaches, methodologies and sources (quantitative and qualitative, statistics, interviews, surveys, various archival sources like minutes or confessions) to which Greenblatt is adding fictional literature following the example set by anthropologists and historians. Greenblatt is then, with the term poetics of culture, shifting usual meaning of poetics from reading, interpreting, and classifying fictional literature to interpretation of culture as well, but with the techniques of literary interpretation (of formalist and structuralist provenance). Therefore the meaning of poetics in Greenblatt's phrase is trying to surpass mere interpretation of the literary text, opening thus itself to anthropology.

⁴ The new historicists were under the strong interdisciplinary influences of various authors and approaches ranging from anthropology and sociology to philosophy and literary theory. As far as the analogy between culture and text is concerned, Stephen Greenblatt and Catherine Gallagher give all the credit to the anthropology of Clifford Geertz and to structuralists (as succeeding quote in the text clearly demonstrates). Of course, it could be argued that such an idea is in the very foundations of semiotics and structuralism, for when Roland Barthes or Umberto Eco are illustrating models devised in the linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure with food or navy flag communication they are stepping precisely into the broader field which today – from the hindsight of cultural studies – would be termed simply and broadly as "culture". Or it could be said that crucial role in that respect had the

anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss which was founded, constructed and developed on the possibility to compare linguistic communication with other material exchanges in the culture. But still, it is quite doubtful how much one is allowed to conclude that such an idea was explicitly formulated or clear as a methodological principle in the works of Western or Eastern structuralists and semioticians (like Barthes or Jurij Lotman) in 1960's and 1970's, and even less in the works of poststructuralists like Jacques Derrida. He is usually thought of as one who turned everything - and consequently the culture - into the text. Discussion of his famous sentence "Il n'y a pas de hors-texte" (Derrida, *De la grammatologie* 227) which is more than often quoted as a sum total of his position and his subsequent glosses of that sentence in other writings from the late 1960's and 1970's (like, for example, in Derrida, *Positions* 117, n. 3 or in Derrida, *La dissémination* 47-48) is way beyond the scope of this article. But, to put it very briefly, it would be hard to point at a single article or a chapter, or even a paragraph for that matter, where Derrida, in his early writings, explicitly and strictly develops analogy between culture and text. In the broader sense still, his use of *le texte* and other terms (*l'écriture, la trace* and others) has more to do with his dialogue with preceding German philosophy and dismantling of philosophical tradition, than with any notion of culture. That is very well visible in the opening chapters of *De la grammatologie* where these terms are discussed with constant references to semiotics (Derrida, *De la grammatologie* 67-70, 88-95). To sum up, it would - hopefully - be enough to say simply that for new historicists it was Geertz's anthropology - in itself already under the influence of structuralism - that was the single most important influence in that respect.

⁵ Such as Louis Montrose's reading of the pastoral forms in literature and political acquiring and appropriation of pastoral elements (Montrose, "Eliza").

⁶ Similarly, on several occasions Greenblatt devoted attention to paintings or engravings, from his analysis of Hans Holbein's *The Ambassadors* in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* to the interpretation of Albrecht Dürer's sketches and engravings in the context of the interpretation of canonical literary texts by notable English Renaissance authors like Edmund Spenser, Philip Sidney and William Shakespeare (Greenblatt, *Learning* 99-112).

⁷ It is an engraving by Nathaniel Whittock from the XIXth century (Mullaney 1).

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Retorika prostora in poetika kulture

Ključne besede: literatura in prostor / retorika prostora / novi historizem / kultura / angleška književnost / renesansa / gledališče / Mullaney, Steven / Greenblatt, Stephen

Čeprav novi historizem kot termin prevladuje že od zgodnjih 80. let 20. stoletja, se zdi, da je Stephenu Greenblattu bolj všeč izraz »poetika kulture« kot kombinacija izrazov, ki najbolje opišejo njegove poskuse s področja literarnozgodovinske analize angleške renesančne književnosti in kulture oziroma tovrstne poskuse njegovih kolegov. Greenblatt običajno poudarja, da je poetika kulture primernejši izraz z vidika novega historizma, ki želi združiti tako zgodovinske kot formalistične kritične interese in književnost interpretira kot eno izmed plasti kulture. Glavna zamisel, na kateri temelji poetika kulture in katero je bil Greenblatt prisiljen zagovarjati pod močnim vplivom antropologije, je poskus pristopanja h kulturi kot besedilu.

Steven Mullaney z izrazom »retorika prostora« opisuje možen način razumevanja videza in prostora angleškega renesančnega gledališča v kontekstu takratne kulture. Osnovne domneve, značilne za njegov poskus »branja« renesančnega mesta in prostora, ki ga v njem zaseda gledališče, so močno podobne zamislim, na katerih temelji Greenblattova poetika kulture.

November 2012