

Abstract

A Biographical Study of Vida Neuwirthová: The Influence of Family Heritage on her Artistic Life and Work

Using biographical methodology within contemporary historic studies, this thesis aims to present interpretations of life events as they were understood by the main subject of this research – Vida Neuwirthová- based on further analyses and interpretations of oral-historical interviews and other sources. Vida Neuwirthová is known to the public as a popular actress in the famous film *Tri veterani* (1984), and a dramatic shortcut in the understanding of her life events has influenced her current media image. Detailed biographical study reveals that the core of her life story is based on the discovery early in young adulthood of her Jewish heritage from her paternal family line. This important change in the understanding of her identity influenced the way she activated her artistic performance during the so-called „late normalisation“of the 1980s, founding the children’s theater *Feigele* within the local Prague Jewish community. This period of time was characterized by an authoritarian state regime with a declared antisemitic ideology which tried to suppress and/or assimilate any signs of Jewish identity. In my thesis, I explore a possible change of meaning that Vida Neuwirthová provides in a retrospective to her actions in the above mentioned period, influenced by the discovery of new archival sources that she was not aware of at the beginning of this research.

Key words: Vida Neuwirthová, oral history, biography, contemporary history, puppeteer, theater Feigele, Jewish identity, normalization, Czechoslovakia