

countering the work. Instead, in the (re-)representations of (1944–1991) Former NKVD – MVD – MGB – KGB Buildings, diligent documentation perhaps harbours more disruptive incoherent fantasies. What if we let those associations fester, staying with the complex of relationships between paranoia, archives, and Šerpytytė’s approach.

ⁱ Cyndy Hendershot, ‘Paranoia and the delusion of the total system’, *American Imago* vol. 54:1 (Spring 1997), 15–37.

ⁱⁱ Ilya Prigogine & Isabelle Stengers, *Order Out of Chaos* (1984), 54.

ⁱⁱⁱ Sianne Ngai, ‘Bad Timing (A Sequel): Paranoia, Feminism, and Poetry’, *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 12:2 (2001), 1–46.

^{iv} Rob Lucas, ‘The Surveillance Business’, *New Left Review* 121 (Jan, Feb 2020), 132–141.

Paranoia’s Afterlives

by 3,14’s text contributor **Johnny Herbert**

What is the afterlife of paranoia? More particularly, here, what is the psychological fallout of the particular paranoid regime within Lithuania for which the buildings Indrė Šerpytytė has focused on were and are reminders? How might one, and how does Šerpytytė, cope with and work through the remains of such a psychological and physical architecture without perhaps taking a paranoid or suspicious approach?

Something to initially consider is that paranoia is contagious (something we’ve all acutely experienced recently). In Sigmund Freud’s account of perhaps the most infamous paranoiac, the judge Daniel Paul Schreber, Freud becomes somewhat seduced by Schreber’s elaborate, fantastical hypotheses and starts to suspect that his own attempts at scientific rigor are blurring with Schreber’s hyperbolic rationalisations. Noting this, theorist Cyndy Hendershot asserts that paranoia evidences the seduction of total systems in which Newtonian-influenced science has left a common sense view of science as systematic and all-explanatory, the work of a singular vision. ⁱ Hendershot’s central point, supported by scientists and theorists Isabelle Stengers and Ilya Prigogine, is that twentieth and twenty-first century scientific knowledge take “randomness, complexity, and irreversibility [...] as objects of positive knowledge” ⁱⁱ, ideas yet to percolate into common knowledge, but which, we might infer from Hendershot’s essay, will give rise to other fantasies, hyperbolic rationalisations, and feelings of persecution for which “total systems” might no longer figure. Paranoia, as being beside oneself or out of one’s mind, may no longer be gripped by the (as-yet unacknowledged) prestige of a grand narrative—a postmodern paranoia, we might say.

Yet, whereas Hendershot sees paranoid thinking as symptomatic of lay theoretical received and outdated intellectual approaches, some psy-

chological and psychoanalytic work is less damning of paranoiacs, considering paranoia to be on a spectrum of rational thought. Here, the construction of elaborate systems as the projection of coherence and cosmological harmony, whilst nevertheless persecutory, enables some sense of consistency and meaningfulness for the paranoiac. It is not too much of a stretch, then, to see that criticism and philosophy—as well as considering art exhibitions—are separated from paranoid thinking only because of an unacknowledged agreement that a given set of logical, coherent thoughts relate to a socially accepted reality. As theorist Sianne Ngai argues in a rich essay looking to recuperate a notion of paranoia for feminist thinking (rather than it being a traditional domain of white male master-theorists and conspiracy thinkers), this “reality” and the attribution of paranoia cast a very familiar shadow: “paranoia can be denied the status of epistemology when claimed by minority subjects, though valorised as such when claimed by the status quo.” Whilst not going so far as to encourage a return to grand narratives, Ngai goes on to consider whether a certain amount of speculation and abstraction is “necessary for critical intervention in late capitalist culture”ⁱⁱⁱ, “the system” as it is so often called.

What if, then, we thought of abstraction as a blur of the fantastical and the systematic? Isn’t knowledge’s entanglement with imagination where fantasy (a mixture of desire and imagination) and rigor smooth out incoherences, gaps, and traumas, maintaining a “reality”, be it a political regime or a religious belief system, in a latently paranoid embrace? Doesn’t paranoia always figure in doubt and belief in an event of knowledge?

Paranoid delusions are often the colossal intellectual fabrication that attempts to ward off uncertainty (and the difficult admission of being just another person). Whereas buildings were erected across Lithuania to maintain ideological control of a population during a communist regime, today’s predominant but subtler architecture that looks to intervene in the future, to secure assets and manage risk—“surveillance capitalism”,

as prominent theorist Shoshana Zuboff has termed the (almost) global order—is algorithmic and motivated by profit, not ideological control. But what Zuboff glosses over, as Rob Lucas notes in his review of her book *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*^{iv}, is that online behaviour is represented as data—data requires some kind of representation, a form rendering it manipulable and, of course, usable and sellable as data.

In representing and re-representing the buildings via annotated images in notebooks, wood models, and images of the models, it is as if the buildings are at each stage passed through media in order to tease out a potential, something “unsaid”, as if mediation will become a medium, a portal, communing with the silenced. Is this emphasis on mediation—the attempt at data accrual, if you will—in fact a way of attending to the afterlife of paranoia?

Kunsthall 3.14’s frequent focus on surveillance in recent years arises again here. Transposing Šerpytytė’s work out of a reflection on history and monuments, we might consider how the work’s archival aesthetics and deliberate, multi-representational modes foreground what we might think of as a surveillance attitude in attending to the afterlife of paranoia, as if rigorously archiving and collating the architecture of the buildings into one space allows us to watch over these monuments to paranoia in their totality.

There has been a fair amount of recent debate in studies of criticism, critique, and critical theory about paranoia (and also suspicion) as the latent, ubiquitous mode of encounter and approach to theorising: a thing considered is stabilised, petrified, and often dismissed, within a framework of theories, terms, and movements, evincing a masterful thinker (the critic/writer) and a mistaken—and maimed—object. One approach we might take to Šerpytytė’s exhibition, then, is an anti-paranoiac one, drawing from the ideas of psychoanalyst Melanie Klein, in which we do not attempt to provide a clever reading or interpretation to smooth out incoherences and resolve a conflict or ambivalence we feel when en-