

Abstract

In this thesis based on research of historical sources I try to reconstruct the Prague festival of majales in 50s and 60s of 20th century and understand if they were truly meant as an act of defiance against the communist „régime“ as some historians say. My point of view is base around the theory of Michail Bachtin and carnival as form of culturally creative force which act as form of social order negotiation. Worlds of play and laughter exist as a parallel to the official mundane world with their own different rules and they can be used as a form of social negotiation even in totalitarian or strongly conservative “régimes”. Majales is a form of carnival that grants the transition into the world of play. Students in Czechoslovakia could use this possibility to negotiate about many otherwise taboo topics. Even if the worlds of play and mundane seem to be separated they influence each other in many ways and even the rules of mundane world can be changed through play and carnival. Students are also protected by their liminal status between being a child and an adult. Which grants them more rights than children but less duties than adults.