

*glu*

9. Letnik / Volume 2. Številka / Number

Revija za teorijo scenskih umetnosti  
Journal of Performing Arts Theory

2021

am  
fi  
te  
at  
er

Senzorialno gledališče/Sensorial Theatre

sl( )gi SLOVENSKI  
GLEDALIŠKI  
INSTITUT

*Univerza v Ljubljani*  
*Akademija za gledališče, radio, film in televizijo*



Ljubljana, 2021



9. Letnik / Volume

2. Številka / Number

Revija za teorijo scenskih umetnosti  
Journal of Performing Arts Theory

2021

am  
fi  
te  
at  
er

Senzorialno gledališče/Sensorial Theatre

AMFITEATER

Revija za teorijo scenskih umetnosti / Journal of Performing Arts Theory

Letnik / Volume 9, Številka / Number 2

ISSN 1855-4539 (tiskana izdaja)

1855-850X (elektronska izdaja)

**Glavni in odgovorni urednik:** Gašper Troha

**Urednika tematskega bloka:** Tomaž Toporišič, Barbara Pia Jenič

**Uredniški odbor / Editorial Board:**

Zala Dobovšek (Univerza v Ljubljani), Primož Jesenko (Slovenski gledališki inštitut), Matic Kocijančič (Slovenski gledališki inštitut), Bojana Kunst (Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen, DE), Blaž Lukan (Univerza v Ljubljani), Aldo Milohnić (Univerza v Ljubljani), Maja Murnik (Inštitut za nove medije), Barbara Orel (Univerza v Ljubljani), Mateja Pezdirc Bartol (Univerza v Ljubljani), Maja Šorli (Univerza v Ljubljani), Tomaž Toporišič (Univerza v Ljubljani)

**Mednarodni uredniški odbor / International Editorial Board:**

Mark Amerika (University of Colorado, US), Marin Blažević (Sveučilište u Zagrebu, HR), Ramsay Burt (De Montfort University, GB), Joshua Edelman (Manchester Metropolitan University, GB), Jure Gantar (Dalhousie University, CA), Anna Maria Monteverdi (Università degli Studi di Milano, IT), Janelle Reinelt (The University of Warwick, GB), Anneli Saro (Tartu Ülikool, EE), Miško Šuvaković (Univerzitet Singidunum, RS), S. E. Wilmer (Trinity College Dublin, IE)

**Soizdajateljja:** Slovenski gledališki inštitut (zanj Mojca Jan Zoran, direktorica)

in Univerza v Ljubljani, Akademija za gledališče, radio, film in televizijo (zanjo Tomaž Gubenšek, dekan)

**Published by:** Slovenian Theatre Institute (represented by Mojca Jan Zoran, Director)

and University of Ljubljana, Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television (represented by Tomaž Gubenšek, Dean)

---

**Prevod/Translation:** Urška Zajec

**Lektoriranje slovenskega besedila / Slovenian Language Editing:** Andraž Polončič Ruparčič

**Lektoriranje angleškega besedila / English Language Editing:** Jana Renée Wilcoxon

**Korektura / Proofreading:** Gašper Troha in/and Jana Renée Wilcoxon

**Bibliotekarka / Librarian:** Bojana Bajec (UL AGRFT)

**Oblikovanje / Graphic Design:** Simona Jakovac

**Priprava za tisk / Typesetting:** Nina Šturm

**Tisk / Print:** CICERO, Begunje, d.o.o.

**Število natisnjenih izvodov / Copies:** 200

Revija izhaja dvakrat letno. Cena posamezne številke: 10 €. Cena dvojne številke: 18 €. Letna naročnina: 16 € za posameznike, 13 € za študente, 18 € za institucije. Poštnina ni vključena.

The journal is published twice annually. Price of a single issue: 10 €. Price of a double issue: 18 €. Annual subscription: 16 € for individuals, 13 € for students, 18 € for institutions. Postage and handling not included.

---

Prispevke, naročila in recenzentske izvode knjig pošiljajte na naslov uredništva / Send manuscripts, orders and books for review to the Editorial Office address:

**Amfiteater, SLOGI, Mestni trg 17, Ljubljana, SI-1000 Ljubljana, Slovenija**

E-pošta / E-mail: [amfiteater@slogi.si](mailto:amfiteater@slogi.si)

Ljubljana, december 2021 / Ljubljana, December 2021

---

Revija za teorijo scenskih umetnosti Amfiteater je leta 2008 ustanovila Akademija za gledališče, radio, film in televizijo Univerze v Ljubljani. / Amfiteater - Journal of Performing Arts Theory was founded in 2008 by the University of Ljubljana, Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television.

Revija je vključena v / The journal is included in: MLA International Bibliography (Directory of periodicals), Scopus, DOAJ. Izdajo publikacije sta finančno podprla Agencija za raziskovalno dejavnost Republike Slovenije in Ministrstvo za kulturo Republike Slovenije. / The publishing of Amfiteater is supported by the Slovenian Research Agency and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia.

# Kazalo / Contents

Na sledi vonjav v vsakdanjem življenju in onkraj njega	9
On the Scent Trail in and beyond Everyday Life	13
Razprave / Articles	
Senzorialno gledališče/Sensorial Theatre	
<i>Enrique Vargas</i>	
Gledališče čutov: nagovora	19
The Theatre of the Senses: Introductory Words and a Short Conversation for the Symposium	21
<i>David Howes</i>	
Sledeč nosu: dozorele študije o vonjavah	27
<i>Tomaž Toporišič</i>	
Performing Touch and Smell: The Liminality of the Senses	37
Uprizarjanje dotika in vonja: liminalnost čutov	51
<i>Simon Hajdini</i>	
Imena na konici nosu	55
Names at the Tip of the Nose	65
<i>Peter de Cuperre</i>	
The Complexity of Olfactory Art	
The Use of Scent as Concept and Context in the Work of Art	69
<i>Barbara Orel</i>	
Svet vonjav v slovenskih uprizoritvenih umetnostih	85
The World of Odour in the Slovenian Performing Arts	93
<i>Barbara Pia Jenič in Igor Areh</i>	
The Art of Immersion with Smell and Sensorial Theatre Language	102
<i>Caro Verbeek</i>	
On the "Odoresque" and "Aero-Perfumes": Smell Related Neologisms in Avant-garde and Contemporary Art and Scholarship	121

*Rajko Muršič*

Between *Aisthēsis* and *Colere*: Sensoria, Everyday Improvisation and Ethnographic Reality 136

Med *aisthēsis* in *colere*: senzoričnost, vsakdanja improvizacija in etnografska resničnost 151

### Razprave/Articles

*Milena Mileva Blažič*

Subverzivna mladinska književnost – pravljica igra Alenke Gerlovič *Jurček in trije razbojniki* (1944) v kontekstu 157

Subversive Children's Literature - a Puppet Play *Georgie and the Three Thieves* by Alenka Gerlovič in the Context 171

*Petra Pogorevc*

Rana in potovanje – Sofoklejev *Filoktet* in Homerjeva *Odiseja* v drami in uprizoritvi *Inflammation du verbe vivre* (Vnetje glagola živeti) Wajdija Mouawada 175

Wound and Travel – Sophocles's *Philoctetes* and Homer's *Odyssey* in *Inflammation du verbe vivre* (Inflammation of the Verb to Live) by Wajdi Mouawad 193

*Primož Jesenko*

Hibernation Works for Bears but not for Theatre: The Notion of Community among Theatre Institutions and Experimental Theatre Groups in Slovenia (1955–1967) 197

### Recenzije/Reviews

*Zala Dobovšek*

Večno, a zapisano pozabi 220

Navodila za avtorje 226

Submission Guidelines 228

Vabilo k razpravam/Call for papers 230







# Na sledi vonjav v vsakdanjem življenju in onkraj njega

Oktober 2020 smo v okviru 55. Festivala Borštnikovo srečanje izvedli mednarodni znanstveno-umetniški simpozij, ki se je posvetil estetsko-senzorični revoluciji, pri čemer je združeval raziskovalne moči Akademije za gledališče, radio, film in televizijo ter Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani, Slovenskega gledališkega inštituta in gledališča Sensorium, ki se osredotoča na umetniške raziskave senzorialnega jezika.

Glavni cilj simpozija je preiskati pretežno neznano in neraziskano, a pomembno področje uprizoritvenih in vizualnih umetnosti, ga na novo osvetliti z uprizoritvenimi študiji, antropologijo, kulturologijo ter drugimi področji umetnosti in kulture. Senzorialno ali senzorično gledališče je danes povezano z zelo priljubljeno vejo čutno vključujočih oziroma potopitvenih gledališč, ki so nastala ob prelomu tisočletja kot privlačna uprizoritvena forma. V odnos med izvajalcem, občinstvom in performansom vnaša posebno igrivost. Medtem ko so se razprave in razpravljanja o imerzivnih gledaliških praksah v glavnem osredotočile na produkcijo in fenomene urbanih gledaliških skupin, ki so pridobile sloves začetnikov na tem področju, se zdi, kot da smo zanemarjali ali celo pozabili na praktike senzorialnega ali senzoričnega gledališča, ki že več desetletij razvijajo imerzivne metodologije, a so te na žalost še vedno v veliki meri ostale nedokumentirane in neraziskane.

Cilj simpozija je spodbuditi raziskave in razprave o senzorialnem in olfaktornem v gledališki kulturi ter razširiti krila teorije in refleksije tudi na poetike čutov kolumbijskega gledališkega režiserja Enriqueja Vargasa ter njegovih privržencev. S tem skuša simpozij razširiti dosedanja okvirjanja senzoričnih uprizoritvenih praks in raziskati njihov transformacijski potencial. Cilj je tudi povezati sodobno senzorialno gledališče in kulturo z Victorjem Turnerjem in njegovim »prestopanjem praga, ki ločuje dve ločeni področji, tisto, povezano s predritualnim ali preliminarnim statusom subjekta, drugo pa z njegovim postritualnim ali postliminalnim statusom«.

Senzorialno gledališče se je v Sloveniji začelo leta 1996 s premiero *Oraculos* Enriqueja Vargasa, svetovno znanega režiserja *Teatro de los Sentidos* (Gledališča čutil), ki je ta specifični sistem s svojim ustvarjalnim delom predstavil skupini sodelujočih slovenskih umetnikov in kulturni sferi. V Sloveniji senzorialni jezik razvija zavod Sensorium, v svetu pa obstaja več kot trideset tovrstnih raziskovalnih skupin. Eden najvidnejših protagonistov senzoričnih oziroma multisenzoričnih raziskav, antropolog David Howes, poudarja, da čas pravcate senzorične revolucije šele prihaja, pri čemer presega

kontekst performativnih, jezikovnih, kulturnih, afektivnih, prostorskih, ontoloških in drugih obratov sodobne humanistike in družboslovja.

Tematska številka revije *Amfiteater*, ki je pred vami, je plod mariborskega simpozija. Naš cilj je predstaviti eseje uglednih znanstvenikov in umetnikov s področij uprizoritvenih ved, antropologije, filozofije in psihologije umetnosti ter senzorialnih gledaliških praks. Znanstveniki in umetniki v razpravah in esejih skušajo opredeliti, kako senzorialna metoda s poudarkom na vonju aktivira proces samopreiskovanja s pomočjo razpiranja podob, spominov in asociacij. Kako izgrajuje specifično samorefleksijo in samozavedanje. Kako uprizoritvene in vizualne umetnosti uporabljajo vonjave; kakšen je prispevek senzorične revolucije k prihodnosti umetnosti in kulture, lokalno in globalno. V številki so zbrani prispevki, ki obravnavajo specifične uprizoritvene prakse (Barbara Orel, Barbara Pia Jenič, Tomaž Toporišič), uprizoritveno umetnost in uprizorjanje v senzorični kulturi (Enrique Vargas, Igor Areh), ter se ukvarjajo s senzorialnim kot možnim orodjem za socialno mediacijo in povezovanje različnih družbenih skupin (Caro Verbeek, Peter de Cupere, Simon Hajdini, David Howes in Rajko Muršič). Kot taka je stičišče različnih perspektiv, različnih pogledov, za katere menimo, da odpirajo nove poglede na pojave vonja v vsakdanjem življenju, teoriji in izvajalskih praksah.

Zahvaljujeva se dragemu kolegu prof. Rajku Muršiču, s katerim smo skupaj zasnovali in izvedli mariborski simpozij, našemu dragemu prijatelju in avtoriteti senzorialnega gledališča Enriqueju Vargasu ter njegovemu najtesnejšemu umetniškemu sodelavcu Gabrielu Hernandezu ter umetniški ekipi Teatra de los Sentidos. Hvala dragim sodelavcem s Festivala Borštnikovo srečanje in Slovenskega gledališkega inštituta, Alešu Novaku in Mojci Jan Zoran. Predvsem pa hvala našim najdražjim kolegom, ki so pripravili eseje na to temo: profesorjem Barbari Orel, Igorju Arehu in Simonu Hajdiniju iz Ljubljane, profesorju Davidu Howesu iz Montreala, Caro Verbeek iz Amsterdama ter Petru de Cupereju iz Flamske. In pa odgovornemu uredniku Amfiteatra, kolegu Gašperju Trohi, za pomoč pri pripravi tematske številke. Brez vas bi bila simpozij in tudi ta številka *Amfiteatra* nepredstavljiva.

*Barbara Pia Jenič in Tomaž Toporišič*





# On the Scent Trail in and beyond Everyday Life

The international academic and artistic symposium took place in October 2020 as a part of the Professional Programme of the 55<sup>th</sup> Maribor Theatre Festival. The symposium joined the forces of the University of Ljubljana's Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television and Faculty of Arts, the Slovenian Theatre Institute, and the Sensorium Theatre Institute, which specialises in sensorial language.

The principal aim of the symposium was to map this largely unexplored but significant field of performing and visual arts with performance studies, anthropology, cultural studies and other areas studying art and culture. Today, sensorial theatre is linked to a highly popular branch of immersive theatres that have emerged since the turn of the millennium as a popular form of performance. It interweaves playfulness into the relationship between performer, audience and performance space. While the discussion on immersive theatres has primarily focused on a selection of urban theatre companies that have acquired reputations as the forerunners in the field, it has neglected the practitioners of the sensorial or sensory theatre who are developing immersive methodologies within the theatre. These are, as yet, largely undocumented.

The symposium aimed to contribute to the field of sensory and specifically the role of the olfactory within the theatre culture and extend its discussion by considering the work and the "poetics of the senses" of the Colombian theatre director Enrique Vargas as well as his followers. The conference sought to expand the current conceptualisation of immersive sensorial theatres and examine the possible transformative potential of this specific performative practice. It linked the notion of sensorial theatre to Victor Turner and his "crossing of a threshold which separates two distinct areas, one associated with the subject's pre-ritual or pre-liminal status, and the other with his post-ritual or postliminal status".

Sensorial theatre started in Slovenia in 1996, with the première of *Oracles* by Enrique Vargas, the world-renowned director of Teatro de los Sentidos (Theatre of the Senses). His creative work introduced this specific system to a group of participating Slovenian artists. One of the most prominent researchers in sensory, or rather, multisensory studies, David Howes, points out that the time of the sensorial revolution is coming, not just as a turnaround or a turn (in terms of performative, linguistic, spatial, ontological and other turns).

The symposium focused on the following issues and topics: studies of specific performances and performing models, as well as examples from the field of sensorial in theatre and its research of the scent, performing practices and culture in general.

It aimed to outline specificities of the sensorial and olfactory languages within the immersive and devised contemporary art, mapping, defining and foreseeing which new tools bring sensory theatre to the stage, to galleries and museums and everyday spaces.

The focus of the *Amfiteater* issue which you are about to read represents the fruit of the symposium. This issue presents essays of the prominent scholars and artists from theatre sciences, anthropology, philosophy and psychology of art as well as from sensorial theatre practices. The scholars and artists try to define how the sensorial method activates the process of self-examination by unlocking images, memories and associations; and how it builds up a specific self-reflection and self-awareness. How do performing and visual arts use scents and specifically smell; what does the sensorial revolution contribute to the future of art and culture scholarship, locally and globally? Within, you will find contributions dealing with particular performances and performance models (Barbara Orel, Barbara Pia Jenič, Tomaž Toporišič); performing arts and sensory culture (Enrique Vargas, Igor Areh); the sensorial as a possible tool for the social mediation and association of different social groups (Caro Verbeek, Peter de Cupere, Simon Hajdini, David Howes and Rajko Muršič). It is a meeting place for different perspectives, different backgrounds that we think open up new perspectives on the phenomena of scent in everyday life, theory and performing practices.

We wish to thank our dearest colleague, professor Rajko Muršič, for helping us conceive, organise and conceptualise the Maribor conference. Likewise, we thank our dear friend and authority in sensorial theatre, Enrique Vargas, and his closest artistic collaborator, Gabriel Hernandez, along with the artistic team of Teatro de los Sentidos. Thanks to our dear colleagues from the Maribor Theatre Festival, Aleš Novak, and the Slovenian Theatre Institute, Mojca Jan Zoran. And above all, thanks to our dearest colleagues who prepared the essays dealing with the topic: professors Barbara Orel, Igor Areh and Simon Hajdini from Ljubljana, professor David Howes from Montreal and Caro Verbeek from Amsterdam and Peter de Cupere from Flanders. And the editor-in-chief of *Amfiteater*, professor Gašper Troha. Without him, the entire symposium, as well as this issue of *Amfiteater*, would be unthinkable.

*Barbara Pia Jenič and Tomaž Toporišič*







---

Razprave / Articles

Senzorialno gledališče/  
Sensorial Theatre

---



## Enrique Vargas: Gledališče čutov: nagovora<sup>1</sup>

*Kaj se nam zgodi, ko doživljamo gledališče čutov?*

*Zakaj potrebujemo igro? Zakaj je senzorialno gledališče danes pomembno?*

*Zaradi kakšnega čudnega razloga se ljudje radi igramo, da se v temi izgublamo in znova najdemo?*

*Z vami bi rad delil, kaj mi pomeni gledališče čutov, vse odkar sem se med svojo otroško igro zavedel, kako se izumljam in ga izumljam, ko sem si zamišljal prepovedane labirinte v kolumbijskih kavnih nasadih, pa do danes, ko si pri svojih osemdesetih želim, da bi to vednost telesa lahko predal naprej.*

*Jasno je, da obstajajo prvobitna in vzporedna védenja, ki so se razvila skozi čas, v vseh kulturah; miti, praznovanja, domišljija, poezija, moč simbolov ... so različno odzvanjali glede na različne zgodovinske okoliščine.*

*Vse to, da bi se skupaj vprašali: Kaj danes zmore senzorialno gledališče?*

(september 2020)

Najprej je vprašanje, ki ga razvijemo, in potem bi lahko bila igra. Če sem kot otrok lahko naredil igro iz svojega vprašanja, sem bil na dobri poti. Pri tej igri je postala ključnega pomena tišina. V tišini razvijamo specifičen pogovor in protislovje, zato je neprecenljiva. V tišini in s tišino poskušamo razviti radovednost in razviti pripoved.

Vprašanja pridejo v samo središče, postala so osrednja točka mojega raziskovanja, v katerem omogočamo srečanja. Srečanja med ljudmi in stvarmi, sedanostjo in preteklostjo, besedami, tišino in vsemi drugimi čuti.

---

<sup>1</sup> Prevedla Tina Malič (prvi del) in Tomaž Toporišič (drugi del).

In naposled sem prišel do spoznanja, da gledališče, ki ga ustvarjam, proizvaja napetost med strahom in radovednostjo, ki je zelo pomembna tako za izvajalce kot za gledalce. Tako sem začel počasi razvijati našo dinamiko, v kateri nismo uporabljali besed, ampak vonje in svojo kožo. Bolj ko uporabljamo besede, manj lahko povemo drug drugemu. (Tišina.)

(oktober 2020)



Conrad (The Heart of Darkness, Teatro de los sentidos, 2012),  
foto: Francisco Javier Garcia.



Prerok (Zavod Sensorium v koprodukciji s Prešernovim gledališčem Kranj, SMG in SSG Trst,  
2018), foto: Nada Žgank.

Enrique Vargas

## The Theatre of the Senses: Introductory Words and a Short Conversation for the Symposium

*What happens to us when we enter a Teatro de los Sentidos (Theatre of the Senses) experience? Why do we need to play? Where does our need to play come from? Why is sensory theatre relevant today? For what strange reasons do humans like to play getting lost and finding themselves in the dark? I want to share with you the reasons why Teatro de los Sentidos has been significant to me ever since I became aware of inventing myself and inventing it in my childhood games, imagining forbidden labyrinths in Colombian coffee plantations, until today, at my eighty years of age. It is clear that a lot of primal and parallel knowledge has developed over time in all cultures. Myths, celebrations, imagination, poetry, symbolic powers ... resonate differently, each according to historical circumstances. Let us ask ourselves together: what potential does sensorial theatre have today? (Enrique Vargas: Some questions before the symposium.)*

**Enrique Vargas:** I will begin with a statement that might seem unusual, but I think it is very important. I would like to stress that my worst enemy is the word. When I begin a conversation, I try not to discipline the words I use. I prefer to work on silences, listen to the silences between the words. Many times, we use words to hide something and not to make it evident. In everyday conversation, we do not pay much attention to the way we pronounce the words. We combine words with silence, give phrases a specific rhythm.

Okay, I just want to say that we begin to use the power of words if we try to revise them, giving more attention to the silences than to the word as something non-rational.

Because it all began when I was living on a farm, when I was a child in the mountains, in the Andean mountains, on a coffee plantation. Moreover, I was alone on this farm and very, very lonely. And the only way I could attract people and children to come to see me from the town was to play games, the games located on the farm. On a coffee farm, on a coffee plantation in the countryside, in this little house, one moves sideways and the walls are open and then you have another colour, the countryside and the interiors change, produce new and new games, new hidden places. And when my mother would say something to my brother and me, I would react to her words and try to recollect some conditions of how and when she spoke, pronounced, uttered the words. Then I would try to hide in the small house, to find some freedom in the

restrictions, to visit places that I was not allowed to see. To get some new experiences, to explore the world in-between words. And the trees outside gave me some freedom, and suddenly, I could go anywhere.

So playing the games became a sort of healing for the others and me. When I grew up and went to theatre school later in my life, I would ask the teachers: Listen, I want to do theatre that is not European. I like to go to my woods, trees, small objects, nature. And this is how I discovered the world of sensory sensations and theatrical gestures, theatrical games and playfulness based on our memories and contemporaneity.

First, we have a question, then we develop it and then it could be a game after the game came in. If I could make a game out of my question, then I had a good road ahead, and if it worked, but the main thing for me was to find the new rules for the game. And silence became something crucial. In silence, we develop specific conversation and the contradiction for that is priceless. In silence, and with silence, we try to develop curiosity and the narrative. We create a question in the mind of the traveller who was going to the malaria region and had to begin to work in detention.

The questions came to the very centre, becoming a central point of my research in which we make the encounters possible. The encounters between people and things, present and past, words and silence, and all the other senses.

And I realised that the theatre I make produces tension between fear and curiosity that is very important for both the performers and spectators. Extremely important. And in this way, I began to slowly develop our dynamic in which we didn't use words. We began and continued to use the smells and the skin. We like to say that our skin and obviously the silences we create are in the darkness of the labyrinth in which we could not see anything with our eyes, but we can feel, smell, touch in the world on the other side of the words. And the more words we use, the less we can tell to the others. (Silence.) Are there any questions from the public at this point?

**Tomaz Toporišič:** Once in Bogotá, I visited you and your students of anthropology at the university and you talked about the ways theatre can be linked to anthropological researches with the tribes in Colombia. And this opened completely new theatrical and performative perspectives for me that went well beyond the European and Western theatre, well beyond the concept of the theatre of words that reached the realms of Artaud's theatre as a plague, a theatre that uses its own language, not that of words and drama. Can you open up this perspective of your work a bit more to us?

**Barbara Pia Jenič:** Yes, we would be very interested in this central topic of your theatre. When I began to work with you in Teatro de los Sentidos (TDLS) in 1996, you said, "Please don't listen to my words, listen to my silences." I know you have

been thinking about these contradictions for a long time now. So, maybe you can talk about this a little more because now we are in the world, we are in a very loud world, full of images and words. So, could you tell us a bit more about this concept of silence?

**Enrique Vergas:** Yeah, I want to say that what I was trying to do, was to gain consciousness. In fact, I think we do different things and use different procedures with art in order to gain consciousness, to be conscious of something. And this is why we chose this specific way of making theatre. In order to gain consciousness of the territory, I had to gain consciousness going to places that were forbidden for me, the places that I could not see. And as I continued to explore the places while working, I found that what I was trying to do was use others to gain consciousness about me, to find out where I was coming from and where I was going to, of course.

I was practising my theatre system as something that could prevent me from becoming propagandistic and creating spectators as consumers. The symbols in the Teatro de los Sentidos became a stimulus enabling both performers and audience to go from one place to another; you go in as one form and go out as an unexpected form. Sensorial theatre enables us, therefore, to go through. And when you meet a person, you meet another person. A friend, whoever it is, your best friend, you should see him as a labyrinth, should know that while talking to you, he is enabling you to travel. We are going through both labyrinths, and we are enriched.

In Chile, when Allende was president, labyrinths were allowed and very popular, also people were sitting in circles and talking to each other. But when Pinochet came and Allende was killed, labyrinths were not allowed anymore, people in schools didn't sit in circles anymore, but one next to the other, people stopped talking.

I continued doing theatre ... In the 1960s, Stanislavsky was very important for us, then later on, Grotowski and Barba, and it became like the Vatican ... Vatican, you say? And while working and exploring, we found that the theatre world was so conservative. So stiff, we didn't find people eager to talk about their contradictions or difficulties and the shapes they used to work with. The Grotowski sect opposing the Barba sect ... And I keep wondering why are they doing this to themselves, why couldn't they laugh at themselves? If you think about yourself too seriously, this is suspicious. This theatre "Vatican" was too fragile. That's why we went back to indigenous communities. We worked with children, with tribal ceremonies and games, and most of all for us to develop forms of essential and creating consciousness. It was important to know why we were doing that. Nietzsche used to say if you have a "why", a "how" becomes clear. So we didn't consciously do theatre, but we were playing games, and most of the time, we were communicating without words, because I don't speak so many indigenous languages.



## **Tell us about the laughter and playfulness in theatre**

We like to laugh a lot, in old communities which were rigid, laughter was suspicious. The emphasis in TDLS was that if we talk to someone, we should talk to listen. We don't like the idea that the public listens to us – I think this is very wrong, very boring; but that we listen to them. That's why we have to play, the more ancient, wise the story, the more naïve and playful it is. Not to take yourself so seriously. Forgetting about fixed structures.

If we understand that the theatre situation is a game, we realise that a game could only develop if there is complicity. The secret means there is a complicity to keep the secret, to create a strength and curiosity out of the secret. But to listen to the secret you cannot invade the others, you should let the others come, let the others share the silence and let the secret be the moment for us. If there is no secret, there is no complicity, and if there is no complicity we cannot develop anything. And it is important not to know the secret. The moment I understand my secret, I am dead. But I know, I need it! The secret enables us to talk, to knock on the door of consciousness.

The main object of our theatrical works is to develop consciousness and a basic interaction between information and experience. If the work is information, it's boring, there is no tension, there is no secret and no work of art. But if the work has two tensions, one stronger and one that makes another tension to oppose it, then there's a point where the two tensions get closer and closer to each other and the tension changes you and the body, there is no words, just the body, in a sensorial situation, five or six senses are not necessary; there is only one sense, not five, only one, with many windows ... and the less clear it is, the better.

And they do this transformation in a way that the existing tension changes both the audience and the performers. And this happens within and with our bodies.

There was one project in Italy, where the work of our actors was to develop a situation, they could hardly see, because they had to give us a dramatic situation that was so far away they had to imagine it and the more difficult it was to see it, the stronger it became. And this is sensorial. And it is the same with sound. Sometimes we feel a sound has to be very present, close to us, and this kills the space. We found the farther away the sound was, the richer the situation. The sound has to be homeopathic, or the image, so we cannot see clearly, the less we see it, the more difficult it was to get to it, the better it was. When we see and hear very clearly, we tend to overreact to those sensations. The more absent we are, the stronger and more sensorial we get. We have to protect our work in front of overacting, overseeing, overhearing, being attacked by so many perverted senses. In that project we learned so many things, definitions are wrong to us ...

And maybe I can finish my introduction to today's symposium with a sentence about **the theatre as a means of developing consciousness, a specific consciousness.**

**Tomaž Toporišič:** Dear Enrique, thank you very much for this highly inspiring introduction opening the spaces for the speakers to come. I would also like to thank Gabriel Hernandez, our dear friend, for being here and sharing this special moment with us here in Maribor.

**Gabriel Hernandez:** Thank you very much Barbara and Tomaž for inviting us and giving us the opportunity to speak about the work of Enrique. We are very happy to be part of the work. I would just like to stress one of the thoughts of Enrique: *"Let us not forget that we must read the best on the silence and the things we don't hear."* Thank you so much for your invitation.

**Tomaž Toporišič:** We will remember and keep repeating this statement. A theatrical festival is always a festivity, even in these circumstances of the pandemic. And our symposium is a reminder that we live in a sensory world, which is theatrical and real at the same time, simultaneously. Once more, I cannot express our gratitude with Barbara, that you took your precious time dear Enrique, to be with us and give us these very inspiring words as well as an occasion to listen to the silences between your words. Your theatrical research and your thoughts are opening important new perspectives on theatre and a singular understanding of the theatre. As your performance (the world première) of *Oracles* in Ljubljana in 1996 changed our perception of the theatre in general, not for just one generation, but for many generations. And even if the circumstances of COVID-19 have made it impossible to welcome you together with our colleagues from the Maribor Theatre Festival to Maribor with your live theatrical performance, we hope to welcome you and Teatro de los Sentidos again in the nearest future.

*The talk and short conversation were transcribed and prepared for the print version by Barbara Pia Jenič and Tomaž Toporišič.*

Ta esej trdi, da se moramo za pravilno razumevanje estetskega in kognitivnega potenciala vonja ozreti izven zahodne tradicije, v tiste tradicije, kjer moč vonja ne nosi vse prtljage in vseh diskvalifikacij, ki so jih zanj naredili Kant, Freud in celo Proust. Kot primer lahko navedemo indijsko parfumerijo, kitajsko kadilno uro in japonski kadilni obred, znan kot kōdō, ki vključuje "poslušanje kadila" (ko wo kiku). Ta esej si prizadeva tudi za povrnitev prvotnega pomena izraza "estetski", ki ga je Baumgarten opredelil kot znanost o razumevanju "enotnosti v množstvu čutnih lastnosti".

---

**Ključne besede:** raziskave vonjav, senzorialne zaznave, senzorialno gledališče, estetika, antropologija vonja

---

**David Howes** je profesor antropologije, sovodja Centra za čutne raziskave in dosedanji vodja Centra za interdisciplinarne raziskave družbe in kulture (CISSC) na Univerzi Concordia v kanadskem Montrealu. Predava o pravu, trgovini, estetiki in čutih v medkulturni perspektivi. Spada med začetnike čutne antropologije in je med številnimi deli objavil tudi knjigi *Čutni odnosi: vključevanje čutov v teorijo o družbi in kulturi* (2003) in (skupaj s Constance Classen) *Načini (ob)čutenja: razumevanje čutov v družbi* (2014).

david.howes@concordia.ca

# Sledeč nosu: dozorele študije o vonjavah

David Howes

Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec

Nedavni začetek projekta Odeuropa Horizon 2020, ki je podprt z 2,8 milijona funtov subvencije nepovratnih sredstev za raziskave, naznanja, da je pravi čas za študije o vonjavah. Cilj projekta je »pokazati, da je kritično vključevanje čuta za vonj in dediščine vonjav pomemben in realen način za povezovanje in promocijo evropske materialne in nematerialne kulturne dediščine«. Projekt bo uporabil najsodobnejše tehnike umetne inteligence za prepoznavanje in sledenje referencam vonjav in dišav na slikah in v besedilih od 16. do 20. stoletja, spretnosti parfumerjev in kemikov za obnovo izgubljenih vonjev, Odeuropa pa ima tudi ambiciozen načrt za odišavljanje muzejev in kulturne dediščine ter razdeljevanje vonjav za uporabo v umetniškem izobraževanju. Najava projekta je sprožila široko zanimanje svetovnih medijev.

To zanimanje je bilo po intenzivnosti podobno vznemirjenju ob izidu knjige *Aroma: kulturna zgodovina vonja* (*Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell*) z multidisciplinarnim pristopom (zgodovina, antropologija, sociologija) k proučevanju voha. Spominjam se žarečih kritik v medijih *The Observer*, *TLS* in *New Statesman*, intervjujev v poznonočnih pogovornih oddajah, podelitev nagrad in odhoda na knjižno turnejo v Sao Paulo zaradi portugalskega prevoda.

Ta nova svitanja v preučevanju vonjav potrjujejo prizadevanja raziskovalcev različnih disciplin, kot sta Barbara Pia Jenič v uprizoritvenih umetnostih in Asifa Majid na področju antropološkega jezikoslovja (glej Luhrmann), da bi vonj postavili na zemljevid. V nadaljevanju bi rad raziskal, zakaj je trajalo tako dolgo, da se je voh uveljavil, hkrati pa bi rad pregledal nekaj zelo škodljivih postopkov, ki jih je ta čut izkusil v preteklosti.

Začnimo s področjem estetike. Izraz estetika je skoval nemški filozof iz 18. stoletja Alexander von Baumgarten. Pravzaprav ga je vzel iz grške *aestheta*, ki se nanaša na stvari, zaznane s čutili, za razliko od *noete* ali tistega, kar je mogoče spoznati intelektualno, s pomočjo logike (prim. Allen), kot so matematične resnice. »Baumgarten je bil odločen in prepričan, da *aestheto*, dvigne na raven znanosti z lastnimi pravili in resnicami, ki so bile primerljive s pravili in resnicami logike, četudi ne morda enako jasne« (Allen nepaginirano).<sup>1</sup> V

<sup>1</sup> Zakaj »ni tako jasno«? Ker so resnice, na primer matematike, samoumevne (logične), medtem ko so dokazi čutov v primerjavi z njimi vedno sumljivi, »zmedeni in nejasni«, v skladu z dolgoletnim predsodkom, ki ga je najodločneje izrazil Descartes.

ta namen je Baumgarten menil, da je estetika zakoreninjena v telesu in čutilih – torej v zaznavanju in ne v razumu, in da je lepota v čutih opazovalca in ni neka lastna kakovost umetniškega predmeta. Povedano drugače, estetika je najprej povezana z dovršenostjo zaznavanja in šele nato z dojemanjem popolnosti ali »lepote«. Torej je estetika način zaznavanja, ki vključuje dojemanje »enotnosti v množici čutnih lastnosti« (prim. Gregor) Pomembno je, da v Baumgartnovi estetiki ni podrobnosti o načinu estetskega zaznavanja (čeprav se večina njegove razprave osredotoča na porazdelitev svetlobe in sence ter tako dokazuje vizualistično pristranskost).<sup>2</sup>

Žal Baumgartnovi čutno usmerjeni definiciji ni bilo dano dolgo živeti v prvotni obliki. Immanuel Kant jo je hitro uredil (očistil »zmede«) in objektiviziral. Za Kanta in za množico njegovih privrženecv naj bi estetika vključevala »brezinteresno kontemplacijo« nekega predmeta, ki se kaže v izrekanju sodbe, ki je načeloma svobodna in univerzalna. Ta redefinicija ni le utrla poti pomeščanju »okusa« (v metaforičnem smislu), kot je v svoji družbeni kritiki presoje okusa pokazal Pierre Bourdieu (1984), temveč je odprla tudi pot diskvalifikaciji vonja. »Kateremu organskemu čutu dolgujemo najmanj in kateri se zdi najbolj nepotreben,« se je spraševal Kant. »Čutilo za vonj. Ne splača se nam ga gojiti ali izpopolnjevati, da bi pridobili užitek; ta čut lahko zazna več predmetov odpora kot užitka (zlasti v gneči), poleg tega pa užitek, ki ga prinaša čutilo za vonj, ne more biti drugačen kot minljiv in prehodan« (46).

Kantova diskvalifikacija je bila prvi udarec proti vonju ne le kot estetskemu, temveč tudi kot spoznavnemu čutu. Ta predsodek se je ohranil. Umetnostni psiholog Rudolf Arnheim je v knjigi *Visual Thinking* (Vizualno mišljenje') zapisal: »Človek se lahko prepusti vonjavam in okusom, vendar v njih skoraj ne more misliti« (19). To je v nasprotju s čutiloma vida in sluha, katerih estetska in kognitivna ali »intelektualna« poklicanost je bila v zahodni tradiciji vedno obravnavana kot nekaj danega. Zanimivo je, da je tudi vonj v predmodernosti veljal za intelektualni čut. »Modrosti nosu« (zdaj zastarelo) so na primer lahko pomenile »pameten« ali »z ostrim vonjem«. Besedi »sagacious« in »sage« pa izhajata iz latinskih besed, ki pomenijo »imeti dober voh« (prim. Classen, *Worlds*). Poleg tega je bil voh zaradi istovetenja z dihom (latinsko *spiritus*) splošno razumljen kot najbolj duhovno čutilo (prim. Classen, *The Color*). Kant se je torej motil.

Drugi udarec proti vonju je sprožil Sigmund Freud. V delu *Nelagodje v kulturi* je Freud veliko govoril o zmanjšanju vohalnega dražljaja, ki je posledica človekove pokončne države. Ljudje ne bi več hodili po vseh štirih, kot psi, in vohali vse, kar jim pride pod nos

<sup>2</sup> Odkrito priznavam, da je moje branje Baumgartnove *Estetike* preuranjeno, vendar le zato, ker je bila njegova teoretizacija premalo razvita. Za celovito, multimodalno in medkulturno teorijo estetike glej »Hearing Scents, Tasting Sights« Davida Howesa. Glej tudi mojstrski opis Gernota Böhmeja v knjigi *Aisthetique: Bemeh: Pour une esthétique de l'expérience sensible* (2020).

(zlasti genitalne predele drugih ljudi). To dejstvo človeške evolucije je bilo sprejeto in se ponavlja v neskončnost. Toda domnevno zmanjšanje voha je bilo bolj povezano s Freudovo osebno zgodovino kot z zgodovino človeštva.

In potem so ugotovili, da je imel Freud nosni kompleks (prim. Howes, »Freud's« in *Sensual*). To je bila posledica travmatičnega dogodka, v katerega je bil vpleten njegov tesni prijatelj Wilhelm Fliess, avtor knjige *The Relationship between the Nose and Female Genital Organs* (1897). Ni splošno znano, kako globoko je na mlade Freudove misli o človeški spolnosti vplivala nenavadna teorija njegovega prijatelja o »refleksni nevrozi nosu« niti kako odvisen je bil Freud od Fliessa, da je (s kokainom in različnimi kirurškimi posegi) sledil številnim predsodkom glede nosu. Do razpada njune zveze je prišlo po tem, ko je Fliess Freuda prepričal, naj mu dovoli operirati nos ene izmed pacientk, da bi jo pozdravil zaradi nekaterih spolnih zagat, operacija pa je imela zaradi Fliessove nesposobnosti številne negativne posledice. Pozitivna stvar tega fiaska so bile »sanje o Irmini injekciji«, ki jih je imel Freud v zgodnjih urah 24. julija 1895 in v katerih je po razmisleku videl, kako se nezavedno želi razbremeniti krivde. Ta samoanaliza je povzročila teorijo sanj kot oblik izpolnjevanja želja, ki je temelj psihoanalize. Toda zdi se, da je ta kriza Freuda tudi odvrnila od raziskovanja vonja znotraj psihoanalize in človeške spolnosti na splošno, saj je hotel Fliessa, ki je bil osredotočen na nos, pustiti za seboj. Freudova kasnejša potlačitev ali zanikanje nazalnosti je razvidno iz njegove teorije o erogenih območjih telesa, kjer navaja usta, anus in genitalije, vendar nosu ne omenja. Podobno je Freud v svojih *Treh razpravah o teoriji seksualnosti* (1954) posvetil poglavje dotiku in vidu, o vonjanju pa ni napisal ničesar.

Zanimivo je, da je Freudova anosmična teorija človeške spolnosti v širši javnosti sprejeta brez večjih vprašanj, tako kot je javnost sprejela njegovo teorijo Ojdipovega kompleksa. Posledično je bil vonj potisnjen na obrobje, zato o celotnem erotičnem potencialu nosu niso nikoli razmišljali ali ga preizkusili. Vse, kar nam je ostalo, so le občasni namigi na obsežno veselje čutnega poželenja. Tako je na primer beli ruski emigrant, ki ga je Margaret Mead intervjuvala v knjigi *The Study of Culture at a Distance* (1953), opazil, da so številni ruski pesniki zaradi vonja rok svojih ljubic pisali ode njihovim dlanem. Kako čudovito! Kdo bi si mislil, da je vonj dlani lahko afrodisiak? Obstaja tudi nenavadna pripomba o neumivanju, ki jo je cesar Napoleon zapisal v pismu Josephine (ki se za nazaj ne bi zdela tako nenavadna, če ne bi Freud zaničeval vonja). Če pogledamo še globlje, iz antropološke literature vemo, da nič ne preprečuje, da bi bil nos erogena cona: pogledajmo razširjen običaj poljuba z nosom, ki je poleg taktilnega užitka pri drgnjenju v bistvu povezan z vonjanjem drugega.

Tretji udarec proti vonju je izrekel Marcel Proust, ki paradoksalno velja za njegovega največjega zagovornika. Upoštevajte tako imenovani »Proustov učinek« v čast avtorju knjige *Iskanje izgubljenega časa*. Natančneje bi ga zaradi vseh njegovih omejujočih

učinkov na naše življenje z vonjem imenovali Proustov sindrom, vendar se je za to preveč zasidral v diskurzu psihologov in nevroznanstvenikov (prim. Lehrer; van Campen), da ne omenjamo splošne javnosti. Pripetljaj z magdalenico, namočeno v čaj, je preveč znan tudi tistim, ki nikoli niso brali Prousta, da bi ga bilo treba na tem mestu navajati. Dovolj je, če povemo, da je okus magdalenice pri avtorju sprožil trenutek »popolnega spomina«, prežetega s čustvi iz otroštva, in botroval nastanku doktrine o vonju kot čutu za spomin in čustva.<sup>3</sup>

Čeprav se zdi, da je bil incident z magdalenico praznik vonja, je bil v resnici ponižanje, ki je še povečalo kantovsko razvrednotenje vonja na kognitivnem in estetskem področju. Vonj ni dober za razmišljanje, je pa dober za čustvovanje in spominjanje, namiguje doktrina. Tako je vonj postal znan kot »afektivni« čut, zato se je razkorak med njim ter intelektualnimi in estetskimi čutili, kot sta vid in sluh, še povečal.

To ne pomeni, da vonj ni dober za spodbujanje spominov ali sprožanje čustev (na Zahodu je tako), le da to ni vse, za kar je vonj dober. Kot primer lahko navedemo iznajdbo Francisa Galtona, ki je izumil aritmetiko vonja. Pri njej je namesto pisnih števil uporabljal vonjave, vendar je bila po njegovih ugotovitvah prav tako učinkovita pri lažšanju izračunov (prim. Galton). Zamisel, da bi lahko matematične operacije izvajali z vonjem, pa se ni prijela. Zakaj? Zaradi nasprotnega vpliva Proustovega učinka (beri: sindroma) na reprezentacijo in reprezentacijske možnosti vonja.

Da bi pravilno razumeli estetski in kognitivni potencial vonja, se moramo ozreti onkraj zahodne tradicije, v tiste tradicije, kjer vonj nima vse prtljage, vseh diskvalifikacij, ki so mu jih naložili Kant, Freud in Proust. Poglejmo, kako sta bila čut za vonj in umetnost vonja (parfum) razvita v indijski kulturi. Oprli se bomo na mojstrsko analizo Jamesa McHugha v knjigi *Sandalwood and Carrion*, ki se osredotoča na predmoderno Indijo.

Če povzamemo, smo videli, kako na Zahodu po Proustu prevladuje razumevanje vonja kot časovnega čuta, čuta za spominjanje. Vonj deluje navznoter, povezuje čas in odmeva po hodnikih spomina. V Indiji pa je vonj, nasprotno, prostorski čut. Deluje navzven in je sila, ki privlači ali odbija, po analogiji s tem, kako z vonjem pritegne čebele k cvetu ali pa je vonj po mrhovini odbijajoč. Kot prostorski čut se vonj ne ukvarja predvsem s spominjanjem. McHugh je glede tega zelo jasen. Ugotavlja, da v »sanskrtski literaturi vonji niso nič pomembnejši od drugih čutnih dražljajev, ko gre za spomin (npr. v kontekstu spominjanja in hrepenenja po odsotnih ljubimcih). [...] Ne gre za to, da bi se ob prisotnosti vonjav samodejno sprožili spomini« (14). Ta podatek bo šokiral marsikaterega psihologa in nevroznanstvenika, vendar naj bo tako. Če bi bili občutljivejši

<sup>3</sup> Opazili bomo, da je Proustov učinek povzročil okus in ne vonj. To razlikovanje se v večini razprav o tej temi običajno ne upošteva, saj sta vonj in okus »kemični čutili«, torej zamenljivi. Z medkulturnega vidika pa te razlike ne smemo omalovaževati. V mnogih žrtvenih tradicijah na primer vonj ali dim (tj. bistvo) daritve zaužijejo bogovi, medtem ko lahko človeški udeleženci pojedjo ostanke.

za kulturno raznolikost, sploh ne bi dajali tako velikih izjav o »naravi vonja«.

Čeprav vonj ni posebej vpleten v procese spominjanja, je kot prostorski čut dober za navigacijo. McHugh za ilustracijo navaja prizor iz znane igre *Ratnāvalī*, v katerem kralj na poti na skrivno srečanje sredi noči voha po kraljevem vrtu:

To je gotovo meja dreves *campaka*; to je tista čudovita *sinduvāra*, to je gosta živa meja dreves *bakula*; to je vrsta *pātalov*.

Pot na tem kraju, čeprav prekrita z dvojno temo, postane jasna zaradi različnih vonjev, ki jih oddajajo drevesa in nam označujejo pot. (28)

V tem primeru je vonj nadomestil vid (ki ga onemogoča tema) kot čutilo, ki človeka usmerja v prostoru in ga vodi do cilja. Ta scenarij nam predstavi zelo drugačen način razmišljanja o kognitivnem potencialu vonja. Ta je pozitivno geografski.

Indijske parfumerijske prakse prav tako rušijo globoko zakoreninjene predpostavke. Na Zahodu se parfum običajno uporablja v obliki tekočine brez teksture, ki je rahlo obarvana. To je v bistvu enomodalna umetnost. V Indiji je parfum običajno v obliki paste in ima številne čutne lastnosti. Oglejte si naslednji opis *candane* (sandalovine): »Lahko, nepekoče, nesuho, mazavo olje kot ghee, prijetnega vonja, primerna za kožo, blaga, ne blede, prenaša toploto, absorbira veliko toplote in je prijetna na dotik – to so lastnosti sandalovine« (McHugh 187). Pripravki, ki vsebujejo sandalovino, tako niso cenjeni le zaradi vonja, temveč tudi zaradi svoje svetlo bele ali rumene barve (vid), hladilne moči (temperatura), prijetnega otipa (dotik) in dolgotrajnosti (druge dišave zbledijo), poleg tega pa so eksotični in dragi. To pojasnjuje njihov ugledni položaj ob dragih kamnih v kraljevih zakladnicah, njihovo uporabo za zniževanje vročine, spodbujanje užitka in vizualno okrasitev telesa. Parfumerija v Indiji je torej multimodalna umetnost. Za pripravo ali ocenjevanje učinkov sandalovine je treba razumeti »enotnost v mnogoterosti čutnih lastnosti«, kot bi se izrazil Baumgarten.

*Prevedla Barbara Pia Jenič*



- Allen, Jennifer. »The Beautiful Science«. *Frieze Magazine*, št. 113, marec 2008, [www.frieze.com/issue/article/the\\_beautiful\\_science](http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/the_beautiful_science). Dostop 20. maja 2015.
- Arnheim, Rudolf. *Visual Thinking*. University of California Press, 1969.
- Böhme, Gernot. *Aisthetique: Pour une esthétique de l'expérience sensible*. Les presses du réel, 2020.
- Classen, Constance. *Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures*. Routledge, 1993.
- Classen, Constance. *The Color of Angels: Cosmology, Gender and the Aesthetic Imagination*. Routledge, 1998.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Complete Psychological Works*. Hogarth Press, 1953.
- Galton, Francis. »Arithmetic by Smell.« *Psychological Review*, letn. 1, št. 1, 1894, str. 61–62.
- Gregor, M. J. »Baumgarten's Aesthetica.« *Review of Metaphysics*, letn. 37, št. 1, 1983, str. 357–85.
- Howes, David. »Freud's Nose: The Repression of Nasality and the Origin of Psychoanalytic Theory.« *Nose Book: Representations of the Nose in Literature and the Arts*, uredile Victoria de Rijke, Lene Ostermark-Johansen in Helen Thomas, Middlesex UP, 2000, str. 165–282.
- Howes, David. *Sensual Relations*. University of Michigan Press, 2003.
- Howes, David. »Hearing Scents, Tasting Sights: Toward a Cross-Cultural Multimodal Theory of Aesthetics.« *Art and the Senses*, uredila Francesca Bacci in David Mellon, Oxford UP, 2011, str. 161–182.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. Southern Illinois UP, 1978.
- Lehrer, Jonah. *Proust was a Neuroscientist*. Mariner Books, 2008.
- Luhrmann, Tanya. »Can't place that smell? You must be American.« *The New York Times*, 7. sep. 2014, [www.nytimes.com/2014/09/07/opinion/sunday/how-culture-shapes-our-senses.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/07/opinion/sunday/how-culture-shapes-our-senses.html). Dostop 1. sep. 2021.
- McHugh, James. *Sandalwood and Carrion: Smell in Indian Religion and Culture*. Oxford UP, 2012.
- Mead, Margaret, in Rhoda Metraux. *The Study of Culture at a Distance*. University of Chicago Press, 1953.
- Van Campen, Chretien. *The Proust Effect: The Senses as Doorways to Lost Memories*. Oxford UP, 2014.



This essay argues that to arrive at a proper understanding of the aesthetic and cognitive potential of smell, we must look outside the western tradition to those traditions where the power of smell does not carry all the baggage, all the disqualifications that Kant and Freud, and even Proust, saddled it with. The cases of Indian perfumery, the Chinese incense clock, and the Japanese incense ceremony known as *kōdō*, which involves “listening to the incense” (*ko wo kiku*), are presented by way of example. This essay also seeks to recover the original meaning of the term “aesthetic,” which Baumgarten defined as the science of grasping “the unity in multiplicity of sensible qualities.”

---

**Keywords:** theatre studies, sensorial theatre, theory of smell, anthropology of smell, sensorial researches

---

**David Howes** is a professor of anthropology, co-director of the Centre for Sensory Studies and outgoing director of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Society and Culture (CISSC) at Concordia University, Montreal, Canada. He teaches courses on law, commerce, aesthetics and the senses from a cross-cultural perspective. He is one of the pioneers of sensory anthropology and, among many other works, the author of *Sensual Relations: Engaging the Senses in Culture and Social Theory* (2003) and co-author (with Constance Classen) of *Ways of Sensing: Understanding the Senses in Society* (2014).

david.howes@concordia.ca



The paper discusses the liminal nature of the sensorial languages in contemporary performing arts. Its starting point will be the following chain of thoughts: during artistic events, a performative action reshaping the performers and the audience takes place, along with the interchange of the roles between the "stage" and "auditorium", either in the sense of Augusto Boal's *spect-actor* or the destruction of the fourth wall and the specific "autopoietic feedback loop" (Erika Fischer-Lichte) between both parties involved. We aim to rethink and re-examine the role of the sensorial language as one of the rarely used yet highly efficient tools of the performative revolutions of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. These revolutions started with the Futurists, continued with the tactile and sensorial performances and politics of Marina Abramović and Yoko Ono, and culminated with Enrique Vargas and his sensorial theatre in different stages from New York's La Mama radical 1960s productions to his 1990s new sensorial theatre language of his Teatro de los Sentidos. We will try to answer the following questions: How can and how do we touch and smell ... in performative actions? Which kind of liminalities does the act of sensorial produce in a contemporary performance?

---

**Keywords:** sensorial theatre, liminality, immersive theatre, Enrique Vargas, performance art

---

**Tomaž Toporišič, PhD**, is a dramaturg and theatre theorist, a full professor and vice-dean of the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television, University of Ljubljana. He was the artistic director (1997–2003) and a dramaturg (2003–2016) of Mladinsko Theatre. In 1995, he co-founded the Exodos Festival of Contemporary Performing Arts. He has been a curator of several exhibitions for *Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space (PQ)*. He is the author of four books on contemporary performing arts. His latest essays include "The New Slovene Theatre and Italian Futurism" and "Death and Violence in Contemporary Theatre, Drama, and Novel".

# Performing Touch and Smell: The Liminality of the Senses<sup>1</sup>

---

Tomaž Toporišič

University of Ljubljana, Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television

---

## I. Touch and smell erasing the boundaries between public and private

During artistic events, a performative action takes places that reshapes the performers and the audience. The roles are interchanged, either in the sense of Augusto Boal's *spect-actor* or the destruction of the fourth wall and the specific "autopoietic feedback loop" (Erika Fischer-Lichte) formed between both parties involved. We aim to rethink and re-examine the role of touch, smell and other senses in this process of reshaping. We will examine these rarely discussed but highly successful tools of the performative revolutions within the last one hundred years that started with the Futurists and proceeded with Marina Abramović (*Rhythm 0*, 1974) and Yoko Ono (*Cut Piece*, 1964). Then we will follow with Enrique Varga, his sensorial theatre on different stages from his 1960s' radical productions with New York's La Mama and Bread and Puppet Theatre to his 1990s' new sensorial theatre language of his Teatro de los Sentidos. We will also look at contemporary groups such as the collective Ontroerend Goed and Sensorium Theatre of Barbara Pia Jenič.

We will try to answer the following questions: What has happened to the sensorial reception in and around the performance? In which way can touch and smell become a potentially liberating mediation of corporeal and emotional states? How can we touch and smell in performative actions? Which kind of liminalities do touch and smell produce in a contemporary performance? Moreover, do these liminal situations also produce a sensation of a contiguous touch and smell between the performer and the audience (sometimes changing their roles), creating possibilities for dynamic encounters in the real time and space?

When describing the key features of perception, Arlette Steri stresses the fact that "perception is a process by means of which the organism becomes aware of its environment on the basis of information taken in by its senses" (Steri 274). She sees

---

<sup>1</sup> The article was written within the research programme Theatre and Interart Studies P6-0376, which is financially supported by the Slovenian Research Agency.

the interpretation of sensory data as one of the functions of perception, necessary for processing the information. When adapting this sensory reception to the field of theatre in his illuminating book *The Provocation of the Senses in Contemporary Theatre*, Stephen Di Benedetto stresses the possible liminality of theatrical sensory reception using the example of the Australian performance artist Stelarc:

Therefore, the senses utilized in the composition of a theatrical event create an in-between state of experience and awareness. It is this constant monitoring over time that allows us to make sense of the sensations we experience. Whereas I might enjoy watching Stelarc hang from meat hooks piercing his skin on points of his back, others may recoil in horror or discomfort. This does not mean that we are not experiencing the same stimulation, merely that we are modifying the input differently according to our own cultural or environmental conditioning (7).

This thought brings us to the reasoning of Erika Fischer-Lichte in her book *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, when describing Marina Abramović's performances, erasing the boundaries between private and public through touch, that the boundary between public and private extends to everyday life. As one of the cornerstones of this new liminal theatre of touch and sensuality, she takes Richard Schechner's staging of *Dionysus in 69* by The Performance Group, in which the actors touched the visitors very directly:

Since the 1960s, performances in which actors and spectators touch each other have been probing this question. *Dionysus in 69* contained one scene labeled "caress-scene" by Schechner. Performers sat or lay down next to audience members and began to caress them. [...] The performers touched the spectators as part of a "scene" that had no obvious links to the rest of the "play." From the perspective of the actors, the contact occurred in accordance with their new aesthetic principles. It was meant to blur the boundaries between fiction – the "play" – and reality. The touch was also intended to "humanize" (Schechner, *Environmental* 1973: 60) the relationship between actors and spectators. It explicitly recognized the audience as co-subjects (Fischer-Lichte, *Transformative* 62–63).

Already in the performance *Dionysus in 69*, e.g., in the "caress-scene", he tried to abolish the boundaries between "fiction" – the play – and reality". He understood touch as something that "humanizes", but this humanisation and liberation "failed" in some viewers to equate the play with reality.

In reality, the touch of actors was understood literally as an invitation to sexual intercourse and not as a work of liberation through contact with a phenomenal body. Thus, physical contact, sensority, which was supposed to abolish the binary between fact and fiction, public and intimate, turned into its opposite during the active reception of the audience. The actors had to face the boundaries they were trying to

destabilise and subvert. Spect-actors were not created in the sense of Augusto Boal but as an unplanned intrusion of the real into the theatrical fiction.

The purpose of Schechner's performances was to democratise the relationship between actors and viewers. Traditional theatre focused on sight and hearing, and Schechner proposed the inclusion of smell, taste and touch for a more intimate experience of staging.

Joseph Beuys used touch in his action event *Celtic + ~~~*, performed in Basel in 1971. He used touch to negate the opposition between public and private. In the event, which took place in a former bunker, the continuous physical proximity formed by the five hundred to eight hundred participants resulted in unintentional touching among them, thus provoking a specific dramaturgy of reception. Fischer-Lichte stresses the fact that "the conditions of the event created a tense relationship between public and private, distance and proximity, seeing and touching. Beuys not only addressed but also had to touch people in the crowd in order to pass through them" (Fischer-Lichte, *Transformative* 63).

While discussing the cases of Richard Schechner, Joseph Beuys and Marina Abramović, Erika Fischer-Lichte points out one of the most interesting features of modern performing practices, their liminality of touch. She also points out that we can explain the process of the perception of the performance "set in motion through synaesthetic perception, shaped not only by sight and sound but by physical sensations of the entire body" (Ibid. 36). At the same time, she stresses that this interpretation is nothing new, as it was already described by a founder of 20<sup>th</sup>-century German theatre studies, Max Herrmann. He claimed the actors' performance is, therefore "experienced not so much visually as through physical sensations. It is a secret urge to perform the same actions, to reproduce the same tone of voice in the throat" (Herrmann 153).

To sum up with the words of Fischer-Lichte:

"The various examples have shown that the fundamental opposition between seeing and touching in performance is connected to a number of other interrelated oppositional pairs: public vs. private, distance vs. proximity, fiction vs. reality. They are all based on the seemingly insurmountable, fixed opposition between seeing and touching" (62).



## II. Sensorial in theatre and performance as a liminal act

During the last hundred years, a part of modern performing practices has consciously returned to hybridity, to the binding of different media, to (utopian?) attempts, which since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and especially from happenings and Fluxus, have tried to combine traditionally separate arts. In the words of Allan Kaprow: the “Blurring of Art and Life” – to mix art and life. Thus, ever-new hybrid spaces of art have been created, including various forms of hybrid stage practices, among which we will today focus primarily on the theatre of touch.

All these performative practices re-articulate some essential postulates of the American theatrical avant-garde and neo-avant-garde performance and visual art in general (e.g., Marina Abramović, Viennese actionists, etc.). This interdisciplinary approach, which abolishes the binary oppositions actor-spectator, view-touch, textual-physical, semiotic and physical, emerges primarily at crossroads between media such as theatre, music, dance, painting, photography, video, sculpture and architecture.

In the new millennium, we are witnessing a continuation of what Bonnie Marranca wrote about the theatre of images:

The convergence of theater and visual arts in a new understanding of performance, demonstrating why these two stories must be interconnected in a comprehensive view of the twentieth century, if let there ever be any coherent history of thought about the play (*The Theatre of Images* 163).

At the same time, in some places contemporary art abolishes a fundamental relationship of opposition between theatre and sensuality and the theatrical connection of the view that desires or stimulates the desire to touch.

We can, therefore, also understand the sensory forms of theatre in terms of the liminal act as defined by Susan Broadhurst in the book *Liminal Acts*. That is, we interpret it as part of contemporary performing arts, which is essentially hybrid, interdisciplinary. Broadhurst explains this art with a term derived from the definition of anthropologist Victor Turner: “fructile chaos, a fertile nothingness, a storehouse of possibilities, not by any means a random assemblage, but a striving after new forms and structure” (“Are there Universals” 11–12). Let us recall that in his essay “Liminality and Communitas”, Victor Turner argued: “Liminal [border] entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial” (95).

Liminal performances thus, according to Broadhurst, emphasise the physical, the technological and the chthonic. However, their aesthetic characteristics are hybridisation, indeterminacy, lack of aura, and the disintegration of the hierarchical

distinction between high and popular culture. The quasi-generic features of this art are also experimentation, heterogeneity, innovation, marginality and an emphasis on the “intersemiotic” (Broadhurst 11–13). If we apply these characteristics and peculiarities of liminal performances to the body of sensorial theatre, we find that it corresponds to most of the characteristics of liminal theatre, as defined within modern performance practices by the theorist.

Sensorial theatre can therefore be defined as an art that differs from classical theatre. Barbara Pia Jenič defines it as follows:

Classical theatre and the performing arts in general communicate visually and audiovisually, and sensory language tends to include, in addition to sight (if already present), communication with the visitor on other sensory levels. Visual communication with the help of images (symbols, archetypal images) has a similar role in the Sensorium as audio communication with a word (36).

The sensory theatre could be interpreted as a successor and consequence of the connection between the liminal and the hybrid, as known in the history of Slovenian theatre and performing arts within the so-called performative turn and other neo-avant-garde practices, especially the groups OHO and Pupiliija Ferkeverk.

Liminal and hybrid representations thus intertwine different “texts” that are “beyond” verbal discourse yet still include it. At the same time, they emphasise the liminality of the body. If Broadhurst includes authors and projects, groups such as the Tanztheater of Pina Bausch, the theatre of images of Robert Wilson and Philip Glass, ritualist social sculptures of Viennese actionists, films and installations by Peter Greenaway. These are easily found also in Slovenia: Pupiliija Ferkeverk and Karpo Godina, Pekarna Theatre, OHO, Scipion Nasice Sisters Theatre, Laibach group, Borghesia, Vuk Ćosić, Igor Štromajer, Marko Peljhan and his theatre of rebellion, Davide Grassi, Vlado Repnik, Bojan Jablanovec, Eclipse, Maja Delak and Luka Prinčič ...

And, of course, in the Sensorium Theatre of Barbara Pia Jenič, which was created as a continuation of the “method” of the magician of this theatre, Colombian director Enrique Vargas and his Teatro de los Sentidos, operating in Barcelona. In the last two decades, it has developed into a theatre offering audiences an incredible, unframed, authentic perception. In a unique, unrepeatabe experience for both spectators and performers, it is a theatre that causes a change in their perception and perception of reality, of themselves and others. It counts on triggering a shift in the viewer’s perception of reality that happens through the aesthetics of the senses. However, this aestheticised language also speaks of the here and now, our present, viewed in the past. Thus, in the fragrant gardens of her latest production at Slovene Permanent Theatre in Trieste, *Dišeče skrivnosti – Invisibili fragranze* (Scented Secrets), the actors and actresses, as well

as the other creators, cause small miracles, with the help of which we perceive the big stage of the theatre differently than usual. With a broader range of senses that awakens special emotional and sensory memories and feelings in us.

Sensory forms of theatre open the viewer to borderline areas of perception that are unknown, but at the same time, attractive and highly inspiring. If contemporary theatre theorist Susan Broadhurst describes this type of art as fruitful chaos, a storehouse of possibilities, we see it as a theatrical experience that this time through the phenomenon of the sense of smell produces new, borderline entities that are neither here nor there, emphasise physical and chthonic, experimentation. Suppose we apply these characteristics of performances to the body of sensorial theatre. In that case, we can conclude: the performance that you will or have seen and smelled represents the type of theatrical seduction introduced by Enrique Vargas in recent decades, and later continued by Barbara Pia Jenič. Thus sensorial theatre became a constituent part of the Slovenian theatrical landscape, proposing to the spectators the realms of sensory language that tend to be in addition to sight.

### III. Olfactory communication in theatre

Here we are reminded of the uses of olfactory practices in theatre during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and before that in symbolism. The history of the theatre persuades us that we cannot escape the smells of the theatre. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, modernists also experimented with olfaction. In her research of the sensorial in symbolist theatre, Mary Fleischer points out that smell became “the Symbolist sense par excellence” (105). They used smell (used today also by Enrique Vargas and Barbara Pia Jenič): “in suggestive, mysterious, and expansive ways to dissolve barriers between subject and object, individual and environment” (Ibid.). The smell served their aim to evocate the hidden reality through symbolic means of olfactory sensations enabling the spectators to feel and “smell” the mysterious atmospheres.

The theatre began to explore perfume or smoke to evoke specific moods. As early as 1891, André Antoine’s Théâtre d’art began to use smell in their performances, using scents: frankincense, white violets, hyacinth, lilies, acacia, lily of the valley, orange blossom and jasmine. The practice continued throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Already in naturalism, smells have been consciously employed for the creation of specific atmospheres. Max Reinhardt used odours to generate specific atmospheres. Here, we should mention the rotating forest scene in his famous *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Neues Theater Berlin, 1904) using olfactory sensations of fragrance emanating from the moss-covered stage floor evoking the forest.

If the symbolists, in their turn, employed odours in the theatre to create specific synaesthetic experiences for the audience, the neo-avant-gardes of the 1960s employed odours in theatre as well as in more radical performing arts. Herman Nitsch's *Orgy Mystery Theatre* (Das Orgien Mysterien Theater) used smell emanating from a lamb's carcass, blood and entrails to achieve a stronger autopoietic feedback loop between audience and performers, a unique atmosphere for the audience, triggering strong feelings of disgust. Grotowski crowded actors and spectators so close together that the audience could smell the actors perspiring. In Johann Kresnik's Berlin production on Artaud, *Antonin Nalpas* (Prater 1997) actors grilled large chunks of fish, etc.

One can use smell also as a tool of characterisation in contemporary drama. Let us not forget the highly interesting example of Annette's scent in Yasmina Reza's *The God of Carnage* (first published as *Le dieu du carnage*, 2008), the smell of Chanel 5 perfume that affects our future judgments about the hero of her play. Or the smell of the potato salad in Frank Castorf's 1996 Volksbühne am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz production of *Des Teufels General*, a play by Carl Zuckmeyer. The smell creates a specific tension, using a persistent three-hour dramaturgy of changes from a sweet, fresh salad to the unbearable smell of the rotten, decaying potatoes, vinegar and oil after two hours of the performance, commenting on the rise of Nazism in Germany around WWII. The tactile quality of the spoiled food – and its stench – are used as a means to evoke political and ethical crisis.

Thus, contemporary productions often use smell to evoke mood and trigger involuntary visceral responses within those attending them. This leads us to another example, a performance by Ivo Van Hove, his 2007 Schaubühne Berlin production of Molière's *Le misanthrope*, described in detail by Ben Brantley:

The edible look is all the rage—and I mean rage—in the fashionable circles of Paris this season. Head-to-toe layers of ketchup, chocolate syrup, watermelon pulp and crushed potato chips. [...] However, if Alceste is applying his lunch externally to épater the aristos, he is also putting his insides on public display. The stench of his pain fills the air; it smells like ketchup and watermelon and chocolate. For the rest of the play, Alceste wears his food stains as if they were stigmata, and whenever he shows up onstage, you flinch for what he's feeling (n.p.).

Di Benedetto interprets this as Van Hove's extraordinary capacity to break the fourth wall and make "physical contact with his attendants, thereby making an audience listening to seventeenth-century verse attendant to twenty-first-century actor-attendant interaction" (112).

Part of contemporary art thus strives for a liminal experience for spectators and performers, which should cause a change in their perception of reality. It counts on triggering a shift in the viewer's perception of reality and the simultaneous

emergence and exposure of the gap between signifiers and signifieds. At the same time, it produces Auslander's understood politics of performance as "revealing the processes of cultural control" (61). This art radically appropriates various forms of staging, ways of addressing the audience and thus builds his politics of performance.

#### IV. Enrique Vargas and Ontroerend Goed: Two examples of sensory theatre

Let us finally look at two excellent examples of the sensory theatre of touch and other senses: the performances *Oracles* and *Ariadna's Thread* by Enrique Vargas and the performance *The Smile off Your Face* by the collective Ontroerend Goed.

In an interview with the Australian newspaper *Sydney Morning Herald* in 2016, Enrique Vargas defined the importance, aesthetic revolutionariness and liminality of the Teatro de los Sentidos as:

"Tyranny of the eye." [...] "The eye can be imperialistic; it becomes so arrogant that it makes it impossible for us to sense other things. [...] We want to use the whole body, not to forget about the eye but to come to the story using all five senses: touch, smell, taste. [...] The imagination is a very important power we have, which is reduced by words." Anyway, the point of the labyrinth is that it is a game. "And the most important thing is the mystery behind it; the game doesn't so much give out information as shine a light on experience," he says. "You become the protagonist of your own story." You will meet certain situations, be touched by actors emerging from the darkness, but these encounters become springboards for your own ideas and questions. He doesn't know what they are, so he can't know the answers (quoted in Bunbury n.p.).

Vargas started his sensorial researches in the theatre in 1966 while working as a director at the La Mama Theater in New York, creating works such as *New York through the Nose* and *Cuchifrito*, which already bear the mark of the search for a specific sensorial body language. Baz Kershaw links his theatre to the "immersive experience" of "emersive participation" of being an audience member within Vargas's work (*Theatre Ecology*, 317–318). He refers to the two works mentioned at the beginning of our essay: *El Hilo de Ariadne* (Ariadne's Thread, The Labyrinth) and *Oraculos* (Oracles).

Kershaw claims that the qualities of Vargas's performance (the sensory and evocative nature of the long passages of utter darkness, the total disorientation in time and space, the constant state of uncertainty and expectation, the general substitution of the tactile for the visual, the rich array of textures and smells, the close interaction with the performers as well as the constant invisible presence of helping hands in

moments of uncertainty, hesitation, fear or even terror) produce for most people a profoundly significant experience (Ibid. 205). Vargas himself sees his theatre as “a way of transforming something, creating something that first of all happens in your own body. So when we are talking about experience, we are talking about how to transform” (quoted in Christie and Gough 97).

Enrique Vargas thus understands his performance as an artistic exploration of “poetics of the senses”. The performance’s sensory elements help him reconnect the audience with the body’s sensory apparatus usually dominated by our visual sense. However, Baz Kershaw sees the impact of this sensorial revolution (when speaking about *Ariadna’s Thread*) as a part of radical theatre:

The key aesthetic tactic of *The Labyrinth* is to subtract and displace. It subtracts sight, and so shifts the locus of perception from the gaze on to hearing, touch and smell. In subtracting sight it displaces the dominant visual economies of Western cultures (Jenks 1995: 10), disrupting the key processes of representation; the world as object of representation is replaced by the self as subject of investigation. In the black maze “we” become wholly vulnerable because “we” do not know quite where “we” are; and so “one” is thrown back on the instability of the self (*Radical* 209).

Thus Vargas – according again to Kershaw, and I completely agree with him – intentionally disrupts our everyday perception, deprives us of sight and produces the acute awareness that it is impossible to look equally at everything you see. The key semiotic point of the theatre is underlined; the meaning is created in the “gaps” and “absences” between the signs and between particular codes, or in Derridean terms, through difference and deferral (Ibid).

Moreover, this leads us to the sensory theatre’s liminal nature also explored by the group or collective Ontroerend Goed. In the 2012 essay “Radical Intimacy”, which polemicalises with the thoughts of Jacques Rancière and his famous text *The Emancipated Spectator*, Liesbeth Groot Nibbelink highlights Ontroerend Goed’s *The Smile off Your Face* and *Internal*, a sequel to Vargas’ tradition of what the Netherlands calls “theatre.experience” or “theatre of experience”.

She describes how, in *The Smile off Your Face*, actors wheel around a blindfolded audience member and then caress them on a bed. In *Internal*, a show that caused uproar in Edinburgh when it played there in 2009, an actor sits in a booth with a single theatregoer, seduces them into revealing their darkest secrets – then shockingly makes them public in a group session at the end:

Thus, they enact the transgression of public/private boundaries. My “passage” into the realm of *The Smile* [...] immediately touches upon this ambiguity: instead of a semi-private seat in a darkened auditorium, I stand out and am seen and yet this is

a private encounter. I am a spectator but cannot see; I am a singular spectator, yet I belong to a group of spectators. [...] My experience probably could be archived into the Department of Confusion, in-between ease and unease, between giving trust and feeling embarrassed. Stepping out of the wheelchair serves as a threshold on which these in-betweens suddenly appear. Several other in-betweens show up too, on that threshold; themes that are intrinsic to today's debate on spectatorship: the (inter)active versus the passive spectator; freedom of experience versus manipulation and confinement; individualism versus community in the theatre (Nibbelink 413).

## V. Sensorial perception as the most direct route to memory

I will conclude this essay on the sensorial in contemporary theatre as a liminal experience with the connection between the various forms of bodily touch and the sensory language of smell and other senses that I have outlined above. I can join Liesbeth Groot Nibbelink in the following statement: A part of contemporary theatre is no longer merely visual and audible but also engages other senses. Thus, the research is being done to find out and explore a new type of theatrical performance, and its reception manifesting itself as a spatially and physically oriented perception that triggers liminal states of intimacy, understood as an amalgam of direct sensory sensation, imagination and reflection.

As Stephen Di Benedetto points out when speaking about the specificities of emotions and sensorial perception: "The emotions of others—for example, fear, contentment and lust—may also be experienced and communicated by smell [...] the most direct route to memory, and the longest lasting. It can influence mood, memory, emotions, mate choice and the immune system" (93). Recent research shows that emotion can be, to a large extent, communicated by different senses. Therefore, it is not a coincidence that contemporary theatre in a mediatised society uses smell and other senses to construct new theatrical realities and artistic procedures. As with other senses, the sense of smell also offers the theatre a powerful tool to affect the feelings and emotions of the audience during the performance. However, not only during the performance.

As seen from the examples listed and discussed, smell, touch and other senses are far from being expelled from today's artistic strategies. They are being used in innovative ways in sensorial and other versions of contemporary theatre (as well as drama) to connect the viewer's, reader's and performer's memories of lived experiences to present theatrical moments. If Di Benedetto shows us how the efforts to incorporate smell into performance are far from being exclusive to contemporary theatre, we have to stress that they became constituent and important parts of today's society of spectacle and mediatised visual culture.

As a special form of response to excessive individualism and a limited field of reception, these performative arts trigger special forms of sensory perception that allows, at least temporarily, the audience to escape from the favoured passive reception of the show. Sensorial and sensory theatre, therefore, strive for a liminal experience for spectators and performers. This experience causes a shift in their perception of reality. Or, as American scholar Philip Auslander sees it. The contemporary performances trigger changes in the viewer's perception of reality and the simultaneous emergence and exposure of the gap between signifiers and signified. They produce specific politics of performance that are "revealing the processes of cultural control" (61).



## Literature

- Auslander, Philip. *From Acting to Performance: Essays in Modernism and Postmodernism*. Routledge, 1997.
- Brantley, Ben. "No Wonder He's Cranky; He's Covered in Condiments," *New York Times*, 23 September 2007. <http://theater2.nytimes.com/2007/09/25/theater/reviews/25bran.html?n=Top/Reference/Times%20Topics/People/M/Moliere>. Accessed on 1 September 2021.
- Broadhurst, Susan. *Liminal Acts: A Critical Overview of Contemporary Performance and Theory*. Continuum, 1999.
- Bunbury, Stephanie. "'Echo of the Shadow' Creator Enrique Vargas on Theatre as a Mystical Game," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 September 2016, n.p. <https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/theatre/echo-of-the-shadowlands-creator-enrique-vargas-on-theatre-as-a-mystical-game-20160921-grkto8.html>. Accessed on 1 September 2021.
- Christie, J., and R. Gough. "Finding Oneself through the Perfumes of Memory: An Interview with Enrique Vargas." *Performance Research*, vol. 8, no. 30, 2003. pp. 94–103.
- Di Benedetto, Stephen. *The Provocation of the Senses in Contemporary Theatre*. Routledge, 2010.
- Fischer-Lichte, Erika. *Ästhetik des Performativen*. Suhrkamp Verlag, 2004.
- . *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*. Routledge, 2008.
- Fleischer, Mary. "Incense & Decadents: Symbolist Theatre's Use of Scent." *The Senses in Performance*, edited by Sally Banes and Andre Lepeki, Routledge, 2007.
- Herrmann, Max. "Das theatralische Raumerlebnis." *Bericht vom 4. Kongress für Aesthetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, Berlin, 1930.
- Jenič, Barbara Pia. *Senzorialni gledališki jezik v gledališlu Sensorium*. AGRFT, 2015.
- Kershaw, Baz. *The Radical in Performance: Between Brecht and Baudrillard*. Routledge, 1999.
- . *Theatre Ecology: Environment and Performance Events*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Marranca, Bonnie. ed. *The Theatre of Images*. The Johns Hopkins University, 1996.
- Nibbelink, Liesbeth Groot. "Radical Intimacy: Ontroerend Goed Meets The Emancipated Spectator." *Contemporary Theatre Review*, vol. 22, no. 3, 4, 2012, pp. 12–420.
- Steri, Arlette. "Perception." *Dictionary of Cognitive Science: Neuroscience, Psychology,*

*Artificial Intelligence, Linguistics, and Philosophy*, edited by Oliver Houde, Psychology Press, 2004, p. 274.

Schechner, Richard. *Environmental Theatre*. Hawthorn Books, 1973.

Turner, Victor. "Are there Universals of Performance in Myth, Ritual, and Drama?" *By Means of Performance*, edited by Richard Schechner and Willa Appel, Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 1-18.

—. "Liminality and Communitas." *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Aldine De Gruyter, 1969.

Članek obravnava liminalno naravo uporabe različnih čutov v sodobnih uprizoritvenih umetnostih. Njegovo izhodišče so naslednje misli: med umetniškimi dogodki poteka performativno dejanje, ki preoblikuje izvajalce in občinstvo, ter izmenjava vlog med »odrom« in »dvorano«, bodisi v smislu spektakla Augusta Boala bodisi uničenja četrte stene in posebne »avtopoetične povratne zanke« (Erika Fischer-Lichte). Naš cilj je ponovno premisliti in preučiti vlogo čutnega jezika kot enega od redko uporabljenih, a zelo učinkovitih orodij performativnih revolucij 20. in 21. stoletja. Te revolucije so se začele s futuristi, nadaljevale s taktilnimi in čutnimi performansi ter pristopi Marine Abramović in Yoko Ono ter dosegle vrhunec z Enriquejem Vargasom in njegovim senzorialnim gledališčem v različnih fazah. Poskušali bomo odgovoriti na naslednji vprašanji: Kako se lahko dotikamo in vonjamo ... v performativnih dejanjih? Kakšne vrste liminalitet proizvaja senzorično dejanje v sodobni uprizoritvi?

---

**Ključne besede:** senzorialno gledališče, liminalnost, potopitveno gledališče, Enrique Vargas, performans

---

**Tomaž Toporišič** je dramaturg in gledališki teoretik, redni profesor za področje dramaturgije in scenskih umetnosti ter prodekan na AGRFT Univerze v Ljubljani, kot gostujoči predavatelj pa izvaja tudi predmet Sociologija gledališča na Filozofski fakulteti Univerze v Ljubljani. Je avtor številnih razprav in znanstvenih monografij. Njegova primarna področja raziskovanja so teorija in zgodovina uprizoritvenih praks in literature, predvsem interakcije med obema področjema; semiotika kulture in kulturne študije.

tomaz.toporisc@guest.arnes.si

# Uprizarjanje dotika in vonja: liminalnost čutov<sup>2</sup>

---

Tomaž Toporišič

Univerza v Ljubljani, Akademija za gledališče, radio, film in televizijo

---

Prispevek se osredotoča na liminalno naravo senzoričnih jezikov v sodobnih uprizoritvenih praksah. Izhaja iz predpostavke, da se med umetniškimi dogodki odvija performativna akcija, ki preoblikuje nastopajoče in občinstvo ter udejanja izmenjavo vlog med »odrom« in »avditorijem«, bodisi v smislu Augusta Boala in njegovega gledalca bodisi v smislu ukinitve četrte stene in posebne »avtopoetične povratne zanke« (Erika Fischer-Lichte) med izvajalci in publiko. Naš cilj je preučiti vlogo senzoričnega jezika kot enega redko uporabljenih, a zelo učinkovitih orodij uprizoritvenih revolucij 20. in 21. stoletja, od futuristov prek Marine Abramovič do Enriqueja Vargasa in njegovega senzorialnega gledališča v različnih fazah – od radikalne produkcije La MaMe v New Yorku v šestdesetih letih do njegovega novega jezika senzorialnega gledališča v Teatro de los Sentidos v devetdesetih.

Senzorialne oblike gledališča lahko torej razumemo tudi kot liminalno dejanje, ki je del hibridne, interdisciplinarne umetnosti. Susan Broadhurst to umetnost označi kot ploden kaos in rodoviten nič, skladišče možnosti. Tovrstna umetnost proizvede liminalne, mejne entitete, ki niso ne tu ne tam, so ujete med položaji, poudarjajo telesno in htonično, eksperimentiranje. Če te značilnosti in posebnosti liminalnih predstav naneseemo na telo senzorialnega gledališča, ugotovimo, da to ustreza večini značilnosti liminalnega, kot ga Broadhurst definira znotraj sodobnih uprizoritvenih praks.

Kot tako je senzorialno gledališče dotika naslednik in posledica povezave liminalnega in hibridnega, kot se je v zgodovini slovenskega gledališča in uprizoritvenih praks najočitneje realizirala znotraj t. i. performativnega obrata in drugih neoavangardnih praks, predvsem skupine OHO in Pupilije. Liminalne in hibridne predstave torej prepletajo različne »tekste«, ki so onstran verbalnega diskurza, a ga vključujejo. Hkrati pa poudarjajo liminalnost telesa.

Podobno je s senzorialnim gledališčem Barbare Pie Jenič, ki je nastalo kot nadaljevanje

---

<sup>2</sup> Članek je nastal v okviru raziskovalnega programa Gledališče in medumetnostne raziskave P6-0376, ki ga financira Javna agencija za raziskovalno dejavnost Republike Slovenije iz državnega proračuna.

metode maga tega gledališča, kolumbijskega režiserja Enriqueja Vargasa in njegove skupine Teatro de los Sentidos, delujoče v Barceloni. Tudi to gledališče stremi k liminalni izkušnji za gledalce in izvajalce, ki naj med posameznimi udeleženci uprizoritve kot dogodka povzroči spremembo njihove percepcije resničnosti, samih sebe in drugih. Računa na sprožitev spremembe gledalčevega dojetja resničnosti ter na hkratni nastanek in izpostavitve prepada med označevalci in označenci.

Senzorialno gledališče dotika in vonja je torej usmerjeno k liminalni izkušnji za gledalce in izvajalce. Ta med posameznimi udeleženci uprizoritve kot dogodka povzroči spremembo njihove percepcije resničnosti, samih sebe in drugih. Sproži spremembe gledalčevega dojetja resničnosti ter hkratni nastanek in izpostavitve prepada med označevalci in označenci. Tako proizvede auslanderjevsko razumljeno politiko predstave kot »razkrivanja procesov kulturnega nadzora«. Od mediatiziranega k senzorialnemu in nazaj nas torej vezljivost medijev vedno znova vrne h gledališču kot umetnosti v živo, ki s svojo performativnostjo in *feedback zankami* omogoča začasne skupnosti med igralci in gledalci.



Problem imenovanja ni kateri koli filozofski problem, pač pa je osrednjega pomena za klasično ontologijo, ki se opira na koncept imen (*onomata*) kot oprijemajočih se reči (*pragmata*) v njihovi bistveni biti. Kot tako je bilo ime tradicionalno zvezano s konceptom resnice kot *adequatio*, tj. resnice kot ujemanja med vednostjo in bitjo, intelektom in rečjo ali propozicijo in realnostjo. Na tem mestu bomo vrgli pogled s strani na ta masivni filozofski problem, tako da se ga bomo lotili s posebnega vidika vonjav in njihovega osupljivega razmerja do jezika.

---

**Ključne besede:** voh, vonj, jezik, anomija, ontologija, psihoanaliza, resnica, ime

---

**Simon Hajdini** je docent in višji znanstveni sodelavec na Oddelku za filozofijo Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani. Je avtor dveh knjig in številnih člankov s področij sodobne filozofije, socialne teorije, nemške klasične filozofije in psihoanalize. Pred izidom je njegova knjiga *Smell: ontology of everything else* (MIT Press, 2022).

shajdini@ff.uni-lj.si

# Imena na konici nosu<sup>1</sup>

Simon Hajdini

Filozofska fakulteta Univerze v Ljubljani

## Ime rože

»Kaj je ime?« vpraša Julija in nemudoma zavoha odgovor: »To, čemur roža pravimo, dišalo / bi prav tako lepo z imenom drugim« (Shakespeare 58). Nikakor ni naključje, da Julija na vprašanje imenovanja odgovori tako, da imena naveže na anomično domeno vonjav. Vonjave v indoevropskih jezikih namreč notorično nimajo lastnih imen, tako pa zadobijo nadomestna imena, kakršno je »vonj po roži«. Vonjave so eponimne: ko jih imenujemo, jih spravljamo v zvezo z njihovimi viri, torej z imeni objektov, ki jih oddajajo, namesto da bi poimenovali bit njih samih kot objektov ali kvalitet. Bistvena bit vonjav uhaja pomenjanju, tako da lahko o njih govorimo le tako, da jih ne izustimo. Vonjave so metonimične: ko jih poimenujemo, o njih govorimo kot o neljubih gostih pri naši mizi, ki jih nagovarjamo le v tretji osebi. Ker so metonimično poimenovane, se vonjave zdijo bistveno evfemistične. A za razliko od evfemizmov v pravem pomenu besede, ki tvorijo vselej spreminjajoči se sociokulturni leksikon zadrege, so vonjave tako rekoč refleksivno evfemistične, s tem pa kažejo na zadrego jezika samega. Julijina domislica nas v eni sami spekulativni potezi napoti od poimenovanja k vonjavam, torej *od poimenovanja k vrzeli poimenovanj*.

Ta singularna metonimičnost vonjav, ki jo najdemo v navedenem odlomku iz Shakespeara, privzema dve osnovni formi. Najprej je tu »roža«, »vonj po roži«, ki manjkajoče ime vonjave izreka z deskriptivnim poimenovanjem njenega vira. Ime vonjave tu referira na objekt (»rožo«), s katero je korelirana partikularna čutna zaznava (neimenovani »X«). In še druga forma: Julija v izvirniku govori o »sladkosti«, ki v prevodu umanjka: »What's in a name? That which we call a rose / By any other word would smell as sweet.« Imamo torej »sladkost«, »sladek vonj«, pri čemer neimenovani »X« ni poimenovan z referenco na njegov vir ali objektivni korelat (kot v primeru vonja po roži), pač pa z nadomestnim imenom, ki je izposojeno pri drugem kemičnem čutu, namreč pri čutu okusa. Eponimno in metonimično poimenovanje vonjav kažeta na to, da je ime vonjave strukturno *drugo* ime. In vonjave so s temi *nomina impropria* ožigosane bodisi kot *sirote*, ki so jih njihovi jezikovni starši vselej že zapustili, ali pa kot čutni *pankrti*, nezakonski otroci, spočeti v domovanju njim

<sup>1</sup> Raziskovalni projekt »Teatralnost oblasti: Hegel in Shakespeare o sodobnih strukturah oblasti« (št. J6-1812) sofinancira Javna agencija za raziskovalno dejavnost Republike Slovenije. Za integralno različico pričujočega članka gl. Hajdini, »Names«.



tujega čuta. Vsaka vonjava je druga vonjava, *second scent*. A za razliko od pojma drugega spola pri Simone de Beauvoir, tj. spola kot Drugega v odnosu do prvega spola, v primeru vonjav ni nobene prve vonjave, nobenega primarnega izraza, na katerega bi se lahko oprli. Ker jim manjka lastno mesto v Drugem kot arhivu imen, so vonjave vselej imenovane z »imenom drugim«.

Kadar so poimenovane s sinestetičnimi nadomestki, si vonjave svoja imena načeloma izposojajo pri gustatorni zaznavi. A hkrati s tem govorimo tudi o »paletah« vonjav, s čimer slednje nanašamo na vizualno percepcijo; govorimo o vonjavah kot »kompozicijah«, ki vsebujejo »note« in »podtone«, s čimer jih nanašamo na čut sluha; nanašamo pa jih celo na čut tipa, ko jih imenujemo »ostre«. Takšno sinestetično izposojanje, kakor tudi eponimno poimenovanje, je pri fizičnih čutih sicer nekaj dosti običajnega (»sladek glas«, »oster vid«, »topla barva« itd.), a v primeru vonjav se to poimenovanje odvija ob popolni odsotnosti *nomina propria*, imen, ki bi bila lastna le njim samim. Zamislimo si primer barvne anomalije, torej nezmožnosti pravilnega poimenovanja barv (v razliki do barvne slepote kot nezmožnosti njihove pravilne zaznave). Zamislimo si torej, da se je subjekt, vsakič ko referira na »belo« barvo, primoran navezati na njen vir in reči »videz snega« ali pa uporabiti nadomestno ime in reči »izgleda hladno«. Zveni bizarno, a natanko tako je z vonjavami, vsakič ko jih poimenujemo.

Kaj je v vonju? Aristotel v *O duši* spregovori o sinestetičnem izposojanju imen, pri čemer izrecno omeni manko generičnih imen za vonjave. Pri tem pripomni, da je razlikovanje vonjav težavno, zato pa jim imena pripišemo po podobnosti s poimenovanji okusov. A tu bi dodali, da tovrstno aplikacijo nadomestnih imen po podobnosti s sfero okusov pogojuje očitna »motnja na osi podobnosti«, če uporabim slavni izraz Romana Jakobsona (prim. »Dva vidika« 97-104). Vonjave označujejo leksikalne vrzeli in tvorijo singularno prizorišče obče jezikovne motnje, *univerzalne olfaktorne anomalije*. Vonjave smo po večini sicer zmožni poimenovati z referenco na njihove vire, nezmožni pa smo jih neposredno metaforično zajeti; tako pa je označevalna funkcija izrazov »vonj po« ... »vrtnici« kongruentna z izmikom pomena.<sup>2</sup>

Jakobson motnjo na osi podobnosti, kolikor zadeva izmik pomena in kolikor se nanaša na nemožnost metaforične selekcije ali substitucije, ilustrira z naslednjo prototipsko beckettovsko izjavo afazičnega pacienta: »*Ich bin doch hier unten, na wenn ich gewesen bin ich wees night, we das, nu wenn ich, ob das nun doch, noch, ja. Was Sie her, wenn ich, och och weess nicht, we das hier war ja ...*« (Jakobson 99).<sup>3</sup> »Kritična faza te vrste afazije,« dodaja Jakobson, »potemtakem prizanese samo okvirju, samo vezivu

<sup>2</sup> Lacan z referenco na Jakobsonovo analizo dvojnega značaja jezika v svoji formuli metonimije poudari ta odpor pomenjanja, pri čemer je označevalna funkcija ( $fS$ ) povezave označevalca z označevalcem ( $S...S'$ ) kongruentna z ( $\cong$ ) ohranitvijo prečke ( $-$ ), ki ločuje označevalec od označenca in s tem preprečuje produkcijo pomena ( $s$ ):  $f(S...S') S \cong S (-)$  s (*Spisi* 162).

<sup>3</sup> Ta pasus v slovenskem prevodu dela ostaja nepreveden. Poskus prevoda bi bil nemara takle: »Toda jaz sem tu spodaj, no če sem bil, ne vem, kdo to, če zdaj jaz, če to zdaj vendar, še, ja. Kaj vi tu, če jaz, oh ne vem, kdo to tu bil je ja.«

komunikacije« (prav tam). V nadaljnjem primeru, o katerem poroča Fritz Lotmar, pacient, ki mu pokažejo sliko »kompasa«, izkusi fenomen konice jezika. Ko ga prosijo, da poimenuje piktorialni znak »kompasa«, jim odvrne: »Da, to je ... vem, kam spada, ne morem se spomniti tehničnega izraza ... Da ... za kazanje smeri ... magnet kaže na sever« (prav tam 100).

Kronski primer te nenavadne bližine med motnjami na osi bližine, kot jih pojmuje Jakobson, in univerzalno olfaktorno anomijo, kot jo predlagamo tukaj, nam ponuja zloglasni primer H. M.-ja. Henryja Molaisona so leta 1953, da bi ublažili njegove hude epileptične napade, podvrgli bilateralni resekciji senčnega režnja, ki je povzročila anterogradno amnezijo, tj. skoraj popolno izgubo zmožnosti oblikovanja novih spominov.<sup>4</sup> Študija H. M.-jevih olfaktornih zmožnosti iz leta 1983 je obrodila filozofsko sila zanimive sadove (Eichenbaum idr., »Selective olfactory deficits«). H. M. je kazal olfaktorno okvaro, ki ni zadevala ne detekcije vonjav, ne adaptacijske zmožnosti in ne sposobnosti razlikovanja med njihovimi intenzitetami, pač pa je zadevala izključno prepoznavanje in poimenovanje kvalitet olfaktornih percepcij. Že bežen pogled na rezultate testiranja H. M.-jeve sposobnosti poimenovanja običajnih odorantov pokaže, da pacient pri tem izkazuje klasične simptome motenj na osi bližine. Podobno kot Lotmarjev pacient, ki objekta pred sabo ne uspe imenovati »kompas«, ampak se je primoran opreti na metonimične deskriptorje, kot so »za kazanje smeri« in »magnet kaže na sever«, tudi H. M. ni zmožen poimenovati odorantov z njihovimi pravimi imeni: namesto da bi odorante poimenoval »klinčki«, »meta«, »malina« ali »vrtnica«, slednje označi za »naplavljenе mrtve ribe«, »nekaj jedkega«, »mrhovina, veverica« in »postana voda«. Bi to, čemur »vrtnica« pravimo, pod imenom »postana voda« dišalo enako sladko?

#### H. M.-JEVO POIMENOVANJE OBIČAJNIH ODORANTOV (prav tam 467)

<i>Vonjava</i>	<i>Test 1</i>	<i>Test 2</i>
Kokos	'Milo'	'Cvetlice'
Meta	'Cvetlice'	'Nekaj jedkega'
Mandelj	'Divja cvetlica'	'Nekaj jedkega'
Limona	'Cvetlice'	'Nekaj jedkega'
Vanilja	'Blage vrtnice'	'Sveže izdelan papir'
Pomaranča	'Nekaj jedkega'	'Blag parfüm'
Klički	'Svež les'	'Naplavljenе mrtve ribe'
Malina	'Cvetlice'	'Mrhovina, veverica'
Vrtnica	'Roža'	'Postana voda'
Voda	'Nič ne vonjam'	'Nič ne vonjam'

4 O zloglasnosti tega najslavnejšega nevropsihološkega pacienta priča bogastvo časopisnih člankov, ki so izšli v dneh po smrti tega »nepozabnega amnezika« (kot ga je imenoval New York Times). Če ta ne posodi svojega imena bolezenski motnji, potem pacientova slava le redko prekaša slavo tistih, ki ga zdravijo.

Da ne bo pomote: na tem mestu nas ne zanima H. M.-jeva anomija, pač pa naša lastna. Poanta ni preprosto v tem, da H. M. izkazuje motnje na osi podobnosti, ki so posledica možganske poškodbe; poanta je vse prej ta, da naša normalna zmožnost poimenovanja vonjav že je primer univerzalne motnje na osi podobnosti. To postane jasno, brž ko se prenehamo osredotočati na stolpca 2 in 3 (*Test 1* in *Test 2*) in se ozremo po »resničnostnih označbah« v stolpcu 1 (*Vonjava*), ki podaja generična imena odorantov, ki se jih H. M. ne more domisliti. Te označbe kažejo na dejstvo, da smo, ko gre za poimenovanje vonjav, vsi afaziki. Nesposobni smo poimenovanja vonjav, zato pa smo se primorani opreti na metonimične nadomestke v formi imen njihovih najreprezentativnejših referentov (»kokos«, »meta« itd.) Vsa generična imena vonjav so, paradokсно, ne-generična in torej značilna; a značilna niso za vonjave, pač pa vselej za nekaj drugega od vonjav samih.

## Čudno, ne diši po limoni

Univerzalna olfaktorna anomija pa je nadalje podvojena s parcialno olfaktorno agnozijo, ki kot nezmožnost eponimnega poimenovanja vonjav vnovič zrcali H. M.-jevo obolenje. Izkaže se namreč, da antinomija imen in vonjav, ki se dozdevno razreši v eponimnem (»vonj po vrtnici«) ali sinestetičnem (»sladek vonj«) poimenovanju, trmoglavo vztraja kot opazna in osupljiva človeška nezmožnost identifikacije vonjav. Eksperimenti kažejo na to, da

zna človek vonjave precej dobro detektirati in da razlikuje med stotinami različnih vonjav, medtem ko je njegova sposobnost identifikacije vonjav skrajno omejena. Oseba z normalnim čutom voha je v identifikacijski nalogi brez pomoči le redko sposobna identificirati > 50 % primerkov vonjav [...]. Neko vonjavo sicer prepozna kot znano in pripadno neki splošni kategoriji, ne more pa se domisliti njenega specifičnega imena. Ko osebi ime zaupamo, ga ta nemudoma prepozna za pravega in je presenečena, da se ga trenutek poprej ni uspela domisliti. (Sulmont-Rossé idr., »Odor naming« 23)

Tudi kadar so eponimna in sinestetična imena na voljo in pri roki, se jih v polovici primerov vseeno ne moremo domisliti in jih povezati z vsakdanjimi olfaktornimi zaznavami. Pri tem naša fizična zmožnost detekcije in interpretacije olfaktornih zaznav ostaja intaktna – smo anomični in ne anozmični. Zmožni smo: detekcije vonjav, tj. zaznave njihove prisotnosti ali odsotnosti; razlikovanja njihovih intenzitet, tj. razlikovanja med – kantovsko rečeno – »močnejšo« ali »šibkejšo« realnostjo vonjav, kolikor aficirajo naš čut; in zmožni smo jih nemudoma prepoznati za kvalitete. Ob vsem tem pa, kot rečeno, za čuda nismo zmožni prepoznati ter poimenovati objektov, ki te vonjave oddajajo in jim posojajo svoja imena. A za razliko od normozmičnih subjektov, ki so ime vonjave prepoznali, brž ko smo jim ga zaupali, pa se H. M. ob

pomoči ni odrezal nič bolje: »Ko je nekoč limono pravilno identificiral z vidom, jo je poduhal in pripomnil, ‚Čudno, ne diši po limoni!‘« (Eichenbaum idr. 469). V tej zvezi se spomnimo primera afazičnega pacienta z motnjami na osi podobnosti, ki ga prosijo, da ponovi besedo »ne«: »Ko so Headovemu pacientu rekli, naj ponovi ‚Ne‘, je rekel: ‚Ne, ne vem, kako naj to storim.‘ [...] [N]i mogel uporabiti najčistejše oblike enačbene predikacije, tautologije a = a: ‚ne‘ = ‚ne‘« (Jakobson 102).

Himerično srečanje: limona, ki ne diši po limoni; beseda, ki je ni mogoče nadomestiti z njo samo. H. M. vonjav ne uspe poimenovati z njihovimi pravimi imeni, zato pa tudi ne uspe razlikovati med njimi. Razlike med vonjavami se tako sesedajo in stapljajo v brezrazličnost ali indiferenco: kokos in meta, limona in malina, vse to je izenačeno s »cvetlico«; meta, mandelj, limona in pomaranča vsi dišijo kot »nekaj jedkega«. A medtem ko eratično odkriva majave identitete tam, kjer obstajajo le razlike, obenem odkriva razlike tam, kjer obstaja le identiteta: vanilja, na primer, je razlikovana od nje same, s tem ko je izenačena tako z »blagimi vrtnicami« kot s »sveže izdelanim papirjem«. Imena vonjav, ki jih poda H. M., se v nobenem od primerov ne ujemajo niti jezikovno niti z ozirom na resničnostne označbe.<sup>5</sup> Vsakič ko nekaj zaduha, je to nekaj podvrženo procesu preobrazbe v nekaj drugega od samega sebe, podvrženo je procesu *Sichanderswerden*, prehajanju v drugobit, če uporabim Heglov izraz. In če H. M. ni zmožen identifikacije identičnih vonjav kot istih in različnih vonjav kot različnih, potem zato, ker vonjava kot brezimna vrzel poimenovanja ravno nikoli ni identična sama s seboj. Neuspeh substitucije, ki je značilen tako za motnje na osi podobnosti nasploh kot za univerzalno olfaktorno anomalijo posebej, torej ne zadeva le subjektive zmožnosti substitucije enega za drugo ime, pač pa tudi substitucijo v čisti obliki, torej *nadomestitev imena z njim samim*.

Nemožnost neposrednega poimenovanja olfaktornih vtisov kot čutnih kvalitete objektov torej sega onkraj njihovega zaznavnega vznika v odnosu med subjektom in objektom zaznave ter zajema tudi nezmožnost poimenovanja teh objektov samih. Tudi kadar se brez pomoči domislimo eponimnega imena, s katerim identificiramo dano vonjavo, »resničnostna označba« ali »pravilno ime vonjave«, ki ga vežemo na olfaktorni vtis, še vedno ostaja intrinzično nestabilno in majavo. Zato se velja na tem mestu malce ustaviti in si ogledati »resničnostno označbo« samo. Za slednjo je »pravilno« ime vonjave tisto ime, ki sovpade z realnostjo njegovega odoranta. Resničnostne označbe torej ustrezajo realnosti odoranta, ki ga poimenujejo. Takšno ujemanje pa je osrednja značilnost tradicionalnega pojma resnice kot *adequatio* ali ujemanja med vednostjo in bitjo, intelektom in rečjo ali propozicijo in realnostjo. Tu postane jasno, da je problem imenovanja ključnega pomena za klasično ontologijo, kolikor se ta opira na pojem imena kot oprijemajočega se reči v njeni bistveni biti.

<sup>5</sup> Natančneje, v nobenem od primerov z izjemo enega: vode, ki pa nima vonja.

Zahodna filozofija je problem resnice od samih svojih začetkov povezovala s problemom imenovanja. In Platon je bil prvi, ki je v *Kratilu*, torej dialogu, ki se izrecno posveča »pravilnosti imen«, sistematično načel problem »resničnostnih označb«. Ker se koncept resnice kot adekvacije nazadnje opira na relacijo reflektivne identitete ( $A = A$ ), pravilno ime ni preprosto tisto, ki se mu uspe pripeti na reč, pač pa tisto, ki uspe adekvatno dezinirati objekt v njegovi identiteti s seboj, s čimer razodene bistveno bit poimenovanega. Takšna raba imen nazadnje razlikuje filozofski diskurz od diskurza sofistov, ki jih v najboljšem primeru zaposluje »pravilna izreka«, *orthoepia*, ne pa pravilnost imen, *orthotes onomaton*. Kot smo videli, H. M.-jeva anomija razkriva samo bistvo vonjav in radikalno subvertira razmerje enakosti, s tem ko spodkoplje njegovo reflektivnost. Za Platona so imena posnetki reči v njihovi bistveni biti, njihove resnične kopije; a brž ko kopija izgubi oporo v modelu ali stvari, stvari same iztirijo in izgubijo svojo bistveno bit.

Imena se oprimejo samoidentičnih objektov, in po Platonu s tem razodevajo njihovo samoidentično bistvo. Označevalci so sami po sebi nosilci pomena, kar pomeni, da v sebi nosijo resnični smisel tistega, kar izražajo. In za Platona se ta resnični smisel razkrije z etimološko analizo, ki tudi sama razkriva svojo etimološko bistvo kot »veda o resničnem pomenu«. Platonove etimologije so sicer nenavadne in ne dosegajo lingvističnih standardov, a vseeno je pomembno poudariti, da se njegovi etimološki poskusi v celoti ravnajo po pomenu, ki ga Platon z velikimi napori priliči imenom. Platonove etimologije so vzratni eksorcizem; s tem ko označevalce napolnijo s pomenom, le razkrivajo, kako se jih je ta vselej že polastil. Ime se ob podrobnem pogledu izkaže za to, kar je: anagram reči. Tako pa je pravilno ime vselej že eponimno ime, ki razkrije bistveno bit poimenovane reči.

Kot smo videli, se besede le mukoma prilegajo vonjavam v njihovi bistveni biti. V krajini vonjav nič ne diši po sebi, ker nič ni to, kar je. To tezo lahko beremo na več načinov. Denimo: vselej vonjamo le tisto, kar je v procesu razkroja in kar naseljuje samo mejo sfere biti. Hegel v svoji diskusiji fizičnih čutov poudari ta ključni vidik voha: »*Denn zu riechen ist nur dasjenige, was schon in Sichverzehren begriffen ist*« (*Vorlesungen* 184).<sup>6</sup> Vonjamo lahko le tisto, kar je že v procesu samorazkroja. A izraz, ki ga uporabi Hegel, v sebi skriva dvoznačnost. Pomeni lahko samouničenje, razkroj substance, ki nas doseže prav v tem svojem razkrajanju. Ta vidik lepo povzame naravo objekta, ki ni identičen s seboj, objekta kot bistveno različnega od samega sebe, prehajajočega v drugobit.

A za konec omenimo še drugi, radikalnejši vidik. *Sichverzehren* je obenem sebeuničenje, torej razkroj sebstva, naše lastne reflektivne identitete. In Adorno in Horkheimer ta vidik voha v *Dialektiki razsvetljenstva* zakoličita s tole udarno formulo:

<sup>6</sup> Za podrobnejšo analizo tega pasusa gl. Hajdini, *Kaj je ta duh*.

»Pri gledanju ostaneš, kdor si, pri vohanju se razbliniš« (196). Inherentna drugobit objekta torej doseže subjekta olfaktorne percepcije, ki je zdaj tudi sam ob svojo reflektivno identiteto, torej ravno ob tisto, kar konstituira njegovo *Sebstvo*, njegovo istovetnost s samim seboj. Ko voham, se moje samoidentično *Sebstvo* razblini in preneha biti to, kar je. To pa nas v obratu sooči s figuro subjektivnosti, ki ji manjka sleherna stabilna figuracija, s figuro subjekta kot madeža reflektivne identitete. H. M.-jeva opazka glede »limone«, ki ne diši po »limoni«, zadeva prav to notranjo vrzel reflektivnosti: samo-identičnost subjekta, njegovo reflektivno identiteto, načanja relacijo reflektivne opozicije, torej razliko ali negativnost, ki ločuje subjekt od njega samega. Tako pa nam ponudi plodne nastavke za mišljenje singularne figuracije olfaktornega cogita. In če kartezijanski cogito na temelju kogitacije lahko preide k zatrditvi lastne biti, potem je olfaktorni subjekt resnica samoidentičnega subjekta, resnica njegove inherentne nemožnosti.

Aristotel. *O duši*, Slovenska matica, 2002.

Eichenbaum, H., T. H. Morton, H. Potter in S. Corkin. »Selective Olfactory Deficits in Case H. M.« *Brain*, let. 106, št. 2, str. 459-72.

Hajdini, Simon. *Kaj je ta duh? K filozofiji voha*. Analecta, 2016.

— »Names at the tip of the nose.« *Filozofski vestnik*, let. 41, št. 3, 2020, str. 159-176.

Hegel, G. W. F. *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik I*. Fischer Verlag, 1970.

Horkheimer, Max, in Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialektika razsvetljenstva*, Studia humanitatis, 2002.

Jakobson, Roman. »Dva vidika jezika in dve vrsti afazičnih motenj.« *Lingvistični in drugi spisi*, Studia humanitatis, 1996, str. 87-116.

Lacan, Jacques. *Spisi*. Analecta, 2006.

Shakespeare, William. *Romeo in Julija*. Prevedel Oton Župančič. Mladinska knjiga, 2016.

Sulmont-Rossé, Claire, Sylvie Issanchou in E. P. Köster. »Odor Naming Methodology: Correct Identification with Multiple-choice versus Repeatable Identification in a Free Task.« *Chemical Senses*, letn. 30, št. 1, 2005, str. 23.





The problem of naming is not just any philosophical problem but rather central to classical ontology. The latter depends on the notion of names (*onomata*) as latching onto things (*pragmata*) in their essential being. As such, the name has traditionally been tied to the concept of truth as *adequatio* or correspondence between knowledge and being, intellect and thing, or proposition and reality. The author proposes to cast a side-glance at this massive philosophical problem, approaching it from the singular point of view of smells and their striking relationship to language.

---

**Keywords:** smell, odour, language, anomia, ontology, psychoanalysis, truth, name

---

**Simon Hajdini** is an assistant professor and senior research associate in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Ljubljana's Faculty of Arts. He is the author of two books in Slovene and numerous research articles in contemporary philosophy, social theory, German idealism and psychoanalysis. His book *Smell: Ontology of Everything Else* is forthcoming with MIT Press (2022).

shajdini@ff.uni-lj.si

# Names at the Tip of the Nose

---

Simon Hajdini

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Department of Philosophy

---

The problem of naming is not just any philosophical problem but rather central to classical ontology. The latter depends on the notion of names (*onomata*) as latching onto things (*pragmata*) in their essential being. As such, the name has traditionally been tied to the concept of truth as *adequatio* or correspondence between knowledge and being, intellect and thing, or proposition and reality. The article casts a side-glance at this massive philosophical problem, approaching it from the singular point of view of smells and their striking relationship to language.

“What’s in a name?” Juliet asks, immediately putting us on the scent: “That which we call a rose / By any other word would smell as sweet” (Shakespeare 58). It is no coincidence that Juliet expands on her initial question by relating names to the anomic realm of smells. In Indo-European languages, at least, smells notoriously lack proper names, in turn acquiring roundabout names such as “smell of rose”. Smells are eponymous: to name them is to relate them to their sources, to the names of objects that emit them, rather than naming the objects, or qualities, that they themselves are. Their essential being eludes signification such that we can only ever speak of them without speaking them out. Smells are metonymical: to name them is to speak of them as if they were unwanted guests at our dinner table whom we could only address in the third person, slandering them in their presence. Metonymically named, smells strike us as essentially euphemistic. But unlike euphemisms proper that – in providing indirect expressions substituted for those considered too disagreeable – make out the vast and ever-shifting socio-cultural lexicon of embarrassment, smells are reflectively euphemistic and therefore indicative of the embarrassment of language itself. In her adage, Juliet moves, in a single speculative stroke, from a name to a smell, that is: *from naming to a void of naming*.

Two typical instances of this metonymicity of smell, singular among the physical senses, are found in Juliet’s passage. First, there’s “a rose”, “the smell of rose”, uttering a smell’s missing proper name as its descriptive source-name. Here, the smell-name is voiced with reference to an object (“a rose”) with which the particular subjective sensation of smell (the unnamed “X”) is correlated. And second, there’s “sweetness”,

“the sweet smell”, where the unnamed “X” is named not in relation to its source, or objective correlate, but by being step-named, that is, by borrowing its name from the register of taste as the other of the two chemical senses. In the absence of first names, smells only have second names. However, they only acquire these *nomina impropria* either as *orphans*, structurally abandoned by their linguistic parents who are always already dead and unknowable, or as sensuous *bastards*, as illegitimate children of a foreign household of sense.

When step-named, smells typically borrow their names from the vocabulary of gustatory perception. However, one also speaks of smell “faces” and “palettes”, relating smells to visual perception; of smells as “compositions” containing “notes” and “sub-tones”, relating them to the sense of hearing; and one even relates smells to the sense of touch by calling them “pungent”. Such synaesthetic borrowing, as well as source-naming, are common among the senses (“sweet voice”, “sharp taste”, “warm colour”, etc.). However, with smells, such source- and step-naming take place in the curious absence of *nomina propria* that would be distinctive of them. Imagine a case of colour anomia in which, when referring to the colour “white”, the subject would be obliged to use a source-name and say, for instance, “(the appearance of) snow”, or a step-name such as “(it looks) cold.” That is precisely what we do with smells each and every time we name them.

What’s in a smell? Pausing to consider synaesthetic borrowing, Aristotle mentions the lack of generic names for smells while adding that “because smells are much less easy to discriminate than flavours, the names of these varieties are applied to smells in virtue of similarity” (Aristotel 9). However, we should add, such an application of step-names to smells “in virtue of similarity” is underpinned – and necessitated – by a blatant “similarity disorder” to deploy Roman Jakobson’s famous term. Smells stand for lexical voids and represent the singular site of a universal linguistic disturbance, *a universal olfactory anomia*. That is to say, we are capable, for the most part, of naming smells in a roundabout metonymical way, typically relating them to the names of their sources. Yet, we are materially barred from directly metaphorically grasping them, such that the signifying function of, say, “smell of” ... “rose” is congruent with the elision of meaning.

The famous case of H. M. provides a prime example of this uncanny proximity between the similarity disorder, as conceived of by Roman Jakobson, and universal olfactory anomia, as proposed here. A glance at the results of testing H.M.’s ability to name common odorants reveals that, in attempting to name them, he displays the standard symptoms of similarity disorder. Instead of qualifying the presented odorant as “cloves”, “mint”, “raspberry”, or “rose”, H. M. qualified them as “Dead fish, washed ashore”, “An acid”, “Carrion, a squirrel”, and “Bad water”, respectively. Once, having

correctly identified a lemon by sight, he sniffed it and remarked, "Funny, it doesn't smell like a lemon!" Consider in this regard the example of an aphasic patient with a similarity disorder who, when asked to simply repeat back a word, cannot bring himself to do it. "Told to repeat the word *no*, Head's patient replied 'No, I don't know how to do it.' [...] he could not produce the purest form of equational predication, the tautology  $a = a$ : /no/ is /no/ " (Jakobson 102).

The article unpacks this chimeric encounter between a lemon that does not smell like a lemon and a word that cannot be substituted for itself. At the core of this problem lies the notion of reflexive identity, i.e., identity with itself, as the essential characteristic of the classical notion of truth. Smell undermines reflexive identity, enabling us to conceive of an olfactory subject as the point of impossibility of self-identical subjectivity.

The sense of smell is a powerful sense that offers many possibilities. To speak of olfactory art, there must be the intention to use odour or olfaction as both context and concept of the work of art. For this, we speak about the terms *Olfactory Context* and *Olfactory Concept*.

The Olfactory Context can be divided into the *Intrinsic and Intentional Odour Values*. The intrinsic odour value brings with it their significance, while the intentional odour value gives an extra meaning to a smell. In addition, the *Olfactory Perception* is part of the *Olfactory Concept* of the artwork. To perceive this, the smell must be transferred to the spectator. The way in which an odour is transferred in a work largely determines how the smell is interpreted in relation to the work. The odour transfer and odour situation determine how an odour gets to the viewer. We call these methods of odour transfer *Olfactory Transfers* and divide them into five categories: *Flowers, Smell Devices, Scent Spaces, Time and Translations*. In most cases, *Olfactory Transfers* are used in crossovers. Together with the various possibilities of using the *Olfactory Context*, they also demonstrate *the Complexity of Olfactory Art*.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Olfactory Art Manifest explains the differences in olfactory art, while the 2<sup>nd</sup> Olfactory Art Manifest demonstrates *the Complexity of Olfactory Art*.

---

**Keywords:** olfactory context, olfactory concept, odour values, olfactory perception, olfactory transfers, Olfactory Art Manifest

---

In twenty years, olfactory artist **Peter de Cupere** realised more than seven hundred works related to the olfactory perception of social, cultural and environmental contexts. His works have been presented in more than two hundred exhibitions. He teaches olfactory art in the Open Lab at the PXL-MAD School of Arts in Hasselt (BE), where he researches the use of smell in art at the research group Manufacture. For his PhD (UHasselt, PXL MAD, VUB), he researched the use of smell as context and concept. In 2018, he received the Art and Olfaction Award for his lifetime contribution to promoting the use of scent in art (London, 2018). [www.peterdecupere.art](http://www.peterdecupere.art)

Peter.deCupere@pxl.be

# The Complexity of Olfactory Art

## The Use of Scent as Concept and Context in the Work of Art

---

Peter de Cupere

PXL-MAD School of Arts in Hasselt, Belgium

---

### I. Introduction

This article summarises my doctoral research on how smell can be used as a concept and context of work in the artistic design process. The used terms, findings, opinions, and statements related to olfactory art, which are used in this article, come from this research and refer to findings, experiences, studies and interpretation of my olfactory works based on my artistic design process. This artistic research in the arts starts from my own substantiated practice in which theoretical and practical conclusions can find their way into artistic works and reflect the artistic design practice. This practice led to the writing of two art manifestos and one olfactory manifesto. The written manifestos are presented in this article. They are both theoretical and artistic statements resulting from the doctoral research in which they were elaborated. The first manifesto (de Cupere, 1<sup>st</sup> Olfactory Art Manifest) was published in an overview book (de Cupere, et al.), which includes the numerous works upon which this research was based.

The sense of smell is a powerful sense that offers many possibilities. By combining odours with another sense, such as the visual, the auditory, the gustatory, the tactile, an interaction is created to give both senses greater impact. The context of an odour or image can also change by crossover with a different sense. To speak of olfactory art, there must be the intention to use odour or olfaction as both context and concept of the work of art. Knowing the effect of olfaction, its limitations and the perception of odours is important. Gaining insight into how smell can work as a context and how it can be interpreted is necessary. Interpreting the smell itself and the context of the odour and/or the work depends on how the viewer perceives the smell and through which concept the odour is transmitted.

Since scents and the sense of smell are used with a specific meaning, their context and the way they are used as a concept will help understand the work. For this, I speak about the terms *Olfactory Context* and *Olfactory Concept*.

The Olfactory Context can be divided into the *Intrinsic and Intentional Odour Values*. The intrinsic odour value carries with it their meaning, while the *Intentional Odour Value* gives an extra meaning to a smell. In addition, *Olfactory Perception* is part of the *Olfactory Concept* of the artwork. *Olfactory Perception* is the sensory identification and interpretation of a smell. It can be achieved by creating an *Olfactory Experience*. To perceive such an experience, the smell must be transferred to the spectator. The way in which an odour is transferred in a work largely determines how it is interpreted in relation to the work. The *Olfactory Experience* itself arises through the olfactive experience of the *Intrinsic Odour Values*. While the perception of the odour is usually determined by the interpretation of the *Intentional Odour Values*. In addition, everything is influenced by the existing *Odour Situation*. The *Odour Situation* is the whole within which the odour perception takes place. It is determined by third parties, including the time, location and combination with other elements present. In addition, the title of the work is mostly also important in the meaning of the artwork.

The odour transfer and odour situation determine how a scent gets to the spectator. I call these methods of odour transfer *Olfactory Transfers* and divide them into five categories: *Flowers, Smell Devices, Scent Spaces, Time* and *Translations*. In most cases, the *Olfactory Transfers* are used in crossovers. Combining them creates greater freedom in the creation of an olfactory work of art. Together with the various possibilities of using the *Olfactory Context*, they also demonstrate *the Complexity of Olfactory Art*.

Before I explain the *Olfactory Context and Concept* with their *Intrinsic and Intentional Odour Values* in detail, I will look at what is necessary to speak about Olfactory Art and how we can determine and categorise olfactory works of art. This is done by the *1<sup>st</sup> Olfactory Art Manifest*, which has been exhibited widely<sup>1</sup>. Afterwards follows an explanation of why Olfactory Art can be very complex. This is done by the *2<sup>nd</sup> Olfactory Art Manifest*, in which all the conducted research on this topic has been collected during an intensive seven-year artistic PhD and more than twenty years experience in the creation of olfactory art.

## II. 1<sup>st</sup> Olfactory Art Manifest

On 11 August 1913, Carlo Carrá published *La Pittura dei suoni, rumori, odouri: Manifesto futurista* (The Painting of Sounds, Noises, Smells: Futurist Manifesto) (Carrá). This is one of the first manifests in which a reference is made to, amongst others, smell. However, since then, smell was only used sporadically in visual arts.

<sup>1</sup> Exhibitions (Belle Haleine – The scent of art) (There's Something in the Air) (DUFT, SMELL, OLOR, ... Multiple representations of the olfactory in contemporary art).

Nevertheless, smell as a medium for the work was hardly ever applied. Only few knew how to find their way to this medium. It was only used sporadically. It would take until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century before visual artists consequently used smell in all their works. Even though the number of visual artists who only create works with smell or have used smell in combination with the visual and/or the auditive was rather limited, in the last decades, there has been a visible increase in artists who see smell as an equal medium to paint or other classic media. Smell has become more valued as “part of the work of art” or as “the work of art” itself. There is also a noticeable increase in interest from the scent industry, more specifically, the world of perfumes, which presents its scent creation as a piece of art, either linked or not linked to the arts. Some classic perfumes are even compared to certain *-isms* from art history. Some “noses” do not always see their work in the light of commerce and are rather looking for the perfect scent artwork. Crossovers and cooperation between perfumers and visual artists arise. Artists get to know the world of smell better, and noses see the added value of linking their work of scents to a certain social context.

Smell has never received so much attention in the world of arts as the last couple of years, and we are only at the beginning of this revelation. The most underrated sense throughout (art) history has seldom gotten so much attention in the world of art as in the last decades. Institutions, organisations and several museums display more and more olfactory art. There is a rise in organisations, institutes and museums who specialise in Olfactory Art. Colleges are more open to the integration of smell as an art medium in the education of upcoming young talent. This makes the young artists more open to the integration of smell into their work. They venture into the smell experiment. Just as sound, photography and video have become accepted media, smell is becoming a commonplace of the visual arts. Yet, the integration remains limited for now, and that is why this manifest is written: To bring olfactory art under the attention as a worthy form of art. Thus, we can talk about a new art movement and therefore, with this manifest, olfactory art is added to the *-isms* of art and from this point onwards, we speak of *Olfactism*.

## Olfactism

Olfactism is a term derived from the Latin verb *olfacere* (to smell). This term is also being used in, for example, *synaesthesia*, in which it means a sensation of smell originated by other senses than the olfactory stimuli. In the art movement, we look at this term as an *-ism* rather from the smell as a medium that gives context and/or can be the concept of the work. This does not take away that the way *synaesthesia* looks at the term is interesting. Eventually, it is about a crossover between smelling and the idea of smelling, the senses and the translation of the



observation and/or experience. In general, we speak of Olfactism when we talk about art in which smell is used as a medium and is part of the work or when the smell itself is a piece of art. A visual representation is nevertheless also possible if it concerns smell concepts and/or works of art in which smell is a context or gives a context.

We can divide Olfactism into Olfactionism and Olfactorism.

## Olfactionism

### *Fact & action*

In Olfactionism, we find the words *fact* and *action*, two ideas, which clarify the term. Using a *fact*, one can encourage someone to take *action*, but *action* can also encourage someone to reflect on a *fact* and even to accept it. In this way, smell can let you think about a *fact*. Smell then allows you to take *action* and question the *fact*, either accepting or rejecting it or even letting you react against it or contend for it. But smell can also be the *fact*, the result, observation or experience of a specific *action*. Smell, hereby, gives context to the work. Smell can also be *action* when it makes you reflect, conclude or experience. In other words, smell is *fact* and *action* but does not necessarily need to be the two together and does not even have to be one or the other to go into *action* or to determine a *fact*. The word *fact* can also be found in Olfactorism, but then we start mainly from the smell as a *factor* and scent as an *actor*.

### *Fact*

- A *fact* is an event, data or a situation in which the reality is fixed.
- A *fact* can be observed either sensory and/or instrumentally measured. The observation itself can be subjective and dependent on personal circumstances and interpretations.
- A *fact* determines the observation, but the observation can also influence a *fact*.
- *Facts* are at the base of knowledge.
- *Facts* can be organised by the mind to a specific insight.
- *Facts* are in close relation to the term *truth*.
- A *fact* is usually generally accepted.

From the above, one can deduct that a *fact* can give context or can be context. The use of *facts* can also be a concept or can support a concept. *Facts* can stimulate thoughts, reflection, observation and can sometimes also provoke *action* and reaction.

## Action

In the word Olfactionism, we can see the word *action*, and this is exactly what smell wants to accomplish here. To encourage the spectator to take *action* and also cause a reaction. A work of art with smell or smell as a work of art serves to encourage the onlooker to think and should not merely be seen as decoration of the work unless the shape of this decoration also contributes to the contents of the work. In other words, smell needs to contribute to the context of the work. Smell can be the context carrier, but also the context giver in relation to the other elements of the work of art, being, for example, the visual and/or the auditive, the tactile or the gustative. One could say that smell needs to have an associative impact.

In Olfactionism, smell can also have a normal supportive function, but only when this function is an element that cannot be missed in the work of art to see the correct context of the work. If the smell is omitted, the work will lose the attention for its context, and the *action* would be different or completely lost.

- An *action* is an intent and usually has a purpose.
- An *action* can either be physical, mental or instrumental.
- An *action* is an activity.
- An *action* is observable by at least one sense unless the *action* is the consequence of an arising thought pattern and is only played out in the memory. In other words, *action* is then thinking or recalling a memory.
- An *action* usually has a reaction and/or can also make someone think and reflect about a reaction but is therefore not necessarily the cause or the consequence of a reaction. An *action* can give a *fact* another insight, which causes a reaction.

In general, the term Olfactionism will be mainly used for works of art in which the smell itself gives context or the smell in combination with the visual and/or the auditive, tactile or gustative has a context. Smell can also be used as a concept of the work to come to a context in relation to other senses. The title of the work can also give another context to the smell, or smell can do this to the title. For example, the title can be unintelligible at first, but in relation to the smell and/or other elements of the work, if these are present, it gets a new reading content by which the whole gets a specific or another context.

## Olfactorism

One speaks about Olfactorism when smell is only the *actor* or *factor* of the work. The term Olfactorism is mainly used in works of art that consist solely of smell or smell only in combination with colours, shapes, compositions, contrasts, light or darkness. The smell *factor* of the work itself is central. The context can be found in the composition of the smell and what it evokes or what it lets us experience. Under Olfactorism, we can mainly find composed smells, including perfumes. Central is the smell and the experience of the smell, but also the composition can be counted as Olfactorism. One could compare Olfactorism with the search for the right composition, in the same way as there are movements in the visual arts in which the composition of the work prevails.

- Composition of smells, composed smells and/or simple smells
- Use of natural, nature identical and/or synthetic smells in a specific composition to come to a new smell
- Mixed smells
- Use of new smell molecules
- Throughout the time mixed smells, amongst others a smell concert
- Through physical displacement, mix the smells in a room

To Olfactorism also belongs the smelling of scent analyses or the remodelling of smells from specific locations, bodies, animals, objects and plants to make the spectator olfactory conscious of its environment, identity and/or situation. Also, the registration of smells and capturing these on a map with the intention to make the spectator olfactory conscious of one's environment is part of Olfactorism. In other words, the creation of smell consciousness of the state in which the spectator finds oneself by the use of nothing but odours also belongs to Olfactorism. When the creation of smell consciousness of a state does not only happen through odours but also through another means or device which is not a smell, this is part of Olfactionism, same as the encouragement to smelling through smell devices which is also part of Olfactionism.

The creation of memories of smell, only through odour, belongs to Olfactorism. The remake of smell memories through an odour can recall and give a context to a specific location, situation or happening. The use of smells in architecture, and thus the contribution to a form of life or living, can also be part of Olfactorism when this does not have a commercial, entertainment and/or medical function. Smell can, therefore, also support the tactile of building materials or even through smell of the chosen building materials give an added value and contribute to the experiencing of the building. The smell in relation to the building is subjective, but the combination can recall a cognitive thing and/or feeling. Smell in combination with the tactile, music or sound can also be part of Olfactorism when this combination gives an artistic experience or

lesson without relapsing into amusement, medical or commercial outbursts. When the combination is the onset to discourse, we will rather speak of Olfactionism.

Concretely, one could say that the Olfactorism is the *architecture of smell*, which gives artistic values, which is more than only the composed.

### ***Olfactionism or Olfactorism?***

To prevent confusion between both, the term Olfactism can be chosen as a general description. The subdivision will only be necessary once we want to make a difference between Olfactory works of art. To classify the use of smells which does not belong to Olfactism and its two subdivisions Olfactionism and Olfactorism, we use the term Olfactourism. In this -ism, the word "Tourism" is concealed. It is a clear reference to the non-art form, with an underlying reference to the crafty, illustrative, potentially medical (e.g., aromatherapy) and entertaining.

### **Olfactourism**

Amongst others, the following uses of smell belong to Olfactourism unless they contribute to the work of art in which the context is created or unless this is used in an art installation. But then the whole work or installation is considered a work of art and not the part of the smell separately.

- Illustrative smells in support of an image/cartoon
- Smell commercials
- Functional odourants
- Atmosphere odours
- Aromatherapy
- Traditional techniques for the creation of odours, see distillation, enfleurage, ...
- Smell workshops, perfume workshops
- Smell/scent-DJ (use of smell in festivals, performances, parties, discotheques, ....)
- Odour atomisation in a non-artistic film, video, documentary
- Use of scent technologies for the amusement of the spectator
- Scratch & Sniff for commercial purposes, movies (except art movies) and publications (except signed and numbered art editions)
- Scented animation
- Smell communication

- Perfumes that do not fulfil the criteria of Olfactorism
- Hobby perfume makers
- ...

## Summary of Olfactory Artforms

Art is free, and a summary of different possibilities to create olfactory art should not be a limitation. Therefore, this list is not complete and can be freely completed. Important is that smell is an essential part of the work and that together it qualifies as Olfactism.

- Olfactory installations / scent sculptures
- Scent paintings/drawings
- Scent rooms/ architecture
- Smell devices that do not have a commercial function but do have as a purpose to make the spectator olfactory conscious or to give a specific context in which is referenced to the smell or as a device are used to support the smelling.
- Perfumes
- Smell performances can also be called Perfumances when the medium smell is used.
- Smell videos and smell movies
- The nose (in which the function of the smelling is enforced and not purely as a visual part of the human being or animal)
- Smell maps of cities for which the focus is in the creation of smell consciousness of a situation.
- Smell dancing/theatre
- Digital scent technology artworks
- ...

## Smell!

Appetizing, beautiful, pleasant, wonderful, super, musty and reeking!

In Olfactism, the smell itself is determinative, or as a “part” is determinative for the work. The smell can be *everything*. There are no limitations if the smell contributes to the work or is the work itself. Therefore, not only single odourants are possible, but also composed smells such as perfumes or a mix of smells which is created throughout time as is the case with scent concerts and smell-DJ settings when these do not

empower amusement, commerce or the medicinal. The amusement, commerce and medicinal as smell output can be a part of the work to reach a particular context so that it belongs to Olfactism, but not when it is only used in its function without added value or without giving purpose to others.

Odours can smell good but can also be foul and reeking if the choice of smell is consistent with the idea of the artistic work and contributes to its meaning, reading direction and/or experience of the work.

Smell is freedom.

### III. 2<sup>nd</sup> Olfactory Art Manifest

#### The Olfactory Context and Olfactory Concept

In the *1<sup>st</sup> Olfactory Art Manifest*, the term Olfactism was introduced due to the need for segmentation and description of Olfactory Art. Olfactory art was thus divided into three parts. Olfactionism and Olfactorism are art-related, while Olfactourism was used as a description for non-art-related olfactory practices. Olfactourism is omitted here, as it can be considered a possible subordinate of the other two Olfactisms. Olfactourism can only contribute to the work of art through its technical know-how, its knowledge of the transmission of smells, its experience of relaxation and entertainment, its functionality as a fragrance product and its scientific input and output. Olfactionism mainly incites an action where the use of smell as a concept is related to the context of the work. Context is here understood as a certain situation, data, information, background and/or event from which it derives its meaning. Olfactorism mainly triggers the experience of smell as a concept of the work of art. The context of the work lies in the experience itself and in consideration of smell *an sich*. To use scent as part of the work of art, in both Olfactionism and Olfactorism, we need to consider the right concept that can be used to apply smell. Since odours/olfaction are used with a certain meaning, the context of the odours/olfaction will contribute to the meaning of the work of art. To be able to speak of olfactory art, there must be the intention to use odours/olfaction as context and concept. We will therefore speak of the terms Olfactory Context and Olfactory Concept. The use of an Olfactory Context is already a concept of the work and is therefore always part of the Olfactory Concept of the work. We, therefore, state that the use of an Olfactory Context is a minimum requirement to be able to speak of an Olfactory Concept.

## Olfactory Context

The Olfactory Context is divided into *Intrinsic* and *Intentional Odour Values*.

The intrinsic odour value carries the meaning, whereas the intentional odour value gives an extra meaning to an odour.

### Intrinsic Odour Value as Context Carrier

The Intrinsic odour values can be divided according to their contributing meaning. These all have to do with the smell itself as the carrier of a certain meaning. These are:

- The smell matter itself
- The origin of the smell
- The existing link with the origin
- The olfactory situation in which the smell is found

However, the odour/the sense of smell can provoke a certain reaction of which the spectator has no control or does not even know that it unconsciously influences him. These reactions are not consciously translated into their meaning but lead to an unconscious reaction/behaviour. In other words, they also carry a meaning, which they transmit to the spectator. Following, we found:

- Psychological reactions to a smell as reactions to an emotional event. In addition, there are the medicinal or physical odour properties of a plant that can trigger a psychological reaction.
- Physical reactions to an odour which can be classified according to their function being warning, emotion, pleasure, libido and genetically influenced reactions.

The intrinsic odour values always have in themselves a certain factor and goal, namely respectively the odour, the olfaction and the physical reaction. With the Intrinsic odour value, the context always lies in the odour itself. In other words, the odour carries the context of the work, and therefore we also see it as a Context Carrier. If they are only used as an olfactory experience as a Context Carrier of the work, they will mainly be classified under Olfactorism.

## Intentional Odour Value as Context Giver

The Intentional Odour Value refers to the use of the assigned value to an odour. The purpose of this odour value is to give meaning and to stimulate interpretation. Their values arise from experiences, sensory perceptions that are linked to a personal experience or to a common cultural experience. We then speak of:

- Personal (Individual) odour interpretation: including individual odour memories and previously personally acquired experiences and interpretations of odours.
- Social-cultural odour interpretation: including social, cultural, historical, religious, and socially experienced odour interpretations. Including the linguistic descriptions of odours according to cultural origin.

The personal and social-cultural odour interpretations are determined by:

- Symbolic meaning: e.g., taking the origin of a smell as a symbol for the intention of the work.
- Odour value determination: consisting of a positive or negative odour value determination.
- Meaning according to the intrinsic odour value: the intrinsic odour values cannot only be used as carriers of meaning but also as givers of meaning.

The intentional odour value is used to give meaning to the intentional context of the work and thus to stimulate the interpretation of the work. We, therefore, see it as a **Context Giver**. Since the odour value has the intention to incite an interpretation that reaches further than their own intrinsic values, they usually belong to Olfactionism. When there is the intention to use the intrinsic odour value as a reason for giving meaning and interpretation, we will speak of smell as **Context Carrier** and **Context Giver**.

## Olfactory Concept

In addition to the olfactory context, the perception of smell is part of the Olfactory Concept of the work of art. Olfactory perception is the sensory determination and interpretation of a smell. The way this is done is by creating an olfactory experience. To perceive it, the smell must be transferred to the viewer. The way the smell is transferred also determines how the smell is interpreted in relation to the work. The experience of smell itself arises through the olfactory awareness of the Intrinsic Odour Values. While the perception of the odour is mostly determined by the interpretation of the Intentional Odour Values. Besides this, all are influenced by the present odour



situation. The odour situation is the whole within which the perception of odours takes place. It is determined by third parties, including time, location and combination with other present elements. In addition, the title of the work of art is of primordial importance in the interpretation of the work of art. The transmission of smells determines how a scent reaches the viewer. It can be expressed in the following ways:

- Directly from the smell source
- Via an aide-device to better perceive the odour
- Through the already present odour/air in the space
- Through a time dimension
- Through translation by another sense, intellectual translation and/or perceptible residual reference of the smell.

We call these methods of odour transfer **Olfactory Transfers**.

## Olfactory Transfers

To smell, one must inhale.

The spectator inhales a smell either actively or passively. Actively when the spectator must decide for himself whether he wants to perceive the smell. Passively when the spectator does not have to take any special action to perceive the smell. The work itself can give off an odour, or the spectator must (seek) out the smell of the work himself. In the latter case, the spectator must actively search for the odour(s), as the smells are not automatically provided. Because of its volatile nature, smell can also change and/or disappear in the course of time, but it can also be translated symbolically by another sense. All these forms can be seen as Olfactory Transfers. We classify them according to their characteristics in the field of smell concept, odour source, smell detection, how the spectator perceives it and based on the experience. We categorise these in the following way:

- Flowers: the scent comes from an object, shape, work of art
- Smell Devices: tools to discover the smell
- Scent Spaces: the smell is already present in the space
- Time: volatility and/or changeability of an odour
- Translations: the reference to smell via another sense organ

## Characteristics of olfactory transfers

	FLOWERS	SCENT SPACES	SMELL DEVICES	TIME	TRANSLATIONS
SMELL CONCEPT	Odour releasing	Odour containing	Odourless tool	Time Smell changeable	Residual odourless
ODOUR SOURCE	The object or work itself is emitting odour Periphery	Present in the room	Not the work itself	Flowers and/or scent spaces and/or smell devices	Imaginary and/or residual reference, symbolic and/or olfactory conceptual reference
SMELL DETECTION	Targeted Controllable	Continuous	Smelling via a tool as an action  Controllable	Continuous and/or alternating and/or sporadic	Translated via another sense
SPECTATOR	Passively involved or active with a passive detection  Determining and discovering	Passively involved  Experiencing Undergoing	Actively involved  Self-discovering	Actively involved and/or passively involved	Physically passively involved and/or mentally actively involved
EXPERIENCE	Object oriented	Spatially oriented	Target discovering	Object and/or spatial and/or exploratory	Mentally Via another sense
Cross-overs					

## Crossovers of the Olfactory Transfers

The Olfactory Transfers can be used in crossovers. By combining them, greater freedom is created in the creation of an Olfactory Artwork. Together with the various possibilities of using the Olfactory Context, they also demonstrate **the Complexity of Olfactory Art**.

## Literature

*Belle Haleine – The scent of art*. Tinguely Museum, 2015.

Carrá, Carlo. *La Pittura dei suoni, rumori, odouri: Manifesto futurista*. 11 August 1913. Manifesto.

Cytowic, Richard E. *Synesthesia. A Union of the Senses*. Second edition. MIT Press, 2002.

de Cupere, Peter, et al. *Peter de Cupere, Olfactory Art, Scent in Context*. Stockmans Publisher, 2016.

— . *1<sup>st</sup> Olfactory Art Manifest*. 11 August 2014. <[www.olfactoryartmanifest.com](http://www.olfactoryartmanifest.com)>. Accessed on 1 September 2021.

*DUFT, SMELL, OLOR, ... Multiple representations of the olfactory in contemporary art*. Weserburg Museum für Moderne Kunst - Centre for Artists' Publications, 2021.

"Olfactism." *Medical Dictionary, en-academic.com*, 2011, <<https://medicine.en-academic.com/146426/olfactism>>. Accessed on 1 September 2021.

Stoddart, W. H. B. *Mind and its Disorders*. Fifth edition. H. K. Lewis & Co., 1926.

*There's Something in the Air*. Museum Villa Rot, 2015.

Voh je močno čutilo, ki ponuja številne možnosti. Olfaktorna umetnost uporablja vonj kot kontekst in koncept umetniškega dela.

Olfaktorski kontekst lahko razdelimo na imanentne in intencionalne vrednosti vonja. Imanentna vrednost prinaša svoj pomen, medtem ko namerna vrednost daje vonju dodaten pomen. Poleg tega je vonjalna zaznava del vonjalnega koncepta umetniškega dela. Da bi ga zaznali, ga je treba prenesti na gledalca. Način prenosa vonja v delu v veliki meri določa, kako se vonj interpretira v povezavi z delom. Te načine prenosa delimo v pet kategorij: *cvetje, naprave za vonj, prostori vonja, čas in prevodi*. V večini primerov se vonjalni prenosi uporabljajo pri mešanih žanrih. Skupaj z različnimi možnostmi uporabe olfaktornega konteksta kažejo tudi na kompleksnost olfaktorne umetnosti.

V 1. manifestu olfaktorne umetnosti so pojasnjene razlike v olfaktorni umetnosti, 2. manifest pa prikazuje kompleksnost olfaktorne umetnosti.

---

**Ključne besede:** vonjalni kontekst, vonjalni koncept, vrednosti vonja, vonjalno zaznavanje, prenos vonja, olfaktorni umetniški manifest

---

Umetnik **Peter de Cupere** je v 20 letih ustvaril več kot 700 del, povezanih z vonjalnim zaznavanjem družbenih, kulturnih in okoljskih kontekstov. Njegova dela so bila predstavljena na več kot 200 razstavah. Poučuje olfaktorno umetnost v odprtem laboratoriju na umetniški šoli PXL-MAD v Hasseltu (Belgija), kjer v raziskovalni skupini Manufacture raziskuje uporabo vonja v umetnosti. V svojem doktoratu (UHasselt, PXL MAD, VUB) je raziskoval uporabo vonja kot konteksta in koncepta. Leta 2018 je prejel nagrado Art and Olfaction Award za življenjski prispevek k promociji uporabe vonja v umetnosti (London, 2018). [www.peterdecupere.art](http://www.peterdecupere.art)

Peter.deCupere@pxl.be

Članek podaja pregled uprizoritev na slovenskih odrih, v katerih so bile uporabljene vonjave kot sredstvo za stimuliranje gledalčevih čutil in vzbujanje transformacijskih učinkov. S tega vidika gledališka kultura na Slovenskem še ni bila raziskana. Avtorica pokaže, da so bile vonjave sredstvo za senzorične zaznave predvsem v eksperimentalnih gledaliških praksah že od sedemdesetih let 20. stoletja (kot enega prvih primerov izpostavi uprizoritev v režiji Tomaža Kralja *Cimetova vrata ladje norcev in druge spremenbe* v Eksperimentalnem gledališču Glej leta 1975). Zanimanje za olfaktorne raziskave se je med gledališčniki okrepilo v devetdesetih letih 20. stoletja. Vonj je bil uporabljen kot element za uresničevanje estetike realnega v postdramskem gledališču in za vzbujanje potopitvenega učinka pri gledalcih. To vlogo imajo vonjave tudi v gledališču 21. stoletja. Poetiko vonjev je začela načrtno in kontinuirano razvijati Barbara Pia Jenič v gledališču Sensorium, ki ga je leta 2001 ustanovila skupaj z Gabrielom Hernándezom. Pri ustvarjanju senzorialnih dogodkov še danes izhaja iz metodologije Enríqueja Vargasa, s katero se je kot igralka in oblikovalka vonjev seznanila v njegovi skupini Teatro de los Sentidos, v gledališču Sensorium pa jo je avtorsko nadgrajevala. Kot oblikovalka vonjev je sodelovala tudi z drugimi slovenskimi gledališči, med drugim pri operatoriju Milka Lazarja *Deseta hči* (po libretu Svetlane Makarovič in v režiji Rocca) v Slovenskem narodnem gledališču Opera in balet Ljubljana leta 2015.

---

**Ključne besede:** vonj, senzorialni gledališki dogodek, uprizoritvene umetnosti, Slovenija, eksperimentalno gledališče, postdramsko gledališče, gledališče Sensorium

---

**Barbara Orel** je profesorica za področje dramaturgije in študijev scenskih umetnosti ter vodja raziskovalne skupine na UL AGRFT. Osrednja področja njenih raziskav so eksperimentalne gledališke prakse, avantgardna gibanja in sodobne scenske umetnosti. Napisala je knjigo *Igra v igri* (2003) in uredila več znanstvenih monografij, nazadnje *Uprizoritvene umetnosti, migracije, politika: slovensko gledališče kot sooblikovalec medkulturnih izmenjav* (2017). Sodelovala je v številnih mednarodnih raziskovalnih projektih in v delovni skupini Theatrical Event (v okviru International Federation for Theatre Research). Predavala je tudi na univerzah v tujini, med njimi na University of Warwick in University of Tartu.

barbara.orel@agrft.uni-lj.si

# Svet vonjav v slovenskih uprizoritvenih umetnostih<sup>1</sup>

---

Barbara Orel

Univerza v Ljubljani, Akademija za gledališče, radio, film in televizijo

---

## Vonj kot sredstvo za senzorične raziskave

V tem prispevku se bomo posvetili tistim dogodkom v slovenskih uprizoritvenih umetnostih, ki so uporabili vonjave kot sredstvo za stimuliranje gledalčevih čutil in vzbujanje transformacijskih učinkov pri vseh udeleženi, nastopajočih in gledalcih. Tovrstne dogodke gre iskati zlasti med eksperimentalnimi gledališkimi praksami, ki so rušile četrto steno in stavile na celostno zaznavo gledalcev z vsemi petimi čuti: vid, sluh, otip, okus in voh. Osredotočili se bomo na tiste, ki prvenstveno nagovarjajo voh gledalcev. Namen prispevka je podati pregled tovrstnih dogodkov skozi čas, proučiti njihovo vlogo pri razvijanju novih uprizoritvenih jezikov in nagovorov občinstva ter opredeliti njihov pomen v zgodovini slovenskega gledališča in naši sodobnosti.

Kot ugotavlja Erika Fischer-Lichte, gledališče že od naturalizma zavestno uporablja vonje z namenom, da soustvarijo kar najprepričljivejšo atmosfero dogodka (192) – tega, kar se v prostoru preliva med stvarjo in subjektom in kar gledalec med prisostvovanjem dogodku telesno začuti. Vonj je namreč »ena najmočnejših učinkovalnih komponent atmosfere« (194). Zato je toliko bolj presenetljivo, kako malo pozornosti je bilo pri ustvarjanju in tudi raziskovanju gledališča namenjene vonjavam. Pravzaprav so vonjave (kot so vonji šminke, pudra, parfuma, potu igralcev pa tudi gledalcev) vedno nehoten spremljevalni fenomen gledaliških dogodkov; gledališki prostori so vedno prežeti z njimi (192). Lahko pa so vonjave zavestno in načrtno uporabljene v samem procesu uprizarjanja. Vzrok je predvsem v tem, kot ugotavlja Fischer-Lichte, »da lahko prostori, objekti ali pa ljudje s svojim vonjem vdrejo naravnost v telo vonjajočega subjekta« (prav tam). Veliko znanja, spretnosti in izkušenj je potrebnih za uporabo vonja na gledaliških odrih. Vonj se namreč izmika nadzoru. V trenutku, ko se razširi po prostoru, ga ni več mogoče nadzirati. Svetloba in zvok, na primer, lahko v trenutku spremenita atmosfero dogajanja. Vonj je v primerjavi z drugimi sredstvi uprizarjanja tako rekoč neukrotljiv. Zato je morda najmočnejše in najgloblje sredstvo za vzpostavljanje atmosfere.

---

<sup>1</sup> Članek je nastal v okviru raziskovalnega programa Gledališke in medumetništne raziskave (P6-0376), ki ga sofinancira Javna agencija za raziskovalno dejavnost Republike Slovenije iz državnega proračuna.

Natančneje povedano, vonje uporabljajo kot sredstvo za doseganje učinka pristnosti in avtentičnosti atmosfere. To je osrednje načelo pri vseh tistih oblikah uprizarjanja oziroma uprizoritvenih zvrsteh, ki jih je vodila strast do realnega, kot bi dejal Alain Badiou. Po naturalističnem gledališču (na prehodu iz 19. v 20. stoletje) so težnje po avtentičnosti postale znova aktualne v performansu v šestdesetih letih 20. stoletja, prav tako v ritualnih oblikah gledališča, gledališču skupnosti in paragledaliških praksah na pregibu umetnosti in vsakdanjega življenja.

## Raba vonja na slovenskih odrih

Enega prvih primerov načrtne uporabe vonjav v slovenskem gledališču zasledimo v uprizoritvi *Cimetova vrata ladje norcev in druge spremembe* Tomaža Kralja in prijateljev<sup>2</sup> (skupina je z uprizoritvijo gostovala leta 1975 v Eksperimentalnem gledališču Glej). Dogodek prikazuje »nekatero elementarne harmonizirajoče lastnosti veselja«, kot se izrazi Tomaž Kralj (16) in izpostavi, da konceptualno izhaja iz antičnega kitajskega besedila *Knjiga sprememb (Yi jing)*.<sup>3</sup> Naslov uprizoritve pojasni takole: »CIMETOVA VRATA pomenijo v človeški zavesti še ne realizirano instanco in smer k tej instanci«, »LADJA NORCEV pomeni vesoljsko ladjo planet Zemlje in njeno gibanje«, »SPREMEMBE: sprememba implicira čas« (prav tam).<sup>4</sup> K sprožitvi sprememb je med drugim pomagalo tudi omamno vzdušje ob potresanju cimeta. Koncept uprizoritve je Tomaž Kralj objavil in tudi v shemah prikazal v reviji Tribuna:

Osnovna mreža se kot e n t r o p i j a napolnjuje z materialom, ki je funkcionalno objektiviziran (Meyerhold, Brecht) in variabilen. Tako je predstava medialen zasuk od večšine k ready-made akcijam, ki jih plasira upočasnjeno in analitično ter jih v takem kontekstu prekinja (stop motion). Od ekspresivnosti se obrača k objektivnemu. Material vključuje ljudi, rekvizite, 2D kinematične informacije, s pre-tapea reproducirane zvočne informacije in glasbeno skupino, ki producira zvoke v realnem času in korespondira s časovnim zaostankom reprodukcije svojega lastnega zvoka (play-back v realnem času). Noben kanal informacije nima večje konceptualne vrednosti in obsežnejšega pomena kot katerikoli drugi kanal informacije. (16)

Kritičarka Rapa Šuklje je dogodek imenovala spiritualistična seansa, »ki se izmika merilom in besednjaku gledališke kritike« in »s katerim gledalec srednjih let ne občuti

2 Tako je bila zasedba uprizoritve imenovana v navaji dogodka v časopisu Delo (20. februarja 1975). Nastopili so: Slobodan Valentinčič, Maruška Krese - Šalamun, Olga Kacjan, Maja Boh, Nomenklature, Tomaž Kralj. Kot »čarovnica z lučmi« je naveden Chris Johnson, kot »glasbeni navigator« pa Tomaž Pengov. Skupina glasbenikov je natančneje navedena v reviji Tribuna, in sicer: Tomaž Pengov – kitara, lutnja, kontrabas, piščali; Tomo Pirc – piščali, tolkala; Bogdana Herman – glas; Jerko Novak – kitara, Aco Razbornik – mešalec tona. Posnetek je arhiviran v diskoteki Radia Študent.

3 V prevodu Maje Milčinski: *Yijing – Knjiga premen* (Mladinska knjiga, knjižnica Kondor, Ljubljana, 2011).

4 »Shema CIMETOVIVH VRAT obsega 6 unij, ki jih je diktirala Knjiga sprememb kot 6 linij heksagrama CH•IEN / kreativni. Podoba: GIBANJE NEBA JE POLNO MOČI. TAKO JE PLEMENITI MOČAN IN NEUTRUDEN. Vsaka unija ima svojo metaforično karakteristiko« (Kralj 16). Tomaž Kralj v nadaljevanju razdela značilnosti posameznih unij in razmerja med njimi.

želje vzpostaviti dialog (vsaj ne na tej ravni)«, kot je odkrito zapisala (»Izredno puščobne norčije«). Kljub zadržanosti do uprizoritve je stvarno predstavila dogajanje. Potekalo je brez besed, poleg »zazibalne glasbe in svetlobnih efektov ter bolj ali manj improviziranih gibov« pa ga je bogatila še »uporaba nekaterih preprostih predmetov – skodel in skodelic, očal, orjaškega kajfeža, polivinilskih in papirnatih vrečic, sveč – ki so, iztrgani iz vsakdanjega konteksta, dosegli primeren učinek; zasanjano premikajoče se prižgane sveče so celo ustvarile trenutek prepotrebne magije. K omamljenosti naj bi dodale tri vrečice cimeta in obilica po odru razsutega belega prahu« (prav tam). Cimet so v nabito polni dvorani začeli sipati ob četrtna deset, spremembe pa so se končale ob pol enajstih.

Vonjave so bržkone soustvarjale atmosfero tudi v drugih eksperimentalnih oblikah uprizorjanja tistega časa, najbrž že pred performansom Tomaža Kralja. Na primer v ritualnih oblikah gledališča, kot so bila t. i. srečanja v zamisli Vlada Šava. Gotovo so vonjave opravile svoje že v predstavi *Pupilija, papa Pupilo pa Pupilčki* leta 1969 (vonj krvi v ritualnem zakolu kokoši na odru, vonj dišav v prizoru kopanja v kadi). Vendar si njihov delež pri oblikovanju estetske podobe gledaliških dogodkov lahko le predstavljamo. Vonjave so izhajale iz izvedenih dejanj (na primer obrednega pitja čaja, prižiganja sveč, uporabe kadila in drugih pripomočkov pri izvedbah obredij). Kritiški in drugi zapisi o tovrstnih dogodkih vonjav posebej ne omenjajo. Opozoriti velja, da je kritika Rape Šuklje eno najstarejših pričevanj o estetiki uporabe vonja na slovenskih odrih.

Pogostejšo rabo vonjav na gledaliških odrih zasledimo v devetdesetih letih, in sicer v postdramskih uprizoritvah, ki so uveljavljale estetiko realnega. Kot ugotavlja Hans-Thies Lehmann, je postdramsko gledališče načrtno prebijalo četrto steno z elementi realnega. V iskanju novih izraznih možnosti pristnega in avtentičnega v globaliziranem in mediatiziranem svetu so režiserji, predvsem predstavniki mlajše in srednje generacije, poskušali doseči učinke realnega tudi s pomočjo vonjav (in ne le z načinom igre, režije in rabe drugih scenskih elementov). Tako na primer:

- Vito Taufer je v uprizoritvi *Odisej in sin ali Svet in dom* na oder Slovenskega mladinskega gledališča leta 1990 privedel ovna in kokoši;
- Emil Hrvatin je v *Banketu* leta 1997 priredil gostijo za gledalce, ki so ob hrani uživali prizore skupaj z igralci;
- v solzodajalski akciji *Camillo – Memo* je od gledalcev izvabljal spomine in solze s pomočjo čebule in njenega ostrega vonja;
- Tijana Zinajić je v uprizoritvi *Svinčnik piše s srcem* leta 1999 v Slovenskem mladinskem gledališču ustvarila učinke realnega s pripravo hrane, ki so jo igralci pripravljali v živo pred gledalci;
- prav tako Matjaž Pograjc v uprizoritvi *Ljubezen na smrt* (2007), ki jo je zasnoval kot večerjo, v kateri so igralci hkrati postali kuharji;



- Borut Bučinel je v *Parfumu* (po znamenitem romanu Patricka Süskinda) leta 2009 v Cankarjevem domu s prijetnimi, pa tudi skrajno neprijetnimi in zaudarjajočimi vonji stimuliral nezavedne asociacije v gledalcih.

Vonj je v funkciji vdora realnega pogosto nastopal v uprizoritvah v režiji Tomija Janežiča: *Ojdip* (1998), *Nahod Simeon* (2006), *Romeo in publika* (2008), *Opera za tri groše* (2014), *Smrt Ivana Iljiča* (2015).

V vseh navedenih uprizoritvah so vonjave – nehote ali namerno – spremljale dejanja na odru. Poetiko vonjev pa je v devetdesetih začela načrtno in kontinuirano razvijati Barbara Pia Jenič v gledališču Sensorium.

## Gledališče Sensorium

Barbara Pia Jenič je ustanovila Sensorium leta 2001 skupaj z Gabrielom Hernándezom z namenom ustvarjati senzorialne dogodke (Jenič 8). Pri tem se opira na metode Enriqueja Vargasa, s katerimi se je seznanila med letoma 1996 in 2004, ko je z njegovo skupino Teatro de los Sentidos sodelovala kot igralka in oblikovalka vonjev. Z oblikovanjem vonjev se je prvič srečala leta 1999, ko je Teatro de los Sentidos gostoval v Zürichu. Takrat je oblikovalka vonjev Antonella Cirigliano zapustila skupino in z Vargasom sta se odločila, da njeno delo nadaljuje Barbara Pia Jenič. Tako je od leta 1999 pa do leta 2004 pri vsaki predstavi oblikovala vonje za približno 30 prizorov in 20 igralcev (saj je vsak nastopajoči lik moral imeti svoj vonj). Vonje je oblikovala za predstave *Oraculos*,<sup>5</sup> *La memoria del vino* in *Hilo de Ariadna*. Barbara Pia izpostavlja: »Za vsako uprizoritev posebej sem pripravila raziskavo in koncept z razlagami, kako vonji vplivajo na publiko in na poetiko posamičnih prizorov. Nekaj odločitev sem podedovala od Ciriglianove, vendar sem pri oblikovanju vonjev hitro ubrala svojo pot« (80).

Po njenem mnenju je poetika vonjev takšna uporaba vonjev, »ki ne izvira le neposredno iz akcije na odru (uporaba hrane, verskih pripomočkov, naravni vonji prostora); je tista, ki odpira nove imaginarne prostore v prizorih s pomočjo čutne sinestezije« (80). Vonji namreč »predstavljajo pomemben most med zavestjo in nezavednim ter med spominom in domišljijo« (Krkoč Lasič, »Vonj kot simfonija prizorov«), Ustvarijo atmosfero, ki jo zaznamo na intuitivni ravni, onkraj razuma, kar neposredno vpliva na naše videnje in dožemanje prizorov (Sedej, »Vonj je atomska bomba«).

Poetiko vonjev je Barbara Pia Jenič nadalje razvijala v produkcijah gledališča Sensorium, poudarjeno v senzorialnih dogodkih, kot so bili *Parcival in vitezi okrog*

<sup>5</sup> Predstavo *Oraculos (Preročišča)* je režiser Enrique Vargas leta 1996 zasnoval za festival Exodos. Premierno je bila uprizorjena v Stari elektrarni v Ljubljani.

mize (1998), *Sprehajalec grehov* (2002), *Mesto tišine* (2003), *Biti ali imeti* (2004), *Odstiranje* (2006), *Mala tovarna upanja* (2013), *Povodni mož* (2013), *Vonjave Emone* (2014), *Senzorialne zvočne pokrajine* (2014), *Merlin* (2015), pa tudi v gledaliških predstavah, ki niso senzorialne (med njimi uprizoritev poezije Gregorja Strniše *Cro-Magnon* – 2013, uprizoritev poezije Daneta Zajca *Gotska okna* – 2014, uprizoritev za otroke *Merlin* – 2015). Kot oblikovalka vonjev je sodelovala tudi pri uprizoritvah drugih gledališč. Najzanimivejše je nemara sodelovanje s Slovenskim narodnim gledališčem Opera in balet Ljubljana leta 2015, kjer je zasnovala vonje v operatoriju Milka Lazarja *Deseta hči* (po libretu Svetlane Makarovič in v režiji Rocca). To posebnost predstave so pohvalili tudi kritiki.

## Sklep

Seznam uprizoritev, ki so uporabile vonjave kot sredstvo za stimuliranje gledalčevih čutil na slovenskih odrih, gotovo ni popoln. Njihov pregled pa vendarle pokaže, da so bile vonjave sredstvo za senzorične zaznave vsaj že v sedemdesetih letih 20. stoletja. Zanimanje za olfaktorne zaznave se je med gledališčniki okrepilo v devetdesetih letih 20. stoletja, kot element za uspešno uresničevanje estetike realnega v postdramskem gledališču in za vzbujanja potopitvenega učinka pri gledalcih. To vlogo opravljajo vonjave tudi v gledališču 21. stoletja. Pričakovati je mogoče, da bo v mediatizirani družbi in kulturi, v kateri dogodki v živo pridobivajo posebno vrednost, uporaba vonjev na gledaliških odrih narasla.

- Fischer-Lichte, Erika. *Estetika performativnega*. Prev. Jaša Drnovšek, Študentska založba, 2008. (Knjižna zbirka Koda.)
- Jenič, Barbara Pia. *Senzorialni gledališki jezik v gledališču Sensorium*. Magistrsko delo, Univerza v Ljubljani, Akademija za gledališče, radio, film in televizijo, 2015.
- Kralj, Tomaž. »Dve predstavi.« *Tribuna*, 5. junij 1975, str. 16.
- Krkoč Lasič, Sandra. »Vonj kot simfonija prizorov.« *Dnevnik*, 24. junij 2013.
- Sedej, Ksenija. »Vonj je atomska bomba med čuti: intervju z Barbaro Pio Jenič.« *Jana*, 13. maj 2017.
- Lehmann, Hans-Thies. *Postdramsko gledališče*. Prev. Krištof Jacek Kozak, Maska, 2003.
- Šuklje, Rapa. »Izredno puščobne norčije. Ob potresanju cimeta in drugih dogodkih v gledališču Glej.« *Delo*, 4. februar 1975.



The article provides an overview of performances on Slovenian stages that have used odour to stimulate the audience's senses and arouse transformational effects. Representing the first research of this kind into Slovenian culture, the author demonstrates that odour was used as a means of sensory perception, especially in experimental theatre practices since the 1970s. One of the first such works was *Cimetova vrata ladje norceve in druge spremembe* (The Cinnamon Door of the Ship of Fools and Other Changes), a performance art piece directed by Tomaž Kralj at Glej Theatre in 1975. In the 1990s, the interest in olfactory perceptions grew among theatre-makers who successfully used odour to implement the aesthetics of the real in post-dramatic theatre and achieve the immersion of the spectator. This role of odour in theatre also continues in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Barbara Pia Jenič began deliberately and continuously developing the poetics of scent at the Sensorium Theatre, which she founded in 2001 with Gabriel Hernandez. In her creation of sensorial events, Jenič relies on the methodologies of Enrique Vargas, with which she became acquainted as an actress and scent designer in his group Teatro de los Sentidos and creatively developed them at the Sensorium Theatre. As a scent designer, Jenič has collaborated with other Slovenian theatres, among others, on the 2015 operatorium, *The Tenth Daughter* (Deseta hči) by Svetlana Makarovič (based on the libretto by Milko Lazar, directed by Rocco) at the Slovenian National Theatre – Opera and Ballet Ljubljana.

---

**Keywords:** odour, smell, sensorial theatre event, performing arts, Slovenia, experimental theatre, post-dramatic theatre, Sensorium Theatre

---

**Barbara Orel** is a professor of performing arts and head of the research group of the UL AGRFT. Her main research areas are experimental theatre, avant-garde movements and performance across disciplines. She wrote *Igra v igri* (The Play Within a Play, 2003) and edited several monographs, such as *Uprizoritvene umetnosti, migracije, politika: slovensko gledališče kot sooblikovalec medkulturnih izmenjav* (Performing Arts, Migration, Politics: Slovenian Theatre as an Agent of Intercultural Exchange, 2017). She has participated in numerous international research projects including the Theatrical Event working group of the IFTR. She has also lectured at universities internationally (University of Warwick and the University of Tartu).

# The World of Odour in the Slovenian Performing Arts<sup>1</sup>

---

Barbara Orel

University of Ljubljana, Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television

---

## Odour as a means for sensory research

This article will focus on those events in the Slovenian performing arts that have used odour to stimulate the spectator's senses and arouse transformational effects of all participants, the performers and the spectators. Such events can be found especially in the experimental theatre practices that tore down the fourth wall and relied on the audience's holistic perception, which includes all five senses: sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. Today, we will focus on those which primarily addressed the spectator's sense of smell. The article aims to provide a chronological overview of such events, examine their role in developing new stage languages and audience addresses and define their significance in the history of Slovenian theatre as well as in its present.

As Erika Fischer-Lichte notes, theatre has deliberately used odours since naturalism. The aim was to co-create the atmosphere of the event and make it as convincing as possible (192). The atmosphere is what flows in space between the object and the subject and what the spectator can physically experience while attending the event. Odour is namely "one of the most powerful effective components of the atmosphere" (194). For this reason, it is all the more surprising how little attention has been paid to odour in theatre-making and theatre research. In fact, odours (such as those of lipstick, powder, perfume, the sweat of the actors as well as the spectators) are always an involuntary accompanying phenomenon of theatrical events; theatre spaces are always imbued with them (192). However, odours can also be used consciously and deliberately as part of the process of performing. As Fischer-Lichte notes, the main reason is "that, with their smells, spaces, objects or people can directly penetrate the body of the smell-perceiving subject" (192). Using odours on the theatre stage takes a lot of knowledge, skill and experience. Odour escapes control. The moment it spreads around the room, it can no longer be controlled. Light and sound, for example, can instantly change the atmosphere of the event. Compared to other means

---

<sup>1</sup> This article was created in the scope of the Theatre and Interart Studies research programme (P6-0376), supported by the Slovenian Research Agency with the national budget.

of performing, odour is more or less uncontrollable. Perhaps this quality makes it the most powerful and profound means of atmosphere creation.

More precisely: odour is used as a means to achieve an effect of the authenticity of the atmosphere. As Alain Badiou would put it, authenticity is a central principle in all performing types or genres driven by a passion for the real. After naturalistic theatre (at the turn to the 20<sup>th</sup> century), the tendency towards authenticity again became relevant in the performance art of the 1960s, as well as in ritual forms of theatre, community theatre and paratheatrical practices at the crossroads between art and daily life.

## The use of odour on Slovenian stages

One of the first examples of the deliberate use of odour in Slovenian theatre can be found in *Cimetova vrata ladje norcev in druge spremembe* (The Cinnamon Door of the Ship of Fools and Other Changes), a performance art work directed by Tomaž Kralj and friends<sup>2</sup> (the work had a guest performance at Glej Theatre in 1975). The event shows “several elementary harmonising qualities of joy”, as Tomaž Kralj puts it (6), stressing that the concept is based on *The Book of Changes* (Yi Jing)<sup>3</sup>, an ancient Chinese text. He explains the title of the piece in the following way: “THE CINNAMON DOOR means a not yet realised instance and the direction towards this instance [...] THE SHIP OF FOOLS means the spaceship of planet Earth and its movement [...] CHANGES: change implies time” (Ibid.).<sup>4</sup> Among other things, the changes were triggered by the intoxicating atmosphere created by cinnamon scattering. Tomaž Kralj published and schematically depicted the concept of the performance in *Tribuna* magazine:

As an e n t r o p y, the basic network of this performance gets filled with materials that are functionally objectified (Meyerhold, Brecht) and variable. In this way, the performance becomes a medium shift from skill to ready-made actions presented in a slowed-down and analytical manner and interrupted in this context (stop motion). It shifts from expressiveness to the objective. The materials include people, props, 2D cinematic information, sound information reproduced from pre-tape and a music group that generates sounds in real-time and communicates with the delayed reproduction of its own

2 This is how the cast was defined in the announcement of the event in *Delo* newspaper (20 February 1975). The performers were: Slobodan Valentinčič, Maruška Krese-Šalamun, Olga Kacjan, Maja Boh, Nomenklature, Tomaž Kralj. Chris Johnson is stated as “witch with lights” and Tomaž Pengov as “musical navigator”. The group of the musicians is stated in more detail in *Tribuna* magazine, i.e., Tomaž Pengov – guitar; lute, double bass, recorders; Tomo Pirc – recorders, percussion; Bogdana Herman – voice; Jerko Novak – guitar; Aco Razbornik – sound mixer). The recording is archived in the Radio Študent audio collection.

3 Translated by Maja Milčinski: *Yijing – Knjiga premen* (Yijing – The Book of Changes) (Mladinska knjiga, 2011).

4 “The scheme of THE CINNAMON DOOR is comprised of 6 unions, which were dictated by the Book of Changes as the 6 lines of the CH’IEN / The Creative hexagram. Image: THE MOVEMENT OF THE SKY IS FULL OF STRENGTH. THIS MAKES THE NOBLE STRONG AND TIRELESS. Each union has its own metaphorical trait” (Kralj 16). In the continuation, Tomaž Kralj elaborates on the characteristics of the individual unions and the relations between them.

sound (play-back in real-time). None of the information channels has greater conceptual worth and a wider significance than any other information channel (“Dve predstavi”).

The critic Rapa Šuklje candidly denoted the event as a spiritualist seance “that evades the criteria and vocabulary of theatre criticism” and “does not awake in the middle-aged spectator the desire to establish a dialogue with it (at least not at this level)” (“Izredno puščobne norčije”). Despite her reserved stance towards the performance, she presented the action objectively. It took place without text, which,

in addition to soothing music and lighting effects, as well as more or less improvised movement was enriched with the use of many simple objects – bowls and cups, spectacles, a giant candle snuffer, small plastic and paper bags, candles – which, taken out of their everyday context, achieved a suitable effect. [...] The lit candles even gave rise to a moment of much-needed magic. Intended to add to the intoxication were three little bags of cinnamon and an abundance of white powder scattered on the stage (Ibid.).

The cinnamon scattering started in the packed hall at a quarter past nine, and the event ended at half-past ten.

Odour was probably used to co-create the atmosphere in other experimental types of performing of that time, probably before Tomaž Kralj’s performance art piece. For example, in ritual forms of theatre such as the so-called meetings as conceived by Vlado Šav. Without a doubt, however, odours played their part in the performance *Pupilija, Papa Pupilo and the Pupilčeks* (Pupilija, Papa Pupilo pa Pupilčki) (the smell of blood in the ritual slaughter of chickens on stage, the scent of fragrances in the bathtub scene). However, the role of odour in shaping the aesthetic image of these theatre events can only be subject to speculation. The odours arose from the actions performed (for example, the tea-drinking ritual, candle lighting, incense and other props in performing rituals). Critical and other records of such events do not specifically mention odours. Notably, Rapa Šuklje’s review is one of the earliest testimonials to the aesthetics of using odour on Slovenian stages.

More frequent use of odour on theatre stages can be noticed in the 1990s, namely in post-dramatic performances, which co-shaped the aesthetics of the real. As Hans-Thies Lehmann notes, postdramatic theatre deliberately broke the fourth wall with elements of the real. In search of the new expressive possibilities of the authentic in a globalised and mediatised world, the directors, especially those of the younger and middle generations, also aimed to achieve the effects of the real through odours (and not just through the types of acting, direction and use of other stage elements). For example:

- Vito Taufer brought a ram and chickens to the stage of the Mladinsko Theatre in 1990 in *Odysseus and Son or The World and Home* (Odisej in sin ali Svet in dom);
- In 1997, Emil Hrvatin’s *The Banquet* (Banket) threw a feast for the spectators,



who enjoyed the scenes with the actors while eating;

- In the 1997 tear-donating session, *Camillo – Memo*, Emil Hrvatin evoked memories and tears from the spectators using onions and their pungent smell;
- In 1999, Tijana Zinajić created the effects of the real in the performance *The Pencil Writes with Its Heart* (Svinčnik piše s srcem) at the Mladinsko Theatre by means of the actors preparing food in front of the audience;
- The same goes for *Love to Death* (Ljubezen na smrt), directed by Matjaž Pograjc in 2007, conceived as a dinner in which the actors were also the cooks;
- In the performance *Perfume* (Parfum), based on the famous novel by Patrick Süskind, which took place in 2009 at Cankarjev dom, Borut Bučinel stimulated unconscious associations in the audience using pleasant as well as highly unpleasant odours.

In the function of the intrusion of the real, odour has also frequently appeared in performances directed by Tomi Janežič: *King Oedipus* (Ojdip, 1998), *Foundling Simeon* (Nahod Simeon, 2006), *Romeo and Public* (Romeo in publika, 2008), *The Threepenny Opera* (Opera za tri groša, 2014), and *The Death of Ivan Ilych* (Smrt Ivana Iljiča, 2015).

In all of these performances, the odours – be it inadvertently or intentionally – accompanied the stage action. In the 1990s, however, the poetics of odours started being deliberately and continuously developed by Barbara Pia Jenič at the Sensorium Theatre.

## The Sensorium Theatre

In 2001, Barbara Pia Jenič and Gabriel Hernandez founded Sensorium to create sensorial events (Jenič 8). In these activities, she relies on the methodologies of Enrique Vargas, with which she became acquainted between 1996 and 2004 when she collaborated with Vargas's group Teatro de los Sentidos as an actress and scent designer. She first got acquainted with scent design in 1999, when Teatro de los Sentidos toured to Zurich. According to Jenič, at that point, scent designer Antonella Cirigliano had decided to leave the group; Cirigliano and Vargas agreed that Barbara Pia Jenič should take over her work. Thus, between 1999 and 2004, Jenič designed the scents for all the performances. Each consisted of about thirty scenes and twenty actors (as each character had to have their own scent). She designed the scents for the performances *Oraculos* (Oracles),<sup>5</sup> *La Memoria del vino* and *Hilo de Ariadna*. "For each performance, I made a research and a concept with elaborations on how the scents affect the audience and as well as the poetics of each scene. I inherited a few decisions

<sup>5</sup> The performance *Oraculos* was created by the director Enrique Vargas for the Exodos Festival in 1996. It premiered at the Old Power Station venue in Ljubljana.

from Cirigliano but quickly started following my own way in the design” (Jenič 80).

In Jenič’s view, the poetics of scents is the kind of use of smells “that comes not only directly from the action on stage (the use of food, religious props, the natural odours of a particular space) but one that opens up new imaginary spaces in the scenes through sensual synaesthesia” (Ibid.). Odours, namely, “represent an important bridge between consciousness and the unconscious as well as between memory and imagination” (Jenič quoted in Krkoč Lasič, “Vonj kot simfonija prizorov”). They create an atmosphere that we perceive at an intuitive level, beyond reason, which directly affects our perception and understanding of the scenes (Sedej, “Vonj je atomska bomba med čuti”).

Jenič developed the poetics of odours in the productions of Sensorium Theatre. Notably, in sensorial events, such as *We Are the World: Waterman* (Mi smo svet: Povodni mož) (from 2013), but also in non-sensorial theatre performances, including *Cro-Magnon* (the 2013 staging of Gregor Strniša’s poetry), *Gothic Windows* (Gotska okna) (the 2014 staging of Dane Zajc’s poetry), and *Merlin* (a 2015 children’s performance). As a scent designer, she has also collaborated in performances of other theatres. Perhaps the most interesting is her collaboration with the Slovenian National Theatre – Opera and Ballet Ljubljana in 2015 when she designed the scents for the operatorium, *The Tenth Daughter* (Deseta hči), by Milko Lazar (based on the libretto by Svetlana Makarovič and directed by Rocco). This unique aspect of the performance also won critical acclaim.

## Conclusion

The list of performances that have used odour as a means of stimulating the spectator’s senses on Slovenian stages is by no means complete. Their examination, however, reveals that odour was used as a means of sensory perception at least as early as the 1970s. The interest in olfactory perceptions grew among the theatre-makers in the 1990s as an element used to successfully implement the aesthetics of the real in post-dramatic theatre and achieve the immersion of the spectator. This role of odour in theatre also continues in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It can be expected that, in a mediatised society and culture where live events are increasingly valued, the use of odours on the theatre stage will also increase.

*Translated by Urška Zajec.*

- Fischer-Lichte, Erika. *Estetika performativnega*. [Aesthetics of the Performative] Translation by Jaša Drnovšek. Ljubljana: Študentska založba, 2008. (Knjižna zbirka Koda).
- Jenič, Barbara Pia. *Senzorialni gledališki jezik v gledališču Sensorium*. [Sensorial Theatre Language at the Sensorium Theatre] MA thesis. Ljubljana: Univerza v Ljubljani, Akademija za gledališče, radio, film in televizijo, 2015.
- Kralj, Tomaž. "Dve predstavi" [Two Performances], *Tribuna*, 5 June 1975, vol. 24, no. 21–25, p. 16.
- Krkoč Lasič, Sandra. "Vonj kot simfonija prizorov" [Odour as a Symphony of Scenes], *Dnevnik*, 24 June 2013.
- Sedej, Ksenija. "Vonj je atomska bomba med čuti" [Smell is an Atomic Bomb among the Senses] (interview with Barbara Pia Jenič), *Jana*, 13 May 2017.
- Lehmann, Hans-Thies. *Postdramsko gledališče*. [Post-Dramatic Theatre] Translation by Krištof Jacek Kozak. Ljubljana: Maska, 2003.
- Šuklje, Rapa. "Izredno puščobne norčije. Ob potresanju cimeta in drugih dogodkih v gledališču Glej" [Extremely Dreary Antics. On Cinnamon Scattering and Other Events at the Glej Theatre], *Delo*, 4 February 1975.



In recent decades, the trend or the need for an experience of the effect of immersion into theatre events, other branches of art, tourism, everyday business and private life has become quite evident. We are used to audio-visual communication, which, from the Renaissance onwards, became the dominant channel for delivering messages, while other senses became less important.

Until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the role of smell in theatre practices was neglected, and more important senses took over the place of communication and staging. Rarely it was used as a direct prop, but always very carefully, because, according to many experts, it cannot be controlled like sound and light. However, we have forgotten that the smell, especially in combination with the sound, can have a strong emotional impact on a spectator. Like the other senses, the scent recreates the context of memories and can evoke an intense reliving of emotions and events. It can also provoke an evaluation or re-evaluation of the past, thereby affecting the perception of the present. Reality is perceived through the adaptation of sensory information, which is shaped and interpreted under the influence of past experiences. Experiences create expectations, and expectations create our subjective reality considering everyday life and theatrical performance. This relationship is especially noticeable in sensorial theatre.

In the last decade, an effort has been made to bring scents and other tools of sensorial theatre back to the stage, just as – according to foreign sources – they were an important part of events in antiquity. In this way, the stage can be enriched with an additional dimension of communication and expression. The paper presents various methods and experiments on the use of scent and other tools of sensorial theatre, evaluating their phenomenology and effectiveness from the perspective of the performing arts and psychological science.

---

**Keywords:** sensorial theatre, perception of reality, psychological immersion, smell, memories

---

**Igor Areh, PhD**, is an associate professor of psychology at the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor. His lectures and research work focus mainly on interviews of witnesses, crime victims and suspects. In his successfully defended 2008 doctoral dissertation in psychology, he researched gender differences in eyewitness memory recall. He has published over ninety papers and four books on forensic psychology issues, such as cognitive biases, eyewitness perception and memory. As a guest lecturer, he has delivered several lectures at universities in the UK, France and Spain.

**Barbara Pia Jenič** is the artistic leader and director of Sensorium Institute and a theatre director, producer, actress. From 1996 to 2004, she was an actress in the Spanish group Teatro de los Sentidos, entering the world of sensorial theatre language and olfactory design under the artistic vision of E. Vargas. She has been developing the sensorial methodology for twenty years and applying its tools to theatre performances for the last decade. In her artistic opus, she bases her research on expressions of sensorial theatre language, develops the sensorial methodology for cultural heritage, galleries, museums and opera. She is the author of many theatre performances and events.

[barbara.pia@sensorium.com](mailto:barbara.pia@sensorium.com)

# The Art of Immersion with Smell and Sensorial Theatre Language

---

Barbara Pia Jenič

Senzorium

Igor Areh

University of Maribor, Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security

---

## Introduction

Barbara Pia Jenič joined the Teatro de los Sentidos (hereinafter TDLS) in 1996. Initially from Colombia, stationed in Spain and the first such theatre globally, it is a theatre of senses and experiences in which the visitor travels through the rooms. Actors/inhabitants guide the visitor through the event's different scenes and involve him in sensory experience individually, interactively. As an actress in this theatre, Jenič was also responsible for designing the scents. She has collaborated with TDLS in more than three hundred performances at various European theatre festivals and other venues. Therefore, she designed scents for up to twenty characters and twenty-five different scenes per show. She has been researching scents since 1999, later also within her Slovenia-based theatre structure, Sensorium.

In Sensorium's performances until 2005, she initially repeated the learnt staging concept (according to the TDLS), that is, labyrinths made of fabric, through which the visitor passed in semi-darkness from scene to scene. The theatre curtains' texture absorbed the prepared scents well, which persisted in the dark and narrow spaces for several hours. The scents deepened the individual experience, elicited visitors' emotions and greatly influenced their well-being. Some visitors<sup>1</sup> were evoked by forgotten memories or deep, sometimes undefined feelings and emotions that were sometimes difficult to control.

Due to the 2008 economic crisis and the consequent reduction of financial resources, the conditions for scenography, long-term rental of staging scenes and the implementation concept (which enabled the experience of intense odours) changed and deteriorated. The construction of labyrinths of cloth was abandoned, the individual relationship between the player and the visitor became public, and the application of scents required new solutions.

---

<sup>1</sup>Visitors' statements are documented in the form of handwritten comments, kept by the Teatro de los Sentidos.

Due to the changes affecting sensorial theatre, questions arose, such as how to maintain a personal relationship between the visitor and the actor and the effect of immersion in an open space; and how to achieve the immersion with the use of odours in a contemporary theatre performance. Before answering these questions, it may be essential to make sense of a sensory theatre experience. Not from the point of view of artistic or philosophical experiential subjectivity, but that of contemporary science. Is it possible to justify or explain the phenomenon of sensory theatre by scientific findings? Are there explanatory connections between sensory theatre and science? First, let us explain psychological immersion in theatrical performance from the perspective of science.

## Psychological immersion in the theatrical performance

Research about psychological immersion in a simulated environment or fictional world is far from being scarce. However, the authors of this essay were unable to find any empirical or experimental studies of immersion related to sensorial theatre. The theme appears neglected in scientific research. Yet, some assumptions and insights into immersion in theatrical performance can be drawn from a close reading of the existing literature that deals with sensory and mental immersion in virtual reality.

Immersion is generally regarded as the experience of losing oneself in the artificial environment or fictional world while narrowing attention away from stimuli coming from the immediate physical outside world (Fox et al. 95–113; Schubert 161–187) of which awareness may even vanish. Immersion may be sensory or mental. Sensory immersion can be defined as the presence in virtual reality (Cummings et al. 272–309), where perception is the primary cognitive process that influences the level of immersion. When a person is immersed in virtual reality, perception prevails, and imagination is expected to be reduced; otherwise, the sense of immersion fades. The intensity of immersion may be manipulated by stimulating perception to achieve the feeling of presence. The more exhaustive the virtual reality is, the greater the sense of presence.

Mental immersion is often explained as transportation or engagement into narratives, which may be found in books, sounds, music, movies, smells or other audio-visual material (Green and Donahue 241–256; Speidel 173–194). Transportation is cognitive and emotional absorption into a narrative, focusing mental (cognitive) abilities on the narrative's plot or events (Greenwood and Long 637–654). Thus, it may be defined as a form of mental simulation of narrative possibilities (Green and Donahue 241–256). Narratives, such as in music, are used to alter and maintain our emotional states (Mar et al. 818–833, Juslin 131–140). Generally, explanations of narratives can induce the sense



of immersion in a fictional world that is predominately produced by internal cognitive processes or abilities to create an imagined world by symbolic representations (Mangen 404–419). Here, imagination is more important than perception, and attentional focus has to be maintained within imagination; otherwise, the sense of immersion is lost. The more possibilities a narrative offers, or the less elaborated or detailed it is, the more it stimulates the imagination. This leads to a more intense transfer into a narrative and to a more intense immersion (Green and Donahue 241–56), which is associated with heightened arousal and more intense emotions due to an experience of “proximity” (Lang et al. 97–135, Visch et al. 1439–1445).

In sensorial theatre, we can experience both types of immersion. One could even say that perhaps sensorial immersion is a hallmark and the original essence of sensorial theatre. First, it offers a novel experience that is quite different from an everyday one and subjective interpretation. The meaning of such an experience may be rationalised later, perhaps even after the end of a performance. In classical sensorial theatre, like in virtual reality, perception might prevail over imagination, which should be reduced; otherwise, immersion fades, and an important goal of the performance might be lost. When a narrative is involved in a sensorial performance, then mental immersion can also be experienced. However, with the narrative used, attention may be focused mainly on its plot, and sensorial impressions may be secondary or even neglected. Thus, a sensorial performance with a narrative is expected to be more challenging for performance creators. To achieve a performance’s goals, its creators must efficiently balance sensorial and mental immersion or create a balance between sensorial experiences and transportation into a narrative.

## Vision as a dominant sense in theatre

Vision is often considered as the dominant, most essential and complex sense. The idea of visual dominance can be traced back to ancient Greece when Plato assigned divinity to vision and considered it as the higher sense along with audition. In contrast, other senses were less rational and more subjective lower senses bound to bodily reactions (Schellekens 734–743, Jütte and Lynn 61). Similarly, Aristotle ranked senses by putting vision first and then the other senses in the following order: hearing, smell, taste and touch (Jütte and Lynn 61). In the centuries that followed, vision was consistently rated as the highest sense in Western societies (Hutmacher 2246). Therefore, philosophical influences seem possible but not the only reason for visual dominance.

A shift from oral/auditory to written/visual transfer of information is evident through history. Centuries ago, books were scarce, very few people were literate, knowledge

was mostly transmitted orally. Even contracts were mostly agreed upon verbally and not written; agreements were stored predominately in the verbal memories of those committed or interested. Then in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Gutenberg printing revolution happened. With printed books and other press, vision has become much more important in attaining information. There was a shift from hearing to sight, which became even more emphasised in the digital revolution in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

A similar shift may be perceived in the assigned importance of smell as well. Before modern history, more precisely before the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a pleasant smell was often strongly related to essence and spiritual truth and medical power. Meanwhile, the sight was often lowered to be superficial, revealing only exterior features of reality and having no such potency as assigned to good smells (Classen 96). Contrary, stench or putrid odour was associated with illness and evil dark forces (Muchembled and Pickford 90). Later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the belief in scents' healing power faded away (Classen 40). The importance of smell became discounted by ideas such as Paul Broca's belief that the evolution of free will required a reduction in the size of the brain's olfactory bulb or the religious politics of the Catholic Church, which opposed the early scientific endeavour. Consequently, the myth that humans have a poor sense of smell was born (McGann 7263), and sight gained importance.

In Western societies, a gradual rise of ideas related to the importance of sight might also be transferred into language. For example, when average frequencies of words per modality are examined in the English language, the frequency of visual words clearly prevails over words of other senses (Winter et al. 213–220). It appears that the origin of the dominance of sight can be explained by cultural/historical influences and by biological predispositions since people generally and foremost talk about their visual experiences and afterwards about what they hear, smell, taste and feel (San Roque et al. 31–60). However, the hierarchy of human senses – sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell – is not a universal reality across cultures. Cultures that place exceptional value on their musical heritage can more efficiently describe sounds; those involved in patterned pottery can communicate about shapes. Still, generally, people of all cultures find that smell is the most difficult to communicate (Majid et al. 11369–11376).

The occurrence of photography, cinema, television, computers and smartphones slowly led to modern life taking place on screens. The everyday human experience is now more visual than ever before in history (Bekkers and Moody 189). Visual dominance has probably also shaped scientific research of human perception. In past decades, research on perception has been heavily focused on visual perception, neglecting other sensory modalities. This trend even seems accelerated in recent years (Hutmacher 2246), perhaps primarily by the development of digital technology,

which creates the visual reality in which we live.

The added value of sensorial theatre is that it presents theatrical themes significantly different from what we are used to and offers participants a very different experience of reality. We are accustomed to visual images; we are so overwhelmed by them in our everyday lives that we often have difficulty differentiating the important from the less important. A remarkable turnaround happens in sensorial theatre. The flow of visual reality is suddenly muffled or even turned off. As the brain fills in the gaps caused by sensory deprivation, the often overlooked flow of auditory, tactile and olfactory reality is activated. The everyday visual reality disappears, and a new sensory experience turns up. Non-visual experiences overwhelm us just like the previous visual experiences.

## Memories triggered by smells

It seems that conscious odour perception is not as crucial as vision or hearing, which are important communication channels. Namely, complete anosmia is often unnoticed, which is not the case in vision or hearing. Odours may have strong emotional and behavioural effects, such as attraction or repulsion. However, most well-known and expected odours are not consciously observed and may only provide a sense of safety. Only new and unexpected odours that do not fit memory-based expectations are consciously remarked. In humans, olfactory memory helps to neglect known odours and react to unexpected or unknown ones. Thus, the memory of odour perception is most probably related to the warning system, which prevents the intake of possible harmful gasses and foods (Köster and Degel 9–11). Research shows that odours were not meant to be identified and embodied. For example, in perfume making, it is well known that most ingredients, such as musk, lose their effectiveness in a mixture if their concentration is so high that they can be noticed as a component (Ibid. 9). It appears that perception of odours is not intended to label them but rather unconsciously monitor our environment. It also allows us, as some kind of side effect, to recall distant memories.

The long-term autobiographical memory, as a part of episodic memory, enables humans to re-experience specific personal events from the past that are associated with feelings of mental time travel, a sense of self, awareness of the past and also reflections on past behaviour and feelings (Tulving 1–25). Among all senses, odours seem to trigger the most emotional and vivid memories. This finding may be associated with the observation that smell is a privileged sense for accessing memories since it has a substantial anatomical connection with memory structures (Saive et al. 240). While in early research, memories of odours are very stable over time, more recent research contradicts such belief (Olsson et al. 161–71). However,

humans can accurately recognise odours (Herz and Engen 300–313), but recognition performance heavily depends on context. The more odours we sense simultaneously, and the more similar they are, the lower the recognition accuracy (Schab 242–251).

Further, odours are better recognised and memorised after elaborative cognitive processing, such as thinking of odours and situations, particularly after receiving information about the odour source or nature (Frank et al. 29–41). Odour-evoked memories are associated with stronger sensations of being brought back in time (Arshamian et al. 123–131). Still, we tend to talk and think less about them than memories recalled by visual or verbal stimuli (Rubin et al. 493).

The reminiscence bump of autobiographical memory reflects reports of memories from ten to thirty years of age that would usually be forgotten (Koppel and Berntsen 66–80). While pictures, sounds or words reproduce reminiscence bumps in adolescence and early adulthood, odours frequently recall memories from childhood, precisely from the first decade of life (Hackländer et al. 401–429). The late finding is expected in the so-called Proust phenomenon (Chu and Downes 111–116) and the discovery that odours evoke more vivid, emotional and rarer memories than those recalled by other sensorial stimuli (Larsson et al. 312). This phenomenon is not well explained and researched; therefore, some controversies exist, such as doubts that odour-evoked memories are more vivid than others and the most effective cues for triggering autobiographical memories (Herz 95–114). Namely, recent research offers only weak support for the assumption that odour-evoked memories are notably vivid (Hackländer et al. 401–429).

In most cases, it was suggested that the olfactory memory bump might be associated with unique characteristics of the olfactory sense. Unlike other sensory systems, the olfactory system in mammals is part of the limbic system and has direct neural projection to the amygdala. It is closely related to the hippocampal regions, and it lacks a thalamic relay between initial core structures and the primary sensory cortex (Wilson and Stevenson 40). Accordingly, olfaction is a sense of first impressions, which allows first odour-to-object and not sound-to-object associations to be formed; therefore, earliest life experiences might be favoured over experiences of other senses (Yeshurun et al. 1869–74). But this is not the only possible explanation why odours may provoke specific memories. We are consciously aware mostly of novel odours but not of those already experienced. Odours are not easily noticed after the first experience. Therefore, the first memorised impressions associated with odours are not replaced by later events involving the same odours. This reason might be why we experience the bump into long-term childhood memories (Köster and Degel 10). Yet, recall of odour-evoked memories is relatively rare because odours might be more specific than other sensorial information and thus match fewer mental representations, which probably explains the

rarity of odour-evoked memories (Larsson et al. 312).

The beliefs that odours influence human behaviour and implicit memory are widely accepted, despite the lack of scientific proof, most evident in aromatherapy (Degel and Köster 317). Nevertheless, odours may still be welcome in sensorial theatre since people often respond to them as expected by performance creators. There is no reason to wait for answers science will bring. People do not need science to enjoy theatre. Beliefs, emotions and sensory experiences are often more powerful, inspiring and lasting essence of life than scientific findings.

## Recent developments in sensorial theatre

At the end of the introduction to the essay, the question was raised on how to achieve the effects of sensory language and immersion with odours in a modern stage performance. Several different performing procedures may lead to answers:

### 1. *Open spaces, an audience with blindfolds*

To achieve the effects of odours in labyrinths, Jenič changed the external labyrinths into internal ones. She decided to put blindfolds on the eyes of participants, thus eliminating the predominant power of vision. Odour perception in such forms depends on the method of application to the atmosphere and the stage elements. Jenič used this method in several sensory performances.<sup>2</sup> According to her observations, visitors perceived sensory impulses in the following order: when vision is switched off, touch becomes the essential sense, followed by sound, smell and taste. Interestingly, according to these experiences, it may be inferred that the hierarchy of senses, such as sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, as assumed by Aristotle (Jütte and Lynn 61), may not be valid in the context of the sensorial theatre. It would be interesting to examine this hypothetical hierarchy of senses. Perhaps future discoveries can offer new possibilities and more in-depth experiences for participants of sensorial performances.

### 2. *Odours as an invisible part of visual art*

With the visual installation of *Sensorial soundscapes* at MGLC<sup>3</sup> in 2014, Jenič studied the influence of smell and sound on visible sensing and perception. Visitors smelled

<sup>2</sup> *Being or Having* [Biti ali imeti] (2005), *Unveiling* [Odstiranje] (2006), *In vino veritas?* (2008), *Waterman* [Povodni mož] (2013), *Smells of Emona* [Vonjave Emone] (2014), *Hotel Tivoli between Memories and Dreams* [Hotel Tivoli med spomini in sanjami] (2018), *Divine Comedy* [Božanska komedija] (2019).

<sup>3</sup> International Centre of Graphic Arts, Ljubljana.

different odours and listened to different sounds while observing the exhibited graphic images. The public wrote down the contents of the observed graphic works on the prepared forms, combining different sounds and smells.<sup>4</sup> The exhibition confirmed the assumptions that sound and smell affect the way the visual target is perceived. This effect was also noticed in the project *Future Promise Park* (2017) by Korean artist Moon Kyungwoon who presented her video installation at the 32<sup>nd</sup> International Biennial of Graphic Arts at MGLC. The artist created an invisible part of the park in the form of scents. The findings that odours may influence visual perception have further motivated Jenič to use smells in stage performances.

### 3. *The invisible part of auditory presentations*

The project *Lalabajke*, first presented in 2011 as part of the international *Generosity project*, combines a narrative, sound and smells. When reading the story in semi-darkness, the listener does not see the reader and focuses on the sound and smells, as he is not occupied with visual impressions. Some<sup>5</sup> visitors completed a survey<sup>6</sup> on the impact of scents on their immersion into the story. Among fifteen participants, 80% of them answered that smell has a positive effect on the event. Approximately 90% said that semi-darkness deepens the experience of smells. Half of them answered that the smells were most influential when asked how strongly they experienced immersion in the story. At the same time, about 85% responded that the darkness mainly influenced the immersion, then the story itself and the narrator's voice. More than 70% of them thought that the smell created the story's atmosphere. Almost 90% of the visitors agreed that smells could be more common in the theatre and when presenting stories. Due to the small number of participants, further research is needed to generalise these findings.

### 4. *Theatre performances*

As suggested by Erica Fisher-Lichte (192), the use of smell is a rarely discussed element in performances. She is surprised at how little attention has been paid to theatre scents so far, as "odour is undoubtedly one of the most powerful effective components of the atmosphere" (Ibid. 194).

The historical importance of odours in public events is evident in many sources of

<sup>4</sup> The exhibition at MGLC was set up one year before London's *Tate Sensorium* won the 2015 IK PRIZE.

<sup>5</sup> Those who consented to the survey left their email address and answered all the questions.

<sup>6</sup> The survey was completed by visitors of *Lalabajke* on 14 May 2016 and 21 April 2017 at the Trubar House of Literature. It was of a pilot nature, so it would be good to do more extensive research on this topic with a larger number of participants and over an even longer period of time.

literature, such as:

The beginnings of Western theatre in ancient Greek festivals like the *Eleusinian* mysteries (in modern times considered the *prototype* of the modern Gesamtkunstwerk) were suffused with intense aromas of all kinds: including fruit, floral, grain, and animal offerings; blood and burning animal flesh; wine, honey, and oil libations; and the *burning* of incense and other material in sacred fires (Burkert 1985). In our times, the use of incense in Catholic *churches constitutes* a diminished survival of the ritual use of smell in religious performances. Scented theatre programs and perfume fountains were only two of the *nineteenth-century* olfactory devices in *Western* theatres (Hail 1987), but during most of the *twentieth* century, the “fourth wall conventions of realism generally divided the *spectator* from the *mainstream* stage and permitted only sight and sound to cross its divide (Banes and Lepecki 29).

In ancient times, various odours were used for sporting events and artistic performances to scent both actors and audiences (Classen 26). For example, the scent of saffron was often used for the audience. Its effects have not yet been researched, but interestingly, they are mentioned on some online sources as very soothing, even narcotic (CaFleureBon). Therefore, it could be assumed that with saffron and other scents, the organisers have tried to induce the well-being of the audience and the perception of the event. “Putting on a good show in antiquity, therefore, involved putting out a good scent” (Classen 26).

Fischer-Lichte also states that the smell in theatre is difficult to control, as it cannot be turned on and off like sound and light (192). However, it can still be used, as Barbara Pia Jenič has proven through her performative experiments over the last decade. Barbara Pia Jenič first tried using scents on stage in 2009 in performances *Evening with Mila Kačič* (Večer z Milo Kačič, 2009–2011), *You Find Me in Everything* (V vsem me najdeš, 2012), *Cro Magnon* (2013), *Gothic Windows* (Gotska okna, 2014). In these cases, a one-time spray of scents around the audience and stage was applied. Due to strong audio-visual impressions, the audience was not aware of the smells. Most of them had not perceived or commented on them, which led the author to conclude that it is necessary to change the methodology of introducing scents to the stage, perhaps to weave the scent into a more appropriate context and give it time and space to develop and spread.

## 5. Opera

In 2015, fragrances were presented in Svetlana Makarovič’s operatorium *The Tenth Daughter* (Deseta hči) at the SNG Opera and Ballet in Ljubljana. Smells were also noticed by the critic of the newspaper *Delo*, Borut Smrekar, but not to the extent and

scope as Jenič expected. Criticism also proves that smells, as Fischer-Lichte states, are always present in the theatre by themselves.

## 6. Drama theatre

In the performance *The Wonderful New World* (Krasni novi svet) by Barbara Pia Jenič inspired by Aldous Huxley in SNG Drama (2017), scent was sprayed on the audience in the substantive context of the clones' conditioning. The audience perceived the context in the desired way and also accepted it with affection, but the critics did not attach any importance to this novelty. In 2018, a scent was used for the first time at Prešeren Theatre Kranj using the method of sensorial theatre language in the performance of Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet* (Prerok). The scents were thoughtfully directed, dressed in context and applied so that their time and space could resonate. As critic Ivana Zajc wrote, "the show melts in the body" (11). Gregor Butala described it as "a fusion of the textual and the sensory into a harmonious, complementary entity" (Butala). These reviews may indicate that the purpose of odours, as described in the introductory part of this paper, was achieved. The same sensory procedures for applying scents were used in the performance *Scented Secrets* (Dišeče skrivnosti)<sup>7</sup>, allowing a complete immersion into what is happening on stage, as was the custom in antiquity.

## Conclusion

Sensory experiences represent only a partial source of the overwhelming feelings induced by a sensorial performance. It may well be that another essential source of excitement and personal immersion comes from overcoming anxiety. In sensorial performance, a participating audience member may blindly surrender to an unknown person, leading them through a novel experience almost without visible information. Thus, the participating audience gives up much of their control over reality. As members of the participating audience, we give up the comfort of the situation's predictability. We dare to do what we otherwise avoid because we fear unpleasant or painful consequences. In a sensorial performance, we are suddenly in control of what usually controls us – anxiety. And that is not all the magic. Despite surrender, nothing terrible happens, quite the opposite; we are safely taken into the unknown, and we come out of it with a different, albeit short-lived, awareness of our existence. We have experienced a different reality that can be seen as life encouragement coming from overcoming anxiety. Even the reality of dreams cannot be as relaxing and pervasive as the reality of sensory performance.

<sup>7</sup> Performance at the Slovene Permanent Theatre in Trieste, co-production Sensorium and UL AGRFT, première in October 2021.



In sensorial performance, the impact of smell on participants' experience may be noticeable and a key factor that directs quality and depth of experience. Smell perception is weaker or insignificant for visitors when they receive visual information with their eyes open. The only exceptions are extremely strong negative or positive odours. Scents applied thoughtfully can significantly contribute to the more profound understanding of individual experiences, images, spaces and situations. The use of scents in theatre and art can open up new possibilities for presentation and delve into events. The scent creates an atmosphere, opens up the inner imagination and emotions of the audience. Therefore, if we know how to use it properly, the scent can sharpen and deepen the immersion into theatrical performance. The hierarchies of perceptions or senses in theatre deserve more attention and additional research that could show the significance of the role and power of thoughtfully used sensorial experiences in theatre.

- Arshamian, Artin, et al. "The Functional Neuroanatomy Of Odor Evoked Autobiographical Memories Cued By Odors And Words". *Neuropsychologia*, vol. 51, no. 1, 2013, pp. 123–131. Elsevier BV, doi:10.1016/j.neuropsychologia.2012.10.023.
- Banes, Sally, and André Lepecki. *The Senses in Performance*. Routledge, 2007.
- Bekkers, Victor, and Rebecca Moody. *Visual Culture and Public Policy*. Routledge, 2015.
- Butala, Gregor. "Kritika predstave Prerok: Premišljeno zlitje elementov". *Dnevnik*, 30 November 2018, <https://www.dnevnik.si/1042848581/kultura/oder/kritika-predstave-prerok-premisljeno-zlitje-elementov>. Accessed on 14 April 2021.
- CaFleureBon. "Golden Threads Of Spice". *CaFleureBon*, 30 March 2014, <https://www.cafleurebon.com/cafleurebon-saffron-in-perfumery-golden-threads-of-spice-best-saffron-perfumes/>. Accessed on 12 April 2021.
- Chu, Simon, and John J. Downes. "Odour-Evoked Autobiographical Memories: Psychological Investigations of Proustian Phenomena". *Chemical Senses*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2000, pp. 111–16, doi:10.1093/chemse/25.1.111.
- Classen, Constance. *Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and across Cultures*. Routledge, 1993.
- Cummings, James J., and Jeremy N. Bailenson. "How Immersive Is Enough? A Meta-Analysis of the Effect of Immersive Technology on User Presence." *Media Psychology*, vol. 19, no. 2, 2015, pp. 272–309. *Crossref*, doi:10.1080/15213269.2015.1015740.
- Degel, Joachim, and Egon Peter Köster. "Odors: Implicit Memory and Performance Effects." *Chemical Senses*, vol. 24, no. 3, 1999, pp. 317–25, doi:10.1093/chemse/24.3.317.
- Fischer-Lichte, Erika. *Estetika performativnega*. Študentska založba, 2008.
- Fox, Jesse, et al. "Virtual Reality. A Survival Guide for the Social Scientist." *Journal of Media Psychology*, vol. 21, no. 3, 2009, pp. 95–113. *Crossref*, doi:10.1027/1864-1105.21.3.95.
- Frank, Robert A., et al. "Odor Recognition Memory as a Function of Odor-Naming Performance." *Chemical Senses*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2010, pp. 29–41. *Crossref*, doi:10.1093/chemse/bjq095.
- Gibran, Kahlil. *Prerok*. Založba Emka, 2018.
- Green, Melanie C. and John K. Donahue. "16 Simulated Worlds: Transportation Into Narratives." *Handbook of Imagination and Mental Simulation*, edited by Keith D. Markman et al., Psychology Press, 2012, pp. 241–256. <https://doi:10.4324/9780203809846.ch16>.
- Greenwood, Dara N., and Christopher R. Long. "Psychological Predictors of Media Involvement." *Communication Research*, vol. 36, no. 5, 2009, pp. 637–54. *Crossref*,

doi:10.1177/0093650209338906.

- Hackländer, Ryan P. M., et al. "An In-Depth Review of the Methods, Findings, and Theories Associated with Odor-Evoked Autobiographical Memory." *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2019, pp. 401–29. *Crossref*, doi:10.3758/s13423-018-1545-3.
- Herz, Rachel S. "Odor Memory and the Special Role of Associative Learning." *Olfactory Cognition: From Perception and Memory to Environmental Odours and Neuroscience*, edited by Gesualdo M. Zucco et al., John Benjamins, 2012, pp. 95–114.
- Herz, Rachel S., and Trygg Engen. "Odor Memory: Review and Analysis." *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1996, pp. 300–13. *Crossref*, doi:10.3758/bf03210754.
- Hupka, Ralph B., et al. "The Colors of Anger, Envy, Fear, and Jealousy." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, vol. 28, no. 2, 1997, pp. 156–71. *Crossref*, doi:10.1177/0022022197282002.
- Hutmacher, Fabian. "Why Is There So Much More Research on Vision Than on Any Other Sensory Modality?" *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 10, no. 2246, 2019. *Crossref*, doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02246.
- Jenič, Barbara Pia. "Senzorialne zvočne pokrajine" *Senzorium*, 7 July 2014, <http://www.senzorium.com/oPredstavi.php?predstava=31>. Accessed on 12 April 2021.
- Jonauskaite, Domicile, et al. "The sun is no fun without rain: Physical environments affect how we feel about yellow across 55 countries." *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, vol. 66, 2019. <https://doi:10.1016/j.jenvp.2019.101350>.
- Jonauskaite, Domicile, et al. "Universal Patterns in Color-Emotion Associations Are Further Shaped by Linguistic and Geographic Proximity." *Psychological Science*, vol. 31, no. 10, 2020, pp. 1245–60. *Crossref*, doi:10.1177/0956797620948810.
- Jonauskaite, Domicile, Jörg Wicker, et al. "A Machine Learning Approach to Quantify the Specificity of Colour–Emotion Associations and Their Cultural Differences." *Royal Society Open Science*, vol. 6, no. 9, 2019, *Crossref*, doi:10.1098/rsos.190741.
- Juslin, Patrik N. "Emotional Responses to Music." *Oxford handbook of music psychology*, edited by Susan Hallam et al., Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 131–140.
- Jütte, Robert, and James Lynn. *A History of the Senses: From Antiquity to Cyberspace*. Polity, 2004.
- Koppel, Jonathan, and Dorthe Berntsen. "The Peaks of Life: The Differential Temporal Locations of the Reminiscence Bump across Disparate Cueing Methods." *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2015, pp. 66–80. *Crossref*, doi:10.1016/j.jarmac.2014.11.004.
- Köster, Egon, P. and Joachim Degel. "Are weak odors stronger than strong odors? The influence of odor on human performance." *Aroma-Chology*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2001, pp. 9–11.

- Kyungwon, Moon, "https://promise-park.ycam.jp/en/overview-of-the-promise-park-project/" Accessed on 12 April 2021.
- Lang, Peter J., et al. "Motivated Attention: Affect, Activation, and Action." *Attention and Orienting*, edited by Peter. J. Lang et al., Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997, pp. 97–135.
- Larsson, Maria, et al. "Olfactory LOVER: Behavioral and Neural Correlates of Autobiographical Odor Memory." *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 5, 312, 2014. *Crossref*, doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00312.
- Majid, A. et al. "Differential coding of perception in the world's languages." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, vol. 115, no. 45, 2018, pp. 11369–11376. doi:10.1073/pnas.1720419115
- Man, John. *The Gutenberg Revolution: How Printing Changed the Course of History*. Illustrated, Transworld Publishers, 2010.
- Mangen, Anne. "Hypertext Fiction Reading: Haptics and Immersion." *Journal of Research in Reading*, vol. 31, no. 4, 2008, pp. 404–19. *Crossref*, doi:10.1111/j.1467-9817.2008.00380.x.
- Mar, Raymond A., et al. "Emotion and Narrative Fiction: Interactive Influences before, during, and after Reading." *Cognition & Emotion*, vol. 25, no. 5, 2011, pp. 818–33. *Crossref*, doi:10.1080/02699931.2010.515151.
- McDonald, Daniel. G. "Narrative Research in Communication: Key Principles and Issues." *Review of Communication Research*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2014, pp. 115–132. doi:10.12840/issn.2255-4165.2014.02.01.005
- McGann, John P. "Poor Human Olfaction Is a 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Myth." *Science*, vol. 356, no. 6338, 2017, p. eaam7263. *Crossref*, doi:10.1126/science.aam7263.
- Muchembled, Robert, and Susan Pickford. *Smells: A Cultural History of Odours in Early Modern Times*. 1st ed., Polity, 2020.
- Olsson, Mats J., et al. "Odor Memory Performance and Memory Awareness: A Comparison to Word Memory Across Orienting Tasks and Retention Intervals." *Chemosensory Perception*, vol. 2, no. 3, 2009, pp. 161–71. *Crossref*, doi:10.1007/s12078-009-9051-7.
- Ou, Li-Chen, et al. "Universal Models of Colour Emotion and Colour Harmony." *Color Research & Application*, vol. 43, no. 5, 2018, pp. 736–48. *Crossref*, doi:10.1002/col.22243.
- Rubin, David C., et al. "Olfactory Cuing of Autobiographical Memory." *The American Journal of Psychology*, vol. 97, no. 4, 1984, p. 493. *Crossref*, doi:10.2307/1422158.
- Saive, Anne-Lise, et al. "A Review on the Neural Bases of Episodic Odor Memory: From Laboratory-Based to Autobiographical Approaches." *Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience* vol. 8 240. 7 July 2014, doi:10.3389/fnbeh.2014.00240.

- San Roque, Lila, et al. "Vision Verbs Dominate in Conversation across Cultures, but the Ranking of Non-Visual Verbs Varies." *Cognitive Linguistics*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2015, pp. 31–60. *Crossref*, doi:10.1515/cog-2014-0089.
- Schab, Frank R. "Odor Memory: Taking Stock." *Psychological Bulletin*, vol. 109, no. 2, 1991, pp. 242–51. *Crossref*, doi:10.1037/0033-2909.109.2.242.
- Schellekens, Elisabeth. "Taste and Objectivity: The Emergence of the Concept of the Aesthetic." *Philosophy Compass*, vol. 4, no. 5, 2009, pp. 734–43. *Crossref*, doi:10.1111/j.1747-9991.2009.00234.x.
- Schubert, Thomas W. "A New Conception of Spatial Presence: Once Again, with Feeling." *Communication Theory*, vol. 19, no. 2, 2009, pp. 161–87. *Crossref*, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2885.2009.01340.x.
- Smrekar Borut. "Ocenjujemo: Deseta hči." *Delo*, 17 May 2015. <https://old.delo.si/kultura/ocene/ocenjujemo-deseta-hci.html>. Accessed on 13 April 2021.
- Speidel, Klaus. "Can a Single Still Picture Tell a Story? Definitions of Narrative and the Alleged Problem of Time with Single Still Pictures." *Diegesis*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2013, pp. 173–194.
- Tate Sensorium, <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/display/ik-prize-2015-tate-sensorium>. Accessed on 12 April 2021.
- Tulving, Endel. "Episodic Memory: From Mind to Brain." *Annual Review of Psychology*, vol. 53, no. 1, 2002, pp. 1–25. *Crossref*, doi:10.1146/annurev.psych.53.100901.135114.
- Visch, Valentijn T., et al. "The Emotional and Cognitive Effect of Immersion in Film Viewing." *Cognition & Emotion*, vol. 24, no. 8, 2010, pp. 1439–45. *Crossref*, doi:10.1080/02699930903498186.
- Wilms, Lisa, and Daniel Oberfeld. "Color and Emotion: Effects of Hue, Saturation, and Brightness." *Psychological Research*, vol. 82, no. 5, 2018, pp. 896–914. *Crossref*, doi:10.1007/s00426-017-0880-8.
- Wilson, Donald, and Richard Stevenson. *Learning to Smell: Olfactory Perception from Neurobiology to Behavior*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006.
- Winter, Bodo, et al. "Vision Dominates in Perceptual Language: English Sensory Vocabulary Is Optimised for Usage." *Cognition*, vol. 179, 2018, pp. 213–20. *Crossref*, doi:10.1016/j.cognition.2018.05.008.
- Yeshurun, Yaara, et al. "The Privileged Brain Representation of First Olfactory Associations." *Current Biology*, vol. 19, no. 21, 2009, pp. 1869–74. *Crossref*, doi:10.1016/j.cub.2009.09.066.
- Zajc, Ivana. "Prerok, gledališče za vse čute." *Primorski dnevnik*, 23 December 2018, p. 11.



V zadnjem času je opaziti trend oz. potrebo po doživetju učinka potopitve v dogajanje na področju gledališča, drugih vej umetnosti in turizma v vsakdanjem poslovnem in zasebnem življenju. Vajeni smo avdiovizualnega sporočanja, ki je že od razsvetljenstva prevladujoč kanal za predajanje sporočil, vsi drugi čuti so postali manj pomembni.

Skoraj do srede prejšnjega stoletja voh ni imel vidnejše vloge v gledaliških praksah, pomembnejši čuti so prevzeli mesto sporočanja in uprizarjanja. Tu pa tam se je vonj priplazil v prostor kot opazen rekvizit, vedno zelo pazljivo, saj ga po besedah strokovnjakov ni mogoče nadzorovati kot zvok in luč. Pozabili pa smo, da ima vonj, še posebej v kombinaciji z zvokom, lahko močan čustveni vpliv na obiskovalca oz. naslovnika. Tako kot drugi čuti tudi vonj poustvarja kontekst spominov in lahko prikljiče intenzivno podoživljanje čustev ter dogodkov. Lahko tudi izzove ponovno vrednotenje ali prevrednotenje preteklosti in s tem vpliva na dožemanje sedanjosti. Resničnost dojemamo s prilagajanjem čutnih občutkov, ki se izoblikujejo in interpretirajo pod vplivom preteklih izkušenj. Izkušnje ustvarjajo pričakovanja, ta pa našo vedno subjektivno realnost, tako v vsakdanjem življenju kot v gledališču, še posebej pa je to opazno v senzorialnem gledališču.

V zadnjem desetletju je prisotno prizadevanje, da bi vonje in druga orodja senzorialnega gledališča vrnili na oder, saj so bili, sodeč po tujih virih, pomemben del dogodkov že v antiki. Tako lahko oder obogatimo z dodatno dimenzijo sporočanja in izražanja. V prispevku so predstavljene različne metode in poskusi uporabe vonja in drugih orodij senzorialnega gledališča, pri čemer se njihova učinkovitost ovrednoti s perspektive uprizoritvenih umetnosti in psihološke znanosti.

---

**Ključne besede:** senzorialno gledališče, zaznavanje resničnosti, psihološka potopitev, vonj, spomini

---

**Dr. Igor Areh** je izredni profesor za psihologijo na Fakulteti za varnostne vede Univerze v Mariboru. Njegova predavanja in raziskave so v glavnem osredotočene na pridobivanje informacij od prič, žrtev in osumljencev. Leta 2008 je doktoriral z raziskavo o razlikah med spoloma v pričanju očividcev kaznivih dejanj. Objavil je več kot 90 člankov in drugih publikacij s področja forenzične psihologije, npr. problematika pristranskosti in zaznavanje ter spominjanje očividcev kaznivih dejanj in nesreč. V praksi deluje kot svetovalec pri preiskovanju kaznivih dejanj in sodni izvedenec. Kot gostujoči predavatelj je opravil več predavanj na univerzah v Veliki Britaniji, Franciji in Španiji.

**Barbara Pia Jenič** je umetniška vodja in direktorica zavoda Sensorium, režiserka, producentka, igralka. Med letoma 1996 in 2004 je kot igralka španskega gledališča Teatro de los Sentidos pod režisersko taktirko E. Vargasa vstopila v svet senzorialnega gledališča in oblikovanja vonjav. Senzorialno metodologijo na različne načine razvija v Sloveniji že dvajset let, njena orodja pa zadnje desetletje aplicira tudi na odrske uprizoritve. V svojem avtorskem opusu utemeljuje in raziskuje različne izraze senzorialnega gledališkega jezika ter razvija senzorialno metodologijo tudi za področje kulturne dediščine, za galerije, muzeje in za opero. Režirala je že 68 predstav ter oblikovala vonje za 53 projektov doma in v tujini.

[barbara.pia@sensorium.com](mailto:barbara.pia@sensorium.com)



For her doctoral dissertation "In Search of Lost Scents," art and scent historian Caro Verbeek (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Kunstmuseum, The Hague) collected olfactory neologisms or newly invented smell related words from (art) historical sources ranging from 1855 to 1975, which she categorised according to the themes poetry, mind, concepts, material and synaesthesia. Three never-before-published artistic illustrations by the author help establish a more embodied cognition of the meaning of some of these concepts, as including "smell images" is impossible. In addition, she has created a "synaesthetic odour wheel" based on literary sources (2021).

---

**Keywords:** Futurism, Symbolism, synaesthesia, olfaction, perfume, vocabulary, neologisms, scent wheel

---

**Caro Verbeek, PhD**, is an art historian, curator and creative scholar specialising in the senses of smell and touch and the intersensory phenomenon synaesthesia. Her books and articles include "Presenting Volatile Heritage" (Future Anterior, 2017), *Something in the Air - Scent in Art* (Villa Rot, 2015) and "Inhaling Memories" (Senses & Society, 2013). Verbeek founded and teaches several courses on the senses at the Royal Academy of Arts (The Hague) and the University of Amsterdam. Over the past ten years, she has created numerous olfactory reconstructions of historical objects and events for exhibitions and care projects. She is head curator of the scent culture programme Odorama at Mediamatic, Amsterdam.

caro\_lisette@yahoo.com

# On the “Odoresque” and “Aero-Perfumes”: Smell Related Neologisms in Avant-garde and Contemporary Art and Scholarship

---

Caro Verbeek  
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

---

## Introduction

There appears to be a dramatic mismatch between smell and language, at least in most Western vocabularies. Many people have a hard time describing scents or related phenomena. Exactly this lack of vocabulary inspired the Futurists and other avant-garde authors and artists to invent their own words to describe their innovative olfactory practices and modernist relation to smell. They tried to bridge the gap between the sensory world and the words that represented this by transforming words into sensory elements themselves. Synaesthesia – or the translation of one sensory realm into another (i.e., visual music or musical perfume) was one of the main tools to achieve this.

What follows is a list of neologisms (invented words) referring to olfactory phenomena as found in Futurist, Symbolist and other contemporary texts written between ca. 1850 and ca. 1950. They are categorised into the themes:

- B. Sound related words
- C. Poetry and writing
- D. Smell and mind
- E. Smell concepts
- F. Scented material
- G. Synaesthesia and cross-modality.

Furthermore, there is an additional group of contemporary words that several scholars invented to (further) develop the field of scent culture and olfactory history of art: Category A.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> This list is a result of the author's PhD-project “In Search of Lost Scents – The Olfactory Dimension of Futurism (1909–

## A. Contemporary handy (and nosy) concepts

### nose witness report

The official legal term as opposed to an eyewitness. Smells of people or places can provide evidence for crimes, such as the use of certain drugs. The term can also be used for reports on smells during significant historical events or artworks of which the olfactory dimension was lost. Simone de Beauvoir wrote about the 1938 Surrealist Exhibition in Paris as smelling of Brazilian coffee. That scent was itself a work of art called *Odeurs du Brésil* and was diffused by the poet Benjamin Péret by burning coffee beans on an electric stove.

### odience/oditorium

A term used to oppose the acoustic term “audience”, indicating a group of people coming together with the intention to smell an olfactory theatrical piece. The room in which this takes place is called the “oditorium”. Coined by Caro Verbeek and Catherine Haley Epstein in 2020 in the *Odorbet*.

### olfactionism

This word contains the words “fact” and “action”. It is the type of olfactory art that encourages the audience to take action. Coined by olfactory artist Peter de Cupere in his “Olfactory Art Manifesto” in 2014.

### olfactory gaze

In Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, the “gaze” is the anxious state of mind derived from the self-awareness that one can be seen and looked at to be subject to someone’s gaze. In the arts, the “gaze” refers to the act of seeing, but beyond the mere physiological, and from a particular culturally-induced perspective. The “olfactory gaze” means analysing images and texts with olfaction in mind. When Marinetti wrote his poem “Ritratto olfattivo di una donna” (Olfactory Portrait of a Woman), he described following a female scent trail with his “nostrils open and eyes closed”, encouraging his readers to see the world from an olfactory point of view or with an “olfactory gaze” – coined by the author in 2020. See also [www.odorbet.com](http://www.odorbet.com) and Figure 1.

---

1942)” and the ever-growing online collection of smell related words called *Odorbet* by Catherine Haley Epstein and the author.

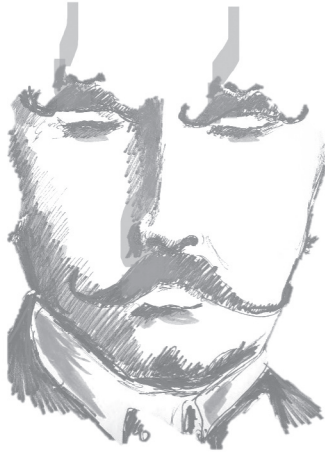


Figure 1. Caro Verbeek, illustration for Marinetti's "Olfactory Gaze", 2021.

## olfactocentrism

What "ocularcentrism" is to the eye, "olfacocentrism" is to the nose. It indicates a worldview in which assumptions are justly or unjustly based on the sense of smell. Coined by art historian and founder of olfactory art history Jim Drobnick in 2006.

## smell museum

In the 1970s, pop artist Andy Warhol expressed his profound wish to establish a smell museum to enable him to travel to the past with his mind through a single inhalation. Preserving scent was a true obsession of his. He collected perfumes and smell related products and called them his *Permanent Smell Collection*. Scents should and could be preserved in archives and museums where they should be presented at nose level. Warhol (1975), *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol. From A to B and Back Again*. See Figure 2.

## B. Sound related words

### **accordi di fetori (stench chords)**

Literally “chords of stench”. The Futurists wanted to include the other side of the dichotomy “fragrant-foul” to heighten a sense of lyricism. The term “perfume chord” was already known, but traditional perfumers did not include malodours. Many scent terms such as “notes”, “chords”, and “compositions” are derived from music. Valentinelli (ca. 1916), *L'arte degli odori*.

### **arpeggio (of thyme and lavender, of rosemary, basil, myrtle, tarragon)**

Literally, a “broken chord” (of thyme and lavender, of rosemary, basil, myrtle, tarragon). An arpeggio consists of a succession of notes rather than a chord played at once. An olfactory arpeggio would consist of rapidly alternating olfactory notes, which – according to the scientist Avery Gilbert – human beings are not able to perceive (unlike mice). The term was used in connection to a scent concert as described by the author Aldous Huxley. Huxley (1932), *Brave New World*.

### **modulazioni olfattive (olfactory modulations)**

Literally “olfactory modulations”. A modulation is a rapid shift from one tone to the next and back again. According to scientist Avery Gilbert, the human sense of smell cannot detect such shifts. Sanzin (1942), *Fiori d'Italia*; Huxley (1932), *Brave New World*.

### **octave of smells**

The perfumer and chemist Septimus Piesse believed that every musical note corresponded to an odorant. Piesse (1857), *The Art of Perfumery*. See also “smound”.

### **profumatóio a tastiera (scent organ)**

Marinetti described a scent organ in a manifesto. It was supposed to answer to individual tastes and be handled by the audience (odience) at their own table. See also “scent organ”. Marinetti (1933), “Teatro totale per masse”; Battaglia (1961), *Dizionario Italiano*

## polifonia di profumi (polyphony of perfumes)

A *polifonia di odori* is a controlled synthesis of different perfumes. Sanzin (1942), *Fiori d'Italia*.

## scent organ

Aldous Huxley's scent organ was able to modulate and switch odours very rapidly. Marinetti probably based his invented word *profumatoio a tastiera* on Huxley's slightly earlier use of the term. Huxley (1932), *Brave New World*.

## semi-odors

Semi-odors are half-notes – like the black keys on a piano – and derived from the “octave of odours” by Septimus Piesse. Piesse (1857), *The Art of Perfumery*.

## smound

A contraction of sound and smell. Septimus Piesse believed that sounds triggered the olfactory nerve and vice versa. According to more recent scientific insights, he was right. Piesse (1857), *The Art of Perfumery*. See Figure 2.



Figure 2. Caro Verbeek, illustration for Septimus Piesse's concept of “smound”, 2021.

## C. Poetry and writing

### idiome des fluids (perfume language)

Literally “grammar of fluids” or the language of perfumes. Huysmans (1884), *À rebours*.

### lirismo olfattorio (olfactory lyricism)

Literally “olfactory lyricism”. See also “stances aromatiques” by Piesse. Valentinelli (ca. 1916), “L’arte degli odori”.

### stances aromatiques (aromatic verse/poetry)

An aromatic wordless type of poetry. Huysmans (1884), *À rebours*.

### syntax/ grammar of perfume

Like language, perfumes are subject to syntax, meaning the notes are interconnected within an olfactory composition, like words and strophes are in a poem. Piesse (1857), *The Art of Perfumery*.

## D. Smell and mind

### narines excédées (extraordinary nostrils/sense of smell)

Literally “extraordinary nostrils”, or a keen sense of smell. Huysmans (1884), *À rebours*.

### odorant souvenir (olfactory memory)

Sensory memory or “Proustian memory” was actually not first described by Proust, but by the “Professor of Beauty”. It refers to a lively, usually early memory evoked by a scent. Montesquiou (1900), *Pays des aromates*.

### odorat, hallucinations de l' (olfactory hallucinations)

The fictional character Des Esseintes smelled things that were not there, so in his mind. Huysmans (1884), *À rebours*.

### **forces odorales (odorous forces)**

Literally “olfactory forces”. The concept was used in in the scented Gesamtkunstwerk *Cantique des cantiques* by Paul-Napoléon Roinard. Roinard (1891), *Les miroirs*.

### **homeopathie nasale (nasal therapy)**

Olfactory therapy, based on the healing power of scent memories. Huysmans (1884), *À rebours*.

### **olfatto-immaginazione (olfactory imagination/olfactorisation)**

There is no word for “olfactory imagination” in Italian (nor in other languages). Marinetti used it in the context of the scent of female skin and how it aroused him (as opposed to perfume). The English translation could be “olfactorisation” (as opposed to “imagination”). Marinetti (1920), *Il lusso femminile*. “Olfactorisation” was coined by the Dutch scientist E.P. Köster.

## **E. Smell concepts**

### **fetori, storia dei (history of stench)**

Literally “history of stench”. Valentinelli wanted to include stench in the re-narrating of the history of smell since usually only perfumes are described. Stench would heighten a sense of lyricism because of the intriguing contrast it would render. Valentinelli (ca. 1916), “L’arte degli odori”.

### **litanie odorante (fragrant prayer)**

Fragrant prayers or burnt offerings were a means to communicate to the gods. Montesquiou (1900), *Pays des aromats*.

### **mise en senteur (scent composition)**

Literally, a “scented composition” derived from “mise-en-scène”; a concept taken from the realm of theatre. It was first used for the scented Gesamtkunstwerk *Cantique des cantiques* by Paul-Napoléon Roinard. Roinard (1908), *Les miroirs*.



## odoresque

Odoresque (adjective) is a fin-de-siècle term opposed to the visually oriented *pitturesque*. It refers to a “scentscape” that stirs the olfactory imagination. First used at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the artist Sadakichi Hartmann, who tried to convey “A Trip to Japan in 16 Minutes” by means of scent in a theatre setting.

## odori, monotonia di (monotony of odours)

Literally “monotony of odours”. The Futurist artist Ennio Valentinelli wanted to replace existing smells attached to buildings with more appropriate ones in line with the activities and functions of public places. Valentinelli (ca. 1916), “L’arte degli odori”.

## ondate olezzatrici / ondes odorantes (fragrant waves)

*Ondata* means “wave”, and *olezzatrice* means “giving of scent”. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, smells were thought to travel through the ether as a vibrating electromagnetic phenomenon. Valentinelli (ca. 1916), “L’arte degli odori”; Huysmans (1884), *À rebours*.

## paesaggio di odori (scentscape)

Marinetti was the first to use the now popularised term “scentscape” for the spatial and temporal organisation of scents. Marinetti (1912), “Manifesto tecnico della letteratura futurista”; Marinetti (1932), “Paesaggio di odori del mio cane-lupo”.

## ritratto olfattivo (olfactory portrait)

Marinetti was the first to use the now popularised term “olfactory portrait”. He described the dynamic scent trail and exhalations of a woman he found attractive and whom he traced by following his nose. Marinetti (1932), “Ritratto olfattivo di una donna”. See Figure 3.

## uniodorità (monodority)

Contraction of *unione* of *unità* (unity) and *odore* (scent). Valentinelli wanted to break

down the dreaded monotony of odours in certain places and argued for a scented narrative in line with the function of a building or environment. Valentinelli (ca. 1916), “L’arte degli odori”.

## F. Scented material

### aeroprofumi (aeroperfumes)

A contraction of *aero* (a prefix invented by the Futurists to indicate speed and modernity) and *profumi* (perfumes). *Aeroprofumi* were typically Italian and modern smells such as lavender from Liguria and bread cooked on car tires. Sanzin (1942), *Fiori d’Italia*.

### conprofumo (harmonic perfume)

A contraction of *con* (with) and *profumo* (perfume). A term used to indicate the affinity of a given perfume with the taste of a certain type of food, such as mashed potatoes and roses. Marinetti and Fillia (1932), *La cucina futurista*.

### disprofumo (dis-perfume, contrasting perfume)

A contraction of *dis* (counter/opposite) and *profumo* (perfume). A term used to indicate the complementary character of a given perfume with the taste of a certain type of food, such as raw meat and jasmine. Marinetti and Fillia (1932), *La cucina futurista*.

### permanent smell collection

In 1975, Andy Warhol imagined a smell museum so certain scents would not go lost forever. He started a “permanent smell collection”, consisting of perfumes, cleaning products and penny slot machines. He only used scented products for three months so that every smell could take him back to a designated time. Warhol (1975), *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol. From A to B and Back Again*.



Figure 3. Caro Verbeek, illustration for Andy Warhol's *Permanent Smell Collection*, which can be seen as a scentscape or even an olfactory portrait of his life, 2021.

### **polibibita (multisensory cocktail)**

The contraction of *poli* (plural/several) and *bibita* (drink). The polibibita is the Italian equivalent for “cocktail”. A polibibita could even consist of sounds. Marinetti and Fillia (1932), *La cucina futurista*.

### **vapofumo (vapodour)**

The contraction of *vapore* (vapour) and *profumo* (perfume) to emphasise the volatility and dynamism of an odorant. Giacomo Balla (1928), *Vapofumo*.

## G. Synaesthesia and cross-modality

### *Colour*

**odore azzuro/azure/opaline, giallo, rosso, verde/vert, turchino, violetto**

blue, yellow, red, green, turquoise, purple odours. Baudelaire (1857), "Correspondences"; Azari (1920), "Milano-Montecarlo in direttissimo Pullman"; Carrà (1913), "La pittura dei suoni, rumori, odori"; Montesquiou (1900), *Pays des aromates*.

**verdeazzurrodorato (greenish-blueish-scent)**

Contraction of *verde* (green), *azure* (blue) and *odorato* (scented). Sanzin (1942), *Fiori d'Italia*.

### *Shape*

**odore concavo, conico, convesso, elissoidale, oblungo, sferico, spirallico, tondo, triangolare**

Concave odour. Carrà (1913), "La pittura dei suoni, rumori, odori"; Marinetti (1933), "Teatro totale per masse"; Marinetti (1932), "Ritratto olfattivo di una donna"; Marinetti (1932), "Paesaggio di odori del mio cane-lupo".

### *Touch*

**odore velutato**

Velvety odour. Marinetti (1932), "Ritratto olfattivo di una donna".

### *Taste*

**aerovivanda (aero-food)**

A contraction of *aero* (a prefix invented by the Futurists to indicate speed and modernity) and *vivanda* (food). A typical aerovivanda contained scents, tastes, sounds and tactile elements. Marinetti and Fillia (1932), *La cucina futurista*.

**caldagrodolce (warmbittersweet)**

A contraction of *caldo* (warm), *agro* (sharp/bitter) and *dolce* (sweet). The Futurists invented many of these types of synaesthetic and multi-sensory words. Marinetti (1932), “Ritratto olfattivo di una donna”.

**sapore-colore-odore (taste-colour-odour/flavour)**

There is no word for “flavour” in Italian, so the Futurists contracted taste, colour and smell to emphasise the synthesis of these sensory stimuli during culinary activities. Marinetti and Fillia (1932), *La cucina futurista*.

**sinottico-singustativo (synoptic-together/syn-gustatory)**

When diverse tastes come together to become a new whole. Marinetti and Fillia (1932), *La cucina futurista*.

Raziskovalka vonjev in umetnostna zgodovinarica dr. Caro Verbeek (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Kunstmuseum Haag) raziskuje olfaktorične neologizme v zgodovinskih virih med letoma 1885 in 1975 za svojo doktorsko tezo z naslovom *V iskanju izgubljenega vonja*. Te neologizme je kategorizirala glede na naslednje teme: poezija, duh, koncepti, material in sinestezija. Trije še neobjavljeni umetniški primeri pomagajo razumeti prej omenjene koncepte, saj čutno zaznavne slike vonjav ne obstajajo. Poleg tega je razvila sinestetski krog vonjav, ki temelji na literarnih virih.

---

**Ključne besede:** futurizem, simbolizem, sinestezija, parfum, neologizem, krog vonjav

---

**Dr. Caro Verbeek** je umetnostna zgodovinarica, kustosinja in ustvarjalna raziskovalka, ki se ukvarja s čutoma voh in dotik ter medčutnimi pojavi sinestezije. Med njenimi knjigami in članki so »Presenting Volatile Heritage« (Future Anterior, 2017), *Something in the Air - Scent in Art* (Villa Rot, 2015) in »Inhaling Memories« (Senses & Society, 2013). Verbeek je ustanovila in vodila več tečajev o čutilih na Kraljevi akademiji umetnosti (Haag) in Univerzi v Amsterdamu. V zadnjih desetih letih je ustvarila številne olfaktorične rekonstrukcije zgodovinskih predmetov in dogodkov. Je glavna kustosinja programa Odorama pri Mediamaticu v Amsterdamu.

caro\_lisette@yahoo.com

The individual experience of everyday city life is essentially an everyday improvisation among other people. It is in urban settings where socially structured formations of daily life meet purely individual situated experience in myriads of spontaneously created and shaped assemblages of everyday life. The visual perception of space, sonic orientation in a given place and olfactory plus tactile experience of the environment are the basic aesthetic performances in cultivating a common urban reality.

The author discusses specificities of anthropological knowledge derived from first-hand experience of the life of other people in the field. To cope with the complexity of everyday urban improvisation, the author employs two ancient Greek terms to define the space of human interaction: *aisthēsis*, i.e., sensory perception, and the complex meaning of the Latin verb *colere*, from which the term culture is derived. The triangulation of everyday improvisation through the sensorial essence of everyday life complements the employment of two other ancient Greek terms, *praxis* and *poiesis*.

The basic empirical materials used to discuss everyday improvisation in an urban environment are collected narrations of sensory perception and individual lives from sensobiographic walks in Ljubljana, Turku and Brighton. Historically, in the West, the dominance of the senses has shifted from sound, touch and smell, orienting people in orally designed cultural domains, to sight.

Smelling is specific embeddedness in place. Its paradoxical position of sensing outside air deeply inside, integrated in breathing, but not always sensing anything special. At the crossroads of distant and close, inner and outer, olfactory experience is simultaneously existentially idiosyncratic and collectively shaped.

The paper's main point is that there are no clear limits between the experienced past and the present. However, both are aesthetically and culturally inscribed in specific registers of individual, social, cultural and embodied memories. The same stands for an ethnographic practice.

Everyday life is a continuum of living, weaved together from many discontinuous contingencies. It consists of incongruent, incomplete and chaotic shifts. Repetitive social activities bring order into this everyday mess: rituals and work. For this reason, repetitive music is inevitable for establishing a common ground of the everyday.

If ethnography ever touches reality, it is a continuous improvisation in everyday life, shared, collective, and peculiar individual improvisation.

---

**Keywords:** aisthēsis, colere, improvisation, social memory, sensorial aesthetics

---

**Rajko Muršič** is a professor of ethnology/cultural anthropology at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology. His research focuses on the anthropology of popular music, theories of culture, epistemology, urban anthropology, methodology of anthropological research, etc. He is the author of a couple of music-related monographs and participates as an expert researcher in the ERC project *Sensotra* (2016–2021).

rajko.mursic@ff.uni-lj.si



# Between *Aisthēsis* and *Colere*: Sensoria, Everyday Improvisation and Ethnographic Reality

---

Rajko Muršič

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology

---

“The Present Epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space.”  
(Foucault 22)

## Introduction: Sensorial aesthetics

The individual experience of everyday city life is essentially an everyday improvisation among other citizens. It is in urban settings where socially structured formations of daily life meet purely individual situated experience in myriads of spontaneously created and shaped assemblages of everyday life. The visual perception of space, sonic orientation in a given place and olfactory plus tactile experience of the environment are the basic aesthetic performances in cultivating a common urban reality.

Communication with other people typically involves the sounds of speaking, tactile communication and the exchange of odours and scents. However, human communication involves participation, activities and various practices, that is, human bodies, as well as feelings, emotions and affects. This mixture is the starting point of anthropological knowledge derived from first-hand experience of the life of other people in the field. The human voice and various sounds, music and dance, are essential parts of any ethnographic experience. In its continuous performance, everyday life – and any possible human existence – involves continuous tactile perception and tasting food, water and other drinks. It is essentially a sensual experience, so Paul Stoller’s warning came surprisingly late: “If anthropologists are to produce knowledge, how can they ignore how their own sensorial biases affect the information they produce?” (7).

To cope with the complexity of everyday urban improvisation, I will employ two ancient Greek terms to define the space of human interaction: *aisthēsis*, i.e., sensory perception, and the complex meaning of the Latin verb *colere*, from which the term culture is derived (i.e., to cultivate, to breed, to inhabit, to honour with worship, and to protect; see Williams 43). The triangulation of everyday improvisation through

the sensorial essence of everyday life will be accomplished by employing two other ancient Greek terms, *praxis* and *poiesis*.

The basic empirical materials used to discuss everyday improvisation in the urban environment are collected narrations of sensory perception and individual lives from sensobiographic walks in Ljubljana, Turku and Brighton.<sup>1</sup> These narrations were collected between 2017 and 2020, primarily induced with topics of urban sensoria. For the presentation in this article, I exposed testimonies on the sensual perception of the city, especially its odours and sounds, mostly from Ljubljana, where I partly participated in sensobiographic fieldwork. Testimonies were initiated by a situated sensorial experience during a walk or specifically initiated in a dialogue on odours, sounds, visualities and the tactile relationship to the space of walking in the city streets.

The paper's main point is that there are no clear limits between the experienced past and the present. However, both are aesthetically and culturally inscribed in specific registers of individual, social, cultural and embodied memories.

## 1. Concepts and contexts

Anthropological reflection of everyday improvisation as the very fundament of the common social reality should begin with aesthetics in its primary sense and the complex notion of culture.

The very term aesthetic was introduced as a new philosophical concept defining the experience of art and its poetics, i.e., the creative sense, only in modernity, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (see Gilbert and Kuhn 1967). The *Online Etymology Dictionary* defines it, "1798, from German *Ästhetisch* (mid-18c.) or French *esthétique* (which is from German), ultimately from Greek *aisthetikos* 'of or for perception by the senses, perceptive,' of things, 'perceptible,' from *aisthanesthai*, 'to perceive (by the senses or by the mind), to feel'" ("Aesthetic" n. d.). At that time, Kant's epochal criticism of the pure mind took aesthetic categories of space and time as fundamental conditions of the mind and being (Kant 2019).

Human culture as a complex active/passive manipulation of human existence (its cultivation, inhabitation, protection and worshipping; see Williams 43) is basically, and essentially sensuous: "Sensation is not just a matter of physiological response and personal experience. It is the most fundamental domain of cultural expression,

<sup>1</sup> The material was collected during the ERC project *Sensory Transformations and Transgenerational Environmental Relationships in Europe, 1950–2020 – SENSOTRA* (2016–2021), under the leadership of Helmi Järviluoma from the University of Eastern Finland. This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No. 694893).

the medium through which all the values and practices of society are enacted” (Howes, *Sensual* xi).

David Howes would further elaborate the sensory environment of everyday existence in “every domain of sensory experience” as “an arena for structuring social roles and interactions” (Ibid.). This arena is where “we learn social divisions, distinctions of gender, class and race, through our senses” (Ibid.). Historically, in the West, the dominance of senses shifted from sound, touch and smell, orienting people in orally designed cultural domains, to sight that came to the fore with literacy (Ong). For centuries, the Western mind was shaped by the capacity of sight:

All men naturally desire knowledge. An indication of this is our esteem for the senses, for apart from their use, we esteem them for their own sake and, most of all, the sense of sight. Not only with a view to action, but even when no action is contemplated, we prefer sight, generally speaking, to all the other senses. The reason for this is that of all the senses, sight best helps us to know things and reveals many distinctions.

Now animals are by nature born with the power of sensation, and from this, some acquire the faculty of memory, whereas others do not (Aristotel 980a).

Only when again challenged with places far away, suppressed senses reinvigorates. In non-European contexts, European philosophers may again turn their attention to smell:

The traveller approaching the New World is first conscious of it as a scent very different from the one suggested back in Paris by the connotations of the word Brazil, and difficult to describe to anyone who has not experienced it. [...] they were like a forest breeze alternating with hot-house scents, the quintessence of the vegetable kingdom, and held a peculiar freshness so concentrated as to be transmuted into a kind of olfactory intoxication, the last note of a powerful chord, sounded separately as if to isolate and fuse the successive intervals of diversely fruity fragrances (Lévi-Strauss 201).

Why? Is it because the world becomes turned upside down? Or is it because the atmospheric change is so radical? Smelling is specific embeddedness in place. Its paradoxical position of sensing outside air deeply inside, integrated with breathing, but not always sensing anything special. At the crossroad of distant and close, inner and outer, olfactory experience is simultaneously existentially idiosyncratic and collectively shaped. In Ljubljana, a walker can face manifold contrast in small distances.

An ageing participant from the Ljubljana walks mentioned that she still remembers some smells and odours from her childhood. The gasoline exhausts of cars were much stronger in the past than they are today.

Space and time – the basic constituents of being – aesthetically shape places. They are

not neutral, just given. We live in space and time, actively, interfering with humans and non-human beings and things, privately and collectively. The space in which we live, a heterogeneous space, is “a set of relations that delineates sites”, irreducible to each other (Foucault 23). Discontinued encounters in experiential space constantly trigger memories of former experiences, providing the basic continuity of our life in endless improvisation, actively and passively perceiving sights, sounds, shapes, smells and tastes. And this is where ethnographers meet “the other”.

## 2. Ethnography as *aisthēsis*: Improvising the poiesis of human life

Ethnography itself should not and cannot essentially differentiate from everyday life, with all its planned routines and unpredictable twists. In its most basic essence, ethnography is an everyday experience. But it is more than just following people’s actual behaviour and practices. Its aim is very complex multi-layered knowledge, contextual, spatial and historical, and not existing before the very fieldwork endeavour. It is a life experience transformed, or translated, into text. Ethnographic knowledge is essentially dialogical and experiential, constantly turning experience into text, imagination into reality, social reality into narratives, and, of course, vice versa. It is simultaneously embedded into social settings, the deeply abstract social reality, connecting experiential emplacements and chronologies with collective memories and creativity. This embeddedness is why ethnography’s social and historical contextualisation as *praxis*, *poiesis* and text inevitably meets the political. And much more: ethnography is itself at the same time theoretical as it provides new knowledge, either from itself, based on expert knowledge of singular cases, or the accumulation of knowledge in general. As any knowledge rests on pre-existing and already accumulated knowledge, it also spontaneously generates knowledge, essentially improvisational and unpremeditated.

Despite various understandings of the “field”, fieldwork is where and how ethnographic improvisation takes place. Anthropological knowledge is primarily derived from actual experience, beginning with active and passive sensation and perception. Fieldwork, even if done online, is work, it is active engagement with other people, living or long deceased, in full or limited sensual connectivity. It means that participant observation includes sight, i.e., actively looking, watching, recognising, seeing and observing various colours and shapes. We surely have to take into account the strength of participant observation, which means that a researcher becomes “the instrument for both data collection and analysis through your own experience” (Bernard 144–145).

While doing ethnographic fieldwork, an ethnographer's everyday life radically changes and daily routines are left far away. However, this new fieldwork experience merges everyday life in a new environment and the everydayness of the participating people. That means that ethnographic fieldwork not only synchronises the lives of previously distant people but, in a sense, establishes a new common reality. Taken from the primary living experience, it is the paramount reality (Schutz 253) for all the people included.

As much as ethnographic experience is embedded in everyday life, there is a contradiction between the vague arbitrariness of everyday life and its regularities. The essential experience of everyday life crisscrosses micro-social formations (kinship-based households, working units, coalitions and voluntary networks) and various arbitrary assembled groupings in a myriad of accidentally emerging situations. Exactly these arbitrarinesses and randomnesses are the essential frame for/of improvisation. The ethnographic endeavour is not finished with the recognition and understanding of formal social formations – it expands into the arbitrary and defines the general of the social: “Everyday life is defined by ‘what is left over’ after all distinct, superior, specialized, structured activities have been singled out by analysis” (Henri Lefebvre quoted in Highmore 3).

The opposite of the everyday are festivities. The carnival, the most typical example of carnivalesque, turning the everyday, with all its solid relations, upside down (Bakhtin), behind the mask, with faces “enlivened by the sensorial exuberance surrounding them”, with some “uncanny, silent face covers” change into “live, intimate and beloved persons”, warmed up “by movement and enveloped in the defeating sound of the feast”, brings forward “the senses of the carnival body” with specific carnival synaesthesia, creating “a collectively vibrating social body” (Panopoulos 44).

Putting together the antinomy of playfulness and rituality, we have to conceptualise ephemeral, seemingly trivial, issues like entertainment and amusement. On the other hand, the paramount reality is obviously something the stage does not give. The staging of phantasm on the theatre stage may easily become more real than the everyday reality. Play and immersion are not limited only to the actors on stage. Still, the very staging provides Aristotelian catharsis for and of those who have no other choice to play their manifold roles in everyday life, without any capacity to intervene into “the script”, other than negative feedback to correct false promises. The illusion of the stage reality is the main aim of a theatre play. However, is everyday paramount reality indeed less illusional?

### 3. The integration of senses in everyday urban environments: Hearing, touching and smelling

Living and moving in our living environment makes a difference: at the level of life, senses are integrated. The body itself demands its own sense for sensing it. Oliver Sacks would have it: "... Our body ego, our sense of self, is formed from the coordination of senses – not just touch and vision but proprioception and perhaps vestibular sensation, too" (212).

Moving in space is a self-understandable part of our daily improvisation. Not only does our body move through space: we as well imagine movement in space and time. Movement through space and time is practical. Praxis, another ancient Greek term, is the nexus of everyday improvisation. It is interrupted by repetitive moves and activities: rhythms of everyday life provide stability in circular time. There is no orientation in space/time without repetitive bodily movement. This is where music becomes inevitable.

Furthermore, exactly due to its repetitive "movement", music is actually the most distinctive from the improvisational flow of everyday life. It transcends sensorial aesthetics of paramount reality. More than that: the realm of music is essentially social, more precisely, social-poetical, in the sense of ancient Greek term *poiesis*, meaning creativity. Therefore, repetitive movement, the practice of walking in ethnographic settings (more on the walking methods in Springgay and Truman; O'Neill and Roberts; Laplante, et al.), typically did not invoke memories of music.

During sensobiographic walks, walkers did not speak of music if they were not directly provoked. Even when music became a topic of discussion, it was mostly induced by the researchers. A typical example is as follows:

R1: Do you listen to music?

YW1: No, that not. It bothers me when people are listening to music out loud. I get it when it's on the headphones, but when you see someone on the bus or when walking and the music is out loud ... it's just, "please don't".

R2: Do you ever listen to music on this route?

YW1: No, I'm rather listening to birds or something. It's calmer, I feel calmer. Cause it's also like that, I go with her on the walk and then ... I'm also calmer and all. I also don't like to talk during the walk ... I don't like to chat with other people during the walk.

Or perhaps in the context of the atmosphere and social life:

R1: I would like to ask you about the atmosphere, right, which you mentioned earlier. You said, well, part of it is the company, the people you're with, and then there's the cold beer that just goes with it.

Y3: Mhm [affirmative].

R1: What else is there? What kind of ... Music? What?

Y3: Yes, yes.

Y3: Music makes all the difference. A place like this, for me, is Gajo (jazz club). Maybe it's too much in ... How would you call it? On a higher level, right. Sometimes you don't feel like going for a beer there, right, but more for a glass of wine, right.

Music is thus either self-understandable scenery of everyday environment or related to specific venues where one encounters it by their choice. It is an integral part of the sound environment, a constant background of existence, thus non-specific. Music is in sharp contrast with odours, scents and perfumes: they are not considered as insensible background – if they are, they are sensitive to other people, not to people who design their personal environment with scents. Perfumes serve as a rather typical example:

A6: You asked me why I remember this scent. It was related to that aunt. My Aunt Ana was ...

Y6: I met her, too.

A6: She was very beautiful, and she has always smelled so nice. And that is what I remember. No matter what I went through, this scent stayed with me. And it still stays. I still feel her, even today.

R2: Could you, please, describe how you feel her, what was the beauty of her smell?

A6: Yes. As a matter of fact, I don't know the beauty, but I know it was; it was unintrusive, mild, related to a kind of calm, restful life. It was related to, I don't know, serenity. It was a very, very soothing scent.

Mentioning places to go out in the summer, Metelkova would easily become the topic of conversation among the younger walkers. In conversation with a younger violin player, it is again the researcher who initiates a longer dialogue on music:

R1: So, what is it about Metelkova, let's say, which are the sensual things that attract you there. I believe that it's the others. Your company, right?

Y3: Yes, but not really that much, you know? I mean, Metelkova stayed in my memory mostly due to Stripburger.

R1: Mhm [affirmative].

Y3: Because we would practice there with Salonski, in that building. And this was a weekly event, right. Maybe we would sometimes grab a beer afterwards. In Celica or someplace else. Then there are all these concerts too. Mostly because of this, yes. Or due to the concerts themselves. It was never "Let's go hang out at Metelkova".

R1: Mhm [affirmative].

Y3: I never experienced that, as there was always a purpose. "Let's go to the concert, and

maybe somewhere else afterwards.”

R1: Mhm [affirmative]. Grab a beer or something.

Y3: Yes ...

R1: Which were your top three concerts?

Y3: The first top concert was by the Kultur Shock at the Gala Hala.

R1: Aha.

Y3: This was some concert, yeah. Again, right, [laughter] I got completely wasted. That was with Bear's Blood.

R1: [laughter] Where?

Y3: In Yalla, yes. And then we drank beer over it. This was with my classmates from college, and on the following day, we had an exam. And I came home at 4.00 a.m. I didn't, I mean. During the exam, I could barely hold my pen, but I passed it. That, that was a pretty good concert. [laughter]

R1: [laughter]

Y3: Another good concert ...

R1: One interjection, sorry.

Y3: Go ahead!

R1: Something I noticed with Kultur Shock. The first time I listened to them, they were TOTALLY awesome. Like, so much. The best that I have seen.

Y3: But then it starts repeating.

R1: Then it repeats itself! Every next concert. Now I just feel towards them.

Y3: [laughter] Yes.

Y3: No, you need to go when you feel like dancing or when you're already slightly wasted. It's more of an experience then. But, yes, I know; I know what you mean.

R1: Yea, yea.

Y3: I have, Like, I have three of their albums in my car, and when I play one of them, I'm like, "OK, I have heard everything."

R1, Y3: [laughter]

R1: No, because. Because many people have told me that was their impression. That their first concert was excellent.

Y3: Yes.

R1: Then, with each concert, they would get worse to the state of meh.

Y3: Yes. So far, I've been to two of their concerts.

R1: Aha.

Y3: That's actually enough for me [laughter]

R1: Aha, yes. I can believe that.

Y3: So, I know what this is all about [laughter].



R1: Yea, yea. OK, next one.

Y3: Well, the next one.

Y3: The next concert was by Vasko.

R1: Aha.

Y3: This one was also in Gala Hala, also good. The third was a concert by a group whose name I have forgotten. That was in Menza.

R1: Mhm [affirmative].

Y3: A! Bad Propaganda.

R1: Mhm [affirmative].

Y3: Yes, yes, yes. It was them. That was also a good concert.

R1: Cool. Do you listen to this music in private, too?

Y3: Yes.

R1: In the car, on headphones, on your phone?

Y3: No. OK. On my SD card, in the car. And that.

R1: Aha. Okay.

Y3: Yes.

R1: On, on, on mobile devices, you don't have it.

Y3: No. I don't even listen to music on my mobile phone.

R1: Aha.

Y3: I stopped using an mp3 player years ago. [laughter]

R1: Okay.

Y3: I don't know. I simply had no more need for these artificial noise producers.

R1: Mhm [affirmative].

Y3: I mean, the artificial noise in the form of music on the iPod.

R1: Mhm [affirmative].

Y3: But I don't know. Now, I simply don't need it anymore. I just need silence.

R1: Mhm [affirmative].

Y3: Sometimes, I don't even have the radio on while driving. It often happens that I come home, and it's just silence. Nothing but silence.

In sensobiographic walks, tactility brought walkers into embarrassment. The following was a bit untypical situation induced by a sculptor:

R3: May I ask something? I noticed you touched this willow.

A3: The weeping willow, yes. I have good memories of the weeping willow.

R3: Indeed?

A3: Well, they seem similar to me. And it is such a beautiful tree.

R3: You always do it, or was it now, because you were left alone, a bit bored?

A3: No, it stood on my path. It was in the range of my arm. Why shouldn't I have caressed it?

R3: Aha. Good [smiling]

A3: Yes.

R3: Interesting.

A3: Clearly, it is related to my profession that I like to touch things. I have to touch them. Sculpturing is an art of touching. Otherwise, the weeping willow is actually such a lyrical tree, isn't it? The most lyrical tree of them all.

R3: You know, I have a very similar impression?

A3: Aha.

RM: [laughing]

A3: How not to? People experience things similarly.

Y3: M-m. [affirmative]

Music is social, but its effects are as well individual and relational. In the spatial and temporal sense, sounds "exist in fields of prior and contiguous sounds" (Feld 78). In relation to sound, the other senses are less relational.

Although olfactory experience is as social as any other sensoria, scent and odours are situational and deeply individual, much closer to individual proprioception than collective sight or hearing. However, the closest sense to define individual realities at the continuum of human sensoria is touch. Touching things relates human beings to material reality, i.e., paramount reality. In *On Phenomenology and Social Relations*, Alfred Schutz would define and develop the concept of the most basic experienced reality as the most fundamental reality human beings share: the very common-sense reality, the objective reality of everyday life, always, and variously taken as granted is exactly the reality where tactile and proprioceptive peculiarities of individual life meet social, even abstract and accumulated social realities people share with other people. Ethnographers should take this reality, or realities in ontological diversity, as truly important.

Following Vincent Crapanzano and his writing about the scenes, in Schutz's phenomenological terms, it is "not only physical objects, facts, and events within our actual and potential reach perceived as such in the mere aperceptual scheme, but also presentational references of a lower order by which the physical objects of nature are transformed into socio-cultural objects" (Crapanzano 389):

Within our ordinary empirical, or, if you prefer, pragmatic assumption, paramount reality is shorn of the fanciful, the temporally, indeed the spatially, capricious – those shiftings of attention that we relate to feelings, emotions, and moods, all of which we

identify with the subjective. They are mere decoration, epiphenomena, or, as some would have it, epiphenomena of epiphenomena. It is to precisely this decoration, these epiphenomena, that I want to draw attention, for, they are, in their own special way, a significant and effective dimension of the world in which we live, think, and act (Ibid.).

To make it clear: exactly the vaguest, most fragile, peculiar, situational, particular, partly accidental, structured, and transitory ever-changing scenes of everyday life improvisations, to some extent as well generalisable Turner's "social drama", or Deleuzian assemblage (*agencement*) becomes the most important entrance into general "human reality", an entrance into anthropological knowledge and wisdom. "Machinic assemblage of bodies, of actions and passion", as well as "a collective assemblage of enunciation, of acts and statements" (Deleuze and Guattari 88) comprises all possible spaces of human encounter, territorial, reterritorial and deterritorial. Everyday improvisation is a phenomenologically irreducible scene we cannot escape: transient, ever-changing, fragile and temporary. Walking, as conducted improvisation, induces specific memories, specific sceneries.

### 3. Conclusion: A continuum of sensations and improvisations, individual and collective

Everyday life is a continuum of living, weaved together from many discontinuous contingencies. It consists of incongruent, incomplete and chaotic shifts. Repetitive social activities bring order into this everyday mess: rituals and work. For this reason, repetitive music is inevitable for establishing a common ground of the everyday.

Sounds and music are thus such self-understandable social grounds and backgrounds of our everyday existence that they do not need – or deserve – many words to talk about them. Human socialness is literally woven from layers of sounds. Only intentionally, they become lifted up and over sounding. Steven Feld brought the Kaluli term *dulugu ganalan* into international scholarship terminology:

The Kaluli term *dulugu ganalan*, "lift-up-over sounding", is a spatial-acoustic metaphor, a visual image set in sonic form and a sonic form set in visual imagery. [...] "Lift-up-over sounding" is always interactive and relational. By calling attention to both the spatial ("lift-up-over") and temporal ("sounding") axes of experience, the term and process explicitly presuppose each sound to exist in fields of prior and contiguous sounds (78–79).

Human everyday improvisation is basically the shared reality of participants in research and researchers. If ethnography ever touches reality, it is a continuous improvisation in everyday life, shared, collective, and peculiar individual improvisation. Ethnography itself, considering at least partly as improvisational practice, is, like learning and

doing, e.g., hunting or weaving, as much mental as bodily (Ingold 324). Therefore, we have to take improvisation much more seriously, both phenomenologically and epistemologically. There is not “any one correct way for anthropologists to approach the study of perception” (Howes, “Reply” 331). And there is no possible improvisation without employing many facets of sensual perception and engagement with the world and other people.

## Literature

- “Aesthetic.” *Online Etymology Dictionary*. [https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=aesthetic&ref=searchbar\\_searchhint](https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=aesthetic&ref=searchbar_searchhint). Accessed 10 August 2021.
- Aristotel. *Metafizika* [Metaphysics]. Založba ZRC, ZRC SAZU, 1999.
- Bakhtin (Bahtin), Mikhail (Mihail). *Stvaralaštvo Fransoa Rablea i narodna kultura srednjoga veka i renesanse* [Rabelais and His World]. Nolit, 1978.
- Bernard, H. Russell. *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. SAGE Publications, 1994.
- Crapanzano, Vincent. “The Scene: Shadowing the Real.” *Anthropological Theory*, vol. 6, no. 4, 2006, pp. 387–405.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi. Continuum, 2004.
- Feld, Steven. “Aesthetics as Iconicity of Style, or ‘Lift-up-over Sounding’: Getting into the Kaluli Groove.” *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, vol. 20, 1988, pp. 74–113.
- Foucault, Michel. “Of Other Spaces.” *Diacritics*, vol. 16, no. 1, 1986, pp. 22–27.
- Gilbert, Katharine Everett, and Helmut Kuhn. *Zgodovina estetike* [A History of Esthetics]. DZS, 1967.
- Highmore, Ben. *The Everyday Life Reader*. Routledge, 2002.
- Howes, David. *Sensual relations: engaging the senses in culture and sensual theory*. University of Michigan Press, 2003.
- . “Reply to Tim Ingold.” *Social Anthropology*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2011, pp. 318–322.
- Ingold, Tim. “Reply to David Howes.” *Social Anthropology*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2011, pp. 323–327.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Kritika čistega uma* [Critique of Pure Mind]. Društvo za teoretsko psihoanalizo, 2019.
- Laplante, Julie, Ari Gandsman, and Willow Scobie, eds. *Search after Method: Sensing, Moving, and Imagining in Anthropological Fieldwork*. Berghahn Books, 2020.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *Tristes Tropiques*. Penguin Classics, 2012.
- O’Neill, Maggie, and Brian Roberts. *Walking Methods: Research on the Move*. Routledge, 2020.
- Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. Routledge, 2012.
- Panopoulos, Panayotis. “Noisy Images, Colourful Sounds: Representing the Senses of the Carnival Body.” *Audiovisual Media and Identity Issues in Southeastern Europe*, edited by Eckehard Pistrick, Nicola Scaldaferrri and Gretel Schwörer, Cambridge

- Scholars Publishing, 2011, pp. 37–50.
- Springgay, Stephanie, and Sarah E. Truman. *Walking Methodologies in a More-than-human World: WalkingLab*. Routledge, 2019.
- Schutz, Alfred. *On Phenomenology and Social Relations*. University of Chicago Press, 1970.
- Sacks, Oliver. *Seeing Voices: A Journey into the World of the Deaf*. Picador, 2012.
- Stoller, Paul. *The Taste of Ethnographic Things: The Senses in Anthropology*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989.
- Williams, Raymond. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Fontana Press, 1983.

**Rajko Muršič** je profesor etnologije/kulturne antropologije na Oddelku za etnologijo in kulturno antropologijo Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani. Njegovo raziskovalno delo obsega antropologijo popularne glasbe, teorijo kulture, epistemologijo, urbano antropologijo, metodologijo antropološkega raziskovanja itd. Je avtor več knjig o glasbi in kot izvedenec sodeluje v raziskavi Sensotra (2016–2021).

rajko.mursic@ff.uni-lj.si

# Med *aisthēsis* in *colere*: senzoričnost, vsakdanja improvizacija in etnografska resničnost

---

Rajko Muršič

Filozofska fakulteta Univerze v Ljubljani

---

Individualna izkušnja vsakdanjega mestnega življenja je v bistvu vsakdanja improvizacija, med drugimi, meščanov. V urbanih okoljih se družbeno strukturirane formacije vsakdanjega življenja srečujejo s povsem individualno situirano izkušnjo v nešteti spontano ustvarjenih in oblikovanih sklopih vsakdanjega življenja. Vizualna percepcija prostora, zvočna orientacija v določenem prostoru ter vohalno in taktilno doživljanje okolja so temeljna estetska dejanja pri kultiviranju skupne urbane resničnosti.

Komunikacija z drugimi ljudmi običajno vključuje zvoke govora, taktilno komunikacijo ter izmenjavo vonjav in vonjev. Toda človeška komunikacija vključuje sodelovanje, dejavnosti in različne prakse, torej človeška telesa pa tudi občutke, čustva in afekte. To je izhodišče antropološkega znanja, ki izhaja iz neposredne izkušnje življenja drugih ljudi na terenu. Človeški glas in različni zvoki, glasba ter ples so bistveni deli vsake etnografske izkušnje. Vsakdanje življenje in vsak človeški obstoj v svojem neprekinjenem delovanju vključuje stalno taktilno zaznavanje in okušanje hrane, vode in drugih pijač.

Ob spoprijemanju s kompleksnostjo vsakodnevnih urbanih improvizacij bom za opredelitev prostora človekove interakcije uporabil dva starogrška izraza: *aisthēsis*, torej čutno zaznavanje, in kompleksne pomene latinskega glagola *colere*, iz katerega izhaja izraz kultura (tj. kultivirati, negovati, naseljevati, častiti in zaščititi). Triangulacijo vsakdanje improvizacije skozi čutno jedro vsakdanjega življenja je mogoče doseči z uporabo dveh drugih starogrških izrazov, *praxis* in *poiesis*.

Temeljno empirično gradivo pri obravnavi vsakdanje improvizacije v urbanem okolju so zbrane pripovedi čutnega zaznavanja in posameznih življenj s senzobiografskih sprehodov po Ljubljani, Turkuju in Brightonu.

Človeška kultura kot kompleksno aktivno/pasivno spreminjanje človeške eksistence (njene gojenja, bivanja, zaščite in čaščenja) je v temelju in svojem bistvu čutna:



»Občutenje ni le stvar fiziološkega odziva in osebne izkušnje. Je najbolj temeljna domena kulturnega izražanja, medij, prek katerega se izvajajo vse vrednote in družbene prakse (Howes, *Sensual xi*).

Zgodovinsko gledano, se je na Zahodu prevlada čutov prevesila od zvoka, dotika in vonja, ki so ljudi usmerjali v ustno oblikovanih kulturnih domenah, k vidu, ki je prišel v ospredje s pismenostjo (prim. Ong). Zahodnjaški um je stoletja oblikovala sposobnost vida.

Šele ko so se znova soočili z oddaljenimi kraji, so potlačeni čuti ponovno oživeli. V zunajevropskih kontekstih so se lahko evropski filozofi spet osredotočali na vonj. Vohanje je posebno pripenjanje v prostor. Njegov paradoksalni položaj je v zaznavanju zunanjega zraka globoko v notranjosti, a ne zazna vedno česa posebnega. Izkušnja vohanja je na stičišču daljnega in bližnjega, notranjega in zunanjega hkrati eksistencialno samosvoja in kolektivno oblikovana.

Prekinjena soočanja v izkustvenem prostoru nenehno sprožajo spomine na nekdanje izkušnje, ki zagotavljajo temeljno kontinuiteto našega življenja v neskončni improvizaciji, aktivnem in pasivnem zaznavanju pogledov, zvokov, oblik, vonjev in okusov.

Glavno sporočilo prispevka je, da ni jasnih meja med doživeto preteklostjo in sedanostjo, čeprav sta obe estetsko in kulturno vpisani v posebne registre individualnih, družbenih, kulturnih in telesnih spominov.

Enako velja za etnografsko prakso. Čeprav se etnografu med etnografskim terenskim delom korenito spreminja vsakdan, njegova siceršnja dnevna rutina pa je zelo oddaljena, njegova nova terenska izkušnja združuje vsakdanjost novega okolja z vsakdanjostjo sodelujočih. To pomeni, da etnografsko terensko delo sinhronizira življenje nekoč oddaljenih ljudi, poleg tega pa v nekem smislu vzpostavlja novo skupno resničnost. Če izhajamo iz primarno življenjske izkušnje, govorimo o najvišji resničnosti (Schutz 253) za vse vključene ljudi. Ravno najbolj nejasni, krhki, svojevrstni, situacijski, partikularni, deloma naključni, strukturirani in prehodni ter vedno spreminjajoči se prizori vsakdanje življenjske improvizacije, do neke mere tudi posploševalna Turnerjeva »družbena drama« ali deleuzovski zbir (*agencement*), se izkažejo kot najpomembnejši načini vstopanja v splošno »človeško resničnost«, antropološko znanje in modrost.

Med senzobiografskimi sprehodi sprehajalci niso govorili o glasbi, če jih k temu niso neposredno spodbudili raziskovalci. Tudi ko glasba postane tema razprave, jo večinoma sprožijo raziskovalci. Glasba je v ostrem nasprotju z vonjavami, dišavami in parfumi: ne velja za neobčutljivo ozadje. Čeprav je vohalna izkušnja tako socialna kot katera koli druga čutna zaznava, so vonj in vonji situacijski ter globoko individualni, veliko bližje individualni proprioceptiji kot kolektivnemu vidu ali sluhu. Vendar je najbližji čut, ki lahko opredeljuje individualno resničnost v kontinuumu človeške čutnosti, dotik.

Vsakdanje življenje je kontinuum življenja, ki ga prepletajo številna neprekinjena naključja. Sestavljeno je iz neskladnih, nepopolnih in kaotičnih preskokov. Ponavljajoče se družbene dejavnosti vnašajo red v to vsakodnevno zmešnjavo: rituale in delo. Zato je ponavljajoča se glasba neizogibna za vzpostavitev skupne točke vsakdanjega.

Če se etnografija kdaj dotakne realnosti, je to neprekinjena improvizacija v vsakdanjem življenju – skupna, kolektivna in svojevrstna individualna improvizacija.



---

# Razprave/Articles

---

Članek obravnava pravljico igro slikarke Alenke Gerlovič (1919–2010) z naslovom *Jurček in trije razbojniki*. Igra je nastala v času 2. svetovne vojne in je izraz avtoričine etične drže do fašizma in nacizma ter vojnih grozot. Kot pokaže analiza, se Alenka Gerlovič s svojo igro uvršča med svetovne mladinske pisatelje, ki so s svojimi deli komentirali vojno dogajanje. Alenka Gerlovič z *Jurčkom* ustvarja »imaginarni zaslon«, ki je publiki v vojnih razmerah omogočil, da je ohranjala distanco do grozodejstev in bil hkrati del antifašističnega boja, tudi kot simbolno orožje in etično dejanje.

---

**Ključne besede:** Alenka Gerlovič, druga svetovna vojna, pravljica igra, subverzivnost, 1944

---

**Milena Mileva Blažič** (raziskovalno področje: humanistika, literarne vede) poučuje mladinsko književnost na Pedagoški fakulteti Univerze v Ljubljani. Področja njenega zanimanja so mladinska književnost, didaktika književnosti, ljudske in literarne pravljice [raziskovalni projekt ARRS], slikanice in primerjalna mladinska književnost, otroški dnevniki v času druge svetovne vojne. Objavlja znanstvene članke v slovenskem in angleškem jeziku.

milena.blazic@pef.uni-lj.si

# Subverzivna mladinska književnost – pravljичna igra Alenke Gerlovič *Jurček in trije razbojniki* (1944) v kontekstu

Milena Mileva Blažič

Pedagoška fakulteta Univerze v Ljubljani

## Opredelitev in obravnava problema

Namen članka je obravnava pravljичne igre Alenke Gerlovič *Jurček in trije razbojniki*, uprizorjene leta 1944, objavljene leta 1950 ter ponovne uprizorjene leta 2015 v Mini teatru.<sup>1</sup> Slovenska ilustratorica Alenka Gerlovič (1919–2010) se je po maturi leta 1937 vpisala na oddelek za slikarstvo Akademije za likovno umetnost v Zagrebu, kjer je leta 1941 tudi diplomirala. Slikarji in slikarke so med letoma 1918 in 1941 najpogosteje študirali slikarstvo na Dunaju, v Münchnu, Pragi in Zagrebu, saj je bila ljubljanska Akademija za likovno umetnost (tedaj Akademija upodablajočih umetnosti) ustanovljena šele 28. oktobra 1945. Tudi Lojze Lavrič (1914–1954), izdelovalec pravljичnih lutk, je študiral kiparstvo na Akademiji za likovno umetnost v Zagrebu (1939–1941) in diplomiral leta 1949 v Ljubljani. Nikolaj Pirnat (1903–1948), ki je narisal risbe za pravljичne lutke, je ravno tako študiral na Akademiji za likovno umetnost v Zagrebu in postal akademski kipar (1925). Od leta 1946 je poučeval risanje na Akademiji upodablajočih umetnosti v Ljubljani. Pirnat je ilustriral dela O. Župančiča *Ciciban* (1932),<sup>2</sup> F. Bevka *Pastirci* (1935) in Manice Koman *Stric s košem* (1937) ter *Teta s cekarjem* (1938).<sup>3</sup>

Mladinska knjiga je leta 1950 v zbirki Lutkovni oder 1 objavila besedilo Alenke Gerlovič *Jurček in trije razbojniki* s podnaslovom *Igra za marionete v štirih dejanjih*. Avtorica je o duhu časa zapisala naslednje misli.

Nikoli prej, ne pozneje nisem živela tako brez vsega in vendar tako povezana z vsem, brez skrbi, srečna [...] Ne, pri tehnikih me niso marali in vendar je bil to nemara najlepši čas mojega življenja. Nikoli več nisem živela mesece in mesece tako blizu naravi. Nikoli več nisem tako verjela v smisel svojega bivanja in dela, ker se nisem nikoli, nikoli več počutila tako tesno povezane s kako človeško skupnostjo za neki cilj. [...] Ljudje okoli mene so bili povečini zelo mladi, malo izobraženi, neslani, tudi surovi, toda vendarle pripravljeni prostovoljno tvegati življenje za nekaj skupnega, velikega.

<sup>1</sup> Gerlovič, Alenka. *Jurček in trije razbojniki*. Režija Robert Waltl, 8. maj 2015, Mini teater, Ljubljana.

<sup>2</sup> Župančič, Oton; Pirnat, Nikolaj (1932). *Ciciban* www.dlib.si.

<sup>3</sup> Koman, Manica (1938). *Teta s cekarjem*. www.dlib.si.

## Jurček in trije razbojniki: igra za marionete v štirih dejanjih, 1944

V prvem dejanju, ki se dogaja v kmečki sobi in kašči, trije razbojniki odpeljejo Jurčkovega očeta in mater ter zažgejo hišo. V drugem dejanju, ki se dogaja na pogorišču, se želi domobranec ali »švabobranec« Janez poročiti s Franco, ki to zavrne, ker njen snubec zapira Slovence, ropa, mori in zažiga hiše. Ker je strahopeten, ji tudi grozi z orožjem. Nadaljuje se dogajanje med Franco, Jurčkom in Pavliho. Tudi Franca odide v partizane, kamor jo povabi Pavliha, »tisti, ki je prišel že enainštiridesetega leta v partizane« (14). V tretjem dejanju, ki se dogaja v partizanskem taborišču, nastopajo komandant oz. trije partizani (komandant Matjaž, Jošt in Grega). Pavliha sporoči komandantu, da se bo poročil s Franco, ki objame komandanta Matjaža, svojega brata. Prizor se zaključi tako, da so vsi združeni v partizanih, tudi Jurček, in pojejo pesem »Na juriš ...«. V četrtem dejanju je dogajalni prostor internacija, taborišče, kjer se nahajata Jurčkova oče in mati. Benito, Fric in Janez se znašajo nad očetom in mamo, povedo jima, da so zažgali njuno hišo. Oče in mati se tolažita, da bo »Jurček zrasel v moža. On vam bo posvetil, razbojniki!« (21). Jurček skoči na oder oz. v taborišče, materi in očetu v naročje, in jima sporoči, da so prišle »naše brigade«: »Prišli so: komandant Matjaž, Pavliha, sosedova Franca. Ta je zdaj tudi v brigadi. S Pavliho sta se vzela. Pa je že taka borka! Da jo vidiš s puško! Živela zmaga! (Skače od veselja)« (Gerlovič 22).

Konec pravljичne igre je pomenljiv, saj se domobranec Janez izgovarja in reče: »Tadva sta kriva, jaz sem samo njihov hlapček. Nisem razbojnik.« Na koncu »trije razbojniki padejo« (Gerlovič 23).

### Tekst in kontekst

V besedilu nastopa dvanajst literarnih likov oz. tri skupine s po tremi liki: v prvi deček Jurček in njegova oče in mati, potem individualizirani kolektivni antijunaki – trije razbojniki (domobranec Janez, fašist Benito in hitlerjevec Fric), trije partizani (komandant Matjaž, Jošt in Grega), potem še Pavliha in Franca ter žival Mula. Na začetku oče žvižga narodno pesem, na koncu jo tudi zapojejo. Prve tri osebe torej vključujejo dečka Jurčka, očeta in mater. V uvodnem zapletu Jurček zamudi domov (mati ga je poslala po kvas, da zamesi kruh), ker je videl, da so trije razbojniki odpeljali očeta deklice Maričke. Kmalu zatem trije razbojniki (Benito, Fric, Janez) obišejo tudi Jurčka, očeta in mater v kmečki sobi in kašči. Simbolično je, da se Benito in Fric zapreta v kaščo s hrano in pijačo pred (domobrancem) Janezom in se sama najesta in napijeta (klobase, potica, štruklji in vino). Potem Benito in Fric nasilno odpeljeta Jurčkova starša in hočeta nasilno odpeljati tudi dečka Jurčka, vendar domobranec Janez reče: »Izpustiva paglavca!« Benito in Janez pa otroku zažgeta hišo, da ne bo imel kje spati. Drugo dejanje se preseli iz kmečke sobe na pogorišče.

Igra je razdeljena na štiri dejanja, dogajalni prostor je v prvem dejanju kmečka soba, kjer nastopata predvsem oče in mati. V drugem dejanju je pogorišče, dogajanje poteka zvečer, osrednji osebi sta Franca in Janez. V tretjem dejanju je dogajalni prostor partizansko taborišče in osrednji lik (komandant) Matjaž. V četrtem dejanju dogodki potekajo v internaciji oz. taborišču, osrednji osebi sta oče in mati, tudi Benito in Fric, v tem delu pride do razpleta in poroke (komandant Matjaž in Franca).

Dogajalni čas je opisan na naslednji način: »Kje so tisti časi. Skoraj sem že pozabila, kakšen je kruh!«; »Oh, kakšni so ti časi!«; »Trije razbojniki se zadnje čase potikajo po dolini.« Čas pisanja (1944) in prva uprizoritev (31. december 1944) pravljične igre je druga svetovna vojna, knjižna izdaja je sledila leta 1950.

Na Silvestrovo 1944. leta je »ansambel« prvega slovenskega partizanskega lutkovnega gledališča prvič nastopil z »Jurčkom« pred nabito polno dvorano v Črmošnjicah. K predstavi je vabil letak s Pavlihovim portretom, razposlana pa so bila tudi tiskana vabila. Da je bilo navdušenje velikansko, ni treba posebej poudarjati. Dva momenta sta bila odločilna; prvič je le malo ljudi doslej sploh videlo lutkovno igro in drugič, snov igre je bila vzeta iz tedanjega življenja naših ljudi, kajti s fašisti, belogardisti in Nemci, ki so pošiljali Slovence v sužnost, je dotlej imel že sleherni opravka. Krepko je pripomogla k uspehu tudi partizanska mula, ki ji sicer ni dano, da bi se razkazovala na »navadnem« odru. (Gerlovič 27)

Nikolaj Pirnat (1903–1948), akademski kipar, ki je diplomiral na Akademiji za likovno umetnost v Zagrebu in se izpopolnjeval v Parizu, je bil med drugo svetovno vojno interniran v Gonarsu. Uveljavil se je tudi kot ilustrator, ki je s plakati in risbami sočasno kritiziral fašizem in nacizem. Že leta 1933 je Pirnat objavil tri pesmi v reviji Ljubljanski zvon na temo: »In vendar hočemo svobodnih cest«. <sup>4</sup> Njegove skice so bile osnova za lutke v igri *Jurček in trije razbojniki: igra za marionete v štirih dejanjih*, 1944.

Na koncu marionetne igre sledi zaključna pesem »Svoboda, svoboda, svoboda zlata,<sup>5</sup> svoboda zlata prišla je spet« (Gerlovič 12). V pravljični igri literarni liki pogosto pejejo: »Oče: žvižga narodno pesem. – Pavliha: Hej, brigade!<sup>6</sup> – Pavliha: Svoboda, svoboda, svoboda zlata, / svoboda zlata prišla je spet« (Gerlovič). V pravljični igri se pojavlja večjezičnost, saj Fric uporablja nemške besede, Benito italijanske. Celotna pravljična igra vsebuje elemente karnevala<sup>7</sup> (M. Bahtin), zato so prisotni tudi elementi ljudske kulture, ki praznuje (Benito poje »Giovinezza«, Fric poje »Siegend wollen wir marschieren in die neue Zeit«, Oče žvižga narodno pesem, Pavliha »Hej, brigade!«) in tudi zasmehuje (Benito: »O mamma mia, o mamma mia!«)

<sup>4</sup> Pirnat, Nikolaj (1933). Pesmi. *Ljubljanski zvon*, letnik 53, številka 6.

<sup>5</sup> Uporaba pridevnika zlat (-a, -o) v besednih zvezah je značilnost ljudskih oz. evropskih pravlji in se imenuje metalizacija (Luthi, Max. *Evropska pravljična forma in oblika*. Sophia, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Bor, Matej. *Hej, brigade!* 1942.

<sup>7</sup> Javornik, Miha. »Dialog, dialogizacija in karnevalsko sprejemanje sveta.« *Jezik in slovstvo*, letnik 34, številka 7/8, 1989, str. 179–182.



Fric: »Imenitno je bilo, nicht wahr?«

Fric: »Kusch!«

Fric: »Luge!«

Fric: »Sehr gut!«

Fric: »Siegend wollen wir marschieren in die neue Zeit.«<sup>8</sup>

Fric: »Verstanden?«

Fric: »Was?« (Gerlovič 7–23)

Benito (poklekne): »Caro partigiano, jaz nočem umreti. Mamma mia! Pieta! Milost!«

Benito: »Kaj, klobasa tvoja? Nič tvoja! Capito?«

Benito: »Marš, subito!«

Benito: (Odide s hlebcom, poje Giovinezso.)

Benito: »Che kapljica! Ah, ah!«

Benito: »O mio bel amore, o cara gospodična.«

Benito: »O, mamma mia, o mamma mia!«

Benito: »Partigiani!«

Benito: »Prav vam je, banditi! Maledetti partigiani!« (Gerlovič 7–23)

V zaključku pravljilne igre, ko Pavliha zapoje pesem o »zlati svobodi«, lahko najdemo povezavo s hipotezo Guntisa Šmidchensa, ki jo je predstavil v knjigi *The Power of Song: Non-violent National Culture in the Baltic Singing Revolution* (2014), da se tudi v pravljilni igri pojavljata »pojoča revolucija« in »moč pesmi«, saj vsi trije pojejo pesmi, ki jim dajejo moč, v kontekstu leta 1944, pri čemer Benito in Fric pojeta svojo himno in tik pred koncem tudi Pavliha zapoje pesem o »zlati svobodi«: »Pavliha: Tiho! V vrsto! Treh krogel je škoda za vas. (Ustrelj. Trije razbojniki padejo. Zbor za odrom poje.)« (Gerlovič 11).

Pravljilna igra je bila ponovno uprizorjena 16. novembra 1983 v Lutkovnem gledališču Ljubljana (v nadaljevanju LGL) v režiji Jelene Sitar in Igorja Cvetka, ter 8. maja 2015 v Mini teatru, režija Robert Waltl.

Konec besedila A. Gerlovič je tudi odprt. Ali je Pavliha, ki je nosilec dejanja, a z elementi humorja, tudi v konec vnesel nonsens, ko »[u]strelj«, ali to pomeni, da [enkrat] ustrelj in da A. Gerlovič uporabi ekspresiven pomen glagola *pasti*, ki ga lahko razumemo dobesedno in/ali metaforično, da trije sistemi (domobranstvo, fašizem, hitlerjanstvo) padejo: »*Trije razbojniki padejo?*«

<sup>8</sup> Podčrtala M. M. Blažič. Germany. Reichsarbeitsdienst in Scheller, Thilo. *Singend Wollen Wir Marschieren: Liederbuch Des Reichsarbeitsdienstes*. 2. izdaja. Potsdam: L. Voggenreiter, 1937.

## Subverzivna mladinska književnost

Jack Zipes, ki je večkrat pisal o subverzivni moči pravljic (*Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 1983, 2006; *The Irresistible Fairy Tales*, 2012; *Workers' Tales*, 2018; *The Castle of Truth and Other Revolutionary Tales*, 2020), med drugim navaja, da je v pravljicah mogoče najti najpomembnejše kulturne in družbene dogodke (Zipes, *Fairy* 1). Zipes v uvodu z naslovom »The Twists and Turns of Radical Children's Literature« knjige J. L. Mickenberg in P. Neila *Tales for Little Rebels: A collection of radical children's literature* (2008) tako omenja, da je vsa književnost ideološka ali politična in da je nemogoče ločiti izobraževanje in zabavo od politike. Kot primer navaja Biblijo in abecednike oz. vse knjige od 16. stoletja, npr. anekdote, biblijske zgodbe, legende, mite, (ljudske) pesmi, pravljice, ki jih otrok doživlja in razumeva. Razumevanje je zapleten proces, pravi Zipes, razumevanje pomeni samorazumevanje in potrjevanje privilegijev (Mickenberg viii).

Navaja različne primere, prvega iz Biblije, *The Child Guide* (1667): »In Adam's fall / We sinned all.« Kot skrajni primer navaja revijo, ki je podpirala abolicijsko gibanje in osvobajanje od suženjstva, *The Slave's Friend* (1836–1839). Zipes pravi, da so politične in socialne skupine, ki so se začele razvijati ob koncu 19. stoletja in še posebej v 20. stoletju, na primer anarhizem, človekove pravice, feminizem, komunizem, socializem, tiste, ki ustvarjajo različna dela, ki so tudi kontradiktorna in drugačna od prevladujočega mišljenja. V knjigi je navedenih nekaj primerov iz abecednika, kjer je pod črko F navedena beseda fašist, narisane pa so tri osebe oz. »trije razbojnik!«: Hitler, Mussolini in Hirohito (Mickenberg 19).

V igri A. Gerlovič se v liku dečka Jurčka zrcali medbesedilnost z arhetipskim likom dečka/hlapca/vajenca (Palčka), ki ga lahko povežemo s člankom J. Zipesa »Odysseus to Thom Thum and Other Cunning Heros« (2002). Zipes piše o pravljичnem liku Palčka, ki predstavlja lik bebčka nižjega (ekonomskega in socialnega) porekla oziroma majhnega ali mladega posameznika, ki ga ogroža arhetip velikana, toda velikan je hkrati arhetip neumnega velikana, ki bi ga v pravljичni igri A. Gerlovič povezali z likom treh razbojnikov.

Zipes poveže lik Palčka z likom Odiseja in velikana s Polifemom, ki je bil močnejši in večji, vendar ga je Odisej premagal oz. je pobegnil iz jame. V pravljичni igri je to lahko internacija/taborišče. Tudi deček Jurček je »prebrisan fant«: »Ti si pa junak, Jurček!«, »Jurček jim [trem razbojnikom] bo že posvetil!« (Gerlovič 8). Zipes razlaga, da pravljичnemu liku podrejenega pomaga samoohranitveni nagon in razum. Podrejeni literarni lik se nauči samonadzora, je pošten, pogumen, pravičen, kar so atributi pravljичnega junaka (M. Luthi). Zipes v pravljичnem liku Palčka najde prvine protestantske etike in samoohranitve. Tako se junak Palček v Grimmovi pravljici pri reševanju konflikta izkaže za posvečenega, ker je pokazal domiselnost, razum ter delavnost in je zato vreden sreče. Podobnost lahko najdemo tudi z likom Jurčka v pravljичni igri, v kateri domala ni čarobnih pomočnikov, četudi je Jurček posebitev pravljичnega junaka (pomaga drugim, rešuje probleme, izpolni nalogo).

## Mladinski pisatelji proti fašizmu in nacizmu

V mladinski literarni vedi je nekaj pisateljic in pisateljev, ki so se kritično in/ali satirično odzivali na drugo svetovno vojno med samo vojno, kar je dragoceno. Med najbolj reprezentativne spadajo finsko-švedska mladinska ilustratorka in pisateljica Tove Jansson, švedska pisateljica Astrid Lindgren (prim. Surmatz), ki je med drugo svetovno vojno delala na pošti v Stockholmu kot cenzorka (brala je pisma, ki so prihajala na Švedsko in odhajala iz nje, ter črtala povedi, ki so omenjale švedsko kolaboracijo z Nemci), potem ilustrator z več kot tisoč ilustracijami, ki sočasno kritizira fašizem in nacizem, Dr. Seuss, s pravim imenom Theodor Seuss Geisel, in slovenska ilustratorka in pisateljica Alenka Gerlovič. Mladinski avtorji, ki so senzibilno predstavljali podobo otroka, npr. T. Jansson v seriji knjig o Muminih in A. Lindgren, ki je s presežnimi mladinskimi romani, npr. *Pika Nogavička*, *Mio, moj sin Mio*, *Ronja, razbojniška hči* idr., motivirala nastajanje *Deklaracije o otrokovih pravicah OZN* (1959) in *Konvencijo o otrokovih pravicah* (1989). Nagrada ALMA (Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award), imenovana »mala Nobelova nagrada«, z nominacijo avtorjev, ilustratorjev, pripovedovalcev in/ali ustanov krepi spoštovanje otrokovih pravic v duhu Astrid Lindgren. Ta je kritiko vojne, nasilja in švedske kolaboracije z Nemci subtilno ter pogumno izražala v mladinskih delih, kar govori o etični drži avtorice, ki ji je v medvojnem in vojnem času grozila tudi smrt.

### Tove Jansson (1914–2001), 1938–1945

Finsko-švedska ilustratorka in pisateljica Tove Jansson, avtorica serije ilustriranih knjig o Muminih, je sočasno objavljala ilustracije v finski satirični reviji Garm (1923–1953) ter kritizirala fašizem in nacizem.

### Astrid Lindgren (1907–2002), 1939–1945

V svojih *Vojnih dnevnikih* je pisateljica Astrid Lindgren (1939–1945), ki je bila med vojno zaposlena na pošti in cenzurirala pisma, ki so bila poslana iz Švedske ali na Švedsko, dobila vpogled v drugo svetovno vojno. Zelo dobro je poznala tedanje razmere, med drugim omenja Hitlerja, Mussolinija, Stalina idr. Ni naključje, da je leta 1943, ko je snovala *Piko Nogavičko*, svoje najbolj znano mladinsko delo, in leta 1944, ko je bila to objavljeno, v poglavju »Pika gre v cirkus« imenovala direktorja cirkusa močni Adolf.

A. Surmatz piše, da je A. Lindgren omenjala mednarodne razsežnosti vojne ne le v *Piki Nogavički*, ampak tudi v mladinskih romanih, nasprotovala je nacizmu, militarizmu, kolonializmu in avtoritetam, npr. cirkusu, policiji, šoli ipd. Zagovarjala je etičnost, pacifizem

(*Brata Levjesrečna, Mio, moj sin Mio, Ronja, razbojniška hči* idr.) in bila proti nasilju, posebej v članku »Never violence!« iz leta 1978, ko je prejela nemško nagrado za mir.

## Dr. Seuss (Theodor Seuss Geisel, 1904–1991), 1941–1943

Znani mladinski pisatelj s pesniškim imenom Dr. Seuss (Theodor Seuss Geisel, 1904–1991) je v letih 1941–1943 narisal več kot 400 političnih karikatur, od katerih je v digitalni zbirki 390 slikovnih karikatur Hitlerja, Mussolinija, Stalina in drugih akterjev druge sv. vojne. Skenirana zbirka je dostopna na spletu v elektronski zbirki in pomeni dragoceno pričevanje, kako so se mladinski pisatelji sredi vojne vihre s karikaturami (in kratkim besedilom) kritično odzivali na drugo svetovno vojno, kar kaže na izjemen civilizacijski pogum.

V slovenščino so prevedene njegove pesniške zbirke *Zelena jajca in krača* (2018; *Green Eggs and Ham*, 1960), *Muc Kapuc* (2018; *Cat in the Hat*, 1957) in *Lisica Nogavica* (2018; *Fox in Socks*, 1965).

## Lojze Kovačič (1928–2004)

Po do zdaj znanih podatkih sta prvi objavi Lojzeta Kovačiča, tudi mladinskega klasika, iz leta 1947. Gre za kratko prozo oz. dva fragmenta: *Maruška* in *Zgodba iz našega mesteca*. Fragment *Maruška* je bil objavljen novembra leta 1947 v literarnem glasilu dijakov dijaškega doma Ivana Cankarja Mi mladi. Isto glasilo je decembra 1947 objavilo odlomek iz istoimenske novele *Zgodba iz našega mesteca*. Besedilo oz. fragment je zanimiv tudi zato, ker je v njem omenjen Adolf Hitler z »odrezavim glasom«: »V našem mestecu je živel Herman Heller, upokojeni orožnik. Podedoval je za svojim bratom, ki je vrsto let prebival pri nas in je bil menda visok uradnik, hišo in park ob občinski cesti. Hiša je bila že stara, zidana v bavarskem slogu, z nizko leseno streho in zelenimi oknicami. Park je mejil na cesto z visoko živo mejo, na drugi strani pa je bil odprt v negovan bukov gozd, ki je tudi Hellerjeva last.«

V nadaljevanju avtor opisuje Hellerjevo življenje in kako ga »ženina smrt« ni prizadela. Na šesti strani je zapisal: »Radio je zahreščal. Govoril je Adolf Hitler iz Monakova.<sup>9</sup> Odrezavi glas je planil v višino in odjeknil po praznih jutranjih ulicah. Nato se je začelo živalsko tuljenje in cepetanje tisoč nog« (Kovačič 13).

<sup>9</sup> Podčrtala M. M. Blažič. <https://www.lg-mb.si/f/docs/predstave/LOJZE-KOVACIC-mladinski-pisatelj-lekt.pdf>. [Dostop: 15. 9. 2021]

## Alenka Gerlovič (1919–2010), 1944, 1950

Alenka Gerlovič se je tako kot zavedni svetovni mladinski avtorji vključila v humanistično kritiko fašizma in nacizma v času le-tega, kar je zahtevalo poseben pogum. K tej kritiki je dodala še kritiko domačih izdajalcev oz. kolaborantov. Tako kot relevantni svetovni mladinski pisatelji se je za sodelovanje proti fašizmu in nacizmu odločila zaradi etičnih razlogov.

Marionetna igra *Jurček in trije razbojniki* (1950), ki je predmet pričujočega članka, se rahlo razlikuje od partizanske lutkovne igre, uprizorjene leta 1944, v kateri nastopa tudi lutka Lili Marlen, ki poje pesem (to pesem je pela avtorica, A. Gerlovič). Ravno tako v prvi verziji nastopa mula, ki je v besedilu le omenjena, pojavi pa se tudi mornar, ki ga v novejšem besedilu ni. V partizanskem lutkovnem gledališču so nastopili še Telovadec na drogu, Klovn, Hitler, trije razbojniki, Lili Marlen, Pijani mornar, Pavliha in Mula.



Predstava *Jurček in razbojniki* v lutkovnem gledališču v frančiškanski cerkvi v Ljubljani. Ljubljana, 28.6.1945. Foto: Milan Kranjc, hrani: Muzej novejšje zgodovine Slovenije.



Lutke lutkovne predstave *Jurček in razbojniki*. Črnomelj, 12. februar 1945. Foto: Stane Viršek, hrani: Muzej novejšje zgodovine Slovenije.



Lutke lutkovne predstave *Jurček in razbojniki*. Črnomelj, 12. februar 1945. Foto: Stane Viršek, hrani: Muzej novejšje zgodovine Slovenije.

## Kritična presoja relevantne literature

Partizansko lutkovno gledališče je marionetno igró *Jurček in trije razbojniki* krstno uprizorilo 31. decembra 1944 v Črmošnjicah. Lutkovno gledališče Ljubljana je 16. novembra 1983<sup>10</sup> premierno uprizorilo rekonstrukcijo prve predstave po izvirnih skicah, zato predstavljam nekaj pozitivnih odzivov (I. Gregorač, E. Majaron, M. Dekleva, S. Godnič) na uprizoritev oz. partizansko lutkovno gledališče.

V gledališkem listu je Ignac Gregorač takole povzel uvod h knjigi Alenke Gerlovič *Partizansko lutkovno gledališče* iz leta 1979: »[I]zjemen kulturni ustvarjalni pojav v Jugoslaviji, da Evrope niti ne omenjamo« (Gregorač). Pravi, da so lutke izražale kritiko vojne in so motiv umetnosti zoper »banalnost zla« (H. Arendt, S. Žižek) oziroma da so v literarnem kontekstu Orfejev mit, ko se Orfej s petjem in igranjem na liro bori za vrnitev Evridike iz Hada. »[T]rdno in močno vero slovenskega naroda, da bo zmagal v silovitem boju za svoje življenje, za svobodni danes, za svoj in svobodni jutri« (Gregorač).

Edi Majaron je v istem gledališkem listu zapisal:

V grafičnem ateljeju Centralne tehnike v Črmošnjicah, ob robu Kočevskih gozdov, je pod rokami Lojzeta Lavrica v toku leta 1943 in 1944 nastalo 16 lutk – marionet. Prvič so nastopile na Silvestrovo pred tamkajšnjo artilerijsko brigado z nizom točk, ki so izhajale iz sokolske tradicije. Ker je bil program kratek, so partizanski lutkarji po Novem letu naštudirali še igró »Jurček in trije razbojniki«, ki jo je napisala in režirala Alenka Gerlovič, pa tudi osnutki za sceno so bili njeno delo.

Od takrat so partizanske lutke obiskale precej sveta. Najprej so potovale po Beli krajini in Gorskem Kotarju, do osvoboditve v Vinici, potem po vsej Sloveniji, dokler niso dokončno dobile častno mesto v Muzeju narodne osvoboditve Slovenije. Pa ne za stalno: večkrat jih člani ljubljanskega lutkovnega gledališča ponovno popeljejo pred občinstvo, v letu 1981 celo do daljne Kitajske. Povsod so bile deležne velike pozornosti.

Milan Dekleva se je v članku »Med spominom in sodobnostjo« oz. ob obnovitvi igró *Jurček in trije razbojniki* v Muzeju revolucije Igorja Cvetka in Jelene Sitar afirmativno izrazil o igri in »revolucionarnem prerodu«: »Obnova ‚Jurčka‘ je tako obnova duhovne smelosti malega ljudstva, ki v središču, v epicentru nerazumnega divjanja, osnutek ‚Partizansko lutkovno gledališče‘ in s tem – ob vseh drugih znamenjih nepreklicnega odra – napove revolucionarni prerod svoje kulturne samobitnosti« (Dekleva).

Ob ponovni uprizoritvi *Jurčka* je Stanka Godnič zapisala, da so se ljubljanski lutkarji vrnili »k tem izhodiščem, da bi počastili poseben dogodek – delovanje edinega partizanskega lutkovnega gledališča v drugi svetovni vojni. Njegova zibelka so bile Črmošnjice na Silvestrovo leta 1944. [...] In tonski zapis petja Alenke Gerlovič, ki je prepevala Lili Marlen« (Godnič).

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.mini-teater.si/si/articles/3105/jurcek-in-trije-razbojniki> [Dostop: 1. 11. 2021]

Mini teater je rekonstruiral in uprizoril predstavo *Jurček in trije razbojniki* partizanskega lutkovnega gledališča z 31. decembra 1944. Lutke so bile narejene po izvornih lutkah L. Lavriča iz leta 1944, scenografija pa po izvornih skicah Alenke Gerlovič. Premiera v Mini teatru je bila 8. maja 2015.

## Ugotovitve

Glavni literarni liki so arhetipski: deček Jurček (arhetip pravljичnega junaka z vsemi atributi) se ne le kot začuden opazovalec, temveč kot aktivni soudeleženec sooči »z zmajem, ki ima dvanajst glav« (Luthi 3), v pravljичni igri se sooči s tremi razbojniki. Pravljичni Jurček uspe rešiti nalogo: »Kje bom pa zdaj doma, Franca? [...] Ko bi to oče vedel! In mamica! – Našo hišo! [...] Čakajte, tolovaji! To boste drago plačali! Mislite, da vam ne bom kos, ker sem majhen in sam na svetu? Če ste mi očka vzeli, vam bom pa jaz posvetil kot odrasel mož« (Gerlovič 13).

Gerlovič in nekateri svetovni mladinski pisatelji so se na svoj način, eksplicitno ali implicitno, odzivali na drugo svetovno vojno, predvsem na antagoniste, Hitlerja, Mussolinija in Stalina, ameriški mladinski pisatelj Dr. Seuss pa je bil razgledan po svetu in je kritično omenjal tudi druge neevropske države (Afrika, Japonska, Kitajska idr.) Tudi slovenska mladinska ilustratorka in pisateljica A. Gerlovič je bila del mednarodnega konteksta, ki je povezoval etiko in literaturo, posebej mladinsko.

Igra Alenke Gerlovič vsebuje poroko in srečni konec (Pavliha in Franca). Ob junaku Jurčku stojijo še trije protijunaki – trije razbojniki. Ravno ta motiv – otrok kot junak in trije razbojniki kot protijunaki – je podoben in hkrati različen kot pri sodobni pravljici, ki je tudi izšla v slikaniški knjižni obliki: *Trije razbojniki* Tomija Ungererja, vendar brez kakršnekoli podobnosti s tremi razbojniki<sup>11</sup> A. Gerlovič. V njej je glavni literarni lik deklica, ki na koncu spremeni tri razbojnike v poštene like. Pri A. Gerlovič je konec drugačen – trije razbojniki (Hitler, Mussolini in domobranec Janez) verjetno končajo tragično: »Pavliha: (Ustrelj. Trije razbojniki padejo.)« Konec je lahko implicitno komičen, en strel, trije razbojniki padejo? Tudi sam literarni lik Pavlihe v slovenski literarni zgodovini ima ekspresiven pomen.

Marionetna igra je tudi večjezikovna. A. Gerlovič uporablja ljudske besede (bajta, cula, izba, kamra, kašča), ekspresivne izraze (grunt, kapljica /vino/, paglavec, štemana, tolovaj), italijanščino (»O mio bel amore, o cara gospodičina«; »Poje Giovinezza«; »Caro partigiano, jaz nočem umreti. Mamma mia! Pieta! Milost!«) in nemščino (»Aufstehen und grüssen, verfluchte«). Humorni elementi (bušniti v smeh, dušiti se od smeha, pavliha /šaljiva figura v lutkovnem gledališču/, planiti v smeh, smejati se, šaliti se, zasmejati

<sup>11</sup> Ungerer, Tomi. *Trije razbojniki*. Mladinska knjiga, 2010.



se idr.) V pravljčni igri so uporabljeni številni frazemi in/ali ekspresivni izrazi (npr. biti fant od fare, biti kos, bog, imeti v želodcu /tri razbojnik/, kršenmatiček /medmet/, pasti z lune, polna mera, posvetiti, povedati v brk, zastati srce, vleči koga/kaj /»Ali me vlečeš?«/ idr.), s katerimi avtorica slikovito izraža ljudsko modrost in smeši antijunake.

Pravljčna igra *Jurček in trije razbojniki* je prostor svobode, značilno je, da je besedilo namenjeno otrokom, kontekst pa odraslim (Seifert 45), na primer:

- Benito z vžigalicami zažge hišo, domobranec Janez mu »poda vžigalice«. Za karakterizacijo Benita avtorica uporablja izraze »plašno«, »poklekne«, »zelo plašno« in s tem slogovno ponazarja njegov značaj.
- Franca (Janezu): »Pravijo, da si za hlapca pri razbojnikih, da jim pomagaš ropati in moriti. Kadar si delijo plen, te naženejo« (Gerlovič 12).
- Fric: hitlerjevec, pogrkuje, poglavar.
- Janez: hlapček, jeclja, priliznjeno, ponižno, strahopetec, s tresočim glasom, uslužno, zajec ipd.
- Avtorica označi tri razbojnik kot grdobe, hude, klavrne, ker morijo, plenijo, požigajo, ropajo, strašijo, ustrahujejo, zapirajo (Slovence).

Miklavž Komelj v članku »O slikarstvu Alenke Gerlovič« o njeni angažiranosti in etičnosti v kontekstu antifašističnega boja:

Alenka Gerlovič je kot slikarka v javnosti prvič nastopila med drugo svetovno vojno s svojimi partizanskimi grafikami, plakati in scenografijo na osvobojenem ozemlju v Beli krajini. Tak začetek javnega delovanja je bil skrajno angažiran in poudarjeno etičen: njena partizanska dela so dokumenti njene jasne in brezkompromisne pozicije v kontekstu antifašističnega boja, obenem so ob svojem nastanku – tako kot vsa partizanska umetnost – pomenila tudi simbolno orožje v tem boju. (985)

Na temelju študija virov in literature ter konteksta je razvidno, da se je A. Gerlovič tudi s pravljčno igro *Jurček in trije razbojniki* (1944), ki je v pričujočem članku osrednji predmet obravnave, vključila v kontekst kritike fašizma in nacizma, ki so jo izražali mladinski avtorji in/ali ilustratorji, kot so T. Jansson, A. Lindgren, Dr. Seuss, L. Kovačič idr. Mladinska književnost je navkljub dejstvu, da je na obrobju literarnega sistema književnosti za odrasle, hkrati prostor svobode. Ravno v kontekstu časa druge svetovne vojne je pravljčna igra, ki v temelju obravnava dobro in zlo, etično dejanje v času in proti »banalnosti Zla« (Žižek 62). Na koncu lahko parafraziramo Žižkovo misel, da so avtorica in drugi avtorji v kontekstu druge svetovne vojne z lutkovno predstavo oz. pravljčno igro in humorjem ohranjali distanco do grozodejstev in vednosti o njih. Lutkovni oder oz. pravljčna igra je »imaginarni zaslon« (Žižek 62), ki je avtorjem lutkovne igre v vojnih razmerah kot subjektom omogočil, da ohranjajo distanco do grozodejstev in so hkrati del antifašističnega boja, tudi kot simbolno orožje in etično dejanje (Komelj 985).



## Literatura

- Blažič, Milena Mileva. *Lojze Kovačič – mladinski klasik*. Lutkovno gledališče, 2019, <https://www.lg-mb.si/f/docs/predstave/LOJZE-KOVACIC-mladinski-pisatelj-lekt..pdf>. Dostop 1. sep. 2021.
- Dekleva, Milan. »Med spominom in sodobnostjo.« *Dnevnik*, 22. november 1983.
- Gerlovič, Alenka. *Jurček in trije razbojniki. Igra za marionete v štirih dejanjih*. Mladinska knjiga, 1950.
- Gregorač, Ignac. »Iz uvoda h knjigi.« *Jurček in trije razbojniki*, Alenka Gerlovič, Lutkovno gledališče Ljubljana, 1983, str. 2.
- Godnič, Stanka. »Gledamo poslušamo ... ocenjujemo.« *Delo*, 18. november 1983.
- Javornik, Miha (1989). »Dialog, dialogizacija in karnevalsko sprejemanje sveta.« *Jezik in slovnstvo*, letn. 34, št. 7/8, str. 179–182.
- Komelj, Miklavž. »O slikarstvu Alenke Gerlovič.« *Sodobnost (1963)*, letn. 69, št. 7/8, 2005, str. 985–95, [www.dlib.si/?URN=URN:NBN:SI:DOC-AUICF50Z](http://www.dlib.si/?URN=URN:NBN:SI:DOC-AUICF50Z).
- Kovačič, Lojze. »Maruška.« *Mi mladi: literarno glasilo dijakov dijaškega doma Ivana Cankarja*, št. 1 (november), 1947, str. 2–4.
- Lindgren, Astrid, in Vang-Nyman, Ingrid. *Pika Nogavička*. Prevedla Kristina Brenkova, ilustrirala Marlenka Stupica, Mladinska knjiga, 2012.
- Luthi, Max. *Evropska pravljica: forma in narava*. Sophia, 2011.
- Majaron, Edi. »Iz uvoda h knjigi.« *Jurček in trije razbojniki*, Alenka Gerlovič. Lutkovno gledališče Ljubljana, 1983, str. 2.
- Mickenberg, Julia L., in Nel, Philip. *Tales for little rebels: a collection of radical children's literature*. New York UP, 2008.
- Scheller, Thilo. *Singend Wollen Wir Marschieren: Liederbuch Des Reichsarbeitsdienstes*. 2. izdaja. Voggenreiter, 1937.
- Seifert, L. C. *Fairy Tales, Sexuality, and Gender in France, 1690–1715*. Cambridge UP, 2006.
- Seuss Geisel, Theodor. »Dr. Seuss Collection.« *Special Collections & Archives of the UC San Diego Library*, <https://library.ucsd.edu/research-and-collections/collections/special-collections-and-archives/collections/the-dr-seuss-collection.html>. Dostop 1. sep. 2021.
- Surmatz, Astrid. »International politics in Astrid Lindgren's works.« *Barnboken*, letn. 30, št. 1–2, 2007, str. 24–37.
- Ungerer, Tomi. *Trije razbojniki*. Mladinska knjiga, 2010.

Zipes, Jack. »From Odysseus to Tom Thumb and Other Cunning Heroes.« *The Brothers Grimm*, Jack Zipes. Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, str. 91–106.

Zipes, Jack. *Fairy tales and the art of subversion : the classical genre for children and the process of civilization*. Routledge: Taylor & Francis, 2006.

Zipes, Jack. »The Twists and Turns of Radical Children's Literature.« *Tales for little rebels: a collection of radical children's literature*, Julia L. Mickenberg in Philip Nel. New York UP, 2008, str. vii–ix.

Žižek, Slavoj. *Kuga fantazem*. Društvo za teoretsko psihoanalizo, 1997.

The article deals with the puppet play by the painter Alenka Gerlovič (1919–2010), entitled *Jurček in trije razbojniki* (*Jurček (George/Georgie) and the Three Thieves*). The play premièred at the Partisan Puppet Theater in 1944 and was published in 1950, with pictures from the puppet show. It is an expression of the author's ethical attitude towards Fascism and Nazism and the horrors of war. As the analysis shows, Alenka Gerlovič's play places her among the world's leading youth writers who have commented on the events of the war. Alenka Gerlovič uses *Jurček* to create an "imaginary screen" that allowed the audience to maintain a distance from the atrocities in the wartime situation and at the same time to be part of the anti-fascist struggle, also as a symbolic weapon and ethical act.

---

**Keywords:** Alenka Gerlovič, World War II, puppet play, subversiveness, 1944

---

**Milena Mileva Blažič, PhD**, (research area: humanities, literary studies) is a professor of children's literature at the Faculty of Education of the University of Ljubljana. Her areas of interest include children's literature, pedagogy of children's literature, folk tales and fairy tales (ARRS research project), picture books and comparative children's literature, children's diaries in World War II. She has published articles in Slovenian and English in these research areas.

milena.blazic@pef.uni-lj.si

# Subversive Children's Literature - a Puppet Play *Georgie and the Three Thieves* by Alenka Gerlovič in the Context

---

Milena Mileva Blažič

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education

---

In the field of children's literature, a few authors have dealt critically with World War II. The most representative creators are the Finnish-Swedish illustrator and author Tove Jansson, the Swedish writer Astrid Lindgren (cf. Surmatz), who worked as a censor at the *Stockholm Post* during World War II, and the illustrator with more than a thousand illustrations who criticised fascism and Nazism at the same time, Dr Seuss (Theodor Seuss Geisel), etc.

Slovenian children's book authors were also critical during World War II. The article deals with the puppet play by painter Alenka Gerlovič (1919–2010) entitled *Jurček in trije razbojniki* (Jurček (Georgie/George) and the Three Thieves). The play premiered in 1944 and was published in 1950. In 2015, Ljubljana's Mini Teater presented a reconstruction of the play. Gerlovič was a co-founder of the Partisan Puppet Theatre within the Sokol movement based on the Czech model (1939). She participated as a director, puppet actor and set designer.

In the text *Jurček and the Three Thieves*, twelve literary characters or three groups of three characters appear. First, the boy Jurček (George/Georgie) and his father and mother, then the individualised collective anti-heroes – the Three Villains (the Home Guard member Janez (John), the fascist Benito and Hitler's Fric), the Three Partisans (Commander Matjaž (Matthew), Jošt (Jo[b]st) and Grega (Georgie)), then Pavliha (a Slovenian variant of the puppet character as Kasperle, Punch, Petrushka, Pulcinella, Punch, etc.), Franca (Francis) and the animal Mula (Mule).

The puppet show contains elements of carnival or folk culture (Bakhtin), such as celebration and laughter. At the end of the puppet show, Pavliha sings a song about "golden freedom". Here we find a connection to Guntis Schmidchens's hypothesis,

which he presents in his book *The Power of Song: Nonviolent National Culture in the Baltic Singing Revolution* (2014). Schmidchens states that the “singing revolution” and the “power of song” are also present in the puppet theatre, as all three characters sing songs, which gives them power.

Jack Zipes has written repeatedly about the subversive power of fairy tales (*Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 1983, 2006; *The Irresistible Fairy Tales*, 2012; *Workers' Tales*, 2018; *The Castle of Truth and Other Revolutionary Tales*, 2020). He argues that we find the most important cultural and social events in fairy tales (Zipes, *Fairy 1*). In the introduction to J. L. Mickenberg and P. Neil's book *Tales for Little Rebels: A Collection of Radical Children's Literature*. Zipes mentions that all literature is ideological or political; it is impossible to separate education and entertainment from politics.

Gerlovič's play reflects intertextuality with the archetypal figure of the boy or apprentice (Thumbelina) in the character of the boy Jurček, which can be related to the article by J. Zipes, “From Ulysses to Tom Thumb and Other Cunning Heroes”. Zipes writes about the fairy tale figure of the dwarf, who is the figure of the simpleton of low (economic and social) origin or the small or young individual (Jurček/Georgie) threatened by the archetype of the giant (Home Army, Fascism, Nazism). Still, the giant is also the archetype of the foolish giant, which is related to the figure of the three bandits in Gerlovič's puppet show. Zipes connects the figure of the dwarf with that of Odysseus and the giant with Polyphemus. Polyphemus was stronger and taller but was defeated by Odysseus or escaped from the cave.

The puppet show is also multilingual. Gerlovič uses folk words, expressive meaning, Italian and German languages. The puppet play *Jurček and the Three Thieves* is like a space of freedom, which is characterised by the fact that the text is for children and the context is for adults (Seifert 45).

Based on an examination of the text *Jurček and the Three Thieves* (1944) as well as the context, it becomes clear that with this puppet show, Gerlovič also belongs to the context of the criticism of fascism and Nazism, expressed by youth authors and/or illustrators such as T. Jansson, A. Lindgren, Dr Seuss, etc.

Although youth literature is on the periphery of the adult literary system, it is also a space of freedom. Especially in the context of World War II, the puppetry play, which is basically about good and evil, is an ethical act in time and against the “banality of evil” (Žižek 62). To summarise, we can paraphrase Žižek's thought that in the context of World War II, Gerlovič and other writers used puppetry and humour to maintain a distance from the atrocities. Puppetry as an “imaginary screen” (Ibid.) enabled the Slovenian partisan puppet theatre during World War II to distance itself from the atrocities and at the same time be part of the anti-fascist struggle, also as a symbolic weapon and ethical act (Komelj 985).



Avtorica v članku analizira primer besedila in njegove uprizoritve, ki ju je navdihnili nenadna smrt v ožji ustvarjalni ekipi njenega avtorja. Kanadsko-libanonski dramatik, režiser in igralec Wajdi Mouawad je v solo predstavi *Inflammation du verbe vivre* (*Vnetje glagola živeti*), uprizorjeni v pariškem gledališču Théâtre National de la Colline leta 2015, prepletel antično grško literarno in mitološko izročilo z osebno izpovedjo o izgubi prijatelja in sodelavca Roberta Davreuja, vse to pa nadgradil še z družbenokritičnim prikazom razmer v sodobni Grčiji. Predstava je nastala kot predzadnji del cikla uprizoritev sedmih ohranjenih Sofoklejevih tragedij s skupnim naslovom *Le dernier jour de sa vie* (*Zadnji dan njegovega življenja*), ki jih je Mouawad nameraval režirati v Davreujevih novih prevodih. Proces žalovanja ob smrti, ki je zaustavila projekt, je povezal z dokumentiranjem procesa nastajanja besedila, ki ga je v obliki svojevrstne gledališko-cinematične žalostinke tudi režiral in v njej nastopil. Lik Filokteta je spojil z likom Odiseja, toda ne tistega, ki si v Sofoklejevi tragediji prizadeva, da bi mu s spletko izmaknil lok, temveč tistega, ki pri Homerju po zavzetju Troje deset let išče pot domov na Itako in ki v podzemlju obišče senco Tejrezija.

---

**Ključne besede:** smrt, žalovanje, gledališče, tragedija, ep, mit, žalostinka, prerokba, antika, telo, rana, spol

---

**Petra Pogorevc** je diplomirala iz primerjalne književnosti in literarne teorije ter angleškega jezika na Filozofski fakulteti v Ljubljani. Med letoma 1993 in 2007 je delovala kot novinarka, kritičarka, publicistka in prevajalka, leta 2007 pa se je zaposlila v Mestnem gledališču ljubljanskem kot dramaturginja in urednica zbirke Knjižnica MGL. Leta 2017 se je vpisala na doktorski študij na Oddelku za dramaturgijo in scenske umetnosti na AGRFT v Ljubljani.

petra.pogorevc@siol.net

## Rana in potovanje -

# Sofoklejev *Filoktet* in Homerjeva *Odiseja* v drami in uprizoritvi *Inflammation du verbe vivre* (Vnetje glagola živeti) Wajdija Mouawada

---

Petra Pogorevc

Mestno gledališče ljubljansko

---

### Zaustavljen projekt in Filoktetova rana

Kanadsko-libanonski dramatik, režiser in igralec Wajdi Mouawad je v svoji solo predstavi *Inflammation du verbe vivre* (Vnetje glagola živeti), nastali v pariškem gledališču Théâtre National de la Colline leta 2015, prepletel antično grško literarno in mitološko izročilo z osebno izpovedjo o izgubi prijatelja in sodelavca Roberta Davreuja, vse to pa nadgradil z družbenokritičnim prikazom razmer v sodobni Grčiji. Predstava je nastala kot predzadnji del cikla uprizoritev vseh sedmih ohranjenih Sofoklejevih tragedij s skupnim naslovom *Le dernier jour de sa vie* (Zadnji dan njegovega življenja), ki jih je Mouawad nameraval režirati v Davreujevih novih prevodih. Prvi del *Des femmes* (Ženske) je leta 2011 zaobjel uprizoritve *Trahink*, *Antigone* in *Elektre*, v drugem delu *Des héros* (Heroja) sta bila leta 2013 uprizorjena *Ajant* in *Kralj Ojdip*, tretji del *Des mourants* (Umirajoči) pa je leta 2015 v predstavah *Inflammation du verbe vivre* in *Les Larmes d'Oedipe* (Ojdipove solze) povezal še *Filokteta* in *Ojdipa v Kolonu*.

Pesnik, pisatelj in prevajalec Robert Davreu je umrl 25. novembra 2013 v Parizu, ne da bi prevedel zadnji dve tragediji, Mouawad pa je proces žalovanja ob njegovi smrti povezal z dokumentiranjem procesa nastajanja besedila *Inflammation du verbe vivre*, ki ga je v obliki svojevrstne gledališko-cinematične žalostinke tudi režiral in v njej sam nastopil. Lik Filokteta je v njem spojil z likom Odiseja, vendar ne tistega, ki si v Sofoklejevi tragediji prizadeva, da bi mu s spletko izmaknil lok, temveč tistega, ki pri Homerju po zavzetju Troje deset let išče pot domov na Itako in ki po nasvetu Kirke v podzemlju obiše senco Tejrezija. V tem članku se bom osredotočila na številne reference iz mitološkega izročila starih Grkov, s katerimi pri obdelavi obeh zgodb



rokuje Mouawad, ter na to, kako jih prenese v izpoved o boleči osebni izgubi in prikaz potovanja po sodobni Grčiji, ki jo pestijo posledice uničujoče finančne krize.

S Filoktetom se Mouawad poistoveti že v prvem dejanju besedila in uprizoritve, ki prikaže okoliščine njunega nastanka in je naslovljen *L'Inflammation (Vnetje)*. Pripovedovalec in protagonist, Mouawadov alter ego Wahid, se iz retrospektive ozre na krizni sestanek ekipe projekta Zbrana dela, ki je malone identičen njegovemu spopadu s Sofoklejevimi tragedijami. Ustvarjalci se morajo na tem srečanju posvetovati, kako bodo nadaljevali delo, kajti smrt prevajalca Roberta je projekt, v katerega se je Wahid spustil tudi zato, ker že dalj časa ni več zmožen pisati, povsem ohromila. Na vprašanje, ali je že kaj napredoval s predlogo, ki naj bi nadomestila prevod, se odzove s povratnim vprašanjem, ali ne bi projekta raje odpovedali.

Nimamo besedila, poleg tega *Filoktet* ni ravno Sofoklejevo najbolj navdihujoče delo. Vse razen Neoptolemove nezmožnosti, da bi izdal Filokteta, in Odisejevega uvodnega govora o razlogih, ki jih za to narekuje Država, mi, priznam, uhaja iz rok. [...] Ta projekt je sam na sebi postal poškodba, odprta rana, ki že ves čas zastruplja naš obstoj. Jaz sem Filoktet. Počutim se, kot da sem na zapuščenem otoku čisto sam s projektom, ki se noče končati, ki krvavi in od mene zahteva, da se izvlečem s prevodom, ki ga ni. Kajti razen tega, da grebem po svoji duši, nimamo besedila! Nimamo besed. Kaj bomo? Uporabiti prevoda Bollacka ali Mazona bi bil absurd, kajti smisel projekta je bil, da Robert prevede Sofoklejev opus v celoti. Toda Robert je umrl in po mojem je mrtev pesnik dober razlog za odpoved predstave. (17)

Analogija je nedvoumna: Wahid se okliče za Filokteta, nedokončani projekt pa primerja z njegovo smrdljivo in gnojno rano spricho ugriza strupene kače, zaradi katere so ga Grki na pobudo Odiseja zavrgli na pusti obali otoka Lemnosa. »Spečemu Filoktetu so na Lemnosu pustili tudi njegov lok in zastrupljene puščice, ki mu jih je podaril Herakles in so bile ključne za padeč Troje, le da tega Grki tedaj še niso vedeli« (Slapšak, *Antična* 415). Deset let kasneje je trojanski videc Hélenos, ki se je znašel v ujetništvu, Odiseju zaupal skrivnost, da Troje ne bo mogoče zavzeti brez Filokteta in Heraklejevega loka, zato je poveljstvo odločilo, naj se Odisej vrne na Lemnos ter lok in lastnika pripelje nazaj pred oblegano mesto. Tudi za Wahida, ki si ne želi drugega kot izginiti, obstaja izhod. Dramaturginja projekta mu položi na srce, naj odpotuje: »Mogoče pa rešitev ni v Filoktetu, ampak v situaciji, ki izhaja iz besedila in Robertove smrti ter se ponuja v raziskavo. Nimaš izbire, sicer bo polom« (Mouawad 19).

Filokteta omenja Homer v *Iliadi*, obravnavata ga *Mala Iliada* in *Ciprski spevi*, za gledališče pa sta ga poleg Sofokleja obdelala tudi Ajshil in Evripid, čigar deli se nista ohranili, vendar o njiju v primerjalni študiji o vseh treh *Filoktetih* piše grški retor Dion Hrizostom. Tisti, ki ima nalogo Filoktetu odvzeti orožje in ga pripeljati pred Trojo, je pri vseh treh avtorjih Odisej. Pri Ajshilu je dejanje osredotočeno na dialog med

Odisejem in Filoktetom, pri Evripidu pa na Lemnos priplujeta trojanska in nato še grška delegacija. A »medtem ko si je Ajshilov Odisej pomagal z zvijačo, da se je polastil Filoktetovega loka, je Evripidov uporabil umetnost prepričevanja (*peithò*) v velikem besednem dvoboju, v katerem se je spopadel s trojanskimi odposlanci« (Vidal-Naquet 123). Sofoklej je v svojo različico, ki naj bi jo napisal kot odgovor na Evripidovo, uvedel lik, ki ga pri Ajshilu in Evripidu ni bilo, to je lik mladega Neoptolema.

Za ugriz kače v mitu obstaja utemeljena razlaga. Grki se na svoji poti proti Troji ustavijo na otoku Hrizu, kjer se na prostem nahaja svetišče istoimenske boginje. »Filoktet napravi dve prepovedani dejanji, s katerima prikliče nase svojo veliko nesrečo: stopi na sveti kraj ali pa nanj samo pokaže drugim in pri tem pogleda boginjo Hrizo, ki je neposvečeni nikakor ne bi smel videti. Filoktet se torej pregreši zoper sveti kraj in zoper Hrizo« (Vrečko 234). Hrizin otok zaradi dvojnega prekrška potone v morje, Filoktet pa deset let vleče za sabo ranjeno nogo; oboje napotuje na svet podzemlja, ki mu po izročilu pripada onečaščena boginja.

Lok Filoktetu zagotavlja preživetje, hkrati pa iz njega naredi lovca, nad katerim visi prekletstvo in je vedno na meji med življenjem in smrtjo, kakor tudi na meji med človekostjo in podivjanostjo; pičila ga je »za ljudi smrtonosna kača«, a ga vendar ni ubila. Spominja na žrtev, posvečeno bogu podzemlja; govori, da bo umrl, napove svojo smrt, a ne more umreti, skratka, če povzamemo, »živ mrlič«, »truplo, senca dima, prikazen«; politično gledano pa [...] družbeno mrtev človek. (Vidal-Naquet 129-130)

Vendar rana ni le kazen, ampak tudi znamenje, da je Filoktet del širšega božjega načrta, ki se lahko razreši samo z njegovo pomočjo. Zgodbo je mogoče primerjati z žrtvovanjem Ifigenije v *Iliadi*, »saj se pred njim ni mogel začeti bojni pohod zoper Trojo, v žrtvovanju Filokteta pa so združeni razlogi, ki preprečujejo njegov konec. Gre torej za žrtvi, ki definirata začetek in konec trojanske vojne, le da je Ifigenija ‚prostovoljna‘ žrtev, medtem ko Filoktet vse do konca ne razume svoje žrtve in bogovom očita najhujše« (Vrečko 235). Enako velja za Ahajce, ki ga zavržejo na obali Lemnosa, oči pa jim deset let kasneje odprejo šele Hélenosove besede; tudi oni v rani vidijo samo kazen, v Filoktetu pa prekrškarja, ki s smradom in vpitjem kali njihove obrede.

Mit o Filoktetu ni edini, ki Lemnos povezuje s smradom. Z otokom v severnem Egejskem morju, za katerega je značilno »najbolj travmatično izmenjevanje ženskih in moških bogov ter ritualov in utrjevanje patriarhalne moči« (Slapšak, *Antična* 413), je povezana tudi zgodba iz časa vladavine kralja Toanta, ki je imel hčer Hipsipilo. Ker ženske v tistem času niso dovolj spoštovale boginje Afrodite, jih je ta kaznovala z neprijetnim telesnim vonjem, ki je od njih odganjal moške in ljubimce. Užaljene ženske so se maščevale tako, da so pobile vse moške v svojih družinah, le Hipsipila je svojega očeta opozorila in mu pomagala pobegniti.

Če vztrajamo pri analogiji med Filoktetovo rano in Wahidovo muko, pri kateri niti za trenutek ne gre samo za ogroženi projekt, temveč za akutno malodušje in z njim povezano nezmožnost pisanja, se je treba vprašati, ali si ni morda tudi on s čim »prislužil« trpljenja, ki je obenem del nekakšnega širšega načrta ali spoznanja.

Uvodne besede v Mouawadovem besedilu oziroma njegovi uprizoritvi se glasijo:

Sestra dvojčica človeštva je, rojena hkrati z njim, ta pozabljena resnica, da je človek bog, kadar sanja, in berač, kadar misli. Jaz, ki sem vse življenje posvetil temu, da bi sledil temu prastaremu zakonu, sem se motil o vsem in zašel s svoje poti. Ker sem verjel, da sem eno s svojimi sanjami, sem se posvečal besedam, ne vedoč, da so ostre kot britev. Ker sem verjel, da sem eno s svojimi sanjami, sem se izgubil v opazovanju obrazov, v lascivnosti teles, v opoju mračnih noči. Opijanil sem se s sijajem narave, se pogubil s trpinčeno poezijo. Uprl sem se luči dneva, da bi občudoval svetlobo, katere vir sem mislil, da sem, izgubil sem se v ognju svojih strasti, se obesil na vrh svojih uporov. (Mouawad 13)

Wahid si očita napuh, ki naj bi ga ob pisanju tako prevzel, da je pozabil na svojo človeškost in si domišljal, da je zrasel v boga; to je razlog, da že nekaj časa ne more ničesar napisati, Davreujeva smrt pa je njegovo krizo le zaostрила in ne povzročila.

## Nastajanje novega besedila in Odisejevo potovanje

Wajdi Mouawad v predstavi nastopa popolnoma sam. Pripoved, ki jo z odra posreduje v živo, kombinira z vnaprej posnetimi in montiranimi filmskimi prizori, ki jih je v obdobju med oktobrom 2014 in februarjem 2015 posnel na različnih lokacijah v Parizu in Grčiji. Osrednji scenografski element v predstavi je platno iz čvrsto napetih, rahlo vibrirajočih elastičnih trakov; na njem se vrstijo posnetki, s katerimi je dokumentiral dvojni proces nastajanja predstave in žalovanja za Davreujem. To platno v predstavi istočasno funkcionira kot projekcijska površina in prepustni zid, ki ga izvajalec lahko prestopi. Včasih izgine za njim in se povsem umakne svoji projicirani podobi, toda večinoma vztraja na prizorišču z njo, se igra s perspektivami in dimenzijami ter sam s sabo vzpostavlja vznemirljiv gledališko-filmski dvogovor. Dialogi med nastopajočimi osebami, živalmi in objekti so podani v prizorih, ki jih gledamo na filmskem platnu, okvir zgodbe ter njeni reflektivni in pripovedni deli pa so z odra posredovani v živo. In medtem ko raba okvirne pripovedi, ki se v retrospektivi ozira le na »predzgodbo« v Parizu, v Grčiji pa prestopi v sedanjik, omogoča časovne in prostorske premike v zgodbi ter jo hkrati razširja s prostorom za avtorefleksivne komentarje, vpeljava filmske tehnike ponuja sugestivne vpoglede v okolje, po katerem potuje Wahid, hkrati pa z rabo raznih postopkov in trikov inovativno aludira na njegovo zapletena psihična stanja.

V drugem dejanju z naslovom *Désastre (Katastrofa)* se Wahid s snemalno ekipo odpravi v Grčijo. Na Lemnosu se najprej napoti v Filoktetovo votlino, ki pa je zaprta, saj je dostop do nje nevarno otežen. Kasneje se v hotelski sobi med nevihto premetava po postelji, nato pa vstane in iz kovčka potegne drugo ključno referenčno čtivo drame in predstave, Homerjevo *Odisejo*. V enem najosupljivejših prizorov v predstavi v spodnjem perilu pleza navzgor po projekcijskem platnu, na katerem se v vertikalni nizajo heksametri iz *Odiseje*. Gre za odlomek, v katerem Kirka svetuje Odiseju, naj odide v podzemlje in tam poišče senco vidca Tejrezija; ta mu bo pomagala z nasvetom in prerokovala, kdaj se bo vrnil domov. Wahid zdaj ve, kam mora. Napiše poslovilno pismo svojim otrokom in zakoraka v morje. Po samomoru ni več samo Filoktet, temveč tudi Odisej, in to tisti, ki po zavzetju Troje deset let potuje domov.

Svetlana Slapšak opozarja, da se je Odisej obleganja Troje sprva izogibal in je zato hlinil norost, kasneje pa se je v vojni izkazal in vanjo pripeljal tako Ahila kot Filokteta. Njegov opis poda z naslednjimi besedami:

Odisej je junak posebnega kova, mojstrska kombinacija starih kulturnih prvin, mlajših antropoloških lastnosti in nepričakovane individualnosti modernega človeka. Ni junak mita, ki je prešel v književnost in kulturno izročilo, temveč literarni lik, okrog katerega je nastal eden najbolj impozantnih humanističnih mitov. Odisej, delo največjega evropskega pevca zgodb Homerja, je najbolj človeški junak: njegova starša sta bila smrtnika Laert in Antikleja, zavrnil je nesmrtnost, odšel je v podzemlje ter se po številnih pustolovščinah in pridobljeni slavi vrnil k družinski sreči. Najti je znal ravnotežje med slavo in željo po življenju, med junaštvom in politiko, med ljubezenskimi izzivi in zakonsko zvestobo. (Slapšak, *Antična* 473)

Vsebina *Odiseje*, ki sodi med temeljna dela evropske civilizacije, je zajeta v 24 spevov in se cepi na tri pesnitve: o potovanjih Odisejevega sina Telemaha, ki išče očeta, o Odisejevih blodnjah in pustolovščinah ter o njegovi vrnitvi na Itako. Njeno prizorišče se razteza tako v vertikalo – od olimpskih višav do globin mitičnega podzemlja – kot v horizontalo – po vseh tedaj znanih delih obljudenega sveta. Pripoved o deset let trajajočih blodnjah in križarjenjih po morju, na katere je Odiseja obsodil jezni Pozejdon, ker je oslepil njegovega sina Polifema, torej osrednji del epa, kamor sodita tudi epizodi enoletnega bivanja pri Kirki in srečanja s Tejrezijem v podzemlju, je Homer zgostil v ozek štiridesetdnevni okvir. To mu je uspelo zato, ker je uporabil okvirno pripoved, ki jo v tem epu srečamo sploh prvič v svetovni literaturi.

Z rabo okvirne pripovedi je Homer omogočil Odiseju, da o sebi govori v prvi osebi ednine, hkrati pa z bitji, ki jih srečuje na poti, stopa v dialog. To je izstopajoča značilnost *Odiseje*, ugotavlja Kajetan Gantar: »V pesnitvi si nenehno sledijo dialogi, monologi ali tudi razgovori več nastopajočih oseb. Vmesno verzno besedilo med temi dialogi in razgovori bi lahko razumeli tudi kot režiserjeve dramaturške napotke ali

kot pesnikov komentar dogajanja na odru. In tako je od Homerjevega epa do grške tragedije v bistvu samo en korak, meje med epsko in dramsko literarno vrsto so skoraj zabrisane« (Gantar, »Spremna« 136).

Toda kot opozarja Tomaž Toporišič, zadeve niso tako preproste: četudi *Odiseja* vsebuje okvirno zgodbo in premi govor, pa »ne razpolaga s klasičnim tragedijskim obrazcem, ne motivno ne tematsko se ne more pokrivati s pojmom tragedije, zaradi česar njena motivika v klasični Grčiji ni postala predmet tragedije. Prav zaradi svoje drugačnosti, epskosti, pa je lahko izjemno zanimiva za sodobno (Brecht bi dejal epsko) gledališče, ki daje velik poudarek vizualnemu, slikovnemu, podobi« (Toporišič 61).

Takšen primer gledališča je seveda Mouawadova predstava/film, ki si za tematsko izhodišče sicer jemlje Sofoklejevega *Filokteta*, a se spričo specifične gledališko-cinematične zasnove v nadaljevanju že kmalu premišljeno preusmeri k bolj odprtemu, za svoje potrebe strukturno hvaležnejšemu modelu Homerjeve epske *Odiseje*. V bistvu je Mouawad neverjetno iznajdljiv, ko spaja obe predlogi: izkorišča časovne vrzeli med zgodbama, ki jima je skupen lik Odiseja v različnih fazah svoje življenjske usode, hkrati pa išče točke identifikacije ter niza asociacije na lastno zgodbo in sodobnost.

Mouawadov Wahid se vsekakor odpravi na podobno potovanje kot Homerjev Odisej, toda medtem ko se v Homerjevem epu glas pesnika izmenjuje z glasom njegovega osrednjega in vseh ostalih junakov, so v drami in predstavi Mouawada avtor, glavni junak in interpret ena in ista oseba. Ne glede na vse mitološke reference, s katerimi večje operira, namreč avtor ves čas govori o sebi in svoji življenjski izkušnji, rani zaradi izgube in doživetjih na potovanju. In medtem ko je *Odiseja* pisni dokument primera davne pripovedovalske prakse, je drama Mouawada že nastala z namenom, da bo oživela v gledališču, kjer bo avtor/junak/interpret razpadel na dvoje: na tistega, ki bo nastopil na odru, in tistega, ki ga bomo gledali na filmu.

## Sodobna Grčija in antični Had

Na začetku tretjega dejanja *Animaux et objets (Živali in objekti)* Wahid prečka reko Aheront na čolnu Herona, ki ga upodobi ostarel mediteranski ribič, in se znajde na letališču Had. Tu ga pričaka taksist Lefteris, ki ga v filmu igra Dimitris Kranias. Kot mu pojasni kasneje, njegovo ime pomeni »svoboda« in je v današnji Grčiji zelo redko; to je najbrž izraz avtorjeve hotene ironije, saj je Lefteris v Grčiji v resnici kar pogosto ime. »Je to Had?« ga vpraša Wahid. »Ja, to je Had,« mu odgovori Lefteris, »ali skoraj Had.« »Kar precej je podoben Atenam,« opazi Wahid. »V bistvu je to prehod med svetom živih in mrtvih,« nadaljuje taksist. »Prehod! Kaj hočeš reči s tem, mar še nisem mrtev?« »Ne, si med življenjem in smrtjo. Odločiti se moraš.« »In ta prehod med življenjem in

smrtjo so Atene?» »Prehod je kraj, kjer si se odločil umreti. Če bi se odločil umreti v Tokiu, bi zdaj imel pred sabo Tokio.« »Kaj torej je Had?» »Ne vem. Nekaj mračnega« (30-31). Wahid si torej še vedno lahko premisli, kajti rešilni avto je že na poti. Le časa za razmislek nima veliko, ker v Hadu ne more ostati neomejeno dolgo.

Dejstvo, da se Atene in drugi predeli sodobne Grčije vzpostavljajo kot analogija z mitološkim Hadom, ima na celoto močan učinek, enako kot odločitev, da smo skupaj s sencami v filmu in samim Wahidom kot sence umrlih razumljeni tudi gledalci, na kar nas Mouawad sprti večkrat opozori med nagovori, ki s svojo humorno neposrednostjo spomnijo na *Pomenke umrlih* starogrškega satirika Lukijana. Filmski Wahid se medtem z Lefterisom vozi v taksiju. Vpraša ga, ali bi ga odpeljal do Filoktetove sence, on pa mu odgovori: »Filoktet je zgodba, fikcija. Tukaj lahko srečaš samo umrle ljudi. Ampak če želiš, te lahko peljem na mesta, kjer boš srečal tiste, ki so jih vsi zapustili. Grčija je polna Filoktetov, zapuščenih na otokih, ker so preglasno kričali. K njim te bom odpeljal.« »To bi mi bilo všeč,« reče Wahid (32).

Wahid in Lefteris najprej obiščeta opustele grobnice grških junakov, ki so jih pokosili Perzijci v bitki za Salamina. »Pridi in poglej,« pravi Lefteris, »tu boš našel tisto, kar je bilo zapuščeno, zavrženo, nekoristno, kar je umrlo samo. Morda ti imajo kaj povedati« (34). Njuna naslednja postaja je ogromno smetišče, ki ga preletavajo velikanske jate ptic ujed. »Ti, ki ne pripadaš niti zgornjemu niti spodnjemu svetu. Poslušaj. Ptice bolečine smo, vsaka od nas je prizadejana bolečina, nikoli ozdravljena, pozabljena, ki se še vedno, četudi vržena sem dol v Had, obrača in kriči in ponavlja svoje ime. Vsaka od nas je odprta rana, ki zeva že od začetka časa« (35). Lefteris je glasnik sodobne Grčije, tiste države, katere ljudje so po letu 2008 zaradi finančne krize in varčevalnih ukrepov utrpeli posledice nepojmljivih razsežnosti.

Katerina Poutpou, socialna delavka z neposrednim uvidom v situacijo in direktorica grške nevladne organizacije Arsis, je v intervjuju z Boštjanom Videmškom o posledicah krize povedala:

Konec leta 2008, ko je v svetu izbruhnila finančna kriza, so nam naši politiki govorili, da v Grčiji ni in ne bo težav. Lagali so nam v obraz. Potem je policist 6. decembra 2008 v Atenah brez razloga ubil šestnajstletnika. Izbruhnili so srditi protesti. Neznanci so istočasno napadli in težje poškodovali sindikalno aktivistko. To je bila izhodiščna točka tega, kar je sledilo. Začel se je napad na družbo. Začelo se je novo obdobje. Ko je bil leta 2010 sprejet prvi varčevalni memorandum, so nam politiki govorili, da moramo razmisliti o Evropi in nas samih. Po mojem mnenju je bil to začetek nove grške in evropske zgodovine. Grčija je bila izbrana kot prva žrtev nečesa, kar Naomi Klein poimenuje doktrina šoka. (Videmšek)

Posledice varčevalnih ukrepov, ki jih je zadolženi Grčiji naložila tako imenovana

»trojka« – Evropska centralna banka, Mednarodni denarni sklad in Evropska komisija – so bile za navadno prebivalstvo naravnost pogubne:

Ljudje, ki so še včeraj imeli veliko, so čez noč izgubili službe. Potem so jim banke zasegle stanovanja, ker niso mogli plačati najemnin ali kredita. Nato so izgubili zdravstveno zavarovanje. Če so bolni, ne morejo k zdravniku. Pokojnine ne bodo imeli nikoli. Številni so končali na ulici. To je drugačna, na neki način hujša revščina. Predvsem v psihološkem smislu. Ljudje se borijo za ohranitev družbenega statusa. Do zadnjega. Delajo se, da še hodijo v službo. Padec je silovit. Spremenili sta se logika in fizika revščine. Trojka je spremenila tudi naš družbeni DNK. (prav tam)

V pokrajini, po kateri s taksijem potujeta Wahid in Lefteris, so posledice finančne krize boleče razvidne na vsakem koraku: sodobna Grčija je država ponižanih in obupanih ljudi, ki se spopadajo z brezposelnostjo in nepredstavljivo revščino, njena mesta in vasi so polna zapuščenih in propadajočih objektov, ki so izgubili svoj nekdanji sijaj in vsebino, njena flora in favna sta podivjali, ker je obupani človek nad njima dvignil roke. V nekem smislu je to dejansko »konec sveta«, kakor je Sofoklej opisal Lemnos v *Filoktetu* ter na njem izpostavil svojega junaka trpljenju. »Ta človek je izenačen z otokom, je zaznamovan s svojo rano in s tem z osamljenostjo, je prav tako kot pusti otok sredi morja, osameli zaznamovanec sredi družbe« (Vrečko 254). Kakor se Filoktet v Mouawadovem besedilu in predstavi/filmu razširi na prebivalce širne Grčije, tako tudi njena pokrajina postaja Lemnos gigantskih dimenzij.

V nadaljevanju se Lefteris in Wahid za nekaj časa razideta, popotniku pa se pridruži Pes Vodnik. Ko mu Wahid zaupa svoje dvome o tem, ali bi se sploh še rad vrnil med žive, mu žival odgovori, da kljub vsemu trpljenju, ki ga je izkusila na Zemlji, ne mine dan, ko si ne bi želela svojega življenja nazaj. »Sreča, hrepenenje, sla, to so zapletene besede. Ne glede na to, ali si človek ali žival, je tisto, kar iščeš, po navadi zelo preprosto. Najbrž je zato tako težko to najti,« pravi Pes Vodnik (36). Wahida najprej odpelje do Bolnega psa, ki da je njegova duša, ta pa ga ogovori v arabščini, njegovem maternem jeziku. »Poglej me in videl boš svoje lastne oči,« mu reče. »Zakaj so tako žalostne?« vpraša Wahid. »Ker te že dolgo nisem videl. Čakal sem nate, ti pa nisi prišel.« »Kje sem pa bil?« »Ne vem. Nisi hotel biti pri meni. Mislil si, da te ne bo nihče maral, če bom jaz tvoja duša« (37). Da bi mu pokazal, kaj ga je pravzaprav odvrnilo od njegove duše, Pes Vodnik odpelje Wahida še do Lačnega psa, ki zaprt v tesno kletko popolnoma podivjan tuli od lakote po vsem mogočem: slavi, moči, nesmrtnosti, priznanju, uspehu, priljubljenosti, udobju, razkošju, ugledu, sijaju, prestižu, denarju, seksu. »Ti sam si pes, lakota in kletka,« reče Pes Vodnik. »Kombinacija vsega trojega pelje v norost. Spremeni kombinacijo in boš spet svoboden« (38).

Prisotnost psov in njihova umeščenost v dramo oziroma predstavo vzbujata tako mitološke kot tudi zgodovinske in aktualne družbene vzporednice. Spomnita na



Kerberja, troglavega psa, ki varuje vhod v Had in sencam umrlih preprečuje, da bi ga zapustile. Spomnita na Astorja, zvestega Odisejevega psa, ki lastnika po vrnitvi na Itako takoj spozna, čeprav se skriva pod preobleko. Spomnita na »pasjega« filozofa Diogena, ki je verjel, da ljudje živimo nenaravno, zato bi nam koristilo preučevanje psov; ti namreč živijo za sedanost, nagonsko ločijo prijatelje od sovražnikov in za razliko od ljudi vselej lajajo po resnici. Spomnita pa tudi na Kanellosa, Thodorisa in Loukanikosa, tako imenovane protestniške pse, ki se so v Atenah od leta 2008 redno udeleževali uličnih protestov, med njimi pa vselej stopili na stran protestnikov in jih, kadar je bilo treba, branili pred policijo. Največja zvezda med njimi je postal Loukanikos, v prevodu Klobasica, znan po tem, da je večče prestrezal pločevinke s solzivcem in jih odnašal stran od ljudi. »Kot potepuški pes si je pridobil veliko simpatij med ljudmi, ki so se poistovetili z njegovim brezdomstvom in ranljivostjo. Njegova prisotnost je sama na sebi postala simbol navadnega človeka, ki se bojuje za svoje pravice« (Zournazi).

Kot pove naslov tretjega dejanja, po živalih pridejo na vrsto še objekti. Pes Vodnik najprej pelje Wahida v odlagališče rabljenih predmetov; tu ga ogovori Stol, ki predstavlja vse stole, na katerih je že ali še bo kdaj sedel. Naslednja postaja je opuščeni butik, kjer mu samotni Čevelj, ki so ga pozabili v lokalu, pripoveduje o svoji usodi:

Slišal sem besedo kriza in vsega je bilo konec. Nikoli nisem spoznal radosti tega, da se odpraviš na sprehod. Vame ni nikoli zdrsnila nobena noga, nikoli nisem bil izpolnjen, nikoli me ni doletela ta sreča, da bi začutil, kako moje usnje ovija žensko nogo. Ne. Ampak če bi se lahko vrnil v življenje, bi to storil zato, da doživim naslednji trenutek: ko žensko, ki ji pripadaš, sleče moški, ki ga ljubi. Začutiti prijem roke, ki te sname s stopala ljubljene osebe in odloži na posteljni rjuhi, ter opazovati, kako se oba skupaj predajata ljubezni. Ja, vse bi dal za ta trenutek. (40)

Sporočilo, ki ga ponovita Stol in Čevelj, za njima pa ga Wahidu še enkrat položi na srce tudi Pes Vodnik, se glasi, da je tisto, kar išče, preprosto. On odgovori: »Če bi lahko spet našel voljo do življenja, dvignil svojo rano kot črepinjo iz stekla in jo v jutranjem soncu obrnil tako, da bi se svetloba razpršila in odkrila vse barve, ki se rodijo skupaj s črkami, pisanimi in govorjenimi! Če se tako sprega glagol živeti, potem z veseljem. Če ne, je bolje, da ostanem nepisem« (prav tam).

## Žrtve krize in pomnožitev Neoptolema

Na začetku četrtega dejanja z naslovom *Jeunesse et Poésie (Mladost in poezija)* Wahid z odra nagovori sence domnevno umrlih gledalcev: »Je v tej dvorani slučajno Victor Hugo? Škoda. Rad bi govoril z njim, ga prosil za nasvet. Daje mi vtis človeka, ki pozna vse odgovore. Napisal je namreč stavek: ‚Prihodnost, prikazen v praznih rokah.‘«



Gledalce nagovor zabava, toda sporočilo, ki sledi, napove resen premik v Wahidovem razmišljanju: »Če je prihodnost izginjanje in preteklost zbledevanje, je samo osvetljeni trenutek sedanjosti osvobojen senc melanholiije in obžalovanja. Mogoče pa zato sedanjosti pravimo *darilo*. Sedanjost. Njena svoboda je dar, darilo. In ta preprosta stvar, o kateri je govoril pes, je morda ovita vanjo« (43). Z neprevedljivo besedno igro, ki je v francoščini mogoča, ker za »sedanjost« in »darilo« razpolaga s skupno besedo »*le présent*«, Wahid na posnetku znova sede v taksi, pogovor z Lefterisom pa se vrne na prvotno iztočnico, vsebino Sofoklejeve tragedije. »Sploh nisem razumel Filokteta,« mu pravi. »Neoptolem se v njegovem življenju pojavi kot darilo. Predstavlja si prikazen. Filoktet si. Minilo je deset let. Tako dolgo si zrl v morje, da si postal eden njegovih modrih odbleskov. Dan za dnem si goltal svetlobo, vsega te je požrla jeza. [...] Nato pa nekega jutra pred tabo stoji ponosen mlad moški in gleda vate« (43-44).

Sledi rekapitulacija prizora, za katerega je Wahid že v prvem dejanju dejal, da je edini pri Sofokleju, ki bi ga zares rad postavil na oder; gre za uvodni prizor tragedije, v katerem Odisej utemeljuje Neoptolemu, zakaj naj se Filoktetu zlaže in mu z zvijačo izmakne lok. V primerjavi s predhodnima različicama *Filokteta*, ki sta ju napisala Ajshil in Evripid, je bila uvedba Neoptolema v zgodbo Sofoklejev avtorski izum. Ko so grški vojskovodje od Odiseja zahtevali, naj se izpred Troje vrne na Lemnos in nazaj pripelje božanski lok skupaj z njegovim lastnikom, mu je bilo takoj jasno, da orožja ne bo mogel zahtevati naravnost. Ker je bil prav on tisti, ki ga je zapustil na samotni obali Lemnosa, mu ga Filoktet ne bo izročil prostovoljno, v primeru odkritega spopada med njima pa bi bile strupene Heraklejeve puščice zanj lahko usodne. Odiseju je torej jasno, da bo moral uporabiti intrigo. »Ahilov sin Neoptolem si bo kot sin Filoktetovega najboljšega prijatelja zlahka pridobil Filoktetovo naklonjenost, približal se mu bo s pretvezo, da je iz užaljenosti zapustil grški tabor pred Trojo, da je dezertiral in pobegnil in zdaj pluje domov, kamor lahko vzame s sabo tudi Filokteta, ki v svoji bolečini in zapuščenosti hrepeni po domačem kraju. In ko si bo tako pridobil Filoktetovo zaupanje, bo v trenutku nepazljivosti nesrečnežu izmaknil dragoceno orožje« (Gantar, »Sofoklov« 18-19.)

Toda mlademu Neoptolemu se Odisejev načrt upira: »Nisem rojen, da podlo bi spletkaril, / kot tudi oče moj ni tega znal. / Pripravljen pa sem ga ugnati s silo, / brez spletk: kako bi mož le z eno nogo / se mogel naši sili upirati?« / Kot pomočnik sem ti poslan; ne maram, / da bi veljal za izdajalca. A ljubši / mi časten je poraz kot podla zmaga« (Sofokles 150). Četudi se v nadaljevanju sprva ukloni Odisejevemu načrtu in Filokteta prepriča, da mu izroči v varstvo svoj lok, si kasneje premisli in mu sodelovanje v spletki prizna, Odiseju pa odreče pomoč. Da bi se zgodba sploh lahko iztekla po nareku mita, mora kot *deus ex machina* posredovati sam božanski Heraklej; on je tisti, ki Filokteta nazadnje prepriča, naj se vendarle vrne pred Trojo in s svojim lokom pomaga zavzeti mesto. Kot pojasnjuje Gantar, je Sofoklej svojo

tragedijo uprizoril leta 409 pred našim štetjem, v času, ko se je peloponeška vojna prevesila v svojo zadnjo, najbolj krvavo fazo. »Verjetno mu je lik Neoptolema dozorel iz osebnih doživetij te nesmiselne vojne, v kateri so bili mladi ljudje – kot se pač v vseh vojnah dogaja – postavljeni pred podobno neizprosne dileme, da izbirajo med vojaško disciplino oziroma ‚domovinsko dolžnostjo‘ na eni strani in klicem humanega sočutja, ki se spontano prebudi v človeku ob pogledu na nemočnega, ranjenega in trpečega nasprotnika, na drugi strani« (Gantar, »Sofoklov« 20).

Drugačno razlago Neoptolemove razvidne preobrazbe v *Filoktetu* predstavi Pierre Vidal-Naquet: Neoptolem naj bi na otoku prestal vojaško iniciacijo, se iz mladeniča razvil v moža ter namesto efebskega načina bojevanja »iz zasede, podnevi in ponoči« sprejel »hoplitski spopad iz oči v oči, za katerega bi lahko rekli, da izhaja iz homerskega obdobja« (Vidal-Naquet 121) in ki poleg upoštevanja hoplitskih načel bojevanja predpostavlja tudi aktivno udeležbo v vojni. Na drugi strani pa Janez Vrečko, ki v *Filoktetu* prepozna sestop iz mita v zgodovino, zatrjuje, da je resnica veliko mračnejša: »Vsekakor ne gre za to, da Neoptolem kot efeb v tem tekstu ne bi spoznaval hoplitske morale, gre za to, da je ne prizna več, zato ni več, kar je bil, lahko je samo še to, kar je in kar bo: vojni zločinec, ki z načinom ubijanja in z okrutnostjo dokazuje, da je zanemaril temeljna sporočila hoplitske morale« (Vrečko 291). Neoptolemova nadaljnja usoda pred Trojo ga dejansko kaže kot nasilnega in krvoločnega vojščaka, saj z lastnimi rokami ubije trojanskega kralja Priama in vrže z obzidja njegovega vnuka, Hektorjevega sinčka Astianaksa. Za to je kaznovan z zakonom s Hermino, ki mu ne more roditi otrok, poleg tega pa ga Orest, ki mu je bila obljubljena, v zaroti spravi s sveta.

Tudi v *Filoktetu*, ki ga je leta 1978 napisal Heiner Müller, je Neoptolem karakteriziran kot zločinec, saj pred odhodom z otoka umori Filokteta; njegova različica je »epohalen ritual demistifikacije, ki predvsem opozarja na neizbežnost ponavljanja in na nujnost rednega rituala, ki časti svetost branja« (Slapšak, »Sofoklov« 39). Toda ne glede na vse povedano drži, da Neoptolem pri Sofokleju vsekakor še nastopa kot »pošten in občutljiv mladenič, nasprotje političnega realista Odiseja« (Slapšak, *Antična* 603), in da mu Mouawad v tem videnju dosledno sledi. Wahid in Lefteris se strinjata, da je Odisejevo ravnanje v slogu »cilj opravičuje sredstvo« skrajno problematično, toda obenem mu priznavata, da je kljub temu daleč najpriljubljenejši grški mitološki junak. »Problem z Odisejem je ta, da ima vedno prav,« reče Lefteris. »Odisej je kot Nemčija. Vedno ima prav.« »Res je! Tako bi moral uprizoriti *Filokteta*: grški igralec bi igral Filokteta v grščini, nemški igralec pa Odiseja v nemščini!« se navduši Wahid. Lefteris mu odgovori: »Odisej zahteva od Neoptolema nemogoče, od mladostnika zahteva, da ravna kot odrasla oseba. Normalno je, da pri Neoptolemovih letih zavrneš ponudbo, da bi nekoga izdal, kajti princip mladosti je, da ne ravnaš v skladu z razumom. Odrastemo takrat, ko izdamo svoje sanje« (46).

Toda Wahid se to pot ne strinja s svojim vodnikom:

Večina mladostnikov izda same sebe. Neoptolem je izjema, zato tudi je junak. Upre se brutalnosti odraslih. Večina mladostnikov se zlomi. Odrasli jih zlorabijo za dosego svojih ciljev. To je prastara zgodba. [...] Največ mladostnikov v Evropi danes umre za posledicami samomora. Predstavljam si, da mora biti Had že od nekaj poln Neoptolemov, teh mladih samomorilcev, mar ne?« »Poglej, tamle jih je nekaj,« pravi Lefteris. »Radi bi ti nekaj povedali. Pojdi k njim in jim prisluhni. (prav tam)

V naslednjih dveh prizorih se Wahid pridruži trem grškim mladostnikom, ki niso prenesli pritiska posledic krize in so naredili samomor. Andreas se je obesil, Katarina si je prerezala žile na zapeljivih, Christos pa se je vrgel pod vlak. »Za nas je bilo življenje mračna zabava,« mu pravijo (47). V naslednjem prizoru ga odpeljejo v diskoteko. V eksplicitnih in mestoma mučnih bližnjih posnetkih ponočevanja, drogiranja, popivanja, plesanja, seksanja in še česa, ki se vrstijo na filmskem platnu, mu razlagajo, kako so živeli in zakaj so se odločili umreti. Wahid jim obljubi, da bo njihovo zgodbo ponesel med žive, še prej pa mora poiskati tisto preprosto stvar, na katero ga je opozoril Pes Vodnik. »Andreas, Katarina, Christos, vi, ki ste Neoptolemi, sublimni heroji mojega časa, vi, ki vidite skozi motnost kamnov, pokažite mi pot tako, kot jo je Tejrezij nekoč pokazal Odiseju,« jih prosi tik pred koncem druženja. Prvi mu odgovori Andreas: »Potovanje, na katero se boš odpravil, da bi našel pot nazaj domov, te bo razžalostilo.« Naslednja se oglasi Katarina: »Filoktet, Poiasov sin, poslušaj me: vrniti se moraš v Trojo. Tam boš bojeval boj, ki ti ga nalaga prerokba. Ko ti bo uspelo, boš zmagovito našel nebo svoje dežele, kjer te čakajo bitja, ki so ti draga.« »Kje je moja Troja? Kako naj jo najdem?« vse tri sprašuje Wahid. Christos mu nazadnje položi na srce: »Obala Troje je znana samo tebi. Moraš se boriti za to, da ohraniš svojo povezavo z jezikom, s tistim jezikom, ki je radostil tvoje srce v davnih časih otroštva. Poezija. Poezija je edina pot« (49-50).

## Umrlí prevajalec in Tejrezijeva senca

Ko se Wahid vrne k Lefterisu, ki ga čaka v taksiju, ima samo eno željo: da bi ga odpeljal do sence Roberta Davreuja. Lefteris mu ustreže ter ga odpelje do velikanske in z grafiti povsem prekrte zapuščene stavbe, v kateri prebiva cel kup pesnikov. Tukaj Wahid sreča Gasparo Stampa, Louise Labé, Georga Trakla, Marío Zambrano, Tukidida, Roberta Walserja in Jorgeja Luisa Borghesa. Nazadnje skupaj z njim zagledamo hrbet velikega naslanjača, na katerem sedi skoraj belolas moški. Moški na posnetku se obrne in prepoznamo Roberta Davreuja.

Wahid pripoveduje Robertu, kako so ga on in vsi ostali sodelavci v ekipi pogrešali, obuja njune skupne spomine, mu opiše svoje potovanje in ga prosi za pomoč. »K tebi sem prišel kot Odisej k Tejreziju. Pes me je vodil do mladostnikov in oni so mi svetovali,

naj ubogam pesnikov glas, preden se podam v boj« (53). Pove mu, da išče preprosto stvar, za katero ne ve, kaj je, in ga prosi, naj mu pokaže pot, po kateri mora naprej. »Moj dragi sin,« mu odgovori Davreu, »želi si zmage v boju, toda vedno le zmage po volji bogov« (prav tam).

Filmski posnetek Davreujevega obraza v bližnjem planu ima na gledalca najprej močan čustveni učinek. Četudi je predstava že prej presunljiva, saj govori o resnih in zavezujočih temah, na katere se gledalec odziva tako emotivno kot cerebralno, se vendarle nič ne more primerjati z nenadno prikaznijo človeka, ki mu je posvečena in zaradi katerega smrti je v bistvu sploh nastala. Toda tik zatem, ko ga presune dejstvo, da je Wahid končno srečal Roberta, gledalca prešine tudi nasprotna misel, da namreč Robertova senca v nasprotju z vsemi predhodnimi ne more več biti stvar odigrane fikcije. Nastopi potujitev, gledalec se zave medija, neizogibno se opomni, da je tisto, v čemer sodeluje, predstava oziroma film ter da je srečanje med Wahidom in Robertom konstruirano, naknadno montirano, zrežirano, z drugimi besedami spodletelo. Ameriška raziskovalka Alice Rayner, ki se v knjigi *Ghosts (Duhovi)* ukvarja s fenomenom duhov v življenju in umetnosti, zlasti v gledališču, ki temelji na prikazovanju, zapiše:

Če so bile sveče in zastori med najzgodnejšimi pripomočki za prizivanje duhov v gledališču, potem je njegovo naj sodobnejše orodje zagotovo film, ob katerem je še toliko bolj očitno, da se za tančico ne skriva nič in da so duhovi produkti zastiranja. Platno je zastor, ki nič ne skriva, kajti za njim ni ničesar. Na dvodimenzionalno površino projicirana svetloba pretvori soj sveč in zastore v tehnološki aparat, ki vzpostavlja grozljivo znano v vidnih podobah, ki niso nič drugega kot raztelesene halucinacije. (Rayner 156)

Wahid želi zdaj pohiteti v Delfe, saj se je odločil nasvet poiskati v tamkajšnjem Apolonovem preročišču. Toda ob prihodu ga v petem dejanju z naslovom *Vie divine (Življenje bogov)* čaka velikansko razočaranje: Apolon je zajeten in z dolgočasen ameriški turist, ki v Grčijo prihaja le še na počitnice, prerokovanje pa ga ne zanima več. Wahid se vrne v Atene in pod Akropolo poišče še Zevsa in Ateno. Najde popolnoma ponižana siromaka brez lastne strehe nad glavo, ki komaj sestavljata en dan z drugim ter ves čas obujata spomine na boljše olimpske čase.

Davreujeva senca, ki nas med gledanjem filma vrže iz okvirov konvencije, tihega dogovora med ustvarjalci in gledalci predstave, da smo vsi skupaj udeleženi v odrski iluziji, ima s svojo *ready-made* pojavnostjo močan učinek deziluzije, ki se pričakovano nadaljuje v duhovitem prikazu detroniziranih grških bogov. Vendar spričo mesta Tejrezija, na katerega je v drami in predstavi pozicionirana, njene besede vseeno vzbujajo težo. To je tisti vedež, ki je

v mladosti videl par kač med parjenjem in je bil za to kaznovan s spremembo spola – sedem let je imel žensko telo. Šele ko je spet videl kači v enakih okoliščinah, se je spremenil nazaj v moškega. Hera je vsa besna, ker je razkril skrivnost ženske seksualne

superiornosti, Tejrezija oslepila. Druga različica mita pa pravi, da je Atena kazen ublažila s tem, da je Tejrezias lahko videl še enkrat več, čeprav je bil slep, in da je smel živeti dlje kot običajni smrtniki. [...] Tejrezias je celo po smrti ohranil to, česar duše umrlih sicer niso mogle – spomin in znanje. Odisej ga je obiskal v podzemlju, da bi mu videl prerokoval, kdaj se bo vrnil domov, in mu razkril usode drugih. (Slapšak, *Antična* 30)

Vidca Tejrezija in efeba Filokteta družita motiva prepovedanega pogleda in kače: drugega je ugriznila kača, ker je pogledal boginjo, prvega pa je zaradi pogleda na kači kaznovala boginja, ki ga je zaprla v žensko telo in mu vzela vid.

Tudi pri Filoktetu imamo opraviti z »nezgodo človeškega telesa«, kakor gledališče v primeru grške tragedije opredeli Froma I. Zeitlin, predvsem pa z žensko izkušnjo, ki je po avtoričinem mnenju pomemben vidik moškega trpljenja v mnogih besedilih grških tragedov:

Kar najbolj zanima občinstvo pri odrski somatiki, je telo v nenaravnem položaju *pathosa* (trpljenja) – ko se najbolj oddalji od svojega ideala moči in integritete. To najbolj opazimo predvsem, ko je privedeno v nemočno ali pasivno stanje – ležeče, zvezano ali ovirano na kakšen drug način, ko je v primežu blaznosti ali bolezni, ko prestaja v presledkih vračajoče se krčevite bolečine in doživlja trenutke zloveščega zatišja, preden ga viharne simptome ponovno ne napadejo. (Zeitlin 10)

Čeprav Filokteta ne omenja izrecno, temveč si za primere jemlje Herakleja, Ajanta in Hipolita, vsebina Sofoklejeve tragedije govori sama zase. V nadaljevanju avtorica misel še dodatno precizira: »Natančneje, tu gre predvsem za trenutke, ko je moški šibak, ko se tudi on nenadoma zave, da ima telo – in potem v brezmejnih bolečinah dojame, da je povsem podoben ženski« (Zeitlin 10). Z drugimi besedami, ženske, ki imajo v atiški tragediji »vlogo čistega drugega« in v funkcionalnem smislu niso same sebi namen, vendarle lahko »služijo za protivzorec ali skriti vzorec moškega jaza« (prav tam 15), četudi so kot v *Filoktetu* odsotne.

Kajti žensko telo je posvečeno v svet najvišjih skrivnosti človekovega rojevanja in umiranja.

»Prav telesnost je tisto, kar jo najmočneje določa v kulturnem sistemu, ki jo povezuje s fizikalnimi procesi rojstva in smrti in poudarja materialno dimenzijo njene eksistence, kot je izpričano v Heziodovem kanoničnem mitu o ustvarjanju prve ženske, Pandore. Moški seveda imajo telesa, toda v sistemu spolnega razločevanja je vloga predstavljanja telesne plati življenja v njeni nebogljenosti in podvrženosti pritiskom prvenstveno dodeljena ženskam.« (prav tam 12).

Ženska je tista, v katere telesu se spočne in zraste novo življenje in ki ga v mukah in krčih iztisne na svet, pa tudi tista, ki se lahko dotika telesa umrlega in ga pripravi za pogreb.

Kot v delu *Miasma* navaja Robert Parker, je bila smrt v stari Grčiji v tesni zvezi s pojmom onesnaženja. Hišo, v kateri je nekdo umrl, je doletelo onesnaženje, zaradi katerega so se morali vsi, ki so vanjo vstopili, podvreči gestam in ritualom očiščenja, samih pokojnikov pa so se smele dotikati samo ženske roke: »Ženske iz hiše so pripravile pokojnika za njegovo razstavitev in ogled; truplo so umile, ga mazile, mu posadile na glavo krono, ga oblekle v čista oblačila, navadno bele ali rdeče barve, ter ga položile na ležišče, postlano z vejami in listjem. Na ta način so ga simbolično očistile, kljub vsemu onesnaženju okoli njega, samo truplo je nosilo krono, emblem čistosti« (Parker 35). Prav tako so bile ženske tiste, ki so pokojnike objokovale; tradicija naricanja žalostink med bdenjem ob truplu v domači hiši in predvsem kasneje med samim pogrebom se je do danes ohranila v nekaterih delih Balkana.

Mouawadov Wahid, ki se ob smrti sodelavca in prijatelja identificira najprej s Sofoklejevim Filoktetom in njegovo rano, nato pa kot Homerjev Odisej, ki v podzemlju poišče Tejrezija, potuje na pot nazaj proti domu, v zgodbi sreča dve ženski. Prva je dramaturginja, ki ji je v drami ime Esther, na filmu pa jo upodobi Mouawadova dejanska dramaturška sodelavka Charlotte Farcet, druga pa je njena mitološka referenca, čarovnica Kirka iz *Odiseje*. Obe ga pošljeta na potovanje, ki ga bo rešilo njegove neznosne stiske, poistovetene s Filoktetovo rano, in v dogajanje prineseta sprožilni moment, ob katerem se prične proces žalovanja dejavno obračati v proces okrevanja in je identičen procesu rojevanja drame oziroma predstave. Podvržen ženski izkušnji trpljenja, četudi zadet zgolj z metaforo rane, namreč Wahid nazadnje najde tisto preprosto stvar, ki jo je iskal od vsega začetka: pisalo. Bogovi, o katerih je govoril Robert, so bili že ves čas v njem samem. »Živeti!« vzklika Wahid, ko ponj prihaja rešilni avto. »Živeti! To je vendar to, živeti! Ni še vse izgubljeno« (59).

## Literatura

- Gantar, Kajetan. »Spremna beseda.« *Odiseja*, Homer, prevedel Kajetan Gantar, Mladinska knjiga, str. 109-146. (Knjižnica Kondor, 263.)
- . »Sofoklov *Filoktet* in njegova aktualnost.« *Filoktet*, Gledališki list SNG Drama Ljubljana, letn. LXXV, št. 7-8, 1995/96, 1996, str. 18–20.
- Mouawad, Wajdi. *Inflammation du verbe vivre*. Leméac/Actes Sud-Papiers, 2016.
- Parker, Robert. *Miasma. Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion*. Oxford UP, 1996.
- Rayner, Alice. *Ghosts. Death's Double and the Phenomena of Theatre*. University of Minnesota Press, 2006.
- Slapšak, Svetlana. »Sofoklov *Filoktet* – moška melodrama; Müllerjev *Filoktet* – ali je sarkazem pogubnejši od melodrame?« *Filoktet*, Gledališki list SNG Drama Ljubljana, letn. LXXV, št. 7-8, 1995/96, 1996, str. 36–39.
- . *Antična mitografija*. Beletrina, 2017.
- Sofokles. *Ajant; Trahinke; Filoktet*. Obzorja, 2000.
- Toporišič, Tomaž. *Levitve drame in gledališča*, Aristej, 2008.
- Vidal-Naquet, Pierre. »Sofoklov *Filoktet* in efebija.« *Mit in tragedija v stari Grčiji*, Jean-Pierre Vernant in Pierre Vidal-Naquet, prevedli Suzana Koncut in Agata Šega, ŠOU, 1994, str. 121–136.
- Videmšek, Boštjan. »Za novo družbeno gibanje je potreben čas.« *Delo*, 9. maja 2014.
- Vrečko, Janez. *Atiška tragedija*. Obzorja, 1997.
- Zeitlin, Froma I. »Igrati drugega: gledališče, gledališkost in žensko v grški drami.« *Ženska v grški drami*, ŠOU, 1993, str. 1–34. (Knjižna zbirka Krt, 87.)
- Zournazi, Mary. »In search of Greece's protest dog, Loukanikos.« *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*, 15. okt. 2015, [www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/archived/radiotonic/in-search-of-greeces-protest-dog-loukanikos/6854042](http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/archived/radiotonic/in-search-of-greeces-protest-dog-loukanikos/6854042). Dostop 3. avg. 2021.





In her article, the author analyses an example of a text and its staging brought about by the sudden death of a member of the playwright's creative team. In his solo performance *Inflammation du verbe vivre* (Inflammation of the Verb To Live), created at the Paris Théâtre National de la Colline in 2015, Canadian-Lebanese playwright, director and actor Wajdi Mouawad interwove the ancient Greek literary and mythological heritage with a personal confession about the loss of his friend and professional colleague Robert Davreu, upgrading it with a socially critical depiction of the situation in today's Greece. The performance was made as the penultimate part of a staging cycle of Sophocles's seven preserved tragedies under the common title *Le dernier jour de sa vie* (The Last Day of his Life). Mouawad had intended to direct the cycle in new translations by Davreu. Mouawad thus connected the process of mourning the death, which stopped the project, with the documentation of the writing process of the text that he later also directed and performed in the form of a peculiar theatre elegy. He fused the character of Philoctetes with the character of Odysseus; not the Odysseus from Sophocles's tragedy who plots to steal Philoctetes's bow, but the one from Homer who seeks his way home to Ithaca for ten years after the conquer of Troy and visits Tiresias's shade in the underworld.

---

**Keywords:** death, mourning, theatre, tragedy, epic, myth, lament, prophecy, ancient period, body, wound, gender

---

**Petra Pogorevc** graduated (comparative literature and English language and literature) from the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana. Between 1993 and 2007, she was active as a journalist, critic, publicist and translator in the Slovenian cultural scene. In 2007, she started working at the Ljubljana City Theatre (MGL) as a dramaturg and editor of the book series MGL Library. In 2017, she started her PhD studies in the Department of Dramaturgy and Performing Arts at the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television of the University of Ljubljana (UL AGRFT).

petra.pogorevc@siol.net

# Wound and Travel – Sophocles’s *Philoctetes* and Homer’s *Odyssey* in *Inflammation du verbe vivre* (Inflammation of the Verb To Live) by Wajdi Mouawad

---

Petra Pogorevc  
Ljubljana City Theatre

---

In her article, the author analyses an example of a text and its staging brought about by the sudden death of a member of the playwright’s creative team. In his solo performance *Inflammation du verbe vivre* (Inflammation of the Verb To Live), created at the Paris Théâtre National de la Colline in 2015, Canadian-Lebanese playwright, director and actor Wajdi Mouawad interwove the ancient Greek literary and mythological heritage with a personal confession about the loss of his friend and professional colleague Robert Davreu. He upgraded it with a socially critical depiction of the situation in today’s Greece. The performance was made as the penultimate part of a staging cycle of Sophocles’s seven preserved tragedies under the common title *Le dernier jour de sa vie* (The Last Day of His Life). Mouawad had intended to direct the cycle in new translations by Davreu. He connected the process of mourning the death, which stopped the project, with the documentation of the writing process of the text, which he later also directed and performed in the form of a peculiar theatre elegy. He fused the character of Philoctetes with the character of Odysseus; not the Odysseus from Sophocles’s tragedy who plots to steal Philoctetes’s bow, but the one from Homer who seeks his way home to Ithaca for ten years after the conquer of Troy and visits Tiresias’s shade in the underworld.

Wajdi Mouawad is the sole actor in the performance. The story communicated live from the stage is combined with pre-recorded and edited film scenes recorded between October 2014 and February 2015 at various locations in Paris and Greece. The main stage set element in the show is a canvas of tightened, slightly vibrating elastic strips; projected on it are videos that document the dual process of creating the performance and mourning for Davreu. The canvas functions as a projection screen and a permeable wall through which the performer can cross. Although he sometimes disappears behind it and completely leaves the floor to his projected image, he mostly shares the scene with it, playing with perspectives and dimensions and establishing

an exciting theatrical and filmic dialogue with himself.

Wahid declares himself Philoctetes, comparing the unfinished project with his wound caused by the bite of a poisonous snake. He and his film crew go to Greece. His first destination on Lemnos is Philoctetes's cave, which is closed because of dangerously hindered access. Later, he tosses in his bed during a rainstorm, then gets up and takes from his suitcase the other key reference reading of the drama and the performance, Homer's *Odyssey*. In one of the most astonishing scenes in the show, he climbs in his underwear up a projection screen vertically displaying hexameters from *The Odyssey*. These are from the part where Circe advises Odysseus to go to the underworld and find the shade of Tiresias, who will help him with advice and prophesy his return home. Wahid now knows where to go. He writes a farewell letter to his children and wades into the sea. After his suicide, he is no longer only Philoctetes but also Odysseus, the one who travels home for ten years after the conquest of Troy.

Wahid crosses the Acheron River on the boat of Charon embodied by an elderly Mediterranean fisherman and finds himself at the Hades airport, where he is met by taxi driver Leteris. The fact that Athens and other parts of modern Greece are established as an analogy to the mythological Hades has a powerful effect on the whole, same as the decision that we, the audience, are understood as shades of the dead in the same way as the shades in the film and Wahid himself; Mouawad repeatedly points this out in his addresses whose humorous and direct nature reminds us of the *Dialogues of the Dead* by Ancient Greek satirist Lucian. The consequences of the financial crisis are painfully evident at every turn: today's Greece is a country of humiliated and desperate people who are confronted with unemployment and unimaginable poverty, its cities and villages are full of abandoned and decaying buildings that have lost their former splendour and content, its flora and fauna have gone wild because desperate people gave up on them. Just like Philoctetes in Mouawad's text and performance/film is broadened to encompass the entire population of Greece, its landscape, too, is turning into Lemnos of gigantic dimensions.

In the end, Wahid's is taken to the shade of Robert Davreu. Davreu's face in close-up has a strong emotional impact on a viewer. But just after viewers are struck by the fact that Wahid finally met Robert, they also get the opposite idea: that Robert's shade, in contrast to all the previous ones, can no longer be a matter of performed fiction. Alienation sets in, and viewers becomes aware of the medium; they are inevitably reminded that they are taking part in a show or film and that the meeting between Wahid and Robert is constructed, subsequently edited, directed – in other words, failed. But the shade's words still bear weight because the drama and performance assign it the role of Tiresias.

The seer Tiresias and the ephebe Philoctetes are associated with the motifs of a

forbidden look and a snake: the latter was bitten by a snake because he looked at the goddess, while the former was punished because he looked at a pair of snakes. Hence, the goddess captured him in a female body and deprived him of sight. The female body is, namely, initiated into the world of the ultimate secrets of human birth and death. It is a woman whose body conceives and grows a new life, extracting it into the world in pain and cramps, and it is a woman who can touch a dead body and prepare it for the funeral.

Mouawad's Wahid meets two women. The first is a dramaturg called Esther in the play but played in the film by Mouawad's actual dramaturgic colleague Charlotte Farcet. The other is her mythological reference, the witch Circe from *The Odyssey*. Both send him on a journey that will relieve him of his unbearable distress identified with Philoctetes's wound and bring to the storyline a triggering moment in which the mourning process actively begins to turn into a recovery process and is identical with the process of the emerging play or performance.

The paper proposes that the experimental theatre scene in Slovenia in the years 1955–1967 formed a community. The performative visions of experimental groups acted as subtle gestures opposing the prominent aesthetic trend that dominated the performing scene in central institutions of postwar theatre creativity. The latter found it difficult to connect with its audience since it dealt with issues of lesser concern and lacked a true connection with progressive theatre currents (predominantly coming from France).

---

**Keywords:** artistic influence, theatre experiment, continual dialectics, need for transformation, subtle gesture

---

**Primož Jesenko, MA**, is a dramaturg and theatre researcher. He is the author of *Dramaturgical Concepts in Slovene Theatre 1950–1970* (2008) and *The Edge in the Centre: Selected Chapters from the History of Experimental Theatre in Slovenia 1955–1967* (2015), for which he was bestowed the Vladimir Kralj Award by the Association of Theatre Critics and Researchers of Slovenia. Editor of the performing arts section of the cultural journal *Dialogi*. Contributor to theatre volumes (a study on the period 1919–1967 for the publication *100 Years of SNT Maribor*, 2019; preface to *Crave* by Sarah Kane, Emanat, 2008), and to various research projects (*TACE – Occupying Spaces*, National Theatre Museum of Slovenia, 2008–2011; *Performing Visuality, Performing Life: Art Practices in Slovenia from the 1960s to the 1980s*, Maska Ljubljana, 2009) and to international festivals, exhibitions and colloquia (*Exodos Ljubljana*, 2006–2008; *Revolutionary Voices*, New York Public Library, 2009). He is also the co-editor of *The Actress with a Pencil; Selected Journals of Alja Tkačev* (2021).

primoz.jesenko@guest.arnes.si

# Hibernation Works for Bears but not for Theatre:

## The Notion of Community among Theatre Institutions and Experimental Theatre Groups in Slovenia (1955–1967)

---

Primož Jesenko  
Slovenian Theatre Institute

---

Speaking about theatre forms in the 1950s when the term “experimental” was coined in Slovenia, the spatial principle of the “theatre-in-the-round” as the first Yugoslav experimental theatre format was the initial impulse for the establishment of a more up-to-date relation between audience and actors and thus the perception of the theatre event. The three non-institutional collectives (the Experimental Theatre of Balbina Baranovič, Oder 57 (Stage 57) and the Ad hoc Theatre of Draga Ahačič) presented the first wave of the theatre experiment in the years 1955–1967. These collectives (all with professional theatre actors) arose from direct correspondence with the institutional production, more precisely as its alternative – they took an oppositional stance, especially towards the rigidity of the so-called “Burgtheater acting manner”, which dominated the Slovenian National Theatre in Ljubljana. Performing what would be impossible to stage within the institution, they anticipated the future by encouraging new repertoire possibilities and modifying the general artistic paradigm. Their persistent “blows” ended the absence of the avant-garde activity. Eventually, they led to the strengthening of cultural pluralism and the capabilities of the national theatre context as a whole.

Performing in the Knight’s Hall, the apparently marginal space in the eminent, centrally located cultural complex Križanke in the Ljubljana city centre, ascribed by the local authorities, played a role of key importance. After WWII, the Knight’s Hall, the oldest venue in Ljubljana, was designated for experimental theatre groups that were not part of institutions.<sup>1</sup> In 1952–1956, the architect Jože Plečnik adapted the interior of the former monastery of the Order of Teutonic Knights, built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The

---

<sup>1</sup> Jesenko, Primož. “The Edge in the Centre (Theatre Experimentation in the Knight’s Hall in the Križanke Complex 1955–1972).” In: *Occupying Spaces: Experimental theatre in Central Europe: 1950–2010*. Ljubljana: National Theatre Museum of Slovenia, 2010. p. 470–521.

Knight's Hall, a simple, ascetic, long room with three windows on every side that was used as the former monastery's refectory, was located on the edge of the complex as well (Plečnik focused chiefly on the open atrium). The paper will take a closer look at the imposed logistics ("production model") of many co-existent theatre collectives on the same stage. Thus, the social and theatrical perception of the non-institutional theatre groups in the 1950s and 1960s provided the continual appropriation of the alternative theatre modes into the institutional framework.

Having this in mind, a brief note about the complex story of experimental theatre in Slovenia is necessary. The theatre of a nation which only exceeds two million inhabitants usually surpasses the awareness of cultural phenomena and fails to meet the broader interest of the global context. The Yugoslav cultural scene after 1945 very often included Slovene theatre into the broader picture of Yugoslav theatre. In this way, a clear distinction between different republics of the state went missing. Nevertheless, the results of Yugoslav artistic creativity that stemmed from Slovenian theatre artists were chosen to appear and got presented on the international theatre floor as the most representative achievements of Yugoslav theatre. The conditions that allowed the growth and evolution of Slovenian theatre mastery have all along – and since the 1920s, even more so – been already privileged from the geographical point of view. Due to their closeness and the ongoing need to take part and interact with (neighbouring) cultural happenings, trends and currents outside of Slovenia, the whole cultural identity of Slovenian artists has been shaped differently ever since the painter August Černigoj's stay at the Bauhaus in 1924 (for financial reasons, his presence at the renowned art school was cut short after only three months). This experience proved Černigoj a creative sponge and presented a model of how the influences of inspirational foreign artistic impulses enter an "autochthonous" culture. This subtle, indirect way has left significant traces on the Slovenian artistic scene – always adding a specific additional trait of the original local creative context at its base, while its spirit draws recognisable traits from the encountered creative current.

At the institutional level, connections of Slovenian theatre with the rest of Yugoslavia were prolonged after 1945. However, the situation in 1952 was critically observed in newspapers by Herbert Grün: "Any visits of renowned stars are fully absent." But the artistic staff had to be allowed to look around the world: "There is no quality theatre that could live like a bear in hibernation just from its own hall. Every central theatre also lives from living initiatives from major centres of theatrical activity. In the past, contacts with the world have raised our central theatre from the provincial level to the European one".<sup>2</sup> The dialectic of transformations was realised in Ljubljana by regular hosting of theatres from all over the world and from other capitals of Yugoslavia (guest visits followed the pattern of return visits in an agreed time). The longing for representative tours from the West was pronounced. Grün elaborated further: "The touring policy has

<sup>2</sup> Grün, Herbert. "Dramaturgija province (Iz izkušenj Prešernovega gledališča v Kranju)." *Naši razgledi*, 26. 7. 1952. p. 16–8.

already provided us with many instructive experiences. For example, we could see at least the most important European (and also some non-European) theatres.”

Internally, the history of theatre experiments in Slovenia was also a result of connections between institutional and non-institutional activities in the period after 1950. This period was continuously stimulated by contact with creative currents outside of Slovenia, or rather outside Yugoslavia. The times were also defined utilitarianly and felt the need for an immediate gain of a positive influence in return, possibly with an exemplary performance of the home house. A clear insight into the phenomenon of artistic influences in a certain period remains rather hypothetical and elusive. Visits and guest performances to neighbouring performative spaces are crucial and confirm the importance of the theatre medium’s ability to trespass national borders. To grasp a definable dialectics of these changes, a precise reconstruction of guest performances and interactions between them would be necessary – but a thorough reflection in this respect (that would include the way how tours were perceived in public and how they enabled a slow yet continual change in aesthetic perception) is difficult, especially if we wish to avoid a line of the imaginary.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that experimental theatre groups in the 1960s were included in the programmes of Yugoslav theatre festivals as equivalent act(or)s – even though their presentations may have seemed difficult and unrealistic from financial, infrastructural points of view. Already in 1961, this was not the case in Yugoslavia: experimental performances from Slovenia were considered since their substance, and formal presentation was adequately appropriated to the institutional performing stance and could thus equally compete with them. Moreover, the approach of the experimental theatre community functioned as a novelty and exceeded the patterns of the institution. The notion of professionalism needed no new definition.

After 1955 when international visits became a regular practice in Yugoslavia, they also served the role of an experience of the variety of different theatre conceptualisations. Yugoslavia – and consequently Slovenia – consciously did not decide on isolation and remote observation but on active and creative involvement in world cultural and artistic trends, which creates dependence on the mutual flow of forces and impulses. A frequent venue for the tours in Ljubljana was the Opera house (situated in the former Provinzialtheater/Deželno gledališče, built in 1892). An organised network of Yugoslav theatres was arranged for renowned theatre groups and artists from abroad to perform in Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana. Over time, Ljubljana received both foreign tours and opportunities for return tours in the remaining two cities, both of which played an important artistic and cultural-political role.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Some names of the prominent guests after 1945: Burgtheatre Vienna, Théâtre National Populaire Paris, Beijing Classical Theatre, MHAT Moscow, Piccolo teatro Milano, José Limón Dance Company, folklore groups from Indonesia, Ukraine, France, Hungary, Shanghai Opera, Academic Choir of Oslo, choir from Guinea, Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Stratford, Narodni divadlo Praga, Old Vic Theatre London.



In the meantime, the central institution heightened its pride with outstanding success on another level. In 1956, the most representative performance in the country was sent to the second edition of Paris festival Théâtre des Nations: there, Slavko Jan's staging of Cankar's *The Serfs* (originally presented in 1948 at the SNT Ljubljana Drama, it had 109 repetitions) was recognised as a model example of a refined realistic direction, it exceeded all expectations of Parisian visitors. The perception of the professional public in Western Europe, and a foreign spectator in general, was based on ideologically motivated stereotypes that shaped a dialectic according to which theatre from Yugoslavia was considered an "exotic" from a socialist state whose stage results could offer no surprise whatsoever. However, lesser-known aspirations spoke of overcoming this prejudice. Lojze Filipič, the dramaturg heavily involved in introducing the modern dramaturgical concept into Slovenian theatre, writes about the participation of the Ljubljana Academy of Performing Arts (AIU) at the University Theatre Festival in Erlangen, Bavaria, already in 1952, where AIU resounded as one of the top European theatre academies.

But above all, the transformation of the Slovenian theatre context appeared through the activities of agile individuals who, with their sophistication and non-conformist personal attitude, shifted the horizon. First, by drawing attention to the established genre, stylistic and writing approaches happening place abroad, such as the theatre in the round or the introduction of choreographed movement into stage expression, as well as the drama novelties that were about to change the face of the global theatre world. At this point, the experimental theatre groups that formed their activity method in the mode of the experimental community as healers took the situation into their own hands.<sup>4</sup>

In the period 1955–1967, the three non-institutional collectives – the Experimental Theatre of Balbina Batellino Baranović, Oder 57 (Stage 57) and Ad hoc Theatre of Draga Ahačič – introduced the first wave of experimental theatre, which developed as an alternative to the central theatre institution in Ljubljana with its rigid acting

4 The search for different possibilities of theatrical representation was simultaneously taking place on different geographical levels of the Slovenian theatre context. On the level of theatre institutions, the theatre community proved active and successful in meeting its goal. In Trieste/Trst, the performance of *Brez tretjega* by the Croatian author Milan Begović was staged in January 1956 (directed by Jože Babič). The play was designed for the theatre in the round format and proved that the Slovene Permanent Theatre in Trieste was "capable of taking on the role of an avant-garde theatre". The Trieste staging was the third Slovenian example of "the theatre in the round" and meant a risky (and courageous) attempt of a genre novelty outside Ljubljana – before the première in Trieste, Baranović even published an extensive article on the phenomenon of the theatre-in-the-round and its growing out of desire for new stage expression – as if to make the city ready for this effort to return to the origin, "to the oldest form – to the circle", as shown in the USA and by the European theatre reformators. Baranović embodied the potential of an experimental community but her failure in Celje was instructive enough. The critical response in Trieste was in favor of the avant-garde, while the response of the Trieste audience was less enthusiastic about the modernisation, imposed upon the conventional theatre. The performance was presented at the 4<sup>th</sup> Ljubljana Festival (July 1956) in the Knight's Hall of Križanke and in Koper and Maribor; later, Fran Žižek also adapted the staging of Jože Babič for television broadcast. In 1957, another staging of *Brez tretjega* was announced at the Celje City Theatre (where *Attentat* was unsuccessful in 1953); but in order to show an even greater ambition, *Rok and Lea*, another play for theatre in the round was now written by Janez Žmavc, an author from Celje, and staged in 1960.

method (the so-called Burgtheater style) and its non-inventive repertoire programme. In doing so, they ended the absence of avant-garde activity, modified the general artistic paradigm, and finally strengthened pluralism in the performing arts.

## The generational gap

Balbina Battelino Baranovič (1921–2015) began her studies in Vienna at the Institut für Theaterwissenschaft already before WWII. She was thus shaped by the German context and by the classical outlook on theatre. Being educated in Vienna gave Battelino Baranovič a different view of the theatre. She directed her last production on Slovenian stages in 1969. The attention for the aesthetics of over a decade of work at the Experimental Theatre became scarce after 1960. Baranovič deliberately withdrew when she became aware of the specific unresponsiveness and non-recognition of the environment in which she worked. The absent sense of community among artists that she felt stemmed from harsh differences in the aesthetic approach. There was no connection between the creators who belonged to different generations (Baranovič was a decade older than the members of the so-called critical generation who founded Oder 57). The heated political context also made any way of interaction between them impossible.

At first, Oder 57 united the generational representatives of the interwar period (1918–1941), the exemplary one among them being Jože Javoršek (b. 1920), who takes credit for the inception of Eugène Ionesco to Slovenian stage in 1958 (*Učna ura/La Leçon*). At that time, Javoršek was distinctively close to the Oder 57 personnel – Taras Kermauner (b. 1930) later defined this affinity of Javoršek as “the genius”, which was more modern than the prevailing playwrights.<sup>5</sup> Javoršek (similar to Balbina Battelino Baranovič and Draga Ahačič, b. 1924) was a decade older than Kermauner’s generation, a generation that was congenial with the collaborators of the socially proactive journal *Perspektive* (Perspectives). Javoršek’s expertise on current artistic waves and the initiation of Ionesco as the herald of progressive drama and theatre innovativeness left a significant trace after he parted from Oder 57. The progressive steps initiated via the attachment to contemporary drama writing did not at first stage include Slovenian plays: the inaugural piece was by Ionesco (dir. Žarko Petan, 1958). According to Marjan Rožanc, the relation to Slovenian drama was not yet fully defined. At first, the presentations of foreign plays played an informative role and influenced the authors of Oder 57.<sup>6</sup> Javoršek’s publicistic era and his theatre critique (1953–1957) hints at his congruity with experimental groups. Still, more

<sup>5</sup> Kermauner, Taras. *Kristus in Dioniz: razprava o slovenski dramatikii zadnjega pol stoletja*. Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1990. pp. 17–18.

<sup>6</sup> “Round table: Oder 57”, in: *Maske* 1989, no. 12. p. 23.

doubt can be raised by his eventual crossing over to the gravitational field of Josip Vidmar (b. 1895), the patriarch of criticism in the 1960s, who had no understanding of modernist drama. The francophile Javoršek, who was greatly influenced by the French drama of the absurd and Ionesco's texts on new theatre writing, partly shared the tendencies of the younger generation. On the other hand, he never took part in uttering the social criticism that was felt as essential and unconditional to Kermauner (less by the remaining part of Oder 57). In contrast, Kermauner grew his ties with the cultural scene in a centripetal manner (in the "manner of a mycelium," as he called it).

The intent for a revolution of the aesthetic expression, which in its dramaturgy opposed the bourgeois theatre, persisted and was consistent. Likewise, the generational differences between the authors remained since this affiliation was likely to defeat even the strongest inclination for change within the given state of things. This side of divergence/discrepancy persists, as can explicitly be observed in the case of experimental groups, even though its authors indirectly spoke of that or were not conscious about it. The problematic "theatre instant" was too topical and too serious. The younger authors more distinctly felt this mood. They nevertheless did not wish to utter it in the metatextual dimensions of their writings (journals) and their stage realisations, as the temper of the transformational intent did not allow it. The proactive striving maintained a decent level of communication. Younger authors did not negate, denounce or cancel older associates with different horizons and moments of inertia since they formed an alliance and wanted to retain the imperative of respectful distance. This is why the mutual bluster against the given state of theatre omitted the generational split as an argument. Every message was passed indirectly, candidly. The points of differences were not destructively argued. The parameters of dissent were simply not articulated.

The organisation of the infrastructural conditions for art, which was created outside the public institutions and drew attention to the narrowness of the "official" theatres, shows the rudiments of the unenviable situation that non-institutional theatres still experience today. Their production found a home in a centrally-located but relatively inadequate space within the former monastery complex in Križanke. This became a creative focal point and the scene of a wide range of culturally and socially significant events. It was also a time of many unrealised initiatives and doubts about the work of the experimental groups that set makeshifts, fragmented, burdened with financial, spatial and technical difficulties and demanding endless compromises. Nevertheless, the theatrical concepts of experimental groups continuously influenced the SNT Drama to break away from many conventions. The 1960s' audience recognised that the work of the first non-institutional groups was in the community's interest. As the case of Oder 57 shows, these had no difficulty articulating their interests, at least in terms of content. After that, in the second half of the 1960s, theatre activities in Slovenia spread in several directions.

Sources of influential impulses between national theatre horizons in Europe were at that point determined only partly. The time was too fresh, too “young” for that, even though considerable inspiration could be felt from France. This influence was first recognised by experimental theatres that appeared as the ones with courage and vigour that sufficiently started to invade the Slovenian theatre performing. The example of Ionesco is very telling. After his first appearance in Slovenia (as well as Yugoslavia) with *Učna ura* (La Leçon) at Oder 57 in 1958, SNT Drama affirmed its caution by staging Ionesco’s *Žeja in lakota* (La Soif et la faim) only in 1967. The director was again Žarko Petan; the staging of Ionesco’s most recent play (from 1966) confirmed the prompt and up-to-date approach of the institution but appeared “cautiously”. This later work by Ionesco had already exposed the playwright’s weaker impact; in the meantime, he had become an established European author, thus showing that Oder 57 had captured the revolutionary traits of Ionesco’s novelties at the right time. In 1967, the institutional theatre was only trying to recapture the surpassed bewildering drama strength of the author. The same situation appeared with Beckett’s arrival. His *Čakajoč Godota* (Waiting for Godot, 1952) was famously staged at Atelje 212 in Belgrade in 1958, the inception of Beckett on Yugoslav stages. On the other hand, Slovenian theatre first decided for his *Konec igre* (Fin de Partie, 1957) at the Experimental Theatre of Balbina Baranovič in 1961, while *Godot* entered the SNT Drama only in 1968, in the direction of institutional director France Jamnik. In this sense, the cautiousness of the central theatre institution in Slovenia twice proved a superfluous brake.

## Balbina Battelino Baranovič

After the war, having witnessed the invasion of Vienna by the Red Army, Balbina Battelino Baranovič immediately tried to “smuggle” the production model of the “theatre in the round” to Slovenia. She first tried this novelty in 1953 at the municipal theatre in Celje. The artistic director Lojze Filipič offered her “carte blanche”. However, the response to the first experimental approach after 1945 in Celje was limited. The experimental staging concept, which tried to “adapt theatre-in-the-round to Slovene conditions”,<sup>7</sup> failed to mobilise additional audiences. Perhaps it even drove them away – because the public in Celje felt suspicious of the term “experiment” and needed to be grasped with a pre-set methodology, even though Baranovič chose to stage a thriller *Attentat!* (1935) by Swiss author Willy O. Somin which was supposed to attract even more. The performance was a flop. It did not even help that the actual première (in its yearning for exclusiveness) took place outside the usual black box in the theatre’s newly renovated foyer. Only the repeat performances took place on the central stage,

<sup>7</sup> Battelino Baranovič, Balbina. “Gledališče v krogu pri nas.” Theatre programme for *Mož, žena in smrt*, no. 2 (1955/56).

where the stage setting and auditorium were next to each other. This only made Balbina realise the necessity of moving to Ljubljana to meet and address a different, more “worldly” audience. She wanted the audience to feel what she had experienced in Paris while watching a group from Philadelphia. It was exactly the stereotypes that Baranovič was trying to leave out.

The Cultural Department of the Municipality of Ljubljana administration enabled her to work within the framework of Križanke. The first performance in the capital in 1955 (which was also the first performance in the Knight’s Hall) was a dramatisation of Zola’s *Thérèse Raquin*. It was presented as a rather traditional example of literary theatre. As Vasja Predan noted, the performance was “in many ways a direct transfer of the ‘conventional’ interpretation to a round platform”.<sup>8</sup> The basic guideline for initiating the circular stage layout was the loosening of the rigid staging expression in central institutions in the mid-1950s that locked actors at a distance from the spectator. The theatre-in-the-round was received well, although some critics expressed concerns since performances have hinted that not all drama plays are suitable for this format and that selectivity in this regard was necessary.

The Experimental Theatre’s mobilising element existed in its good actors. They belonged to younger generations not tied to the routine of the traditional German theatre. For them, the round stage, the closeness of the audience and the rapid conversational style were not a hindrance. Moreover, the repertoire was not that far from what the audience was used to from the Slovene National Theatre programmes. Battelino Baranovič reached further, but not too far; in a way, the eclectic nature of the programme was without any particular connection to the modernist tradition. A more marked radical approach could thus be found in the organisation of this “new theatre” rather than in the stage result. Even though the Experimental Theatre signified a deviation from the established form and strove for aesthetic autonomy, its content did not explicitly include a different equation suitable to the spirit of the time. The ideological stance was not emphasised. The group did not explicitly dispute traditional theatre, the bourgeoisie or the Communist Party (the Central Committee had a few tickets booked for every performance). But in fact, the performances of Experimental Theatre could easily be included in the programme of the Ljubljana Festival as the grand summer event in Ljubljana with an intended international resound.

The director of SNT Drama, Slavko Jan, thus called Battelino Baranovič two years after her theatre first appeared and proposed that the two theatres merge. She rejected the proposal out of fear that, within a large institution, they would no longer be able to work according to their established model. In a talk with representatives from the Ministry of Culture, she insisted that it was not possible. “I knew that if we moved to

<sup>8</sup> V. P., “Gledališče v krogu.” *Ljudska pravica*, 21 June 1955.

Mala drama (the SNT Drama small stage), it would backfire on us.” After this, she did not believe that her Experimental Theatre would survive. The SNT Drama theatre kept wishing to establish an experimental stage and finally did so in 1963 (Mala drama).<sup>9</sup>

Aesthetic contributions made by the Experimental Theatre in the mid-1950s provided the objective change upon which the experimental groups later built. Also, the relation to particular foreign prominent theatres that visited Ljubljana to provide examples of stable contemporary theatre production suddenly received representative theatre of genuine Slovenian “counterparts”. The situation was turned upside down. It happened almost immediately and simultaneously, most of all due to Balbina Baranovič’s design of the staged programme. This was possible because the anchor point of Battelino Baranovič’s staging procedure was literature which allowed the introduction of up-to-date authors and, at the same time, tried out classical authors who were granted a good promise already with their names. Baranovič was updated with new authors who were invading French stages of that time, and this is why her approach seemed logical and unpretentious: after Zola’s *Therese Raquin* (1955), Plato’s *Last Days of Socrates* (1957) and Faulkner’s *Requiem for a Nun* (1958), Goethe’s *Faust* (1959) followed, the second staging of the text in Slovenia (after the performance by Osip Šest in 1929), which in agreement with Festival Ljubljana was this time staged as a rather lively ambient performance in the foyer of Križanke. *Faust* offered something quite contrary to the usual perception of theatre medium as a pathway to stiff academic events with less spark. The choreographic interventions of Henrik Neubauer resulted in a non-stereotypical performance, where dance appeared in every scene on a stage surrounded by the audience on four sides. It thus provoked the general imagination and provided an incentive for future work in this direction.<sup>10</sup> This performance was followed by a staging of F. G. Lorca’s poetry (1960), Beckett’s *Endgame* (1961), Albee’s *Zoo Story* (1962), Dylan Thomas’ *Under Milk Wood* (1963) – authors who were soon taken over and integrated into the programmes of institutions. A soft but recognisable scent of elitism thus led to this sort of experimental theatre production. Alongside the outstanding collaborators (translators, actors), even the invited choreographers figured as best of their profession.

9 Another theatre founded in 1955 and artistically led by Balbina Battelino Baranovič was the Mladinsko Theatre. It also staged its first performances in the Knight’s Hall. The first idea for such a theatre arose because of education: it was intended to stage occasional theatre performances for children and young people. The first four performances were tied to the activities of the children’s Pionirska Knjižnica (Pioneer Library) and were actually just the final production by extracurricular drama classes, where the young participants appeared together with professional actors from the SNT Drama and the Ljubljana City Theatre. We could even talk about the activities of a “theatre-in-the-round” for the “pioneers”, within the limitations provided by the young actors. The Experimental Theatre and the Mladinsko Theatre developed in parallel: a theatre for adults with a progressive outlook and a theatre aimed at the young.

10 “The Knight’s Hall seemed just a fraction too small,” remembers Battelino Baranovič. “The foyer, on the other hand, did not function as a Greek amphitheatre, but as a Roman arena. Some people sat on balconies, even on the pavilion roof. I went around, also asking my colleagues to do the same, to see how the whole functioned in this space and the experience was incredible. We had two repeat performances, sadly, no more.” (“Balbina Battelino Baranovič: ‘Ozko usmerjeni in enostransko izobraženi ljudje niso v posebno korist, kultura in umetnost zahtevata široko oblikovanega človeka. Takih v tistem času ni bilo veliko.” In: Jesenko, *The Edge in the Centre*, p. 297.)

## Oder 57

After the francophile Jože Javoršek withdrew from Oder 57, Taras Kermauner took over the tactical management of this group of like-minded theatre practitioners in 1959. It was clear to him that Oder 57 needed to be laid on new foundations: on questioning the problems of the current social environment with which the audience could identify, and at the same time include dealing with issues of a historical moment that seemed common across Europe. This brought a significant change in the ideological and programmatic orientation and perspective of Oder 57; the “critical generation” got mobilised by the philosophical foundations of existentialism and modernism. This required a different type of playwriting. This is why it established close ties with the circle of emerging writers: it strengthened the generational commitment and the will for political and organisational engagement in society. The analytical approach desentimentalised the theatrical expression. The dilemma of “Aristotelian postulates: pro and contra” became secondary. The chamber stage style came to the fore, with a play without pathos, pursuing a non-illusionist visual image. The orientation and vision of the (predominantly male) Oder 57 were more rigorous and articulated.

In 1962, Kermauner, the principal theoretical proponent of Oder 57, focused on the very distinction between two types of experimental theatre:

It is questionable whether this loosened experimentation is essential if, through all this, a regeneration of the theatre, a return of truth to the theatre has been achieved. If it is not just a secondary, technical activity, which any official, the already existing bourgeois theatre could apply and adapt to its goals? (And the facts show us that the official theatres do precisely this, but they still do not exceed their limitations.)<sup>11</sup>

No one is mentioned explicitly, but the following makes it clear to where such an evaluation pointed: “What is needed is confrontation, comparison. And even at this point, we can eliminate all those theatrical endeavours, which are experimental only in technical terms – externally – but which, in fact, follow the same goals as the official theatres.”

Foreign drama accentuated the insufficiency of the traditional psychological realism in theatre and drove to considerations of different directorial and acting approaches to performing on stage. This continually shaped the idea, which Vasja Predan retrospectively labelled as the main thesis of Oder 57: theatre – as an emancipated art form which grows out of itself and is pledged to its theatrical structural sense – should and may not rely solely on reproducing literature, but should also do more than just present a mirror image of reality.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Kermauner, Taras. “Kaj je današnje eksperimentalno gledališče?” *Perspektive*, no. 17 (1961/62): 885–8.

<sup>12</sup> Predan, Vasja. *Slovenska dramska gledališča*. Ljubljana: Mestno gledališče ljubljansko [Knjižnica MGL], 1996. p. 136.



In the experimental community, differences persisted, but these did not spring out, neither on the plane of the mutual solidarity nor did their rationale allow them to b(l)oom further. Since the activity parameters of Oder 57 followed an entirely professional approach, it is interesting to note that in his later writings (in the 1970s), Kermauner refused to label the performances of Oder 57 as “experiments” and attributed this term a pejorative undertone.

## Community worked!

Due to the activities of three experimental and other theatre groups,<sup>13</sup> the Knight’s Hall became a cultural centre, in which several events were organised and performed every year. Draga Ahačič also found herself within this framework and focused her Ad hoc Theatre on staging (new) French drama. As recipients of all these (sub) cultural activities, educated people, artists, students, youth and others met in the Knight’s Hall. This experimental theatre domain was visited by a permanent and very heterogeneous audience of 1,000 to 1,500 people annually. The Knight’s Hall was also open for various other events, conversations and debates (not only) on cultural issues. The fact that the city (and state) enabled the operation of experimental groups offers a more democratic – and externally representative – image of Yugoslavia (and Slovenia) from an international perspective.

As a space designated for the (theatrical) experiment, the Knight’s Hall enacted the thesis that architecture and urbanism are “privileged areas of ideology”. Hence, the directors of cultural policy in Ljubljana in 1955 acted wisely. The constitution of a creative gathering point that marks the urban context neither marginalised experimental theatre to the margins of cultural policy interest, nor did it enact the tendency to totalise in the name of a single, dominant aesthetic. It became inhabited by theatre discourses, with which the artists searched for different possibilities related to the cultural field. In this sense, theatrical art was considered as something special; in many ways, it was attributed to a representative role and position among the arts. The precondition for a community was thus fulfilled. Until the designation of premises on Gregorčičeva ulica 3 for the Experimental Theatre Glej in 1983 – and from today’s point of view –, the Knight’s Hall was a sheer delicacy.

<sup>13</sup> As the theatre forces were modernised and actualised, the borders between amateurism and professionalism (at least for the authorities in power) were not clearly formulated. Several phenomena existed, such as the Artisan Stage (Obrtniški oder), the Worker’s Stage (Delavski oder) and the various incarnations of informal theatre groups led by the actor Jurij Souček, that all expanded the purview of performing practices at the time.



## Points of difference

The discussion “On Some Problems of Slovene Theatre” by Kermauner (published in four sequels in the *Perspektive* journal in 1961 and 1962) gives a comprehensive anamnesis of the state of theatre production in Slovenia and turns the established hierarchy of values upside down. He no longer uses the provocative and declarative manifesto form but analyses it realistically and critically.<sup>14</sup> As Kermauner later admitted, this led to a rather one-sided and reductive view of our own ideas; this is one of the reasons why the “anti-perspective” mood awoke among people, no matter how unreflected it was. The point of difference was “thought” – this was, as Peter Božič points out, “the only possible and active weapon that could destroy a closed and ideological totalitarian system, which at most resembles a closed pressure pot in which everything is cooked in a few seconds in the gravel. I saw that vigorously in the theatrical production of the middle generation, which, especially its literary part, completely gave up thinking.”<sup>15</sup>

This included a rather minimalist design of the set and the absence of colours (“black and white” photography) since the designated set was not perceived as a crucial constituent of theatre presentation at Oder 57. The actual aim was to simplify and shrink the visual information to a single perspective and light tone, which in its basic concept and creative attitude tried to comment on the current sociopolitical situation in the country. However, Oder 57’s interaction with political authorities followed a specific dialectics of a game that was experienced daily, a game of power play, incentive, pretence or even bluff. Politicians took up the role of constant staging where actual moves are being taken in the background. Nevertheless, the socialist authorities in Slovenia can not be labelled as the enemies of Slovenian theatre.

While the methodology of Balbina Baranovič relied on the act of doing, of an immediate act, Oder 57 was the most conceptually consolidated group of all. It was supported by the journal *Perspektive*, which brought together a group of intellectually strong, partly established playwrights, essayists, philosophers, sociologists: Taras Kermauner, Dominik Smole, Veljko Rus, Dane Zajc, Peter Božič, Primož Kozak, etc., stood out. As a result, the group was strong in its conceptual orientation, the strongest in the early post-WWII period. The state took them seriously as otherwise unpleasant but respectable interlocutors. The Oder 57 member Mija Janžekovič, director and later television documentary filmmaker, recalls that the Oder 57 collective did not closely observe the activities of other experimental groups. They went to see some of their performances, but mostly did not discuss them or their authors. This is why one can

<sup>14</sup> Kermauner, Taras. “O nekaterih problemih sodobnega gledališča (I-IV)”. *Perspektive* no. 1. 9–10 (1960/61). *Perspektive* no. II. 11–12 (1961/62).

<sup>15</sup> Božič, Peter. “Iluzija in vizija sta meso postal”. In: *Oder 57: pričevanja*. Ljubljana: Mestno gledališče ljubljansko, 1988. p. 48.

hardly speak of aggression or competition between the groups. Antagonisms never surfaced. In a rather abstract sense, they formed a community, but every group was busy realising their intentions in front of a relatively small but steady, loyal audience.

Such were the general dynamics between groups and also the understanding of the community that stemmed from the organisation and the ideological priorities. Agreements that concerned the shared space of the Knight's Hall were made by mutual consent, and the activities were carried out at a relatively fixed rhythm. There were hardly any differences of opinion, conflicts or distrust among the co-users of these premises, so there was no need to resolve any situation by compromise. The artists felt good in this visually far from alternative space, better than in an institution. The venue offered a certain privacy in which they could work quite intensively for a limited period of time: occupy the hall, carry out their business, and then leave the venue to those who came after them. The use of the hall varied: between theatre performances, there were musical events, and in 1958, Janžekovič even attended a discussion after the miners' strike from Trbovlje. This was the first (and perhaps the only) strike after 1945, and Janžekovič remembers a similar charge of rebellion from this discussion as from the première of *Antigone*.

A slight dialogue with the individual enlightened representatives of the authorities existed. Partly, the theatre experiment seemed like an intrusion of the West and that the spirit of the time was trespassing borders. The group members could feel their tense relationship with authorities. But these latent pressures and uncertainties did not hinder the groups from performing. The police called a few of them after the evening *Ivan Cankar and Slovenian Actors* (which happened three weeks before the violent shutdown of Oder 57 at the première of *Topla Greda*, April 1964), in which almost the entire set of Slovenian professional actors performed. Still, amongst themselves, they did not even speak about it.

At Oder 57, the tactics of self-censorship were never used. Connections to the Yugoslav area existed: Oder 57 and Ad hoc Theatre also attended Sterijino Pozorje in 1962, the central Yugoslav theatre festival in Novi Sad (with productions *Vojaka Jošta ni* by Peter Božič and *Afera* by Primož Kozak, 1961) – on this occasion, Oder 57 was completely synonymous to institutional theatres. (In 1964, Oder 57 also visited the International Theatre Festival in Sarajevo, with *Kaznjenci* by Peter Božič.) The inclusion of experimental groups into festival programme selections was not the only gesture of acknowledgement, giving the group a specific weight – they even took home awards. In the 1960s, actor Jurij Souček won five awards for acting and directing at the principal Yugoslav theatre festivals (in Sarajevo and Novi Sad). Two of these were for his roles in experimental theatre groups. In this way, theatre contributed to the permeability of the system. Something was leaking on all sides; the genie wanted to get

out of the bottle. With such micro-interventions, experimental theatres contributed to the continual changing of the system. Political power in Slovenia seemed to change more quickly than in other parts of Yugoslavia.

Jurij Souček (b. 1929), who was one of the central bearers of the modern acting style at Oder 57, Ad hoc Theatre and at the same time a member of the Slovenian National Theatre, also established his first theatre group in 1966. Likewise, the group used very basic, self-arranged or re-arranged props and costumes, in collaboration with many emerging visual artists. It was fuelled mainly by the enthusiasm of its members (studying and performing after their regular job in theatre ended for the day and without being paid). The activity of Souček sets an example of the interaction between institutional and non-institutional theatre scenes in the 1960s. It is a sign of how both “communities” strove for the same goal despite heavy infrastructural differences and indirect (yet obvious) interactions. The experimental scene was equipping the institution with binding forms and contents.

The experimental theatre groups that appeared in Ljubljana in the second half of the 1950s were originally dependent on contributions received from the city and republic authorities (the fund aimed at accelerating cultural activities), but later also on sponsors. There was thus awareness about the culturally important work they were performing (the contractually determined number of repeat performances co-financed by the Municipal People’s Committee amounted to ten in the years 1963 and 1964). Each group had to annually submit an application containing their repertoire to the Ljubljana Cultural Community. But despite the recognition in the press that short bursts of creativity were not the way to organise the cultural sector, no noteworthy financial support was forthcoming. In *Perspektive*, Ahačič described the experimental search for new forms of expression as too casual, fragmented, and full of financial and spatial difficulties that demanded constant compromise.<sup>16</sup> (Ahačič was also looking for a separate space for her group, planned to open a basement theatre, but failed because the financial support was cut off in 1964.)

The described narrative tells the story of the broader network (community) of creative happenings. However, the analysis confirms that Slovenian authorities – although they followed the prescribed ideological principles and from time to time exhibited their dominating methods – allowed this diversity. This was a prerequisite for the growth of Slovenian theatre in the modern and urban sense, in line with foreign trends. Precisely with experimental groups, especially with the theatre activities of Oder 57 at the beginning of the 1960s, the field of art became creatively independent to such an extent that the regime was no longer able to impact the groups directly, not even the institutional theatres.

<sup>16</sup> Ahačič, Draga. “Slovensko sodobno gledališče.” *Perspektive* (1960/61), pp. 1129–1133.

The silent interaction of experimental groups with two main institutional theatres in Ljubljana actually took place the whole time. Soon after 1955, the experimental qualifiicator played a visible role in shaping the genre of intimate performances in Slovenian regional theatres. The principle of cultural regionalisation was very present in the cultural scene after WWII.

The community and communitarian relations were very different from how these terms are perceived in the current mediatised world of the accentuated calling for public attention where the arsenal of knowledge, at least its basic traits, can easily be attained via the world wide web. Since 1955, the activity of experimental groups has stemmed from the notion of resistance that was, however, not calculated with public exposure or managerially devoted to refined networking. The collaborators were not driven by the impulse of the struggle to survive; the core of their innovation/novelty was creating and performing new drama pieces. However, they did not feel the urge to surpass or undo the social system in the manner of a direct confrontation with it.

The memory of the war condition and the decade of radical manifestations of Nazi fascism was still fresh; its political and social consequences meant too serious a deviation from all humanistic principles. In the world structure after 1945, the notion of a culture expert did not yet exist, neither were there studies and conclusions on the real quality of human life. Doubt in the notion of the human as the “big idea” was the most vivid in the empirical experience of the survivors of concentration camps.

## Mija Janžekovič, 4 May 2021

Mija Janžekovič recalls:

Speaking of the communitarian moment in the context of experimental theatre groups and the institution and their theatre approach in the years 1955–1967 seems rather strained/forced since the current understanding of community is somewhat completely different. The reality was much more simple. An idea appeared, was developed and carried out piece after piece. The structure of the programme was flexible. The addressed values were inscribed in texts. This procedure went on year after year, without a previously determined plan or pretensions. There was also not only one individual who would lead Oder 57. The stage did not have a sole ideologist; the group was far from homogeneous, which is crucial for reflecting on this phenomenon. Oder 57 only had “an operator” who managed all individual projects. Oder 57 was happening in a spontaneous, organic, natural way, simultaneously, gradually, unified. After having gained financial support, a group was formed that would stage a certain play. We got along splendidly when we worked, but otherwise, it was all about various interest groups that collaborated with each other. Concentrated thought, sheer asceticism, took the forefront. This type of drama had no vast audience and did not necessarily address

the masses. Oder 57 was slowly withering. Eventually, it would wither away on its own; the exemplary drama can not be produced indefinitely. The mission/enterprise was over after four or five seasons. Strivings lasted this long.

It was all held up by very scarce means, the actors got only a small fee, but this meant a lot. It is impossible to talk of the supposedly lead times in the 1960s; such interpretations are given too much attention. It is important to recognise the meaning of the existence of Oder 57 and its accomplishments in a long-term historical light. Of course, the institutions further developed the medium of theatre. An experiment is always an experiment if we decide to call it this way (this category was initially not used by Oder 57 and appeared later). The core was foremostly the contemporary, free spirit that always radiates from an independent theatre group and trespasses to the institution subsequently. Individual spirits joined, the institution noticed them, attested and integrated them into its own approach and working technique. At this point, the experimental mission was already over. Experimental stages are a short-lived phenomenon.

Meetings took place at the seat of *Perspektive* (above the bookshop of Državna založba Slovenije close to the City Hall) since the domain in Križanke needs to be paid additionally: at the Pod lipco inn, often in the “smoky kitchen” at Mija and Savo Janžekovič in Rožna ulica, after the end of the night rehearsal. Everyone respected other groups. They knew each other, occasionally went to see each other’s premières and performances, and the plays of Oder 57 in which one was not participating. They discussed them internally as strong, designed personalities yet abstained from all other contacts with each other. When a piece was being staged, they hung about with each other more, as grown-up friends not. Balbina figured as an interesting theatre madame; the communication was polite. The interaction with leading structures of Drama was missing. Later, only Taras Kermauner (he directed *Otroka reke* by Dane Zajc, took part in Peter Božič’s *Vojaka Jošta ni*, dir. Žarko Petan) formed this link. In 1970, he (for three months) became the artistic leader of Drama but realised that this profession did not suit him, so he returned to the call of a free writer. Already in 1964, Kermauner did not take sides in current political happenings; he skipped the première of *Topla greda* and kept a low profile. At the same time, Petan started to direct fresh drama pieces from the United States (Albee, Kesselring, Kopit) in 1963, in the programme of Drama and Mala drama (which at that time had its domains in the Knight’s Hall), to great success.

Bojan Štih, the head of Drama (1962–1969), was not fond of experimental groups. As Janžekovič tried to pin the flier of the première of Peter Božič’s *Kaznjenci* (The Convicts, 1963), which she directed at Oder 57 (the majority of actors came from Drama), onto the noticeboard of Drama at its reception, Štih loudly expelled her from the building.<sup>17</sup> The mutual influence between the institution and the experimental scene and the

<sup>17</sup> The fury of Štih was an obvious sign of antagonism which in later years ceased and was “forgotten” already in the 1970s when Janžekovič filmed a TV documentary on *Revolutionary Songs of the World* and also included Štih as the then leading figure of the Celje theatre.

dynamics of their relations remained unspoken, even though clearly visible.

Interactions among the collaborators of Oder 57 mostly took place at meetings that were at the same time not abundant. Otherwise, everyone lived his life, followed their own employment commitments; not all actors at Oder 57 were members of Drama. Telephones were not used (they mostly did not have their stationary versions), so communication caused problems – but in the night hours, they made agreements about who was free to work. In a way, the theatre was not the principal intent of collaborators; their work took place as a border activity. The basic course and point of identification at Oder 57 were to present new drama plays. To remain credible, the group absorbed a different attitude to reality. Of crucial importance was the generation of splendid authors who grew up at Oder 57 and whose works were then staged in a manner that was not tried out by directors and artistic leaders of previous generations. Experimental groups, above all Oder 57, thus penetrated the theatre scene with special, unique styles. Owing to the spirit of the time, the accent of Jurij Souček was always put there. Even though it was impossible to exit Yugoslavia since the borders were closed, the spirit of time trespassed the administrative borders and steadily entered Slovenia. In this respect, the situation in Slovenia was no different than elsewhere in Europe. Oder 57 had no firm connections with colleagues from Yugoslavia; only the writers met at literary and theatre festivals. (In the sense of connecting with like-minded individuals, festivals had a large impact.) Great(er) transitions and uptakes between groups of theatre practitioners never took place. At guest performances of Oder 57 at Yugoslav theatre festivals in Novi Sad and Sarajevo, the crew mainly stuck together and generally returned to Ljubljana immediately after the show. They worked together with a usual productive pace and rhythm. The notion of community existed in this sense. Jurij Souček, as the principal acting persona at Oder 57, Ad hoc Theatre and likewise in SNT Drama, was not regarded with hostility, the principal care being devoted to the piece that was being staged. The pledge to the experimental community was thus tangible and significant. Though hidden under the surface, it could intuitively be felt – its central aim to accent the fresh drama pieces that defined Oder 57 and hint at the beginning of a whole new chapter in Slovenian drama. This did not rely on determined/resolute opposing of a political type since nothing of a kind was possible at that time. It is only possible to talk of Oder 57 as a propulsive and proactive political factor in the sense of political opposition with an insight into the society's problems that manifested artistic and civil activism through theatre that omitted a potentially provocative stance.

Protests in the theatre were rare since protesting with political connotation/charge involved an imminent risk.<sup>18</sup> It was well known who in the theatre was a member of the

<sup>18</sup> We can name the protest in front of the Drama theatre building in late March 1962 due to the halt of the performance of Jože Javoršek's *Povečevalno steklo* (Magnifying Glass), directed by Andrej Hieng, which was a consequence of an "anonymous directive" from politics that expelled the performance (of the otherwise officially awarded play) from Drama after six performances.

Union of Communists. The “Party” (as the union was colloquially termed) ceaselessly tempted to attract new members through its active informers, but some artists (e.g., Balbina Baranovič) kept rejecting such concessions in a determined way. Some of those who did not want to join the Party still were not against it, while the rest simply felt like second-class citizens. Still, it was possible to live a rather normal/usual everyday life in the 1960s and 1970s. Current accentuating of the supposed antagonisms of that time is strongly exaggerated, utters Janžekovič. “The social context was different immediately after the war when ‘gods are thirsty’ like every time after the revolution, from the French revolution on. Blood gives blood, and the war never ends with its closing but remains heavily engraved in people even after every peace treaty. However, Oder 57 never discussed these matters with a political diction.”

The official stately forums did not support the newly created drama writing. Political structures could not grasp the core of the new drama and could not establish a true connection with what was taking place in the heads of Oder 57. They attributed the group the role of a bystander, a marginal phenomenon whom they only gave sufficient money to survive. A rather small circle of young intellectuals were interested in experimental groups, and the authorities must have noticed that this scarce audience does not present a particular threat/danger. Massively populated events would surely make them more attentive. The groups of Baranovič and Ahačič also did not have repeat performances that would exceed ten. The authorities were more bothered by the journals. Thus, the publishing of *Perspektive* was finally prohibited in 1964.

Interestingly, the first and second experimental theatre groups, the forerunners of the experimental community, were formed as missions of two women, Balbina Battelino Baranovič and Draga Ahačič, both belonging to the generation of the 1920s. This owed mainly to the situation where women were cast aside and automatically felt the need to assert their place. Applying their own idea of the theatre was modelled on the impulses from Vienna, Paris and the USA. Baranovič played the role of a trigger, a catalyst that set the movement in motion. Thus, several groups of agile creators emerged, but all outside the institution and with a different approach. She traced new spaces of acting, which turned out as extremely important for community and audience creation. Even when they worked at Drama, they left it at a certain point, either due to the cancellation of the working contract (Draga Ahačič) or because the collaboration did not work out for aesthetic reasons (Balbina Baranovič). Disputes with the leading figure Slavko Jan appeared easily; the dislike of the director led to inconveniences. However, it was Baranovič who first opened the door to contemporary forms of theatre to these spaces and stimulated a tolerant, inclusive attitude in society towards experimental attempts. Staging their “attempts” (as Baranovič called them), they set the tone and signalled the direction the theatre scene should take in the future. The “theatre in the round” stage format was labelled an “experiment” and initiated



as a specific act of inception. Both the format and her groundbreaking introduction of choreographic elements into the theatrical image were later upgraded by others. Male authors later took over with a well-reflected and not at all ambiguous theatre concept and with original drama plays of local authors that are still recognised parts of Slovenian drama and theatre history.

In this sense, the reproach of Kermauner that Štih grabbed the spirit of Oder 57 and transferred it to Drama is rather exaggerated, says Janžekovič. “This literally happened, but in an entirely organic way.” Such were the long-term structural changes, the interaction of experimental groups with theatre institutions and even the appropriation of some of the experimental aesthetic models by the institution. Although in the 1950s, Drama played none of the drama authors who evolved at Oder 57, this practice changed in 1960 and 1961 when the directors of Drama staged *Antigone* by Dominik Smole and *Afera* by Primož Kozak, a mere six months after their respective premières at Oder 57. Oder 57 thus enacted the role of a testing field for the institution, and its end came up as soon as the wave of new drama writing ceased. This method of supplying the institution with a fresh drama course is significant for Oder 57 and SNT Drama. Also, the institutional affiliation gave Smole and Kozak the possibility to be paid for their work, which Oder 57 could not afford. Most of all, Oder 57 triggered the whole movement, just like the concept of Mala drama appropriated the working principle of Oder 57. Seven years after Oder 57’s (1971) extinction, the Experimental Theatre Glej followed a different storyline of its own. But at that point, Drama could not transfer anything from Glej that did not already exist in Drama.

## Conclusion

The leading experimental theatre proponents (Balbina Baranovič, Draga Ahačič and, above all, Taras Kermauner) were highly informed about foreign drama and philosophical currents. Their experimental theatre groups – Oder 57 being the most propulsive and influential – functioned as a community. This made them a superior and challenging dialogic partner, albeit internally based on a very loose (or even non-existent) network of interferences between groups and the consistent strategy of using an indirect yet recognisable semantic vocabulary. They all followed the line of “otherness” that grew out of distancing from the prevailing programme, acting and directing patterns in the institution that seemed worn out and having lost the connection to the modern theatre approach. The loose relations of groups reflected the implicit nature of experimental broadening of the performative horizon that very rarely feels the need to connect and implies the urge for independence. As the paper points out, the notion of “community” with its subtle yet decisive form of operation enabled and opened up the dialectics for the future.



- Ahačič, Draga. "Danes se k sreči vse bolj kaže, da se v svojih osnovnih strokovnih in načelnih stališčih nisem kaj dosti motila." Interview by Primož Jesenko. *Dialogi*, vol. 47, no. 1-2 (2011), pp. 6–15.
- Battelino Baranovič, Balbina. "Ozko usmerjeni in enostransko izobraženi ljudje niso v posebno korist, kultura in umetnost zahtevata široko oblikovanega človeka. Takih v tistem času ni bilo veliko." Interview by Primož Jesenko. *Dialogi*, vol. 48, no. 3–4 (2012), pp. 6–27.
- Gabrič, Aleš. *Socialistična kulturna revolucija: slovenska kulturna politika 1953–1962*. Cankarjeva založba, 1995.
- Janžekovič, Mija. "Drugi intervju." *Rob v središču*, pp. 355–361.
- . "Oder 57 po mojem sploh ni imel ideologa. To je bistvena napaka v današnjem razmišljanju o tem fenomenu. Oder 57 ni bil homogena skupina." Interview by Primož Jesenko. *Dialogi*, vol. 46, no. 9 (2010), pp. 6–16.
- Jesenko, Primož. *Rob v središču: Izbrana poglavja o eksperimentalnem gledališču v Sloveniji 1955–1967*. Slovenski gledališki inštitut, 2015. *Dokumenti SLOGI*, vol. 51, no. 92.
- Kermauner, Taras. "Kaj je današnje eksperimentalno gledališče?" *Perspektive*, vol. 2, no. 17 (1962), pp. 885–8.
- . *Slovensko perspektivovstvo*. Društvo za preučevanje zgodovine, literature in antropologije: Znanstveno in publicistično središče, 1996.
- . *Spomini ter pogledi na Oder 57*. Slovenski gledališki muzej, 2008.
- Muck, Kristijan. "Vsak tekst kot svojska struktura zahteva svoj prostor, ki je vzpostavljen na katerikoli način. Občinstvo je lahko kjerkoli." *Rob v središču*, pp. 317–22.
- Neubauer, Henrik. "Ne delamo zato, da bi z delom v gledališču obogateli." *Rob v središču*, pp. 312–6.
- Petan, Žarko. "Sam sem bil ves čas tajnik društva, nisem hotel biti predsednik." Interview by Primož Jesenko. *Dialogi*, vol. 48, no. 10 (2012), pp. 6–19.
- Rus, Veljko. "Oblast nas ni preganjala zaradi antikomunizma, pač pa zato, ker je Oder 57 pomenil dodatno možnost za politično emancipacijo mlajše generacije." *Rob v središču*, pp. 362–76.
- Taufe, Veno. "Avantgardna in eksperimentalna gledališča; Opis tiskane dokumentacije." *Živo gledališče III: Pogledi na slovensko gledališče v letih 1945–1970*, edited by Dušan Tomše, Mestno gledališče ljubljansko, 1975, Knjižnica MGL 65.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. *Utopistike ali izbira zgodovinskih možnosti 21. stoletja*. Založba /\*cf.,

Prispevek izhaja iz teze, da je eksperimentalno gledališko prizorišče v Sloveniji v letih 1955–1967 formiralo skupnost. Uprizoritvene vizije eksperimentalnih skupin so s subtilnimi gestami oponirale veljavnemu estetskemu trendu, ki je obvladoval povojno gledališko prizorišče v osrednjih institucijah. Dotedanji profesionalni izraz je s težavo nagovarjal občinstvo, saj mu je manjkalo obravnave vsebin iz vsakdanje stvarnosti in prave povezave s progresivnimi gledališkimi tokovi (ki so prihajali pretežno iz Francije).

---

**Ključne besede:** umetniški vpliv, gledališki eksperiment, nuja po spremembi, subtilna gesta, kontinuirana dialektika

---

**Mag. Primož Jesenko** je dramaturg in teatrolog ter avtor študij *Dramaturški koncepti v slovenskem gledališču 1950–1970* (2008) in *Rob v središču: izbrana poglavja o eksperimentalnem gledališču v Sloveniji 1955–1967* (2015). Za zadnjo je prejel priznanje Vladimirja Kralja, ki ga podeljuje Društvo gledaliških kritikov in teatrologov Slovenije. Ureja področje scenskih umetnosti pri mesečniku Dialogi. Objavlja v teatroloških zbornikih in knjižnih izdajah (npr. analiza obdobja 1919–1967 v zborniku *100 let SNG Maribor*, 2019; spremna beseda k *Skominam Sarah Kane*, Emanat, 2008). Sodeloval je v več raziskovalnih projektih (npr. *TACE - Occupying Spaces*, Slovenski gledališki muzej, 2008–2011; *Uprizarjanje vizualnega, uprizarjanje življenja: umetniške prakse od 60. do 80. let*, Maska Ljubljana, 2009) in na mednarodnih festivalih, razstavah ter kolokvijih (npr. *Exodos Ljubljana*, 2006–2008; *Revolutionary Voices*, New York Public Library, 2009). Zaposlen je v SLOGI. Souredil je knjigo o Alji Tkačev *Igralka s svinčnikom: izbrani dnevniki (1962–1991)* (2021).

primoz.jesenko@guest.arnes.si



---

# Recenzije / Book Reviews

---

# Večno, a zapisano pozabi

Zala Dobovšek, zala.dobovsek@yahoo.com

Alain Badiou: *Rapsodija za gledališče* .  
MGL, 2021.

Orjaški filozofski opus vplivnega francoskega misleca Alaina Badiouja so od nekdaj zaznamovale tudi ekskurzije v polje teatrološke refleksije in gledališkega ustvarjanja. Kot kritični opazovalec tako družbe kot umetnosti je vselej natančno preiskal njune paralele in mnogokrat tudi sorodne mehanizme delovanja, še zlasti ga je motiviralo raziskovanje dimenzij političnega, ki se implicitno nahaja v obeh vejah življenja oziroma ustvarjanja. Poleg številnih lucidnih razmislekov o (sodobnem) gledališču je spisal tudi niz gledaliških del – (roman)opere, tragedije in komedije. Zdi se, da je v svojem primarnem področju filozofije vselej prav tako iskal »praktično ost«, s katero je teoretsko misel vpel v (potencialno) odrsko stvaritev. Zato knjigo *Rapsodija za gledališče* znotraj obsežne filozofske analitičnosti nenehno prebadajo izvirne misli o pomenu in učinku dramskih besedil in tudi drugih scenskih praks, saj se avtor pogosto o njih izreka nadvse neposredno, se pravi prvoosebno. Kadar je v tem kritičen, je pravzaprav najbolj kritičen prav do sebe. Njegovo profesionalno identiteto dopolnjujeta tako filozofija kot literatura, saj – kakor omeni Mladen Dolar v spremni besedi – ga ni filozofa, ki bi posvetil toliko časa in energije gledališču, ne le s filozofskimi refleksijami, temveč tudi kot gledališki avtor in praktični sodelavec (predvsem s francoskim režiserjem Antoinom Vitezom). Konec koncev knjigo v presledkih zapolnjuje dialog med Empirikom in Jazom, dvema avtorjevima entitetama, ki v slogu dramske komunikacije iščeta vmesno osebno nišo med potencialnim odrskim prizorom in reprezentacijo čistega filozofskega materiala. S perspektive filozofskih postulatov je Badiou gledališče definiriral kot najbolj »dogodkovno« od vseh umetnosti, proizvodnjo dogodka ideje pa označil kot singularno in univerzalno obenem. Navsezadnje v svojem antologijskem delu *Dvajseto stoletje* (2005) razpravlja ravno o tezi, da je 20. stoletje stoletje gledališča kot umetnosti, brez dvoma tudi ob dejstvu, da je to stoletje »izumilo« pojem režije in tako rekoč na piedestal postavilo (funkcijo) režiserja. Vzporedno pa se to stoletje pokaže tudi kot obdobje skokovito naraščajoče mediatizacije, ki sproži nevarne stranske učinke, in sicer v obliki katastrofične krize reprezentacije.

Velik del besedilnega gradiva *Rapsodije za gledališče* izvira iz člankov, ki jih je Badiou med letoma 1986 in 1989 objavljial v reviji gledališča TNP (*Théâtre national populaire*), katerega vodstvo je takrat prevzel Antoine Vitez. Razmisleki kot taki so sočasno tudi

osvetljevali sesipanje dozdevno jasnega sveta hladne vojne, kjer se je vse filtriralo skozi »temeljno protislovje«, kot so temu rekli marksisti; skozi ta aspekt je pričal o tem, da so režiserji, igralci, scenografi pa tudi pisci (kavršen je bil sam), ki so delovali v tistem času, menili, da se je treba z umetniškimi sredstvi boriti proti vsakemu enostavnemu – bodisi zadovoljivemu bodisi obupanemu – obračunu z izginotjem preprostih dialektik. To tudi slikovito ponazori z naslednjimi ideološkimi »kontrapunkti«: komunizem proti kapitalizmu, socialistične države proti imperialističnim, revolucija proti reformi. Badiou v pričujoči knjigi gledališče (v ta pojem sta všteta gledališko ustvarjanje pa tudi umetniška institucija) ves čas prikazuje kot model krožne bipolarnosti neke stroke, področja, znanja in vpliva, ki z javnostjo komunicirajo izjemno večplastno, nepredvidljivo in včasih bolj, drugič manj politično, subverzivno, dvorezno. Kakor zapiše, lahko svet med drugim čisto upravičeno razdelimo na podlagi ugotovitve, da obstajajo in da so obstajale družbe z gledališčem in družbe brez njega. In da so bili v tistih, ki so poznale ta čudni javni kraj, kjer se fikcija konzumira kot ponovljiv dogodek, obenem z navdušenjem od nekdanj prisotni tudi zadržanost, obsojanje, interdikti in izobčenja. Skratka, duhovni sum, uperjen v gledališče, je vedno spremljala čuječa skrb države, tako da se je vsakršno gledališče vselej uvrščalo med državne zadeve. In se še vedno. To izpeljavo Badiou izvrstno konkretizira v obliki nekakšne povsem realne/stvarne metafore – gledališče označujejo: Država, katere zadeva je; Morala, katere osumljenec je; in Gledalec, iz katerega črpa svoje realno, se pravi *to, kar prekine vajo*. V tem oziru je bistvo gledališča v tem, da se zgodi *premiera*. Teorijo nato praktično zaokroži v praksi: prva repriza, ki se je igralci tako bojijo, zadeva Državo. Druga repriza predpostavlja, da je Morala ni preprečila.

Rdeča nit, ki se nenehno vije skozi vsa razmeroma kratka poglavja, je seveda politika oziroma političnost v vseh svojih spektrih. T. i. istoličje med gledališčem in politiko, kakor ga uvede avtor, je, da ima troje obvez vsake politike (masovni dogodek, organizacija, misel-besedilo) urejene posledice. V tej sintezi se izriše njuna vzporednost tako notranje logike kot zunanje aktivnosti, ki se zašili z idejo, da je država neodvzemljiva scenografija politike. Država je stanje, gledališče je dogodek. In kakor si gledališki avtorji ne želijo napisati le dramskega komada, temveč njegovo uprizoritev, je tovrstna tendenca vselej navzoča tudi v strukturah politike, ki mora za svoj obstoj in vpliv zmeraj misliti na izvršitev (uprizoritev), da bi posegla v dinamiko kolektivnosti ali vsaj izbrane množice. V tej konstituciji delovanja pa se kot ključni akter kaže Država, s katero je gledališče ves čas v odnosu, tudi takrat, ko morda misli, da ni, ko vztraja v ne-odnosu, brezbržnosti in navidezni apolitičnosti, ravno tedaj je morda še toliko bolj politično in povedno. Badiou je pri tem zelo zajedljivo neposreden, ko provokativno sprašuje, ali mar gledališče, nezmožno pokazati revolucijo in ujeto v železno srajco države, ni edina umetnost, ki vzpostavlja neko *vidnost* države? Morda celo edina umetnost, ki jo kaže. Nadalje se sprašuje, o čem govori gledališče, če ne o stanju države, o stanju družbe, revolucije, politike. Pa tudi o stanju ljubezni, kar

je nekaj zelo drugega od ljubezni. Kot še poudari, »gledališče« z malo začetnico je deležnik v državi, čeprav o tem molči kot grob. Vzdržuje in organizira prostodušno in nergavo subjektivnost, ki jo potrebuje država. Gledališče z veliko začetnico pa vselej nekaj *izreka* o državi (*L'État*) in navsezadnje o stanju (*l'état*) stvari. Nemalo razlogov je, da tega izrekanja ne bi hoteli poslušati.

Že omenjena specifična bipolarna pozicija umestitve gledališča (kot prakse in ideologije) sočasno z občudovanjem sproža tudi sovraštvo, kajti po avtorjevem mnenju obstaja posebno sovraštvo do Gledališča, ki ga je zmožna sleherna duša. Gledališče je izmed vseh umetnosti najbolj osovraženo, in sicer pod krinko oboževanja »gledališča«. Badiou prizna, da bi človek kdaj kar raztreščil svoj sedež od besa in sovraštva ali pa prebegnil na bulvar, da bi se potešil od tolikšnih muk in naporov. Gledališče, kakor ga uvidi, se je od Komičnega naučilo izjavljati, da je to, kar nekaj velja, le prazen videz, in od Tragičnega, da je to, kar rešuje, prav tisto, kar pogublja, le s težavo diha v okoliščinah, ko nekaj velja prav prazen videz in ko je rešitev le v begu, kakor narekuje neduh našega časa. Še posebej je luciden v izpeljavi dialektičnega odnosa med odrom in občinstvom oziroma gledališčem in javnostjo. To ponazoritev uveljavi v naslednji prisposobi: ker je uprizoritev dogodek, se človek, ki natanko v trenutku njenega trajanja ni sam v sebi našel vira vpletenosti, iz katerega privre resnica, znajde v razmeroma enakem položaju kot nekdo, ki obždi v svoji sobici, medtem ko se pod njegovimi okni odigrava revolucija ali vstaja. Kot izvrsten poznavalec strateških modelov politike in gledališča Badiou izoblikuje idejo, da sta tako gledališko besedilo kot tudi struktura političnega besedila *ne-vse* (*pas-tout*). Kajti samo to, kar iz njega iz-stopa in kar nastopa, uprizoritev oziroma dejanje, ga zaznamuje kot besedilo. Za gledališko besedilo, nadaljuje, je nujna določena nepopolnost, ki mu je lastna določena poroznost, gnetljivost. Nekaj *preprostega*, preveč preprostega, da bi artikuliralo celoto sveta. Prav na tej točki pa ustvari eno bolj radikalnih in drznih dognanj morda celotne knjige, ko gledališče umesti v red *ne-vsega* in ga s tem označi kot bistveno žensko. Konkretnije pravi, da je Ženska »ne-vsà« (pri tem se opira na Lacana). Skozi preoblačenje, spolno negotovost in krošnjarjenje s falusom gledališče razkazuje ta latentni posmeh slavnemu »Vsemu« moškosti. Ob tem podčrta tudi ideološko navezavo na težnjo cerkve, saj ta meče igralce, gledališče in ženske v en in isti koš. Pričujočo dialektiko pa pronicljivo zaključi s tezo, da ker je gledališče v svojem bistvu žensko, je prav toliko v svojem bistvu stvar moških.

Sicer je ključni karakter kratkih poglavij v knjigi prav to, da izostrijo določeno tezo oziroma iztočnico, jo pomensko in problemsko razprejo, a zavestno ne nudijo – vsaj ne neposrednega ali praktičnega – odgovora, ampak prej računajo, da ga glede na svoje okoliščine poiščemo sami. Zdi se, da bi mnogokrat v zadnjem stavku posameznega poglavja lahko postavili dvopičje in bi se dolgotrajna razprava na dano temo lahko šele začela. A prav v bogatem nizanju strnjjenih zgodovinskih, filozofskih, socioloških

in umetniških izhodišč se izrisuje analitska krivulja, ki se mestoma bolj, mestoma manj dotika gledališča, ga nagovarja skrajno neposredno ali spet drugač njegovo parafrazo najde v navidezno oddaljenem kontekstu, denimo v politiki. Gledališču pripiše zakoreninjeno »imitacijo imitiranega«, saj si snov zmerom sposoja iz realnega (v obliki navdiha ali kritike), jo posname in pretvori v lasten jezik, da jo lahko nato v obliki artefakta vrne v družbeno resničnost (javnost).

Badiou poudari, da obstajata samo dve temi za gledališče: ljubezen in politika. In gledališče si prizadeva, da bi obe temi postali eno, saj je vse v vozlišču tega enega. Vsa poanta današnjega gledališča pa je po njegovem mnenju ta, da ne ljubezen ne politika nista sili, ki bi ju bila ta doba pripravljena, zares pripravljena *razjasniti*. Na tej točki avtor postane zelo načelen, še bolj pa strog v razumevanju zaznavne fenomenologije v gledališču. Prepričan je, da je treba biti v vsakem trenutku *edinstven*. Argumentira pa s stališčem, da je edinstvenost nekaj veliko zahtevnejšega od izvirnosti, saj enostaven izvirnež navsezadnje pristane pri igranju samega sebe, postane narava, na kateri slonijo razlike. Posledično, nadaljuje Badiou, ne obstaja »dober igralec«, če s tem razumemo igralca, na katerega se lahko »zanesemo« ne glede na odrske okoliščine. Ta zanesljivost je lahko samo tehnična. Po njegovem je igralec na odru tisti subjekt, ki razkazuje izhlapevanje vsakršne stabilne esence. Če se na eni strani avtor opira na nekatere temeljne dispozitive filozofije umetnosti, se zmore kaj kmalu zazreti v popolnoma vsakdanji, »trivialni« akt, kot je aplavz. Do njega zavzema očitno in pikro distanco, saj izpelje dognanje, da ta naknadna uvedba empiričnega, skoraj opolzkega čara ploskanja in vzklikanja v strogo opravljanje dolžnosti igralca neizogibno skvari njegovo substanco. Hkrati pa uvede zelo zanimivo in provokativno idejo kolektivnosti, ki sega onstran idejnosti, ampak v samo prakso izvedbe. Predlaga namreč, da se prava kolektivna naravnost predstave kaže v tem, da bosta avtor/avtorica (če je še živ/-a) in režiser/režiserka predstave *obvezana*, da se prideta vsak večer poklonit. V ritualu obiska gledališča izlušči lucidno sociološko vzporednost vzgajanja človeka (občinstva), saj se sprašuje, pod kakšno pretvezo in v imenu česa gledalec ostane na svojem sedežu, če ne zato, ker je v imenu države, v kateri je udeleženo gledališče, obvezno ostati tam, kamor nas je posadila hostesa, kakor je obvezno obsedeti v šolski klopi.

Ker Badiou ves čas dvoumno prepleta prvine cinizma, satire in ostre kritike, je prav gotovo ena njegovih sočnejših domislic povezave med državo in gledališčem ta, da bi moral vsak prebivalec (razen v primeru višje sile) prisostvovati vsaj štirim predstavam letno. Gledališče bi bilo seveda brezplačno, a bi sočasno bilo tudi nekakšna obveza. Tisti, ki bi izpolnjevali to nalogo in bi imeli bogato evidenco ogledov, bi bili deležni davčne olajšave, medtem ko bi neposlušne doletela globa, zbrana sredstva pa bi v celoti usmerjali v gledališki proračun. Ideja bi se prvenstveno in tako rekoč v celoti osredotočala na postopek, kako populacijo neke države izobraziti in ji razpreti kulturne, a nič manj tudi politične horizonte. Navsezadnje je resnična



funkcija gledališča ta, da nas usmerja v času, da nam pove, kje v zgodovini smo. Kot ga poimenuje avtor, gledališče je stroj za vprašanje »Kje?«, stroj za umeščanje, stroj za topološki odnos do časa.

Izstopajoče poglavje v *Rapsodiji za gledališče* predstavlja razgrnitev treh kanonskih konstelacij filozofirajočega dojemanja umetnosti, in sicer: didaktične, klasi(cisti)čne in romantične. Teza didaktične je, da je resnica vedno zunaj umetnosti, da je register umetnosti register videza. Na umetnost zato leti sum, da kot resnico ponuja nekaj, kar je le simulaker. Klasi(cisti)čna napeljuje, da je resnica res zunaj umetnosti, da pa je ta zunanost nedolžna. Kolikor vključuje posnemanje, ga le zato, da bi sprožila transfer. Gledališča se torej ne gre prav nič bati, saj nikakor ni tekmeč filozofije (ki je iskanje resnice), temveč jo pospremi z dobrodejnimi učinki potešitve notranjih nejasnosti in napetosti. In tretja, romantična, ki pravi, da je edinole umetnost zmožna konkretne resnice. Je sestop neskončne Ideje v čutno. Nehoten in trpeč sestop. Ob analizi avtor sklene, da do danes te tri konstelacije še ni nadomestilo nič drugega, pri tem pa se sklicuje na nujnost iskanja četrtega odnosa, ki ne bo ne didaktičen (torej postbrechtovski), ne klasi(cisti)čen (torej postfreudovski), ne romantičen (torej postheideggerjanski).

Kakor sklene, gledališče – ki implicitno zaobsega tudi prezentacijo brezčasnosti – izkazuje največjo možno spojitev, spojitev trenutka in večnosti. Izgrajuje svoj čas, medtem ko mi trpimo banalni čas. Zato avtorjev sklepni poziv sega onkraj teorije oziroma je teoretičen toliko, kolikor se realizira v praksi: poziva nas k želji po gledališču, ki je brezbrizno do sedanjega časa, neumestno gledališče, gledališče, ki bi šlo proti dlaki in proti toku. To bo gledališče, ki bo deležno rapsodije, a ta rapsodija bo tudi neizprosna, odkrita in mestoma še kako boleča. V vsakem primeru je knjiga v svoji idejni strnjjenosti, filozofski jedrnatosti in na videz mestoma skoraj poljubnem vrstnem redu nizanja topik besedilo, ki poleg bistrega uvida v sodobno družbo in politiko razpira tudi izhodišča zanimivih diskusij, v kakšnem razmerju med umetnostjo in filozofijo se danes nahaja gledališče. Avtorjeva filozofija ne želi nadzirati ali preseči gledališke umetnosti ali se do nje v kakršnem koli smislu obnašati nadrejeno ali prek vzvišenega elitizma, prej obratno: iz gledališča se napaja, se nato v lastnem diskurzu preizpraša in nato vrne v materializirano obliko – uprizoritev. In od tod se refleksija in z njo rapsodija lahko šele zares začneta. Izsledki bodo nekje v temelju vedno isti: gledališče je večno, a hkrati zapisano pozabi.



# Navodila za avtorje

Amfiteater je znanstvena revija, ki objavlja izvirne članke s področja scenskih umetnosti v širokem razponu od dramskega gledališča, dramatike, plesa, performansa do hibridnih umetnosti. Uredništvo sprejema prispevke v slovenskem in angleškem jeziku ter pričakuje, da oddana besedila še niso bila objavljena in da istočasno niso bila poslana v objavo drugam. Vsi članki so recenzirani.

Priporočena dolžina razprav je 30.000 znakov s presledki (5000 besed). Na prvi strani naj bodo pod naslovom navedeni podatki o avtorstvu (ime in priimek, elektronski naslov in ustanova, kjer avtor deluje). Sledi naj izvleček (do 1500 znakov s presledki) in ključne besede (5–8), oboje v slovenskem in angleškem jeziku ter objavi namenjena biografija v obsegu do 550 znakov s presledki (v slovenščini in angleščini). Na koncu članka naj bo daljši povzetek (do 6000 znakov s presledki v angleščini, če je članek v slovenščini oz. v slovenščini, če je članek v angleščini). V angleških tekstih naj avtorji uporabljajo angleško črkovanje (npr. -ise, -isation, colour, analyse, travelled, etc.).

Članek naj bo zapisan v programu Microsoft Word ali Open Office, v pisavi Times New Roman z velikostjo črk 12 ter medvrstičnim razmikom 1,5. Vsak novi odstavek naj bo označen z vrinjeno prazno vrstico. Daljši citati (nad pet vrstic) naj bodo samostojni odstavki z velikostjo pisave 10, od preostalega besedila pa naj bodo ločeni z izpustom vrstice in zamaknjeni v desno. Okrajšave in prilagoditve citatov naj bodo označene z oglatimi oklepaji [...]. Opombe niso namenjene sklicevanju na literaturo in vire. Natisnjene so kot sprotne opombe in zaporedno oštevilčene.

## CITIRANJE V BESEDILU

Kadar navajamo avtorja in citirano delo med besedilom, v oklepaju označimo samo strani, npr. (161–66). Kadar avtor citata v stavku ni omenjen, zapišemo njegovo ime in številko strani v oklepaju, med njima pa ne postavimo ločila, npr. (Reinelt 161–66). Različne bibliografske enote istega avtorja poimenujemo z okrajšanimi naslovi, npr. (Reinelt, *Javno* 161–66).

- Naslove knjig in umetniških del (dramskih besedil, uprizoritev, raznovrstnih umetniških dogodkov, slik itd.) zapisujemo ležeče: Cankarjeva *Lepa Vida*.
- Naslovi člankov naj bodo zapisani pokončno in v narekovajih kot na seznamu literature: Draga Ahačič je v članku »Blišč in beda teatralnosti: gledališče Tomaža Pandurja« zapisala, da ...
- Besedilo v citatu naj bo navedeno z vsemi posebnostmi (arhaizmi, velikimi črkami, kurzivami itd.), npr.: ... sta dognala, da »če reče sodnik: 'dovolim', noče 'govoriti o veršitvi' dovoljevanja, temuč dovoljenje v resnici dati, s to besedo dejanje zveršiti« (Škrabec 81).
- Pri zaporednem citiranju iste bibliografske enote (članka, knjige) v besedilu uporabljamo besedno zvezo: (prav tam 20).
- Pri posrednem navajanju uporabimo: (nav. po Reinelt 10).

Seznam literature in virov sestavimo po standardih MLA (8. izdaja).

- *Za zbornik z več uredniki:*  
Sušec Michieli, Barbara, Blaž Lukan in Maja Šorli, ur. *Dinamika sprememb v slovenskem gledališču 20. stoletja*. Akademija za gledališče, radio, film in televizijo/Maska, 2010.
- *Za knjigo:*  
Reinelt, Janelle. *Javno uprizorjanje. Eseji o gledališču našega časa*. Mestno gledališče ljubljansko, 2006. Knjižnica MGL, 143.
- *Za del knjige:*  
Auslander, Philip. »'Just Be Your Self': Logocentrism and difference in performance theory.« *Acting (Re)Considered: Theories and Practices*, ur. Phillip B. Zarrilli, Routledge, 1995, str. 59–67.
- *Za članek v reviji:*  
Bank, Rosemarie. »Recurrence, Duration, and Ceremonies of Naming.« *Amfiteater*, letn. 1, št. 2, 2008, str. 13–30.
- *Za članek v gledališkem listu:*  
Kermauner, Taras. »Nova Sizifova viža.« *Gledališki list SNG Drama Ljubljana*, letn. 76, št. 5, 1996/97, str. 10–15.
- *Za članek v časopisu:*  
Ahačič, Draga. »Blišč in beda teatralnosti: gledališče Tomaža Pandurja.« *Delo*, 6. jul. 1996, str. 37.
- *Za članek na internetu:*  
Čičigoj, Katja. »Zakaj še vedno kar oponirati s kladivom?« *SiGledal*, 17. maj 2011, veza. [sigle-dal.org/prispevki/zakaj-se-vedno-kar-oponirati-s-kladivom](http://sigle-dal.org/prispevki/zakaj-se-vedno-kar-oponirati-s-kladivom). Dostop 23. jul. 2013.
- *Za ustne vire oz. intervju:*  
Korda, Neven. »Intervju.« Intervjuvala Tereza Gregorič. Ljubljana, 28. apr. 2011. Zvočni zapis pri T. Gregorič.

# Submission Guidelines

The journal *Amfiteater* publishes articles in field of performing arts in the context of different media, cultures, social sciences and arts. Articles are accepted in Slovenian or English language. It is expected that any manuscript submitted has not been previously published and has not been simultaneously submitted for publication elsewhere. All submissions are peer reviewed.

The recommended length of articles is 30,000 characters including spaces. After the title please write the author's name, postal address and e-mail address as well as professional affiliation. A short Abstract of up to 1,500 characters (including spaces) and a list of keywords (5–8) should follow together with a short biography of the author that should not exceed 550 characters including spaces. At the end of the article is a longer Abstract (6000 characters with spaces) that will be translated into Slovenian.

Submit articles as an attachment file in Microsoft Word or Open Office format, in the Times New Roman font, 12 point, with 1.5 line spacing. Each new paragraph is marked with an empty line. Quotations longer than five lines are placed in separate paragraphs, in 10 point size, without quotation marks. Abbreviations and adaptations of quotations are marked in square brackets. Notes are not meant for quoting literature; they should appear as footnotes marked with consecutive numbers. *Amfiteater* uses British spelling (-ise, -isation, colour, analyse, travelled, etc.) in English texts.

## IN-TEXT CITATIONS

When quoting an author and related work within the text, state only the page numbers in brackets, e.g., (161–66). When the author of the quoted work is not mentioned in the sentence, state the author's name and the page numbers in brackets without punctuation between them, e.g., (Reinelt 161–66). For different bibliographical entries by the same author, include a shortened title of the work, e.g., (Reinelt, *Javno* 161–66). The in-text citations and bibliography is structured according to MLA style, 8th edition.

Titles of books, productions, performances etc. are written in italic: e.g., *Storm Still* by Peter Handke.

Titles of articles are written in normal font and in quotation marks: As Rosemarie Banks argues in her article "Recurrence, Duration, and Ceremonies of Naming."

When the same bibliographical entry is quoted in succession the author should use (Ibid.).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- *Book with editors:*  
Jones, Amelia, and Adrian Heathfield, editors. *Perform, Repeat, Record: Live Art in History*. Intellect, 2012.
- *Book:*  
Reinelt, Janelle. *Javno uprizorjanje. Eseji o gledališču našega časa*. Mestno gledališče ljubljansko, 2006. Knjižnica MGL, 143.
- *Book Article or Chapter:*  
Auslander, Philip. "‘Just Be Your Self’: Logocentrism and difference in performance theory." *Acting (Re)Considered: Theories and Practices*, edited by Phillip B. Zarrilli, Routledge, 1995, pp. 59–67.
- *Article in a journal:*  
Bank, Rosemarie. "Recurrence, Duration, and Ceremonies of Naming." *Amfiteater*, vol.1, no. 2, 2008, pp. 13–30.
- *Newspaper or Magazine Article:*  
Ahačič, Draga. "Blišč in beda teatralnosti: gledališče Tomaža Pandurja." *Delo*, 6 July 1996, p. 37.
- *Article with URL:*  
Čičigoj, Katja. "Zakaj še vedno kar oponirati s kladivom?" *SiGledal*, 17 May 2011, veza. sigledal.org/prispevki/zakaj-se-vedno-kar-oponirati-s-kladivom. Accessed 23 July 2013.

## Vabilo k razpravam

Amfiteater je znanstvena revija, ki objavlja izvirne članke s področja scenskih umetnosti v širokem razponu od dramskega gledališča, dramatike, plesa, performansa do hibridnih umetnosti. Avtorji in avtorice lahko analizirajo oblike in vsebine umetnin in umetnostnih pojavov s področja scenskih umetnosti, njihovo zgodovino, sedanost in prihodnost ter razmerje do drugih umetnostnih področij in širšega (družbenega, kulturnega, političnega...) konteksta.

Uredništvo sprejema prispevke v slovenskem in angleškem jeziku ter pričakuje, da oddana besedila še niso bila objavljena in da istočasno niso bila poslana v objavo drugam. Vsi članki so recenzirani.

Pri navajanju virov in seznamu sledimo standardom MLA (8. izdaja, The Modern Language Association).

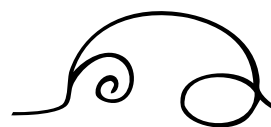
Prosimo, da pred oddajo prispevka natančno preberete Izjavo o spoštovanju založniških in akademskih etičnih standardov na spletni strani revije.

## Call for papers

*Amfiteater – Journal of Performing Arts Theory* publishes articles in the field of the performing arts ranging from dramatic theatre, playwriting, dance and performance art to the hybrid arts. Authors may analyse the format and content of art and art events in the field of performing arts, discuss the history, present or future of performing arts or examine its relationship with other fields of art and a broader (social, cultural, political ...) context. Articles are accepted in Slovenian and English languages. It is expected that any manuscript submitted has not been published before and has not been submitted at the same time for publication elsewhere. All submissions are peer reviewed.

The in-text citation and bibliography is structured according to MLA style, 8th edition.

Please carefully read the Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement on the Amfiteater webpage before submitting a manuscript.



ISSN 1855-4539



9 771855 453006

Cena: 10 €