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Gledališče je neločljivo povezano s skupnostjo², saj ga določa soprisotnost akterjev in gledalcev oz. kolektivna narava recepcije. Seveda pa to ni edina plat gledališča, ki je povezana s skupnostjo. Tokratna številka *Amfiteatra* raziskuje različne načine vzpostavljanja skupnosti v dramatiki in gledališču od sredine 20. stoletja. Tu gre najprej za kolektivno naravo gledališke produkcije (v zadnjem času npr. pojav snovalnega in skupnostnega gledališča), potem za vzpostavljanje skupnosti med igralci/akterji/performerji in gledalci, za moč gledališča, da oblikuje in spreminja družbo oz. določeno skupnost, pa tudi za vprašanje, kako se takšna skupnost oblikuje že v samem gledališkem tekstu. Prispevki tokratne številke se teh vprašanj lotevajo z zelo različnih strani in v mednarodnem kontekstu.

Uvodni članek Tomaža Toporišiča tako predstavlja razvoj gledaliških kolektivov in nehierarhičnega načina ustvarjanja na Slovenskem od Gledališča Pupilije Ferkeverk do Slovenskega mladinskega gledališča. Prav eksperimentalna gledališča sedemdesetih, osemdesetih in devetdesetih let 20. stoletja so pustila odločilni pečat, ki je viden tudi pri sodobnih gledaliških skupinah, kakršne so En-Knap, Betontanc, Mini teater in Via Negativa.

Razširitev tega vprašanja v mednarodni prostor predstavlja analiza gledaliških kolektivov, ki so se na hrvaški neinstitucionalni sceni ukvarjali z ustvarjanjem skupnosti in s spreminjanjem družbe. Lucidno analizo tega razvoja je prispevala Višnja Kačić Rogošić, ki ugotavlja, da vse te skupine družijo želja po transformaciji posameznika in družbe.

Aldo Milohnić se ukvarja z aktualnima pojavoma – s snovalnim in skupinskim gledališčem – ki ju analizira prek odnosa ustvarjalne ekipe do režiserja in dramatika skozi zgodovino 20. in 21. stoletja pri nas.

Gašper Troha razširi obravnavano polje na dramsko besedilo oz. na vprašanje dramskega in ne več dramskega teksta. Gre za ponovno pojavljanje dramskega v delih Simone Semenič in za analizo, kako je izkušnja ne več dramskega teksta vplivala na sodobno dramsko pisavo, ki v večji meri ohranja prepoznavne karakterje, dejanje in družbenokritično sporočilo.

1 Uredništvo te številke in pisanje uvodnika je potekalo na AGRFT Univerze v Ljubljani v okviru raziskovalnega programa Gledališke in medumetniške raziskave P6-0376, ki ga financira Javna agencija za raziskovalno dejavnost Republike Slovenije iz državnega proračuna.

2 Ideja za tematsko številko se je rodila ob 50-letnici obstoja EG Glej, ki je bilo v svojem delovanju tesno povezano z raziskovanjem skupnosti v gledališkem ustvarjanju. V oktobru 2020 je pod naslovom Skupnost deluje potekal tudi mednarodni znanstveni simpozij, ki so ga organizirali UL AGRFT, SLOGI in Gledališče Glej.

Teoretične razprave so dopolnjene s štirimi študijami primerov. Najprej raziskava dela centra za mlade v Gani, ki skuša tudi prek gledališča opolnomočiti mlade iz marginaliziranih okolij Gane. Avtorja dokazujeta, da prav gledališče močno vpliva na razvoj samozavesti in motivacije. Branko Jordan v zanimivem članku analizira kolektivno ustvarjanje v skupini Beton Ltd. in nam prek lastne izkušnje odpira pasti in dileme igralskega kolektiva.

Gledališče DA-ja je umetniški pristop, ki ga je Marina Pallares-Elias razvila ob delovanju v Mehiki in sodelujočim omogoča soočanje z njihovimi travmatičnimi izkušnjami. Na drugačen način pa z umetnostjo vstopa v marginalna okolja Češke kolektiv Intelekturálně (intelektualni in ruralni), ki je za Praški kvadriennale pripravil projekt *Praga ni Češka* in ga potem razvijal naprej. Tu umetniški kolektiv razširja obzorje sodobnega intelektualca (običajnega sprejemnika umetnosti) z različnimi srečanji z ruralnimi prostori, njihovimi prebivalci in avtentičnimi zgodbami.

Tako se vračamo na izhodiščno ugotovitev, da je povezava med skupnostjo in gledališčem predvsem način, na katerega se skuša doseči transformacija vseh vpletenih. Čeprav je slednja, kot ugotavljajo tudi razprave, vedno le začasna, so spoznanja o možnosti vzpostavljanja skupnosti in njenih terapevtskih učinkih močno spremenila gledališko umetnost tako v Sloveniji kot v tujini.

Gašper Troha

Theatre is inevitably bound to the community, as it is founded on the fact that actors and spectators share a common space, time and presence; in other words, it is an art form performed "live". Furthermore, this defines its mode of reception as a collective one. Nevertheless, these are not the only features of theatre connected to the community, as the articles in this issue of *Amfiteater* journal prove. In tackling different modes of creating communities from the middle of the 20th century to today, some of the authors look at collective production methods (e.g., in today's theatre, devised and collective theatre); others explore how the community between actors/performers and spectators is established. In their articles, some analyse the power of theatre to transform its participants and, by this, the society as a whole. Some also question how such a community can be placed in the theatrical text.

The introductory article by Tomaž Toporišič debates the development of theatre collectives and non-hierarchical modes of creation in Slovenia from Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre in the 1960s to the Mladinsko Theatre in the 1990s. These phenomena have strongly impacted contemporary groups such as En-Knap, Betontanc, Mini teater and Via negativa.

Višnja Kačič Rogošič widens the perspective to the international, more precisely, the Croatian context. She analyses different theatre collectives of the Croatian non-institutional scene and concludes that what they have in common is a wish to transform the individual and society.

Aldo Milohnić discusses the contemporary forms of devised and collective theatre. He approaches the two from the changing relationships between the creative team and the director and between the creative team and the playwright.

Gašper Troha expands the discussion on the theatrical text by looking at how Simona Semenič returns to drama with more or less coherent dramatic characters, action and a political message with her substantial experience of formal innovation. How is the form of the no-longer-dramatic text as defined by Gerda Poschmann transformed back to a more traditional one?

Four case studies complement the theoretical studies. The first one discusses the situation of a youth community centre in Ghana. The authors show that theatre is the art form best suited for empowering young people in Ghana and reveal the level of motivation and self-confidence that it raises in young people from marginalised groups.

Next, Branko Jordan opens a very revealing discussion on his own work in the collective Beton Ltd. Through his analysis of the group's modes of creation, he shows us the dilemmas and challenges of a contemporary actors' collective.

With her projects in Mexico, Pallares-Elias has developed an artistic approach she calls the Theatre of Yes. She facilitates people who have suffered social exclusion in expressing their traumas and accepting them. At the same time those are quality performances for the general audience.

Theatre is used differently by the Czech Intelekturálně (intellectual and rural) Collective for widening the perspectives of its audience. Their project *Prague is not Czech*, which the team initially developed for the Prague Quadriennial, has been developed further and brings intellectuals (the typical consumers of art) to rural environments. There, the participants encounter different environments, people and their authentic stories to widen their perceptions of reality.

Thus we return to our starting point: to the fact that theatre and community are brought together primarily to transform all the participants. Even though this transformation, as several authors argue, is only temporary, the fact that it is possible and that it might have therapeutic effects is changing theatre not only in Slovenia but also in other parts of the world.

Gašper Troha



Razprave / Articles

Within the twenty-year period that coincides with the first twenty years of the Glej Theatre, the essay concentrates on the formation and transformations of non-hierarchical theatre communities, or, in the words of one of its founders, Dušan Jovanović, *theatrical tribes*. Using historical and present-day examples, the author will try to map the specific devised theatrical procedures producing what Badiou names "a generic vacillation": "Theatre turns every representation, every actor's gesture, into a generic vacillation so as to put differences to the test without any supporting base. The spectator must decide whether to expose himself to this void, whether to share in the infinite procedure. He is summoned, not to experience pleasure (which arrives perhaps 'on top of everything', as Aristotle says) but to think" (*Rhapsody*, 124).

The essay strives to answer the following questions: How did the Slovenian experimental and non-institutional performing arts scene (as a reaction to the hierarchical structure of repertory theatres) create different non-hierarchical modes in relation to creating the performances, the theatre's artistic direction and forming temporary communities with emancipated audiences? To which models did this scene turn – then and today – to develop its own logic of devised and collaborative theatrical tactics? And lately: To what extent have those different artistic collaborative tribes changed the theatrical landscape in Slovenia, Yugoslavia and elsewhere?

Keywords: artistic collective, performative turn, neo-avant-garde, experimental theatre, non-institutional art

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Collectives, Communities and Non-Hierarchical Modes of Creation from the 1970s till the 1990s¹

Tomaž Toporišič

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

Within the twenty-year period that coincides with the first twenty years of the Glej Theatre, the essay will concentrate on research into the formation and transformations of non-hierarchical theatre communities or, in the words of one of the founders, Dušan Jovanović, *theatrical tribes*. Using examples from past and present, I will try to arrive at answers to the following questions: In what way did the Slovenian experimental and non-institutional performing arts scene (as a reaction to the hierarchical structure of repertory theatres) employ different non-hierarchical approaches to creating the performances, the theatre's artistic direction and the forming of temporary communities with emancipated audiences? To which models did this scene turn to develop its own logic of devised and collaborative theatre tactics? To what extent have those different artistic collaborative tribes changed the theatrical landscape in Slovenia, Yugoslavia and elsewhere?

1. From collectives and tribes of the 1970s to non-hierarchical creative approaches in "independent" theatre and the performing arts scene

As Barbara Orel points out in her essay "Experimental Theatre", the performing arts have had a rich history in Slovenia since the 1950s, with their roots going back to the first half of the 20th century. In the second half of the century, they have been denoted in different ways: "experimental theatre" until the end of the 1970s, "alternative theatre" in the 1980s, "independent theatre" in the 1990s, and "non-government sector production" as the most suitable term after 2000. Like other Eastern and Central European countries, Slovenian experimental theatre has combined aesthetic

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

Članek je nastal v okviru raziskovalnega programa Gledališke in medumetniške raziskave P6-0376, ki ga financira Javna agencija za raziskovalno dejavnost Republike Slovenije iz državnega proračuna.

challenges with an oppositional political stance:

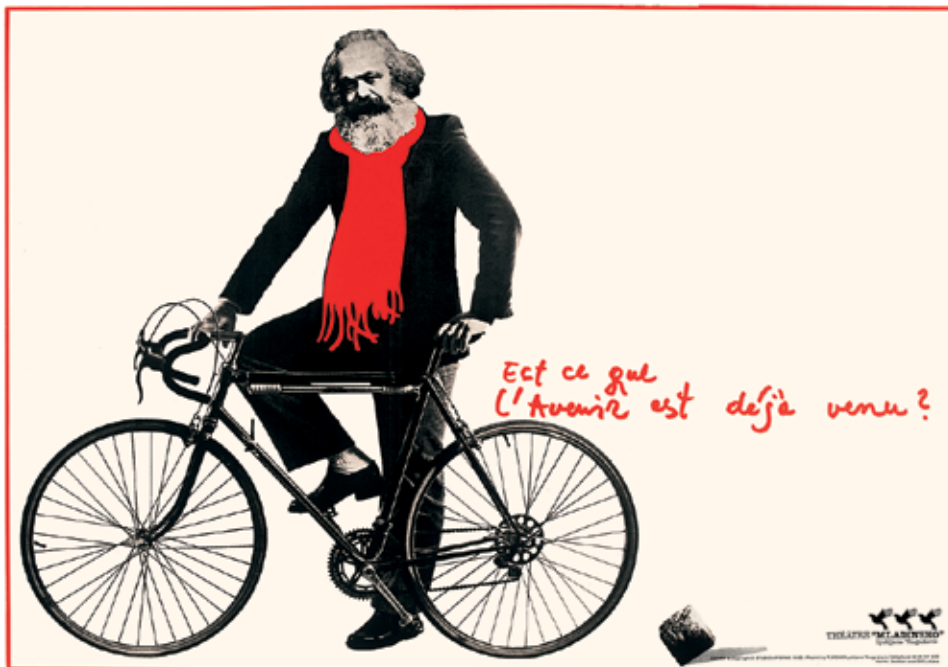
The breaks in the theatre tradition in terms of diverging from the traditional aesthetic principles and mimetic representation have been influenced by an intermedial dialogue with other arts, media and technologies, and have transformed the theatre field into the wider sphere of the performing arts. Theatre innovations have been decisively shaped by the search for new lifestyles, which have created new environments of existence, experiences in Slovenian society. (Orel, "Experimental" 295)

In accordance with this interpretation, we can see the history of Slovenian post-WWII theatre as a series of interactions between opposing but at times very constructive and creative relations between the institutional-repertory theatre scene and experimental, alternative and, later, non-institutional performing arts, often referred to as "amateur and dilettante" by the "drama theatre" critics.

Within the Slovenian theatre of the second Yugoslavia (1945–1991), the experimental theatre communities thus became a specific, alternative space to the politically supervised and ideologically regulated mainstream artistic and cultural scene within the self-managing socialism. The guardians of the regime (the Communist Party, later to become the League of Communists) were not only vigilant over the institutional repertory theatres. They paid particular attention to experimental theatre practices that were (irrespective of their level of socio-political engagement) always considered by the authorities as provocative art or political theatre, for which an upper tolerance limit needed to be set (Toporišič, *Levitve drame* 140–41). As historian Peter Vodopivec points out in his book *From Pohlin's Grammar to the Independent State. Slovenian History from the End of the 18th Century till the End of the 20th Century*, the Communist Party leaders were aware that "... a more free and pluralist cultural atmosphere was an important outlet for the intellectual and wider dissatisfaction of the people; on the other hand, they also understood that the opening of the cultural sphere threatened the monopoly of their fundamental beliefs and ideology" (356).

We will start our analysis with a look into the experimental theatres and performance groups at the turn of the 1960s to the 1970s, that is, during the performative turn from textual to body culture. In our investigation, we will begin with the decision of these groups to exclude classical theatre actors from their circle, replacing them with non-professional performers with no formal theatre education. To a certain extent, their decisions were influenced by the theory and practice of American and European theatre avant-gardists. They related to the work and methods of Richard Schechner and The Performance Group, as well as the theatre of Eugenio Barba and Jerzy Grotowski, Bread and Puppets Theatre and others. And one cannot neglect the influence of the actions of The Living Theatre, presented in Yugoslavia for the first time in 1967, that invited their audience to protest and join in a common act of bodily

and sexual liberation on or off the stage. The performance and the consequences of *Antigone* and *Paradise Now*, by all means, the most famous example of the “loving communities”, reveal not only the reawakening of the ritualistic character of 1960s’ art but also a different notion of community and its collaborative structure.



The poster for the Mladinsko Theatre Tour in France in the 1980s (design by Matjaž Vipotnik), Archive of Mladinsko Theatre.

“It is self-evident that nothing concerning art is self-evident anymore, [...] not even its right to exist” (Adorno 1).

When speaking about the new situation of art in the society of the spectacle, the German philosopher Theodor W. Adorno could also be referring to the Slovenian theatrical experiment of the second part of the 20th century. This experiment (according to Venko Taufer) “created a distinct and recognisable profile of theatre which could be designated as an idiosyncratic type of ritual theatre in search of some basic theatre signs or acting and mise-en-scène expressions of such signs of human existential practice” (Taufer, “Rudi Šeligo” 154–5)

This new experimental theatre, practised by various groups, succeeded in overwhelming Yugoslav festivals of alternative and student theatre. It became synonymous with the resilience and endurance of small theatre groups, which proliferated during the 1970s and started to present an alternative to the professional

repertory theatre with formally educated actors. These groups were practising new communities, built as communities of equals, friends, brothers, sisters and lovers or (to use the words of Dušan Jovanović) “tribes”, who could all “be together” in the present time of the performance as a sensation and a pleasure, but also the aesthetic reorientation of perception and sensuality.

For this theatre of opposition in the aesthetic and political sense, the *Vjesnik* newspaper from Zagreb introduced an interesting term, “theatre guerrilla”. It claimed that this guerrilla gained the upper hand against the flagship “theatre cavalry” of the 1970s. These new communities were nevertheless quite far from the political guerrilla: they can better be defined as loving communities, very different from the militant collectives with their ghostly characters. The Slovenian experimental theatres and communities of the 1970s were thus practising collaborative structures and approaches to work, and trying very hard to keep crossing, including permanently, the borders between art and life.

Nevertheless, Lado Kralj – most probably the “ideological” and “spiritual” leader of the new performative revolution of the 1970s deriving a lot of its ideas from Schechner, Foreman and the New York avant-garde – highlighted the origin of the Pekarna Theatre and other performance groups of the 1970s also within the tradition of Slovenian experimental theatres: particularly the Oder 57 (Stage 57), the Experimental Theatre and the Ad hoc Theatre. However, he also emphasised that this was a politically engaged, “class theatre” looking for its own means of expression: new theatre communities wanted to develop their own methods that were participatory as well as involving a specific psycho-physical acting training. These new theatre communities emphasised theatre as ritual and the group or collaborative creation of the performances. Kralj’s interest was not in experimental or avant-garde theatre, as practised by the Glej Theatre. This approach to theatre was not radical enough, as it aspired “to be better and more progressive than traditional theatre” (Kralj, “Zanima me razredno gledališče” 21). For him, theatre should go beyond the bourgeois theatre Brecht criticised. It should establish a new type of artistic community, no longer a mere theatre, but an “aesthetic action, as ritual, as speaking the unspeakable” (Ibid.).

Like Grotowski and Schechner, for Kralj, the process in theatre was more important than the final product. What was at stake was experimentation with the very “essence of acting and human impersonation, about relationships between the physical and the psychological” (Kralj, “Hipijevsko” n.p.). The critics seemed not to have understood Kralj’s aims, but Pekarna actors themselves were well-aware of this new relationship between the physical and the psychological. They were aware that the Pekarna Theatre “defied the theatre mastodons with mere peanuts from the cultural community. In the spirit of Stanislavsky, Grotowski and Brook, it restarted the theatre wheel of history which politicians so violently stopped with Oder 57.” (Slana 27).

The aesthetic revolution of Kralj's concept of Pekarna was specific in its goal: it searched for new ways to connect the main priorities of the American neo-avant-garde performative turn with the situation of the student generations in socialist Slovenia. In the words of Lado Kralj, their aim was "to find and define a home ground, to refresh it, reshape it according to the needs of our audiences and social space, to change it or maybe even reject part of it" (Lado Kralj on the Pekarna Theatre, quoted in Andres 112).

The Pekarna Theatre found its aesthetic and political identity in close dialogue with the Polish (Grotowski, Kantor) and American theatre avant-garde (Schechner, Chaikin ...). At the same time, it burst forth from the specific cultural and political situation of the non-aligned Yugoslavia. Looking back at his work of the 1970s, Lado Kralj defines this situation as follows:

Richard Schechner, my mentor, stripped the halo of religious rapture off Grotowski and added elements of absurdist theatre, as well as irony and the grotesque, topped with anthropological research into the tribal culture in New Guinea and Australia, and bizarre aspects of Americana [...]. (Svetina, *Pekarna*)

What he learned from the dialogue with Schechner, he adapted to himself and his generation in Slovenia and established the Pekarna Theatre.

How can we draw a "morality" from this statement: indubitably, the very idea and concept of the Pekarna were established in close dialogue with diverse phenomena of contemporary performative practices at the intersection of East and West, socialism and capitalism. In this dialogue, the boundaries of the reception and interpretation of contemporary art in experimental and student theatres at the time were shifted. And this led to a specific breaking down of the hierarchy and dichotomy between high culture and popular, between capitalist and socialist culture.

2. A new classification and dehierarchisation of the theatre landscape at the transition from the 1960s to the 1970s

Writing and commenting on the 4th International Student Theatre Festival in Zagreb in 1964, Lado Kralj formed a new, revolutionary classification of contemporary theatre. He introduced new categories, among them, student theatre as something that could be compared to both professional repertory theatre on the one hand and amateur or dilettante theatre on the other.

He highlighted the specificities of student theatre as experimental theatre: "a very special layer of acting, different from both professional and amateur performers. [...]"

Student theatres, however, belong to that larger group of theatres, which, for want of a better term, I will dub experimental” (“Mednarodni” 1238–39).



Lado Kralj's first staging of *The Pathwalker* by Dane Zajc in 1972, Pekarna. Photo: Tone Stojko, Iconography SLOGI.

Kralj's classification was highly revolutionary at a time when the professionalisation or rather Europeanisation of the acting and other theatre professions had barely finished in Slovenia and Yugoslavia. According to his persuasions, the student and non-student experimental theatres allowed both professional and non-professional theatre people to mix:

They are characterised by a kind of continuous experimentation that affects not only their manner of stage expression and selection of the repertoire but also the ensemble itself: by experimenting with acting, they are constantly testing their attitudes towards social reflection and attempting to affect it creatively. (Ibid. 1239)

And not only this, he was convinced that both student and experimental theatre workers could produce “an accomplished conception of the role of theatre in society” as they not only fulfil the basic role of the theatre as a profession but also “as an inalienable part of their immediate presence in society, through which they attempt to reach some kind of active correspondence with society” (Ibid.). Thus, experimental and student theatres are very different from conventional theatres and do not tend to merge with them.

When looking back to the history of the Pekarna Theatre (which he established together with Kralj and Ivo Svetina), one of the most influential and consequential experimental artists and thinkers, Peter Božič, confirmed most of the ideas of young Lado Kralj. He pointed out that experimental theatres focused on “completely new principles of horizontal dramaturgy with a different sensibility/awareness of time” (Božič, “Eksperimentalno pozorište ...” 320). Božič furthermore linked this horizontal structure of artistic creation and theatre organisation of the theatrical tribes or communities as something that could be linked to Edvard Kardelj’s idea of self-management in socialism: a representation of “a consistent approximation to the ideal of self-management, author, director, costume designer, technician, etc.” (Ibid.).

Lado Kralj’s and Peter Božič’s concepts of a specific experimental theatre and its communities were but the tip of the iceberg of the performative turn in the Slovenian performing arts scene that introduced tectonic shifts to the understanding of the theatre. The new generation that has to be linked to student and neo-avant-garde movements suddenly became aware that nothing was self-evident in art and society: not even the division of the actors into drama (matrix), student (experimental, non-matrix) and amateur (spontaneous non-professionals), or the society into capitalist and communist.

To summon up the conceptual changes and main outlines of the Slovenian experimental and student theatrical scene in the late 1960s, we can once more use the arguments that Lado Kralj published in the journal *Sodobnost* in 1969 as a part of a special theme devoted to the *Slovenska gledališka situacija* (Slovenian theatre situation). He defined the experimental theatrical landscape of the time as a community “seeking out and defining ‘social minorities’ and the ‘social majority’, enabling each one appropriate affirmation since only such a situation allows for radically new solutions surpassing the level of personal quarrel and exhausting running in circles” (Kermauner et al. 593). Kralj’s argument, which was most likely shared by his contemporaries, especially Dušan Jovanović and his circle of the Pupilija Ferkeverk Group and the Glej Experimental Theatre, is again very much to the point, challenging the borders of theatre and society in the 1960s (and to some extent also today).



Lado Kralj at the beginning of the 1970s. Still from TV Slovenia Archive.

Kralj demanded clearly demarcated areas of activity in both the repertory and experimental theatrical scenes. Experimental theatres should concentrate on “experiments in the area of performance, acting, the idea of theatre, the dismantling or deconstruction of the only Slovenian theatre form – the Burgtheater adaptation of Stanislavsky – replacing it with new, unattested experimentation with mixed media, the radicalisation of gesture, word, stage technique, etc.” (Ibid.). They were the ones that could take the kind of risks that the national and other repertory theatres, situated at the very centre of the cultural and theatre semiosphere, could not.

However, the repertory theatres should nevertheless not be understood as fortresses of tradition: they should absorb experiment into their functioning, which is in its nature primarily informative and aimed at representing the nation. Both types of theatre should maintain their respective logic and sense but maintain a clear and intense dialogue between the two theatrical communities to “establish a normal correlation between institutional and experimental theatre” (Ibid.).

3. The tribe of Pupiliija Ferkeverk and Dušan Jovanović



The tribe of Pupiliija Ferkeverk in 1969. Photo: Tone Stojko, Iconography SLOGI.

Kralj's thoughts about theatre were very close to the thoughts of together with the predominately visual arts community OHO probably the most influential artistic community of the 1960s within the field of the performing arts, Pupiliija Ferkeverk. In 1970, while performing in Zagreb, Pupiliija published its mini-manifesto in the student newspaper *Studentski list*. It reads:

We want to destroy the basic characteristics of traditional and some avant-garde theatres, which is the illusion of life to which theatre has always been subservient. The performance is no longer a play, a copy, or enactment of life but rather a total and all-encompassing reality [...]. Performers are no longer actors [...], the actor is on equal terms with the spectator; while the performers, through their presence, create a concrete social [?] environment [...]. The Pupiliija Ferkeverk Theatre is an experimental, non-literary, open and living theatre ("Gledališče Pupilije Ferkeverk").

Pupiliija wanted to replace the theatre performance with an event – an action. The actor, or rather protagonist of the theatre event, thus became “an authentic and physical figure. [...] There is no more pretence onstage; nothing is feigned, everything is happening for real, and it really happens. [...] The actors' resources are adapted to

this end so they can use them to really function, as they really cause blood to flow. The blood actually flows onstage” (Toporišič, *Performativni obrat* 230).

Their starting point was shared and most probably influenced by the today-famous neo-avant-garde visual arts group OHO in the 1960s: the alertness of their senses, the specific way in which materiality was understood in this Slovenian visual and other arts collective. Both groups shared the idea of exploration of the performativity of language, nature and everyday gestures. Their practices might have had different ideological and aesthetic backgrounds, but they show many similarities. They were both interested in a specific community, in which bodies collaborate on or off stage, in theatre and everyday life, and alliances are made between libidinal energies and common imaginations. For Pupilija and OHO, being together was grounded mainly in desire, in the disclosure of intimacy.

Pupilija was a student-experimental community of non-professional actors who never intended to be anyone but themselves. They introduced a specific practice of acting, based on Johan Huizinga’s notion of play in his highly influential book *Homo Ludens*² (this practice can be compared to Michael Kirby’s theory of not-acting, published in his 1972 *TDR* article “On Acting and Not-Acting”), replaced professionalism and drama with non-professionalism and non-drama, the actor with a performer. Pupilija was a performative community that no longer wanted to be hierarchical, but rather a “tribe”, of which Dušan Jovanović, who in many ways steered Pupilija, wrote: “I became a fan of the tribe. For a long time afterwards, I missed the tribe, a community where I could feel at home” (92). Like Kralj, Jovanović perceived Pupilija as an aesthetic, political reaction to the deceptive harmony of society and its official art:

Pupilija was not art with a capital A. According to professional standards, it was almost diletante. But it contained the liberating power of parody, ritual sacredness and a thirst for unlimited freedom. [...] Pupilija had an unusual power; it had a culture of authenticity typical of tribal communities (Ibid. 91).

The representative of the Oder 57 generation and highly influential theatre scholar and dramatist, Primož Kozak, placed this in a broader context:

This is no simple matter, even though it often seems like a youthful whim and the eccentricity of “those damn artistic brats”. What is happening, [...] touches upon the very foundations of our life, not just our national life, but our life as a culture. [...] We cannot just say it is simply a fashion that will pass or some nonsense from which we must avert our youth or an imitation of the decadent West that must be thwarted. It is here, and it will go on in one form or another. (26)

² The influence of this book is described by Dušan Jovanović in his highly interesting essay *Pleme, konfrontacija in kolaž* (Tribe, Confrontation and Collage).

According to the dramaturg and theatre scholar Eda Čufer, Pupiliija symbolised within the Slovenian scene a demand for the pluralisation of theatrical models, a gesture of an innocent need to widen the notion of theatre (28). Or, as Primož Jesenko sees it: Pupiliija confronted theatre as an institution, and its vision contradicted the norm (455).

4. Dušan Jovanović and the Glej Experimental Theatre (eksperimentalno gledališče Glej)

Kralj's ideas were a bit more radical than those of the Glej group – Dušan Jovanović, Igor Lampret, Zvone Šedlbauer, Samo Simčič, Lučka Simonič, Iztok Tory and Matjaž Vipotnik. In fact, the Glej Experimental Theatre began its journey to being the longest surviving experimental theatre in Slovenia (celebrating 50 years in 2020) on 25 June 1970 with a premiere of *Kaspar* by Peter Handke, one of the most influential new dramatists and theatre reformers of the time. Its name (the word *glej* is Slovenian for “to watch” or “look”) stressed the group's commitment to a different theatrical perception. One of the founding members of the group, Kralj remembered the circumstances of its establishment:

The idea of putting together a new alternative theatre group formed at the end of 1969, when Dušan Jovanović and Zvone Šedlbauer approached me. Soon after that, Igor Lampret, Marko Slodnjak and Iztok Tory joined the group. The ensemble was recruited quickly and spontaneously from the students at the Academy for Theatre, Radio, Film and Television. (“Hipijevsko, čutno, razpuščeno”)

As Barbara Orel sums up, Glej and Pekarna were but the tip of the iceberg of the experimental theatrical communities and approaches of the 1970s:

In the 1970s, performance research ranged from “poor theatre” (with reference to Jerzy Grotowski) to multimedia theatre. Poor theatre gave rise to unique concepts of ritual theatre forms. The following communities provided an original Slovenian contribution to European theatre: the group of Tomaž Kralj (who continued the work of the Gledališče Pupilije Ferkeverk and realised the concept of “untranslatable theatre”); the Vetrnica (Windmill) group by Vlado Šav (developing an original variant of the “meeting” between the actors and the spectators); and so-called “group theatre,” practiced by Lado Kralj's Pekarna on the basis of the anthropological research into play and environmental theatre by Richard Schechner. This generation, which sprang from hippy culture, was followed in the late 1970s by the generation establishing itself under the increasing influence of the mass media and pop culture. Through the paradigm of performance theatre, they paved the way to multi-media theatre (in the projects of the student alternative FV 112/15, Dušan Pirih Hup, the Pocestno gledališče Predrazpadom (Streetwalking Predesintegration Theatre) group, the Gledališče Ane Monró (Ana Monró Theatre), Meje kontrole št. 4 (The Borders of Control No. 4), and the first groups in Yugoslavia consisting solely of female authors: Podjetje za proizvodnjo fikcije (Fiction Production Company) and Linije sile (Lines of Force). All of them attempted

to abandon the field of aesthetics and were reproached for alleged instrumentalisation of amateurism. ("Experimental" 297)

Once more, the mainstream theatre critics adopted a reserved stance; they seemed to fail to recognise the experimental and "independent" theatre, performance and intermedia art as a part of Slovenian theatrical culture. However, this is a story we are going to reopen in the 1980s.

As we have seen already from the arguments of Lado Kralj, the new generation was far from satisfied with the political and cultural situation in theatre and society. Thus, Dušan Jovanović criticised the status quo and provinciality of the situation in *Naša sodobnost*: "We are more or less behind in everything that is new, progressive in Europe. Moreover, we are not behind only at the level of new tendencies, experiments and studies, but also at the level of the known, established, traditional models of our profession, craft, technology. We do not have an experimental theatre or an avant-garde theatre ..." ("Odgovor" 1171).

Glej was the fruit of the theatrical revolution of Pupilija, joining the forces of students from the AGRFT (Academy for Theatre ...), some young actors from the Slovenian National Theatre (SNT) Drama Ljubljana, headed by Dušan Jovanović and Lado Kralj, an assistant professor of dramaturgy at the academy that proposed the name in the spirit of the neo-avant-garde. A few weeks after the première of Handke's *Kaspar*, the group formed the theatre with Kralj stating that it was the fruit of the awareness of the need for experimental activities in contemporary theatre. Soon after the founding, Kralj noted that his interest was not in the experimental or avant-garde theatre practised by Glej (which he co-founded with Jovanović, Šedlbauer and others). In his opinion, this theatre was not radical enough, as it aspired "to be better and more progressive than traditional theatre" (Kralj, "Zanima me razredno gledališče" 21). For him, this theatre was no better than the bourgeois theatre Brecht criticised. He aimed to establish a new type of theatre, which would no longer be mere theatre, but an aesthetic revolution or "aesthetic action, as ritual, as speaking the unspeakable" (Ibid.).

Primož Jesenko describes the situation within the experimental theatre scene at the beginning of the 1970s:

When in the summer of 1971, Lado Kralj returned from a year off with professor Richard Schechner and The Performance Group in New York, he disagreed with his former colleagues about the need to approach the institutional method of production. He disagreed with the creative principle that Glej had developed during the year of his absence. Due to the influence of the New York avant-garde, Kralj founded the Pekarna Theatre, an additional "free group of theatre workers". Glej let him leave with people and carry out his work in the spirit of developing Grotowski's ritual theatre and social therapy as a goal and effect. The group settled in the former bakery at Tržaška cesta 15

and began to appear, with Ivo Svetina, and the Pekarna Theatre. (518)

Lado Kralj himself commented on the situation: “It was said that I was perhaps right, but they did theatre differently, that they were masters of thatis and that they would not do anything differently. There was no conflict, just a realisation that cooperation would not work. They even gave us a part of the finances from the Cultural Community to Glej, and we invested it into transforming the former bakery into a theatre” (“Čutil sem”, 10).

Let us take as an example of collaborative work a performance of Dušan Jovanović,³ *Monument G*, a highly unusual performative staging of a play by Bojan Štih in which the director, together with the choreographer Lojzka Žerdin and dramaturg Igor Lampret, wanted to implement Jerzy Grotowski’s poor theatre and elaborate a different experience from that of the Pupilija Ferkeverk group.



The scenography of *So So* by Mirko Kovač, directed by Ljubiša Ristić, Pekarna Theatre, Iconography SLOGI, 1974

³ Together with Zvone Šedlbauer and Iztok Tory, Dušan Jovanović was in the inner circle of the directors working for this group. Among his important works for Glej were: *Victor, or Power to the Children* (Victor ou les enfants au pouvoir) by Roger Vitrac (22 January 1971), *Spomenik G* (Monument G) by Jovanović and Bojan Štih (28 January 1972), *Kdor skak, tisti hlap* (He Who Jumps is a Serf) by Rudi Šeligo (26 January 1973), *Živelo življenje Luke D.* (Long Live the Life of Luka D.) by Pavle Lužan (23 January 1974) and *Pogovor v maternici koroške Slovenke* (Conversation in the womb of a Carinthian Slovene woman) by Janko Messner, Tomaž Šalamun and Jovanović (5 October 1974).

Gašper Troha states that, with *Monument G*,

Glej produced a new form of theatre that was based on the theatrical event. This was a Yugoslav phenomenon. "At approximately the same time Atelier 212 was formed in Belgrade, Theatre ITD in Zagreb, and we all displayed tendencies that were completely different from those in theatre institutions. We realised that compromises were no longer possible, as this would have led to an aesthetic and ideological defeat" (EG Glej). There was a clear connection between these views and the student revolt that demanded social revolution and the transformation of all traditions. (217)

Jovanović's first attempt at aesthetic revolution was within the Student Actual Theatre (ŠAG – Študentsko aktualno gledališče) in the second half of the 1960s, before the creation of Pupiliija. He continued in some productions in the 1970s, most notably directing Štih's play *Spomenik* (Monument) at the Glej Experimental Theatre in 1972, about which Venó Taufer wrote: "But Jovanović preserved both sides of the text. [...] Only that he denied the text as literature, destroyed it as such, re-created it as theatre. Thus, Štih remains a co-author of the Monument, which the director returned to him as a personal experience of total theatre" (*Odrom ob rob* 50).

Or as Peter Božič, another protagonist of the aesthetic avant-garde of the 1960s and 1970s, lucidly describes in his interpretation of the Glej performance and its turning points: "In this performance, Dušan Jovanović abolished the mediator between the actor's body and his play, which we call intellect or reason" ("Razvoj" 37). Thus, the actress Jožica Avbelj achieved the exclusion of rational or conscious work in her Artaudian interpretation and "the text was reduced to semantic signs or a sound mass, which they also interpreted semantically according to the changed structure" (*Ibid.*). The director, who before *Monument G* staged in Glej his homage to Vitrac's play *Victor or Children in Power*, wrote a highly interesting testimony of this most radical cut with the text in Glej's history: "I took Štih's *Monument* very seriously, but I was quite disturbed by the traditional structure of the piece and its engagement. [...] I wanted the things in the text to come to light physically, not verbally. [...] Of the seventy pages of the text, nine sentences, one poem and a few cries remain. Through the dialectic of twelve poses, Jožica Avbelj performed the content of the entire Štih piece" (Jovanović, *All these experiments ... n.p.*).

According to Andrej Inkret, an influential critic of the time, the play "in the first phase of the rehearsals started from Štih's striking cultural-political-critical satirical happening". Then it gradually eliminated the literary template, reduced the performers to a minimum, until the only "surviving" actress "remained with a series of torn, independent sentences (completely neutral fragments from Štih's texts), from which it is hardly possible to recognise the template ..." (Inkret, *Milo za drago* 332–33). Inkret further notes that the text in *Monument G* has been "removed" and concludes that

Jovanović's performance is "the extreme limit of the 'negative' or 'negativist' attitude towards the text, derived radically to the lower limit on the other side of which begins the world of 'pure theatre'" (Ibid. 333).

Thus, with *Monument G*, if we use Pavis's label, Jovanović boldly embodied the fact that "theatre directing is not a performative translation of a text" ("Od teksta" 147).

Not unlike Lado Kralj, Dušan Jovanović saw his role in Glej and theatre in general as a person trying in every way to establish a tribal atmosphere within a specific artistic community. While doing so, he met with many obstacles, one of them being the actor and his specific socialist psychology, which he defined as follows: "An actor is a member of a trade union which defines him and his social role, the role of an employee [...] I came to this conclusion after I tried to change a professional ensemble into a social group, to introduce a participative process into theatre" (*Prišli so Pupilčki* 93).

As Gašper Troha points out, "here, Jovanović talks about his artistic leadership of the Mladinsko Theatre in the 1980s" (215). Still, the theme of difficulties when eliminating the basic theatrical hierarchy and unionism is a constituent part of all his thoughts about the possible aesthetic revolutions in theatre.

5. Vlado Šav and his shaman's open theatre of active culture as a continuation of the model of the poor theatre of Jerzy Grotowski

Vlado Šav, a contemporary of Jovanović and Lado Kralj, proposed his own version of a performative revolution, closely linked to Grotowski, one of the world's most influential figures in independent theatre. Šav developed the methods and ideas of his own original version of an intercultural theatre seeking the universal principles that shape not only the theatre but also human action in a performance situation. Thus he opted for theatrical activities that could enable the community practising it to make a complete departure from the bourgeois and repertory model of the theatre at the turn of the 1960s to the 1970s.

Šav, who graduated in drama acting in 1970 from the Academy for Theatre, Radio, Film and Television in Ljubljana, successfully entered the selection for a six-month specialisation at Jerzy Grotowski's Acting Institute at Teatr Laboratorium in Wrocław, Poland, in 1973. As early as September 1973, after returning from Poland, Šav founded the group Vetrnica and started gradually developing various (existential and performative) practices of active culture.⁴ With his group, he practised the ideology

⁴ The work of Šav with Vetrnica was a continuation of his explorations of the community works and happenings he started with his first performance collective *Beli krog* (White Circle) at the end of the 1960s.

of primitivism derived from Grotowski and Schechner (Innes 1–5), which (like Kralj and Grotowski) he built on an alternative scale of values concerning contemporary culture and society. But his main goal was a specific return to nature and the fellow human being, a specific version of the third theatre in the sense of Eugenio Barba, putting in dialogue intellect and body. In a similar way to Kralj (who, in his own words, dealt at the Pekarna Theatre with Slovenian pathology and schizophrenic society), Šav introduced an extreme version of the return to the roots, the origins, and “anti-materialism directed towards spirituality (interest in religion and other spiritual practices of non-European cultures, experimenting with techniques of reaching altered states of consciousness, an inclination for founding ritual communities and blurring the boundary between performers and spectators), and belief in the transformative, or rather therapeutic force of ritual (self-)representation” (Schuller 400).

Beginning his career as an actor at the Koper City Stage (Mestni oder Koper, 1964–1968) already during his studies, he quickly made a radical turn by founding and heading the experimental theatre group Beli krog (White Circle). Its “manifesto” was the abolition of the distinction between professional and amateur, acting and not-acting, theatre and ritual. This activity was an introduction into Šav’s para-theatre, or rather, a theatre of the active culture or rather a theatrical “meeting” that is not a performance but a meeting between the group and the audience.⁵ The group “followed the example of The Living Theatre, as well as the laboratorium-style, introspective acting expression of Grotowski”, while the performance “presented its attitude towards the world which might seem a bit too simplistic, lacking in problematisation and critique”, nevertheless, “a promising start of successfully posited work in the formal as well as the specifically-expressive sense” (Povše 20–21). His performance *Pot* (The Path) was thus environmental, placed in a meadow. Performers and spectators were separated merely by a white chalk circle; it emphasised performative rituality, an autopoietic feedback loop between performers and spectators formed through physical and vocal actions by the performers who were not acting out roles but attempting to express who they were by using archetypes.

In the spring of 1974, the group Vetrnica⁶ organised a special performative event, which was entitled *Srečanje* (The Meeting). It was conceptualised as “the spontaneous improvisation of individuals who endeavoured to involve everyone present in unified action through their expressive strength” (Šav, “Gledališče kot intenzivno življenje” 4):

⁵ For a detailed analysis and synthesis of the crucial elements of Šav’s specific concept of theatre, see Alexandra Schuller’s essay “Vlado Šav in aktivna kultura” (Vlado Šav and Active Culture).

⁶ The group was founded in September 1973 in Ljubljana as part of the student cultural association Forum. It was active from 1973 until 1981. Its members included Vesna Dvornik, Milan Kristan, Jani Osojnik, Slavica Rukavina, Vlado Šav, Zdena Virant and Andrej Žumer. The group was also active internationally, touring in Europe and to Israel and Canada.

This can hardly be called a play since members of the group do not represent anything; instead, they are who they are. It is something different, something that still lacks a name. We make use of the terms: confrontation, soirée, meeting. [...] This isn't theatre in the traditional nor the modern sense, but something utterly new, singular [...] a meeting between a visitor and the group, a meeting of certain people in space, close contact between them, a moment of relaxation, a moment when perfect strangers join in that which is most beautiful and intimate to humans. It is a psychological and physical activity shared by everyone present. Each member of the group takes on this mission; they attempt to create such moments, to discover that most profound in themselves, and to pull everyone present into this experience of the self, thus triggering a similar experience in them as well. To meet with the Other as human to human ("Študentsko gledališče Vetrnica" 20).

Šav succeeded in demolishing the border between the performers and spectators, who in his theatre became fellow actors and co-created the performances by participating in the play, that is, through their physical presence, their perception and their reactions forming a specific society and a specific performative autopoietic feedback loop, interaction between actors and spectators.

6. New theatre for a new age and a new spectator

The similarities between the ideas of Vetrnica, Pekarna, Pupilija and Glej, as well as other neo-avant-garde groups of the 1970s, including the OHO group, are evident. Lado Kralj's reflections, the mini-manifesto of the Pupilija Ferkeverk group, Tomaž Kralj's short programme notes, and Vlado Šav's reflections on his group Vetrnica all speak about a specific form of experimental theatres that emerged in Slovenia at the turn of the 1960s to the 1970s, in interaction with the student movements and alternative culture. These collaborative communities and collectives paved the way for the non-institutional scene with a specific aesthetic diversity, radicalism and consistency:

There are many performances, their array spanning from ritual theatre to the so-called "upgraded realism", which introduced utterly new principles of horizontal dramaturgy with a different sensibility/awareness of time, which in this dramaturgy substitutes verticality. [...] Members of this company are neither better nor smarter than the next man; they merely have infinitely more opportunities to experiment in their own social environment, representing a consistent approximation to the ideal of self-management, author, director, costume designer, technician, etc. (Božič, "Eksperimentalno pozorište" 320).

The theatre communities of the 1970s were aesthetic revolutions that turned their focus towards the ritual presence of someone who was not acting but being in reality. They all proceed from the postulates of Artaud's theatre, from his realisation that theatre, which made use of Western psychology's "obsession with the defined word

which says everything”, led to “the withering of words” (Artaud 118). They try to add “another language to the spoken language, and I am trying to restore to the language of speech its old magic [...] for its mysterious possibilities have been forgotten” (Ibid. 111). Thus, Glej, Pekarna, Pupiliija and Vetrnica became involved in what Rudi Šeligo called “immediate presence”, a specific presence.

They also introduced special acting-performing methods through which they tried in their performances to find a new type of acting that would stem from the actor’s very blood, body, biology and situation. Thus Lado Kralj, Vlado Šav, Dušan Jovanović and Tomaž Kralj, each in their own way, carried our aesthetic, performative revolutions emancipating both performers and spectators in the sense of Jerzy Grotowski, Richard Schechner and Eugenio Barba. Schechner’s ritualism was present in the first three performances by the Pekarna Theatre: Dane Zajc’s *Pathwalker*, directed by Lado Kralj (1972); *Gilgamesh*, directed by Ivo Svetina (1972) and Rudi Šeligo’s *Let Me Cover You with Leaves*, directed by Lado Kralj (1973). Jerzy Grotowski’s influence was primarily felt in the performances and actions of the Vetrnica group in the 1970s: *Srečanje* (The Meeting, 1974); *Soočanje* (The Confrontation, 1974); *Kopanje* (Bathing, 1975) and the community in Petkovci (1976–1980). But all the artistic communities and groups shared a specificity of collective creation in which the performance before the public was not the main goal. Their focus was a specific process of creation, as well as the interaction of all participants. Their goal was a new type of actor, or rather performer, whom Ivo Svetina describes: “All performers were becoming agents, a new type of actor who was no longer based on ‘enacting’ individual drama characters, but rather used their individual energy and presence, gesture and spoken word to give a new image to poems as well as their authors” (“Prispevek za zgodovino” 41).

Barbara Orel claims that the series of performances and performative procedures triggered in that period’s theatre should be understood as the defining moment in Slovenian theatre history when the “transition to performance art” took place. They also provided a “fascinating confrontation with reality” in their descent from literature to immediate stage presentation: “The assemblage of scenes, from the introductory urban ritual – watching the TV evening news and thus the world as it appears in the moment of performing, to the concluding ritual of slaughtering the chicken, was founded in a dedicated and ruthless exploration of the real” (Orel, “Pupiliija” 196).

This ritual of slaughtering the chicken can be interpreted in the sense of Maurice Blanchot when he makes the following point in *The Unavowable Community*:

The “basis of communication” is not necessarily speech, or even the silence that is its foundation and punctuation, but exposure to death, no longer my own exposure, but someone else’s, whose living and closest presence is already the eternal and unbearable absence, an absence that the travail of deepest mourning does not diminish. And it is in

life itself that that absence of someone else has to be met. It is with that absence – its uncanny presence, always under the prior threat of disappearing – that friendship is brought into play and lost at each moment, a relation without relation other than the incommensurable. (25)

As demonstrated in the cases of Pupilija, Pekarna and Vetrnica, the student-experimental theatre blurred the boundaries between artistic genres, high and low culture, professional and non-professional actors. It was derived from novel theories of art and culture as argued for by, for example, Lado and Tomaž Kralj and Taras Kermauner, who built on Artaud, the American theatre avant-garde, Grotowski and Schechner. By breaking down boundaries and taboos, this theatre created a new, liberated performative territory, from which the alternative theatre and culture of the 1980s and the non-institutional performing arts scene of the 1990s emerged, as well as, to a certain degree, today's post-repertory theatre in its more daring forms.

However, we should not forget that this theatre also created something that became very important for the positioning of the independent theatre and artistic scene of the late socialism and post-socialism, and can be linked to Nancy's notion of community as a specific singularity: "Community means, consequently, that there is no singular being without another singular being, and that there is, therefore, what might be called, in a rather inappropriate idiom, an originary or ontological 'sociality' that in its principle extends far beyond the simple theme of man as a social being (the *zoon politikon* is secondary to this community)" (28).

And the utopian idea of communism as a society without classes and fixed roles was, of course, very close to Pekarna, Pupilija and Glej of the 1970s, the aesthetic revolutions that took Georges Bataille's idea (as interpreted by Nancy) very seriously that "the pole of community was, for Bataille, bound up with the idea of communism. This included, in spite of everything, themes of justice and equality; without these themes, regardless of the way one chooses to transcribe them, the communitarian enterprise can only be a farce. In this respect at least, communism remained an unsurpassable exigency, or, as Bataille wrote, 'In our times the moral effect of communism is predominant.'" (20).

For the Slovenian experimental communities under Yugoslav self-management socialism, the idea of communism, as well as its moral effects in a good and bad sense, were more than present. They had to cope and face all the vulgarisations of the community and communism, but their primary aim was to establish new modes of artistic communities.

Thus, we can confirm the hypothesis suggested by Rok Andres: Lado Kralj's programme (as well as those of Vlado Šav, Dušan Jovanović and Tomaž Kralj) to a

significant extent “corresponded to the current theatre moment, for what else are audience participation, specialised psycho-physical training of actors, ritual elements of theatre, team (group) creation of performances, new possibilities offered by the visual and audio elements of performance, but elements of contemporary (dare we say, post-dramatic) theatre?” (26).

Meanwhile, all avant-garde groups at the turn of the 1960s to the 1970s ought to be understood in connection with the hippie culture, its ludic elements, the student and civil movements such as the new-left movements, the critique of culture (and politics) of their fathers and to new art practices. Miško Šuvaković thus concludes that this means “there are no longer any clear stipulations of what theatre, literature, visual arts and film actually are”. Thus, theatre became a thing of the tribe, which set off to discover “its sociality and presented it through art” (Tanko, 1585). In the avant-garde student theatre, these genres and tactics entered into an intensive mutual dialogue and began working in an experimental, sometimes excessive, way. This generation needed to redefine its artistic and social role, which undoubtedly led to abolishing the hierarchy between the repertory and the experimental, the professional-drama and the amateur-student theatre.

And to conclude with some thoughts from Bojana Kunst on collaborative works and communities from the 1960s and 1970s:

The collaborative other is present only through an immediate freedom of choice and exactly with this freedom of choice he/she also gets his/her body, his/her senses, his/her very particular desires and creative energies. Therefore, the endless participatory freedom of bodily collaborators, the spontaneity of the democratic communities from that period, are only possible through a series of strict protocols which, precisely because they are merely technical, enable a “free” scenario for collaboration. Participatory freedom is thus always the freedom of realisation through a certain protocol, which in turn allows us to participate and do whatever we desire without interruption. Which we can qualify as a paradox, because every form of participatory freedom requires the same scenario. The paradox that is today in the core of the contemporary production of desire, where scenarios for freedom are increasingly unified, privatised and controlled. (80)

In this sense, we can interpret the history of the Slovenian experimental theatre and performing arts scene from the 1970s (the decade in which both Glej and Pekarna community theatres were established and had their artistic and conceptual peaks) as a period of constant attempts to form the community in art as defined by a French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy: “Community on the contrary is ordinary being together, without any assumption of common identity, without any strong intensity, but exposed to banality, to the ‘common’ of existence.” (XIII)

Moreover, at the same time, the attempts to re-establish a modern form of community

that would recover something of the commonality experience in society is somehow characteristic of more primitive social forms.

7. Conclusion: From late socialism to post-socialism



An artefact by Matjaž Vipotnik for *Missa in a minor* by Ljubiša Ristić, Mladinsko Theatre, 1980, Mladinsko Theatre Archive.

The “cultural struggle” between official and experimental continued well into the 1980s. At its beginning, the leading Slovenian cultural ideologue, Josip Vidmar, as a president of Sterijino Pozorje in Novi Sad, described Jovanović and Ristić as cultural terrorists.

At the start of the 1980s, Jovanović, Ristić and Marko Slodnjak developed the new, specific non-hierarchical structure of the Mladinsko Theatre based on the models of the Berlin Schaubühne of Peter Stein, the Theatre du Soleil of Ariane Mnouchkine and the Tanztheatre Wuppertal of Pina Bausch. Its protagonists were the author and the director, and its tools were the space and the body, as well as a specific, Brookian

and Brechtian approach towards acting. Critics denoted this infelicitously as the ensemble-acting phenomenon. In contrast, it should essentially be understood as a holistic, political and especially artistic engagement on the part of the acting team for an individual performance, for the theatre as a whole and for the entire collective of artists cooperating in the individual theatrical project. The new understanding of theatre and its attitude towards reality, and the understanding of the whole literary-dramatic-critical apparatus, which, at the turn of the decade, was introduced most radically by Ristić and Jovanović, was initiated by Taras Kermauner in his nowadays sadly little known but lucid and daring paper “Comments on Direction or How the Directed Director Deciphers His Direction”.

He differentiated between “half-past” and hyper-modernist directors, between the two approaches towards theatre, which, with the support of conservative criticism, conflicted precisely given Ristić’s and Jovanović’s (and, before them, Mile Korun’s) performances on the transition from the 1970s to the 1980s.

The criticism that tries to destroy the significance and value of theatrical hyper-modernism (Josip Vidmar), incessantly calls upon the intangibility of dramas; it takes away the right of the directors to interpret the drama of the world or even to transform it. [...] Placed face to face as opponents are not the half-past classically bourgeois and the hyper-modernist directors, but the latter and the half-past critic – the ideologist. As to his nature, the half-past director is actually the observer of the law ... In the fight against the hyper-modernist, he is therefore replaced by the one who is the first-sworn and nationally and institutionally appointed – the interpreter of holy books: the literary-cultural ideologist. (Kermauner, quoted in Toporišič, *Med zapeljevanjem* 118–119)

This conflict culminated in the Ristić/Jovanović/Vidmar polemics at the Sterijino pozorje festival of Yugoslav drama and in Josip Vidmar’s labelling of them as “cultural terrorists”. Vidmar, who declined *Missa in a minor*, along with practically all-contemporary Slovenian theatre, did not consider it appropriate to see the performance. In an interview for the daily newspaper *Delo*, he stated that he was also told what Ristić demanded from his spectators – to sit on footstools, that is. He added that the fact the director would be directing him as well as something to which he did not want to treat himself. In contrast to him, however, most of the critics defended the performance as a pinnacle one.

The main characteristics of this kind of political and explorative theatre were precisely the linking of political engagement and theatrical experiment, the revolution of the mind and form. Interestingly, it sprang from the reading of tradition, e.g., that of Bertolt Brecht, Peter Brook and his staging of the documentary theatre of Peter Weiss (*Marat-Sade*), Heiner Müller and his premise that as many actions as possible should be shown simultaneously, Ariane Mnouchkine and her early projects on revolution

(1789, 1793: *The Revolutionary Spot is in this World*).

While neglected at home, in Slovenia and Yugoslavia, this theatre had successful international performances. A very interesting example is *Missa in a minor* (1980) which did not receive any of the awards at the leading Slovenian national theatre festival (Borštnikovo srečanje, known today in English as Maribor Theatre Festival) but became the first Yugoslav performance to receive the Grand Prix at the then extremely important international BITEF festival event in Belgrade and one of the first in-depth critiques of Slovenian theatre in the leading German theatre magazine *Theatre Heute*.

With *Missa in a minor*, Ristić developed a specific form of theatre that used to his advantage the most varied visual and phonic facets of the performance, and, with a non-classical attitude to the text or by creating Barthesian written texts, he creates a typical post-dramatic and Eco's open work. In the following decades, this property remained one of the most recognisable peculiarities of the poetics of youth and non-institutional theatre in general, which Western theatre critics and the profession recognised as a speciality of Slovenian theatre (later also contemporary dance).

The specificity of the Mladinsko Theatre was perceived by the audiences and critics time and time again. It was referred to as "ensemble acting", which initially sprang specifically from the theatrical organism and the acting approach cultivated by the Berliner Ensemble, though this connection was lost later on.

A similar specificity can be seen in the concept of Ljubiša Ristić's "utopic idea" of a new structure KPGT, an acronym formed from the words for theatre in the corpus of languages spoken in Yugoslavia: *kazalište*, *pozorište*, *gledališče*, *teatar*. His concept was based on a multi-notional cultural concept. With his close associates (Nada Kokotović, Dušan Jovanović, Rade Šerbedžija, Dragan Klaić, Dušan Jovanović, etc.), in 1977 Ristić formed this supra structure to produce *The Liberation of Skopje* in Zagreb, written and directed by Dušan Jovanović. In the 1980s, this structure slowly became a specific network (of artists, institutions, performances, aesthetics, etc.) and a theatre brand with participating artists from several theatre institutions mostly led by KPGT-related artists in Ljubljana, Zagreb, Novi Sad, Subotica, Skopje, etc. Rok Vevar describes the new situation emerging after the death of Josip Broz Tito:

In the mid-eighties, when Ljubiša Ristić took over as the manager of the National Theatre in Subotica, the KPGT based itself there, while in this period the cultural programmes of the KPGT (festival, repertoires, etc.) also started functioning as a peculiar collection of artistic works. That is, they became some sort of a theatre depot in which the performances of the KPGT collaborators were nearly catalogue units, which particularly Ljubiša Ristić could, at any time, (again) pull out from the warehouse and stage in a selected theatre in the SFR Yugoslavia. From the mid-nineties, the KPGT is the name

of an artistic programme and ensemble based in the former sugar factory (Šećerana) in Belgrade that operates there as a local theatre. After the dissolution of the SFRY, due to the collapse of the common political space, the Serbian nationalist usurpation of the idea of the Yugoslavhood in political disagreements of the eighties and Ristić's participation in the JUL (Yugoslav Left) party, a number of its artistic protagonists and collaborators, distanced themselves from the KPGT concept. Some did so publicly, some simply refused to talk about it any longer. Ljubiša Ristić still insists that the idea of the common cultural space is pertinent (and is particularly critical of treating the western Balkans as a "region", in the way the European Union does it), regardless of the fact that the political structure called SFRY collapsed. ("KPGT" 17)

KPGT shared with the Mladinsko what dramaturg Marko Slodnjak termed "the theatrical metaphor of the political" that strongly marked the repertoire of both theatres in the first half of the 1980s. But let us concentrate on the Mladinsko.

The Prisoners of Freedom (Ujetniki svobode, 1982), written by Emil Filipčič and directed by the young director Janez Pipan, followed *Missa in a minor*. The ludic playfulness and political provocativeness of the performance took the Slovenian cultural public by storm. It outlined the individuality of the Mladinsko Theatre phenomenon in both the former Slovenian and wider Yugoslav spaces. This was well mirrored by Pipan's thinking in an interview at the time for the weekly *Mladina*:

At this moment, a prevailing model of Slovene theatre exists, which, in comparison to the theatre of ten years ago, is markedly conservative. It is spasmodic in its efforts to preserve its status and repressive towards everything that appears outside of that mode. Watching such performances, I get the feeling that, within several months, these theatres will have demolished all of what has been built over the past several years or even the past decade: as if the theatres forgot about the experimental work, such as that of the Glej or the Pekarna. They have forgotten about the innovative and more radical theatres that have brought a new vision and formulation to the theatrical world. Performances made in the manner of fifty years ago are advocated as valuable without the right of appeal. Consequently, texts by young authors are ejected from programmes and younger artists are driven away from the theatres, having no chance of working (an example is *The Christmas Crib / Jaslice* by Valentin Duša at Glej Theatre) and that theatrical criticism nips in the bud any attempt by younger theatrical creators to enter this big organism, the Slovene theatrical institution. An organism, which, in my opinion, is dead. We must prevent the sterilisation and regression of Slovene theatre. (Quoted in *Has the Future* 124)

Pipan's thinking clearly presents the Slovenian theatrical situation in the first half of the 1980s and, of course, the new programme scheme of the Mladinsko Theatre. At the première of *The Prisoners of Freedom*, Andrej Inkret wrote in the newspaper *Delo*: "A wild performance that connects the play with the ideology and style of the so-called contemporary alternative culture" (*Za Hekubo* 326).

It is quite clear that Ristić and the Mladinsko Theatre, with its variant of political theatre, announced the entry of art into the field of politics and that this remained characteristic of the entire Neue Slowenische Kunst (NSK) movement. However, in contrast to KPGT, which deliberately built a communication model that allowed the audience to identify, NSK no longer allowed this but built on double coding, over-identification and sliding markers.

In the same period, however, the next generation with Neue Slowenische Kunst confidently declared, “theatre is a state” and, at a time when the Yugoslavia that the KPGT tried to defend disintegrated, established its own NSK State. However, the members of NSK were not labelled as cultural terrorists but rather as fascists or remnants of the Western avant-garde, which were ideologically controversial and

far from the working class in terms of progress: Since the working class is in power, our society is already, as such, avant-garde. The socialist country does not need special avant-garde artists, as it is avant-garde in itself. [...] So, of course, it is clear that in our post-war history, the idea of the avant-garde could appear only as a fantasy of those who fought against the new working class and political avant-garde they did not understand. And society was absolutely right when it marked avant-garde attempts as backward, as they were usually identified with the Western avant-garde, which, however, are avant-garde only from the point of view of the bourgeois class, that is to say – as is generally known – one that is far behind the workers in terms of progress. (Mikuž, *Slovensko* 199)



Missa in a minor, Mladinsko Theatre, 1980. Photo: Mladinsko Theatre Archive.

Thus history once more organised itself in a series of repetitions. In the late 1980s, the Slovenian experimental theatre scene was far from being just on the margins of society. Nevertheless, it still did not become a part of mainstream culture. One could say that it found itself in a schizophrenic position: at the margins of the national semiosphere and slowly moving towards the centre of the European festival semiosphere. Theatres on the periphery of the national semiosphere have produced specific aesthetic and institutional revolutions, qualities that make them more perceived, valued and ranked on the international festival scene than the Slovenian repertory theatrical scene.

From 1970 to 1990, the Slovenian experimental and non-institutional performing arts scene created new, specific modes of non-hierarchical aesthetics and creativity, changed how the groups and theatres were organised and led and formed temporary communities with emancipated audiences. To develop their own logic of devised and collaborative theatrical tactics, these new models turned to heterogeneous models from Grotowski, Schechner and Barba to Mnouchkine Peter Stein and Pina Bausch.

These collaborative artistic tribes significantly changed the theatrical landscape in Slovenia and Yugoslavia and led to new models and aesthetics from the 1990s until today. New or other theatre, practised by various groups, gradually overwhelmed Yugoslav and European festivals of alternative and student theatre. They became synonymous with the resilience and endurance of small theatre groups that proliferated during the 1970s and 1980s, partly merging with the phenomenon of the first non-repertory professional theatre with an ensemble of actors, the Mladinsko Theatre, on the one hand, and new initiatives of the “independent” and later “non-institutional” theatrical and artistic scene on the other. However, that is a new story that must be examined closely and retold in the near future.

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Razprava v razdobju tridesetih let, ki sovpadajo tudi z obstojem Gledališča Glej razišče oblikovanje in preoblikovanje nehierarhičnih gledaliških skupnosti oziroma - z besedami enega od ustanoviteljev Gledališča Glej Dušana Jovanovića - gledaliških plemen. Na podlagi preteklih in sodobnih primerov bomo poskušali izrisati zemljevid tistih praks ustvarjanja avtorskega gledališča, ki jih Badiou poimenuje splošna nihanja. »Resnično gledališče vsak nastop, vsako igralčevo gesto spremeni v splošno nihanje, v katerem so dovoljene razlike brez osnove. Gledalec se mora odločiti, ali se prepusti tej praznini in sodeluje v neskončnem postopku. Ni pozvan k užitku [...], pač pa k razmišljanju« (*Rhapsody* 91, 92). Poskušali bomo poiskati odgovore na naslednja vprašanja: kako je slovenska eksperimentalna in nevladna gledališka scena (kot reakcijo na hierarhične strukture repertoarnih gledališč) ustvarila različne moduse nehierarhije v okvirih performansov, umetniških vodenj gledališč in oblikovanj začasnih skupnosti z emancipiranimi gledalci; katere modele je ta scena uporabljala in katere uporablja danes za razvoj lastne logike avtorskih in skupnostnih gledaliških taktik; in nazadnje, koliko so ta različna umetniška skupnostna plemena spreminjala in še spreminjajo gledališko krajino v Sloveniji, Jugoslaviji in drugod?

Ključne besede: Umetniški kolektivi, performativni obrat, neoavantgarda, eksperimentalno gledališče, neinstituicionalna umetnost

Dr. Tomaž Toporišič je dramaturg in gledališki teoretik, izredni profesor za področje dramaturgije in scenskih umetnosti 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. Njegovi primarni področji raziskovanja sta teorija in zgodovina uprizoritvenih praks in literature, predvsem interakcije med obema področjema; semiotika kulture in kulturne študije.

Kolektivi, skupnosti in nehierarhični načini ustvarjanja od sedemdesetih do devetdesetih let 20. stoletja

Tomaž Toporišič

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Razprava v razdobju tridesetih let, ki sovpadajo tudi z obstojem Gledališča Glej, raziskuje oblikovanje in preoblikovanje nehierarhičnih gledaliških skupnosti oziroma – z besedami enega od ustanoviteljev Gledališča Glej Dušana Jovanovića – gledaliških plemen. Na podlagi preteklih in sodobnih primerov bomo poskušali izrisati zemljevid tistih praks ustvarjanja avtorskega gledališča, ki jih Alain Badiou poimenuje splošna nihanja. »Resnično gledališče vsak nastop, vsako igralčevo gesto spremeni v splošno nihanje, v katerem so dovoljene razlike brez osnove. Gledalec se mora odločiti, ali se prepusti tej praznini in sodeluje v neskončnem postopku. Ni pozvan k užitku [...], pač pa k razmišljanju.« Poskušali bomo poiskati odgovore na naslednja vprašanja: kako je slovenska eksperimentalna in nevladna gledališka scena (kot reakcijo na hierarhične strukture repertoarnih gledališč) ustvarila različne moduse nehierarhije v okvirih performansov, umetniških vodenj gledališč in oblikovanj začasnih skupnosti z emancipiranimi gledalci; katere modele je ta scena uporabljala in katere uporablja danes za razvoj lastne logike avtorskih in skupnostnih gledaliških taktik; in nazadnje, koliko so ta različna umetniška skupnostna plemena spreminjala in še spreminjajo gledališko krajino v Sloveniji, Jugoslaviji in drugod?

Razprava se osredotoča na odnose med t. i. institucionalno-repertoarno gledališko sceno na eni in t. i. eksperimentalnimi, alternativnimi in kasneje neinstitucionalnimi uprizoritvenimi praksami na drugi strani, ki jih je »dramskogledališki obrat« velikokrat označeval kar s pojmom amatersko in ljubiteljsko. Prikaže, kako se je na prelomu iz šestdesetih v sedemdeseta leta v Sloveniji v interakciji s študentskimi gibanji, zasedbo Filozofske fakultete, dejavnostmi Radia Študent, Tribune in Kulturnega društva Forum izoblikovala specifična oblika študentskih in eksperimentalnih gledališč (Gledališče Pupilije Ferkeverk, Gledališče Pekarna, Vlado Šav in Vetrnica ...). Ta so se zavestno odločila, da bodo iz svojega kroga izločila klasične hierarhične oblike organiziranosti tako gledališke produkcije kot estetike in recepcije. Tako je prav fenomen študentskega eksperimentalnega gledališča, ki briše meje med umetniškimi zvrstmi, visoko in nizko kulturo, profesionalnimi igralci in naturščiki, s svojim podiranjem meja in tabujev

vzpostavil kreativno osvobojeno ozemlje, s katerega sta kasneje izhajali alternativa osemdesetih in neinstitucionalna scena devetdesetih let, danes pa do določene mere tudi postrepertoarno gledališče v svojih drznejših oblikah. Raziskujemo, kako in koliko so se pri tem zgledovali po gledališki avantgardi Richarda Schechnerja in Performance Group, Eugenia Barbe, Jerzyja Grotowskega, Ariane Mnouchkine, The Wooster Group ter drugih.

Performativni obrat je tudi v Sloveniji pokazal, da v umetnosti ni nič gotovega, tudi to ne, da se igralci ločujejo na dramske (matrične), študentske (eksperimentalne, nematrične) ter amaterske (spontane naturščike). Pri vsem tem je prav gledališkim skupnostim ali plemenom, ki jih je najdosledneje zastopal Lado Kralj, uspelo analizirati tudi celotno gledališko krajino, v kateri so opozorili na potrebo, »da se najdejo in definirajo ‚družbene manjšine‘ in ‚družbena večina‘ in da se jim omogoči ustrezna afirmacija, kajti le takšna situacija omogoča radikalne nove rešitve nad nivojem osebnih prepirov in utrudljivega stopicanja na mestu.«

Ta »kulturni boj« se je nadaljeval tudi v osemdesetih letih, na začetku katerih je vodilni slovenski kulturni ideolog Josip Vidmar kot predsednik Sterijevega pozorja v Novem Sadu označil Jovanovića in Ristića za kulturna terorista. Hkrati pa se je nadaljevala tudi mednarodna odmevnost tovrstnega gledališča, najbolj z *Misso in a minor*, ki na Borštnikovem srečanju ni prejela nobene nagrade, je pa kot prva jugoslovanska predstava prejela veliko nagrado na takrat izjemno pomembni mednarodni festivalski manifestaciji Bitez v Beogradu. Pri tem je povsem jasno, da so Ristić, Slovensko mladinsko gledališče in KPGT s svojo različico političnega gledališča napovedali vstop umetnosti v polje politike, ki je ostal značilen tudi za celotno gibanje Neue Slowenische Kunst. Toda v nasprotju s KPGT, ki je namerno gradil komunikacijski model, ki je publiki omogočal identifikacijo, NSK tega ni več omogočal, ampak je gradil na dvojnem kodiranju in nadidentifikaciji ter drsenju označevalcev. S KPGT je režija postala oblikovanje konkretnega političnega prostora, v katerega je v devetdesetih letih vstopila za ceno izstopa iz angažiranega gledališča in se v vsej svoji groteskni podobi prelevila v svoje ideološko nasprotje, iz revolucije v reakcijo, iz levice v desnico.

Iz primerov, ki jih analizira razprava, je očitno, da je bil za postdramsko gledališče novih, neformalnih gledaliških skupnosti in skupin od leta 1970 pa vse do konca socializma v Sloveniji izjemno pomemben plasma umetniških fenomenov v mednarodni gledališki in festivalski prostor, ki je znal neobremenjeno, a dovolj dosledno in kritično interpretirati gledališki stroj imaginacije. Danes, ko smo se že ustalili v postpostsocialistični dobi tako imenovane tranzicije Slovenije, je z zgodovinskega odmika že mogoče trditi, da brez te podpore od zunaj sodobna uprizoritvena umetnost, ki ima svojo kontinuiteto v organizmih, kot so Pekarna, Mladinsko, Neue Slowenische Kunst, Koreodrama, PTL, En-Knap, Betontanc, Mini

teater, Via Negativa itn., kot fenomen ne bi preživela. Pozitiven odziv v Evropi in obeh Amerikah je bil nujen za nadaljevanje raziskav. Te so največkrat potekale prav v nehierarhiziranih novih umetniških strukturah od eksperimentalnih gledališč sedemdesetih do neinstitucionalnega gledališča devetdesetih let 20. stoletja.

In their 1979 manifesto, the independent experimental theatre collective Kugla glumište (Zagreb, 1975–1985) claims: "Kugla discovers images, symbols and stories that wish to be the promise of community." The article explores the repercussions of those neo-avant-garde community efforts on the contemporary Zagreb non-institutional scene by analysing four inclusive performances which differ in motivations, aesthetic aims, production levels and participatory modes. In *The Love Case of Fahrija P* (2017), the ex-members of Kugla and additional co-authors stage a polylogue with the artistic heritage of the deceased Kugla glumište member Željko Zorica Šiš (1957–2013) and the inclusive procedures they devised during the 1970s. The community project *55+* (2012) by the production platform Montažstroj gathers the participants who are over 55 in workshops, public debates, celebrations, protests and a documentary to provide visibility and voice to that neglected generation. In the trilogy *On Community* (2010–2011), the production platform Shadow Casters tests different mechanisms of creating temporary aesthetic communities, from learning an *a cappella* group song to sharing secrets, on its recipients. Finally, the atmospheric inclusion of the subtly associative performance *Conversing* (2019) by Fourhanded offers an almost elitist opportunity of co-existing in the intimate world of private tensions. However, what they all have in common is a physically non-invasive form, emotional and/or intellectual engagement and an emphasised personal commitment that can oblige audiences to reciprocate while they join the community of experience.

Keywords: Zagreb non-institutional theatre of the 2010s, community of participants, *On Community*, *55+*, *The Love Case of Fahrija P*, *Conversing*

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Keeping the Promise of Community: Communal Efforts on the Contemporary Zagreb Non-Institutional Scene

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The Zagreb non-institutional theatre scene provides elements of communal experience (reflected in the creative process, performance or reception) both in the obscure and well-known theatre practice, in memories and archives, in retrospective interpretations and the straightforward strategic activities as well as in various periods of its recent history. Although one can find under investigated examples of the theatrical exploration of this field in the first part of the 20th century,¹ it particularly developed amid the 1970s' rediscovery of collective power on the alternative scene, when even groups with clearly individualised creative tasks avoided naming specific authors (community of performers/authors) and interaction with the audience was almost expected (community of participants), and was perhaps most elaborately realised in the practice of the neo-avant-garde experimental theatre group Kugla glumište (1975–1985). In the words of their 1979 manifesto: “Kugla discovers images, symbols and stories that wish to be the promise of community” (79).² The following paper will attempt to chart

1 For instance, in the summer of 1940, the members of the theatre company Družina mladih (1939–1948), which was founded within the French Institute in Zagreb, undertook a methodological experiment containing some of the recognisable elements of community building such as physical isolation and connecting through a consciously chosen common creative process. As remembered by the surrealist writer and the influential group member Radovan Ivšić, “(e)nough young people warmed up to the practice, so we decided to spend the summer together in the village of Razvor, on the river Sutla, and dedicate all that time to making theatre. It was in Razvor that Družina mladih set up its chorus for choral recitations, which was one of group’s basic activities for years, along with the acting and the puppetry” (156). Thus a barely registered practical research overflowed into the formal innovation implying a strong collective base, both on the organisational and performative level. Choral performance was suggested by Ivšić who also provided powerful modernist choral recitations such as *Sun City* (1943–1944) as linguistic texts of their performances. Diverging from the desirable and generally accepted realistic conversational style it recalled ritual heritage of the theatre performance and musical quality of the stage speech, according to the description of the composer Ivo Malec: “We did choral recitation as a sort of musical-vocal piece. We spoke the text in such a way that the word or the sentence would shift from one mouth to the other creating a certain musical surrounding” (161).

2 Kugla’s claim reverberated across various layers of the group’s existence. It was tested in the organisation of the group as its members experimented with “creating their working surrounding as a primary social group” (Burić quoted in Marjanić and Vlašić-Anić 48). It was transferred to the creative process which, regardless of the informal domination of more experienced and more charismatic members and in spite of sometimes slow-moving progress, relied primarily on the group discussion and nominal equality in making decisions. It was manifested in the performance marked by the fragmented dramaturgy (a sequence or a cluster of separated scenes) resulting from the artistic polylogue and a group body of performers united in a procession or a *tableau vivant*. Finally, it was dispersed by the invitation to the spectators to join their participative projects, as clarified by the group: “The problem is that so far Kugla’s success has been evaluated according to AESTHETIC and not social criteria [...] no one has ever noticed that this is a different kind of social activity” (Mor 86).

contemporary repercussions of that communal legacy on the same independent theatre scene by analysing four projects from the 2010s: *On Community (O zajedništvu)*, Shadow Casters, 2010–2011), 55+ (*Montažstroj*, 2012), *The Love Case of Fahrija P (Ljubavni slučaj Fahrije P)*, group of authors, 2017) and *Conversing (Razgovaranje)*, Fourhanded, 2019). Namely, with different motivations, aesthetic goals, production levels and modus operandi, they do not necessarily refer to the term but do focus on a group of interconnected individuals united by means of cohesion, particularly in relation to the audience. Thus, the analysis will especially explore the interactive and participatory potential of each of the performances employed to form a social organisation, exploring the political potential of the community or its practical and ideological background. If there is a common starting point, it can be found in their positive perception of the community, whether it is proposed as a probable outcome, a question or “wishful thinking”. As Zygmunt Bauman observes, somewhat ironically, “Community, we feel, is always a good thing” (1).

A possible community

The positive side of the spectrum is marked by the belief in the successful establishment of performative unity of all those involved in a theatre performance. Up to a certain point, it is a natural outcome of the 20th-century experiments in that field that completed the cycle from devising fresh models to their practical testing, from envisioning ideals to accepting attainable versions, from subverting conventions to inaugurating new conventions and even joining the mainstream. Some form of communal theatrical experience is thus nearly presumed or at least less problematised and exceeds the presented material or serves as its denominator – obtained like a previously existing pattern and applied with a lot of optimism or acceptance of its shortcomings to the new circumstances. Accordingly, the theatre performance *The Love Case of Fahrija P* (Theatre &TD, opening night: 13 December 2017) directly links to that neo-avant-garde heritage. It was created by a group of authors,³ including Zlatko Burić Kićo and Damir Bartol Indoš, who once belonged to Kugla glumište; even more so, upon the disintegration of the group in the early 1980s, they respectively represented its “soft” and “hard” fractions. In addition, the project is a homage to another deceased Kugla member and multimedia artist, Željko Zorica Šiš (1957–2013), and therefore rendered in the form of performative dialogue with his artwork; in particular, it is based on three comic pages from 1984 (*The Love Case of Fahrija P, Mummies, Ed Killer Hed*) with references to his other works such as partially edible installations, the experimental film *Cabbage Clairvoyant* (2012) or the reflections of his fictional alter-

³ Zlatko Burić Kićo, Damir Bartol Indoš, Dragana Milutinović, Tanja Vrvilo, Hrvojkja Begović, Dina Puhovski, Sven Jakir, Domagoj Janković, Miro Manojlović, Ivan Marušić Klif, Igor Hofbauer Hof, Henning Frimann Larsen, Peter Oliver Jørgensen and Ana Janjatović Zorica.

ego Dr Hans Christian Zabludovsky published in two fantasy bestiaries. It does not, therefore, come as a surprise that the project relates to Kugla's opus on the level of content, dramaturgy, spatial organisation and highlighted media. Zorica's motifs are incorporated into the mixture of everyday scenes and surreal fiction, which the group established in the mid-1970s juxtaposing, for example, the spectacular multimedia staging of the crime story about Fahrija P. with a simple, realistic tale about ordinary people, a peasant family growing cabbages.

Furthermore, the production is shaped in four spatially and thematically separated segments, of which some are additionally divided into mutually independent parts: postdramatic interpretation of Zorica's comic plots staged on two more conventional scenes is followed by a succession of performances on small scaffold stages representing various *loci* and a musical finale in an empty hall. Along with acting, it features music – a possible nod to the famous Kugla band, which accompanied all of their shows – and a strong visuality, interweaving live acting and drawing, film, installation and projections of comics, a debt to the multimedia oeuvre of Željko Zorica.

Most importantly, within the context of this insight, *The Love Case of Fahrija P* continues to rely on its audience, leaving the impression of a collection of procedures designed to persuade the spectators to renounce that status in favour of physically active or more conscious participation. On the general level, the fragmentary disposition of particular scenes is surpassed by a collective processional body of audience members led by one or more performers from one performance locus to another. The invitation to join it is issued calmly ("Let us go! Let us move!" announces the actor Sven Jakir after the introductory scene. "Go, now, follow the snowstorm into the hall and take a look at our other images" encourages the actress Tanja Vrvilo after the end of Fahrija's story). Still, it cannot hide the implicit ultimatum: join the group or miss the performance altogether. On the level of particular segments, the authors interlace different channels and intensity of inclusion. By directly addressing the viewers demanding their alert intellectual engagement and openly showing or presenting the performance content, for example, in the central sequence on scaffold stages, they practise the Brechtian abolishment of the fourth wall convention to create a firm connection between the stage fiction and the reality of the auditorium. To quote the official announcement: "Come to the show, in the words of Ed Killer Hed, to see – when you are already watching." At the same time, all the segments appeal to the sensory experience of the recipient with the ever-present musical performance, which alternates in force with acted parts, occasionally transforming a theatre piece into a concert. *The Love Case of Fahrija P* begins with forceful tones (composed and performed by Miro Manojlović, Henning Frimann and Peter Ole Jørgensen and enriched with the operatic voice of Dina Puhovski), continues with a dynamic background of our experience and finishes with a full-blown acoustic environment which envelopes everybody.

A questionable community

If the neo-avant-garde theatrical investigation of community highlighted its potential in the creation of a theatre performance (and vice versa), it has also contributed to the precaution with which some contemporary theatre-makers return to that concept. One bears in mind the difficulties in maintaining the popular neo-avant-garde model of the community of equals and many theatre collectives that dispersed under the pressure of the uncomfortable tension between common values and individual freedoms. Thus, on an abstract level, certain positive insecurity or even amusing scepticism can be applied to the very idea of community, for example, concerning the motives and possibilities of its realisation as well as sustainability. However, when tackled with curiosity and/or critically, the community cannot avoid becoming one of the thematic or formal problems of the project. Such reserved and questioning attitude is demonstrated by the production platform Shadow Casters (2001–) which opened the 2010 decade with the performance trilogy *On Community*⁴ (2010–2011) “examining the community and communal experience through multiple reasons for their establishment, energy and socio-political conditions and changes” (Shadow Casters Explicit). In the opening part, *Explicit Contents*⁵ (Zagreb Youth Theatre, opening night: 9 May 2010), presented in the form of six interlaced audience journeys through the theatre building, each led by a pair of actors, the authors focus on creating the “arranged community”. The second performance *[R]evolution Master Class*⁶ (Belgrade, Atelje 212, opening night: 14 September 2010) – again a group psychophysical interaction between the audience and the performers, although mostly in a single joint space – instigates the re-evaluation of the community through its “decomposition and reestablishment”, while the finale *Male/Female – Female/Male*⁷ (Theatre &TD, opening night: 25 February 2011) divides its “basic energies – male and female” only to confront them in “the laboratory-theatrical dialogue” (Ibid.). Regardless of the formal variations, all the performances share several specificities important for the main topic of this article. First of all, the community that Shadow Casters question is a theatre community: with the exception of a few fragments,⁸ it is placed in the spatial and temporal context of a theatre performance (although it can occur in the working rather than the performance spaces within a theatre building) and is limited to the participants of a theatrical event. Throughout the

4 Concept: Boris Bakal; direction: Boris Bakal and Katarina Pejović.

5 Dramaturgy: Boris Bakal, Katarina Pejović, Stanko Juzbašić; co-authors and performers: Lana Barić, Goran Bogdan, Lada Bonacci, Ivana Buljan Legati, Nikša Butijer, Edvin Liverić, Vilim Matula, Maro Martinović, Nadja Perišić Nola, Barbara Prpić, Urša Raukar, Vedran Živolić.

6 Dramaturgy: Boris Bakal and Katarina Pejović; co-authors and performers: Aleksandra Janković, Hristina Popović, Ana Marković, Joana Knežević, Srđan Jovanović, Bojan Krivokapić.

7 Dramaturgy: Vedrana Klepica, Stanko Juzbašić, Dražen Novak; orchestrator: Stanko Juzbašić; co-authors and performers: Irma Alimanović, Benjamin Bajramović, Boris Bakal, Nikša Butijer, Dean Krivačić, Zrinka Kušević, Vili Matula, Jelena Miholjević, Mona Muratović, Petra Težak (Boris Ler).

8 In *Explicit Contents* one group of the audience is shortly led outside of a theatre building blindfolded while in *[R]evolution: Master Class* one of the groups leaves the theatre to go write graffiti on city walls.

particular segments, the authors thematise various contemporary group identities such as family, nation, gender, a circle of acquaintances or intimate friends, or even a dance group, generally relating their experiment to the wider social circumstances. However, they eschew a firm connection with any specific examples or models of community, thus preserving a more neutral character of the problem. Furthermore, the described “laboratory” conditions allow for the fully inclusive nature of the trilogy, which strives to invite the recipients into all or most of the phases of the complete project. They attend the *Opening Night*, a symbolical starting point of the devising process, not to witness the performance but to join the discursive search for common interests upon which the performance would be built. They are invited to support the creative process as the necessary “rehearsal audience” because “without the participating audience, there is really no performance” [R]evolution and are eventually, using various mechanisms, placed into the very centre of the artwork. Namely, the development of each of the performances in great part consists of gathering the audience into one or several smaller or larger groups to lead them through some performative tasks: share a secret with your partner, learn a group dance/an *a capella* song, take a collective bow, meditate on flying, give an opinion, enter a conversation, etc. Following the authors’ conviction that the evolution of the individual is the precondition for forming a sustainable community, the tasks tend to have a more or less emphasised emancipatory character. The outcome is doubly rewarding. On the one side, it enables the performers to “catch up” with the audience who are conventionally more experienced in their recipient roles than the actors are in whichever role they embody (*Explicit Contents* 2010). Thus, they balance out the general inequality of the temporary theatrical community. At the same time, it tests one’s decision to become and/or remain a member of that same body by examining its particular qualities: the vulnerability or protection of the individual within a group, features with which a group might identify, the way it chooses to present itself, or treat the non-members. Finally, if Shadow Casters are comprehensive when setting up an experiment, they are equally open when it is time to provide the results since the trilogy progresses towards more focused problems rather than clear solutions. Although the tendency is visible in all its parts, it is perhaps most evidently presented in the last one, which is constructed as four different performances in the form of elaborate group discussions: a performance by male performers intended respectively for male and female spectators and a performance by female performers intended respectively for female and male spectators. Namely, in each of the four variants, a group of gender equalised spectators is welcomed by a group of gender equalised performers in the hall, where the seating is symbolically placed in concentric circles. The audience is then invited to an informal two-hour long socialising session with occasional, subtly offered, “provocative” discussion issues or activities which might unite/divide present communities, considering their specific gender profile

(for example, “Would you agree that this is a man’s world and that men should be blamed for everything wrong in it?” or “What would be an acceptable way to end a relationship?”). *Male/Female – Female/Male* thus lucidly suggests: whether the circumstances for creating any community are favourable or not, its realisation remains the matter of our individual responsibility.

A wanted community

The same “problem-based” approach is perhaps most appealing in relation to a specific community – one that is achievable, existing or even desirable, just not unconditionally. Therefore, starting from a more concrete communal experience (or a lack of one), many artists strive to discover its optimal or at least more functional version as well as the road to its actualisation. As their name suggests and their manifesto statement confirms, the Artistic Organisation for Opening New Fields of Theatre Communication Fourhanded is strongly preoccupied with this sphere of research. Specifically, the organisation is dedicated to the “realisation of refined communication” and “always wants to gather a group of participants” only to anchor them to their immediate surrounding with the socially engaged performance, one that Fourhanded defines as “co-acting, co-dealing with what is around us” (Četveroruka manifestno). Even more so, the meticulous examination of means and ways to achieve performative community serves as a distinguishing methodological feature of their work: “We are interested in dealing with the materiality of the connections established by the theatrical event between its participants and in shaping that materiality [...] with the consciousness that every form is the result of the joint investment made by the subjectivities of both audience and performers” (Ibid.). Those interests serve as the premise of the fourth episode in their artistic-exploratory cycle *Distances*,⁹ which is inspired by the crisis of interpersonal relationships caused by the Croatian War of Independence (1991–1995). The series of performances was initiated by the theatre director Marina Petković Liker in 2017 with the investigation of the postwar conditions in the small Baranja municipality of Darda (East Slavonia).¹⁰ The authors used an economically and socially devastated and politically, nationally and humanly deeply divided place as the paradigmatic example of insurmountable barriers in communication in contemporary Croatian society.¹¹ Hence their performance

⁹ The whole cycle is comprised of the following episodes: *Distance – Focusing* (2017); *Distance – Falling behind* (2017); *Distance – Point 285* (2018); *Neither Friend nor Brother* (2018) and *Conversing* (2019).

¹⁰ Initially, the research also included Maja Sviben (dramaturgy), Eva Kraljević (camera), Miro Manojlović (editing), Luka Gamulin (sound) and Nina Đurđević (camera).

¹¹ In relation to the project, the authors describe “one of the elementary problems of the current moment” as “lack of understanding and fear from the other as well as aggressive and destructive impulses towards the other and oneself” “Udaljenosti – fokusiranje”.

significantly named *Conversing*¹² (2019) chooses both thematic and methodological approach to the subject, which is additionally elaborated by the juxtaposition of the documentary material – audio recordings of the conversations between the authors and women from Darda, and its theatricalised reflection. Thematically, the recorded conversations establish the outline of the “distances”, i.e., the ambivalence between the necessity and the impossibility of overcoming described social crisis and continuing promising co-existence. At the same time, Fourhanded employs the “authenticity” of the media to affect the performers and the audience. Expectedly rendered in a discursive format, the performative reaction to this problem is presented by six female performers who attempt to maintain a functional conversation. One of the key characteristics of their approximately two-hour interaction is the difficulty with which a series of monologues fuses into a polylogue and the easiness with which the participants of that polylogue misinterpret each other or take opposing sides. And although that “jazz discussion”¹³ (live group improvisation with several performance tasks in relation to the living material) does not provide a clear story, characters or even time and space, the distance between women symbolically gathered around one table and trapped in a vicious circle of miscommunication is transparent. If the change is possible, it seems that it can be instigated by the recipients (gathered in an equally symbolic way in a wider circle around the performers) who Fourhanded recruits as “witnesses”. Namely, as the precondition for the understanding and unity which is out of reach of performers, the authors encourage the audience to develop analytical insight, accept conscious co-existence and feel responsibility but also warmth: they juxtapose different perspectives, they share the space and do not ignore the spectators, they personalise invitations to the performance and blur its temporal frame by inviting audience members to join them in an informal conversation over drinks afterwards. They hope that “after you've spent an hour or two noticing something in a different way, it will continue to vibrate even when you leave” (Petković Liker quoted in Kačić Rogošić).

As opposed to the subtle intervention into everyday life conducted by Fourhanded, the performance group and production platform *Montažstroj* advances with much more urgency and force. In addition, their project with the suggestive title *55+* (2012) is the only one among those presented in this text (regardless of their more or less evident social function or the legacy of the same kind), which is categorised as community theatre with a more direct utilisation and a clear goal. That status of applied theatre project provides a better understanding of its key features, as recognised by Kees Epskamp, “the exchange of the ideas between the participants and leaders/actors”, the connection between the content of the performance and “the life surrounding of the

12 Dramaturgy: Maja Sviben; sound design: Luka Gamulin; performers: Lada Bonacci, Slavica Jukić, Jasna Palić Picukarić, Barbara Prpić, Urša Raukar, Dijana Vidušin.

13 The term is used by the director Marina Petković Liker as one of the experimental elements of her methodology.

participating community”, problematisation of issues which are “of direct importance for the community where the performance or the workshop are happening” and encouragement of the audience “to directly participate in the event during or after the performance” (Lukić 22–23). Therefore, the comprehensive enterprise targeted at the population aged 55 years and over thematises the position of that population in contemporary Croatian society. According to the author of the concept and theatre director Borut Šeparović, the members of that age group are considered less potent and rendered “invisible”. Therefore, the multiphase project is designed to call attention to their forgotten potential. To enable the circulation of ideas that will result in the performance *55+ – Years Are (Not) Important*¹⁴ (Vatroslav Lisinski Concert Hall, opening night: 23 September) and a documentary film *Consumed*¹⁵ (2014), the project starts with the week-long interviews with the possible future participants and continues with workshops for the 99 invited non-professional performers. Divided into four media categories (theatre, movement, new-media and group discussion), they aim at activating the participants and providing them with new skills while at the same time fusing the individual members into a “micro-community”. Interaction with the audience, however, is tackled in different ways with varying success. On the one side, a long final theatre performance “provides a voice” for each of its 44 performers by giving them the opportunity to present the most important minute in their lives as well as give an engaging speech on current social problems, intended for the audience. However, as noted by the theatre scholar Una Bauer, our ethical responsibility to hear and react to those voices is significantly weakened by the representational frame of the theatre, which transforms soul-stirring reality into a dramaturgically monotonous line of approximately one-minute long confessions followed by an equal number of mostly uninventive speeches by non-professional speakers (2012). On the other side, the two-month-long joint preparations for the grand finale succeeded in creating an age-determined community of project participants who, for example, initiate additional socially-engaged activities or offer suggestions for their manifesto (“Vremeplov”). Since *55+* is not presented as a one-time endeavour but is offered as a “model-project”, which can be transferred to another context with different participants (Šeparović 77), it opens a parallel channel for the dispersion of communal experience. In the words of Šeparović: “I believe that art has great potential when it is created in strong correlation with the transformation of the local community. If we want to consider the power of political theatre at all, it has to take from the community and give back to the community” (76).

14 Dramaturgy and transcript adaptation: Nataša Mihoci, Borut Šeparović, Jasna Žmak; performers: Miljenka Androić Marić, Jadranka Barlović, Miran Cencić, Renata Dossi, Mira Egić, Zvonimir Fritz, Marijan Frković, Josip Grosek, Mira Inkret, Branko Ječmenjak, Barbara Juraja, Ante Kaštelan, Lidija Klešćić, Ana Knežević, Marica Komljenović, Nada Kos Balen, Zlata Lešković, Blaženka Levak, Marija Lovinčić, Gordana Lovrić, Jasna Paravina, Stanka Pavuna, Nada Pejša, Emil Pernar, Eduard Pešun, Ljudmila Peterfai, Božidar Petrina, Miljenko Pinterić, Višnja Pleško, Žarko Potočnjak, Ljubica Radmanović, Vlasta Ritting, Hermina Rukavina, Franciska Šimenić, Vladimir Šimenić, Slavko Šoić, Miro Šola, Dražen Tišljar, Sonja Tomac, Vojko Tomašić, Rozalija Travica, Predrag Vrabec, Mirjana Žerjav, Nevenka Žigić.

15 The film was written, directed and produced by Borut Šeparović.

Conclusion

Despite the different reasons, means and ways of confirming, reaching or testing performative unity, the analysed performances share specific characteristics. Firstly, the perception of community in all of the examples (and even some creative processes) is extensive, not limited to the hermetic group of authors but open to those conventionally perceived as recipients. The invitation to participate varies in the level of its directness. It occasionally leads to the immediate establishment of the “autopoietic feedback loop” (Fischer-Lichte 38–74) while at other times inspires potential future project participants. However, it always remains an invitation, although sometimes issued with no “theatrical” alternative. I still remember an elderly visitor of *Explicit Contents* who refused to follow actors-guides at the beginning of the show only to be left alone in the empty auditorium of the Zagreb Youth Theatre where she could ponder her dismissal of the group and, I assume involuntarily, of the performance in general. Accordingly, regardless of the emphasised bodily presence, physical invasiveness is steadily avoided. If any “aggression” towards the audience appears, it is in a familiar and mostly acceptable form, for example, intellectual provocation or loud music. Somatic experience is enriched with the mental engagement of the spectator (who is, respectively, in different shows, challenged on both the thematic and formal levels) and their emotional involvement. In the attempt to achieve the latter, the authors can again rely on the content (for example, the documentary material of the performance) as well as the creative methodology (for example, the assumption about the increased personal investment and personal risk of the performer-co-author in the devising process). In both cases, it results in the additional responsibility on the part of the spectator who is reminded to respect the story or the effort and encouraged to respond in kind; for example, as Una Bauer reminds us, the audience members of *55+ – Years Are (Not) Important* are burdened with a “guilt trip” if they leave and once again deprive the ordinarily voiceless performers of their voices (2012). What the artists aim for is, however, a short, total joint experience that would not only result in the temporary aesthetic community defined by theatrical conventions but potentially remain as a pledge for future recognition, connection or even closeness between those who shared it. To quote Petković Liker: “That sharp cut which happens in the classical theatre when you see, clap and leave is sometimes good and needed but for me, wasn’t correct. This, somehow, doesn’t end.” (Petković Liker quoted in Kačić Rogošić)

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Leta 1979 v svojem manifestu kolektiv eksperimentalnega gledališča Kugla (Zagreb, 1975–1985) zapiše: »Kugla odkriva podobe, simbole in zgodbe, ki želijo biti obljava skupnosti.« Raziskali bomo posledice teh neoavantgardnih skupnostnih podvigov za zagrebško neinstitucionalno sceno skozi štiri modele inkluzivnih uprizoritvenih praks/uprizoritev, ki se razlikujejo v izhodiščih, estetskih ciljih, nivojih produkcije in načinih sodelovanja. V *Ljubezenskem primeru Fahrije P* (2017) bivši člani Kugle z drugimi soavtorji uprizorijo polilog z literarno, vizualno in performativno zapuščino pokojnega člana gledališča Kugla, multimedijskega ustvarjalca Željka Zorice Šiša (1957–2013). Uporabijo interaktivne postopke, ki so jih razvili v 70. letih. V dolgotrajnem in velikopoteznem projektu *55+* (2012) v produkciji platforme Montažstroj ustvarjalci zberejo udeležence, starejše od 55 let, na delavnicah, javnih razpravah, praznovanjih, protestih in v dokumentarnem filmu ter s tem opolnomočijo zanemarjeno generacijo in ji omogočijo glas in vidnost. V trilogiji *O skupnosti* (2010–2011) produkcijska platforma Metalci sence raziskuje delovanje različnih mehanizmov ustvarjanja začasnih estetskih skupnosti, od vaje vokalne skupine do deljenja skrivnosti, na udeležence. In končno: v subtilno asociativni predstavi *Niti prijatelj niti brat* (2018) v produkciji organizacije Fourhanded atmosferska inkluzija ponuja skoraj elitistično možnost soobstoja v intimnem svetu zasebnih napetosti. Skupni so jim fizično neinvazivna forma, emocionalna in/ali intelektualna vključenost ter poudarek na osebni zavezi (kot posledici praktičnih ali ustvarjalnih zagat), ki lahko gledalce zvabijo k odzivu na vključujočo izkušnjo.

Ključne besede: zagrebško neinstitucionalno gledališče 21. st., *O skupnosti*, *55+*, *Ljubavni slučaj Fahrije P*, *Razgovaranje*

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Držati obljubo skupnosti: skupnostni napori na sodobni zagrebški neinstitucionalni sceni

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Elementi skupnostne izkušnje (ki se odraža tako v ustvarjalnem procesu kot v izvedbi in recepciji) se na zagrebški neinstitucionalni sceni še najbolj razdelano pojavljajo v delu neodvisnega eksperimentalnega gledališkega kolektiva Kugla glumište (1975–1985).

V manifestu iz leta 1979 so Kuglini člani zatrtili: »Kugla odkriva podobe, simbole in zgodbe, ki želijo postati obljuba skupnosti.« Članek raziskuje vplive teh neoavantgardnih skupnostnih naporov na sodobno zagrebško neinstitucionalno sceno, še posebej v navezavi na interaktivni in participativni potencial predstav. V ta namen analiziramo štiri projekte iz zadnjega desetletja, ki se razlikujejo po motivih, estetskih ciljih, produkcijski ravni in oblikah participacije. V predstavi *Ljubezenski primer Fahrije P* (2017) so nekdanji člani Kugle, prepričani, da je mogoče uspešno vzpostaviti performativno enotnost vseh vpletenih v gledališko predstavo, s še nekaj soavtorji uprizorili polilog z umetniškim izročilom umrlega člana Kugle glumišta Željka Zorice - Šiša (1957–2013). Med procesom so se večinoma naslanjali na inkluzivne postopke, ki jih je Kugla razvila v sedemdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja. Prostorsko razpršena predstava tako uspešno vzpostavi kolektivno procesijsko gručo članov občinstva, ki jih eden ali več nastopajočih vodi od enega prizorišča do drugega. Poleg tega nastopajoči neposredno naslavljajo občinstvo in od njega zahtevajo pozoren intelektualni angažma, obenem pa nagovarjajo tudi čutno zaznavo prejemnikov z nepretrgano glasbeno izvedbo, ki se po silovitosti izmenjuje z igralskimi parti, tako da se gledališka predstava občasno preobrazi v koncert. Po drugi strani se člani produkcijske platforme Shadow Casters tega koncepta lotevajo previdneje, saj skupnost dojemajo kot tematski in formalni problem svoje večfazne trilogije *O skupnosti*, v kateri preizkušajo različne mehanizme za ustvarjanje začasnih estetskih skupnosti. Zato se v uprizoritvi *Neprimerne vsebine* (2010), ki so jo predstavili v obliki šestih prepletenih popotovanj publike po stavbi gledališča, od katerih je vsako vodil po en par igralcev, avtorji osredotočajo na ustvarjanje »urejene skupnosti«. V uprizoritvi *Mojstrski tečaj [r]evolucije* (2010), kjer gre spet za skupinsko psihofizično interakcijo med publiko in nastopajočimi, ponovno ocenijo skupnost skozi njeno ponovno vzpostavitev. V zadnji predstavi *Moško/žensko – žensko/moško* (2011) pa poudarijo spolno delitev in tako omogočijo dialoško soočenje dveh konvencionalno ločenih

»ekip«. Med celotnim procesom raziskovanje zamejijo na skupnost udeležencev gledališkega dogodka, ki so umeščeni v prostorski in časovni kontekst gledališke uprizoritve. Da bi ohranili bolj nevtralni značaj problema, se izogibajo trdnejših navezav na kakršen koli specifičen primer ali model skupnosti; da bi vse še bolj posplošili, pa si prizadevajo prejemnike povabiti na vse ali vsaj večino faz celotnega projekta, vključno z ustvarjalnim procesom. Nazadnje poskuša več umetnikov na podlagi enakega »problemskega« pristopa, le da tokrat apliciranega na specifično skupnost, ugotoviti, katera verzija le-te je optimalna ali vsaj najbolj funkcionalna, pa tudi, kako najti pot do njene uresničitve. Umetniška organizacija za odpiranje novih polj gledališke komunikacije Štiriročna uporablja natančno raziskovanje sredstev in načinov za doseganje performativne skupnosti kot prepoznavno metodološko značilnost svojega dela. V umetniško-raziskovalnem ciklusu *Oddaljenosti*, ki ga je navdihnili kriza medosebnih odnosov kot posledica hrvaške vojne za neodvisnost, raziskujejo povojne razmere v majhni občini Darda v Baranji (Vzhodna Slavonija). Ekonomsko in socialno opustošeni in politično, nacionalno ter človeško razklani kraj uporabijo kot paradigmatški primer nepremostljivih ovir pri komunikaciji v sodobni hrvaški družbi. Performativno reakcijo na to problematiko predstavlja tudi subtilno asociativna uprizoritev *Pogovarjanje* (2019) šestih izvajalk, ki se simbolično zberejo okoli mize, pri tem pa poskušajo vzdrževati funkcionalen pogovor, vendar jim to vedno znova spodleti. Atmosferska inkluzivnost uprizoritve, ki ponuja malodane elitistično priložnost soobstoja v intimnem svetu osebnih napetosti, namiguje, da se stvari lahko spremenijo, zdi se, da bi to lahko spodbudili prav prejemniki (ki se na nič manj simboličen način zberejo v širšem krogu okoli izvajalk). Avtorji namreč mobilizirajo člane publike kot »priče« in jih spodbujajo, naj sprejmejo ozaveščeno sobivanje, razvijajo analitični vpogled in sprejmejo odgovornost. Kot še en primer tovrstnih teženj članek predstavi skupnostni projekt *55+* (2012) produkcijske platforme Montažstroj, ki je prek delavnic, javnih razprav, proslav, protestov in dokumentarca zbral nastopajoče, starejše od 55 let, in s tem ponudil vidnost in glas tej zapostavljeni generaciji. Projekt se je začel z delavnicami in razgovori, ki so bili namenjeni aktivaciji udeležencev in temu, da jih oskrbijo z novimi veščinami, obenem pa posamezne člane povežejo v »mikroskupnost«. Poleg tega ga ponujajo kot »vzorčni projekt«, ki ga je mogoče prenesti tudi v kak drug kontekst z drugimi udeleženci, s tem pa odpirajo vzporedni kanal za razpršitev skupnostne izkušnje. Vsem opisanim projektom so skupni telesno neinvazivna forma, čustveni ali intelektualni angažma pa tudi poudarjena osebna predanost, ki publiko lahko zaveže k temu, da se oddolži, ko se pridruži skupnosti izkušnje.

V prvem delu prispevka avtor analizira pojav režiserja in spremembe njegovega položaja v slovenskem gledališču od druge polovice 19. stoletja do danes. V tem kontekstu ga še posebej zanimajo premene gledališke režije, ki so se zgodile v drugi polovici 20. stoletja s pojavom skupinskega gledališča. Avtor metodološko kombinira zgodovinsko in primerjalno analizo, saj ti procesi potekajo še danes, ko se čedalje pogosteje govori in piše o »snovalnem gledališču« in drugih oblikah gledališkega ustvarjanja, ki se oddaljujejo od konvencionalnega postopka, po katerem dramatik napiše dramsko besedilo kot literarno umetnino, režiser pa jo prevede v gledališko umetnino. V sodobnem slovenskem gledališču je vse več predstav, kjer vnaprej napisano dramsko besedilo ni ključno za končni produkt ustvarjalnega procesa. Najpogosteje uporabljana izraza, ki označujeta to vrsto predstav, sta »po motivih« in »avtorski projekt«. Čeprav izraza nista sinonima in ju ni mogoče enačiti, oba implicirata tako imenovani »snovalni« tip gledališča. Avtor primerja skupinsko s snovalnim načinom ustvarjanja in opozori, da gre za praksi, ki sicer lahko potekata vzporedno, vendar ju ne moremo enačiti. Premislek o razmerju med skupinskim in snovalnim v sodobnem gledališču zgosti v ugotovitvi, da je za skupinsko gledališče konstitutivno specifično razmerje med ustvarjalno skupino in pozicijo režiserja, medtem ko je za snovalno gledališče ključno razmerje med ustvarjalno skupino in pozicijo dramatika. Na koncu se dotakne tudi povezav med postdramskim in postrežijskim gledališčem ter pojava ustvarjalne skupine kot kolektivne subjektivitete.

Ključne besede: slovensko gledališče, skupinsko ustvarjanje, snovalno gledališče, eksperimentalno gledališče, režijsko gledališče, postrežijsko gledališče

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O skupinskem in snovalnem ustvarjanju v slovenskem gledališču

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Ko je kmalu po drugi svetovni vojni Narodna vlada Slovenije ustanovila današnjo Akademijo za gledališče, radio, film in televizijo, se je imenovala Akademija za igralsko umetnost. Tudi danes se igralska umetnost občasno pojavlja kot sopomenka za gledališko umetnost ali kar gledališče. V *Gledališkem terminološkem slovarju* je gledališče opredeljeno kot »dejavnost, pri kateri igralci in drugi nastopajoči igrajo vloge, prikazujejo (fiktivno) dramsko zgodbo, delujejo in se izražajo s svojim telesom pred neposredno navzočimi, sodelujočimi gledalci« (69–70). Slovarska definicija pojma »gledališče« torej temelji na igralcu in tudi drugih nastopajočih (v novejšem času se pogosto uporablja tudi angleška beseda »performerji«), ki jih posebej ne imenuje, saj bi bil seznam predolg. Igralci so gotovo *differentia specifica* gledališke umetnosti, a kljub temu ne moremo mimo dejstva, da so nastopajoči le najbolj izpostavljeni, najbolj vidni segment gledališkega dogodka, za katerim, poleg njih, navadno stoji še veliko drugih soustvarjalcev: dramaturgi, režiserji, scenografi, kostumografi itn. Zato pogosto slišimo, da je gledališče »kolektivna umetnost« ali, kot pravi Eugenio Barba, »situacija organiziranega prikazovanja« (28). Gledališka predstava torej nastane kot organizirana dejavnost skupine ljudi, v kateri najdemo različne specializirane poklice, od umetniških do tehničnih (ali podpornih). Skupinska dinamika, ki se razvije pri tem »organiziranem prikazovanju«, pa je lahko zelo različna. V tem prispevku¹ bom analiziral, kako se je ta dinamika spreminjala v slovenskem gledališču od druge polovice 19. stoletja do danes, pri tem pa bom pozoren zlasti na status režiserja. V tem kontekstu me bodo še posebej zanimale premene gledališke režije, ki so se zgodile v drugi polovici 20. stoletja s pojavom skupinskega gledališča in potekajo še danes, ko se čedalje pogosteje govori in piše o »snovalnem gledališču«, »avtorskih projektih« in drugih oblikah gledališkega ustvarjanja, ki se oddaljuje od konvencionalnega postopka, po katerem dramatik napiše dramsko besedilo kot literarno umetnino, režiser pa jo prevede v gledališko umetnino.

¹ Članek je nastal v okviru raziskovalnega programa Gledališke in medumetnostne raziskave P6-0376, ki ga financira Javna agencija za raziskovalno dejavnost Republike Slovenije iz državnega proračuna.

Od »usmerjevalca prometa« do poklicnega režiserja

Organizacija gledališkega pogona je bila od antičnega grškega in rimskega do srednjeveškega in renesančnega gledališča bolj ali manj v rokah njegovih neposrednih producentov, v starejšem času dramatikov, pozneje igralcev, v 19. in zlasti 20. stoletju pa režiserjev (prim. Pavis, *Gledališki slovar* 641, 642). Beseda »režija« se sicer pojavi že leta 1820, vendar pa kot gledališki pojem obstaja šele od druge polovice 19. stoletja. »V tem obdobju je postal režiser odgovorni ,odredbodajalec' predstave,« razlaga Patrice Pavis. Pred tem sta se namreč »vodja predstave ali včasih glavni igralec poukvarjala s tem, da sta po vnaprej določenem kalupu izoblikovala predstavo. Režija je bila zvedena na rudimentarno tehniko razmestitve igralcev v prostoru (mizansceno)« (631, 632). Režiserji so sprva še skrbeli za organizacijo gledališke produkcije, pozneje, ko sta se nadaljevali diferenciacija in specializacija gledaliških poklicev, pa so se lahko omejili na vodenje neposrednega procesa nastajanja gledališke uprizoritve. Pavis meni, da si je prav s pojavom režije gledališka umetnost »pridobila domovinsko pravico kot avtonomna umetnost« (637). Do podobnega sklepa je prišel tudi Alain Badiou, ki trdi, da je s tem, ko je »izumilo pojem režije«, 20. stoletje postalo »stoletje gledališča kot umetnosti«. S pojavom režiserja sovпада sprememba tradicionalnega razmerja med besedilom in njegovim uprizarjanjem, saj »gledališče pomeni v 20. stoletju nekaj drugega kot igranje komadov«. Režiser je namreč tisto, »kar je bilo prej le postavitev predstave, preoblikoval v samostojno umetnost«, kot »mislec predstave« je vzpostavil neki vmesni prostor med pisateljsko in igralsko umetnostjo, prostor, iz katerega je bilo naposled možno »kompleksno razmišljanje o razmerju med tekstom, igro, prostorom in občinstvom« (58-59). V drugi polovici 20. stoletja so se tako začele pojavljati pregledne, sintetične knjige o režijskem gledališču. Nekateri teoretiki gledališča, ki delujejo v anglosaškem prostoru, so prepričani, da sta bili monografski študiji Edwarda Brauna *The Director and the Stage* (1982) ter Davida Bradbyja in Davida Williamsa *Directors' Theatre* (1988) pred vsemi drugimi, vendar pri tem, nemara zaradi nepoznavanja jezika, povsem spregledajo zgodnjo knjigo Borisa Senkerja *Redateljsko kazališče*. Izšla je namreč že leta 1977 kot prva knjiga v zagrebški gledališki knjižni zbirki Prolog, ki jo je urejal znani hrvaški dramatik Slobodan Šnajder, sicer tudi urednik istoimenske gledališke revije.

Tudi v slovenskem gledališču se je režiser pojavil v drugi polovici 19. stoletja, vendar se je zares uveljavil šele v 20. stoletju. V zgodnjem obdobju delovanja ljubljanskega Dramatičnega društva je za režijo skrbel Josip Noll. Njegovo delo je nadaljeval Josip Gecelj, od leta 1886 pa Ignacij Borštnik. Po njegovem odhodu leta 1894 je skoraj vse dramske predstave do konca 19. stoletja režiral Rudolf Inemann. Kadrovske, finančne in prostorske kapacitete ljubljanskega gledališča v 19. stoletju so bile zelo omejene, zato je bila glavna naloga takratnih režiserjev, da so se predstave sploh zgodile, razvijanju subtilnejših režijskih prijemov pa ti časi niso bili naklonjeni. Takrat je bil

režiser pravzaprav »odgovorni vodja« predstave, ki je moral poskrbeti predvsem za red in požarno varnost. Danes je videti nenavadno, če režiser režira več predstav enega gledališča v isti sezoni, v 19. stoletju pa je bilo povsem normalno, da je npr. od leta 1867 do leta 1875 Nolli poskrbel za režijo vseh predstav (razen ene) in je tako režiral skoraj 160 dramskih in še 30 opernih predstav (prim. *Repertoar* 15–29, 174–176 in Koter 64). Borštnik in Inemann sta sicer nekoliko okrepila položaj režiserja, vendar sta bila tudi onadva še vedno ujeta v paradigmo »serijskega« režiranja. To se je nekoliko spremenilo v začetku 20. stoletja, ko se je že začelo pojavljati nekaj več imen režiserjev v okviru ene gledališke sezone, obenem pa se je nadaljevala praksa, da so režijske naloge opravljali nekateri izkušenejši igralci.² Čeprav se je ljubljansko gledališče le nekako otreslo dotedanje prakse »serijskega« režiranja, saj se je število režiserjev v tem obdobju znatno povečalo, je bilo njihovo delo, kot pravi Dušan Moravec, zelo poenostavljeno: »kazali so igralcem, kje morajo nastopiti in kje oditi, aranžirali so skupinske prizore in določali rekvizite, zanemarjali pa delo z igralcem pri oblikovanju značajev in prirejanju enotnih, harmoničnih predstav« (*Slovensko gledališče* 153). Z drugimi besedami, v začetku 20. stoletja je bil »režiser na slovenskem odru (pa tudi še kje) predvsem ‚usmerjevalec prometa‘, komaj še, v zelo skromnih razsežnostih, tolmač vlog« (234).³ Do občutnejšega utrjevanja položaja režiserja v slovenskem gledališču je tako prišlo šele po koncu prve svetovne vojne, takrat izidejo tudi prvi tehtnejši spisi o režiji, kot sta npr. »Moderna režija« Milana Skrbinška in »Vprašanje režiserjev v ljubljanski drami« Cirila Debevca. Takrat so sicer režiserji še vedno prihajali iz vrst igralcev, vendar se je vsaj eden med njimi, Osip Šest, zelo zgodaj povsem posvetil režiranju in tako je dobilo slovensko gledališče, kot pravi Moravec, »razgledanega, presenetljivo delavoljnega, okretnega, pa tudi prilagodljivega režiserja, prvega ‚profesionalca‘ v tej stroki pri nas« (*Slovenski režiserski* 18).

Osamosvajanje režiserske stroke se je močno pospešilo v drugi polovici 20. stoletja, ko se je režiser poklicno že povsem ločil od igralca. Takrat je režiser odprl še eno »fronto«: začel je boj za pravico do lastne interpretacije uprizoritvenega besedila in je tako občasno prihajal navzkriž z dramatikom, kateremu je začel odžirati monopol nad avtorstvom. Nekateri dramatik (ali njihovi dediči) se niso mogli sprijazniti z omejevanjem vpliva na uprizarjanje svojih besedil in s čedalje večjo interpretativno svobodo, ki so si jo jemali režiserji, zato so postali občasni spopadi med dramatik in režiserji del gledališke folklore. Kot primer lahko navedem spor med Gregorjem Strnišo in Miletom Korunom zaradi uprizoritve *Ljudožercev*, najprej v sedemdesetih

2 V času dočetka prve svetovne vojne so največ predstav režirali Anton Verovšek, Adolf Dobrovolný, Lev Dragutinović, Hinko Nučič, Milan Skrbinšek in Josip Povhe, poleg njih pa so nekaj predstav režirali tudi František Lier, Vilém Taborský, Jaroslav Tišinov, Rudolf Deyl, Ignacij Borštnik, Anton Cerar Danilo in njegova soproga Avgusta Danilova kot edina režiserka.

3 O tem zgovorno priča tudi anekdota iz spominov Milana Skrbinška: »Režiser je bil samo vodja vaj, ki je skrbel zgolj za to, da so se vaje vršile, da so bili igralci tistega komada od začetka do konca vaje vedno vsi prisotni, pa se je zgodilo le redkokdaj, da bi kaj posegel vmes. Pri neki vaji sem na primer doživel to, da sta imela Avgusta Danilova in Verovšek sama daljši dialog, pa se je režiserju Danilu na nekem mestu le zdelo, da bi glede na igre obeh moral nekaj pripomniti, a ga je Danilova skrajno začudeno pogledala in ogorčeno dejala: ‚Kaj ti pa je? Pusti naju vendar pri miru! To bova že sama napravila! Prav tako se režiser ni smel vtikati v igralčevo oblikovanje monologa« (Skrbinšek, *Gledališki mozaik* 66).

letih, ko je bil dramatik še živ, potem pa po njegovi smrti leta 1987, ko je Korunovi režiji tega besedila nasprotovala Strniševa vdova. Kako ostro in odklonilno je bilo Strniševostališče do Korunove režije njegove igre, lepo ponazori mnenje Vena Tauferja, da bi tudi po svoji smrti, če bi le lahko, »Gregor Strniša prepovedal tudi samega Strnišo, če bi ga režiral Korun« (nav. po Milohnić, »Speculum mundi« 8). Razmerje med dramatikovo in režiserjevo integriteto je bilo v tem primeru še posebej zaostreno, saj je bil na eni strani avtor, ki je bil izrazito navezan na svoje besedilo (Strniša: »Glavno je, da mi bodo lepo govorili besedilo ...«), na drugi pa režiser, ki si je želel radikalno poseči v besedilo, da bi iz njega iztisnil čim več uprizoritvenega potenciala (Korun: »Ko smo prvič delali *Žabe* v Drami, sem natančno upošteval njegova scenska navodila. In ni šlo nikamor.«), zato je bil spor neizogiben (prim. prav tam 10). V današnjem času so avtorji besedil navadno pripravljani priznati režiserju nekoliko več interpretativne svobode, čeprav se občasno še pojavljajo sporne situacije, ko se avtorji sklicujejo na določbo Zakona o avtorski in sorodnih pravicah, ki v 19. členu podeljuje izključno pravico avtorju, »da se upre skazitvi in vsakemu drugemu posegu v svoje delo ali vsaki uporabi svojega dela, če bi ti posegi ali ta uporaba lahko okrnili njegovo osebnost.«⁴

Eksperimentiranje s skupinskim ustvarjanjem

Kot izhaja iz dosedanje razprave, v slovenskem, evropskem in delno tudi svetovnem gledališču lahko spremljamo linijo osamosvajanja, profesionalizacije in individualizacije režijskega poklica. Po drugi strani pa se je najpozneje v šestdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja (po nekaterih mnenjih, kot bomo videli v nadaljevanju, tudi prej) pojavil vzporedni tok, za katerega je značilno skupinsko ustvarjanje ali – kot je Igor Lampret prevedel geslo »Création collective« v Pavisovem *Gledališkem slovarju* – »skupinska stvaritev«. Pavis razlaga, da je skupinska stvaritev »uprizoritev, ki je ne podpisuje en sam ustvarjalec (dramatik ali režiser), temveč skupina, ki jo je pripravila«. Eksperimentiranje s skupinskim ustvarjanjem v šestdesetih in sedemdesetih letih je bilo povezano s širšim družbenim vzdušjem, ki je spodbujalo ustvarjalnost posameznikov znotraj skupine. »Prav s pomočjo te skupine,« pravi Pavis, »naj bi presegli tudi ‚tiranijo‘ avtorja in režiserja, ki sta nagnjena k centralizaciji vseh pristojnosti in odločanju o vseh estetskih in ideoloških vprašanjih« (*Gledališki slovar* 673). Pri tem ne gre le za estetska vprašanja, saj skupinsko ustvarjanje »politično sovпада z zahtevo po množični umetnosti in umetnosti za množice, po neposredni demokraciji in samoupravni produkciji skupine,« poudarja Pavis in kot

⁴ Novejši primer je spor med avtorico Anjo Golob in Slovenskim mladinskim gledališčem, ki se je moralo avtorici opravičiti s plačanim oglasom v medijih: »Slovensko mladinsko gledališče se opravičuje avtorici Anji Golob za skazitev njenega avtorskega dela, tj. odrske adaptacije otroške stripovske serije Ariol, ki jo je Slovensko mladinsko gledališče dne 19. 1. 2019 pod naslovom ‚Ariol: zaljubljen do ušes‘ in ‚Ariol: popoldanske oslarije‘ v režiji Matjaža Pograjca bistveno spremenjeno uprizorilo na način, da uprizorjeno delo ni več ustrezalo vsebini in kvaliteti avtoričinega izvornega dela, zaradi česar se je bila Anja Golob zaradi zaščite svojega ugleda in dobrega imena od svojega avtorskega dela prisiljena javno distancirati« (*Mladina*, št. 7, 14. 2. 2020).

paradigmatična primera tega procesa navede znameniti severnoameriški skupini The Living Theatre in The Performance Group (674).

Tudi v Sloveniji lahko najdemo primere gledaliških skupin, ki so v tem času prakticirale podobne oblike skupinskega ustvarjanja, med njimi npr. Gledališče Pupilije Ferkeverk. Ko se je veliko pozneje spominjal svojega sodelovanja s Pupilčki ob koncu šestdesetih let, je Dušan Jovanović uporabil besede »klapa«, »grupa«, »pleme«, »bratovščina« ... Kolektivizem Pupilčkov ni bil »ne hierarhičen ne represiven, baziral je na participaciji«, tudi on kot režiser naj ne bi nastopal avtoritativno. »Ideje smo si, kot v igrah z žogo, podajali in jih razvijali v verižnih reakcijah,« se je spominjal Jovanović (70–71). Ko je pozneje nadaljeval režisersko kariero v poklicnih gledališčih, je zamenjal ta kolektivni princip ustvarjanja: »Ansambel ni tovarišija,« saj v njem »vladajo stroga hierarhična pravila« (72). Še pred tem je v Gleju režiral Štihov *Spomenik*, ki ga je radikalno skrajšal (avtor temu ni nasprotoval), od dvanajstih igralcev na začetku procesa pa je do premiere ostala samo Jožica Avbelj, ki jo je spremljal glasbenik Matjaž Jarc. Študij predstave *Spomenik G* (črko g je dodal Štihovemu naslovu, »da bi povedal, kako je ta spomenik tudi naša, glejevska zgodba«) naj bi bil »štiri in pol mesece dolga kalvarija,« ki so jo lahko zaključili šele, ko so naredili »homogeno grupo, pa čeprav je ta grupa štela le enega člana« (75).

Prav v tem času, malo pred premiero *Spomenika G*, se je Lado Kralj, tudi sam soustanovitelj Gleja, vrnil iz ZDA, kjer je nekaj več kot leto nabiral izkušnje pri Richardu Schechnerju in The Performance Group. Kralj je sodelavcem v Gleju očital, da so pozabili na izvirne ideje in da reproducirajo strukturo gledališke institucije, zato je skupaj z nekaterimi študenti primerjalne književnosti, umetnostne zgodovine in gledališke akademije ustanovil novo gledališče v opuščeni pekarni, ki je gledališču dala ime. Ko se je v novejšem času v pogovoru s Primožem Jesenkom spominjal začetkov Pekarne, je Kralj izpostavil skupinski duh in svobodno izbiro pri odločitvah igralcev, kaj bo njihov prispevek k predstavi: »Ko je bil tekst izbran in predložen grupi, je ta odprto debatirala o tem, kako se bi ga dalo montirati ali kdo bo prevzel kateri delež [...]. Če igralec ni našel stika s svojim materialom, potem tega ni igral« (Jesenko 120). Ta skupinski duh se je začel krhati, ko se je – po Kraljevi oceni nekako po peti predstavi – skupina pogreznila v obsesivno ukvarjanje z individualnimi psihičnimi frustracijami in je tako gledališki kolektiv postajal čedalje bolj podoben terapevtskemu krožku. »Ob tej kleči se je takrat razbila tudi marsikatera ameriška off off grupa« (Kralj 8), kajti skupinsko ustvarjanje v gledališču bi vendarle moralo biti nekaj več kot spogledovanje s psihično rehabilitacijo, ki je vrh vsega še povsem spontana in nestrokovna. Ko so se na to konceptualno krizo cepile še finančne težave, je bila usoda Pekarne dokončno zapečatenata.

Pojav skupinskega ustvarjanja, tudi kolektivne režije, torej navadno povezujemo s šestdesetimi leti, z dogajanjem v takratnem gledališču in s širšimi, političnimi procesi v družbi, zlasti s študentskim gibanjem, hipijevskim načinom življenja, komunami itn. Skupina raziskovalcev, ki zadnjih deset let preučuje prav skupinsko ustvarjanje v gledališču 20. stoletja, pa ugotavlja, da ne gre za eksces, temveč za vzporedni tok, ki je spremljal dominantno režijsko gledališče že od samega začetka. Do zdaj so izdali več zbornikov, ki sta jih uredila Kathryn Mederos Syssoyeva in Scott Proudfit (*A History of Collective Creation*, 2013; *Collective Creation in Contemporary Performance*, 2013; *Women, Collective Creation and Devised Performance*, 2016), v katerih zagovarjajo tezo o »treh valovih« skupinskega ustvarjanja v gledališču 20. stoletja: najprej v prvi polovici stoletja (npr. skupinsko raziskovanje in ustvarjanje v studiih in laboratorijih, ki so jih ustanovili Mejerhold, Copeau, Saint-Denis in drugi), potem od sredine petdesetih do začetka osemdesetih let (npr. The Living Theatre, The Performance Group, Wooster Group in podobne skupine, prav tako raziskovalni centri, npr. Mednarodni center za raziskovanje gledališča, ki ga je v Parizu ustanovil Peter Brook, Mednarodna šola gledališke antropologije, ki jo je na Danskem ustanovil Eugenio Barba itn.) in na koncu še tretji val, ki se začne v osemdesetih letih in traja še danes.

Skupinsko in snovalno gledališče

V novejšem času, zlasti v zadnjih dveh desetletjih, se je v anglosaških razpravah uveljavilo poimenovanje *devised theatre* (snovalno gledališče),⁵ ki se navadno nanaša na nastajanje predstave *ex nihilo*, torej brez uporabe vnaprej napisanega dramskega besedila, ampak ga nekateri avtorji povezujejo tudi s skupinskim načinom ustvarjanja. V vplivni monografski študiji *Devising Performance: A Critical History* (2005) Deirdre Heddon in Jane Milling pripisujeta ta način ustvarjanja »tistim gledališkim skupinam, ki uporabljajo izraza 'snovalno' ali 'skupinsko' ustvarjanje, da opišejo način dela, pri katerem ni nobene predloge – ne dramskega besedila ne uprizoritvenega scenarija – preden skupina ustvari predstavo« (3). Očitno ta opredelitev skuša enačiti skupinsko (ali sodelovalno) s snovalnim načinom ustvarjanja, čeprav ni nujno, da gre za enake prakse. Hipotetično sta lahko tako skupinska kot snovalna pristopa značilna za eksperimentalne in neodvisne gledališke skupine iz poznih šestdesetih let, vendar nikakor ne drži, da so predstave teh skupin vedno nastajale *ex nihilo*, saj so mnoge izhajale iz že napisanih – sodobnih ali klasičnih – dramskih besedil. Čeprav je videti,

⁵ To je trenutno najnovejša prevajalska rešitev, ki sta jo predlagali Zala Dobovšek in Maja Šorli v prispevku »Kralj Ubu – šok snovalnega gledališča v nacionalni instituciji« (2016). Pred tem je Eva Mahkovic, prevajalka knjige Cathy Turner in Synne K. Behrndt *Dramaturgija in predstava* (2011), poskusila s prevodom »raziskovalno gledališče«, Jan Jona Javoršek, prevajalec Pavisove knjige *Sodobna režija* (2012), pa je predlagal »iznajdeno gledališče« in obenem v prevajalčevi opombi pod črto navedel, poleg že omenjene možnosti »raziskovalno gledališče«, še »procesno gledališče« (337). *Gledališki terminološki slovar*, ki je nekaj let starejši (2007), še ne vsebuje nobenega od teh izrazov, pozna pa »avtorsko gledališče«, ki ga primarno definira kot »gledališče, v katerem je avtor dramskega besedila tudi režiser ali igralec in uveljavlja svojo poetiko«, sekundarno pa kot »gledališče, ki pri uprizorjanju ustvarja, uveljavlja svojo poetiko« (33).

da se je v sodobnih uprizoritvenih praksah okreplil snovalni pristop in da je ta *modus operandi* izpodrinil nekdanje poudarjeno horizontalno, egalitarno naravnano skupinsko ustvarjanje, nikakor ne gre za pojava, ki bi ju bilo mogoče enačiti. Kot opozori Patrice Pavis v *Sodobni režiji*, »kolektivno ustvarjanje je danes mnogo več kakor *devised theatre*, torej gledališče imaginacije nekega kolektiva, subjekta brez usmeritve, ki torej dela na osnovi tega, kar je mogoče najti v skupini, in ne na osnovi vnaprejšnje zamisli« (345). Na to opozori tudi Kathryn Mederos Syssoyeva v uvodnem poglavju knjige *Collective Creation in Contemporary Performance*, ko razlaga, da je z uporabo metodologije, ki jo je razvila njena raziskovalna skupina, snovalni model »hitro izginil s horizonta kot odločujoči dejavnik« (5), sami pa so se osredotočili na skupinsko ustvarjanje kot uprizoritveno prakso, ki je lahko v različnih razmerjih do uprizoritvenega besedila. Z drugimi besedami, da lahko določeno uprizoritveno prakso označimo kot skupinsko ustvarjanje, ni nujno, da besedilo (če sploh obstaja) nastane v procesu nastajanja predstave, čeprav je res, da se v sodobnem gledališču povečuje delež predstav, ki niso uprizoritve obstoječih, že napisanih dramskih besedil.

Na raznovrstne pristope in možne povezave med skupinskim in snovalnim v drugi polovici 20. stoletja opozori Višnja Kačić Rogošić v novejši monografski študiji *Skupno osmišljeno kazališče* (2017), v kateri, med drugim, pregledno predstavi poskuse iskanja ustreznice za angleški izraz *devised* v raznih jezikih, npr. v češčini (*avtorské divadlo*), srbsščini (*građenje pozorišta*), hrvaščini (*osmišljeno kazališče*), slovenščini (*snovalno gledališče*) itn. Avtorica opozori tudi na nekatere druge različice, ki se pojavljajo v hrvaških virih, npr. od kolektivne režije (zlasti v sedemdesetih letih) in avtorskega gledališča (izraz, ki se pogosto uporablja tudi v slovenskem gledališču) do razvojnega gledališča (s katerim način ustvarjanja skupine Bacači sjenki označuje njen soustanovitelj Boris Bakal) in kolaborativnega gledališča. V anglosaškem prostoru se pojavljajo tudi sintagme, ki povezujejo skupinski in snovalni princip, npr. *group devised theatre*, *collaboratively devised theatre*, *ensemble-based work* ipd. Kanadski teatrolog Bruce Barton meni, da se v teh pojmovnih konstrukcijah *collective* nanaša na »skupni namen in motivacijo, ideologijo« skupine, *collaboration* na »okvir in strukturo, kontekst«, ki si jih skupina sama določi, *devising* pa na »sprejete strategije in pravila, proces« (Barton ix; prim. tudi Kačić Rogošić 13). Tudi Višnja Kačić Rogošić se je odločila za povezavo dveh ključnih pojmov, torej skupinsko in snovalno, da je lahko metodološko zamejila raziskovalno polje, in se je v osrednjem delu študije poglobila v primere »skupnega snovalnega gledališča« na Hrvaškem od šestdesetih let do danes. Specifičnost tega gledališča avtorica vidi v »proizvajanju večine materiala predstave skozi skupinsko delo vseh članov gledališke skupine tekom vaj« (19).

Uprizoritve »po motivih« in avtorski projekti

Tudi v sodobnem slovenskem gledališču je vse več predstav, kjer vnaprej napisano dramsko besedilo ni ključno za končni produkt ustvarjalnega procesa. Dva najpogosteje uporabljana izraza, ki označujeta to vrsto predstav, sta »po motivih« in »avtorski projekt«.

Predstave, ki nastanejo po motivih, načeloma temeljijo na obstoječih igrah ali drugih literarnih zvrsteh, vendar jih ustvarjalci uporabljajo le kot izhodišče za povsem novo kompozicijo besedila predstave. V zadnjih petih, šestih letih je npr. režiser Jernej Lorenci, ki se je obdal s skupino rednih sodelavcev, uprizoril več predstav po motivih znanih dramskih besedil: *Učene ženske po motivih Molièrovih Učenih žensk* (SLG Celje in MG Ptuj, 2015), *Kralj Ubu po motivih Kralja Ubuja* (SNG Drama Ljubljana, 2016), *Sen kresne noči* (MGL, 2017), Škofjeloški pasijon (PG Kranj in MG Ptuj, 2020) itn. Tik pred izbruhom epidemije kovida 19 je nastala uprizoritev *Sedem vprašanj o sreči: gledališko potovanje po motivih Modre ptice Mauricea Maeterlincka* (Lutkovno gledališče Ljubljana in SMG, 2020) v režiji Tomija Janežiča. Sicer pa ni nujno, da tovrstne predstave nastanejo po motivih dramskih besedil; tako je npr. Žiga Divjak režiral *Hlapca Jerneja in njegovo pravico* (Cankarjev dom in AGRFT, 2018) po motivih znamenite Cankarjeve povesti, predstava *Do zadnjega diha: Zdaj* (MGL, 2014), ki jo je režiral Jaša Koceli, je nastala po motivih Godardovega filma *Do zadnjega diha*, Matjaž Berger je režiral več predstav v Anton Podbevšek Teatru po motivih filozofskih besedil ipd.

Za avtorske projekte je značilno, da predstave nastajajo na podlagi individualnih ali skupinskih prispevkov v ustvarjalnem procesu, kar ima za posledico popolnoma novo uprizoritveno besedilo. Nekaj odmevnih avtorskih projektov je nastalo pod režijskim vodstvom Oliverja Frličja, npr. *Preklet naj bo izdajalec svoje domovine!* (SMG, 2010), *25.671* (PG Kranj, 2013), *Kompleks Ristić* (SMG in koproducenti, 2015), *Naše nasilje in vaše nasilje* (SMG, 2016). Med avtorske projekte bi lahko uvrstili tudi *Ljubezen do bližnjega* (SNG Nova Gorica, 2016) in *Stenico* (PG Kranj in MG Ptuj, 2017) v režiji Jerneja Lorencija, nekatere predstave v režiji Žige Divjaka, npr. *6* (SMG in Maska, 2018), *Sedem dni* (MGL, 2019) in *Gejm* (SMG, 2020), vsaj dva projekta v režiji Janeza Janše – *Zraka!* (Maska in SMG, 2015) in *Republika Slovenija* (SMG in Maska, 2016; avtorstvo te predstave je sicer »uradno« anonimno in kolektivno) in še razne druge uprizoritve. Poseben primer bi lahko bila predstava še *ni naslova* (SMG, 2018), ki je nastajala postopoma, med celotno gledališko sezono, najprej na način snovalnega gledališča, ko so imeli ustvarjalci le izhodiščni motiv Don Juana in so razvijali lastne zgodbe, vzporedno pa je nastalo besedilo Simone Semenič, ki ga je režiser Tomi Janežič tako rekoč »vdela« v uprizoritveni material, ki je že nastal na vajah.

Čeprav izraza »po motivih« in »avtorski projekt« nista sinonima in ju ni mogoče enačiti (kljub občasnim prekrivanjem, kot je npr. Lorencijev *Sen kresne noči* s podnaslovom

»avtorski projekt po igri Williama Shakespeara«), oba implicirata snovalni tip gledališča. Po drugi strani pa to ne pomeni, da so uprizoritve po motivih ali avtorski projekti nujno tudi skupinske stvaritve, saj lahko nastanejo tudi na način tradicionalne delitve dela v ustvarjalnem procesu z režiserjem kot avtoritativnim vodjo in glavnim avtorjem predstave. Ker ni nujno, da sta v procesu nastajanja predstave uporabljena oba principa, torej skupinsko in snovalno ustvarjanje, se raziskovalec uprizoritvenih praks – zlasti takrat, kadar nima neposrednega vpogleda v uprizoritvene postopke in procedure – sooča s težavno nalogo, da prepozna in ustrezno ovrednoti delež enega in drugega v končnem produktu tega procesa, torej v javni uprizoritvi.

Premislek o razmerju med skupinskim in snovalnim, do katerega me je pripeljala razprava o položaju režiserja (deloma tudi dramatika) v gledališču 20. in začetka 21. stoletja, zdaj lahko zgostim v ugotovitvi, da je za skupinsko gledališče konstitutivno specifično razmerje med ustvarjalno skupino in pozicijo režiserja (od vzpostavitve funkcije režiserja in njegove profesionalizacije do danes to razmerje niha med avtoritarnim in demokratičnim, hierarhičnim in egalitarnim, vertikalnim in horizontalnim), medtem ko je za snovalno gledališče ključno razmerje med ustvarjalno skupino in pozicijo dramatika (od uprizarjanja dramskega besedila kot relativno avtonomne literarne umetnine do uprizoritvenega besedila, ki nastane kot integralni del procesa, vaj, igralskih improvizacij itn., pri čemer sicer lahko sodeluje tudi dramatik, vendar ne kot izključni avtor dramskega besedila). Ta temeljna razmerja postanejo še nekoliko kompleksnejša in zato tudi težje razpoznavna, če se v ustvarjalnem procesu prepletejo v večplastno teksturo različnih silnic, ki nastajajo v trikotniku med dramatikom, režiserjem in ustvarjalno skupino. Ta kompleksna struktura, v kateri so funkcije pogosto tudi zabrisane, saj ni več nujno, da so dominantne pozicije vnaprej določene, in prihaja tudi do premikov dominant med temi funkcijami, je produkcijsko okolje, v katerem nastaja skupinsko snovalno gledališče, kot ga imenuje Višnja Kačič Rogošič. Krepitev te paradigme prispeva k raziskovalni naravnosti ustvarjalcev, ne le režiserja in ustvarjalne skupine, ki naj bi relativno enakovredno sodelovala pri avtorstvu predstave, temveč tudi dramatika, vsaj takrat, kadar je neposredno vključen v proces nastajanja predstave. Če je bila za gledališče v prvi polovici 20. stoletja značilna postopna specializacija poklicev, se je v drugi polovici 20. in v začetku 21. stoletja zgodil premik k hibridnim modelom in številnim kombinacijam, ki bogatijo spekter možnih simbiotičnih učinkov med nekoč relativno ostro razmejenimi funkcijami v okviru prevladujočega modela ustvarjalnega procesa v meščanskem gledališču. V sodobnem gledališču je tako čedalje pogostejše skupinsko avtorstvo predstave, igralci in drugi soustvarjalci predstave prispevajo lastno uprizoritveno besedilo ali dopolnjujejo obstoječe, režiserji se ponovno pojavljajo na odru, prav tako nekateri izkušenejši igralci občasno prevzemajo funkcijo režiserja (tako kot je že bilo v navadi ob koncu 19. in v začetku 20. stoletja), dramatik prispevajo besedila sproti, med nastajanjem predstave, v kateri se lahko tudi sami

pojavijo ali pa, kot npr. v predstavi *še ni naslova*, vsaj slišimo njihov glas ipd. Ker se je v 20. stoletju režiser vzpostavil kot vodilna figura v ustvarjalnem procesu, so na pojav skupinskega (in) snovalnega gledališča pomembno vplivale spremembe njegove pozicije v tradicionalnem modelu gledališke hierarhije. Spremembe položaja sodobnih režiserjev so prinesle tudi več njihove (samo)refleksije, saj so poleg teoretikov (na nekatere sem že opozoril), v novejšem času tudi številni režiserji premišljevali o teh procesih v sodobnem gledališču. Zanimivo je, da se nekateri med njimi ne strinjajo s podmeno, da je režijsko gledališče okrepilo položaj režiserja v razmerju do dramatika, kot ta proces režiserjeve emancipacije v 20. stoletju razlagajo Pavis, Badiou in drugi vidnejši teoretiki. Kot primer lahko omenim Oliverja Frljića, ki meni, da je v dramskem gledališču režiser tako rekoč neizogibno v funkciji »interpreta dramskega avtorja«. Celó v režijskem gledališču, ko so se režiserji poskušali oddaljiti od te funkcije, se je niso mogli povsem znebiti: »Ko je zasedel pozicijo dramskega avtorja, je režiser na videz opustil klasično derridajevsko shemo teološke scene, vendar jo je s tem v bistvu samo okrepil, saj logocentrični model tudi v tem primeru ostaja dominanten« (75). Frljićeve predstave navadno uvrščamo v paradigmo političnega gledališča, zato bo morda videti nekoliko nenavadna njegova trditev, da se je v teh predstavah ukvarjal predvsem z vprašanjem režiserja: »Njihova političnost, natančneje preizpraševanje političnega v gledališču in kaj bi lahko bilo danes politično gledališče, je bila le predloga za premislek o poziciji in funkciji režiserja« (prav tam).

V novejšem času se pojavljajo tudi radikalne ideje o tako imenovanem *heterarhičnem* režiserju, s katerim naj bi se zgodil premik od hierarhičnega modela gledališkega kolektiva z režiserjem kot avtoritativnim gurujem k samoorganizirani ustvarjalni skupini, v kateri se od režiserja ne pričakuje vodenje, temveč spodbujanje in opolnomočenje sodelavcev (prim. Radosavljević 248). Če je v večjem delu 20. stoletja prevladovalo režijsko gledališče, bi se lahko vprašali, ali morda krepitev skupnega ustvarjanja ob koncu 20. in v začetku 21. stoletja, ki časovno sovpada s pojavom postdramskega gledališča, oznanja prehod na postrežijsko gledališče?⁶ To vprašanje odpira obsežno in kompleksno temo, ki bi si nemara zaslužila obravnavo v posebnem članku, zato se bom ob tej priliki omejil le na omembo nekaterih skupin, ki raziskujejo možnosti drugačnega načina režiranja s skupinskim pristopom. Med zanimivejšimi je gotovo nemška skupina She She Pop, njene članice so skoraj izključno ženske, ki svoje predstave ustvarjajo kolektivno, ne da bi se pri tem ločevale po funkcijah igralk, režiserk, dramaturginj itn. V slovenskem prostoru podobne prijeme preizkuša Beton Ltd., skupina performerjev (Primož Bezjak, Branko Jordan, Katarina Stegnar), ki prisegajo na načelo emancipiranega igralca in režije brez režiserja, prevzemajo polno

6 Oznako »postrežijsko gledališče« je že pred desetimi leti uporabila urednica kar dveh tematskih številk beograjske gledališke revije *Teatron* (»Postrediteljsko pozorišče i/ili nove rediteljske prakse«) Aleksandra Jovičević. V uvodnem članku prve tematske številke je – verjetno po vzoru koncepta »ne več dramskega gledališkega besedila« Gerde Poschmann – predlagala tudi sintagmo »ne več režijsko gledališče«, v katerem, kot pravi, »izginjajo tradicionalne vloge in razmerja« ter prihaja do »izenačevanja vseh ustvarjalcev, ki od začetka delajo na skupnem konceptu« (10).

odgovornost za svoje predstave in tako dekonstruirajo pojem režije v fluidni in obenem kolektivni označevalec.⁷ Nekoliko drugačen je primer skupine Rimini Protokoll, ki so jo leta 2000 ustanovili Helgard Haug, Stefan Kaegi in Daniel Wetzel. Njeni člani lahko ustvarjajo skupaj ali ločeno, pogosto na način snovalnega gledališča, in pri tem sledijo zgodbam in izkušnjam navadnih ljudi, ki v njihovih predstavah nastopajo kot amaterski igralci oziroma, kot jih sami imenujejo, »eksperti vsakdanjega življenja«. Za Rimini Protokoll je ključnega pomena prav ta košček realnosti, ki ga prinesejo na oder neizšolani igralci, ko govorijo o sebi, svojem delu, življenju, družini itn. »Gledališče preizkušamo kot model izkušnje in ne reprezentacije,« pravi Daniel Wetzel (nav. po Milohnić, »Performing Labour« 76). Prav zato, ker »eksperti vsakdanjega življenja« ne predstavljajo dramskih likov, temveč le sebe in svoje vsakdanje izkušnje, jih Rimini Protokoll šteje za soavtorje uprizoritev. Po besedah Stefana Kaegija njihovo skupino zanima raziskovanje modelov skupnega ustvarjanja in načinov uravnavanja delovnih procesov v gledališču, saj ko so-ustvarjaš v skupinskem tipu gledališča, »se moraš vedno vprašati, kaj je mogoče narediti skupaj, in moraš delati v skladu z odločitvami, ki jih sprejmeš skupaj« (nav. po Boenisch 111).

Ustvarjalna skupina kot kolektivna subjektiviteta

Tako kot je besedilo v postdramskem gledališču le eden izmed mnogih drugih elementov uprizoritve, je v skupinskem gledališču režija le ena izmed ustvarjalnih plasti predstave. Če smo pripravljeni sprejeti to enačbo, ni nobenega razloga, da bi v sodobnem, postdramskem gledališču dramatik ohranjal monopol nad avtorstvom besedila, režiser pa se ponašal z avtorstvom uprizoritve kot celote. Ko v *Gledališkem slovarju* razlaga pomen skupinske stvaritve, Pavis spomni, da je že Brecht skupinsko delo v gledališču opredelil kot »posploševanje znanja«, kar naj bi po njegovem izhajalo iz 70. paragrafa Brechtovega *Malega organona za gledališče*: »Zgodbo podaja, razgrinja in postavlja na ogled gledališče kot celota, se pravi igralci, inscenatorji, maskerji, kostumografi, skladatelji in koreografi. Vsi ti združujejo svoje umetnosti v skupni zamisli in se pri tem kajpak ne odpovedujejo svoji samostojnosti« (Brecht 391). Pavis naprej razlaga, da bi to skupinsko znanje »lahko razumeli kot vzpostavitev diskurza označevalnih sistemov na odru, ko režija ni več govor *enega samega* avtorja (bodisi dramatika, režiserja ali igralca), temveč bolj ali manj vidna sled, ki jo ustvarja skupinski govor« (674–675).

Pavisova razlaga skupinske stvaritve z vpeljavo Brechtovega »posploševanja znanja« kot oblike produkcije, ki bi lahko postal (ali bi celo moral postati) dominantni način produkcije v gledališču »znanstvene dobe«, je po mojem mnenju nenavadna in

⁷ O temeljnih načelih delovanja skupine Beton Ltd. je govoril njen član Branko Jordan 8. oktobra 2020 v navdihnjeni predstavitvi na simpoziju *Skupnost deluje*.

hkrati spoznavno spodbudna zgotitev dveh pomembnih konceptov iz zakladnice materialistične misli: Marxovega »občega intelekta« (*general intellect*) in Bahtinove »polifonije«. Obči intelekt se skozi razvoj znanosti opredmeti v fiksnem kapitalu, torej v strojih, kar je veljalo v Marxovem času industrijskega kapitalizma in v osnovi velja tudi danes, v postfordističnem kapitalizmu, vendar, kot razlaga Paolo Virno v *Slovnici mnoštva*, obstaja tudi kot atribut živega dela, kot »abstraktno mišljenje, ki je postalo steber družbene proizvodnje« (49) in se »danes kaže predvsem kot komunikacija, abstrakcija, samorefleksija živih subjektov« (50). Z drugimi besedami, občega intelekta »ni več mogoče ločiti od kooperacije, od skupnega delovanja živega dela, od komunikacijske sposobnosti individuov« (51). Če si lahko dovolim nekoliko metaforično ali celo poetično branje Marxovega koncepta, bi lahko Brechtovo »posploševanje znanja« označil za svojevrstni obči gledališki intelekt, skupni kvantum gledališkega znanja in ustvarjanja, ki se utelesi v skupinskem ustvarjanju postdramskega gledališča in tako ustvarjalna skupina, gledališki kolektiv, privzame obliko kolektivne subjektivitete. Pavisova »vzpostavitev diskurza označevalnih sistemov na odru« kot »sled, ki jo ustvarja skupinski govor,« pa je manifestacija Bahtinove polifonije v procesu produkcije skupinske stvaritve postdramskega gledališča. K temu bi lahko dodal, da skupinsko ustvarjanje prevaja abstraktne ideje, ki jih generira polifoničnost skupinskega mišljenja, v »realne abstrakcije« (še en izraz iz Marxovega pojmovnega registra), da torej abstraktne ideje in misli prevede v fizično – telesno in predmetno – realnost gledališke uprizoritve.

Premislek o položaju režiserja v razmerju do drugih ustvarjalcev v gledališču 20. stoletja in danes, ko se krepijo skupinske in snovalne oblike gledaliških praks, odpira vznemirljiva vprašanja; v tem članku sem se dotaknil le nekaterih izmed njih. Analiza uprizoritve *Kralja Ubuja* z vidika snovalnega gledališča, ki sta jo razvili Maja Šorli in Zala Dobovšek, je gotovo ena izmed pomembnejših študij primera z vidika snovalnega gledališča v slovenski gledališki teoriji, a za tehtnejši spoprijem s tem teoretskim poljem bi potrebovali še veliko več podobnih prispevkov. Zato bi k temu, kar je že ugotovil Pavis za francosko in evropsko gledališče, da namreč »nimamo zgodovinskega pregleda stvaritev, ki so nastale skupinsko kot plod dela gledaliških skupin,« in bo zato treba »preučevanje režije in režiserjevih odločitev podpreti – dopolniti in okrepiti – z zavestjo o skupinskem delu« (345), lahko dodal le to, da ta naloga čaka tudi raziskovalce slovenskega gledališča.

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In the first part of the article, the author analyses the appearance of the director and the changes in his position in Slovenian theatre from the second half of the 19th century to the present day. In this context, he is particularly interested in the changes in theatre directing that took place in the second half of the 20th century with the emergence of collective theatre. The author methodologically combines historical and comparative analysis, as these processes still take place today, when devised theatre and other forms of theatrical creation are increasingly spoken and written about, moving away from the conventional process by which a playwright writes a dramatic text as a literary work of art and the director then transforms it into a theatrical work of art. There are more and more performances in contemporary Slovenian theatre in which a pre-written dramatic text is not crucial for the final product of the creative process. The two most commonly used terms for this type of performance are *po motivih* (based on the motifs) and *avtorski projekt* (auteur performance). Although the terms are not synonymous, both terms imply a devised type of theatre. The author compares group creation with the devised way of creating and points out that although these are practices that can take place in parallel, they cannot be equated. The author concludes that for collective theatre, the specific relationship between the creative group and the director's position is constitutive. In contrast, for devised theatre, the relationship between the creative group and the playwright's position is crucial. Finally, the author also touches on the connections between postdramatic and post-directors' theatre and the emergence of the creative group as a collective subjectivity.

Keywords: Slovenian theatre, collective creation, devised theatre, experimental theatre, directors' theatre, post-directors' theatre

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On Collective and Devised Creation in Slovenian Theatre

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The author analyses the dynamics of the changes related to the emergence of collective theatre and the shift in the position of the director that occurred in the second half of the 20th century. These changes can also be observed in contemporary theatre, when concepts such as postdramatic theatre, devised theatre and other forms of theatrical creation are increasingly spoken and written about, moving away from the conventional process by which a playwright writes a dramatic text as a literary work of art and the director then transforms it into a theatrical work of art.

The word “theatre directing” appears as early as 1820. Still, it has only existed as a theatrical concept since the second half of the 19th century. While at first, directors also took care of the theatrical production’s organisation, eventually, with the continued differentiation and specialisation of theatrical professions, they could focus on leading the immediate process of the theatrical production’s creation. The appearance of the director coincides with a change in the traditional relationship between the text and its staging. The director also appeared in Slovenian theatre in the second half of the 19th century, but his position did not really consolidate until the 20th century. The human, financial and infrastructural capacities of Slovenian theatre at the beginning of the 20th century were very limited. Thus, the main task of the directors of that time was to make theatre performances happen at all because those times did not allow the development of more subtle directing techniques. The more significant consolidation of the director’s position in Slovenian theatre came only after World War I. We can therefore follow the trend of professionalisation and individualisation of the director in Slovenian and European theatre at the beginning of the 20th century. On the other hand, no later than in the 1960s (according to some opinions, even earlier), a parallel flow emerged, characterised by collective creation. Experimenting with group creation in the 1960s and 1970s was associated with a broader social climate that encouraged individual creativity within the group. The Living Theater and The Performance Group are paradigmatic examples of this process. In Slovenia, too, we can find examples of theatre groups that at that time practised similar forms of group creation, among them, Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre, Experimental Theatre Glej, and the Pekarna Theatre.

In recent times, especially in the last two decades, the term devised theatre has become established, which usually refers to the creation of a performance *ex nihilo*, i.e., without the use of a pre-written dramatic text. Still, some researchers also associate it with a collective way of creating. Hypothetically, both collective and devising approaches may be characteristic of experimental and independent theatre groups of the late 1960s. Still, it is questionable to claim that the performances of these groups were always created *ex nihilo*, as many were derived from already written – modern or classical – dramatic texts. Although the devising approach seems to have intensified in contemporary staging practices, and it has supplemented the horizontal, egalitarian-oriented collective creation from the late 1960s, the two are by no means equivalent phenomena.

Also, in contemporary Slovenian theatre, there is an increasing number of performances in which a pre-written dramatic text is not crucial for the final product of the creative process. The two most frequently used terms indicating those types of performances are *po motivih* (“based on the motifs” of a particular text) and *avtorski projekt* (auteur performance). Performances “based on the motifs” are in principle based on existing plays or other literary genres. Still, they are used only as a starting point for a completely new composition of the performance text. A key feature of auteur performances is that they are developed by either individual or collective inputs within the creative process resulting in a completely new performance text. Some important auteur performances and performances “based on the motifs” were created under the direction of Oliver Frljić, Jernej Lorenci, Tomi Janežič, Žiga Divjak, Janez Janša, Matjaž Berger, among others. Although the terms “based on the motifs” and “auteur performance” are not synonymous and cannot be equated, both terms imply a devised type of theatre. On the other hand, this does not mean that performances developed based on motifs or auteur performances are necessarily also collective creations, as they can also be produced in the way of the traditional division of labour in the creative process with the director as the authoritative leader and primary author of the performance.

The author condenses his reflection on the relationship between the collective and devising mode of production in theatre into the conclusion that, for collective theatre, the specific relationship between the creative group and the director’s position (from the establishment of the director’s function and his professionalisation until today, this relationship fluctuates between authoritarian and democratic, hierarchical and egalitarian, vertical and horizontal) is constitutive. In contrast, for devised theatre, the relationship between the creative group and the playwright’s position (from staging a dramatic text as a relatively autonomous literary work of art to staging a text that emerges as an integral part of rehearsals, acting improvisations, etc.; a playwright may also be included in that process, but not as the sole author of a dramatic text) is crucial. Just as the text is only one of many other staging elements in postdramatic

theatre, in collective theatre, directing is only one of the creative layers of the play. If we are willing to accept this equation, there is no reason for the playwright to maintain a monopoly on the authorship of the text in contemporary, postdramatic theatre and for the director to boast of the authorship of the performance as a whole.

More recently, radical ideas about the “heterarchical director” have emerged, which presupposes a shift from the hierarchical model of the theatre collective with the director as an authoritative guru to a self-organised creative group in which the director is not expected to lead but to encourage and empower all the collaborators involved in the project. If directors’ theatre predominated for most of the 20th century, one might ask whether perhaps the strengthening of collective creation at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century, coinciding with the emergence of the postdramatic theatre, opens up the possibility of the transition to the so-called post-directors’ theatre?

Razprava se posveča trem dramam Simone Semenič, ki so izšle v knjigi z naslovom *Me slišiš?* (2017). Na prvi pogled gre za znano avtoričino pisavo brez ločil in velikih začetnic ter brez očitnega deljenja na didaskalije in dialog, vendar se v vsebinskem smislu bistveno razlikuje od preostalega avtoričinega opusa, saj so to avtobiografska besedila, ki ponovno vzpostavljajo dramsko osebo in bolj ali manj razvidno dramsko dejanje. Razprava se osredotoča na vprašanja, ali gre še za ne več dramska besedila in kako je z reprezentacijo in dogodkovnostjo v njih. Z analizo formalnih in vsebinskih lastnosti besedil, natančneje z analizo dramske osebe, razmerja med dialogom in monologom ter dramskega dejanja, razprava pokaže, da ti teksti vzpostavljajo prepoznavne dramske subjekte in dovolj trdno dramsko dejanje. S tem se odmikajo od ne več dramskih tekstov, kot jih definira Gerda Poschmann, čeprav je njihova dediščina še močno prisotna npr. v fragmentarnem načinu pisanja.

Ključne besede: Simona Semenič, *Me slišiš?*, ne več dramski tekst, dramski tekst, Birgit Haas

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Me slišiš? Simone Semenič in vprašanje ne več dramske pisave¹

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Uvod

Simona Semenič, dandanes verjetno najvznemirljivejša slovenska dramatičarka, katere opus zaznamuje nenehno poigravanje s formo in ga običajno označujemo kot ne več dramsko pisavo (prim. Leskovšek in Toporišič, »(Ne več) dramski«), je leta 2017 pri založbi Zrakogled izdala knjigo *Me slišiš?*, v kateri je objavila tri svoje avtobiografske performanse: *jaz, žrtev* (2007), *še me dej* (2009) in *drugič* (2014). Vse tri je tudi sama izvedla v letih, ko so besedila nastala.

Na prvi pogled gre za znano avtoričino pisavo brez ločil in velikih začetnic ter brez očitnega deljenja na didaskalije in dialog. V tekstu avtorica nenehno polemizira z občinstvom, ga torej jemlje kot sokreatorja uprizoritve in od njega zahteva aktivno vlogo. V tem bi torej lahko videli odmik od reprezentacije k dogodkovnosti, ki je značilna za postdramsko gledališče (Lehmann) in ne več dramske tekste (Poschmann), a je že avtorica v uvodu h knjigi zapisala, da gre za »avtobiografska besedila, za katera sem zdaj, po ponovnem branju, ugotovila, da se v njih ukvarjam predvsem z avtoriteto. Skozi osebne pripetljaje ti trije teksti bolj ali manj bentijo čez sistem, v katerem trenutno živimo« (10). Prav slednje bržkone kaže na odmik od siceršnjega avtoričinega pisanja, ki nas napeljuje na naslednja vprašanja.

So to še ne več dramska besedila? Kako je z reprezentacijo in dogodkovnostjo v njih?

Nekateri raziskovalci so že opazili, da gre za drame, ki v opusu Simone Semenič odstopajo od siceršnjega vzorca. Tako Ivana Zajc v svoji raziskavi monodrame in avtobiografskih elementov v dramah Simone Semenič s pomočjo stilometrične analize ugotovi, da prav obravnavana besedila tvorijo posebno skupino, ki se po deležu monoloških prvin »ločijo od preostalih, *gostija* se razvrsti mednje, a je najbolj oddaljena od drugih obravnavanih besedil« (86).

Tudi Tomaž Toporišič v svojem članku o dramski pisavi po postdramskem izpostavlja

¹ Članek je nastal v okviru raziskovalnega programa Gledališke in medumetnične raziskave P6-0376, ki ga financira Javna agencija za raziskovalno dejavnost Republike Slovenije iz državnega proračuna.

dejstvo, da drame Simone Semenič presegajo ne več dramsko pisavo in ustvarjajo še kako dramatične učinke:

Dialoško obliko sicer vztrajno predeluje v družbi z raznorodnimi besedilnimi strategijami: od odrskih smernic do opisov, ki so bližje romanu in prozi, pripovednih, esejističnih, teoretičnih in drugih tehnik, ki občinstvo opominjajo, da to, kar bere ali gleda, ni več realen dialog. Toda pri tem proizvede izrazito dramatične učinke, ki bi jih Haasova najbrž imenovala »dramatično dramske«. (»Dramska« 114)

Da bi lahko raziskali, kako se Simona Semenič v *Me slišiš?* giblje med postdramsko in dramsko pisavo, kaj to pomeni za vprašanje reprezentacije in prezenze oz. zakaj je ta pisava že na prvi pogled drugačna od dram, ki temeljijo na delitvi na dialog in didaskalije, dramskem dejanju, zapletu itd., obenem pa je še kako dramatična in relevantna, se bomo oprli na misel Birgit Haas o ponovno dramskih besedilih ter seveda natančno analizirali izbrana besedila Simone Semenič.

Ne več dramska in dramska gledališka pisava

Nika Leskovšek v spremni besedi k izdaji *Treh dram* Simone Semenič zelo dobro opiše zagato raziskovalke ob poskusu kategorizacije obravnavanih besedil. Tu najprej ugotavlja, da je zelo očitno dejstvo, da Simona Semenič odstopa od Szondijevega koncepta absolutne drame in uvaja celo serijo postopkov epizacije, ki bi jo na prvi pogled postavili v polje postdramskega oz. ne več dramske pisave. Vendar pa ta uvrstitev nikakor ni neproblematična. Avtorica se namreč sprašuje:

[A]li lahko učinek njene dramatike zvedemo na jezikovni učinek in kombiniranje jezikovnih plasti, učinke medbesedilnosti in samonanašalnosti ali raje na pazljivo samorefleksivno skonstruiranost teksta s pazljivim doziranjem in izvabljanjem učinka zgodbe na gledalca / odgovor je niansiran in kompleksen, variira od teksta do teksta in je spet odvisen od razmerja med didaskalijami in replikami, njihovo razporeditvijo, osmišljenostjo in usmerjenostjo narativa. (»Dramska« 122)

Ker gre za v slovenskem prostoru dodobra uveljavljene pojme, kot so postdramsko gledališče, estetika performativnega, ne več dramski tekst, rapsodični gon gledališkega teksta, jih bomo tu obnovili le v grobem, kolikor je potrebno za našo raziskavo. Bistvo vseh teh premikov, ki jih dobro povzema Tomaž Toporišič v svojem članku »(Ne več) dramski gledališki tekst in postdramsko gledališče«, je paradigmatični premik v gledališču konec šestdesetih let prejšnjega stoletja. V ta čas tako Hans-Thies Lehmann (prim. *Postdramsko gledališče*) kot Erika Fischer-Lichte (*Estetika performativnega*) locirata začetke sodobnih pogledov na gledališke uprizoritve. Lehmann v sodobnem gledališču opaza detronizacijo gledališkega teksta, ki sedaj postane le en od gledaliških

elementov, s katerimi se gradi gledališki dogodek kot nekaj, kar se zgodi med izvajalci in gledalci vsakokratne predstave. Besedilo tako postane skrajno odprto, razpoložljivo in predvsem nima več referencialne narave, pač pa postane samorefleksivno. Kot lucidno povzema Tomaž Toporišič:

Toda za Lehmanna postdramsko gledališče kot osvoboditev od modela trizvezdja ne pomeni gledališča brez povezave onstran drame. Je zgolj proces razpada, demontaže in dekonstrukcije v sami drami. Prihodnost gledališča po drami vidi kot prihodnost gledališča onstran primata dramskega avtorja oziroma kot gledališče po verigi kriz dramskega avtorja, kot zaporedje etap *samorefleksije*, *dekompozicije* in *ločevanja* dramskega gledališča. (»(Ne več) dramski« 182)

Erika Fischer-Lichte detektira isti proces, a se osredotoči na gledališko uprizoritev. Slednja se po t. i. performativnem obratu ukvarja s samonanašalno feed-back zanko, še natančneje, z vprašanjem, kako na to zanko vplivajo posamezni elementi uprizoritve. V ospredju torej ni več gledališko besedilo, ki bi ga bilo treba postaviti na oder in naj bi kar najverneje odražalo neko temo/dogajanje, ki je seveda njegova referenca, pač pa gre za vzpostavljanje dogodka. Za razmere, v katerih postane bistvena soprisotnost akterjev in gledalcev, med katerimi se nekaj zgodi, slednje pa omogoča emergenco² pomenov.

Jelinekova – tako kot Müller – v svojih tekstih razvija novo teatralnost, ki je drugačna od teatralnosti dramskih besedil. Ne gre več za dramatično teatralnost, ki je namenjena ustvarjanju možnih referentov njihovih znakov, ampak za analitično teatralnost, ki je samorefleksivna in ni več namenjena odrsko-fikcijski prezentaciji, ampak se vzpostavlja kot interakcija – Fischer-Lichtejeva bi rekla performativno dejanje predstave kot interakcije med izvajalci in gledalci, za katero je značilna avtopoetična zanka *feedbacka*, ki provocira in integrira emergenco – med akterji in gledalci. (»(Ne več) dramski« 184)

Besedila, ki torej radikalno dekonstruirajo dramsko formo in vanjo vnašajo tako epske kot lirske prvine, Gerda Poschmann imenuje ne več dramski teksti, Jean-Pierre Sarrazac pa govori o konceptu rapsodije. Gre za besedila, ki razširjajo svoje možnosti in konstruirajo nove forme z njeno navidezno dekonstrukcijo. »Gledališče, drama, ki je pogledovala k romanu, pesmi, eseju, da bi se znova in znova osvobajala tistega, kar je bilo vedno njeno prekletstvo: njen status ‚kanonske‘ umetnosti« (Sarrazac 24).

Vendar pa nam tu ne gre toliko za poglobljeno razpravo o krizi dramske pisave v zadnjih 60 letih kot pa za iskanje nadaljnjega razvoja, ki ga Birgit Haas detektira ob novejši nemški dramatik, katere predstavnica je tudi Dea Loher. Za te avtorje in njihove drame je sicer značilna izkušnja ne več dramskega in s tem dekonstrukcije forme, a obenem

² Erika Fischer-Lichte v *Estetiki performativnega* govori o avtopoiesis in emergentnosti kot o dveh ključnih lastnostih sodobnih uprizoritev. Pri tem razume emergenco tako, da konstrukcija pomenov ne velja več po kavzalni logiki, ampak vznikne iz ritma in postavitve različnih elementov uprizoritve. »Ker se pojavljanje ter izginjanje pojavov v zadevnih uprizoritvah ni ravnalo po razumljivi in v določenem smislu napovedljivi logiki dejanj in psihologije, in ni sledilo niti drugim kavzalnim zvezam, temveč je bilo odvisno od ritmičnih vzorcev, [...] se jim je vse prikazovalo kot emergentno« (269).

tudi ponovno vračanje fabule, subjekta in naracije ter zunanjih referentov. Še več, prav ta besedila so v nemški dramatiki pomenila nov in močan val političnega gledališča. In s kakšnimi postopki Dea Loher to doseže? »Kljub uporabi potujitvenega efekta se ne prepusti niti postmodernistični dekonstrukciji subjekta niti koncu pripovedi. Prav nasprotno, Loher gradi na konceptu revolucionarne marksistične estetike Walterja Benamina, s katero je slednji skušal ohraniti človeškost v umetnosti, element človeškosti, ki bi lahko kljuboval tehničnim inovacijam njegovega časa« (Haas 74).

To dramatiko torej zaznamuje ponovno uvajanje bolj ali manj razpoznavnega dramskega subjekta, ki je nosilec govora in dejanja, predvsem pa svojega osebnega pogleda na svet, obenem pa ravno slednji gradi tudi razpoznavno zgodbo celotne drame. Ob tem seveda ne gre za vračanje v nekakšen psevdorealizem, ampak za skrajno fragmentarno zgodbo, ki je zaznamovana s spoznanji postmodernizma. Kot pravi Birgit Haas, avtorica

namenoma gradi občutek negotovosti kot posledico mešanice zasebnih in javnih političnih diskurzov. [...] Njeno delo je kreativno in uspešno obujanje brechtovskega gledališča v kontekstu postmoderne dobe, dobe, v kateri so ljudje ponovno zavzeli gledališki prostor. [...] Gledališče Dee Loher je gledališče opravnomočenja, politično gledališče, ki gledalca ne pusti povsem zmedenega pred podobo družbe po koncu zgodovine. (85)

Kaj je torej tisto, kar zaznamuje eno in drugo obliko gledališkega pisanja? Je med njima jasna ločnica ali se do neke mere prekrivata? Zdi se, da gre za ponovni krog krize in renesanse, ali kot to imenuje Toporišič, ujetosti med »končati« in »začeti«, ki pa se po našem mnenju odigra ob vprašanju referencialnosti. Če torej ne več dramska besedila stavijo na konstrukcijo pomena, ki je emergenten in odvisen od vsakokratne situacije ter vpletenih (akterjev in gledalcev) ter je lahko le še trening pogleda, pri katerem »postane vidna pretrgana nit med zaznavo in lastno izkušnjo« (Lehmann 308), ti dramski gledališki teksti vendarle vzpostavljajo določljive dramske osebe in zgodbo, ki ima referenta, čeprav je ta lahko zelo fragmentaren. S slednjim se ponovno vzpostavlja konkretna družbena kritika oz. kritika določenih družbenih razmerij in odnosov.

Z besedami Richarda McClellanda, ki v svoji razpravi raziskuje ravno soobstoj obeh konceptov v sodobni nemški dramatiki: »Postdramski gledališki teksti so odprti, saj zahtevajo od gledalcev, da postanejo aktivni soustvarjalci besedila uprizoritve. Gledalci ne zapolnjujejo le predvidljivih praznih mest dramske zgodbe, ampak postanejo aktivne priče, ki razmišljajo o svojem lastnem kreiranju pomenov, obenem pa so pripravljene sprejeti prazna mesta in nedorečenost pomena celote« (4).

Dramski gledališki teksti imajo dve bistveni razločevalni lastnosti: »Prvič, dramatik ponovno postavi dramski subjekt v središče dramske reprezentacije. Drugič, ta besedila gradijo na modernistični in postmodernistični dediščini, ko spajajo

kvazirealistično raziskavo človeških izkušenj s postmodernističnim nezaupanjem v resničnost kot enotno entiteto« (prav tam).

Kako je torej s tem prehajanjem med ne več dramskim in dramskim v obravnavanih besedilih Simone Semenič?

Dramsko in postdramsko v *Me slišiš?*

Me slišiš? je dramska trilogija, ki predstavlja v opusu Simone Semenič posebnost. Tega se zaveda tudi sama, saj v uvodu h knjigi zapiše: »Ta besedila pa so drugačne narave tako po vsebini, pisana torej za to, da jih sama izvajam, kot po obliki, ki je dramska ali pa tudi ni« (11).

Avtorica torej zazna, da gre za posebno vrsto besedil, ki so med dramskim in ne več dramskim oz. je njihov status vsaj bolj nedoločljiv kot pri drugih njenih delih. Da bi se dokopali do jasnejše slike o vsebini in formi teh treh dram, se jim bomo približali s treh vidikov: 1. z vidika položaja avtorice oz. dramske osebe; 2. z vidika dramske forme, pri čemer imamo v mislih obliko diskurza (razmerje med didaskalijami in replikami, dialog-monolog), odnos do bralca/gledalca in njegov položaj v samem tekstu; ter 3. z vidika zgodbe oz. dramskega dejanja. Prav ta določila se zdijo namreč bistvena tudi za ne več dramske oz. dramske gledališke tekste, kot smo jih predstavili v prejšnjem poglavju.

Prva drama *jaz, žrtev* je od vseh treh najdoslednejše avtobiografska in monološka. S tem imamo v mislih dejstvo, da avtorica skorajda ves čas pripoveduje o sebi in v doslednem monologu, pri čemer da slutiti, da gre za dramski tekst le z uvodno in končno didaskalijo, ki sta v kurzivi.

kratka pavza

vdih

in izdih

in potem se začne

[...]

kratka pavza

vdih

in izdih

in potem se konča (Me 12, 13, 55)

Knjižna izdaja se v tem smislu še nekoliko razlikuje, saj je v njej avtorica napisala spremno besedilo, ki pa ni zgolj na začetku knjige, ampak se raztegne čez celoto, tako da sprti pojasnjuje okoliščine nastanka dram. Ta pojasnila predstavljajo metabesedilo

in uvajajo pripovedovalca ter posredniško raven v komunikacijski shemi, skratka predstavljajo močno epizacijo, ki bralcu še zaostri avtoričino poanto, razkriva njeno avtopoetiko in življenjsko filozofijo, pojasnjuje pa tudi nastanek in nadaljnjo usodo vseh treh dram. Prvi tak komentar se glasi: »Tukaj moram prekiniti. Samo da ti povem, da je ta Vesna prav tista Vesna, ki mi je v dimenziji brez božjasti namenila haljo in epruveto in Inštitut Jožefa Štefana. Do božjasti pa še pridem. Beri dalje« (Me 15).

še *me dej* je že nekoliko drugačna. Še vedno gre za Simono Semenič, torej avtorico samo, a predmet njenega zanimanja je sedaj avtorica kot dramska oseba, ki je vpeta v sodobno gledališko produkcijo t. i. neodvisne scene in pred nami razkriva vse skrivnosti subvencij in birokratskih postopkov. Celotna drama je »še ena izmed nočemvritidenarja predstav« (Me 60), predstav, ki so dobile subvencijo in jih je potem treba realizirati, da bi upravičili stroške, čeprav projekt nikakor ni domišljen in narejen, kot so si ga ustvarjalci prvotno zamislili. Didaskalij je veliko več, saj opisujejo dogajanje in v njih avtorica razmišlja o razmerju med odrom in publiko. Še več, tu je tudi neposredni nagovor gledalcu oz. vživljanje v gledalca, ki ga srečamo v njenih kasnejših dramah (npr. *mi, evropski mrlič*). Avtorica je tako obenem dramska oseba, avtorica/režiserka in tista, ki bralca/gledalca zapeljuje, da vstopi v dramo in jo soustvarja.

*spoštovani publikum, medtem ko prihajaš,
te opazujem
zagledam te prej kot ti mene
sedim ob oknu, pri blagajni gledališča
[...]
nasmehnem se ti
nekdo me fotografira
sem malce hudomušna
hi hi hi ha ha ha
lepo nama je, a ne, da nama je lepo
tu sem
zate, spoštovani publikum (Me 58, 59)*

Tako ga neposredno nagovarja, naj bo aktiven, naj se odloči sodelovati v dogodku.

*čakam, če se odločiš oditi
če je v tebi kak provokator, ki bo to naredil
pa ne bi rada, da greš
tudi če, ja, sprejemem vse posledice svoje
hudomušne igre*

*ker – kot rečeno – ne želim vrniti denarja
na tem mestu se ti hudomušno nasmehnem (Me 63)*

Na koncu gledalec/bralec tudi postane del gledališkega dogodka.

*medtem, ko ti nosim vampe, printam besedilo
medtem ko ješ vampe, ti dam besedilo v roke
besedilo, ki je hkrati tudi gledališki list in letak, na koncu, poglej
gledaš me, kaj s tem
ja, beri, ne, kaj me gledaš
glej v besedilo, ne vame
to je del predstave, da zdaj v miru poješ
vampe in da v miru prebereš besedilo (Me 96)*

Avtorica na ta način uvaja dialog, ki pa ni več dialog med dramskimi osebami, ampak med odrom in avditorijem. Avtopoetska feed-back zanka, ki je sicer značilna za vsak gledališki dogodek, je sedaj tematizirana. Besedilo jo prevprašuje, skuša uravnavati ali vsaj izpostavlja nekatere elemente, ki jo konstituira (npr. nagovori gledalcev, tematiziranje gledalčevih občutij, njegove vloge v predstavi). Vendar pa to sodelovanje gledalca, kot opazi Katja Čičigoj, ni povsem arbitrarno, pač pa ga precej usmerja avtorica: »Nevarnost arbitrnosti pomena tako nadomesti pragmatična delna določitev učinka: znotrajtekstualno režiranje situacije, v kateri je gledalec potisnjen v izkustvo con nedoločenosti končnega učinka dogodka« (65).

S tem Simona Semenič kot dramski lik postane trdnejša oz. jasnejša in bolj enovita. Koherentnost ji zagotavlja najprej dejstvo, da gre za avtobiografsko besedilo. Biografija avtorice je torej tista zunanja referenca, ki to dramsko osebo definira in ji nudi vsebinski kontekst. Poleg tega gre za to, da je sodelovanje gledalca režirano. Možnosti njegovega sodelovanja so omejene in vnaprej predvidene, zato se število možnih interpretacij omeji, kar nas pelje v bližino koncepta dramskega teksta. Vendar pa je to le ena plat tega razvoja. Ista dramska oseba namreč obenem postaja bolj razdrobljena, saj se avtobiografski pripovedi oz. dejanju pridružujejo še vprašanja narave predstave, odnosa med igralcem in gledalcem ... V fiktivni dramski svet poleg tega vstopa napoved drugih igralk, ki naj bi nastopile, čeprav na koncu do tega ne pride: »poleg mene v vlogi mene nastopajo še tri igralk/ - medea novak, lara jankovič in damjana černe« (Me 60).

V tretji drami iz knjige *Me slišiš?*, ki je bila pod naslovom *drugič* krstno izvedena v klubu Gromka 12. oktobra 2004, je pomenljiv že sam začetek, saj ima od vseh treh dram le ta zapisan čas, kraj dogajanja in seznam dramskih oseb. Pod dramatis personae

piše: »*simona semenič, Ti*« (Me 98). Dialoški partner, ki se v besedilu oblikuje kot spoštovani publikum že v še me dej, postane sedaj kar dramska oseba. Bralec/gledalec dobi v besedilu svoje mesto, svojo vlogo. V nadaljevanju drame gre za radikalizacijo postopkov, ki smo jih že opisali ob še me dej. Avtorica se postavlja v različne vloge, ki segajo od dramske osebe, ki govori svojo pripoved v monologu, do dramatičarke, ki razmišlja o dramskih situacijah, usmerja dogajanje, ugiba o reakcijah publike ali pa jih kar napoveduje oz. zahteva.

*dramatis persona simona semenič vstopa
rada bi si predstavljala, da vstopam graciozno
in da vse onemi, ko se pojavim
rada bi si predstavljala, da se zrak zgosti in čas
ustavi, ko raciozno stopim predte
ali jebiga
zmatrana sem ko pes, spala nisem skoraj nič, cel
dan sem imela vaje in potem sem 45 minut
tekla (Me 99)*

Aktivno sodelovanje gledalcev je sprva želja: »*morda splezaš na ta visoki oder in stopiš do mene/ in morda mi pomagaš zavihati rokav in namestiti / uno manšeto za merjenje tlaka*« (102), kasneje pa že zapoved: »*a lahko prosim vzamete tisti karton in flomaster / in gor napišete rezultate*« (104). Monolog se razvije v nekakšen kvazi dialog z gledalcem, ki se odziva pričakovano. Ob tem pa seveda prihaja tudi do stopnjevanja čustev oz. primerov avtoričinih življenjskih tegob, ki na treh mestih od gledalca zahtevajo tudi denarne prispevke. S slednjimi Semenič meri uspešnost svojih preživetvenih taktik, lahko pa bi rekli, da obenem meri moč in prisotnost povezave med odrom in avditorijem, torej prisotnost samonanašalne feed-back zanke. V zadnjem poskusu zaključí: »*no, pa smo / mislim, da mi je le uspelo nekoliko napredovat / nekoliko izpopolnit svojo taktiko preživetja / vse, kar človek na koncu koncev potrebuje, je / podoba v zlatu*« (153). In zdi se, da je to tisti stik, ki ga je avtorica ves čas iskala. Pa ne v smislu, da bi ji šlo za denar, ampak za povezavo, sočutje, razumevanje: »*zdaj me razumeš tudi, če sploh ne spregovorim*« (prav tam).

Avtorica je torej v vseh treh dramah glavni lik, saj gre za avtobiografske tekste, ki jih izvaja sama na odru. Povezava z realno osebo in faktičnim kontekstom je torej močno prisotna, s tem pa tudi reprezentacija besedila. Njihova prevladujoča oblika je monolog, a kljub temu lahko opazimo v tem pogledu določen razvoj. Če je šlo v *jaz, žrtev* za novit lik, ki mu celoto zagotavlja tudi avtorica s svojo lastno biografijo, ta lik v še me dej in *drugič* razpada. Cepi se na več komunikacijskih ravni. Prevzame namreč tudi vlogo avtorice, ki v didaskalijah opisuje dogajanje, razmišlja o svojem

početju itd., predvsem pa ustvarja vedno močnejšo vez z bralcem/gledalcem. Slednji v *drugič* postane celo ena od dramskih oseb, s čimer se ta kvazi dialog, kvazi zato, ker Ti nima nobene replike in je jasno, da gre za gledalca. Gledalec je seveda v vsaki uprizoritvi udeležen kot partner v komunikaciji, a praviloma ni dialoški partner, še manj pa je dramska oseba. Vendar se zdi, da je prav z *drugič* postal ta odnos za Simono Semenič bistven. Kot lahko vidimo v nekaterih njenih kasnejših besedilih, je začela pisati in misliti drame skozi prizmo gledalca. V tem položaju postaja pozicija avtorice bolj negotova in odvisna od vsakokratnih gledalcev/bralcev. Slednje kaže na to, da je v teh besedilih še vedno močno prisotna dediščina postdramskega. Vendar pa ni zato učinek njenih besedil nič manjši. Prej nasprotno, bralec/gledalec je močnejše nagovorjen, potegnen v dogajanje. Pri tem na videz dobiva več svobode in svobodno soustvarja gledališki dogodek ali vsaj lastno interpretacijo. Koliko je to res svoboda? Je dogajanje res povsem fragmentarno in sili gledalca k emergenci, torej k povsem naključnemu vznikanju pomenov? Da bi se lahko dokopali do tega, moramo premisliti še dva vidika vseh treh dram.

Nekaj opažanj o dramski formi smo zapisali že zgoraj. Gibljejo se od monologa v *jaz, žrtev* do nekakšnega dialoga med Simono Semenič in Ti v *drugič*, pri čemer seveda ne gre za pravi dialog, saj Ti nima nobene replike, je pa ves čas naslavljan in od njega se pričakuje nekatera dejanja kot reakcije na replike Simone Semenič. Vendar pa nas tu nadalje zanima, kako se avtorica giblje med lirskimi, epskimi in dramskimi prviniami teksta. Kako jih torej meša med seboj? Tu sledimo njenemu lastnemu namigu v uvodu knjige, ko zapiše: »To, kar bereš, ni roman, tudi gledališko besedilo ni. Je torej – kaj? Sem jaz, ki se poskušam pogovarjati s tabo, je topla dekica, je kavč« (8).

Vse tri drame so izrazito avtobiografske. Njihovo dogajanje opisuje avtoričino življenje, še več, izpoveduje ga avtorica sama, ki je drame kot performanse tudi izvedla v letih 2007, 2009 in 2014. Govori torej iz sebe in o sebi. Med njo in predmetom ni nikakršne distance, kar kaže na lirski subjekt. A ta se bliža dramskemu že v še me dej, še bolj pa v *drugič*, saj je Simona Semenič tam dramska oseba, ki očitno komunicira s kolektivnim sprejemnikom, ki ga imenuje »dragi publikum« oz. »Ti«. Vendar pa se dejanje ne odvija pred nami v neposredni sedanosti, ampak je v *jaz, žrtev* ves čas, kasneje pa večinoma, oddaljeno od subjekta v bolj ali manj daljno preteklost. Ta drža je seveda epska. Zakaj je vse to pomembno? Dramski subjekt tako ni več povsem fragmentaren, saj mu trdnost in koherenco zagotavlja avtoričina biografija. Poleg tega sama oblika performansa uvaja močno prisotnost realnega oz. faktičnega sveta, ki predstavlja zunanjo referenco dogajanja. Referencialnost oz. prikazovanje nečesa, kar predhaja gledališkemu dogodku in je vpisano v dramsko besedilo, se sedaj v veliki meri vrača.

Zanimivo se zdi, da je ta mešanica lirskega, epskega in dramskega pravzaprav osnova za besedilo, ki ustvarja izrazito napetost. V bralcu/gledalcu vzbuja močne občutke.

Giblje se torej od sočutja, ki prevladuje v *jaz, žrtev*, do sodelovanja, morda celo odpora do »družbe jahačev«, kot aktualno družbeno situacijo imenuje avtorica, in zavzemanja kritične drže. Skratka, *drugič* uspe posredovati močno politično sporočilo skozi izrazito intimno zgodbo in s pomočjo številnih prijemov postdramskega gledališča.

V članku »Dramska pisava po postdramskem« pa Tomaž Toporišič ob dramah Anje Hilling, Milene Marković in Simone Semenič detektira tri vrste preseganja ne več dramskih besedil: nezmožnost komunikacije in razstavljanje telesa in glasu ob Anji Hilling, kjer dialog in didaskalije razpadejo in se pomešajo, dekonstrukcijo in rekonstrukcijo reprezentacije realnosti ob dramah Simone Semenič, kjer gre za številne postdramske postopke, ki pa jih avtorica sestavlja v učinkovite kritične tekste, ter kontaminacijo z lirskim in epskim ob delih Milene Marković. Zdi se, da ob obravnavanih dramah srečamo vse te lastnosti. Gre namreč za tesno prepletanje dramskega z lirskim in epskim, za vedno bolj zabrisano mejo med replikami in didaskalijami ter na koncu za fragmentarizacijo, vpletanje gledalca v sam dogodek in manipulacijo čustev, ki naj producira pomen. Koliko je ta pomen konsistenten in usmerjan s strani dramatičarke, smo že pokazali ob analizi dramske osebe in monologa/dialoga, ki se s prehajanjem od fikcije k realnosti približujeta dramski obliki besedila.

Kako pa je z dramskim dejanjem? Gre za povsem odprto dogajanje, ki mu mora pomen pripisati vsak recipient sam, ali pa besedilo ponuja usmeritve, ki vodijo recepcijo? Čeprav so vsa tri besedila izrazito fragmentarna in na videz pomensko odprta, vendarle vsebujejo močno rdečo nit, avtoričino biografijo, ki jih drži skupaj. Ker drame gradijo na realnem življenju Simone Semenič, njegovo razumevanje nikakor ni povsem prosto. Gradi se na njegovem čustvenem odzivu na vse avtoričine zdravstvene, finančne in ustvarjalne tegobe.

Čeprav sočustvuje z njo in ga Semenič z vsako dramo bolj vpleta v dogajanje, ne more ostati na tej intimni ravni. Avtorica se na več mestih predaja samosmiljenju in apatiji: »si mislim, edina stvar, ki jo lahko poskusim / ki mi še preostane / ki me še reši / je to, [...] da sproduciram še kako diagnozo / in da lahko vpišem novo epizodo v samoizpoved / žrtve« (54, 55). Zato se sprejemnikova stiska in sočutje bržkone sprostita v kritiko avtoritete oz. sistema, ki avtorici povzroča vse te težave. Kot pravi avtorica sama: »Skozi osebne pripetljaje ti trije teksti bolj ali manj bentijo čez sistem, v katerem trenutno živimo« (10). Slednji pa je »ne kočijaška združba, jahaška združba naj bo. Saj jahači tudi držijo vajeti v rokah, aneda« (12).

V *jaz, žrtev* gre za spoznanje, da je avtorica žrtev številnih absurdnih medicinskih postopkov, ki skušajo enkrat za vselej odpraviti njene diagnoze (močenje postelje, genitalni herpes in božjast). To se stopnjuje v knjižni izdaji, kjer avtorica s komentarji še zaostri opisane situacije. Tako npr. pripoveduje o operaciji glave, ki so ji jo opravili

leta 1991 pri 16 letih, da bi ji, kot ji je zagotovila zdravnica, enkrat za vselej odpravili epilepsijo, a je bila posledica tega posega pojav res hudih napadov. V komentarju nam razkrije, da je poseg v njenih izvidih zaveden kot eksplorativna kraniotomija, kot diagnostični poseg, s katerim naj bi raziskali stanje bolezni ter se odločili o nadaljnjem zdravljenju. Ob tem zaključí: »Tam zgoraj so se torej igrali zdravnike. Če bi se zdravnike igrali tam spodaj, potem bi to bila zloraba, ker so se jih igrali tam zgoraj, je pa eksplorativna kraniotomija« (30).

še *me dej* je t. i. nočemvrnitidenarja predstava, ki jo avtorica mora oddelati, da upraviči prejeto subvencijo. Fragmentaren tekst, ki meša besedilo prijav na razpise, različnih dodatnih pojasnil, prošenj ter zahtevkov v postopku izbora in financiranja s komentarjem dogajanja v živo, je nekakšen kolaž, ki sili recipienta v to, da mu sam pripiše pomen. Vendar pa ta ni povsem poljuben, saj ves čas kaže na težke produkcijske pogoje in s tem razkriva različne taktike preživetja nevladne produkcije ter njenih akterjev, ki so usmerjene predvsem v hiperprodukcijo, s tem pa pogosto tudi v površnost in hitre rešitve. Ena takšnih je pričujoči tekst/performans in avtorica tega nikakor ne zanika:

ker vam ni treba ostat, nič katarzičnega ni pred
vami nocoj
razen pač to, da zveste, zakaj vampi
in da si jih privoščite
v glavnem, tudi če se vi odločite it, bom jaz še nekaj časa ostala, ker moram pač to
oddelat (63)

Seveda pa obenem gledalcu spretno ponudi tarčo njegovega nelagodja v sistemu, saj so prav način subvencioniranja in pičle subvencije razlog, da kljub mednarodnemu uspehu (predstave ni mogla narediti zaradi številnih angažmajev v tujini in na največjih festivalih pri nas) in nedvomni uveljavljenosti svoje dramatike ne more živeti od svojega dela.

V *drugič* je rezultat podoben, a taktika je drugačna. Gledalec/bralca je veliko bolj neposredno vključen v dogajanje – vpisan je kot »Ti« v seznam dramskih oseb, naprošen je za pomoč pri merjenju krvnega tlaka ... zapisuje rezultate in prispeva denar za povečanje avtoričinega proračuna. Poleg tega se sedaj Simona Semenič ne kaže več neposredno kot žrtev. Ta je sicer še vedno prisotna najprej kot odmev prejšnjih dveh besedil, nato pa tudi prek vseh njenih diagnoz in finančne stiske, ki se vlečejo kot lajtmotiv, vendar je tokrat njen odnos diametralno nasproten.

torej, žrtev je bila predstava o nekaterih mojih
boleznih, težavah, tegobah, kakor sem jih
poimenovala v letu 2007

danes jih ne imenujem več tako
 danes jih imenujem blagoslov
 ker sem se naučila, da so stvari, ki morda na prvi
 pogled zgledajo kot breme, pravzaprav darila
 darila, ki jih moraš prav odpret, da bi postala
 opora in smerokaz (111, 12)

Njen pristop, ki je prej temeljil na vlogi žrtve in vzbujanju sočutja, je postal aktiven. Sedaj vzame zdravje v svoje roke, teče, neha kaditi ... Seveda pa se ta aktivizem prenese tudi na njeno profesionalno in ustvarjalno življenje. Prav *drugič* je predstava o taktikah preživetja na vseh ravneh. Tako kot pacientka štrajka, »dokler združba jahačev ne uredi javnega zdravstva tako, kot se eni pravni in socialni državi spodobi« (138, 39). Poziva pravzaprav k spremembi družbe, ki bi prinesla kakovostno zdravljenje vsem (plačana bolniška odsotnost za zaposlene in samozaposlene), osnovno finančno neodvisnost oz. dostojen mesečni dohodek, da ljudje ne bodo pod stresom in zato zbolevali, ter financiranje npr. psihoterapije s strani zdravstvenega sistema.

Intimna zgodba se tu preveša v družbeni program, do katerega se mora sprejemnik opredeliti. Prav tako provokativen je zaključek, ko Semenič svoje telo, zaznamovano z diagnozami in posegi, najprej razstavi pred avditorijem, potem pa ga odene v zlato (od spodnjic do obleke in sandalov) ter prek tega dejanja, ki po eni strani spominja na emancipacijo oz. spoznanje lastne vrednosti, po drugi pa na prostituiranje, pride do zadnje nabirke denarja. Sledi replika:

no, pa smo
 mislim, da mi je le uspelo nekoliko napredovat
 nekoliko izpopolnit svojo taktiko preživetja
 vse, kar človek na koncu koncev potrebuje, je
 podoba v zlatu (153)

Tako je povsem jasno, da te drame niso povsem pomensko odprte. S svojo strukturo bralcu/gledalcu usmerjajo recepcijo in uspejo ustvariti močno družbenokritično sporočilo. Slednje pa nikakor ni agitatorsko ali plakatno, ampak temelji na iskreni intimni zgodbi ter spretni manipulaciji čustev, ki jih dosega avtorica s številnimi postdramskimi prijemi.

Sklep

Na tej točki lahko skušamo odgovoriti na izhodiščni vprašanji. Imajo te drame še vedno zunanjo referenco? Gre torej za reprezentacijo ali prezenco? Na prvi pogled se zdi odgovor enostaven. Seveda vsa tri besedila, objavljena v *Me slišiš?*, vzpostavljajo neko zunanjo referenco. Najprej se referirajo na avtoričino biografijo in njeno realno življenje. Tako se neposredno nanašajo na probleme današnje družbe, predvsem na vprašanje avtoritete, delovanja zdravstvenega sistema in področja kulturne produkcije.

Vendar pa bralcu/gledalcu te drame ne izrisujejo sveta, ki naj bi bil ločen od njega in naj bi se vanj vživljal ali o njem razmišljal, pač pa ga Semenič nenehno zapleta v dramsko dogajanje. Od gledalca zahteva aktivno vlogo, pa naj bo to neposredna akcija ob živi uprizoritvi ali pa čustveni odziv. Ta odziv odločilno gradi razumevanje drame, kar pomeni, da gre za nekakšno vzajemno učinkovanje reprezentacije in prezence. Kar smo razumeli kot nasprotje (prim. npr. Fischer-Lichte), se vrača v nov krog kot spoj. Dramski tekst ponovno prenese referencialnost in je sposoben sproducirati koherentno sporočilo, a je obenem zaznamovan prav z izkušnjo postdramskega. Ne računa več na gledalčevo estetsko distanco in brezinteresno ugajanje v Kantovem smislu, niti na distanco kot posledico potujitvenega efekta (Brecht), ki naj bi gledalca obdržala v območju racionalnega premisleka, ampak angažira recipienta na čustveni ravni ter ga postavi v vlogo soustvarjalca pomena, čeprav to sodelovanje v določeni meri usmerja. Rezultat je močna družbena kritika, ki pa se gradi prek osebne izkušnje, ki gledalca angažira na čustveni ravni.

Da bi dobili boljši vpogled v nihanje Simone Semenič med postdramsko in dramsko pisavo, bi morali pregledati tudi druge njene drame, ki v večji meri temeljijo na dialogu in didaskalijah, predvsem pa na fiktivnih zgodbah in junakih, vendar to presega naš trenutni namen. Dejstvo je, da Simona Semenič, podobno kot nekateri drugi evropski dramatik, išče nove oblike pisanja, ki bi ob močnem učinkovanju na gledalca in njegovem angažmaju lahko ubesedile jasna sporočila o nas samih in o svetu, v katerem živimo.

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In the article, the author analyses three plays by Simona Semenič that were published in the book *can you hear me?* (2017). At first sight, the three pieces appear to be written in Semenič's now-familiar writing style with no punctuation marks or upper-case initials and no apparent division between dialogues and stage directions. Content-wise, however, the three plays differ significantly from the bulk of the playwright's opus as they represent autobiographical texts which once again establish the character and more or less distinct dramatic action. The article focuses on two questions: Are these still no-longer-dramatic texts? And, what is the status of representation and performativity in them? By analysing the formal and content properties of the three texts, more precisely, through an analysis of the drama character, the relationship between dialogue and monologue and dramatic action, the author shows that indeed these texts establish recognisable dramatic characters and relatively strong dramatic action. In this, they move away from no-longer-dramatic texts as defined by Gerda Poschmann, even though their legacy is still very much present, e.g., in the fragmented writing style.

Keywords: Simona Semenič, *can you hear me?*, no-longer-dramatic text, dramatic text, Birgit Haas

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can you hear me? by Simona Semenič and the question of no-longer-dramatic writing¹

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Introduction

Simona Semenič is probably the most provocative contemporary Slovenian dramatist. A characteristic of her work is her constant experimentation with form. Usually, her work is designated as no-longer-dramatic writing (see Leskovšek; Toporišič “(Ne več) dramski”). In 2017, the organisation Zrakogled published her book *Me slišiš* in Slovenian, which was translated into English and published in 2019 by Integrali Cultural Association as *can you hear me?*. The book presents three of her autobiographical performances: *Jaz, žrtev* (I, victim, 2007); *še me dej* (do me twice, 2009); and *drugič* (the second time, 2014). Semenič also performed each of them in their respective year of creation.

At first sight, the three pieces appear to be written in Semenič’s now-familiar writing style with no punctuation marks or upper-case initials and no apparent division between dialogue and stage directions. In her text, the author continuously polemicises with the audience; she takes them as co-creators of the performance and requires them to take on an active role. This demand could be considered to mark a shift from representation to the presence characteristic of postdramatic theatre (Lehmann) and no-longer-dramatic texts (Poschmann). However, as the author herself explains in the book’s introduction: “These are autobiographical texts, in which – as I figured out after reading them all again – I mostly deal with authority. Using personal incidents, these three texts more or less curse the system in which we’re currently living” (10). The latter probably indicates a deviation from the author’s other writings, which steers us towards the following two questions: Are these still no-longer-dramatic texts? What is the status of representation and presence in these texts?

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Some researchers have already noticed that in the opus of Simona Semenič, the three pieces in question stray from the pattern. Thus, Ivana Zajc, in her research of monodramatic and autobiographical elements in Simona Semenič's plays, uses stylometric analysis to reveal that the three plays in question make up a special subgroup which, according to the proportion of monologic elements, "differ from the rest, while *the feast* could be listed among them, it is, however, itself the most distant from all of the other texts considered" (86).

In his essay on dramatic writing after postdramatic theatre, Tomaž Toporišič also highlights the fact that the plays by Simona Semenič surpass no-longer-dramatic writing and produce powerful dramatic effects.

She persistently reshapes the dialogic form accompanied with heterogeneous textual strategies: from stage directions to descriptions that are closer to the novel and prose, to the narrative, essayistic, theoretical, and other techniques which remind the audience that what they are reading or observing is no longer a realistic dialogue. However, she produces explicitly dramatic effects that Haas would probably designate as "dramatically dramatic". ("Dramske" 114)

To explore how in *can you hear me?* Simona Semenič shifts between post-dramatic and dramatic writing and what is the implication of that for the question of representation and presence, or rather why this type of writing is so much different from the plays that are based on distinguishing between dialogue and stage directions, on dramatic action, on the thickening of the plot, etc., while at the same time remaining very much dramatic and relevant, we will refer to Birgit Haas's idea about again-dramatic texts and, of course, a careful analysis of the selected plays by Simona Semenič.

No-longer-dramatic and dramatic writing for theatre

In her preface to *Tri drame* (Three Plays) by Simona Semenič, Nika Leskovšek aptly articulates the researcher's predicament when categorising the texts in question. In this, she first establishes that Simona Semenič's works deviate from Peter Szondi's notion of absolute drama and introduce an entire series of episation procedures that might, at first sight, seem to position her in the field of post-dramatic or even no-longer-dramatic writing. However, such classification is by no means straightforward. Leskovšek here poses the question

whether the effect of her drama can be reduced to linguistic effects and the combination of linguistic strata, the effects of intertextuality and self-reference, or rather to the careful self-reflective construction of the text by careful dosing and luring the spectator to extract the effect of the story / the answer is nuanced and complex, it varies from

play to play, and again it depends on the ratio between stage directions and lines, their arrangement, their meaning and the orientation of the narrative (122).

Since the considered terms such as postdramatic theatre, aesthetics of the performative, no-longer-dramatic text, rhapsodic drive of theatre text are quite well established in the Slovenian theatre landscape, we will only highlight them briefly here for the needs of the discussion. The essence of all these shifts, aptly described by Tomaž Toporišič in his paper “(No Longer) Dramatic Text for Theater and Postdramatic Theatre”, appears to lie in the paradigmatic shift that took place in theatre during the late 1960s. It is in this period that both Hans Thies Lehmann (Cf. *Postdramatic Theatre*) and Erika Fischer-Lichte (*The Transformative Power of Performance, A New Aesthetics*) locate the origins of contemporary perspectives of theatre stagings. Lehmann noticed an ongoing process of dethroning the text for theatre at work in contemporary theatre. Thus, the text became merely one of the elements of theatre among many others that build up a theatre event as something that happens between performers and spectators of each individual performance. The text thus becomes radically open, disposable and, first and foremost, no longer referential but somewhat self-reflective. As Toporišič lucidly summarises:

To Lehmann, however, postdramatic theatre as the liberation from the three-star model does not mean a theatre that lacks a connection beyond drama. It is but the process of decomposition, dismantling and deconstruction inside drama itself. He sees the future of theatre after drama as the future of theatre beyond the primacy of the dramatic author or rather as theatre after a chain of crises of the dramatic author, as successive stages of *self-reflection, decomposition and separation* of dramatic theatre. (“(Ne več) dramski” 182)

Erika Fischer-Lichte detects the same process. However, she focuses on theatre performance. After the so-called performative turn, the latter started to deal with the autopoietic feedback loop, or more specifically, how individual elements of the performance affect this loop. Thus, the main focus is no longer on the text for theatre that needs to be put on stage and is probably supposed to reflect some theme/action that is, of course, its reference. The emphasis is now on establishing an event, the circumstances in which the co-existence of actors and spectators becomes essential for something to happen and thus allow for the emergence of meanings.

Just like Müller, Jelinek also develops a new theatricality in her texts that differs from the theatricality of dramatic plays. This is no longer dramatic theatricality aimed at creating possible referents of their signs, but rather, an analytical theatricality that is self-reflective and no longer aimed at stage-fictive presentation. Instead, it is established as an interaction – Fischer-Lichte would call this the performative act of the performance as the interaction between performers and spectators, the characteristic feature of which is the autopoietic feedback loop which provokes and integrates emergence – between actors and spectators. (Toporišič, “(Ne več) dramski” 184)

Gerda Poschmann designated texts that radically deconstruct the dramatic form and introduce epic as well as lyrical elements into it as no-longer-dramatic; Jean Pierre Sarrazac talks about the notion of rhapsody. These are texts that widen their possibilities and construct new forms through their apparent deconstruction. "Theatre, drama that looked towards the novel, poem, or essay in order to liberate itself again and again from that which has always been its curse: its status of 'canonic' art" (Sarrazac 24).

However, an in-depth discussion of the crisis of drama writing in the last sixty years is not our intention here. Instead, it is to track down further developments that Birgit Haas has detected in recent German drama with Dea Loher as one of its prime representatives. While the experience of the no-longer-dramatic and the deconstruction of form that comes with it is still characteristic of these authors and their plays, they also reintroduce the story, the subject, narration and external reference into it. Furthermore, it was precisely this type of drama that introduced a solid, fresh wave of political theatre in Germany. But what are the procedures that Dea Loher uses to achieve this? "Despite the defamiliarised *Verfremdungseffekt*, however, she neither subscribes to the postmodern decentering of the subject nor to the end of the metanarratives. Instead, Loher draws on Walter Benjamin's revolutionary Marxist aesthetic that he established in order to retain a human element in the arts, a human element that would resist the technical innovations of his time" (74, 75).

This type of drama is therefore characterised by the reintroduction of a more or less discernible character, the agent of both speech and action and, more to the point, their own world view. At the same time, the latter also builds up a discernible story of the entire drama. Of course, this does not imply a return to some kind of pseudo-realism, but rather an extremely fragmented narrative marked by the insights of postmodernism. As Birgit Haas puts it, the author

Loher deliberately causes a feeling of uncertainty, mainly due to the mixture of private and public political discourses. [...] Her work is a creative and productive revival of the Brechtian theatre in the context of the post-postmodern age, an age in which human beings have again reclaimed the theatrical space. [...] As a consequence, Loher's theatre is a theatre of empowerment, a politically engaged theatre that does not leave the bewildered spectator in front of a destroyed history. (85)

So what are the distinctive characteristics that mark the first and the second form of writing for theatre? Can we draw a clear line between them, or do they overlap to a certain degree? It appears that what we are dealing with here is another example of the cycle of crisis and renaissance or, as Toporišič puts it, of being trapped between the terms "to end" and "to begin", albeit one that, in our opinion, plays out within the question of referentiality. While no-longer-dramatic texts invest into the

construction of emergent meaning that depends on each particular situation and its participants (both actors and spectators) and thus cannot be anything else but the training of the gaze in which “the broken thread between perception and the personal experience becomes visible” (Lehmann 308), dramatic theatre texts, on the other hand, do establish distinguishable characters and stories with referents, albeit very fragmentary ones. The latter also allows them to reestablish concrete social criticism or the criticism of particular social relations and attitudes.

In the words of Richard McClelland, who explores the co-existence of both notions in contemporary German drama in his discussion:

She describes the work of playwrights such as Martin Crimp, Elfriede Jelinek, Heiner Müller and Sarah Kane as “open” or “writerly” texts [...] in the sense that they require the spectators to become active co-writers of the (performance) text. The spectators are no longer just filling in the predictable gaps in dramatic narrative but are asked to become active witnesses who reflect on their own meaning-making and who are also willing to tolerate gaps and suspend the assignment of meaning. (4)

There are two essential distinguishing characteristics of dramatic texts for theatre.

First, the playwright reasserts the position of the subject at the centre of dramatic representation. Second, these texts engage with postmodern and modernist legacies by combining a quasi-realist exploration of lived experience with a postmodern distrust of reality as a singular entity. (Ibid.)

So how is this passing between no-longer-dramatic and dramatic reflected in the three texts by Simona Semenič?

Dramatic and postdramatic in *can you hear me?*

can you hear me? is a trilogy of plays that, to a certain extent, represent a curiosity in Simona Semenič’s opus. The author herself is well aware of this fact as she says in the introduction to her book: “These texts, however, are of a different nature in both contents, written for me to perform myself, and form, which is dramatic or not” (*can you* 11).

The author thus senses that the plays in question represent a special kind of text which hangs somewhere in-between the dramatic and the no-longer-dramatic. The least one could say is that their status is not so readily determinable as in the case of her other works. To gain a clearer insight into the content and form of these three plays, we intend to approach them from three perspectives: 1) from the position

of the author, or rather, the *dramatis persona*; 2) from the dramatic form, which encompasses the form of the discourse (the ratio of stage directions to spoken lines, dialogue-monologue), the relationship to the reader/spectator and their position in the text itself; 3) from the story or dramatic action. These determinants seem crucial for distinguishing between no-longer-dramatic and dramatic texts for theatre, as argued above.

The first play entitled *I, victim* is the most consistently autobiographical and monologic of the three. What we mean by this is the fact that in it, the author is, for the bulk of the time, talking about herself in a monologue lasting throughout the play. The fact that the text is intended as a play can only be inferred from the introductory and closing stage directions, which are written in cursive.

a short break

inhale

exhale

and then it begins

[...]

a short break

inhale

and exhale

and then it ends (can you 13, 56)

In this sense, the published version is a bit different, as the author added an accompanying text which is not just a preface at the beginning. Instead, it expands throughout the entire body of the text so that she can explain the circumstances of the creation of the plays as she goes along. These explanations represent a meta-text and introduce the figure of a narrator and a mediating level into the communication scheme. In other words, this establishes a decisive moment of epistation that helps to make the author's point come across to the reader even more poignantly, as it reveals her autopoietics and philosophy of life. However, it also explains the making and future destiny of all three plays. The first one of these commentaries goes as follows: "Here, I have to interrupt. Just to tell you that Vesna is the very Vesna who, in some epilepsy free dimension, designated me for a lab coat and a test tube and the Jožef Stefan Institute. I'll get to the epilepsy. Read on" (*can you 15*).

The next play, *do me twice*, already diverges from this model. It is still about Simona Semenič, a.k.a., the author herself. However, the main focus of her interest here is on the author as a character embedded into the processes of contemporary theatre production on the so-called independent scene, revealing to us all the intricacies of funding and other bureaucratic procedures. The whole play is "one of those

iwontreturnthemoney shows" (*can you*, 62), those performances that have received funding and thus need to be realised to justify the costs, even though the project is not even close to being properly elaborated and carried out the way its creators have initially envisioned it. Here there are many more stage directions describing the action. The author uses them to reflect on the relationship between the stage and the audience. Furthermore, here we can also see the author directly addressing the spectator or rather, putting herself into their shoes, a device she also used in her later plays (e.g., *we, the european corpses*). The author thus, at the same time, functions as a character; author/director and the one who entices the reader/spectator to enter the play and co-create it.

dear valued audience, while you're arriving, i'm
 watching you
 I see you, before you see me
 i'm sitting by the window, the box office of the
 theatre
 [...]
i smile at you
i'm a little impish
hi hi hi ha ha ha
it feels good, doesn't it feel good
i'm here
for you, highly valued audience (can you 59, 60)

This way, she is directly persuading them to be active and to choose to participate in the event:

i wait if you decide to leave
if there's a provocateur inside you that would do it
but i don't want you to go
even though, yes, i accept all the consequences
of my impish games
because – as i've said – i don't want to return the
money
and here I smile at you impishly (can you 65)

In the end, the spectator/reader becomes part of the theatre event.

*while i'm bringing you the tripe i'm printing the
 text
 while you're eating tripe i'm placing the text in
 your hands
 text that is at the same time the programme and
 the flier, at the end, look
 you look at me, what about this
 well, read, ok, why are you looking at me
 look at the text, not at me
 this is a part of the show, that now you eat tripe
 in peace and read the text in peace (can you 98)*

This inclusion of the reader enables the author to introduce dialogue. However, it is no longer a dialogue between characters but between the stage and the hall. The autopoietic feedback loop that is, in any case, a characteristic of any theatre event is directly addressed here. The text reflects on it, attempts to regulate it or at least point out some of its constituent elements (e.g., addressing the audience, pointing out their emotions, their role in the performance). This participation on the side of the spectator is not completely arbitrary. As Katja Čičigoj notes, indeed, it is to a large degree directed by the author: "The danger of arbitrary meaning is thus replaced by a pragmatic partial determination of the effect: intratextual directing of the situation in which the spectator is pushed into the experience of the zones of indeterminacy of the final effect of the event" (65).

Through this gesture, Simona Semenič, as a character, becomes more solid or rather more clearly outlined and unified. Her coherence is assured first and foremost because the nature of the play in question is autobiographical. Thus, the author's biography represents the external reference that defines this drama character and provides it with a context. Besides, it is about directing the spectator's participation. The possibilities of their participation are limited and anticipated, which narrows down the number of possible interpretations. This element brings us closer to the notion of dramatic text. This aspect, however, is only one of this development. Namely, this way, the same drama character also becomes more fragmented, as questions about the nature of the performance, the relationship between actor and spectator, etc., become attached to the autobiographical narrative or action. Additionally, the announcement of other actresses that are supposed to appear also enters the fictive world of the play, even though this ultimately does not take place: "In addition to myself, three other actresses play me – medea novak, lara jankovič and damjana černe" (*can you* 61).

In the third play from *can you hear me?*, entitled, *the second time*, which premièred on 12 December 2004, in Club Gromka, it is the very beginning that is most significant, as this is the only play of the three in which the time and place of the action and a list of characters are stated. Under *dramatis personae* we can read: *simona semenič, You*. This dialogue partner that already formed in *do me twice* under the address of valued audience is here listed as a proper character. The reader/spectator is thus assigned their own place, their role in the play. Later in the play, we can see a radicalisation of the procedures already described in the case of *do me twice*. The author places herself into different roles ranging from a character telling us their story in a monologue to the dramatist reflecting on dramatic situations, directing the action, wondering about the audience's reactions or even predicting or demanding them.

*dramatis persona simona semenič is entering
i would like to imagine that i enter graciously
and that everything becomes silent when i enter
i'd like to imagine that the air thickens and time
stops, when i graciously step in front of you
but fuck it
i'm beyond exhausted, i've barely slept,
rehearsed all day and ran for 45 minutes (can you 101, 102)*

The active participation of the spectators is first expressed merely as a desire: “*maybe You step up onto the stage and maybe / You approach me and maybe You help me roll up / my sleeve and set the blood pressure measuring / machine*” (*can you* 105). But later, this changes into an order: “*Can you please take that carton and a / felt tip marker and write down the results*” (*can you* 109). Thus the monologue unravels into a kind of quasi-dialogue with the spectator who responds with expected reactions. With this, of course, the intensity of emotions also gradually increases, or rather, the author's biographic tribulations. At three different points, this goes as far as her actually asking for financial contributions from the spectators. For Semenič, this represents a means to assess the success of her survival techniques. One could also say that at the same time, it allows her to measure the power of the established link between the stage and the audience, i.e., the existence of the autopoietic feedback loop. In her final attempt, she concludes: “*well, we're done / i think i did manage to progress a bit / hone my survival tactics some / everything a person needs is, at the end of the / day, an image in gold*” (*can you* 156). And it would appear that it was this kind of contact that the author was looking for the entire time. Not in the sense that she would really be asking for money, but rather for a connection, empathy, understanding: “*now you understand me even if i don't speak at all*” (*Ibid.*).

So the author is the main character in all three plays since these are autobiographical texts performed on stage by the author herself. The connection to the real person and her factual context is thus strongly present, and, correspondingly, so is the representation quality of the text. The plays' predominant form is the monologue, but we can notice a particular development in this respect. While in *I, victim*, the character is a unified figure whose wholeness is guaranteed by the author and her biography, in *do me twice* and *the second time*, her character begins to fall apart. It splits into several communication levels, as it takes on other roles, e.g., the role of the author describing the action in written stage directions, reflecting on her interventions, etc.; first and foremost, she establishes an ever-stronger bond to the reader/spectator. In *the second time*, the latter is even included in the play as one of its characters which allows for the establishment of the quasi-dialogue. "Quasi" because the *You* does not have any written lines, and it is clear that this is meant to be the spectator. Of course, the spectator always participates as a communication partner in any performance. Yet, as a rule, this is not in the role of an actual dialogue partner and even less so as a character. But it would seem that it was precisely with *the second time* that this relationship became crucial to Simona Semenič. As we can discern from some of her later plays, it was here when she started writing and thinking about drama through the spectator's perspective. In such a disposition, the author's position becomes less certain and more dependent on actual readers/spectators. This view implies that in these texts, the legacy of postdramatic theatre is still very much present. It does not, however, in any way diminish the effectiveness of her plays. Quite the contrary, in this way, she is able to address the reader/spectator even more emphatically and immerse them deeper into the action. This way, they also appear to gain more freedom to co-create the theatre event or at least their own interpretation of it. But to what extent is this freedom real? Is the action completely fragmentary, enticing the spectator to emergence, i.e., perfectly contingent emergence of meanings? To get to the bottom of this question, we must consider the remaining two aspects of the three plays.

Above, we have already given some observations about the dramatic form. The plays move from monologue in *I, victim* to a kind of dialogue between Simona Semenič and *You* in *the second time*, by which we do not mean a real dialogue, of course, since *You* does not have any lines, they are, however, being addressed all the time and expected to perform specific actions in reaction to the lines spoken by Simona Semenič. At this point, however, we are more interested in how the author shifts between the lyrical, epic and dramatic elements of the text. How does she mix them up? To find this answer, we should follow the hint that she gives in the introduction to the book where she writes: "What you're reading is not a novel, but it's not a theatre text, either. It is – what, exactly? It's me, trying to talk to you, it's a warm blankie, it's a sofa" (*can you* 9).

All three plays are explicitly autobiographical. Their action describes the author's

life. Even more, it is narrated by the author herself, who also performed the plays herself in the years 2007, 2009 and 2014. Therefore, she talks from and about herself. There is no distance between her and her subject, and this would indicate a lyrical subject. However, she moves closer to a dramatic subject already in *do me twice* and even more so in *the second time*, as here Simona Semenič is a character who clearly communicates with a collective receiver addressed as either *valued audience* or *You*. The action, however, does not unfold before us in the immediate present time. Instead, it is removed from the subject into a more or less distant past for almost all the time in *I, victim* and for most of the time in later works. Such a stance, of course, implies an epic approach. Why does all of this matter? This way, the dramatic subject is no longer completely fragmented, as the author's biography guarantees its solidity and coherence. Besides, the very form of performance introduces a strong presence of the real or rather factual world representing an external reference of the action. This referentiality or representation of something that precedes the theatre event itself and is inscribed into the play's text has recently made a noticeable comeback.

It seems interesting that this combination of lyrical, epic and dramatic actually serves as a basis of a text that emphatically creates tension. It elicits strong emotions from the reader/spectator, which range from compassion prevailing in *I, victim* all the way to cooperation, perhaps even resistance to the "riders' syndicate", as the author designates our current social situation, taking a critical stance. In other words, *the second time* manages to pass a clear political message through a distinctly intimate story and using several procedures from postdramatic theatre.

In his paper "Dramska pisava po postdramskem" (Contemporary Playwrights after the Post-dramatic Turn), Tomaž Toporišič analyses plays by Anja Hilling, Milena Marković and Simona Semenič and detects three approaches to overcoming no-longer-dramatic texts. The impossibility of communication and the deconstruction of body and voice in the case of Anja Hilling, who fragments dialogues and stage directions and mixes them all up; the deconstruction and reconstruction of the representation of reality in plays by Simona Semenič, where we can notice several postdramatic procedures which the author composes into effective critical texts; the contamination with the lyrical and the epic in Milena Marković's work. In Semenič's three plays considered here, it would appear that one can encounter all of these features. We notice the close interweaving of dramatic elements with lyrical and epic ones, a gradual reduction of the division between dialogue and stage directions, and, in the end, fragmentation, involving the spectator into the action proper and the manipulation of emotions, which is supposed to produce meaning. We have already shown to what extent this meaning is consistent and directed from the part of the dramatist in our analysis of the character and monologue/dialogue, which by transitioning from fiction to reality, both approach the dramatic textual form.

But what about dramatic action? Is the action of the plays completely open, with each recipient inferring its meaning by themselves, or does the text offer some directions which guide its reception? Even though the three texts in question are explicitly fragmentary and appear to be completely open in their meaning, they nevertheless include a strong common thread; the author's biography binds them together. Since all the plays build on Simona Semenič's real life, its understanding is not completely open. Instead, it is built on an emotional response to the author's health issues and financial and creative problems.

Even though the spectator feels compassion towards her, and Semenič with each play involves them more and more into the action itself, one cannot stay at this intimate level. At several points, the author indulges in self-pity and apathy: "i figure the only thing i can try / that i have left / that can save me / are [...] to produce another diagnosis / that i can write a new episode in the victim's self / narrative" (55). Because of this, the anxiety and empathy felt by the receiver most likely relax into a critique of the authority or rather the system, which is the final cause of all of the author's hardships. As she puts it herself: "Using personal incidents, these three texts more or less curse the system in which we're currently living" (10). And the latter is represented by "not the coachmen's syndicate, let's call it the riders' syndicate. Because riders also hold reins in their hands, right?" (12).

I, victim is all about the realisation that the author has been the victim of several absurd medical procedures which endeavoured to deal with her several diagnoses for good (wetting the bed, genital herpes and epilepsy). This victimisation intensifies even further in the book edition, as the author additionally escalates the described situations in her commentaries. Here she mentions the cranial surgery that she underwent in 1991, aged 16, to eliminate her epilepsy for good, as the doctor assured her. Instead, this resulted in even stronger seizures. In her commentary, she reveals to us that the procedure was listed in her neurological results as exploratory craniotomy, that is, a diagnostic procedure that allows insight into the state of the disease and decision regarding treatment. Thus, she concludes: "They played doctors up there. Had they played doctors down there, it would constitute abuse, but because they played up there, it's exploratory craniotomy" (31).

The play *do me twice* is a so-called *iwontreturnthemoney* show that the author must do to justify the funding she has received. A fragmentary text combines filled-out forms for public tenders, several additional explanations, pleas and demands included during the selection and funding procedures with a running commentary of the live-action. It is a kind of collage that forces the recipient into ascribing meaning to it by themselves. However, this is not left entirely to their will, as the play keeps returning to the difficult conditions of cultural production and thus reveals the diverse survival

tactics in non-governmental production and its actors, primarily oriented towards hyperproduction, and, thus, also negligence and spur-of-the-moment solutions. One such tactic is also the very text/performance in question, which the author does not try to deny:

because you don't have to stay, there's nothing
 cathartic in front of you tonight
 except finding out why tripe
 and tucking into it
 basically, even if you decide to go, i'll stay here a
 spell, because i have to finish this work (63)

But of course, at the same time, she also skilfully offers the spectator a specific target of their discomfort – the system, as it is the very manner of funding and scantiness thereof that is the reason that she is unable to make a decent living with her work, despite her international success (she ran out of time to prepare the performance due to several engagements abroad and her attendance of the most important festivals in Slovenia) and an indisputable reputation as a playwright.

In *the second time*, we reach a similar result, albeit through different tactics. The reader/spectator is much more directly involved in the action – they are listed as *You* in the list of characters, they are asked to assist in measuring the author's blood, to write down the results and to contribute money to increase the author's budget. Besides, Simona Semenič here no longer appears directly as a victim. While the motif is still present first as an echo of the previous two texts and later through all her diagnoses and financial tribulations representing a kind of leitmotif, her attitude here is the polar opposite.

so, victim was a show about some of my
 diseases, problems, burdens as i used to call
 them in 2007
 today i'm not calling them that anymore
 today i call them blessings
 because i've learned that things that may look
 like difficulties are actually gifts
 gifts one needs to unwrap in the right way to
 become a support and a guideline (115)

Her approach, which used to be based on her victim role and evoking sympathy, has evolved into a more active one. Now she takes charge of her physical condition,

takes up running, quits smoking ... And, of course, such an active attitude is also reflected in her professional and creative life. The performance *the second time* describes survival tactics at all levels. Thus, she goes on a strike as a patient “until the riders’ syndicate sorts out the public health care system so it is fit for a social state governed by the rule of law” (141). What she is calling for is a transformation of society that would enable everyone to access quality medical care (paid-sick leave for both regularly employed and self-employed), basic financial independence or decent monthly income so that people would not be so stressed out and get sick because of it, and make, e.g., psychotherapy covered by the public health insurance.

At this point, her intimate story turns into a social agenda to which the receiver must take a stance. The conclusion is just as provocative: here, Semenič first puts her body marked by numerous diagnoses and procedures on display to the audience and then dresses it up in gold (from underwear to an evening dress and shoes). This act brings to mind emancipation or the recognition of her value, on the one hand. On the other hand, it recalls prostitution, leads to her final request for contributions. And then come the lines:

well, we’re done
 i think i did manage to progress a bit
 on my survival tactics
 everything a person needs is, at the end of the day,
 an image in gold (156)

Thus it is clear that as far as their meaning is concerned, these plays are not completely open. Their structure directs the reader/spectator’s reception and successfully passes a powerful socially critical message. This message does not function as agitational or didactic. It is based on an honest, intimate story and the skilful manipulation of emotions that the author achieves through several post-dramatic procedures.

Conclusion

At this point, we can attempt to answer our two starting questions. Are these dramas still based on some external reference? And is this about representation or presence? At first sight, the answer might appear straightforward. Of course, the three texts published in *can you hear me?* establish some kind of external reference. First and foremost, they refer to the author's biography and her real life. Thus, they directly refer to specific problems within contemporary society, particularly the questions of authority, the functionality of the healthcare system and the area of cultural production.

However, these plays do not depict to the reader/spectator a world that would be separated from them and into which they would supposedly have to immerse themselves or reflect upon it. Instead, Semenič keeps involving them in the dramatic action. She demands that the spectator take an active role, be it direct action within the live performance or an emotional response. This response crucially establishes the understanding of the play, which means that a kind of reciprocal functioning of both representation and presentation is at work here. What we saw as an opposition (see Fischer-Lichte) is entering this new cycle as conjunction. The drama is bringing back referentiality and is able to produce a coherent message, while at the same time, it is marked by the experience of the post-dramatic. It no longer counts with the spectator's aesthetic distance and disinterested contemplation in a Kantian sense, nor with distance as a result of the alienation effect (Brecht), which is supposed to keep the spectator within the domain of rational reflection. Instead, it engages the recipient at an emotional level and places them in the position of a co-creator of meaning, even if this participation is to some extent directed. The final result is a strong social criticism, but one built on personal experience which engages the spectator at an emotional level.

To gain deeper insight into Simona Semenič's oscillating between post-dramatic and dramatic writing, we should also analyse her other plays that are, to a greater extent, based on dialogue and stage directions. More importantly, on fictive stories and characters. This analysis, however, reaches beyond the purpose of this paper. The fact is that, similarly to some other European dramatists, Simona Semenič is searching for new forms of writing. Forms that would, besides strongly affecting the spectator and engaging them, also allow for the articulation of clear messages about ourselves and the world in which we live.

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As contemporary theatre and new production models are now being evaluated with more regard to community empowerment, the importance of proper tools for evaluation of the process has increased. The article explored the community youth theatre practices of the Community Youth Cultural Centre (CYCC) of the National Commission on Culture (NCC) in Ghana. We examined the role of the youth theatre at CYCC in the light of community empowerment. Using the qualitative case study design, six artists with a minimum of five years and a maximum of thirty years of work experience with the CYCC were interviewed. Performance activities and documents of the CYCC were also observed and analysed. The findings revealed four themes: Objectives of the centre; Youth theatre practices; Abibigoro/puppetry theatre models; and non-formal and cultural education. It was found that staff and artists at the CYCC employed diverse theatrical modes to facilitate community empowerment processes. The study recommends that cultural and creative centres in Ghana should harness the potentials of the community youth theatre, develop community-specific and context-driven performance models to support artistic-aesthetic-cultural and non-formal education processes to enhance our collective strive for community empowerment in Ghana.

Keywords: community, empowerment, people, theatre in Ghana, youth theatre

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Youth Theatre and Community Empowerment in Ghana

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Introduction

Contemporary theatre and new production models have increasingly received emphasis in recent times because of the new and significant ways in which they contribute to community empowerment processes in Africa (Abah 435; Nyatuame 26; Yankah 87). Despite this recent emphasis, in Ghana, contemporary theatre practices like youth theatre are largely absent in existing literature. There is, however, ample evidence to the effect that youth theatre contributes to people's empowerment (Hughes & Wilson 57; Jensen 146; Leaf & Ngo 1; Michael Richardson 1; Shulamith Lev-Aladgem 291). Lev-Aladgem (277, 291) and Hughes and Wilson (57) affirm the socio-cultural, political and personal benefits of youth theatre, which have implications for community empowerment purposes. However, in the current state of the literature in Ghana, there is almost no study devoted to youth theatre practices, particularly on the experiences of the only state-owned Community Youth Cultural Centre (CYCC) in Ghana. Therefore, the article deals with an interesting and original issue since available literature on the CYCC of Ghana is almost non-existent. This article thus has the potential to become a significant contribution to the literature in this regard.

The rest of the article is structured into various sections. Firstly, we present the background and summarise the conceptual and empirical review to contextualise the study. In the second section, we introduce the methodological procedures to justify the relevance of using an interpretive case study to explore the youth theatre experiences of the CYCC in the light of community empowerment interests. In this section, we also justify our reasons for selecting the CYCC as a case for this study. Though we admit the limitations of this exploratory study which relies heavily on data mainly from interviews, observations and documents (online archives and sources), the article, nonetheless, provides insight into other theatre systems in the global south, particularly contemporary theatre practices such as youth theatre in a

developing nation such as Ghana in West Africa. In the final section, we present the results and discussions to inform conclusions and recommendations derived.

In this article, we explore the youth theatre practices of the CYCC, located in a deprived community in the Accra metropolis of Ghana, to examine the role of the youth theatre at CYCC in the light of community empowerment processes. To achieve this purpose, the following research questions were raised:

1. What are the objectives of the Community Youth Cultural Centre (CYCC) in Ghana?
2. How does the CYCC engage in youth theatre practices in Ghana?
3. What contemporary theatre models influence youth theatre practices of the CYCC?
4. How does the youth theatre of CYCC serve community empowerment processes in Ghana?

Theatre in Ghana

Ghana boasts of unique, rich and diverse cultural identity and heritage. These find expression in cultural forms and the creative industry. Key among creative offerings from Ghana's cultural industry is the performing arts, comprising music, dance, drama and masquerade performances, among others. A vital component of Ghana's performing art forms is the art of theatre, which plays significant roles in the socio-cultural, economic, political and environmental development of the country (Bello, 3, Commey Fio, 33; Asare, 10).

As is characteristic of many African countries, Ghana has a unique theatrical culture. Theatrical traditions in Ghana may be grouped under the following periods: pre-colonial, post-colonial, pre-independence and post-independence. Owing to this, theatre in Ghana reflects the nature and values of the Ghanaian society as are manifested in her art and culture. Different dramatic and theatrical forms could be identified in the theatrical culture of Ghana. Yankah identifies three distinctive forms of drama and theatre which have undergone an evolution, namely: literary theatre, commercial theatre, popular theatre and theatre for development (57). Asiedu also identifies traditional (indigenous) theatre, literary theatre, popular theatre/concert party and theatre for development as forms of theatre in Ghana (5). Traditional/indigenous theatre, literary theatre, conventional theatre, popular theatre, theatre for development can be recognised as various forms depicting the nature of the theatrical culture of Ghana. These theatrical forms are still susceptible to evolution as a result of the influence of colonialism and its associated Western cultural influences as much as demands of the changing circumstances and current times. Emerging from the current practices of theatre in Ghana is the youth theatre culture, championed mainly

by the CYCC, some centres of national culture (CNCs) and a few Senior High Schools in Ghana. The diverse theatrical forms and the evolution of indigenous theatre forms reflect the uniqueness of Ghanaian theatrical tradition and the nature of drama and theatre in contemporary Ghana. Theatre in Ghana plays significant roles in the socio-cultural, economic, political and environmental development of the country (Bello 3, Commey Fio 33; Asare 10), particularly in community empowerment efforts.

Community empowerment

Scholars in development studies and development communication observe that one's participation in development processes has largely influenced trends in development thinking, paradigms, strategies and practices in the 1960s and 1970s and gathered renewed strength in the 1990s (Balme 3; Yankah 15). Community empowerment interests continue to influence trends in development thinking, paradigms, strategies and practices (Balme 3; Yankah 15). Ghana's development agenda over the years and in recent times have been tailored towards people-centred or human-centred paradigms and, by extension, community empowerment (Nyatuame 218). Sloman intimates that the 1960s and 1970s witnessed a paradigm shift in the active use of theatre as a tool for universal community development due to the adoption of greater participation practices (8).

Grassroots participation and empowerment present alternative approaches to development theory (thinking and processes). The individual and the society and their cultural structures have become the focus of attention in contemporary discussions on community empowerment and development communication. Theatre presents a practical dimension to this development approaches as it is culture-related, people-centred and creative. Smith-Autard posits that: "Art is an important aspect of culture, and should therefore be valued not only for its aesthetic and artistic character but as a teacher of and about culture" (36). Reimer also draws attention to the influence of culture on a particular conceptual view of art (5). Artworks are associated with their socio-cultural contexts. They have culturally defined meanings, which inform the basis of expressions in such art forms. The youth need guidance to imbibe and apply culturally defined meanings, artistic traditions, styles and presentations in such artistic forms to reveal how such meanings, traditions and styles have evolved and developed over time. So cultural education seeks to emphasise the socio-cultural and political context of artworks as it pertains to all cultures. And this underscores the significance of context to the form and value, the processes, and the referents of artworks of all cultures at all times. Since artistic and cultural expressions are rich and diverse in Africa, particularly Ghana, it is imperative for the youth in Ghana to familiarise themselves with traditions and practices that underpin the theatrical

culture of Ghana. The implications are of much significance to this study in that cultural education is core to community empowerment goals as enshrined in the Cultural Policy [document] of Ghana (NCC 10).

Theatre as cultural education should aim at empowering all people in Ghana, particularly the youth, in recognising, exploring, understanding, and suitably applying their own cultural assumptions and values (Smith-Autard as cited by Nyatuame 75). The youth may thus imbibe values and attitudes that are consistent with the richness of their arts and culture. Theatre as cultural education empowers target communities and vulnerable populations like the youth to appreciate the transitory and dynamic nature of culture and society as well as the processes and potential for socio-cultural change (76). This change may be facilitated through positive cultural – specifically, contemporary theatrical – practices and models like the youth theatre experience.

The practice of youth theatre

Researchers on the practice of youth theatre have espoused different perspectives. Such views provide practical issues bordering on the concept of youth theatre; its nature and purpose; activities associated with the practice; benefits of youth theatre and its applications; conditions necessitating the practice; strategies for managing youth theatre in different contexts; types and range of contexts; and approaches to youth theatre. Shulamith Lev-Aladgem (291) and Michael Richardson (1) provide interesting and valuable perspectives on the practice to underscore the educational and social development benefits of youth theatre to project the field as a growing area of study in the broader discourse and practice of theatre arts. Hence, the concept of youth theatre practice has attracted significant attention in global scholarship in recent times (Hughes & Wilson 57; Jensen 146; Leaf & Ngo 1; Lev-Aladgem 276; Richardson 1; Pearson & Thomas 2).

The practice of youth theatre is described by some scholars as socio-culturally and politically related (Lev-Aladgem 276–277). Lev-Aladgem notes that the practice requires conditions that are shaped and motivated by social concerns, cultural issues and political perspectives (277). Disenchanted youth tend to need guided activity and are thus likely to see benefits from the socio-psychological advantages of participation in theatre-centred activities. Similarly, Hughes and Wilson describe the term “youth theatre” as “a wide variety of organisations that engage young people in theatre-related activities in their own time” (57). Consequently, Richardson considers youth theatre as “drama for life” (5) and also as a processual enterprise, requiring “proper tools for evaluating the process” (10). Thus, practitioners of youth theatre need to systematically contextualise structure and evaluate their practices

as a mode of “non-formal education” (10) as much as artistic-aesthetic-cultural education (Smith-Artaud 30-36; Nyatuame 223). Richardson thus argued that local authorities tend to lend support to process-based, voluntary, non-formal education artistic enterprises with the capacity to prioritise social and personal development. What modes of practice usually guide the practice?

Richardson identifies diverse approaches to the practice of youth theatre. Emergent from these are four categories, which have been noted as the modes informing the practice. The first mode identifies theatre arts groups that privilege skill acquisition for creating and performing. The second is the community projects, concerned with the promotion of local collaboration and cooperation. Conversely, the third approach, youth arts groups, is mainly geared toward the social and personal growth of participants, while users of the fourth approach, applied theatre, employ it as a teaching tool to examine contemporary issues (3). Relatedly, Leaf and Ngo (3) explored community-based youth theatre practice in a social justice context, where youth participants confronted and grappled with issues of diversity and difference. The study sheds light on how artistic practice can be appropriated as a tool in the context of social injustices and to counteract educational contexts that reproduce inequality. The implications relate to the knowledge base of out-of-school learning contexts that inform contemporary approaches to learning in the arts (1).

Regardless of the diversity of the approaches, each of these methods to youth theatre has the potential capacity to generate purposeful educational and social environments drawing children and young people together in theatre-specific projects. Theatre-related processes encourage informal learning, activity and participation due to their learner-led and task-orientated nature (3, 16). The socio-psychological benefits of participating in theatre-centred activities (5) and as a model of empowerment (Lev-Aladgem 291) cannot be overestimated. Hughes and Wilson provide empirical insight into the impact of youth theatre on young people’s personal and social development (57). This insight lends support to the practice of youth theatre within the context of youth transitions, where the identified skills, capacities and resources that help young people make successful transitions to adulthood in the current social and economic climate can be explored and harnessed.

To support the benefits of youth theatre, Pearson and Thomas investigate the relationship between youth theatres and Connexions, a “new government initiative for 13–19 year olds [sic], designed to improve and enhance support for them at this key stage during their lives” (2). The study notes, “youth theatres are well placed to offer rich and rewarding experiences for young people. This process of ‘referring’ young people to a youth theatre for a variable period of time was a key concept which was tested in the research” (2). It is concluded that “youth theatres are in a strong

position to contribute to Connexions work and can do a great deal to enhance the opportunities for personal development for young people.” (3) The report further espouses the view that “youth theatres are in an excellent position to contribute to the work of Connexions partnerships” (3).

While related studies discuss youth theatre in a community-based context, Jensen’s perspective provides another range of context of the experience in professional youth theatre spaces, where diverse media forms and mediating technological systems of representation could be explored (146). Jensen explores participatory youth theatre performance within the discourse of convergence culture and learning. She “posits that new forms of performativity accompany convergence culture and provide opportunities for new types of learning and engagement in professional youth theatre spaces” (146). Attention is also drawn to conventional culture in educational theatre settings, which might not escape the culture of new media convergence and further considers youth theatre as a sense-making space for young audiences as they relate to their contemporary experiences. The need to examine applications of youth theatre as both an educational medium and means of creative expression in community performance (1) contexts toward stimulating community empowerment processes is thus brought to the fore to explore and reflect on the Ghanaian situation with youth theatre practices in the case of the CYCC in Ghana.

Youth theatre in Ghana

Commey, reporting in *Cultural policy and performing arts promotion: A study of the centre for National Theatre, Cape Coast*, notes that cultural festivals for junior and senior high schools were one of the major programmes on the calendar of the cultural unit of the Ghana Education Service in the National Cultural Festival event (54). This event is usually organised annually among first and second cycle educational institutions. Before the national event, the festival is generally organised at the zonal, district and regional levels, where outstanding participating schools and individual students are selected to represent their respective regions at the national festival. According to Aguri, the main objectives of the cultural unit under the Education Ministry are to achieve the following:

- a. Unearth those creative talents which otherwise would remain unknown;
- b. Guide and strengthen the capabilities of those inborn potentials in the young artists and nurture them into professionals;
- c. Use the arts as a tool to instil a sense of responsibility and strengthen Ghana’s national identity;

- d. Educate and create awareness in pupils/students on social vices through arts and cultural programmes and activities; and
- e. To encourage stakeholders of cultural education to have an attitudinal change towards Ghana's own culture through workshops, seminars, etc. (19)

Evidently, youth theatre practice in Ghana is rooted in cultural and artistic education to facilitate cultural intervention processes targeted at causing social change, especially among the vulnerable youth populations. Cultural education through formal and non-formal educational processes have been exploited by state institutions like the educational ministry in Ghana to whip up the interest of young people in cultural activities, as in the case of youth theatre. In Ghana, the practice has evolved into dynamic cultural interventions that blend art with action, aesthetics with pragmatism, and community participation in stimulating social change and transformation.

Additionally, youth theatre activities in Ghana usually occur in locations such as community centres, centres of national culture (CNCs), community youth cultural centre (CYCC), educational settings (Senior High Schools, [SHSs]), churches, prisons and rehabilitation centres, with which marginalised youthful groups are usually engaged. In the model/practice of the Community Youth Cultural Centre (CYCC) in particular, facilitators and volunteers mobilise a group of youths into an ensemble of performers to create and improvise community performances through creative processes of group consolidation, improvisations, play development and rehearsals, and productions of public/community performances. Poetry recitals and drum appellations were reported to have been some of the theatrical activities performed by some of the Senior High Schools in the Cape Coast metropolis of Ghana during the 2016 edition of the Central Regional Cultural Festival in Cape Coast (Commey Fio 56). Also, some of the programme activities, which are reported to have been organised by some of the Centres for National Culture (CNCs), particularly in the Cape Coast metropolis, are Students' Drama Festival (91). Popularly referred to as STUDRAFEST, the Students' Drama Festival started in the late 1980s as a result of a paper presented by the late Efua Sutherland in 1980. The idea for the establishment of STUDRAFEST was to launch a process whereby with or without formal training in playwriting and acting, students would write and act out a play for appreciation. The best play, actor, actress and others would then be harnessed for further training and to keep the tradition going (91). Though the Centre for National Culture (CNC) in Cape Coast has suffered some setbacks in organising the STUDRAFEST event over the years, the programme has since become an annual event held on a competitive basis for second cycle schools in the Central Region of Ghana (92). The rationale has been to offer a medium for talents to be exposed. The festival works towards achieving this objective by guiding youth to exhibit their potentials more usefully. Some senior high schools have made efforts to constantly participate in STUDRAFEST since its relaunch in 1995 (92).

Efforts have been made to involve some of the youths of Ghana in theatre-related activities. Traces of youth theatre activities may be observed in formal educational activities and programmes of some Ghanaian high schools as well as in youth theatre practices of the CYCC. The need to examine the case of the CYCC in the light of youth theatre and community empowerment purposes is thus pertinent given that the CYCC is the only cultural centre in Ghana explicitly devoted to serving community youth interests. However, in the current state of the literature, there is almost no study devoted to the CYCC. Therefore, the article deals with an interesting and original issue since available literature on the CYCC in Ghana is almost non-existent. The study thus has the potential to become a significant contribution to the literature in this regard. The following section presents a brief historical account of the CYCC to place the discourse in proper context.

The Community Youth Cultural Centre (CYCC)

The Community Youth Cultural Centre (CYCC) was established in 1989 in Accra, Ghana, under the mandate of the National Commission on Culture and the Ministry of Youth and Sports at the time (CYCC 1). At present, CYCC is a cultural agency of the National Commission on Culture (NCC) under the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Creative Arts in Ghana. The motivation is to embark on a community youth cultural programme designed to address the socio-cultural needs and aspirations of the young people of Ghana. This is further to create conditions that will enable the youth to develop their creative abilities and empower them to contribute meaningfully to the nation's development. Such recognition is to tap the potentials of the youth as a very crucial social category for the national interest. It is anticipated that CYCC will respond to the daily aspirations and anxieties of the youth population in the country and in the long term to create the basis for the evolution of a Youth Cultural Movement that is national in character and identity as well as internationalist in outlook (Ibid.). The initial thrust of the programme is to concentrate on fruitfully engaging young people during their recreational and leisure times. Today, programme events of CYCC are mainly out-of-school activities, which are creatively and culturally inclined.

The functions of CYCC are to respond to the needs of the youth, identify and nurture talents and creative potentials of young people, promote positive values among the youth and prepare them as responsible human resources and a resource for development and set the basis for the evolution of a youth cultural movement in Ghana (Ibid.). The target population of CYCC are the entire youth in the country, with the main focus being the socially vulnerable population of the youth in Ghana. The activities of CYCC include regular, weekend, and special programmes. Regular programme activities include orientation sessions; performing arts (traditional and

contemporary dance, music, drama, poetry and puppetry); fine art and cottage craft; physical culture, library provisions; excursions and environmental activities; and video shows. Weekend programmes are mainly diverse community outreach activities comprising various artistic events organised particularly on weekends to whip up community participation and interest in youth programmes (6) with the centre. As an important component of the activities of CYCC, special programmes mainly involve vacation camps purposely organised to fully engage the attention and interest of the youth during holiday periods. Special programmes also include programmes for special occasions and youth festivals (7).

In light of the preceding, the need to explore the current situation of the CYCC regarding how it is employing youth theatre practice towards community empowerment in marginalised settings in Ghana is brought to bear. The article considers the CYCC as one of the settings for youth theatre activities in Ghana in light of the Ghanaian model of cultural centres/centres of national culture (CNCs) as CCIs for cultural education (Asare 291).

Methods and procedures

This interpretative case study explored the role of the CYCC in promoting youth theatre for community empowerment in Ghana. The case study was justified by concerns raised on the increasing importance of proper tools for evaluation of contemporary theatre and production models toward community empowerment, particularly on criticisms of the role of cultural and creative arts institutions (CCIs) in the socio-cultural political needs of Ghana (Asare 5; Bello 3; Commey 4). Data was collected and analysed from interviews (of key informants), observations of programme activities of CYCC and, available documents (print and online archives of CYCC) regarding youth theatre activities of the CYCC in light of community empowerment in Ghana.

The study was undertaken at the CYCC in the Accra metropolis of the Greater Accra region of Ghana, during the 2018/2019 youth camp activities, within a time frame of approximately two years. The centre was purposively selected since it is arguably the only community youth cultural centre established by the government of Ghana through the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Arts and Culture with the mandate to address the needs and social aspirations of particularly the youth in some of the underprivileged settings in Accra, Ghana (CYCC 1). Some of the staff (administrator) and artists (dancer, drummer, choreographer, puppeteer and actor) of the centre participated in the study. A total of six respondents (five males; one female within the age group of 29 to 56 years) were available for interviews. They were the personnel with the CYCC and directly involved in the daily activities of the youth theatre practice

of the centre at the time of the study. The artists may be described as experienced personnel since they had been practising their art with the CYCC for a minimum of five years and a maximum of thirty years. The six respondents participated in the interview sessions about how the CYCC engages in youth theatre practices to support community empowerment processes. On average, about 250 youth participants were involved in the programmes observed and described; 110 teens and 140 children. The artists and administrator were interviewed at one stage or the other during the period of the study. The interview arrangement was a semi-structured interview guide enabling all the participants to respond to the same set of basic questions bordering on the study's key research questions.

To minimise any form of biases, the participants at CYCC were given the opportunity to respond to the same set of basic questions. The responses, observations and documents of the artists and personnel on the youth theatre culture of CYCC were subsequently linked to broader concerns. However, the newly emerging issues from the interviews and observations were further probed during the interviews.

The interview responses of each participant, based on the role of CYCC in promoting youth theatre for community empowerment in Ghana, were transcribed. Pictures and video recordings of some of the programme activities of the centre were also reviewed (and described) in line with the nature (type), purpose, place/venue/location, time/period/occasion and context of performances. Codes and broader themes were then generated to inform meanings derived from the data. Specific themes were subsequently developed based on the emergent meanings derived from the participants' explanations, which were analysed and further discussed to affirm and or counter perspectives espoused in the related literature that was reviewed.

Results of the study

The research questions sought to explore the role of CYCC in supporting youth theatre for community empowerment in Ghana; leading to four themes or categories as were identified in the qualitative interviews, observations and documents, namely:

1. Objectives of the centre;
2. Youth theatre practices;
3. Abibigoro/puppetry theatre models; and
4. Non-formal and cultural education.

Objectives of the centre

The extracts from the interviews and documents highlight the knowledge the participants have about the youth theatre practice at CYCC. Many of the accounts given by the facilitators show that they share the view that many of the training, skills and capacities developed at the CYCC go a long way to support the goals and objectives of the cultural centre as mandated by the NCC and the government. According to the Cultural Policy of Ghana, this is “To enhance Ghanaian cultural life and develop cultural programmes to contribute to the nation’s human development and material progress through heritage preservation, conservation, promotion and the use of traditional, modern arts and crafts to create wealth and alleviate poverty” (NCC 10). Thus, the youth development and training programmes of the CYCC, in particular, support the socio-cultural needs and aspirations of the youth in Ghana. The participants were familiar with the CYCC in general and the youth theatre practice in particular at the centre. This familiarity is because one of the facilitators had been with the CYCC for nearly thirty years, two for ten years, two for six years, and the other for five years. The Concept Note document on CYCC as developed by the centre in 2020 notes the following objectives of the CYCC:

- a. To respond to and satisfy the out-of-school recreational and leisure time need of the youth.
- b. To identify and realise the latent talents of the young people.
- c. To enhance the creative and indeed cultural abilities of the youth and channel their energies into positive use.
- d. To promote the positive values of patriotism, cooperation and internationalism among the youth.
- e. To prepare the youth as an important human resource for development.
- f. To set the basis for the evolution of the Youth Cultural Movement in the country (CYCC 2).

Facilitators highlighted several personal and social development opportunities and skills in the interviews as arising from CYCC. These include: to enhance the creative abilities of the youth; promote cultural values; prepare them as an important human resource for development; good training grounds for professional development for youths in the creative arts economy. Some of the facilitators noted that they are convinced about the mandate of the CYCC as a centre for youth development. For instance, Kuuku explained:

CYCC is a community-based centre that involves community leaders, stakeholders, schools and the general populace to ensure an alliance and a base for community engagement and discussions. Its objectives was [sic] to enhance the creative abilities

of the youth, promote cultural values, the spirit of patriotism, and prepare them as an important human resource for development. (Respondent 1, CYCC)

In agreement, another artist and facilitator of the centre observed in an interview that attaining these objectives is becoming much more challenging due to inadequate support and less commitment from the state authorities. Nuno, for instance, related:

In my view, the CYCC could have or can easily pass as a good training ground for professional development for youths in the creative arts economy. But, unfortunately, lack of a realistic commitment towards developing our creative and cultural art forms is challenging it as an engine of social and economic development (Respondent 2, CYCC).

Youth development and theatre practices

Many artists and facilitators invest a great deal of time and energy in the affairs of the CYCC. Best practices require cultural centres to provide the needed opportunities to harness and support the potentials of marginalised youths in underprivileged communities. Arrangements to put in place a conducive and work-like, professional and creative environment and provisions to support expectations, self-motivation, and commitment from the youth are brought to bear. Vacation camps, reading clinics, study sessions, sporting activities, skills development and total theatre experiences provide the youth with the needed structures to tap, harness and exploit their latent talents. To the extent that adequate provision is made for these facilities, the youth are most likely to be committed, enthusiastic about having a share, prepared, participate, perform, team up with peers from all walks of life, exchange ideas and feelings, take risks, be decisive, consistent and responsible. The following pictures are evidence of some of the programme activities of the CYCC.



Sporting (basketball) activities at CYCC

(Source: <https://www.facebook.com/CYCCVOCATIONAL/>)



Bead making training: CYCC Vacation Camp 2019, CYCC, Accra.

(Source: Researchers' Archive (fieldwork), 2019)



Library programmes at CYCC: Reading and study sessions, homework exercises, extra tutoring session and literacy work

(Source: Researchers' Archive (fieldwork), 2018)

Such programmes include but are not limited to the following: performing arts, fine art and cottage craft, physical culture and library programmes. Performing arts activities comprise lessons on traditional and contemporary dances, music, drama poetry as well as puppetry. Per the context of this study, the operational definition of youth theatre encapsulates all these forms of performances. Youth development

programmes of the CYCC thus comprised any internal and external training that enhanced capacity building and community empowerment for the youth.

Abibigoro and puppetry theatre

Explicit in CYCC theatre practices is Mohammed ben Abdallah's abibigoro concept and technique (Abdallah 23; Afful 4; Appiah-Adjei 4). Mohamed ben Abdallah, the Ghanaian playwright who happened to be a student of Efua Sutherland, developed the Abibigoro concept, which drives on African aesthetics of storytelling tradition, particularly the use of the narrator technique, music, dance, drama, audience participation and other elements to heighten actor/audience interaction and conceptualise this black (African) theatre. Abdallah, in the process, has expanded the frontiers of Sutherland's Anansegoro concept (Addo 50) and theatre-making practice. According to Respondent 1, an artist (actor) with the centre, "CYCC combines contemporary African theatre, storytelling, musical forms and dance into a modern form of theatre. Its unique style is based on the Abdallah concept of Abibigoro, which infuses music, dance and drama to bridge the gaps between the traditional and the modern."

In addition, one of the most experienced artists and staff members of the centre, a puppeteer, says:

They [CYCC] teach the children a lot of things. Yes, that one too [theatre and the performing arts], they teach it. They teach drumming, dancing, and theatre, too. Why puppetry? Puppetry does attract the children, and puppetry does send [informative and educative] messages. At the same time that you are entertaining the crowd [the audiences], the children, they are learning something from it. Puppetry is so special in terms of educating the public. So the reason why puppetry is so special is that with puppetry, we do it in such a way that it represents art and reality in the form of human needs. And it is something that is very interesting, and the children love it (Respondent 4, CYCC).

Clearly, puppetry theatre emerges as a key contemporary performance model that informs the youth theatre works of the CYCC. In the process, the performing arts experience and the theatre-making process provides a unique opportunity for the youth to explore feelings, thoughts, experiences, attitudes and behaviour in a lively context that is reflective of their everyday life. Such platforms become avenues for the youth to be assisted in expressing and managing difficult feelings. The concept and process of community youth theatre provide the youth with positive attributes as self-development, confidence, tolerance and the likes as they benefit from the role-playing experiences. Such levels of participation and engagement with

familiar and unfamiliar people and experiences are thus crucial to the transitional development processes of the youth as they advance toward negotiating socio-cultural exigencies like coexistence and diversity in the contemporary world. In effect, participation in the youth theatre experience becomes a means to an end for the youths of the CYCC. In an interview with participants on the theatre forms of the CYCC, an artist (an actor) related thus:

CYCC combines contemporary African theatre, storytelling, musical forms and dance into a modern form of theatre. Its unique style is based on the Abdallah concept of Abibigoro which infuses music, dance and drama to bridge the gaps between the traditional and the modern. This technique has processes, which has its fundamentals in role-play, games, storytelling, musical forms, etc. Improvisation is central in the practice of Abibigoro. (Respondent 2, CYCC)

In support of the above view, a choreographer and theatre director and facilitator of many of the dance theatres of the CYCC recounted the following:

Mohamed Ibn Abdallah, the Ghanaian playwright who happened to be a student of Efua Sutherland, developed the Abibigoro concept to heighten actor/audience interaction and conceptualise the African theatre. I have been using these techniques for the past fifteen years as a dancer, choreographer and theatre director to date. (Respondent 1, CYCC)

It is clear from the above views that the youth theatre culture of CYCC is influenced by the total African theatre configuration, Abibigoro performance aesthetics, popular theatre, community theatre for change outreach, and community participation. Consequently, theatrical activities of the CYCC take the form of traditional and contemporary dances, music, drama poetry as well as puppetry. For facilitators, the youth theatre experience provides a significant source of support by facilitating access to training and capacity building in the performing arts. The youths tend to benefit from the creative experiences and expertise of artists and professionals in the creative arts sector. Peers also become supportive mates to other participants within the time and space of the improvisations, rehearsals and performances in a collective context of informal education and empowerment through the artistic-aesthetic-cultural processes. The following photographs demonstrate some youth theatre performances of the CYCC, including total and puppetry theatre.



CYCC Puppetry performance at Jall & Jill International School, Accra, 2019
(Source: Researchers' Archive (fieldwork), 2019)



Dance theatre rehearsals: CYCC Vacation Camp 2019, CYCC, Accra.
(Source: Researchers' Archive (fieldwork), 2019)



CYCC of NCC, located at Kawukudi, Kanda – Accra, Ghana.

(Source: Researchers' Archive (fieldwork), 2018)

Non-formal and cultural education

Cultural and creative centres serve as cultural structures for exploring issues and challenges of everyday life. Youth theatre thus offers a valuable creative process and means to support and attain such ends. Artists of CYCC emphasise the importance of community works, empowerment, creativity, fellow feeling and teamwork through professional and creative experiences with the centre. Some of the past participants (products/graduates) of the centre describe CYCC as somewhere they felt welcomed, accepted, appreciated and supported. So the centre assumes a means by which positive identities and relationships could be established with peers and adults. For some of the volunteer facilitators with the centre, the youth theatre had provided a significant source of empowerment for them to be trained as creative professionals. In an interview with an artist of the centre, the following claims were made:

As a training ground, CYCC has produced some influential performing artists and sports personalities. Sherifa Gunnu [famous Afro musician in Ghana]. Anas Aremeyaw Anas [ace international investigative journalist in Ghana], the Ayew brothers [Andre

Dede Ayew and Jordan Ayew – both as Ghanaian professional footballers who are privileged to be part of the National Football Team of Ghana – the Ghana Black Stars], etc. (Respondent 3, CYCC)

In affirmation of the above claim, a volunteer associate and facilitator of the centre noted the following:

Some of us are products of CYCC. We have taken it upon ourselves to volunteer to help CYCC to get going, even without getting paid. The youth need to be motivated, and you know how volatile the area is, areas like Nima, Mamobi ... So CYCC is to help the youth to be hopeful and see opportunities for today and tomorrow. CYCC is to help empower the youths of the community to have something doing; even the famous Anas Arameyaw Anas [international investigative journalist] is a product of CYCC. (Respondent 2, CYCC)

Another artist and volunteer of the CYCC in charge of dance and dance theatre relates the following experience at the centre to corroborate the works of CYCC:

The centre used to help underprivileged people a lot, but that vision has been killed as a result of partisan politics. If we the products haven't changed positively then it becomes difficult for the people to learn something from us. We have formed a group called Africana Dance Ensemble, and the majority of us are products of CYCC. And I am the current leader and director of the African Dance Ensemble. So, even though CYCC is facing tremendous challenges, it has contributed tremendously to nurturing people like myself and others to become role models for the people [youth]. And that is one of my reasons to continue to volunteer to support the programmes and activities of CYCC, to be there for them. (Respondent 5, CYCC)

Discussion

The findings have shown that community youth theatre is a cultural practice that fits the model of contemporary theatre and has the potential to trigger community empowerment processes. The practice, as demonstrated in the study, provided the Ghanaian youth with participatory, meaningful activities and roles through which they acquired the skills of theatre and teamwork, and achieved recognition from their family members, community people and local and school peers. This finding is consistent with the assertion of Lev-Aladgem that youth theatre identifies a model of empowerment that can serve as a preventive intervention for many of the problems of the youth (291).

The finding on the participation of Ghanaian youth from the Kawukudi, Mamobi and Nima enclaves demonstrates that some Ghanaian youth have their own unique feature as a marginalised and underprivileged specific group. The contemporary epoch of globalisation is characterised by a mass prevalence of marginalisation, unemployment

and poverty, constituting new forms of oppression. Groups of marginalised youth-at-risk are a widespread phenomenon today in many underprivileged settings of Ghanaian towns and cities and, as such, share a common life and behavioural styles. The youth theatre collective at the CYCC, Ghana, is indeed part of this global phenomenon. Nevertheless, marginalised youth find refuge and solace at the CYCC, where they see opportunity in the youth development-oriented programme activities like the youth theatre tradition and the likes in order to live in harmony with the cultural centre, which provides them with fairly comfortable conditions. This finding supports Lev-Aladgem's suggestion that "participating in positive, meaningful activities, learning useful and relevant skills, and being recognised, are the basic aspects of the empowerment cycle" (291).

From the findings on the works of CYCC, it becomes clear that the community youth theatre of the CYCC that was basically initiated as a recreational, yet empowering (educational and developmental) activity, succeeded in generating a more elementary, fundamental tool for everyday life and identity formation of the local people. This discovery is consistent with Leaf and Ngo's observation that youth theatre contributes to the knowledge base of out-of-school learning contexts that inform contemporary approaches to learning in the arts (1).

Emerging from the finding on youth theatre as an avenue for sustainable community empowerment processes is the observation that the community youth theatre of CYCC was an opportunity to manage, present and problematise the uncertainties in the lived experiences of marginalised youths of the lab site. The centre enabled the youth to perform as local subjects and provided them with a critical, reflexive site from which to confront these existences. Community (local) experiences, as this theatre practice revealed, are not essential or pure but heterogeneous and diverse. Thus "community", "empowerment", "youth", "belonging" or "identity" are not solid categories as underprivileged Ghanaian narratives might imagine, but "processes" always in change and always mediated by issues of community, culture, creativity and sustenance. The community youth theatre practice of the CYCC clearly demonstrates that community-based theatre, regardless of the challenges, is, nevertheless, a unique "third space" that facilitates creativity, identity formation, and cultural negotiation; and always engenders hope for a better society. As Richardson professes, the youth theatre of CYCC is an avenue for creative expression in a non-formal educational range of contexts (1). As opined by Hughes and Wilson, the findings here also suggest that "youth theatre has a number of important functions for young people, positively contributing to their personal and social development" (57). So, the findings can be situated within the context of youth transitions research that has identified the skills, capacities and resources that help young people make successful transitions to adulthood in the current social and economic milieu.

Conclusion

In this article, we found that the CYCC, as a cultural agency under the NCC, was established with the statutory mandate of serving as an avenue for youth empowerment processes in Ghana. Among other interests, youth theatre practices inform the works of the centre. Diverse performance (artistic) modes – music, dance, dramatic, Abibigoro technique and puppetry theatre forms were used as creative avenues to facilitate community empowerment processes, particularly for youth development purposes. Thus, the centre has the potential to trigger community empowerment processes through non-formal and cultural education processes. The community youth theatre practice, in particular, offered Ghanaian youth meaningful creative opportunities towards personal and social-educational and development processes in an informal context. This way, the centre has opportunities for young entrepreneurs in the performing arts, skills development, sporting activities, and sustainable empowering processes for the marginalised. The CYCC in Ghana also serves as an enterprise for harnessing talent, imbuing the discipline for patriotic and culturally viable youth and holistically nurturing youth.

The study thus recommends that cultural and creative centres in Ghana should harness the potentials of the community youth centres, develop community-specific and context-driven performance models to support artistic-aesthetic-cultural education and non-formal education processes to enhance our collective strive for community empowerment in Ghana.

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Z razvojem novih produkcijskih modelov in osredičenjem na opolnomočenje skupnosti je narasel pomen razvoja orodij za evalvacijo teh procesov. Prispevek se osredotoča na skupnostno mladinsko gledališče Community Youth Cultural Centre (CYCC) Narodne komisije za kulturo (NCC) v Gani. Raziskali smo vlogo mladinskega gledališča CYCC pri opolnomočenju skupnosti. Uporabili smo kvalitativno študijo primerov šestih umetnikov/posrednikov z najmanj petimi in največ 30 let delovnih izkušenj v CYCC. Opazovali smo tudi uprizoritvene aktivnosti in pregledali dokumente CYCC. Rezultati so razkrili pet tem: podpora družbeno-kulturnim potrebam in prizadevanjem mladih v Gani; programi za razvoj mladih; skupnostno mladinsko gledališče in družbena intervencija za razvoj izobraževanja in družbe. Ugotovili smo, da uprizoritveni umetniki in posredniki v CYCC uporabljajo raznolike gledališke modele ter z njimi omogočajo procese opolnomočenja skupnosti. Raziskava predlaga, naj kulturni in ustvarjalni centri v Gani izrabijo potencialne skupnostnega mladinskega gledališča ter razvijejo na skupnosti in kontekste vezane performativne modele ter tako podprejo umetniško-estetsko-kulturne in neformalne izobraževalne procese, ki vodijo k našemu vzajemnemu cilju opolnomočenja skupnosti v Gani.

Ključne besede: skupnost, opolnomočenje, ljudje, gledališče v Gani, mladinsko gledališče

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Mladinsko gledališče in opolnomočenje skupnosti v Gani

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Kot kaže, poklicna gledališka kultura v Gani ni močno prisotna, čeprav imamo celo vrsto državnih kulturnih institucij in centrov. Vendar pa največkrat v njih niso zaposleni ne igralci ne režiserji. V primerjavi z drugimi afriškimi in evropskimi državami Gana nameni precej manj denarja gledališki dejavnosti. Država je ustanovila Nacionalni svet za kulturo (NSK), ki naj bi imel pregled nad vsemi kulturnimi institucijami pri ohranjanju in promociji umetniške identitete in kulturnega izročila Gane. Ena od teh institucij je tudi gansko nacionalno gledališče, ki je bilo ustanovljeno in deluje kot nacionalna institucija ter razpolaga z gledališkimi prostori in igralskimi ansambli (Commey 47). Zaposluje tudi umetniške vodje in peščico uradnikov. Imajo tudi popoln nabor podpornega umetniškega osebja, ki je zaposleno za nedoločen ali določen čas in lahko ponuja zaželeno storitve. Narava in praksa gledališča v Gani se kažeta v naslednjih žanrih: literarno gledališče, folklorno gledališče, komercialno gledališče, ljudsko gledališče ter gledališče za razvoj (Yankah 56; Asiedu 8). Tisti, ki delujejo v komercialnem gledališču, so večinoma zaposleni za polovični delovni čas, za preživetje pa se zanašajo še na druge poklice. V skladu z razvojem in trendi globalne gledališke scene se tudi gledališče v Gani še vedno razvija, raznolikost gledaliških praks v kontekstu sodobnega gledališča zato močno zaznamujejo sodobni vplivi in potrebe. Sodobno gledališče in novi produkcijski modeli so tako porodili nove gledališke prakse, kakršna je na primer mladinsko gledališče.

Mladinsko gledališče se ukvarja s storitvami za mlade v gledaliških dejavnostih, navdihuje pa se pri osrednjem konceptu opolnomočenja posameznikov in skupnosti. Koncept mladinskega gledališča je v zadnjem času vzbudil precejšnjo pozornost (Hughes in Wilson 57; Jensen 146; Leaf in Ngo 1; Lev-Aladgem 275; Richards 1; Richardson 5; Pearson in Thomas 275), saj je zelo koristno sredstvo za opolnomočenje mladih (Hughes in Wilson 58). Mladinsko gledališče v Gani deluje kot nepoklicno gledališče s poudarkom na skupnosti, ki artikulira življenjske izkušnje posameznih zanemarjenih

skupin z namenom, da bi dosegli osebno in kolektivno opolnomočenje (Lev-Aladgem 275). Izvor te oblike gledališke prakse lahko zasledimo pri »zgodovinskem razvoju mladinskega gledališča v delovanju Michaela Crofta v petdesetih letih dvajsetega stoletja, kar je leta 1961 privedlo do ustanovitve Nacionalnega mladinskega gledališča« (Richardson 2). Tako so prakso lahko utemeljili na procesualnosti, s pristopi prostovoljnega neformalnega izobraževanja, ki so usmerjeni k družbenemu in osebnemu razvoju (Richardson 2). Ciljna publika so običajno druge zanemarjene skupnosti in obrobne skupine z namenom uvajanja ter ohranjanja procesov rehabilitacije in napredovanja ljudi v skupnosti (še posebej mladih) na področjih družbeno-kulturnih, izobraževalnih, psiholoških in čustvenih potreb (Hughes in Wilson 57; Jensen 146; Leaf in Ngo 1; Lev-Aladgem 276; Richards 1; Richardson 1; Pearson in Thomas 2). Kako se potem lahko Skupnostni mladinski kulturni center (SMKC) v Gani poveže s praksami mladinskega gledališča in kako to olajšuje procese opolnomočenja skupnosti v Gani?

SMKC je ena od kulturnih agencij Nacionalnega sveta za kulturo (NSK), ki spada pod okrilje Ministrstva za turizem, kulturo in ustvarjalne umetnosti v Gani. Center so ustanovili, da bi naslovili družbeno-kulturne potrebe in težnje mladih v Gani. S tem naj bi izboljšali razmere za to, da bi mladim omogočili razvoj njihovih ustvarjalnih potencialov in jih opolnomočili, da bodo lahko pomembno prispevali k razvoju našega naroda. S tem želimo doseči prepoznanje mladih kot zelo pomembne družbene skupine, katere potenciale bi bilo treba izkoristiti v prid naših nacionalnih interesov. Predvidoma naj bi se SMKC odzival na vsakodnevne potrebe in strahove mladinske populacije v državi in dolgoročno pripravil podlago za razvoj Mladinskega kulturnega gibanja, ki bo po naravi in identiteti nacionalno, po nazorih pa mednarodno (1). Izhodiščno delovanje programa se osredotoča na vprašanje, kako plodno angažirati mlade v prostem času in med rekreacijo. Dandanes program SMKC sestavljajo predvsem občolske dejavnosti, ki so pretežno kulturno in ustvarjalno obarvane. SMKC naj bi se v svojem delovanju odzival na potrebe mladih, prepoznaval in gojil talente ter ustvarjalne potenciale mladih, promoviral pozitivne vrednote med mladimi in jih pripravljaj, da postanejo odgovorni kadri in vir razvoja, pa tudi vzpostavil temelje za razvoj mladinskega kulturnega gibanja v Gani (1).

Kot kulturna agencija SMKC, ki deluje pod okriljem NSK v Gani, menimo, da mladinsko gledališče mladim in drugim obrobni skupinam ponuja priložnost za samoizražanje skozi umetnost in gledališki medij kot način za omogočanje integracijskih procesov zanemarnjenih skupin v širšo družbeno strukturo (CYCC 3; NCC 5). V ta namen dejavnosti mladinskega gledališča »ponujajo priložnosti za izražanje potlačenih in prepovedanih življenjskih izkušenj, ki se upirajo, izzivajo ali kako drugače obravnavajo status quo« (3). V tem procesu gledališče deluje kot intervencijski medij za umetniško-estetsko-kulturno izobraževanje (Nyatuame 20) in neformalno izobraževanje za opolnomočenje skupnosti ter ponuja programe za izobraževanje mladih. Kot ra-

ziskovalci, promotorji izobraževanja in predani izvajalci gledališča za spremembe si prizadevamo pokazati, da mladinsko gledališče omogoča procese opolnomočenja skupnosti.

V članku smo raziskovali dejavnosti in prakse mladinskega gledališča, ki jih SMKC omogoča v sodelovanju s skupino ganske mladine iz zapostavljene skupnosti iz ganske prestolnice Akre, da bi preučili pomen mladinskega gledališča v SMKC v luči procesov za opolnomočenje skupnosti.

The paper focuses on Beton Ltd., a theatre collective comprised of three actors, Primož Bežjak, Branko Jordan and Katarina Stegnar, established in 2010. Beton Ltd. emerged on the Slovenian performing arts scene with a collective approach to theatre-making and is thus a special case as far as non-hierarchical and collective production models in Slovenia are concerned. In the last ten years, Beton Ltd. has created seven performances: *So Far Away: Introduction to Ego-logy* (2010); *I Say What I am Told to Say* (2012); *Everything We've Lost, While We've Gone on Living* (2013); *Revoltin' Man* (2014); *Ich kann nicht anders* (2016); *Große Erwartungen/Great Expectations* (2018) and *Mahlzeit* (2019). Through introspective self-analysis, the paper elaborates on the necessary preconditions for the formation of a collective, as well as the conditions necessary for effective collaboration in performance making, combining a short historical overview of the case in question, including specific collaborative strategies developed by Beton Ltd. during the past decade.

Keywords: Beton Ltd., Katarina Stegnar, Primož Bežjak, Branko Jordan, Betontanc, Matjaž Pograjc, Bunker, Anton Podbevšek Theatre, collective, collectiveness

Actor **Branko Jordan** studied and graduated from the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television of the University of Ljubljana, mentored by Mile Korun and Matjaž Zupančič (1996-2002). During his studies, he already began to collaborate with director Matjaž Pograjc as an active member of Betontanc (2001-2014). He has worked with both repertory theatres and independent producers in the performing arts field. He has been a part of the ensemble of Celje City Theatre (2003/2004), Prešeren Theatre Kranj (2004-2008), the Drama of SNT Maribor (2009-2013 and 2016-2018) and SNT Drama Ljubljana (2014-2016 and 2019-). He has collaborated with Bunker, Glej Theatre, Imaginarni InSTITUTE, Cankarjev dom, Pandur.Theaters and Anton Podbevšek Theatre. Internationally, he has worked with Ulysses, Jonghollandia (Wunderbaum), New Lathwian Theatre Institute, Mittelfest Festival, Reon Theatre of Bologna and others. In his twenty-year career, he has created more than seventy roles for which he has received numerous awards. In 2018, he became an assistant professor of acting at the UL AGRFT. He is a founding member of Beton Ltd.

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Beton Ltd.: A Case Study¹

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Even though collectiveness as a term and as an inevitable circumstance that dictates every second of our work is constantly present in our conversations, thoughts and (re)actions, none of the members of Beton Ltd. (individually or collectively) never tried to systematically explain how, why and under which circumstances we work or conceive our performances. Furthermore, during the entire period of the existence of Beton Ltd., there has not been a comprehensive investigation or study of Beton Ltd.'s unique approach concerning collective work in contemporary Slovenian theatre practices.

The title of this paper is *Beton Ltd.: A Case Study*. Perhaps I should more precisely call it *An Attempt of a Case Study*. It is important to underline that this paper is utterly subjective. It derives from my personal point of view, and even though I try to be objective to my utmost ability in explaining the basic points important for understanding our synergy, or even fundamental preconditions, which were (and are) necessary for establishing (and maintaining) a collective, the conclusions I will arrive at will simply be limited by my position as an exclusive insider.

Perhaps I should emphasise how difficult and/or even schizophrenic it is to talk about "us" when only "I" am the one who is writing to share this. Is this not a direct contradiction of the fundamental principles of collectiveness where something that "appears outwardly" (as statements in this paper) should result from a carefully built process through which all divergent opinions are transformed into a consensual statement? Does this statement exceed the bare sum of (in our case, three) different opinions instead of becoming something firmly, objectively binding? This dilemma: or a trap if you like, is not only a linguistic one; it is constantly present in every possible situation, which demands some sort of a decision. And we know that theatre is all about decision-making.

In Beton Ltd., we cope with this dilemma with the help of a simple measure. We call it code "red". "Red" is a signal, a stop sign that an individual group member uses to emphasise that *the other* has crossed the line, that what he/she is doing or saying is not shared, consented to or accepted by the other members. When code "red" is spoken, the one that received it for a statement or action knows that he or she is on

¹ **Acknowledgements:** For their much valued assistance in the preparation of this paper, I would like to thank Katarina Stegnar, Primož Bežjak, Alma R. Selimović and, above all, Tibor Hrs Pandur.

his or her own, no longer part of the herd, since he/she presented or represented ideas that do not have any potential for development in the collective process.

So, what are we talking about when we talk about Beton Ltd.? We are talking about three actors, Katarina Stegnar, Primož Bezjak and Branko Jordan, who at a certain point ten years ago decided to start a theatre collective and have been sporadically, although continuously, working together under this brand ever since. Till now, Beton Ltd., in an exceptional collaboration with great artists and coworkers such as Jure Vlahovič, Toni Soprano Meneglejte, 004 (Miha Horvat), Janez Weiss, Andreja Kopač, Mateja Benedetti and Urška Brodar, among others, has conceived seven different performances, produced mainly by Bunker, an independent theatre institute, plus in some cases (co-)produced by Anton Podbevšek Theatre from Novo mesto.²

If we put aside any kind of critical judgement of individual performances conceived and performed by Beton Ltd., I believe that the most significant achievement of the collective is the bare fact that we managed to stay together, that we were able to ensure the continuity of our work during ten years and that we have been able to create the conditions for future perspectives as well.

Considering our approaches to the content of selected performances and techniques referring to the term of collectiveness, we can roughly divide Beton Ltd.'s opus into three phases:

1. The initial phase: 2010 (*So Far Away: Introduction to Ego-logy*);
2. The formative phase: 2012–2014 (*I Say What I am Told to Say; Everything We've Lost, While We've Gone on Living; Revolting Man*);
3. The "current" phase: 2015–present (the so-called *German Cycle: Ich kann nicht anders; Great Expectations/Große Erwartungen; Mahlzeit; Hoppla, wir leben*³).

The name of the group itself, its etymology and historical background, offers some key elements for understanding the collective Beton Ltd.: *Beton* ("concrete") is an abbreviation from *Betontanc* – the parent collective to Beton Ltd., established by the renowned theatre director Matjaž Pograjc in the early 1990s, in which the three of us

² Beton Ltd.: *Tam daleč stran: uvod v ego-logijo (So Far Away: Introduction to Ego-logy)*. Bunker Institute, 2010.

Beton Ltd.: *Rečem, kar mi rečejo naj rečem (I Say What I am Told to Say)*. Anton Podbevšek Theatre and Bunker Institute, 2012.

Beton Ltd.: *Vse, kar smo izgubili, medtem ko smo živeli (Everything We've lost, While We've Gone on Living)*. Anton Podbevšek Theatre and Bunker Institute, 2013.

Beton Ltd.: *Upor ni človek (Revolting Man)*. Anton Podbevšek Theatre, 2014.

Beton Ltd.: *Ich kann nicht anders [nemški cikel] (Ich kann nicht anders [German Cycle])*. Bunker Institute, 2016.

Beton Ltd.: *Große Erwartungen/Velika pričakovanja [nemški cikel] (Große Erwartungen/Great Expectations [German cycle])*. Bunker Institute, 2018.

Beton Ltd.: *Mahlzeit [nemški cikel] (Mahlzeit [German cycle])*. Bunker Institute, 2019.

³ A performance currently in the stage of development.

continuously collaborated for more than ten years.⁴

During the establishing of the collective, all of us considered ourselves primarily as members of Betontanc; this was our common denominator. Yet, the absence of the figure of a director (the father figure) was so strong that we felt obliged to signal it in the name itself, hence *Ltd.* (“limited”). Limitedness was the circumstance through which we entered into a complex world of often utopian ideas of a true collectiveness in theatre. The Slovenian version of the abbreviation *Ltd.* is even more precise (*d.o.o.* – *družba z omejeno odgovornostjo*: a company or society with limited responsibility or liability). Especially because responsibility is the crucial point of discourse connected to collectiveness, it is fair to state that the very first version of the name of our collective was actually “Betontanc *Ltd.*”, and that the first performance *So Far Away: Introduction to Ego-logy* was signed as such and only after the fact and with the consent of the director Matjaž Pograjc we decided to use the abbreviated version of the name: Beton *Ltd.*

Evidently, in the beginning, the absence of the director, as it is practised in the usual organisation of theatrical work, was a crucial point of difference compared to traditional approaches. Yet, it was also the point through which we sought to establish this qualitative difference or even trigger a certain kind of originality.

Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to attend a public lecture by professor Janez Pipan from UL AGRFT entitled “Režija in njen konec” (Directing and its End), in which he stated in the very beginning that one should very carefully distinguish between the terms “director” and “directing”, however blasphemous it may sound. For me, this was a revelation of sorts. To simply envision that directing can autonomously exist without a director.

However, while we have got used to the fact that some sort of substitution of the director *is* possible through different strategies,⁵ the collectiveness itself offered us

4 The three of us started our collaboration with Matjaž Pograjc in 1998. Primož and Katarina joined Betontanc after a successful audition in the spring of 1998 and immediately started with rehearsals for the performance *Secret Sunshine Schedule* (Bunker, 1999). I joined the ensemble for the performance *Who is Afraid of Tennessee Williams?* which Pograjc simultaneously directed in Mladinsko Theatre in the same period and had its opening in the beginning of 1999. We collaborated together for the first time in Betontanc’s performance *Maison des Rendez-vous* in 2001 (première in 2002, co-produced by Bunker and Mladinsko Theatre) and after then the three of us continuously worked together in Betontanc until 2014 (*Track of the World*, Bunker, 2014).

5 The strategies in the process of the substitution of the director refer above all to mechanisms of establishing an “external” objective gaze focused on the individual building blocks that form the performance as a whole. The most elemental strategy consists in filming rehearsals, combined with critical (self-)analysis. Another method is the systematic inclusion of collaborators and selected audiences for specific parts of the performance or scenes in progress, based on clearly elaborated question or dilemmas we are trying to solve in a certain phase of the performance’s development. But the most important procedure concerns the development our own sense for contextualising the whole. This involves feelings gathered on stage, while playing specific segments of the performance, that we share, reflect and analyse with each other. Of great assistance in these endeavors were our numerous experiences with physical theatre, where we developed techniques which help to constantly check our performative presence, our performative actions in relations to the body of another (actor/actress, event or situation). This enables us to completely organically create, what is in classical, normative theatre known as *mise-en-scène*.

much bigger and greater challenges: how to practise collectiveness first among the three of us, then between other collaborators (set and costume designers, musicians, producers, etc.) and us and, in the final phase, also with the spectators.

The challenge derives from the phenomena of hierarchy. How do we understand it, how do we practise it? Does hierarchy exist in the case of Beton Ltd.? Of course, it does. But the main thing is that hierarchy between us is constantly fluid. It is not stable or permanent. It shifts. It has a limited mandate.

I strongly defend the position that in the creative process, the performance itself becomes an independent entity in its own right. It develops its own needs and demands specific decisions. And the crucial task of every artist (producers and the whole theatrical machinery as well in fact) involved in the delivery of a particular performance is to carefully listen to it, to be aware that a performance is not only a product of our intentions, wishes and desires (or *the objects of our desires*) but an existing entity. We can imagine a group of people bound to create particular performances similarly. There is a job to do, a process to start, and if we are aware of it, we can feel the responsibility to make certain decisions: to start the rehearsal, to open or close a discussion, to offer new material, to enter into the space, to write a text, etc. And if we all understand this, some of us eventually and temporarily slip into the decision-making position or take on the role of “director”.

The decision-making process is similar: there is no democracy in the sense of voting and outvoting. Decisions that define the process itself or the gathering of material to construct a frame for a particular performance require a long and complex procedure. The variety of choices, opinions and points of interest circulate in endless loops among us until the right decision or statement is reached. Such a process requires a lot of time. And this enormous amount of time (combined with a lot of patience) is the main characteristic of working in a collective. The second characteristic, or shall I say fear, is connected with compromise. We had several discussions regarding compromise, whether we feel that our artistic choices are losing their sharpness due to consensus. However, we feel that, for the most part, we benefited from it because a particular idea is constantly observed or shaped through different points of views. And to be frank: you can attain a special sort of inner freedom when you are not obliged to constantly produce perfect ideas on your own.

Even the original idea for a collective collaboration was not our own. It came from an external source: the late Nevenka Koprivšek, the head of Bunker, suggested it. The gesture of establishing a collective was not a realisation of our own deep inner wishes or needs. From today’s perspective, this was an essential extenuating circumstance because we never put ourselves in the position where we felt obliged to prove the correctness of our choice and (especially in the beginning) there was no inner

pressure of any kind. Instead, there was mere curiosity, how to deal with this unusual situation of which we were suddenly a part.

Furthermore, the decision for a collective was never ideological in the sense of the only possible choice. We never had any doubt in the role of the theatre director *per se* or in a common hierarchy that is present in theatres everywhere. As one review stated:

Primož Bežjak, [...], Branko Jordan, Katarina Stegnar have ventured into an experiment of physical theatre for a second time without a director; not because they perhaps didn't need one, but above all because their individual potentials, physical and performative skill, especially the necessity to critically articulate their points of view, represents an almost autonomous (and unique) performative practice in our local environment. (Dobovšek)

After all, the majority of our professional engagements as actors derive from these "normal" conditions. We were merely interested in whether and how it was possible to work in other conditions, in our case, in the format of a collective. And regarding our experiences, we strongly encourage the efforts to explore different approaches in contemporary theatre, which can coexist with one another.

Now it is perhaps time to turn to the decisive reasons why we held on to the idea of working in a collective. First of all, I think this was strongly connected with the idea of the emancipated actor, an actor who understands her- or himself as a true collaborator in the process of creating a particular performance and, even further, to have at least some sort of role in making artistic choices connected with the development of our skills, fields of interest, our position as artists, working conditions and so on.

The process of the emancipation of actors, in general, is a process that has its roots way back in history, while it simultaneously decisively impacted the evolution of the Slovenian theatrical landscape. To give an example, I will quote an observation by one of the most prominent Slovenian actors, Radko "Rac" Polič, concerning the established stereotype of the actor's role in normative theatre practice.

Since I came to the academy, I was also shocked by the fact that the actor is often understood as a tool guided by the director's hand. This was confirmed again and again throughout my entire career. I was always certain this should not be so. That our work is collective, but that we, together and on our own, can be successful only if we talk to each other and, if necessary, consult with one another. (Quoted in Pogorevc 136)

However, the process of an actor's emancipation is slow and sometimes barely visible, although it has something to do with the inner growth of each individual artist. Yet, the three of us were systematically exposed to an intense course of widening the narrow views concerning the actor's role in performance making since the early days

of our professional careers. Credit in this regard is due to the director Matjaž Pograjc.⁶ By collaborating with him, we developed a sort of hunger for decisively questioning how we deal with personal, intimate or social, political and environmental issues that define us in theatre. So it was a desire to articulate contemporaneity, how to have a personal (artistic) influence on the content itself.

As mentioned before, certain preconditions have to be met to achieve a highly operative collective, a community that works effectively without a strong top-down hierarchal structure or without initially strongly defined obligations and responsibilities (which are in a certain sense the natural enemies of creativity). Beton Ltd. met those preconditions; they are specific and unique to our path. These perhaps contain certain truths.

- Common background

I already stressed the importance of a common background. In our case, the parent collective Betontanc, with its director Matjaž Pograjc, is an excellent example. Besides the fact that we also share common experiences while being schoolmates at the theatre academy, but most of all: we spent an incredible amount of time together on and off stage before we started working together in a collective, which enabled two things for us: first, enormous trust in each other, tested in practice on numerous occasions on rehearsals, performances or on tours, combined with the mutual admiration of our capabilities and talents; and secondly, a wide field of shared referential codes (words, terms, images, experiences, etc.), which are necessary not only as a support in creating a common language, but also as efficient methods in coping with time. Common referential codes help us economise the time needed to arrive from a starting point to a particular result.

- The emancipated actor

I elaborated on this position earlier, but it also includes a specific desire to take on a specific role of responsibility for making “executive” decisions. If one does not have this desire – if only for few minutes – collective work in theatre becomes impossible.

- A realised artistic personality

The fact that we joined the collective without a particular desire to establish our individual artistic credentials is one of the reasons which prevents unnecessary exhibitionism and enables us to realise unfulfilled phantasies, which we are not able

⁶ As well as Sebastijan Horvat, Bojan Jablanovec, Jernej Lorenci, among others, who practise different models of co-authorship and expanded collaboration in their own theatre projects with which we were involved.

to realise anywhere else. The reasons for working in a collective are, in our case, completely different, so to say: non-performative. We leave our individual acting ambitions to environments in which we act as individuals. In contrast, in our collective, we mostly occupy ourselves with content and phenomenological questions: Which themes to choose, which questions to raise and how to stage our point of view.

- Insight into widespread approaches in theatre

Information and practical experiences with different organisation methods in the theatre are necessary for the development of individual forms of work. During the last two decades, Slovenian theatre has, unfortunately, to a certain extent, slipped into a kind of isolated, self-infatuated and self-obsessed community where the flow of information concerning global creative processes, ways and forms of work, is limited or even interrupted. The reasons for this reside partly in malnourished international festivals and exchanges, limited possibilities in international collaboration, and in an irrational, self-infatuated national character fuelled by the fear of confronting something better, greater and above all, something different than ourselves.

I can state with certainty that Beton Ltd. would never have come into being if we had not had the first-hand experience that such a collective of actors can exist in practice.

In our case, there was the crucial collaboration with a group from the Netherlands called Jonghollandia (today known as Wunderbaum), which formed from a much longer and systematically developed idea of theatre-makers, based on the suggestion of director Johan Simmons, who probably at some point recognised the necessity to invest in research of such forms of practice. Still, above all, he invested certain funds (which he had at his disposal) in an unpredictable endeavour. The result of this investment exceeded all expectations.

- Opportunity

Opportunity is perhaps the most important precondition, which is often beyond our control. Because it is connected with the vision, the broad-mindedness and courage of individual artistic directors, as well as decision-makers and policies of particular institutions, etc., which enable a certain individual to recognise the potentials in particular artists or even to encourage conditions that can influence the development of new practices. In our case, such a vision or gesture was carried out by Nevenka Koprivšek, the director of Bunker, who realised we could form a collective before we knew it ourselves. Later on, it was Matjaž Berger, the artistic director of Anton Podbevšek Theatre, who gave us a three-year residency, which helped us to strengthen our relations, enabling us to consider ourselves as a

collective at all, something bigger and stronger, transcending the mere sum of three separate individuals.

The opportunity and support given and offered to us by Bunker during these past ten years is something that we strongly encourage for all artistic and operative decision-makers to practise as often and as systematically as possible.

Karolina Babič, in her article *Hierarchies among Equals*, describes the phenomenon of democratic self-governance as “a state of affairs which exists only when it is practised and ceases to exist when it is not” (13). This phenomenon goes for collectiveness in theatre as well. Regardless of methods, strategies, formalised and non-formalised practices, a successful collectiveness or a “fully-consumed” and durable collective depends solely on the fact that it is practised.

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Beton Ltd. je gledališki kolektiv treh igralcev, Primoža Bezjaka, Katarine Stegnar in Branka Jordana, ki od leta 2010 kontinuirano deluje pod produkcijskim okriljem Zavoda Bunker, nekaj predstav pa je ustvaril tudi v (so)produkciji Anton Podbevšek Teatra. Na področju uprizoritvenih umetnosti v slovenskem prostoru je Beton Ltd. oral ledino v kolektivnem pristopu pri ustvarjanju predstav in je kot tak specifičen primer, ko govorimo o nehierarhičnih in kolektivnih produkcijskih modelih v Sloveniji.

V desetih letih obstoja je Beton Ltd. ustvaril sedem predstav: *Tam daleč stran: uvod v ego-logijo* (2010); *Rečem, kar mi rečejo, naj rečem* (2012); *Vse, kar smo izgubili* (2013), *Upor ni človek* (2014), *Ich kann nicht anders* (2016), *Große Erwartungen* (2018), *Mahlzeit* (2019).

Prispevek se s pomočjo introspektivne samoanalize poskuša približati odgovorom na vprašanja, kateri osnovni pogoji so bili potrebni za vzpostavitev kolektiva (zgodovinski pogled) in kateri so potrebni za učinkovito delovanje (vsebinska analiza postopkov, metodologije in procesa dela). Preizprašuje razmerje med dejansko in navidezno kolektivnostjo, poskuša označiti prednosti in slabosti ustvarjanja v kolektivu, predvsem pa poskuša ozavestiti, ali v posameznem primeru obstajajo premise splošnega, kar bi lahko veljalo kot primer dobre prakse, ali pa gre le za izjemo.

Ključne besede: Beton Ltd., Primož Bezjak, Branko Jordan, Katarina Stegnar, Betontanc, Matjaž Pograjc, Bunker, Anton Podbevšek Teater, kolektiv, kolektivno (skupnostno)

Igralec **Branko Jordan** je študiral in diplomiral na Akademiji za gledališče, radio, film in televizijo Univerze v Ljubljani v razredu profesorjev Mileta Koruna in Matjaža Zupančiča (1996–2002). Že med študijem je začel sodelovati z režiserjem Matjažem Pograjcem in bil aktiven član skupine Betontanc (2001–2014). V svojem profesionalnem delu je deloval tako v repertoarnih gledališčih kot z neodvisnimi producenti na področju uprizoritvenih umetnosti. Bil je stalni član SLG Celje (2003/2004), Prešernovega gledališča Kranj (2004–2008), Drame SNG Maribor (2009–2013 in 2016–2018) ter SNG Drama Ljubljana (2014–2016 in 2019–). Sodeloval je z Zavodom Bunker, Gledališčem Glej, Zavodom Imaginarni, s Cankarjevim domom, z gledališko organizacijo Pandur.Theaters in Anton Podbevšek Teatrom. V mednarodnem prostoru je sodeloval z gledališčem Ulysses, s skupino Jonghollandia (Wunderbaum), New Lathwian Theatre Institutom, festivalom Mitelfest, Teatrom Reon iz Bologne idr. V dvajsetih letih ustvarjanja je oblikoval več kot sedemdeset vlog in zanje prejel številne nagrade.

Leta 2018 je postal docent za področje dramske igre in umetniške besede na Akademiji za gledališče, radio, film in televizijo, kjer predava dramsko igro. Je ustanovni član skupine Beton Ltd.

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Beton Ltd.: študija primera

Branko Jordan

AGRFT Univerze v Ljubljani

Članek s pomočjo introspektivne samoanalize obravnava gledališki kolektiv Beton Ltd., ki smo ga leta 2010 ustanovili igralci in performerji Primož Bezjak, Katarina Stegnar in Branko Jordan in ki je v preteklih desetih letih ustvaril sedem avtorskih snovalnih uprizoritev, pretežno v produkciji Zavoda Bunker, nekatere od njih pa tudi v (so)produkciji Anton Podbevšek Teatra: *Tam daleč stran: uvod v ego-logijo* (2010); *Rečem, kar mi rečejo, naj rečem* (2012); *Vse, kar smo izgubili, medtem ko smo živeli* (2013); *Upor ni človek* (2014), *Ich kann nicht anders* (2016), *Velika pričakovanja/Große Erwartungen* (2018) in *Mahlzeit* (2019).

Upoštevač zgolj stopnjo in razsežnost izvajanja skupnostnih mehanizmov pri razvoju posameznih predstav, bi lahko delovanje kolektiva Beton Ltd. v grobem razdelili na tri obdobja: 1) iniciacijsko obdobje (ki upošteva vzpostavitev kolektiva ter mehanizmov vključenosti in nehierarhičnih delitev vlog v procesu gledališkega ustvarjanja); 2) formativno oziroma razvojno obdobje (ki upošteva razvoj mehanizmov skupnostnega ustvarjanja) in 3) »trenutno« obdobje, obdobje t. i. nemškega cikla, v katerem kolektiv suvereno uporablja doslej razvite mehanizme.

Članek razgrne nekatera ozadja, ki so omogočila nastanek kolektiva, pri čemer že sama odločitev za ime »Beton Ltd.«, katerega jedro je koren »očetovskega« kolektiva Betontanc, ki je eden od skupnih imenovalcev ustanoviteljev kolektiva, predvsem pa pripadajoča okrajšava »Ltd.« (d. o. o. – družba z omejeno odgovornostjo), jasno usmerja ost v specifično stanje omejenosti, omejitev v območju »prevzemanja odgovornosti«, ki v normativnih oblikah gledaliških procesov običajno pripada vlogi in osebi režiserja, v primeru kolektiva Beton Ltd. pa, če in kadar obstaja, poteka fluidno, nezavezujoče, neopazno prehajajoče z enega člana na drugega. Ob odsotnosti režiserja (ne pa tudi režije), ki je bila velik izziv zlasti v prvih obdobjih, je druga bistvena razlikovalna lastnost delovanja v kolektivu povezana s časom, ki je potreben za usklajevanje in sprejemanje posameznih odločitev, deloma pa v to spada tudi nenehna nevarnost kompromisa kot nadomestka za unikatne umetniške in produkcijske odločitve.

V nadaljevanju se prispevek osredotoča na nekatere ključne pogoje, potrebne za vzpostavitev in delovanje gledališkega kolektiva (izhajajoč iz specifičnih dejavnih

izkušenj kolektiva Beton Ltd.). Najprej skupno referenčno in izkustveno ozadje, ki je ključno vsaj na dveh ravneh: pri oblikovanju notranje terminologije in sporazumevalnih kodov kolektiva, zlasti pa kot podstat za zaupanje med posameznimi člani kolektiva; pomen »emancipiranega igralca_ke«, ki si želi aktivno in soavtorsko posegati v tkivo predstave, v različne ravni gledališkega izraza pa tudi v izbor samih vsebin; visoko stopnjo razvite (in potešene) umetniške osebnosti; vpogled v obstoječe primere »dobrih praks« na področju sodobnih uprizoritvenih praks, pri čemer sta bila za Beton Ltd. ključni srečanje in sodelovanje s sorodno nizozemsko skupino Jonghollandia; ter priložnosti, na katere, resnici na ljubo, potrebe in želja posameznih ustvarjalcev nimajo veliko vpliva, temveč so v domeni odločujočih deležnikov – producentov, umetniških vodij, kulturne politike nasploh – njihove pripravljenosti za spodbujanje odprtih, raziskovalnih in tudi k določenemu tveganju podvrženih oblik scenskih praks, ne samo na ravni vsebine, temveč tudi notranje organiziranosti in načinov dela. V konkretnem primeru kolektiva Beton Ltd. sta pri tem izpostavljeni vlogi Zavoda Bunker in Anton Podbevšek Teatra.

Prispevek se zaključí s skoraj tautološko mislijo, da je kolektivnost v gledališču mogoče misliti in udejanjati zgolj, če jo izvajamo.

Vse od ustanovitve kolektiva do danes nihče od njegovih članov posamezno ali skupaj ni objavil širšega prispevka, ki bi reflektiral delovanje kolektiva, metode in specifikke ustvarjanja v njem, hkrati pa v tem času v slovenskem prostoru tudi še ni izšla nobena poglobljena študija o delovanju kolektiva Beton Ltd. Tudi zato je pričujoči prispevek v resnici zgolj poskus študije primera in v tem smislu primer t. i. teorije iz prakse.

Tejidos is a community artistic project that aims to develop a community to give voice to the particular stories of those who live in Oaxaca (women and the deaf community) and Mexico City (older adults). The project has been funded by the Arts Council England (2018) and Iberescena (2019). "Theatre of Yes" is a methodology that uses the power of beauty as a language to break the stereotypes of situations that society views with apathy. By creating a provocative and emotional performance, we can transform the lives of people who suffer social exclusion.

Yet, how can we create a high-quality performance with people who are not professional actors but have stories that should be shared? How can we use powerful performances as an axis of change? How can emotions be the motor for the struggle against the social oppression that many groups suffer?

Artistic work has helped us to observe how creativity pushes people to find a freer self and, above all, to be close to the essence of the human being. The base of the Theatre of YES brings together the universal characteristics, honesty, simplicity, humility and generosity. The characteristics of the methodology developed with these groups are the yes as a weapon against the non-worthy self, beauty as the axis of change, physical theatre according to the Lecoq methodology.

Keywords: Theatre of Yes, beauty, Greek Choir, social transformation, quality as excellence

Marina Pallarès Elias is the artistic director of Acting Now based in the UK and Rebozo Teatro based in Mexico. Her passion is to create high-quality performances using the personal stories of people who do not have the opportunity to be heard. She has worked in Mexico with women, deaf people and the elderly; in the UK with people with mental health challenges, learning disabilities, LGBTQ+, refugees, women; in Italy with people with physical disabilities; in Spain with the LGBTQ+ Zinegoak Film Festival; in Germany with migrants. She has received the prestigious Iberescena Award and the Award of the Arts Council England. She has presented her work at the National Theatre Conference in Mexico (2019), at the Cambridge University Conference and in Madrid (2018).

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The Theatre of Yes: Beauty as the Axis of Change for the Transformation of Communities Through Their Own Stories

Marina Pallarès Elias

Acting Now, UK, and Rebozo Teatro, Mexico

The basics of the Theatre of Yes have been developed in recent years to show the world the theatrical language that I use in multiple international projects. It is a methodology developed from action in the creative framework of working with people in multiple communities. The Theatre of Yes uses personal stories from communities at risk creating performances of emotional quality. Instead of creating a pamphlet piece designed to intellectually inform the audience about oppressive circumstances, I propose an emotional piece that showcases often hidden, untold or overlooked personal stories. The performance of such stories is intended to spark collective catharsis in both the performers and the spectators.

The Theatre of Yes is based on some universal characteristics that human beings possess, namely honesty, beauty, simplicity, humility and generosity. These qualities surround us everywhere, although sometimes they are difficult to find. Trauma, injustice and distress disconnect us from our own life and our future, but, at the same time, they are part of them. I work with people who often do not feel beautiful, feel a lot of guilt and have endured a lot of suffering. The Theatre of Yes facilitates the creation of spaces in which to connect with the world and humanise ourselves. These are spaces in which to accept our own narrative, open it up to the world from within a safe and creative space, spaces in which the tool of physical theatre supports us and facilitates a new dimensionality in our life journey. It also allows us to see our life in a much more flexible way and to understand that we are not victims or guilty of the specific circumstances in which we find ourselves. In this way, it predisposes us to be able to develop a fresh look at other narratives about ourselves. The Theatre of Yes, therefore, opens, expands, cleans, yields, reclaims and reconnects.

In 2018, the Arts Council England offered me a scholarship to work in Oaxaca for seven weeks. In 2019, Ibersecena granted me another one to work with older adults in Mexico City. The scholarship was an investigation of using this language in a context like Mexico, working with fourteen women participants and twenty-five members of

the deaf community. The women were aged between 20 to 55, residents of the city or its surroundings. It took four intensive days to learn the language of the Theatre of Yes and four consecutive weeks for the creation of the work. The deaf group consisted of young people aged 15 to 25 and volunteers who translated. Most were in high school, and a few had jobs. The work was done in six hours a week over seven weeks.

My story began in 1997. I was fifteen and was experiencing a difficult time as a teenager. My family was broken, and I was angry, disappointed and desperate to escape from any pain. One day, one of my teachers at secondary school invited me to join the theatre group. At first, I resisted, but then I decided to attend. This group saved my life. I felt included and loved. For the first time, people were admiring me! From that moment, I understood what my purpose was in life: to use theatre to help others to transform their lives in the way that theatre had done so for me. Over time, I began to work using theatre as a tool for social transformation, drawing on Theatre of the Oppressed and other techniques. I was lucky to have the opportunity to travel and to develop projects with multiple communities. However, I began to consider a troubling question. When I went to see a community performance, in which the actors could be people with disabilities or with mental health issues, often the performance standard lacked quality. Although the performance was developed with the best intentions, the beauty of theatre was not there. My thoughts as an audience member were that “they did their best” and “they could not do any better”. However, in thinking these thoughts, I reproduced the same paternalistic concepts against which I was trying to fight. I started wondering how I could use my theatre expertise to develop a language of theatre that would enable the creation of a high-quality performance using the personal stories of people who need to be heard. Other questions came to mind: How to create quality plays by working with people who are not professional actors but have brutal honesty? Why is creating quality work essential when working with communities? Where are the professional ethics when working with this vulnerable material? How does theatre, without the concept of applied theatre, only theatre, facilitate the transformation of people? How can theatre profoundly affect the people who come to see these works? What theatrical language do we have to use to put forth the scenic quality that the stories deserve?

With my training in Lecoq pedagogy and my combination of experiences, I have been able to develop a form of theatrical language that combines beauty with the exploration of trauma, the honesty of the actor with the humility of working with a group, emotion as the axis of the trip theatrical, the body-emotion-voice path and the choir as the essence of the transmission of these acquired emotions. It is a theatrical language that allows us to reach emotional honesty, the beauty of the dark, but always in a safe context.

Furthermore, I use the Theatre of the Oppressed, a theatrical form oriented towards liberation from oppressive beliefs and situations. TO, as it is sometimes abbreviated, addresses social, political and economic issues such as racism, poverty, homelessness, violence against women, religious and ethnic conflicts and environmental threats (see Gökhan). I also use psychodrama, which can be considered not only as a method of psychotherapy but also a laboratory, in which psychosocial problems are explored through dramatic tools and participants' own behaviours. A protagonist is the main actor in the work. A therapist, acting as director, guides the play; the others play the roles the protagonist wants to develop, and the audience watches the play (see Moreno and Sullivan et al.).

Therefore, on the one hand, it focuses on the reflection process to see alternatives for community and personal context and psychodrama works in a therapy context. On the other hand, the Theatre of Yes focuses on the cathartic experience for the audience and actors together, creating an emotional, high-quality theatre performance that breaks the stereotypes and prejudices that community groups have to face in daily life.

In my theatrical research, I needed to find a theatrical language that could be adapted to human beings without distinguishing race, culture, diversity or gender. As long as they had stories to tell, the methodology could be used. The Theatre of Yes brings together the universal characteristics that human beings have; honesty, beauty, simplicity, humility and generosity. The theatre of Yes provides spaces to connect with the world, to humanise us to say enough, say NO. We work with people who often do not feel beautiful, with much guilt, much suffering.

In this paper, I describe my experiences working in Mexico. In 2020, 3,723 women were killed in Mexico. Women suffer all kinds of violence from health, justice and education institutions or in personal relationships. This methodology invited these women to create a space to accept their own narrative, to open it up from within a safe space and to use the tool of physical theatre to facilitate a new dimensionality of their life journey. They had the opportunity to share stories about the violence that they face in their lives. In doing so, it helped them to realise that it is a common pattern related to gender identity and helped them to explore alternative ways of thinking to the established narrative.

The Theatre of Yes is the collective process of the transformation of the individual and group. It is the creative journey that the participants take, connecting with emotions, with their own traumas, with their own stories.

With the Theatre of Yes, over the years, I have realised the importance of being seen before the public. It is there where the rules of the game begin to change, people without a visualisation within society, marked in their social domains, feeling guilty

of so many stories, where now, they go on stage, to tell, to express, and those who typically decide the laws from this society, we sit and listen. These works have the characteristic of being provocative, of great emotion and of extreme quality. Likewise, without giving less importance, the public sample of these works offers a cathartic relationship between the public and actors where the bankruptcy of prejudices about the actors, which in other circumstances can be seen as hopeless and vulnerable people.

The word *catharsis* as defined in the Merriam-Webster *Encyclopaedia of Literature* derives from the Greek word for “cleansing” or “purification”. As Ronaldo expresses it, there are “two essential components of catharsis: the emotional aspect (strong emotional expression and processing) and the cognitive aspect (insight, new realisation, and the unconscious becoming consciousness)” (2). Catharsis thus results in a positive change.

Characteristics of the Theatre of Yes

The Yes as a political-ethical position in a world where the “You are not enough” does not prevail in the cultural discourse. Often, the participants who attend have the characteristic that this position is not impregnated in all its spheres. We will use the Yes as a political act to be free to say NO. To create spaces of freedom where acceptance is the main thing, the Yes as a means of independence; the Yes to discover new paths never undertaken; the Yes to accept other bodies, other emotions, and the Yes to say NO to oppression, discrimination.

Beauty is the axis of change. Beauty is one of the most important axes of this theatre. Beauty in the language of this theatre is understood as a weapon to fully open unhealed wounds, to find justice in such pain, to name submerged emotions. It helps us to break patriarchal patterns, to see alternately that you are going away from a boring morality. There is no dialogue with the public without that effective honesty. We need dialogue to change prejudice. Rather than an intellectual dialogue to understand a concept, this will be an emotional dialogue where, through sharing emotional stories, we can understand the humanity in suffering and the lessons people have learned in their journeys.

Without that acceptance of oneself, without being present in soul, body and heart. We propose a theatre without artifice, without masks, a theatre of empowerment and self-acceptance. It is a theatre of the acceptance of difference, and above all, the empowerment of those who are excluded because they have not been able to adapt in a society that only values the economic winner. It helps us break patriarchal patterns,

see possible alternatives far from boring morality. Nothing can destroy beauty; it always depends on how we see it and the overtone we have towards it. Beauty is our weapon of combat in the dark, shit, hate.

Without beauty, there is no work, and there is no possible narrative. Beauty supports our stories of horror and hope; it helps us digest what has never been said to expose what has sometimes been secretly lived. We see as beautiful what others see as disgusting. Trauma as a beautiful element – here, I use beauty as a political means to define the world we want. It is the process of recognising others, of seeing others as an opportunity. Beauty helps us understand the world more, the processes where they lead people to commit acts difficult to find an answer such as suicide attempts, psychotic attacks, abandonment. Meli told her story one day. She had not been able to meet her grandparents because her father always prevented her. She insisted on seeing them, on knowing them. The grandparents lived in another country, and she could not go to see them alone. The young woman dreamt of meeting them. Yet, out of fear that she would discover his own turbulent past, her father did not want her to know them and always made up excuses. One day, an acquaintance told her that her grandparents had died without her knowing them. She felt devastated, furious with her father. How to face a story of this kind, showing all these terrible feelings? When creating the story, every emotion she shared gave her a movement. The group was fundamental in that emotional movement. The group endured Meli, making equal movements, or the opposite. For example, in a movement of pain, she went to the floor, covering her body. The rest of the group covers her body, saying: “Meli, you are not alone. Meli, you are not alone. Meli, you are not alone.” The piece helped her to express her history, unlocking our judgements of distant stories. Afterwards, Meli shared with the group how this process allowed her to reconcile with herself and put an end to the guilt that she had been holding onto for years. In other words, she was able to see herself with more love and less hate. Beauty enables us to have the time to understand the causes of events and their consequences. Beauty connects us with genuine emotions. It helps us to digest the horror, the trauma, to accept, to move forward. Not to accept to build another future, but rather to adapt, to feel more secure. Beauty helps us to see it in another way, to see the inside of that trauma, to explore emotions, to find the reason for so many questions, to eliminate established stigmas.

A theatrical result gets through only with excellence. We can only break prejudices and stereotypes if we reach the emotions of the spectators. Emotions prevent the audience from over-analysing the performance and judging the story on a rational level. Emotions maintain a connection between the audience and actors, bringing them closer and allowing them to experience the same journey. Emotions

help to develop an understanding of the causes, reasons and consequences around a character's actions. Therefore, the audience can empathise with these communities rather than being judgmental. That is why we, the theatre experts, must know how to do quality work without hesitation. These works have the characteristics of showing great emotion and of extreme quality. This aspect brings us from the micro situations to the macro situations that often overwhelm us, making us feel powerless to respond. It is about understanding, from many points of view, how emotions take on the role of guides. Therefore, the actors, from their stories, become catalysts for collective empowerment by approaching and connecting. We are no longer alone, isolated in our own faults, but rather a unified group.

Because of my conviction that the quality of a play is a requirement in the Theatre of Yes, it hurts when I see plays developed by a group, made with the best intention, but for which quality is not an important point. As a result, the goal we want to achieve, using theatre to break stereotypes, can be counterproductive. Hence the need for the Theatre of Yes, the search for that quality, the beauty of their bodies, their own stories, so that these people show themselves as they are. It is time to go further, to accept ourselves, to love each other, to see how wonderful we are. It's time to start transforming into who we are: darkness and beauty, despair and union, passivity versus action.

Physical theatre uses the Lecoq methodology. Using the magic of physical theatre, I intend to use theatre as the inspiration for breaking with the constraints of the realist dimension. Therefore, we create entirely new worlds in which we can express our emotions and stories "simply", using the effort of our bodies in movement and in voice. Physical theatre reconnects us with our bodies and emotions in an exciting and challenging way, open to anyone with a curious body and mind.

In personal stories, the Theatre of Yes does not seek to find the solutions for change but to tell stories. In those stories, you can find dreams of change or find that history develops those changes that happened to the person. In this methodology, the change is in the honesty, generosity and humility of the stories and the collective catharsis generated between actors and spectators. When you see us, look at us and connect. This connection will be the rebellion: a committed theatre, seeing alternatives and empowering protagonists to refuse to reproduce the norms established by a culture that benefits itself, leaving those of no interest aside. These alternatives are created from understanding our own narratives and unleashing the space of victimisation or guilt that many people have in their lives.

The political and ethical basis

The Theatre of Yes is a political act. I mean, it is an act in which we as theatre creators have to be aware of our position of respecting the people for whom we work. As creators, we do not have to ignore our privileges (for example, me, woman, white, European, heterosexual), but to be aware of them when working with people at risk of social exclusion like the homeless, people with learning disabilities, refugees, people with mental health challenges, young women and members of the LGBTQ+ community. Through that awareness, we can enter into more authentic dialogue with the people with whom we work. If we ignore who we are but detect when our speech can prevail over the stories of the people with whom we work, we will repeat the already established patterns. But we understand that our role is that of creators and that objectivity is impossible and unfeasible. Therefore, our ideas and thoughts come from a subjectivity that we welcome as long as we are aware of it and work to give it the space it deserves. As directors, we have to assume responsibility but remain very aware of the power we have. Power is synonymous with responsibility. If we want that magical opening by our participants, we need to understand very well our role, which is to develop a play with their own stories using theatrical language at their service, where creativity serves to expand and bring these closer to the spectators. For example, in Mexico, a deaf man shared his experience of being mistreated by his family because of his hearing impairment. He felt safe sharing his story, but it occurred to me that he might not be ready to take action and create something from it. This observation was my subjective one from my position of power, and I was concerned about causing him pain. However, I was aware of this thought and embraced it, realising that he was both responsible for and capable of changing his own situation through the process of the Theatre of Yes.

The terrific comments include: “They did the best they could”; “As they are disabled, limited, with problems to express themselves”. But, to understand what “we, white, first world, know”, nothing happens if the quality is not at the right level. This lack of quality is the victim of our lack of responsibility as professionals. Assistance perpetuates the victim in continuing to be a victim; in that help is offered as a value to perpetuate that limitless power. The commitment lies in social responsibility; if we intend to support people for a vital transformation, the quality of work must go hand in hand as a professional responsibility.

Breaking prejudices. The creation of the work is to break the morality imposed by the dominant culture from the morality (what to do and how to behave) by welcoming the contradictions that the stories may have by breaking the social order. In this state of competition, of power relations, the Theatre of Yes process has to be an absolute collective process. If the state of power continues, there is a risk of falling into an

absolute ego “self-criticise, self-control, self-perfect”. Breaking prejudices will thus be the rebellion, a committed theatre, from the community, honesty, humility and generosity in seeing alternatives and empowering the protagonists to be themselves.

The Greek chorus as a collective force

The choir is one of the main engines of my work. This choir comes from the inspiration of the Greek chorus.

In the context of Greek ancient theatre, the chorus, a term taken from ancient Greek, χορός (khorós), is often defined as a “group of actors in a classical Greek play (therefore either tragedy or comedy) typically serving to formulate, express, and comment on the moral issue that is raised by the dramatic action or to express an emotion appropriate to each stage of the dramatic conflict” (“Greek Chorus”).

The chorus of the Theatre of Yes connects with the role of the ancient Greek chorus in exploring the emotions of the characters. That theatrical form, so beautiful and inclusive, allowed a trip on many axes from the depths of the bowels, through repressed emotions, going up to the actions taken and the words spoken. The choir goes straight to the repressed emotion, bluntly, without possible excuses. It makes possible a new communication between the participants, in the group’s trip, where that story is ours, of the actors and the spectators.

Reasons that give absolute power to this methodology are:

- **The possibility to express with the action and voice the deepest emotions that the characters are feeling.** It reveals the wishes that many times can be contradictory with those that the character manifests at that time. Therefore, answering so many questions never mentioned and hidden in the well of our souls. We imagine that a character wants to leave a space that feels very oppressed, while his oppressor, his partner, tells him that he is well where he is, inside, he dreams of not returning, dreams of going back and not marrying that person. The choir represents all those dreams. It makes possible the sample that, although it looks like a dead person in life, inside, he still shows his hidden dreams.
- **Amplify the emotions of the characters.** It is not the same to say “go” from one character to another, that there is a chorus behind the characters supporting and interpreting the deep intention. For example, one brother has realised the betrayal of the other. He told him a secret, and he has told everyone. The brother is disappointed with the other and says, “Go”. If you say it, it will only be realistic and possibly flat. Imagine instead that this character has a chorus behind him that

also repeats “Go away” three times, making a movement in unison with the hands of rejection. The result is that amplifying this “go” helps the viewer to connect more deeply with this intention.

- **Supports characters full of pain.** Working with personal stories is very sensitive and delicate work. Often, the participants want to talk about personal stories, but the process of doing so is very painful. Yeli, a woman from the Oaxaca project, wanted to talk about how her family pushed her to study law because her mother, her uncle and her brother had done so. She really wanted to study theatre, but she ended up working as a lawyer and the sexist abuse she received from her boss without being able to change that. In the end, she explained how she revealed all of that. I proposed a chorus that would mean the other Yelis, their other selves. Those took care of her in the process, that she opened her eyes with a lot of love, with a lot of delicacy that they suffered with her. Therefore, in the process of reviving and putting Yeli’s story into life, she would not feel helpless. All the Yelis, all the women, all of us were Yeli. That intense pain is no longer of a single person but is shared with the collective.
- **Unravel.** No one is disposable. We are all useful and necessary. In my view, within classical theatre, the one who does it best stands out, and those who do not have so much talent are relegated. On the contrary, in the Theatre of Yes, there is no such concept of talent connected with the ego. It is not valued who knows more or less. In this methodology, the drive is the quality of the work, which is independent of the qualities that the dominant culture imposes on us. All people can reach it.

Everything is possible, everything has meaning

Any idea can develop a story. In this methodology, the idea is not the most important, much less; we are not looking for the most incredible story. It may sound weird. We are used to looking for the best idea, unique or adapted from others. And from that idea, we start. If we don’t have that idea, we don’t even know how to start. Here comes the first discrimination with the people with whom I work. As they have no space to find those ideas, they feel like passive beings feeling that their only function is to follow those who do have those bright ideas where power is manifested. “How will I have an idea if I’m not enough? How will I emphasise if I’m nothing?” Also, to highlight that if we look for the most incredible story, we do it from a mental point of view, from a narrative logic, we go to the final result, which restrains us and takes away the freedom.

Simplicity is not at odds with beauty, quite the opposite

I advocate for a simple story, for simple movements. Simple movements allow the audience to connect with the internal emotion that the story is expressing. Complex movements can mean that the emotion is lost, resulting in the spectators disconnecting from the essence of the story and returning to their position of judgment. Simpler and cleaner, the result will be more powerful and therefore more beautiful. I constantly repeat that I am not interested in somersaults in the air. They only interest me if they have an emotional justification. We must break the naturalistic language that represses us for the rest of our lives to find a more equitable and balanced language. Inside the questions, there are hidden emotions and true answers. Simplicity is a weapon that separates us from imperial logic in a living space that seems to be more complex.

Theatrical inspiration is out: the world and its nuances as theatrical inspiration

The theatre that I propose is a theatre of deep emotions, of hidden stories of blocked situations. In creation, we have two ways of creating; one from human nature another from the character's psychology. What is the difference? The first, as Lecoq (101) says, inspiration is outside, others, natural elements such as water, air, earth or fire, how they move or how they become other elements, inspire us. Objects, their forms and their falls inspire us. The geometry of circles, triangles. The shapes of the mountains. The movements of animals and their relationships. If instead, we limit ourselves in that internal psychology, we run a risk that the emotion is too close to the trauma experienced and therefore, we open wounds without knowing how we will close them.

Emotion as a driver in giving alternatives to imperialist logic

Physical theatre gives us the opportunity so that we can create what we want. The concept we want covers all unimaginable possibilities. The freedom of not needing anything, just our bodies, to create what we want. What we want is quite different from what we need. Desire from creative freedom is the key point of the Theatre of Yes. This point is essential for participants to feel from an early age. Without that freedom, there is no depth to get into the most hidden emotions, to reach those remote entrails. If we want to reach the deepest emotions where the trauma is cystic, we need to beautify them. Traumas are made where emotions are holding the stories in. Often, these emotions are difficult to see, to talk about, to share with others or to understand. Theatre has the power to beautify them so that they can be reached

without a painful experience. Using this art form, we can create new dimensions, exploring the character's journey, dreams or/and the reasons for their conflict. By embellishing them, we approach them to take action, accept them, reject them, discover them and assume them.

Humility, generosity and honesty as an engine of change

These three characteristics define a position of rebellion against cultural and social standards. It is a theatre based on group quality, where the qualities and characteristics of each one are at the service of the group and its stories.

- **Generosity.** It is an anti-ego theatre. My generosity helps the story progress. My creativity, my body, my stories, my emotions are at the service of the group. The whole is the result of the generosity of all participants. As participants enter the process, they open up physically, emotionally and verbally, accompanying the overtures of others.
- **Honesty.** The theatre we propose is not a theatre of pretending an emotion, of making people see. It is a theatre of showing deep emotions, often cycled. The proposed language has to show the insides of the stories. Without that level of honesty, the stories do not pass on to the public and, therefore, will not have the expected result. We need that honesty from the actors to reach that certainty, and therefore find the answers to the questions never answered. There is no dialogue with the public without that effective honesty. For me, dialogue in this context of theatre means the sharing of personal experiences without fabricating an ideal version of reality. Honesty harnesses the power of stories as a tool to break stereotypes. With this comes the acceptance of oneself, in soul, body and heart.
- **Humility.** The Theatre of Yes is not a space that generates acting skills. That is, quality does not come from the acting skills of the participants that take part in it. Humility starts from the acceptance of oneself. That is how I am, with all my travels, experiences that push me, sometimes they imprison me, and sometimes they corner me. I'm here. No more, no less. I'm here. Humility helps us to see each other, to get us out of masks. I do not pretend, here I am.

Women and the deaf community

The women's project is divided into two parts. In the first one, I showed the different techniques that the Theatre of Yes proposes. In the second part, we prepared a production about the stories themselves. I agreed to go to Mexico with a feeling of

empowerment that I was living as a woman. For different reasons, I deeply reflected on what it was to be a woman and how easily the manipulation of patriarchy abducted us because we live the normalisation of so many behaviours. Women have few spaces to share, support and feel all the suffering. To visualise hope in a life shared with men. From the first day, I observed the need between them to touch each other: "Nobody had touched my face in this way since my daughter got older," they often said. Moreover, the need to experience moments of unity in a creative and emotional space: "I had never had a quality listening space." The first day, I proposed an exercise to make an image using everyone's body to create an object without which we could not live. One of the young women proposed we create the ancestors, those women who have transmitted so much to us. In the way she proposed it, pain and loneliness were visible. Furthermore, I asked them: "What do you want?" And they answered: "I want to feel free", "I want to feel safe", "I want the beings around me to be safe", "I want to be happy", "I want to get where I propose without obstacles".

During those days, we shared desires, guilt, intentions through the technique of physical theatre. I usually carry the workshops this way; I propose a technique, for example, rhythms. We practise the technique, we understand the rhythms bodily connecting emotionally with them, and we give them a voice. We support these rhythms with daily actions to understand how a physical exercise helps us to a more realistic action. We understand that changing rhythms changes our intention, helps us to clean. In pairs, they have ten minutes to propose a small story only using these rhythms. The next level is the creation using this technique for something more elaborate. In this case, I proposed the title *The Release of Guilt*. A topic that suggests without determining, one that it is deep but does not drag us into an imaginary prison.

The group is a supportive space in which we immerse ourselves in the search for simplicity as beauty. The group supports, but not by speech. It is supported from the creation, from the connection to each other from the body, from the movement of those beautiful bodies, which makes everybody comforted, stimulated, recognised, transformed by the poetics of beauty.

My function with them is joint creation; they create stories inspired by their own stories using the poetics of physical theatre. I help them to clean the movements, to amplify the emotion from the Greek choir, to understand the motivations of the characters, I ask about the different choices, I dissect where they want to go.

When someone proposed to me to work with deaf people, my first impression was respect and fear. The theatre group of the deaf, Guelaguetza of words and signs, is a group that has been working together for a while in the city of Oaxaca. I wondered, "How can I communicate? How can we work with subtle concepts such as beauty, with my lack of sign language?" On the first day, the group presented itself as a

group of listeners and deaf people. In total, twenty people. I did not even know how to introduce myself; I felt lacking in resources to communicate. From the nerves of introducing myself, I decided to go directly to a game to connect with them. I started with the game of balls, passing ten balls to each other. It is a universal game and very effective. It helps with concentration and group connection. I felt that I was beginning to relax. I continued with my preferred body connection exercise that I do with all my groups. Absolute freedom. Bodies feel free to move, connect, shed tensions and express big, small, not to think. They look for a partner and dance together, change partners and express themselves.

I tried to explain the basics of physical theatre with my clumsy mimicry. The need to explain to you to go to the concrete in abstract concepts was complicated in my head. Action-emotion-sound. I realised that, when expressing emotion, they used their faces. Normal. They are used to surviving to use expressions on their faces to express themselves; it is their survival code. But there is a disconnection in the rest of the body. If it stays in the face and does not move towards the body, it will remain superficial in the “I pretend to be sad”, not in the honesty that the work requires through the connection of the emotion with the support of the body. How to move from this superficial and survival code to a deeper code?

On the second day, I proposed a very simple exercise. I wrote different emotions on cards; sadness, disgust, anger, disappointment, happiness, freedom, laziness. In pairs, they had to express these using their hands. I showed an image on cardboard, and the listeners translated it to the deaf, and every two minutes, we changed our emotion. I stressed that they could not use the face to express themselves, only their hands. There I began to see the magic of the theatre; their bodies recovered, became alive, sensitive, authentic, the basis of the Theatre of Yes. The basis for entering deeper spaces. In the next phase, among four, they chose three emotions from the cards and interpreted them together.

In the last stage of the day, they could use their entire body, except the expressions of the face, to represent a creation. The title of it was *The Journey of the Deaf*. What do you not want, where do you want to go, what do you want, what do you wish, etc.? There were scenes full of frustration, anger, of feeling lost at times but accompanied by others, support, feeling lost because of not being able to hear. I began to see living bodies, honest stories and sensitive people behind the masks of survival. There, something deeper, more alive, more true appeared. For the next session, I suggested that we work with the obstacles and the next one how to overcome them.

Conclusions

At the end of the project, the works were presented at the Theatre House (70 spectators) and the La Locomotora Forum (90 spectators). Participants were divided into two groups of women and the deaf youth group: The first group recounted the frustration of feeling violence just because they were female and how that led to suicide. The work told the reasons for not losing hope, being united, paddling together towards a more egalitarian space. Solidarity among women was one of the points reflected.

The piece told personal stories about family pressure not to follow your dreams ending in a job you hate without being able to stop the boss's sexual abuse. Also, of the daily persecution without the police doing any physical abuse against them. The work ended on their power and examples of help among women. From the concrete friendship, going on as solidarity between strangers upon arriving at a site for the first time, ending up helping those in danger by not listening to her own husband.

The work of the deaf community was their journey as young people, and the difficulties in suffering their disability had a brutal impact on the family, school level, among equals. That impact had affected their own personal consciousness. Solidarity between them, the respect for understanding and the effort to adapt to that tortuous culture for them was the final point.

After this experience in Mexico, I noticed not only that this methodology could be implemented in these two groups but also the need of these groups to express their own stories based on theatrical emotion. I noticed, from another perspective, their desire to show them in front of the public. The journey of emotions in their own body created an honesty they had never seen; the desire and the need to express personal stories created an extraordinary climate in front of female and male spectators. At the end of each work, we held a colloquium. It is essential to be able to share that cathartic moment. The men did not share any comments. Among our group, we commented on this fact, concluding that it was possibly one of the first times that male audience members were confronted with their own behaviour and needed time to understand how their behaviour resulted in the oppression of women. Only a blind man, who understood that discrimination shared the power of the work, lived through his own history. The women shared how they felt deeply connected with the stories shared.

Participants saw their stories heard, interpreted, expressed, lived, which gave meaning to their own experiences. They understood that what they experienced changed their lives, transforming them. They accepted these experiences as a springboard for new ones. History and people go together. Therefore, the acceptance that something happened to me helps me to accept myself.

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Tejidos je skupnostni umetniški projekt, katerega cilj je razvijati skupnost z namenom, da damo glas specifičnim življenjskim zgodbam, ki se odvijajo v skupnosti žensk in gluhih v Oaxaci ter starejših v Ciudadu de Mexico. Financirala sta ga Angleški svet za umetnost (Arts Council England) (2018) in Iberescena (2019). Gledališče DA-ja je posebna metodologija, ki moč lepote uporablja kot jezik, s katerim razbija stereotipe situacij, na katere družba zre z malodušjem. Z ustvarjanjem provokativnih in čustvenih predstav lahko spremenimo življenja ljudi, ki trpijo zaradi socialne izključenosti.

A kako naj ustvarimo vrhunske predstave z ljudmi, ki niso poklicni igralci, imajo pa zato veliko zgodb, ki bi jih bilo treba deliti? Kako naj izkoristimo takšne močne predstave kot središča sprememb? Kako naj čustva postanejo motor boja proti družbenemu zatiranju, katerega žrtev je toliko različnih skupin?

Umetniško delovanje nam je omogočilo, da smo lahko opazovali, kako ustvarjalnost pripravi ljudi k temu, da dosežejo večjo svobodo jaza in predvsem da se približajo bistvu tega, kar pomeni biti človeško bitje. Temelj gledališča DA-ja povezuje univerzalne lastnosti iskrenosti, preprostosti, skromnosti in širokosrčnosti. Značilnosti metodologije, ki smo jo razvili skupaj s temi skupinami, so DA kot orožje proti manjvrednemu jazu, lepota kot središče sprememb ter fizično gledališče po Lecoqovi metodologiji.

Ključne besede: Gledališče da-ja, lepota, grški zbor, družbena preobrazba, kvaliteta napredovanja

Marina Pallarès Elias je umetniška vodja skupine Acting Now s sedežem v Veliki Britaniji in gledališča Rebozo iz Mehike. Ustvarja visokokakovostne predstave na podlagi osebnih zgodb ljudi, ki jih navadno ne slišimo. V Mehiki je delala z ženskami, gluhihimi in ostarelimi, v Veliki Britaniji z ljudmi z motnjami v duševnem razvoju, učno oviranimi, LGBTQ+, priseljenci in ženskami; v Italiji z gibalno oviranimi; v Španiji z LGBTQ+; v Nemčiji z migranti. Je prejemnica prestižne nagrade Iberescena in nagrade Arts council England. Svoje delo je predstavila na državni gledališki konferenci v Mehiki (2019), na konferenci Univerze v Cambridgeu in v Madridu (2018).

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Gledališče DA-ja: lepota kot središče sprememb za preobrazbo skupnosti prek njenih lastnih zgodb

Marina Pallarès Elias

Acting Now, VB in Rebozo Teatro, Mehika

Tejidos je skupnostni umetniški projekt, katerega cilj je razvijati skupnost z namenom, da damo glas specifičnim življenjskim zgodbam, ki se odvijajo v skupnosti žensk in gluhih v Oaxaci ter starejših v Ciudadu de Mexico. Financirala sta ga Angleški svet za umetnost (Arts Council England) (2018) in Iberescena (2019).

Gledališče DA-ja je posebna metodologija, ki moč lepote uporablja kot jezik, s katerim razbija stereotipe situacij, na katere družba zre z malodušjem. Z ustvarjanjem provokativnih in čustvenih predstav lahko spremenimo življenja ljudi, ki trpijo zaradi socialne izključenosti.

A kako naj ustvarimo vrhunske predstave z ljudmi, ki niso poklicni igralci, imajo pa zato veliko zgodb, ki bi jih bilo treba deliti? Kako naj izkoristimo takšne močne predstave kot središča sprememb? Kako naj čustva postanejo motor boja proti družbenemu zatiranju, katerega žrtev je toliko različnih skupin?

V letih ustvarjanja predstav z različnimi skupinami po vsem svetu je Marina Pallares Elias spoznala, kako pomembno je kakovostno uprizorjanje kot središče sprememb, če hočemo razbiti stereotipe, s katerimi se pogosto soočajo ljudje, ko se znajdejo v ranljivih položajih. Namesto da bi organizirala kampanje deljenja letakov za ozaveščanje ljudi, ki so žrtve zatiranja, Marina predlaga ustvarjanje čustvenih predstav na podlagi pogosto nevidnih osebnih zgodb, kjer je najpomembnejši rezultat kolektivna katarza med gledalci in igralci. V teh delih odgovarjajo na skrita vprašanja in razkrivajo čustva in želje, ki prej niso imele mesta, kjer bi jih bilo mogoče deliti.

Vse to nam je pomagalo, da smo se začeli spraševati o razlogih za igre nadvlade, da smo opazili, kako ustvarjalnost pripravi ljudi k temu, da dosežejo večjo svobodo jaza in predvsem da se približajo bistvu tega, kar pomeni biti človeško bitje. Temelj gledališča DA-ja povezuje univerzalne lastnosti iskrenosti, preprostosti, skromnosti in širokosrčnosti. Značilnosti metodologije, ki smo jo razvili skupaj s temi skupinami, so DA kot orožje proti manjvrednemu jazu, lepota kot središče sprememb ter fizično gledališče po Lecoqovi metodologiji. Težava je v tem, da smo težava mi sami, osebne zgodbe in gledališki rezultati, ki naj bodo v smislu odličnosti.

The presented text focuses on the particular artistic practice employed during the realisation of the project *Prague is not Czech*, which was established as a collective exhibition within the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space 2019 (henceforth PQ). The authors of this project, who are gathered within the team *Intelekturálně*, decided to carry on with the Prague is not Czech travel agency and to transform it into a systematic socio-artistic research, which uses selected strategies of non-Prague reality as a ready-made and fills them with its own content. Since its very beginning, the project has been based on a concept of radical cooperation. Therefore, a collaborative approach towards creation represents the primary subject that is being reflected within this text (and which is itself a product of the cooperation of several people).

Thus, the gist of the presented paper is to introduce initial artistic approaches and fundamental strategies of the project. The following text, therefore, consists of a manifesto written by the initiators of the project and broader theoretical reflection. In the first section, entitled *What we do*, the authors describe the various forms of the presented project, conditions of its creation and its development. The text is then divided into four parts – according to the project's essential aspects: *Czechness*, *Participation*, *Scenography* and *Experience*.

Keywords: Czechness, participation, scenography, experience, Prague, travel agency, public service.

The Intelekturálně is a fluid collective that interconnects scenographers, visual artists, directors, musicians, graphic designers, theorists and production managers with the local communities. The main research strategy of the collective is performative spectatorship and ready-made appropriation. The collective holds the Imagination Award in Student Exhibition from the Prague Quadrennial 2019. For 2020, it became a part of *New Blood on Stage*, a mentorship and distributing platform of the Czech Cultural Network *Nová Sít*.

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Prague is Not Czech: Artistic Project as a Public Service

The Intelekturálně Collective

Amálie Bulandrová

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Andrea Dudková

Brno University of Technology, Faculty of Fine Arts

Introduction

The following text sheds light on the structures of a particular artistic practice employed during the realisation of the project *Prague is not Czech* which was introduced as a collective exhibition within the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space 2019 (henceforth PQ). Rather than an expert case study, the presented paper propounds an experimental combination of a “manifesto” written by the initiators of the project reflecting its genesis on multiple levels and a draft proposal of its (theoretical) interpretation. In other words – while suggesting various possibilities of uncovering its diverse structures – each thematic section is introduced by the authors of the project and subsequently shortly developed by an art-theoretician who experienced *Prague is not Czech* during PQ in 2019. In this way, the connection of the authentic artistic paper with the “theoretical insertions” aims to offer various ways of understanding the project, which might/might not be applied while discussing and interpreting it.

More specifically, in the first section, entitled *What we do*, the authors describe various forms of the presented project, conditions of its creation and its development. The text is then divided into four parts – according to the project’s essential aspects: *Czechness*, *Participation*, *Scenography* and *Experience* – which are prefaced by a short manifesto written by the initiators of the project (Anna Chrtková and Andrea Dudková). Those parts further consist of a suggestion of theoretical reflection by the theatre researcher Amálie Bulandrová, who

approaches the project from the “outside” and describes it on the basis of her own viewer’s experience.

The section entitled *Czechness* is specific in that it approaches the subject by means of answering a short questionnaire compiled by the co-authors of the project. The *Conclusion* represents another distinctive part of the text – once again written from the perspective of the initiators of the project, it elaborates, apart from the synopsis of the text, the concept of public service, which, although articulated only at the very end, interrelates the whole article.

What we do

We are a travel agency and an artistic project at the same time. We are searching for the contemporary Czechness; most often through the medium of curated trips. We are a fluid collective that interconnects scenographers, producers, graphic designers, curators, actors, musicians, and theoreticians within the simple context of a travel agency. In *Prague is not Czech*, we are turning ourselves into workers of the company, into its officers, guides, location managers, DTP operators or just dialogue providers. By means of our actions, we are aiming to create a happy universe where the region of our origin or our social status dissolve in the shared activities, collective presence and common being.

Prague is not Czech is a travel agency that organises trips to discover authentic “Czechness”. It is a long-term process, within which the collective Intelekturálně (“Intellecturálně”) examines liminal forms of scenography, performance, and installation art, and which gradually transforms into continuous artistic research practice. This project initially emerged to represent Czech Republic at the student exhibition of PQ 2019. The first and the most visible layer of the entire concept were physical objects; such as a newsstand purchased and transported to Prague from the village of Žleby near Kutná Hora, positioned in the left wing of the Trade Fair Palace on interlocking paving precisely copying the defined space of 5x5 metres, surrounded by a brick fence, a seating, thujas, a parasol, etc. This installation turned into a temporary bureau of the travel agency, which, in the course of ten days, arranged six trips outside the metropolis for the visitors of PQ.

Each trip was prepared individually as an open-air event directed by different subjects – be it students of academies of arts or art groups (creative duo formed by director Michal Pěchouček and artist Rudi Koval; art group Czech; the team of Intelekturálně). Each time, only a very narrow audience group (consisting of individuals who bought a ticket) was taken to the chosen destination, e.g., to the Brdy forests, the North Bohemian industrial city of Ústí nad Labem (Aussig), the agricultural valley of Elbe,

Southern Bohemia, the Moravian metropolis of Brno or to the “village in the middle of Prague” – the Spořilov district. Afterwards, these trips were broadcast live back to Prague through mobile phones to a television screen standing inside the newsstand.

While each trip engaged a different artistic strategy, in the context of the practice of the tourism industry, all of them developed certain performative principles – e.g., the presence of couriers/tour guides of the travel agency at each trip; specific staged situations with actors at the trips *Vodník* (“Water Goblin”) or *Trampové a houbaři* (“Tramps and Mushroom Pickers”); more or less accidental conversations with the locals during the trips *Ústíčko má šťávu a šmrnc* (“Aussig has juice and pizzazz”) and *Upcycling Reality*; or a strawberry dumpling workshop held at a private garden that ended the trip *Bez práce nejsou koláče* (“No pie to munch on without a hard work”). By using such diverse strategies, the whole exposition opened up questions concerning the problems of increasing social and cultural differences within specific geopolitical units, cultural centralisation and unification of urban space. In most cases, the authors almost did not intervene in the environment in which the trips took place. Thus, merely the enactment of a (real) situation in which the visitors (often also artists) and the general Czech public were usually mingled could be considered as the authors’ only intervention. Concerning the given facts, it is also possible to refer to the Artistic Research discipline while discussing the *Prague is not Czech* project: “The ethos of artistic research very often includes the needs of the artist to expand, to discover the political, social, cultural, ethnographic and ethical dimensions of her work, and to avoid the risk of falling into narcissistic self-expression” (Jobertová, Koubová 12).

The *Prague is not Czech* project was awarded the prize for Imagination in a Student Exhibition by an international jury. It also received great acclaim also from the general public. The team of authors then decided to transform the Prague is not Czech travel agency into a systematic socio-artistic research, which uses selected strategies of the non-Prague reality as a ready-made and fills them with its own content. As a result, *Prague is not Czech* realised a series of diverse activities in the course of 2019–2020: distinctive catering for the launch ceremony of an independent magazine, a thematic party of the independent theatre festival Malá Inventura, or a travelling advisory centre for the festival of young art Pokoje. Probably also due to the radical transformation of the financial and personnel background, the *Intelekturálně* collective gradually began to pose a bigger emphasis on their own perception than on one’s authorship. Thus, the collective creates a library of materials and objects while collecting visual material (the library is accessible via *Prague is not Czech* Instagram page) and develops dialogical, radically non-hierarchical and non-exoticising approaches to people living in other social, cultural and especially geographical environments.

For the *Intelekturálně* collective, a trip is an artistic strategy of how to observe and be

observed while not necessarily having to separate these two activities. The members of the team always prepare only the initial situation; they believe that everyone could be an actor, scenographer or director without the need to study at universities, have long-term experience or know acquaintances in the right places.

Czechness

“Prague is the melting pot of Czech and international culture. But as in most capitals, the gentrification erases specific qualities (as well as not-so-pleasant things) and creates the universalist, but the exclusive urban environment. Rather than arguing with Prague’s position, we focus on places that simply exist. Places where there is nothing, where nothing awaits and where no one expects us. In such places, we have to make some effort. Find our way of having fun, find the willingness to start a dialogue, or just gaze into space for two hours. We are observing while being observed and the notion of ‘Czechness’ helps us to understand what is real, local, and important.”

1. *Where would you go for a trip these days? And why?*
2. *What does “Czechness” mean to you?*
3. *Do you embrace something that is considered a Czech stereotype?*
4. *Do you have any Czech guilty pleasures?*

Amálie Bulandrová, theoretical base, visitor

1. To our cottage in the Vysočina region, where there is a beautiful pub in the middle of the village of Malá Losenice; it’s really nice there. And a forest just behind the cottage – ideal in the summer heat.
2. A mixture of humour – wiseacre tendencies – indolence – creativity – and such a specific “stink” (in a good way).
3. Perhaps a great liking for beer and a certain feebleness.
4. Open-face sandwich!!! (potato salad – egg – ham – mayo – pickle)

Anna Chrtková, initiator of the project – co-founder of the Intelekturálně group

1. Recently, I was particularly interested in the locality near the village called Pohled (“sight”, but pohled is a word is used for “postcard” as well). As a part of my tourist experience, this destination is very attractive to me, especially due to the picturesque landscape in the area and the neighbouring territorial unit called Pohledští dvořáci (“The Courtiers of Sight”).

2. Being able to manage in any situation. Having wisecrack conversations, not necessarily while drinking beer. Loving nature, but only insofar that it doesn't prevent me : from building a highway or a PET bottle greenhouse. Working hard and being proud of it.
3. Bathing in ponds, walking in the woods and sleeping outside. Lately, I'm even discovering in myself the tendency to be a wisecrack.
4. Fried cheese, sometimes sausages and a good deal of pea porridge. And every time I hold a bottled beer in my hand, I feel somewhat cooler.

Andrea Dudková, initiator of the project – co-founder of the Intelekturálně group

1. For some time, I really want to visit the Macocha abyss. When I was small, my class and I were supposed to go there for a visit. But I got Chickenpox, so I did not go anywhere.
2. It is some kind of inexhaustible certainty. Just like the mustard as the last food left in the refrigerator.
3. I would not say it to myself personally, but in our kitchen, we have the collection of half-litre glasses stolen from several pubs.
4. I do enjoy the word *lahůdky* (delicatessen).

Marie Hájková, video-supervisor

1. The Blaník Knights Cave in Rudka Kunštát. It is a Moravian version of the Blaník Knights Legend, carved into the rock in a couple of months, donated by the biggest local butcher at the time of the First Republic.¹
2. Faintheartedness, beer patriotism, spilt green tablecloths with the Staropramen² logo, yellow draught lemonade, negation and eternal dissatisfaction, black humour, the midlife men with little crossbody bags, outdoor side-pocket pants with detachable leg parts, roasted chicken with canned peach, Richard Krajčo³ lyrics, nihilistic loitering. Sticking with traditions that could be beautiful and engaging as well as narrow-minded, strict and non-progressive.
3. I would say it is a fiery deviance more than a guilty pleasure: dissecting room and pigsty in Czech Television.
4. The *Hospůdka* (the familiar word for a pub) TV series, East-European Netflix film section (but I guess it is only in our geographic space), The *Trhák* movie and *Katka*

¹ The First Republic is the Czech term for Czechoslovakia in the years 1918–1938.

² Czech beer brand.

³ The lead singer of the Czech pop-rock band "Kryštof", well-known for its all-embracing lyrics.

& *Jindra*⁴ regular concerts in Hodonín spa town – that performance is always as transcendental as *Twin Peaks*.

Natálie Pleváková, sound engineer

1. I would love to visit Ještěd Mountain – actually, I am going there next week! On the very top of it, there's this transmitter tower that is also a hotel. It was built in the 1960s, and at that time, it was rather futuristic. So nowadays, to me, it seems that if I can go there and spend a night, I might wake up in what in those days would appear as a distant, probably amazing future, or in our terms – alternative present. And one can only hope that in this alternative present, there will be neither the corona nor the climate crisis.
2. Well, it is an assemblage of several things: Schweikism⁵, beer, pelargonium flowers, sleeveless shirts for men and last but not least: socks in open shoes. Advertising parasols on the outdoor seating of the refreshment bistros. A stinky cosiness.
3. That is a hard one. Maybe ... dumb humbleness and modesty?
4. All the above-mentioned stuff packed together with sauerkraut and a portion of dumplings.

Eva Sýkorová, business relationship manager

1. Basically anywhere. I would get on the local train and get off at the tenth station. And I would let myself be surprised what would be awaiting me there and in what I could read about the surroundings that would surround me.
2. Fried cheese, beer, short-sleeved shirts, but unfortunately perhaps also xenophobia, racism, homophobia. It's something like the beauty and the beast.
3. I'm rather discovering something more and more Jihlava-esque in me. That is to say, something from my hometown.
4. Fried cheese. Shots. Beer. 70s' Czech chocolate dessert with liqueur. Mushroom picking. Wandering in the forest. Watching football.

⁴ Moravian party-song duo.

⁵ The term derived from the *Good Soldier Švejk* novel's main character, Švejk, who could be characterised as an "unlucky and simple-minded but resourceful little man oppressed by higher authorities" (Wikipedia.org).

Participation

“In our Prague and non-Prague homes, we search for collective consciousness. Besides (and in spite of) working across various theatre and artistic professions, we co-create the events with spectators and locals. The line between the authors and the perceivers is thick; we are operating inside of it, so that this line becomes a specific meta-reality. Within such a field, there are neither divisions nor borders that would separate the artist/spectator/participant, local/visitor, Prague/non-Prague. Who gives advice to whom? Who learns from whom? Who creates the narrative? Sometimes it is important to fight off the fear of choosing the haircut from the provincial salon catalogue.”

For the *Prague is not Czech* project, the phenomenon of cooperation/participation, which has been receiving more and more attention in the last twenty years or so, is of crucial importance. Projects and installations based on artistic cooperation and participative art (i.e., creative participation) are today often seen not only in smaller independent galleries or expositions such as the biennial or quadrennial but also in prestigious gallery institutions. This type of artistic practice conceives the strengthened position of the viewer as a starting point, and its projects are built mainly on the activation of groups or individuals who become co-creators in the course of the event.

As the curator and art theorist Jan Zálešák explains, we can (simultaneously) observe a double tendency within the so-called turn to cooperation:

[...] first, it is an increased interest in a “horizontal” cooperation among people who claim a similar status in the art world – a cooperation at the level of artists or curators. And then there is a cooperation of a “vertical character”, i.e., such in which people with unequal status participate in the realisation of the project – on the one hand, artists (curators) and on the other hand people outside the professional field of fine arts. That is, a kind of artistic practice which is today commonly referred to as participative art. (10)

The first of the mentioned tendencies demonstrates the overall concept of *Prague is not Czech*, since the trio of authors decided to invite a number of art practitioners and theorists to the organisation of individual trips, who further autonomously realised their ideas about “curated reality/situation”⁶ in their chosen locality. Apart from the initiators of the project, we can thus consider as co-creators at the so-called “horizontal level” also the students of Department of Alternative Theatre at DAMU, Theatre Faculty at JAMU, Studio of Intermedia at FaVU, the artistic-anthropological group Czech, and others. The concept of “vertical” cooperation is then carried out by the very idea of individual trips, which were attended by random visitors of PQ, in order to establish contact with the residents of the given locality by means of a certain activity.

⁶ It is in particular the manifestation text by Guy Debord, which brings the notion of “constructed situation” in the discourse about cooperation in art. For more on this topic, see: Václav Magid. *Konstruovaná situace a její okamžik v čase. Sešit pro teorii, umění a příbuzné zóny* 4–5 (2008).

According to Zálešák, collective and participatory artistic practice is usually associated with some form of engagement, once we encounter “[...] a tendency to suppress artistic autonomy in favour of efforts to achieve changes in everyday life (in public space, ‘in the real world’) and with a critical attitude towards the functioning of the art world, in which the individual genius of the author further remains the key point of reference” (10). This quote is once again reflected in the ideological concept of the *Prague is not Czech* project, in the effort of its creators and co-creators to draw attention towards the isolation of smaller (local) centres from the capital and to the socio-political consequences of this chasm. Nevertheless, it is not about utopianism – an attempt to change the social system as a whole – but about minor (temporary, provisional) interventions conceived on a local scale.

Scenography

“We are not designers. We refuse to hide ourselves inside the black boxes or white cubes, we do not need to build something that already exists outside of them. We create a situation that lives on its own. The set could be a local pub, a strawberry field, socks in open shoes, the Kofola lemonade or fried cheese. Together with its inhabitants, owners, or users, they create a complex environment which acts as a vibrant, active agent in one’s individual reality.”

Let us recall that *Prague is not Czech* was created as a national exposition – i.e., as a project representing the domestic scenography at the international exhibition of scenography and theatre space (PQ). In this context, it is thus obvious to ask what type of scenography the exposition in question actually embodies?

First of all, it is important to note that “scenography” is a term of a highly variable nature, the meaning of which was (is) shifted on the basis of the cultural-historical context. For example, in our territory, scenography established itself as an independent artistic branch during the first half of the 20th century, above all thanks to the architect and stage designer František Tröster. As Czech theatre researcher Barbora Příhodová explains, it was mainly the work of the scenographer Josef Svoboda that – at the beginning of the second half of the century – popularised scenography as an exclusive artistic discipline (25). Thus, the term scenography has been commonly used in our country since the 1960s, when it was traditionally understood in connection with stage design, perspective-architectural creation and the common tendency at that time to integrate science and technology into the art world, ads Příhodová (25).

On the other hand, for instance, in *The Cambridge Introduction to Scenography* published in 2009, we find a characteristic that widens the perception of scenography

as “manipulation and organisation of the performative environment” (4). Also, the American theatre historian Arnold Aronson in his book *Looking Into the Abyss: Essays on Scenography* brought attention to the multidisciplinary concept of scenography, by strongly distinguishing the term from a similar notion of “stage/set design” and characterised it as follows: “Scenography [...] carries a connotation of an all-encompassing visual-spatial construct as well as the process of change and transformation that is an inherent part of the physical vocabulary of the stage” (7). In this particular context, the *Prague is not Czech* exposition embodies the very effort to break scenography free from its close connection to the theatre stage. Furthermore, it aims to present it as an overall visual, spatial and auditory organisation of a theatre (or performative) event, potentially encompassing all the senses as well as the dimension of time, that allows for a dynamic process of changes which occurs during the event (Ibid. 7–8).

Considering the tendency to broaden the semantic field of the term scenography and the overall change in thinking about this discipline, we are probably not even surprised by the transformation of the largest exposition of scenography: while until recently, the PQ was exhibiting mostly physical artefacts related to the formation of the scene and documentation (scripts, designs, models, costumes, props, etc.), the latest years of the event have the air of a performative festival. Yet, this tendency is not manifested only in the numerous accompanying events, workshops, performances, etc. Even within the exhibition installations themselves, we often encounter distinctive scenography structures, which exist both in the frame of the exhibition space and within the environment of the surrounding landscape or the socio-political situation, and which are based on the performative action of their actors as well as of the visitors/co-actors. These “theatricalized environments” offer a variety of experiences to the visitors and often do not fall within the category of theatre performances (Aronson, *Exhibition* 11).

Against the background of such PQ expositions, we may characterise scenography as a transdisciplinary practice of artistic arrangement of performative spaces, specific for its variability within time, space, and interaction with its actors. Rather than creating other categories for new – non-traditional forms, we are witnessing the expansion of existing meanings.

Experience

“We respect what is around us. We do not have a plot, a text, a scenario. We work with the non-expected; we expect meetings with locals, diversity of opinions. Our target group consists of retired people, farmers, provincial officers, Ukrainian cleaning ladies, tuning enthusiasts, home chefs, active hikers, gardeners, kindergarten teachers, ice-cream sellers, ice-cream eaters, beer lovers, coffee drinkers, vegetarians as well as meat-eaters.”

In the context of contemporary tendencies in thinking about theatre, the described exposition could be perceived through the lens of the so-called “theatre as experience”. This approach towards theatre is based on the phenomenological philosophy, mainly represented by Edmund Husserl or Martin Heidegger, whose ideas were further developed, for instance, in the research of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. What we encounter here is an effort to conceive the world, not through an abstract scientific perspective, but contrarily, from the viewpoint of the first person – the subject. The fundamental question is, how does the world appear as a phenomenon to people who interact with it? In the context of theatre studies, this approach manifests by an attempt to capture the experience of the viewer in its first essence, “[...] that means before it starts to be processed at the intellectual level. During the analysis of a performance, we actually carry out an artificial reconstruction [...] of a performance or an event; we choose, arrange, and to a certain extent also remake this ‘experience’ and its elements” (Bernátek, Drozd, Havlíčková Kysová 50, 51).

The underlying question defined above could be further abstracted, and the term “world” replaced by the notion of “scenography”. We could thus ask about how scenography appears as a phenomenon to people who interact with it. Followingly this, we will be mainly interested in how the scenic solution affects us sensorially; whether we like it in the first place, what we feel when we look at it, which states it evokes in us etc. In this way, phenomenology stands in opposition to semiotics; it puts an emphasis on the sensorial impression of theatre, which is reflected primarily in shifting the focus towards the spectator. Simply put, theatre (or, in our case, a scenography exposition) appears to the viewer’s senses, deliberately adopts the role of something that is to be seen, heard, or possibly felt differently (e.g., tasted).

Picking strawberries – which was the objective of one of the trips organised by the Prague is not Czech travel agency – could thus be understood also in terms of “scenery as a lived space”. This term was introduced by the Australian professor of art, Thea Brejzek, who uses it to describe an increased activation of public space and its perception as a theatre space – that is, a phenomenon dating back to at least the 1960s (33–52). In its context, the theatre practitioners began to participate in urban discourses by abandoning the physical limitations of theatre buildings and proscenium stage and started to enter the spatial/political area of the city. In the same way, the authors of the *Prague is not Czech* project strived to reflect the separation of the small local centres, villages and their inhabitants from the capital, and the often very deep chasm of opinions between the inhabitants of cities and rural areas.

The aforementioned could be further demonstrated on the example of the trip *Aussig has juice and pizzazz*. It was a collective “experience” of the city of Ústí nad Labem, which included a guided tour of the city (or rather its outskirts), a

snack made from local ingredients, a visit to a renowned second-hand shop and fashion advice given by the author of the trip, and other adventures. However, the seemingly neutral walk had its socio-critical overlaps, which emerged against the very background of the unmaintained neighbourhoods at the periphery, i.e., the devastated houses and “industrial squats” along the river Elbe. This ostensibly stable, yet actually variable scenery formed by architecture, infrastructure and the people inhabiting it worked as a means of focusing the attention of the audience on a specific (urbanistic) problem of the chosen locality: “Typically, scenery adheres to the spatial organization between the space of action and the space of observation, immersion or participation” (Brejzek 34).

Conclusion

Going on with the manifesto prefaces, the project *Prague is not Czech* aims to achieve temporary “happy universes”, where the experts from the field of art and creative sector (artists, managers, producers, culture workers and their friends) meets the non-Prague population in a framework of a semi-fictional institution, “the travel agency”. A tourist, researcher or participant of the trip, who does not expect a standard comfort during his or her travels and does not require a certain level of readiness of the visited place for “strangers’ eyes”, opens up, in such unusual conditions, to unexpected encounters and conversations. This socio-artistic practice is used as a tool for setting up various unexpected situations and thus instigating encounters of people from different social and cultural strata. This development leads us, the collective, to adopt an unusual statement, a “public service”, but also to develop the change on a personal level – in our approach to the perception of the space and people that surround us. We can repeatedly make use of the experiences gained in this way and hence participate in the construction of new futures – such as those in which local specificity represents an added value and a space for dialogue; and not only a marketing slogan.

According to the theorists’ development of each manifesto preface, the project merges the attitude to scenography with a socially oriented or participatory art, mixes the artistic expression with lived reality and bridges the individual experience (being “a tourist”) with collective practice. Although it was established as a one-time exhibition combining several more or less autonomous artistic subjects, its character as a temporary travel agency based at the Prague Exhibition Grounds during PQ 2019 enabled it to link diverse views on both artistic and non-artistic activities in a specific space.

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Pričujoče besedilo se osredotoča na specifično umetniško prakso, ki smo jo uporabili pri izvedbi projekta *Praga ni Češka*, ki smo ga zasnovali kot kolektivno razstavo v okviru Praškega kvadriena scenskega oblikovanja in prostora 2019 (v nadaljevanju: PK). Avtorice projekta, ki so se povezale v ekipo Intelekturálně, so se odločile projekt nadaljevati s potovalno agencijo Praga ni Češka in ga razviti v sistematično družbeno-umetniško raziskavo, ki izbrane strategije neprške resničnosti uporablja kot ready-made in jih napolni z lastnimi vsebinami. Že od samega začetka projekt temelji na konceptu radikalnega sodelovanja, tako da participativni pristop k ustvarjanju predstavlja primarno temo, kar se odraža tudi v tem besedilu (ki je tudi samo plod sodelovanja več ljudi).

Glavni namen pričujočega članka je predstaviti izhodiščne umetniške pristope in temeljne strategije projekta. Besedilo, ki sledi, zato obsega manifest, ki sta ga spisali pobudnici projekta. Razdeljen je na štiri dele glede na bistvene vidike samega projekta, temu pa sledi širša teoretska refleksija. V prvem razdelku z naslovom »Kaj delamo« avtorice opisujejo različne oblike predstavljenega projekta in okoliščine njegovega nastanka ter razvijanja. Nadaljnje besedilo se deli na štiri dele – glede na poglavitne vidike projekta: »Češkost«, »Participacija«, »Scenografija« in »Izkušnja«.

Ključne besede: češkost, participacija, scenografija, izkušnja, Praga, potovalna agencija, javna storitev

Intelekturálně je fluiden kolektiv, ki scenografe, vizualne umetnike, režiserje, glasbenike, grafične oblikovalce, teoretike in producente povezuje z lokalnimi skupnostmi. Poglavitni raziskovalni pristop kolektiva je performativno gledalstvo in apropiacija ready-mada. Na Praškem kvadrienu leta 2019 je kolektiv prejel nagrado za domišljijo, na Študentski razstavi leta 2020 pa so postali del mentorske in diseminacijske platforme New Blood on Stage češke kulturne mreže Nová Síť.

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Praga ni Češka: umetniški projekt kot javna storitev

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Glavni namen pričujočega besedila je refleksija ustvarjalnega procesa projekta *Praga ni Češka*, ki je bil zasnovan kot kolektivna razstava v okviru Praškega kvadriena scenskega oblikovanja in prostora 2019 (v nadaljevanju: PK). Avtorice projekta, ki so se povezale v ekipo Intelekturálně, so se odločile projekt nadaljevati s potovalno agencijo Praga ni Češka in ga razviti v sistematično družbeno-umetniško raziskavo, ki izbrane strategije neprške resničnosti uporablja kot ready-made in jih napolni z lastnimi vsebinami. Že od samega začetka projekt temelji na konceptu radikalnega sodelovanja, tako da participativni pristop k ustvarjanju predstavlja primarno temo, kar se odraža tudi v tem besedilu, ki je tudi samo plod sodelovanja; gre za formalni eksperiment o tem, kako bi lahko potekalo kolektivno pisanje na temo skupnega projekta.

V petih razdelkih besedilo predstavi začetne umetniške pristope in temeljne strategije, ki so oblikovale izvorni projekt na PK, pa tudi njegovo trenutno fazo družbeno-umetniške raziskave. Besedilo je razčlenjeno na pet razdelkov, vsakega od njih uvede odstavek otvoritvenega manifesta, ki sta ga spisali pobudnici projekta Anna Chrtková in Andrea Dudková, potem pa ga s teoretsko refleksijo nadalje razvije teatrologinja Amálie Bulandrová, ki k projektu pristopa »od zunaj« in ga opisuje na podlagi lastne gledalske in udeleženske izkušnje.

Prvi razdelek nosi naslov »Kaj delamo«. Avtorici tu odpirata telo besedila z opisom različnih faz v razvoju projekta *Praga ni Češka*: od začasne pisarne potovalne agencije, umeščene v razstavni prostor PK (kjer so prodajali izlete iz Prage, ki jih je organiziralo šest študentov in poklicnih ekip), pa do družbeno-umetniške raziskave, ki izbrane

strategije nepraške resničnosti uporablja kot ready-made in jih napolni z lastno vsebino.

Drugi razdelek vzpostavlja glavno temo projekta *Praga ni Češka*, ki je iskanje resnične češkosti. Obliko tega razdelka bi lahko opisali kot »kolektivno pisanje«. Ustvarili smo kratek vprašalnik, na katerem so članice ustvarjalne ekipe projekta *Praga ni Češka* odgovarjale na sugerirana vprašanja: Kam bi si želeli iti na izlet v teh dneh in zakaj? Kaj vam pomeni »češkost«? Se strinjate s tem, kar imamo za češki stereotip? Imate kakšno češko skrivno razvado?

Naslednji razdelek predstavi različne plasti soudeležbe v okviru notranje strukture projekta (udeležba različnih poklicnih gledaliških in likovnih ustvarjalcev v okviru napol fiktivne institucije potovalne agencije) pa tudi v samih rezultatih (sodelovanje umetnikov in producentov z gosti – »turisti« in »lokalci«). V uvodnem manifestu je jedro prakse projekta umeščeno na ločnico med avtorstvom in gledalstvom, čeprav bi to mejo lahko imeli za specifično vrsto metaresničnosti. Vendar pa znotraj tovrstnega polja ni ne delitev ne meja, ki bi delile umetnika/gledalca/udeleženca, lokalca/obiskovalca ali Prago/Neprago. To razglasitev nato kontekstualizirajo v okviru »sodelovalnega obrata« v likovni umetnosti, kot ga navajata Claire Bishop in Jan Zálešák. Projekti in instalacije, ki temeljijo na umetniškem sodelovanju in participativni umetnosti (se pravi ustvarjalni participaciji), zasnujejo okrepljeni položaj gledalca kot izhodiščno točko in tovrstni projekti večinoma gradijo na aktivaciji skupin ali posameznikov, ki med dogodkom postanejo soustvarjalci.

V četrtem razdelku razvijamo tematiko scenografije. *Praga ni Češka* uteleša prizadevanja, da bi scenografijo iztrgali iz njene tesne povezave z gledališkim odrom. Poleg tega je naš cilj predstaviti scenografijo kot splošno vizualno, prostorsko in zvočno organiziranost gledališkega (ali performativnega) dogodka, s čimer potencialno obsega vsa čutila pa tudi dimenzijo časa, kar omogoča dinamičen proces sprememb, ki se zgodi med dogodkom. Avtorice si jemljejo svobodo od črnih škatel in belih kock, tako da zavračajo reprezentiranje resničnosti znotraj takšnih prostorov. Namesto tega same sebe štejejo za tiste, ki postavijo določeno (umetniško) situacijo in ji pustijo, da zaživi po svoje.

Zadnji razdelek se ukvarja s tematiko izkušnje. Manifest pridiga o nujnem spoštovanju že obstoječih prostorskih in družbenih struktur ter z odprtimi rokami sprejema vse nepričakovano, naključja, dialoge in raznolikost. Teoretska refleksija zgradi teatrološki poskus, kako zajeti bistvo gledalčeve izkušnje v njenem neposrednem bistvu, in razvija zaznavo scenografije kot specifičnega sveta z lastnimi pravili. Torej gre za refleksijo prizadevanja, da bi svet zasnovali ne z abstraktnega znanstvenega vidika, temveč, nasprotno, s prvoosebnega gledišča subjekta. Temeljno vprašanje pa je, kako se svet kaže kot fenomen ljudem, ki stopajo v interakcije z njim?

Zaključek predstavlja še en ločen razdelek besedila – tudi ta je spisan z vidika pobudnic projekta. Poleg povzetka ugotovitev razdela tudi koncept javne storitve, ki povezuje celoten članek, čeprav ga artikuliramo šele čisto na koncu. Sam konec besedila tako odraža glavno spremembo, ki so jo avtorice doživele med izvajanjem projekta *Praga ni Češka*. Gre za premik od utopične, totalitarne perspektive »srečnega vesolja«, ki ga ponujajo potovalne agencije, kjer ljudje različnih družbenih in kulturnih ravni postanejo sodelavci, k bolj osebnemu – nepráškem, neumetniškemu, nespecifičnemu – pristopu k zaznavanju drugega. S temi besedami pa zaključek bralcu ponuja še eno sugestijo: »*Spet in spet lahko izkoristimo izkušnje, ki smo jih s tem pridobili, in tako sodelujemo pri izgradnji novih prihodnosti – na primer takšnih, kjer krajevne posebnosti pomenijo dodano vrednost in prostor za dialog, ne pa zgolj marketinški slogan.*«



Recenzije / Book Reviews

Gledališče potencialnosti in potencial njegove skupnosti

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Mala Kline. *Gledališče potencialnosti: med etiko in politiko*. Spremnna beseda Bojana Kunst,

Maska, 2020. Transformacije, 163.

Mala Kline se v svojem raznoterem opusu, ki bi ga lahko označili za konglomerat tako teoretičnih, performativnih, koreografskih, sodobnoumetniških kot filozofskih praks, zdi kot neke vrste dvoživka; na eni strani umetnost ustvarja, izvaja in ponuja v premislek ter občutenje, na drugi pa jo skozi lasten teoretski aparat ponovno razstavlja, razkosava, misli in vpenja v vsakič nove konceptualne mreže, ki jih tke z natančnim poznavanjem teorije gledališča, performativnih praks in filozofije na eni strani in z lastnimi izkustvi na drugi. Nič čudnega ni, da je bila tudi njena izobraževalna pot zastavljena v tej smeri: najprej je diplomirala iz primerjalne književnosti in filozofije, nato magistrirala v Amsterdamu iz uprizoritvenih umetnosti in se naposled vrnila po doktorat v Ljubljano, ki ga je opravila pod mentorstvom dr. Eve D. Bahovec. Prav njeni doktorski izsledki iz let 2010–2015, kakor sama pojasni v zahvali knjige, pa so zaslužni za delo pred nami, v katerem avtorica spretno kombinira izkustvo videlih predstav z izstopajočim konceptom celotnega dela – s konceptom potencialnosti.

Začnimo najprej nekoliko monotono: knjiga *Gledališče potencialnosti* je zastavljena pregledno, natančno in metodično. Na prvi pogled bi se lahko zdela kot nekakšen zbir videlih predstav, ki jih je avtorica po spominu obnavljala in podoživljala z namenom, da bi v njih razgrnila podstat »gledališča po gledališču«¹ in podstat potencialnosti, ki je »inherentna kateri koli obliki gledališča, deluje v gledališču in je nekaj, s čimer se gledališče ukvarja« (10). Napačno bi bilo sklepati, da avtorica izbrana dela izrablja za vsiljevanje koncepta potencialnosti, saj je že po prvih straneh jasno, da je Mala Kline sicer naključno videna dela izbrala po ključu potencialnosti, pa naj gre za njihovo potencialno preseganje jezika, potencialne političnosti, potencialne ustvarjanje skupnosti, nove paradigme itn., in da jih ne nazadnje misli »kot potencialna dejanja odpora« (34), ne da bi s to mislijo po nesreči zasenčila temeljno misel obravnavanega

¹ Ta termin si avtorica izposoja od Hansa-Thiesa Lehmana.

dela. Kot pojasni, pripada avtorstvo vseh šestih izbranih del še živečim in aktivnim evropskim umetnikom, vsi pa v svojih delih premišlujejo premičnost mejnikov med življenjem in performansom. To so dela *Mahanje* (Myriam Van Imschoot), *Praktične vaje v mišljenju* (Snežanka Mihajlova), *Abecedarium Bestiarium – Portreti podobnosti v živalskih metaforah* (Antonia Baehr in prijatelji), *Projekt Janez Janša* (Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša), *Spominjanja* (Dalija Aćin Thelander) in *Bach/Pasijon/Janez* (Laurent Chétouane).

Vsako delo, ki ga avtorica premisli v drobovje, pospremi s prav tako naključno izbrano teoretsko referenco, ki pa se je, kot pojasni sama, naposled izkazala za nujno (Kline 10). Mala Kline sledi misli Giorgia Agambena, s pomočjo katerega si zastavi teoretski okvir, ki ga sama spretno nadaljuje z lastno mislijo in s potencialnim nadaljevanjem misli drugih filozofov in teoretikov – pri tem si izposoja Agambenov arheološki postopek. Agambena izbere intuitivno, ker se slednji opira na življenje, se k življenju vrača, poskuša s svojo filozofijo prihajanja uloviti najbolj pravo definicijo življenja, obenem misli »politizacijo ,golega življenja kot takega‘« (27) in se navsezadnje vrača k prvinam življenja. Ena izmed teh prvin je tudi jezik, ki ga Agamben razume kot vmesnik med človekom in realnostjo, Mala Kline pa v odnosu do gledališča jezik pojmuje kot njegov ontološki pogoj (12). Prav zato bi lahko rekli, da je vsa izbrana dela avtorica izbirala tudi po ključu preseganja jezika (pa naj gre za besedni ali nebesedni jezik), saj prav vsa obravnavana dela po svoje kažejo na raznotere možnosti izrabe jezikovnega potenciala.

Kline bere Agambena kot nadaljevalca misli Foucaulta in Deleuza, s tem da se sama osredotoča na njihovo ukvarjanje z idejo biopolitike in idejo desubjektivizacije subjekta, kar naj bi, rečeno zelo grobo, subjekt približalo njegovi potencialnosti in mu posledično omogočalo izmakniti se vdoru političnega, ali rečeno bolje: »Izničenje subjekta je gesta, prek katere subjekt izstopi iz avtomatiziranega podrejanja, ki ga izvajajo stroji biomoči, in se vrne k samemu sebi kot potencialno bitje, kot katerokoli bitje v odnosu odprtosti do lastne potencialnosti, hkrati pa ostaja subjekt« (31). Prav s to mislijo, kakor tudi z mnogimi drugimi, Mala Kline med obravnavo nabranih del ostaja v nenehnem dialogu in tako izbrane umetniške poskuse jemlje kot prostore, v katerih se lahko zgodita možna desubjektivizacija subjekta in potencialni vznik subjektive potencialnosti, očiščene vdora biopolitičnega.

Uvodoma nas avtorica seznanja še s »koncepti na delu«, kjer poleg koncepta potencialnosti naslovi še koncepte singularnosti, materialnosti in kontingence, vse štiri pa spoji v koncept potencialne nove paradigme.

V nadaljevanju Mala Kline razpre dragocen premislek o psevdoaktivnosti sodobne umetnosti, znotraj katerega premisli politični potencial ali nepotencial umetniških praks, pri čemer ugotavlja, da se sodobna umetnost bolj kot velikih političnih vprašanj in družbenega antagonizma loteva vprašanj, zvedenih na ožje mikropolitичne svetove

in mikroprizorišča. Kline opozori na politično, ki je v umetniškem delu, četudi se samo ne opredeljuje za striktno politično, zmeraj potencialno prisotno: »Prav zaradi te naključne možnosti je umetnost za svojega nasprotnika vselej potencialno ‚nevarna‘« (24). Čeprav se vse manj umetniških praks danes še izreka za odkrito politične, Mala Kline pa tudi Bojana Kunst, ki je napisala sicer dobro, a nekoliko ponesrečeno umeščeno spremno besedo, ki jo najdemo na zadnjih straneh knjige, v takih umetniških gestah, skoncentriranih okoli mikropolitčnih vprašanj, vidita drobne, »neznatne« (36), a koristne premestitve in premike, ki vodijo k potencialni vzpostavitvi nove individualne ali kolektivne subjektivnosti: »Morda bolj kot neposreden, očiten boj s še enim političnim programom pravzaprav spremljamo spremembo našega načina razmišljanja in razumevanja« (25). Mala Kline kljub manku umetnosti, ki bi bila hkrati tudi izrazita aktivistična in politična gesta, ne izgublja vere v žive dogodke, še več, v gledališče in žive dogodke verjame, jih izbira in premišljuje, saj so to »nujni politični motilci status quo, trn v peti družbenega telesa, formiranega v skladu z razplatenimi postfordističnimi diskurzi« (35).

Omenjene potencialne možnosti jezika, ki presegajo njegov najočitnejši lingvistični potencial, Mala Kline premišlja v prvem izbranem delu *Mahanje* umetnice iz Bruslja, Myriam Van Imschoot. Slednja se navdušuje nad načini komuniciranja na daljavo, še najbolj nad takimi, ki so iz naših življenj že povsem poniknili. To navdušenje nad gestami, ki ni lastno le avtorici performansa, marveč celotni populaciji, ki je take geste izbrisala iz svojih življenj, ima Agamben za »bolezen« 20. stoletja (Kline 48). Mehanične geste so nadomestili dispozitivi, ki jih Agamben razume kot nekaj, kar zapoveduje (prav tam).

V performansu *Mahanje*, ki ga po spominu opiše Mala Kline, je gledalec postavljen pred bel zaslon, na katerem se izpišeta pojasnilo in definicija geste mahanja za vse tiste, ki bi nemara gesto pozabili ali pa je sploh ne bi poznali (Kline 45). Nato avtorica uprizori mahanje, to gesto pa umesti in izvede ob različnih priložnostih. Sledi še video nebotičnika, v katerem gledalci prepoznajo zabrisane človeške podobe (»Tisto, kar je komaj vidno, je občutno« (53)), ki mahajo neznano kam in neznano komu.

Mala Kline se v obravnavi performansa obrne na nekaj Agambenovih esejev, v enem izmed katerih Agamben kritiko opredeli na trojni ravni. Ena izmed teh ravni je tudi gestična. Agamben geste ne razume kot ločene ali odtrgane od jezika in jo nasprotno ob jezik sopostavlja, Kline pa v soglasju z Agambenom prav gesto mahanja postavlja v medprostor med jezikom in prostorom: »Diskurzivno je samo dejanje mahanja. Mahanje ni gesta telesa, ki v gesto vnaša predjezikovno vsebino z druge strani jezika. Mahanje samo nas umešča v vrzel med jezikom in prostorom, kjer jezik onemi« (47). Avtorica knjige *Gledališče potencialnosti* gesto mahanja razume kot gesto, ki izraža željo po komunikaciji in morebitni potencial komunikacije. Performans razume kot

poskus »biti v jeziku in onstran jezika« (56), kar bi lahko povezali z Agambenovo očaranostjo nad mimiki in drugimi igralci, ki v svoji igri ostajajo onstran jezika. In prav biti onstran jezika opozarja na človekovo željo po biti v.

Idejo biti v jeziku, ali še natančneje, biti v misli Mala Kline nadaljuje s premislekom performansa *Praktične vaje v mišljenju*, ki je delo bolgarske umetnice Snežanke Mihajlove. Avtorica performans začne z vodeno vizualizacijo pri gledalcih, medtem ko gledalci strpno sedijo v krogu, sredi katerega sedita performerja: to sta umetnica sama in slovenski filozof Mladen Dolar. Performans je celota iz dveh delov, in sicer na eni strani iz predhodno izdane knjige z naslovom *Praktične vaje v mišljenju* in na drugi iz skupka performativnih srečanj, znotraj katerega je nastal obravnavani performans.

Koncept performansa se zdi enostaven: performerja si v dialogu izmenjujeta misli z namenom prikazati mišljenje. Mala Kline si zastavi smiselno vprašanje, ki verjetno zbode tako neposrednega očitveca performativnega dogodka kakor tudi posrednega bralca, ki v pričujoči knjigi bere o dramaturgiji dogodka. Kline se sprašuje: »Kako je mogoče razstaviti misel v galeriji, pravzaprav eni najprestižnejših galerij v Evropi? Kako lahko gledališče uprizori misel?« (62) pa tudi: »Kaj je pravzaprav misel in kako deluje?« (prav tam). To je le nekaj vprašanj, ki si jih filozofinja postavi za nadaljnji premislek vidnega performansa. Misel seveda ne more biti uprizorjena v prostoru galerije, v katerem si jih filozofa izmenjujeta. Prav zato se gledalec, kot ugotavlja Mala Kline, obrača v lasten, notranji prostor, k temu, kar avtorica pojmuje kot gledališče misli (62), to lastno gledališče pa vsako na svoj način soustvarja videni performans. Pri tem se avtorica knjige vrača k vprašanju o odnosu med jezikom in mislijo, ki bi ga lahko zastavljali podobno, kot zastavljamo enigmatično vprašanje o odnosu med kuro in jajcem: kaj je lahko prej – misel ali jezik. Tu Mala Kline zopet sledi Agambenu, ki vzpostavitev subjekta razume ravno prek jezika (nav. po 72). Da bi torej prišli do čiste misli, do predstanja jezika, moramo priti v stanje pred subjektom, to pomeni, da se moramo vrniti v stanje pred jezikom. To stanje je za Agambena mogoče doseči v obdobju detinstva (*in-fancy*), znotraj katerega je mogoče govoriti o golem izkustvu: »Poblisk detinstva je točka, v kateri se spomnimo, da je še nekaj razen jezika« (72). Priti moramo v stanje, ki ve. »In to stanje je znotraj jezika« (73).

V naslednjem obravnavanem delu *Abecedarium Bestiarium – Portreti podobnosti v živalskih metaforah* so Antonia Baehr in prijatelji ustvarili kratke »zapise oziroma partiture na temo izumrlih živali, do katerih čutijo posebno naklonjenost« (79). Tako začne Mala Kline z opisom vidnega performansa, ki pred gledalca postavi podobnosti med na videz nasprotujočimi se subjekti, stanji, idejami. Kot pojasni Mala Kline, se je ideja performansa razvila iz vprašanja, ki ga je umetnica postavila svoji prijateljici Dodi. Vprašala jo je, kaj ji pomeni ime, ki si ga deli z izumrlim ptičem dodojem. To vprašanje se je razvejilo v kopico drugih podvprašanj, vse do takšnih,

povezanih z odnosom človeka do imena, pa do vprašanja, ali človek res prevzema lastnosti, ki jih nosi določeno ime, in obratno: ali nemara to ime iz človeka izvabi te lastnosti (nav. po Kline 80). Mala Kline ponudi odgovor: »Vprašanje imena v odnosu do življenja je pravzaprav vprašanje o moči jezika, da opredeli življenje in ga ujame v neko obliko življenja« (80).

Ta odgovor pa nas bržkone privede že do naslednje umetniške geste treh Janezov Janš, *Projekta Janez Janša*. Ker je bil projekt tako odmeven, da odmeva še danes, ko je pravi Janez Janša (čeprav se tu poraja vprašanje, kdo sploh je pravi Janez Janša; kot pojasni Mala Kline, je tudi sam trenutni premier posnetek samega sebe, kajti sam nosi ime Ivan Janša in ne Janez Janša (nav. po Kline 107)) spet na čelu slovenske vlade, se bomo izognili obnavljanju te geste »potencialnega odpora«. Raje bomo sledili že zastavljenemu premisleku o odnosu med imenom (jezikom) in življenjem, ki ga v tem primeru parazitsko napadejo trije umetniki.

Zakaj so se umetniki odločili za to gesto, ni bilo nikoli zares opredeljeno. Kot ironično zastavi Mala Kline, bi lahko njihovo odločitev razumeli kot dobessedno branje gesla stranke SDS, v katero so se včlanili trije umetniki (geslo se glasi: »Več nas bo, prej bomo na cilju« (95)). Sprememba imena in s tem pomnožitev Janeza Janše je namreč vplivala tako na življenje treh umetnikov kot tudi na pravega Janeza Janšo. Pomeni, da s preimenovanjem v Janeza Janšo niso izginili le Emil Hrvatin, Davide Grassi in Žiga Kariž, marveč je v množici Janezov Janš izginil tudi sam Janez Janša. Izginila je njegova »simbolna funkcija« (106) oziroma njegova avratičnost, ki mu podeljuje možnost vodenja države. To pomeni, da več Janezov Janš privede do desubjektivizacije pravega Ivana Janše, kar nam ponudi »prazno mesto, skozi katero poseva ideološki mehanizem kot tak« (107). Izpraznjeno mesto oziroma prazen označevalec pa dovoljuje prav vsakemu, da se tega označevalca polasti, kar pomeni, da bi si prav vsak lahko prilaščal ne samo ime Janez Janša, kar nam sicer dopušča že povsem legalna možnost spremembe imena v ime našega premierja, temveč tudi simbolno funkcijo Janeza Janše: »Samo ime in simbolna moč, ki jo nosi, zdaj postaneta dostopna vsem, vsaki obliki življenja« (prav tam). In če bi prav zares v nedogled pomnoževali označevalec Janez Janša, potem bi nas to privedlo do desubjektivizacije ne samo Ivana Janše, temveč tudi vseh, ki bi si njegovo ime prilaščali. To pa bi pomenilo vznik nove množice Janezov Janš in posledični vznik nove potencialnosti.

Sledi »participatorni performans« (120) *Spominjanje* avtorice Dalije Aćin Thelander, ki na oder, na katerem se bo odvila koreografija (ali pa ne) postavi MP3-predvajalnike, risbe in dokumente, ki jih bo gledalec poslušal in gledal (ali pa ne). Kot pojasni Mala Kline, se performans zaključí, ko iz prostora odide zadnji obiskovalec. Njeno koreografijo lahko umeščamo v polje »koreografije kot razširjene prakse« (113), kar pomeni, da njena koreografija lahko deluje tudi onkraj konkretnega giba in plesa.

S koreografiranjem gledalčeve pozornosti umetnica vabi gledalca, da performans zavestno soustvarja (ali pa ne), hkrati pa ga vabi k soustvarjanju skupnosti oziroma vabi nas, da »na novo doživimo, si na novo zamislimo ali na novo mislimo naš ‚biti skupaj‘ kot vedno vnaprej relacijski in kot tisto, kar je ‚skupno‘ vsem, kot osnovo za skupnost, ki prihaja« (114). Mala Kline se opira na idejo Agambena, ki želi skupnost očistiti nepotrebne nujne pripadnosti tej skupnosti, kot rešitev pa pripadnost subjekta pripiše subjektu samemu. Subjektu se ni treba več poistovetiti s skupnostjo, kakor se tudi gledalcu in soustvarjalcu performansa *Spominjanje* ni treba več čutiti dolžnega pripadati skupnosti. »Ničesar mi ni treba udejanjiti: nobene oblike identitete, reprezentacije ali pripadanja. Posvečam se temu, da sem tukaj in zdaj, z drugimi v skupnem prostoru časa, izpostavljena tistim, ki so izpostavljeni meni, v prenašanju te izpostavljenosti« (123). Performans od udeležencev ne zahteva aktivnega sodelovanja, pač pa le njihovo prisotnost, kar pomeni, da je dogodek zveden na osnovni pogoj gledališkega dogodka, ki pa v sebi vselej nosi potencialnost: »Vsako umetniško, torej tudi gledališko delo je v odnosu s svojo lastno potencialnostjo. Njegova potencialnost ‚je zmožna‘ lastne impotencialnosti. Delo tiči na meji med tem, kar je v njem potencialno, in njegovo (uresničeno) dejanskostjo« (16).

Podobno idejo v sebi nosi zadnje obravnavano delo *Bach/Pasijon/Janez*, še en koreografski performans, pod katerega se tokrat podpisuje režiser Laurent Chétouan. Na odru se za razliko od prejšnjih performansov tokrat znajde lepa množica glasbenikov, pevke in plesalcev, ki že sami po sebi ustvarjajo skupnost. »Njihov biti drug z drugim in z občinstvom je Pasijon kot tak ali vsaj mesto njegove potencialne pojavitve« (131). Jedrna ideja performansa je torej usrediščena okoli vprašanja skupnosti in gole izpostavljenosti drug drugemu (nav. po Kline 133). Kot pojasni Mala Kline, je gledalec ves čas priča odločitvi performerjev o tem, kako bodo katero stvar izvedli, jo v zadnjem hipu spremenili ali sploh ne naredili ničesar. Zgodi se lahko namreč tudi popolnoma nič; kot pojasni Mala Kline, so v performansu vzpostavljeni osnovni parametri gledališkega dogodka, to je postavitve v prostoru, kompozicija itn. Vendar pa tudi ti pogoji ne zagotavljajo, da se bo performans končal z uspehom: »Pasijon stopa po tanki meji med mogočim nastankom in enako mogočim propadom« (136). To pomeni, da »[p]otencialno vselej obstaja tveganje, da Pasijon propade« (142).

Ta grobi prelet vseh del, ki jih Mala Kline v sozvočju z drugimi avtorji premišlja in poskuša zvesti na skupni imenovalc potencialnosti, nas pravzaprav šele pripelje do glavnega občutja o tem, kaj knjiga *Gledališče potencialnosti* sploh predstavlja za filozofsko-umetniško pa tudi družbeno-politično krajino, v katero avtorica prida pomemben uvid v stanje sodobne evropske umetnosti in v način njenega delovanja. Ponudi nam vreden vpogled v vitalnost sodobnoumetniških praks, v stanje »gledališča po gledališču«, ki raziskuje potencialnost živega dogodka in preizkuša meje mogočega, do kam ustvarjalci še lahko grejo, kaj lahko dogodku še odvzamejo, da ta še lahko

obstaja v razporku med svojo potencialnostjo in nepotencialnostjo. Tak dogodek poskuša proizvesti nekaj, kar je onkraj znanega, onkraj jezika, onkraj telesa, onkraj biopolitičnega in onkraj subjekta.

Knjiga razgrinja polje skupnosti, v tem polju skupnosti pa se najdeta tako politika v vlogi antagonista kot tudi umetnost v vlogi njenega motilca. Četudi se sodobnoumetniška dela izogibajo naslavljanju skupnih družbenih antagonizmov, se z individualnimi gestami odpora upirajo standardizaciji subjektov s tem, da subjektu dovoljujejo uresničitev njegovega potenciala in ponovne subjektivizacije. Te geste odpora nas pripeljejo do »drobnih premestitev«, kakor te mikropremike imenuje Walter Benjamin (153), ti premiki pa nam dovoljujejo premisliti potencial tako družbe kot skupnosti kot tudi subjekta samega, »kdo smo lahko (ali ne), torej kot še neizpolnjeno obljubo, še nerealiziran potencial; nas pozivajo k temu, kar (še) nismo, a bi lahko bili, in nam tako nudijo možnost preobrazbe in razširitve v sebstvo, ki prihaja, skupnost, ki prihaja, svet, ki vselej šele prihaja; v življenje možnih alternativ, ki si prizadevajo in uspevajo druga ob drugi brez sprave« (41). Mala Kline nam pravzaprav vrača vero v potencialnost gledališča, ki ga nič več ne razume kot bojno sredstvo zoper družbeni antagonizem. Razume ga kot prostor raznoterih možnosti, prostor nezamejene potencialnosti, prostor svobode, skupnega in prav zato tudi prostor odpora. Ali še bolje, gledališče po Lehmannu razume kot »prostor potencialnosti«, ki nas (ponovno) »potrdi ne v tem, kar smo, temveč v tem, kar nismo, a bi lahko bili« (Lehmann 55). In v ta prostor potencialnosti, ki ga avtorica v knjigi sistematično izgrajuje, s prebiranjem in razumevanjem njenih misli vstopamo tudi sami in tako izgrajujemo skupnost, ki jo poleg bralcev tvorijo še avtorica sama in umetniki na delu. Podobno kot v performansu *Spominjanje* nas namreč knjiga *Gledališče potencialnosti* vabi k udeležbi, k nadaljevanju avtoričine misli, k premišljanju potencialnosti še nepremišljenega: »Besedilo bralcem daje izhodišče za nadaljnji premislek« (39). Mala Kline pa nam tako ne vrača zgolj vere v potencialnost gledališča, marveč tudi v potencialnost nas samih.

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Abstraktna umetnost kot vzvod dejanskih sprememb

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Birgit Fritz. *InExActArt: avtopoietsko gledališče Augusta Boala*. Kulturno umetniško društvo Transformator, 2020.

InExActArt je prvi obsežnejši priročnik gledališča zatiranih v slovenskem jeziku. Prevedel ga je Jan Franc Podbrežnik, filozof, umetnik in prevajalec, ki med drugim deluje tudi na področju gledališča zatiranih. Uspelo mu je ustvariti jezikovno jasen, enostaven in uporaben prevod. Novembra lani ga je izdalo KUD Transformator, ki je lani slavilo prvih deset let delovanja kot gledališko-aktivistična skupina Transformator. Za njegove začetke ter posledično kasnejšo rast in razširitev metode ter tehnik gledališča zatiranih je v veliki meri zaslužna prav avtorica tega priročnika, Birgit Fritz. Njen vpliv in prispevek k razvoju gledališča zatiranih na slovenskih tleh sta pomembna tudi z vidika kasnejšega obdobja, saj je avtorica kar nekajkrat obiskala Ne-festival gledališča zatiranih v Gornjem Gradu, kjer je med drugimi aktivnostmi vodila delavnice tehnik gledališča zatiranih in predajala dragocene izkušnje. Je ena izmed srečnic, ki je imela priložnost tudi osebno spoznati očeta gledališča zatiranih, Augusta Boala.

Metoda gledališča zatiranih je koncept stalno dograjujočih in spreminjajočih se tehnik v skladu z življenjskimi situacijami. Prvotni namen, s katerim ga je Augusto Boal osnoval, je prav to – rast, deljenje, povezovanje, spreminjanje, razumevanje in – izboljšava življenja samega! Gledališče zatiranih je gledališče za ljudi, je orodje, s katerim je posamezniku ali skupnosti dana možnost izraziti se, in kar je najpomembnejše – postati slišan. Je izkušnja transformacije z akcijo, ki je sodelujočega v trenutku zmožna tako navdihniti, da se brez pomisleka poda na pot raziskovanja: »Gledališče je za Boala ‚mati vseh umetnosti‘, saj združuje jezik, glasbo in vizualno formo. Njegovo razumevanje gledališča je zelo široko, je ‚gledališče za vsakogar‘, in v takšnem gledališču najde prostor vse, kar je življenjskega – četudi to pomeni, da ga ne bi več mogli poimenovati gledališče« (Fritz 20).

Tehnike gledališča zatiranih so metode, ki jih je v šestdesetih in sedemdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja v Latinski Ameriki in nato še desetletja kasneje po Evropi razvijal brazilski režiser in dramatik Augusto Boal. Rojen je bil 16. marca 1931 v Riu de Janeiru v Braziliji. Po končani osnovni šoli je izobraževalno pot nadaljeval na Univerzi

Columbia v ZDA, kjer je študiral kemijo in gledališče, kasnejši del življenja pa je v celoti posvetil slednjemu. Deloval je po vsem svetu, kar mu je leta 2008 prineslo tudi nominacijo za Nobelovo nagrado za mir.

Tehnike, ki jih je razvijal Augusto Boal, ne bi obstajale brez utemeljitelja pedagogike zatiranih. Metoda in tehnike gledališča zatiranih namreč temeljijo na principih pedagogike zatiranih Paula Freirja, ki predpostavlja, da se vsakdo lahko znajde v položaju zatiranega oz. da se zatiranje zgodi, kadar se dialog prevesi v monolog in se tako prekine komunikacija, ki je pomembna za izboljšanje položaja predvsem osebe ali skupnosti, ki se v zatiranem položaju znajde. Glede na takratno politično situacijo v Latinski Ameriki so Freirjeve misli vzkllile iz opazovanja komunikacije med tedanjimi oblastmi ter ljudstvom, Boal pa je na podlagi tega razvil orodje, uporabno za čisto vsakega človeka, ki ga je mogoče aplicirati na veliko situacij in katerega poglavitni cilj je spodbujanje oblikovanja demokratičnega prostora dialoga za vseživljenjsko učenje. Freire pravi, da je dialog pravzaprav bivanjska potreba, saj »če ljudje z izrekanjem besede, s katero poimenujejo svet, ta svet spreminjajo, se dialog uveljavlja kot način, s katerim se ljudje osmišljajo kot ljudje« (69).

Gledališče zatiranih je angažirano gledališče za družbene spremembe, ki skrbi za odkrivanje in reševanje situacij, ki nastajajo ali pa so že dalj časa prisotne v družbi in predvsem ljudi postavljajo v težaven položaj. Je nekakšno gledališče od ljudi in za ljudi, saj s svojimi metodami posega v resnična življenja in situacije ter jih uspešno obelodani in se tako pomakne korak bližje k razrešitvi. Je gledališče, ki se ljudem prilagaja in se še vedno razvija. Njegove raznovrstne prakse temeljijo na pomenu človekovih pravic, saj je gledališče zatiranih oblika raziskovanja, s katerim postajamo del svetovnega gledališkega gibanja za humaniziranje človeštva. »Je način interakcije z gledališko formo in uporabe gledališča kot emancipatorne, participatorne in dialoške prakse, usmerjene v razvoj in preobrazbo družbe,« kot o njem zapiše avtorica priročnika sama (21).

InExActArt je prva v slovenščino prevedena obsežnejša knjiga na področju gledališča zatiranih, ki se pri nas najintenzivneje razvija, širi ter preobraža pod taktirko KUD Transformator, zato je od društva izdani prevod izvirnika dopolnjen tudi z vložkom kratkega prereza delovanja, v katerem je prikazana uporaba pristopov gledališča zatiranih skozi prakso oz. tri projekte: *Moje prav(lj)ice*, *Impro-forum* in *Upogljivi upor*. Primeri adaptacije gledališča zatiranih, ki so uvrščeni kot zadnji prispevek v priročniku, bralcu s temi tremi projekti pokažejo, kako koristne in prilagodljive za uporabo so pravzaprav tovrstne metode.

Gledališče zatiranih je na naša tla v sodelovanju s KUD Transformator uspešno prenesla prav Birgit Fritz, zato je izid prvega priročnika v slovenskem jeziku nekaj, kar je kot vzročno-posledična zveza toku razvoja logično sledilo. Nabor gledaliških

pristopov, ki so prikazani in razloženi v priročniku, ni omejen samo na strogo polje tovrstnega gledališča, ampak se je že pred začetki KUD Transformator tudi na naših tleh uporabljal na različnih področjih in še vedno se – npr. vaje je mogoče uporabiti ali prilagoditi v igre za prebijanje ledu, za ogrevanje pred predstavami, za sestavo vsebine oz. pripravo performansa, za izluščenje ključnega sporočila določenih dogodkov, situacije ali celo notranjega doživljanja oz. razpoloženja osebe, za delo z marginaliziranimi skupinami, za delo z mladimi, za ustvarjanje in povezovanje skupin in še bi lahko naštevali. Lahko bi rekli, da so nekatere vaje in igre med ljudmi že trdno zasidrane v podzavesti. Metode gledališča zatiranih v praksi delujejo kot nekakšne igre, vendar je njihov namen resen in jih ne gre uporabljati zgolj za zabavo – lahko pa seveda jih.

Avtorica priročnika nam v uvodu pojasni, da se ne oklicuje za avtorico izbranih vaj in metod, saj so v skupnem izročilu gledališke igre ali drugih praks poučevanja obstajale že desetletja pred njenim raziskovalnim delom, prav tako pa nam na srce polaga dejstvo, da izbrane vaje niso popolne in zaključene, ampak so odprte za dopolnjevanje in izboljševanje. Pri svojem raziskovanju izhaja predvsem iz prakse – da bo stopila po tej poti, pa je bil rezultat hipne odločitve, ki ji je botrovalo tudi srečanje z Augustom Boalom. Ob vseh delavnicah, ki jih je izvedla v preteklih letih – in bilo jih je več kot tristo – se ji je zazdelo, da se je v bistvu odvila ena sama delavnica, vedno ista, čeprav v različnih kontekstih, z različnimi vajami, različnimi skupinami in poudarki, a vedno z nekakšnim istim vodilnim motivom. Birgit Fritz je sicer izkušena pedagoginja in mentorica ter izvajalka različnih delavnic na tem področju. Je pisateljica in aktivistka. Deluje na Univerzi na Dunaju, kjer poučuje transkulturno delo v gledališču, sodeluje pa tudi v mirovnih programskih študijah Univerze v Innsbrucku. Je ustanoviteljica Gledališča zatiranih na Dunaju, skupine SpielerAI Mednarodnega gledališča Amnesty International in transdisciplinarne skupine z imenom InExActArt, v kateri se ukvarjajo predvsem s tradicionalnim pripovedovanjem zgodb na različne načine, z gledališčem zatiranih in alternativnim gledališčem, dela pa tudi s članicami posebne skupine, namenjene samo ženskam oz. vstopu žensk v situacije zatiranih žensk, ki se imenuje Magdalene (prim. Klement). Kot zanimivost naj omenim, da skupina Magdalene obstaja tudi v Sloveniji.

Priročnik *InExActArt*, katerega ime bi lahko grobo prevedli v abstraktne oz. nedoločene umetnosti, je v jedru razdeljen na štiri dele. V prvem delu priročnika gre poudarek grajenju odnosov v skupini, v kateri se delavnica odvija – v tem delu so zbrane tehnike, ki so namenjene razvijanju udeleženceve stopnje samozavedanja, občutka za soudeležence ter občutka vodje za skupino. Avtorica spretno predstavi način dela od začetka delavnice do postopnega izvajanja zapletenejših tehnik. Pogosto poleg natančnega opisa same vaje poda tudi uporaben komentar – nasvet praktične narave glede izvedbe same, ali pa nam razkrije še kakšno možnost interpretacije. Določene

tehnike so izvedljive v različnih variacijah, nekatere npr. potrebujejo kontekstualno razlago ali pa se povezujejo z zgodbami – vse to je zajeto v opis posamičnih tehnik. Drugi del je posvečen foramskemu gledališču. To je najbolj uporabljana in priljubljena tehnika gledališča zatiranih v smislu aktivne transformacije družbe. Gre za nekakšno kolektivno raziskavo najrazličnejših problematik. Pri tej metodi gledalci prevzamejo vlogo udeležencev v dogajanju, postanejo gled-igralci in s tem vstopijo v prostor akcije – niso samo opazovalci, temveč imajo možnost sodelovanja v smislu vstopa v čevlje zatiranega ali v nekaterih primerih njihovih zaveznikov ali nevtralnih oseb, ki lahko vplivajo na potek dogajanja z namenom iskanja alternativnih razpletov, ki ne podpirajo situacij zatiranja. Vrh prizora predstavlja t. i. *kitajska kriza* (poimenovanje izhaja iz kitajske pismenke za krizo, ki v sebi nosi nevarnost, hkrati pa se v njej skriva tudi priložnost). Praviloma takrat, ko prizor zatiranja postane že precej oster in očiten, občinstvo oz. gled-igralci dobijo priložnost, da vplivajo na morebitni razplet konflikta ter s tem posledično ustvarijo različne variacije mogočih rešitev. Pri tem sodeluje tudi t. i. *joker* (ali *kuringa*), ki skrbi, da dialog med gled-igralci gladko teče, povezuje dogajanje, postavlja vprašanja ipd., skratka skrbi za interakcijo med dogodkom – kot nekakšen moderator predstave. Poleg vaj, ki se vežejo na ustvarjanje predstave foramskega tipa, so v tem delu zajete tudi druge koristne vaje, npr. vaje za izboljšanje gledališkega izraza ali vaje za poglobitev likov, v tretjem delu pa se bralec spozna še z vajami, ki so uporabne predvsem z vidika izboljšanja zaznav – sluha, dotika, pogleda, glasu, prisotnosti. Priročnik nas v tem delu uči interakcije s predmeti, raziskovanja vlog in polarizacij ter zavedanja lastnega jaza in osebnosti – kako priklicati na plan svoje sposobnosti ali kako sodelovati z drugimi in premostiti razlike ter pozorno opazovati okoliščine, kako ukrepati in sprejemati odločitve tudi v trenutkih zmede. V tem delu priročnika nam avtorica predstavi vaje, ki nas učijo strpnosti in so poleg osnovnega namena uporabne tudi kot trening za obvladovanje vsakodnevnih pa tudi kakšnih nenavadnih in kompleksnejših življenjskih situacij, obravnava pa tudi estetiko gledališča zatiranih ter vlogo umetnosti na področju mirovništva. Četrti del priročnika govori o mednarodnem gibanju gledališča zatiranih – skozi prizmo zavzemanja za temeljne človekove pravice se nam razodevajo različna področja, ki jih ta zajema. Dotakne se odnosa gledališča zatiranih od zasebnega podjetništva in kapitala, načel in oblik dela žensk z ženskami, mirovniškega aktivizma, delovanja gledališča zatiranih v Afriki, vse do najpomembnejšega vprašanja vsake gledališke prakse – tvorjenja skupnosti. V tem delu avtorica bralcu razgrne široko polje globalnih kontekstov, v katere je vpeto gledališče zatiranih, predstavi pa nam tudi svoje premisleke o transkulturalizmu – življenju v multikulturni družbi, ki ga postavi v prerez s tradicionalnim dojemanjem kulture in tako ugotavlja potrebo po spremembi načina razmišljanja glede sobivanja in komunikacije med različnimi kulturami. V tem delu je najti besedila različnih umetnikov, ki delujejo na področju gledališča zatiranih. Beseda v priročniku pa teče tudi o splošnih smernicah in pravilih,

ki nam pomagajo ohranjati korektne in spoštljive odnose v skupini, prav tako pa so v pomoč posamezniku, ki se s tovrstnimi praksami srečuje prvič. Dodani so napotki za učenje in vodenje vaj v skupini, v dodatkih na koncu priročnika pa najdemo štiri poučne zgodbe, ki se vežejo na osrednji bistveni del knjige ter spodbujajo k razmisleku o določenih temah, kot so kolektivna tesnoba in pogum ter iniciacija posameznika v družbo in lastno življenje. Dve zgodbi pripovedujeta o osebni izkušnji Augusta Boala z začetkov njegovega delovanja, ki je botrovala rojstvu forumskega gledališča, in s svojo vsebino še danes omogočata globok vpogled v to tehniko. Zgodbe s svojo vsebino priročnik odlično dopolnjujejo in oplemenitijo. V priročniku pa je tudi deklaracija načel Mednarodne organizacije gledališča zatiranih (International Theatre of the Oppressed Organization – ITO), ki so pomemben sestavni del prakse gledališča zatiranih.

Na kratko, ta priročnik avtopoietskega gledališča je uporaben za vse, ki se pri svojem delu srečujejo z ljudmi. V ožjem smislu je uporaben za raziskovanje kompleksnosti določenih situacij različnih oblik zatiranja, za oblikovanje in vzpostavljanje odnosov v skupini, refleksijo in samorefleksijo, pripravo predstave ali performansa, njegov osnovni namen pa je bralcu ponuditi orodja za družbenokritično pretresanje problemov, ki pestijo našo družbo. Je priročnik, ki ga boste večkrat vzeli v roke, ne samo zato, da bi se spomnili marsikatero vaje, temveč tudi zato, da bi lahko znova prebrali lepe in revolucionarne misli o svetu in družbi, ki so v njem zapisane. Prav tako kot je vsebinsko uporaben, pa je priročnik vsekakor zanimiv tudi na pogled. Od različice z angleškim prevodom se nekoliko razlikuje v fotografijah opisanih vaj, ki jih je iz različnih arhivov dodalo KUD Transformator in tako prijetno posodobilo slovensko izdajo. O tem, da je za spremembo najpotrebnejša akcija, pa priča že njegova zunanost – natisnjen je namreč na popolnoma recikliranem papirju.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogika zatiranih*. Krtina, 2019.

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Navodila za avtorje

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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 uprizarjanje. 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. Dostop 23. jul. 2013.
- *Za ustne vire oz. intervju:*
Korda, Neven. »Intervju.« Intervjuvala Tereza Gregorič. Ljubljana, 28. apr. 2011. Zvočni zapis pri T. Gregorič.

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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. An 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.

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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.).

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- *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.
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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.
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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.

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