

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

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

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

Performing Touch and Smell: The Liminality of the Senses¹

Tomaž Toporišič

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To sum up with the words of Fischer-Lichte:

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

II. Sensorial in theatre and performance as a liminal act

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

III. Olfactory communication in theatre

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

V. Sensorial perception as the most direct route to memory

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

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

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

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

Literature

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

tomaz.toporisc@guest.arnes.si

Uprizarjanje dotika in vonja: liminalnost čutov²

Tomaž Toporišič

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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