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ŽIVLJENJE S PODVODNIM SVETOM:
o dialogu, tovarištvu in skrbi v delu Robertine Šebjanič

LIVING WITH THE SUBAQUATIC
Through Dialogue, Accompaniment and Care
in the Work of Robertina Šebjanič

STEKLENIK



Grafika: Robertina ŠEBJANIČ



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Povzetek

Pojem nadvlade, tako značilen za zahodni/hetero-patriarhalni način razmišljanja, je v temelju oblikoval in zamejil miselne okvire, v katerih vzpostavljamo odnos do sveta in naše bivanje v njem. Nujno potrebujemo drugačne poglede. Z združevanjem okoljskih zvočnih posnetkov, performansa, instalacij in objektov je ustvarjanje slovenske umetnice Robertine Šebjanič, ki že vrsto let dela z oceanom, preplet umetnosti, kulture in znanosti. V povezavi z našimi odnosi z naravo, okoljem in nečloveškimi živalmi odkrivamo v njenem delu pojme, kot so dialog, skrb in tovarištvo. Njen interdisciplinarni pristop razpira nove, v tradicionalni reprezentaciji pogosto prezrte dimenzije resničnosti, drugačne od odnosa do sveta in bivanja v njem, ki ju opredeljuje pojem nadvlade. Delo Robertine Šebjanič prinaša ustvarjalne vsebine in ideje, nujne za preoblikovanje našega odnosa z naravo, okoljem in nečloveškimi živalmi. Take vsebine ponujajo tudi možnosti za kritični razmislek o prostorih, v katerih sobivamo z drugimi, in dejstvu, da smo vsi bitja okolja.

Ključne besede

živeti-z, misliti-z, okolje, habitat, snemanje okoljskih zvokov, dialog, skrb, tovarištvo, Aquatocene, aquaforming, zvočno okolje, narava, ocean

Izjava Robertine Šebjanič

Aquaforming in skrb

V osrčju mojega dela so kocepti skrbi, empatije in solidarnosti, ki podpirajo razmislek o paradigmah prihodnosti, kot sta *živeti-z in misliti-z* več-kot-človeškimi živalmi (more-than-human animals). Ganjena sem, kako se je v svojem tekstu *Življenje s podvodnim svetom: o dialogu, tovarištvu in skrbi v delu Robertine Šebjanič* nanj odzvala dr. Lena Ortega.

Prihajajoče delo je nadaljevanje tovrstnega iskanja umetniškega izraza. V njem sem pozornost preusmerila na najnižjo točko, 1233 metrov globoko v južnem delu Jadranskega morja.

Linija | +1233m -1233m

Linija je uresničitev moje želje, da bi se s pomočjo daljinskega zaznavanja in spekulativnih interpretacij neznanih potopljenih zvočnih krajin približala tujim in neraziskanim zvočnim okoljem morskih globin. *Linija | +1233m -1233m* je delo, v katerem sem horizontalno izkušnjo morskih globin nadgradila z razmislekom vertikalne linije oceana oz. njegove nadmorske zvočnosti. Zvočnosti oceanskih globin, ki se odziva (tudi) na spremembe v tlaku in ozračjih, se lahko približamo z uporabo tehnologij daljinskega zaznavanja. S soničnimi interpretacijami v delu prevprašujem človekovo (ne)povezanost z vodnimi zvočnimi svetovi. *Aquaforming* je rezultat industrializacije morskih krajin globoko pod palubami človeških ladij.

Evangelista Torricelli, renesančni matematik in odkritelj zračnega tlaka, je zapisal: »Živimo potopljeni na dnu oceana zraka in neizpodbitni eksperimenti dokazujejo, da ima ta zrak težo.« Ozračje je ocean in ocean je ozračje, s svojimi turbulencami, prisotnostjo in mikroklimo.

Uvod

Pojem nadvlade, tako značilen za zahodni/hetero-patriarhalni način razmišljanja, je v srži oblikoval in zamejil miselne okvire, v katerih vzpostavljamo odnos do sveta in naše bivanje v njem. Omenjeni miselni okvir praviloma temelji na opoziciji in hierarhiji, aktivnosti in pasivnosti, na tistih, ki odločitve sprejemajo, in tistih, ki se morajo po njih ravnati (Wittig 2006, 53, 54). Taki miselni okviri so se zajedli tudi v naše odnose z naravo, okoljem in nečloveškimi živalmi, ki obstajajo oz. so pomembni samo v primeru, če služijo *nam*. Človeške živali razvrščajo in diskriminirajo nečloveške živali po hierarhični lestvici – bolj ali manj pomembne vrste – glede na njihov namen oz. uporabno vrednost, ki jim jo pripisujemo. Hierarhijo uporabljamo pri odločanju o tem, katera nečloveška žival živi in katera umre, ker so nekatere vredne moralnega premisleka, druge pač ne (Bekoff 2013). Uporabljamo jih tudi, ko odredimo, katera žival si zasluži več in boljšo skrb in katera manj in slabšo. Nekaterim vrstam domačih živali, npr. psom in mačkam, posvečamo veliko več skrbi kot drugim, npr. hišnim pticam (Ortega 2021, 22).

V zadnjih letih počasi dojemamo, da sta kultura in narava neločljivo in kompleksno povezani (Whatmore 2002). Narava ni več nekaj drugačnega, tujega ali »postranskega«. Sprejemamo pojem o recipročni kavzalnosti med organizmi in okoljem; živi organizmi vplivajo na okolje in okolje vpliva nanje. Sodobna biologija prepoznava, da je odnos med organizmi in njihovo okolico vzajemen in poteka v obe smeri (Ortega 2020, 104). Trenutna okoljska katastrofa neizpodbitno dokazuje, da moramo nekako domisliti, kako lahko ta in druga nova spoznanja spremenijo naše odnose, da bodo bolj pošteni, spoštljivi in manj antropocentrični do narave, okolja in nečloveških živali. Naučiti se moramo *živeti*-z drugimi in upoštevati vzajemnost odnosa med okoljem in njegovimi prebivalci. Za to pa potrebujemo drugačne in alternativne načine razmišljanja.

Skrb, *tovarištvo* [za razliko od spremstva *tovarištvo* vključuje zavest o povezanosti, enakovrednosti, odsotnosti nadvlade, vpletenosti skrbi in čustev, op. prev.] in dialog so dimenzije resničnosti, ki jih najdemo v umetniškem delu Robertine Šebjanič in se razlikujejo od prevladujočih. V obstoječih in »priznanih« miselnih okvirih in reprezentacijah so omenjeni pojmi pogosto prezrti. Marie Puig de la Bellacasa meni, da skrb predstavlja izziv tradicionalnim reprezentacijam, v katerih je pomen čustvenih in ljubečih povezav popolnoma spregledan (2017). Njen cilj je premakniti meje skrbi, in sicer z njeno umestitvijo v kontekst premislekov in debat, ki se je pogosto ne lotevajo oz. se ji izogibajo. Puig de la Bellacasa sicer ostaja v polju sodobne kritične misli, vendar s pomembno razliko: z razmišljanjem o skrbi kot *disruptivnem* početju [dejavnost, ki pomeni kritičen odklon od ustaljenih načinov, moteča dejavnost, ki prekine status quo, op. prev.], ki lahko na novo izoblikuje (*rekonfigurira*) naše problematične sedanjosti. Vztrajati s potencialom skrbi, ki »zamaje«, ne pomeni (samo) večje prepoznavnosti zapostavljenih dejavnosti, ki si zaslužijo, da bi bile bolj »cenjene« – kot npr. »produktivne« dejavnosti z ekonomsko in drugimi oblikami vrednosti, ki jih velja prepoznati. Gre tudi za preizpraševanje situiranih predstav o pomembnosti skrbi, raztresenih po uveljavljenih hierarhijah vrednosti, in razumevanje, kako so-obstoj in so-delovanje (zelo) različnih načinov vrednotenja skrbi včasih ubereta z(a)vita pota (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 12). Kar zadeva ekologijo, bi uveljavitev njenega predloga lahko vnesla neskladja in razhajanja v obstoječe diskurze ekološkega moraliziranja in etike ali pripoznavanje posebnosti in subjektivitet nečloveških živali. Lahko bi spodbudila neinstrumentalni pristop do narave; drugačen od uveljavljenega, po katerem narava obstaja, samo v kolikor nam služi.

Ideja skrbi se navezuje na pojem tovarištva, ki opredeljuje pristop naravopiske Nan Shepherd do okolja. Pripoveduje, kako se je sčasoma naučila potepati po gorovju Cairngorms doma na Škotskem z

enim samim namenom – da bi bila tam, brez želje ali potrebe, da bi se povzpela na vrhove ali premagala okolje. »Kakor obiščeš prijatelja, kar tako, samo da si z njim.« (Shepherd 2019, 61) Njeno globoko in ljubeče doživljanje življenja gore v naravopisju tistega časa ni bilo sprejemljivo – ni uspela najti založnika, ki bi bil njeno delo pripravljen natisniti –, morda pa je bilo po tedanjih merilih (tudi) brez vrednosti. Nan Shepherd je posvetila stotine dni in tisoče kilometrov raziskovanju pogorja. Cairngormse je počasi in poglobljeje spoznavala, in prav ta bližina ji je prinesla globlja in intenzivnejša spoznanja. Zato je uzrla tesno povezanost različnih sfer in prebivalcev gorovja, pa tudi izmuzljivost narave same. Več kot je vedela, bolj je zavračala »enosmeren« pogled na goro in njeno življenje. »Spoznavanje drugega nima konca ... Tisto, kar spoznaš, ob tem spoznavanju raste.« (Shepherd 2019, 162)

Njeno razumevanje tovarštva, stkanega v brezciljni hoji, se navezuje na pojem dialoga v konceptu zvočnega sprehoda, ki ga je razvila kanadska, v Nemčiji rojena komponistka, radijska umetnica in okoljevarstvenica Hildegard Westerkamp. Nanaša se na potepanje, ki ima en sam namen – poslušati okolje, raziskati odnos uho/okolje (Westerkamp 2006). Njeno pojmovanje zvočnega sprehoda uveljavlja koncept dialoga in doživlja okolje kot aktivno in odzivno (McCartney 2006, 33). Hildegard Westerkamp v procesu snemanja okoljskih zvokov in njihovi studijski obdelavi vzpostavlja spoštljiv dialog z drugimi vrstami in entitetami. Že zgodaj v umetniški praksi je v snemanje zvokov okolja vključila glas, saj je svoje početje razumela kot *pogovor z okoljem* (Westerkamp 2021). Pluralnost v njenih kompozicijah zavrača unitaristično kodo – eno samo kodo, ki v popolnosti prevaja vse pomene –, ki je zaščitni znak totalitarističnih diskurzov. Prav nasprotno, delo Hildegard Westerkamp je, če povzamemo Donno Haraway, umeščeno v boj za jezik in boj proti popolni komunikaciji (Haraway 1991, 176). Kompozicije nihajo med poslušanjem zvočnega popotovanja in njeno domišljijo, afektom

[hipno in intenzivno čustveno stanje, ki ga spremljajo močni telesni odzivi, op. prev.] in čustvi [duševni procesi ali stanja, ki odražajo človekov vrednostni odnos do zunanjega sveta ali samega sebe, op. prev.]. Niso »pristna« reprodukcija okolja – kar je samo po sebi nemogoče –, temveč poslušalcu omogočajo, da utelesi njeno izkušnjo zvočnega sprehoda. Dialog, vgrajen v njene procese tkanja in spletanja, je tisto, kar omogoči poslušalčevo participacijo. »Subjektivna čustvena vpetost lahko razprši drugost in v tem je utelesitev ekoloških izzivov lahko pomembna.« (Ortega 2020, 109)

Opisana teoretska izhodišča, tj. koncept okoljskega dialoga Hildegard Westerkamp, pojem skrbi, kot ga razume Puig de la Bellacasa, in ideje tovarštva v delu *Živa gora* avtorice Nan Shepherd, bom naslovila v zvočni pripovedi *Zgodbe iz Atlantika* slovenske umetnice Robertine Šebjanič.

Zgodbe iz Atlantika: Selachophilia: Cetorhinus maximus – Limara hians

Zgodbe iz Atlantika so kolaborativno delo, ki pluje med mejami umetnosti, znanosti, humanistike in tehnologije ter prepleta mitologijo in znanost. Je del programa Aerial/Sparks, ki ga je razvila in producirala irska vizualna umetnica Louise Manifold po naročilu mesta Galway, evropske prestolnice kulture leta 2020. Začel se je maja 2019 na petnajstnednevni raziskovalni odpravi na ladji *Celtic Explorer* ob severni obali Irske v okviru raziskave Backscatter and Biodiversity of Shelf Sea Habitats (BaBioSSH). Skupina znanstvenikov na krovu ladje se je posvetila raziskovanju sedimentnih združb in uporabi sodobnih sonarjev za mapiranje morskega dna. Za boljše razumevanje raznolikosti vrst v morskih ekosistemih so uporabili neinvazivno tehnologijo daljinskega zaznavanja, kar je umetnici omogočilo drugačen vpogled v vodno življenje. Med rezidenčnim bivanjem na ladji *Celtic Explorer* je Robertina Šebjanič dneve

preživljala ob snemanju okoljskih zvokov, branju, pisanju in opazovanju morskih psov orjakov, strmoglavcev, galebov in ožigalkarjev (meduz). Družila se je z ekipo znanstvenikov, se udeleževala dnevnih informativnih sestankov in delala z njimi, ko so zbirali in analizirali vzorce z morskega dna. Nekega dne je ekipa v vzorcih našla školjko nežna lovkarica (Limaria hians). Ta drobceni organizem je eden ključnih v nastajanju koralnih grebenov. Njegova prisotnost je razgrnila preteklost in potencialno prihodnost ekosistema – na kratko živi spomin. Drugo bitje, še posebej pomembno za umetnico, je bil morski pes orjak (Cetorhinus maximus), ki se prehranjuje pretežno s planktonom in filtrira vodo na morski površini. Ti tihi in nežni orjaki so počasi in elegantno plavali ob ladji. Umetnica se je odločila, da bo o njih napisala zgodbo in jo združila s posnetki okoljskih zvokov in irskim petjem sean-nós: »To so zgodbe valov Atlantskega oceana, morskega psa orjaka in nežne lovkarice, njenega življenja v preteklosti/sedanjosti/prihodnosti.« (Šebjanič 2020, 56–57)

Prepletanje dialoga, tovarištva in skrbi v delu Robertine Šebjanič

Umetnica pri svojem delu doživlja okolje kot aktivno in odzivno, z njim vzpostavlja *dialog*, kot ga razume Hildegard Westerkamp. Dela Robertine Šebjanič pripovedujejo o srečanjih z ljudmi, oceanom in njegovimi prebivalci. Zgodbe o Atlantskem oceanu, morskih psih orjakih in školjkah nežnih lovkaricah, njihovem življenju v preteklosti/sedanjosti/prihodnosti pripovedujejo naratorica besedila, pevki in zvoki oceana. Avtorica vzpostavlja medvrstni dialog med več bitji, ki je stkan v studijsko kompozicijo. S prekrivanjem, sopostavljanjem in ponavljanjem besed in stavkov poustvarja ritem oceanskih valov. V tem pogledu delo nima začetka in konca, ampak je neprestan in nepretrgan gibalni dialog. Kompozicijo odlikuje specifična percepcija časa – več-časovnost (politemporalnost). Čas oceana ni »en sam«, vanj

so vtakani dogodki iz preteklosti/sedanjosti/prihodnosti.

Umetnica in filozofinja zvoka Salomé Voegelin preučuje poslušanje kot dejanje vzpostavljanja odnosa s svetom (Voegelin 2010, 3). Namesto zaznavanja v svetu gre pri poslušanju za resoniranje s svetom, katerega del sem, katerega del so vsi drugi. Tišine ne opredeli kot odsotnost zvoka, temveč kot začetek poslušanja (Voegelin 2010, 83). Robertina Šebjanič že dolgo dela z oceanskimi zvočnimi krajinami, pri čemer je ena osrednjih tem vpliv zvočnega onesaženja na prebivalce oceanov¹. Bitja, ki jih poslušša, so tiha (vsaj kar zadeva človeško sposobnost zaznave) in ta tišina ne zgolj izostri njenega zavedanja okolice – v zvočnih posnetkih je slišati zamolklo pokanje in brbotanje vodnih mehurčkov –, ampak tudi podžge njeno domišljijo in radovednost za odkrivanje zgodb, ki se pišejo v globinah izmuzljivega oceana. Ljudje smo sposobni videti samo droben delec

¹ V projektu *Aquatocene / V iskanju podvodne tišine* (2016–v trajanju) Robertina Šebjanič raziskuje zvočno onesaženost, ki so jo človeške živali prinesle v morja in oceane. Zvočne kompozicije podvodne zvočne pokrajine spodbujajo poslušalce k premisleku o antropogenih zvočnih vplivih na podvodni habitat in morsko življenje, dvigajo zavest in ozaveščenost ter poudarjajo pomembnost ohranjanja varnega zvočnega okolja za živali, ki živijo v svetovnih oceanih, morjih, jezerih in rekah. Umetnica se projekta loteva z empatičnimi strategijami, podobnimi tistim, o katerih razpravljamo v besedilu. V zvočnih kompozicijah *Aquatocena* umetnica pri snemanju okoljskih zvokov in komponiranju razbija predstavo dominantnega diskurza o kodi, ki je sposobna v popolnosti prevesti vse pomene. V kompozicije vključi elemente, kot so hrup, drobni zvoki, pokanje ali glasovi, ki jih pogosto preslišimo. To resonira tudi z odnosom Nan Shepherd do gore: ne gre za snemanje najbolj pristnih in nedotaknjenih zvokov – ali vzpon na vrh –, temveč tovarništvo in počasno vzpostavljanje dialoga z okoljem. Terenska snemanja opravlja s skrbjo in spoštovanjem do okolja, ne posega vanj, temveč želi samo ojačati zvoke, ki sicer ostanejo neslišani. *Aquatocene* je tudi koncept, skovanka umetnice, s katero označuje procese, ki jih imenuje *aquaforming* (še ena umetničina skovanka, s katero naslavlja stanje voda v dobi antropocena in njegov vpliv na osnovne strukture morskih habitatov), pri čemer se osredotoča na antropogeno hrupno prisotnost in zvočno onesaženje, razširjeno v podvodnem svetu (Šebjanič 2022a).

podvodnega življenja. Njena srečanja zaznamuje spoštovanje do prebivalcev kraja in zvokov, ki so subtilno izpostavljeni v studijskih kompozicijah.

Šesto poglavje *Zgodb iz Atlantika* je posvečeno dialogu morskega psa orjaka in nežne lovkarice. Oba se hranita s planktonom, in mikroorganizmi, ki se jima med filtriranjem vode izmuznejo, so neke vrste sli. Prehranjevalna cikla obeh vrst sta podobna, vendar vsak od njiju filtrira svoj plankton. Voda, ki jo pri precejanju drobnih vodnih organizmov prepustita, vsebuje informacije o njuni okolici (Šebjanič 2021, 68). Voda, fluidno-posredovalno-spreminjajoče se telo, je živi spomin številnih dialogov prebivalcev morij.

Nan Shepherd v *Živi gori* pripoveduje o srečanjih z naravo, ki niso imela namena ali cilja, v njih nastopa bolj kot »opisovalka« narave in ne znanstvenica. Znanost namreč reprezentira, kategorizira, klasificira, sistematizira in ločuje. Kot smo omenili, se je avtorica odpravljala na potepe po Cairngorms, kot bi šla na obisk k prijateljici, kar tako, samo da bi bila z njo.

[...] A zakaj bi sestavljala seznam? Ne bi imel pravega smisla, saj so vsi po vrsti opisani v knjigah. Kar se tiče mene, pa niso v knjigah – zame so to živa srečanja, trenutki, ko so se njihova življenja prekrizala z mojim. So v škurhovem klicu, ki ga nese prek daljav, in v rahlem, srebrnem petju med najvišje ležečimi drevesi, ki mi pove, da so tam sinice [...] (Shepherd 2019, 119)

Zgodbe iz Atlantika so enako osredotočene na živa srečanja – pretekla/sedanja/prihodnja – obeh glavnih junakov, oceanskih voda, kulture in same umetnice. Robertina Šebjanič posluša morje, kot bi poslušala prijatelja, njen edini namen je »biti tam«. Ko človek pozorno in brez naglice posluša kraj, ko se zares preda, uzre posebnosti, majcene podrobnosti in prepletenost odnosov. Kot Nan Shepherd se

tudi Robertina Šebjanič zaveda izmuzljivosti narave. Morda je to eden od razlogov za njeno dolgoletno delo z oceanom – ni začasna opazovalka, ampak ljubeča sopotnica: »Tisto, kar spoznaš, ob tem spoznavanju raste.« (Shepherd 2019, 162) Shepherd je skozi tovarištvo, spleteno s hojo brez posebnega cilja ali namena, ki bi lahko vplivala na njena opažanja (tradicionalne znanstvene metode včasih uokvirjajo in omejujejo našo pozornost, zato »najdemo«, kar »iščemo«), odkrivala nove povezanosti v tistem, kar je videla na potepanjih po gorovju Cairngorms. V jelenu je lahko ugledala ptico, plenilca in plazilca ali prepoznala vedenje mladega srnjaka v mladih vevericah. Odkrila je, da vznemirjena jelenjad »laja kakor razdražen pes« ali opazila raco in racaka, ki sta se med letom brezhibno prilagajala drug drugemu, da sta bila videti kot dve polovici enega telesa. (Shepherd 2019, 120–123)

Način, ki ga je Robertina Šebjanič izbrala za kreacijo zvočne pripovedi, dokazuje, da je bila sposobna utelesiti ritme oceana, njegovo tonaliteto ter zvezni in diskretni spekter zvoka. Informacije je uporabila za določitev tempa in postavitev strukture studijske kompozicije. Zvočni posnetki oceana tkejo dialog s petjem sean-nós pesmi, ki se pogovarjajo tudi med sabo. Improvizacija je bistvena značilnost tradicionalnega irskega ljudskega petja, imenovanega sean-nós. Nastopajoči zgodbe podoživljajo, to pa pomeni še več glasov, ki v kompoziciji pripovedujejo svoje zgodbe.

Razmišljanje o skrbi v povezavi z nečloveškimi živalmi ni nekaj vsakdanjega, še posebej ne pri živalih, ki niso domači ljubljenci. Skrb za domače živali, ki po pravilu sledi antropocentrični/zahodni/heteropatriarhalni predstavi o »dobri skrbi,« z ukoreninjeno hierarhijo in diskriminacijo, je pomembnejša od skrbi za manj »pomembne« vrste, kar je že samo po sebi sporno: o nekom drugem razmišljamo in se zanj odločamo v skladu z lastnimi parametri o vrednem in zaželenem (Ortega 2021, 23). Po drugi strani pa nedomače živali za nas pogosto

ne obstajajo/jih zanemarjamo, če se »nam« ne zdijo dovolj pomembne ali uporabne. S pravnimi sistemi in političnimi stališči, ki izhajajo iz tradicij in svetovnih nazorov, npr. humanizma in monoteističnih religij, legitimiziramo nadzor nad in uničevanje posameznih nečloveških živali.

Legitimizacija diskriminacije, ki jo nad drugimi čutečimi bitji izvajajo človeške živali, pa je še bolj kompleksna in se odvija na številnih kulturnih, diskurzivnih, psiholoških in evolucijskih ravneh. Specizem je diskriminacija posameznih bitij na podlagi pripadnosti določeni vrsti (Corbey and Lanjouw 2013, 1). Kako skrbeti za nečloveške živali in njihova okolja? Lahko vpletanje čustev, dialoga in tovarštva v naše odnose ponudi nove možnosti? Je mogoče *misliti-z*, *živeti-z*? Sam naslov *Zgodbe iz Atlantika: Selachophilia Cetorhinus Maximus – Limara Hians* daje slutiti ljubečo povezanost. Ne odraža se samo v spoštljivem odnosu umetnice do zvokov, ampak njeni želji pripovedovati zgodbe bitij, ki sicer niso slišana. V potrpežljivosti, ki se kaže v njenem poslušanju in gledanju. V skrbi, kako bi zgodbe lahko ozavestile laično občinstvo, da bi jim prisluhnilo in jih izkusilo. Čustvena vpletenost razprši drugost in spodbuja empatijo. Umetnica je poskušala najti način, da bi se njeni sodelavci lahko čustveno povezali z *Zgodbami iz Atlantika*. Scenarij prepleta znanost, kulturo, osebno terensko izkušnjo ter vprašanja o okolju in bitjih, ki živijo v oceanih. Napisala je čustveno partituro za pripovedovalko in pevke, da bi zgodbe utelesile v branju oziroma petju. Razlog za izbiro irskih sean-nós vokalov je značilna tonaliteta tega sloga petja, ki je nostalgичno in izraža čustva v vokalnem slogu melizma [zaporedje več melodičnih tonov na enem zlogu besedila, op. prev.]. Po pisanju Eamonna Costella se od pevca pričakuje, da utelesi duh in sentiment zgodbe pesmi. (Costello 2017, 44) Drugi razlog je bil pripovedovanje zgodb z vidika tradicije in kulturnega pomena za Irsko, kar je smiselno v umetniškem delu, ki prepleta narave in kulture. Slog petja brez spremljave in v solistični izvedbi ustvarja vzdušje svečanosti:

pripovedovanih zgodb ne gre jemati zlahka. Robertina Šebjanič je preživljala dneve na krovu ladje v poslušanju, snemanju, branju, pisanju in opazovanju. Čas je preživljala z ekipo znanstvenikov, sodelovala je na dnevnih informativnih sestankih ter zbiranju in analiziranju vzorcev z morskega dna. »Politika skrbstva je veliko več kot moralna drža; vključuje čustva, etiko in ukrepe, ki imajo praktične in materialne posledice.« (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 4)

Zaključek

Zgodbe iz Atlantika slikajo in ponujajo čustvene odnose z naravo, ki bi prek empatije spodbujali ozaveščenost. Da bi dosegla omenjeni cilj, umetnica v potopitveni zvočni instalaciji prepleta pojme in predstave iz različnih dimenzij resničnosti. S konstrukcijo resonirajoče atmosfere, ki lahko sproži določene dispozicije, spodbuja njihovo utelesitev. *Zgodbe iz Atlantika* so stkane iz znanstvenih dognanj, kulture, čustev, medvrstnega dialoga²/ srečanj in osebne terenske izkušnje. Način sopostavljanja, prekrivanja ter mešanja zvokov in zvočnih posnetkov oceana posnema ritem oceanskih valov in daje občutek oceanskega časa, kot ga razume in zaznava umetnica – medsebojno povezanega časa, ki spleta dogodke iz preteklosti/

² Robertina Šebjanič je stopila tudi v polje medvrstnega dialoga, in sicer v delu *Aurelia 1+Hz project*, sestavljenem iz performansa *Aurelia 1+Hz / proto viva sonification*, ki se posveča novi kritični opredelitvi družbenih vrednot in odnosa do sobivanja različnih vrst, in instalacije *Aurelia 1+Hz/Proto Viva Generator*, ki naslavlja biopolitike podaljševanja življenja. *Aurelia 1+Hz / proto viva sonification* je interaktivni performans, v katerem raziskuje načine medvrstne komunikacije. Njegovo temeljno vodilo je okoljski dialog, v katerem »sodelujeta« meduza in nastopajoča, kar predstavlja odmik od dualističnega diskurza akterka (aktivna) in prejemnik (pasiven). Delo vsebuje živo posredovani zvok, ki ga proizvaja meduza *Aurelia Aurita* (uhati klobučnjak). Zvočne zanke s posnetki meduz v zaprtih sistemih in vnaprej posnetimi zvočnimi eksperimenti v morju so združene v generativno kompozicijo, ki zagotavlja potopitveno zvočno in vizualno izkušnjo (Šebjanič 2022b).

sedanjosti/prihodnosti. Ritem, ki ga ustvarjajo pesmi in zvočni posnetki oceanskih globin, deluje kot tehnika zvočno-telesne participacije. Ustvarja namreč neenakomerni pulz, ki posnema ritem telesa. Ta vrsta pulza ni predvidljivi udarec (*beat*), na katerega se človek odzove mehansko. Kar zadeva percepcijo atmosfere, potopitveno delo gradi atmosfero³ z arhitekturnimi in oblikovalskimi komponentami ter posebnim razpoloženjem, ki poustvarja globine oceana. Najpomembnejši elementi vključujejo direktne luči, projekcije, temo ter glasove zvočne kompozicije, ki atmosferi dajejo svečan, melanholičen in čustven pridih. Ti elementi ojačajo percepcijo atmosfere, zavedanje in dovzetnost publike. Tako pri publiku postane delo utelešena izkušnja, ki se zasidra v telesu in prodre v misli. Umetničina interdisciplinarnost, ki ustvarjalno povezuje znanstvene, humanistične in umetniške metode, lahko ponudi ideje za preoblikovanje naših odnosov z naravo, okoljem in nečloveškimi živalmi. Njena metodologija lahko razpre možnosti za kritični premislek o prostorih, v katerih sobivamo z drugimi, in o dejstvu, da smo vsi bitja okolja.

³ S konceptom ozračja (atmosfere) kot meteorološkim pojmom se umetnica ukvarja v najnovejšem delu, ki ga je nasloвила *Linija I +1233m -1233m*. V projektu preučuje vpliv zračnega (atmosferskega) tlaka na zvočno okolje 1233 metrov globoko v Jadranskem morju in zvočno okolje zvočnega zidu 1233 metrov nad morjem. Evangelista Torricelli, ki je odkril zračni tlak, je zapisal: »Živimo potopljeni na dnu oceana zraka in neizpodbitni eksperimenti dokazujejo, da ima ta zrak težo.« Ozračje je ocean in ocean je ozračje, s turbulencami, prisotnostjo in mikroklimo. V tem pogledu ocean/ozračje ni »prostor«, skozi katerega se telesa gibljejo, temveč nenehno spreminjajoče se okolje na presečišču številnih vplivov, v katerem medsebojnih odnosov med organizmi in njihovo okolico ni mogoče prezreti. Korelacija med oceanom in ozračjem v tem projektu lahko z analogijo izpostavi korespondence oceanskih globin preprosto zato, ker imajo človeške živali tesne odnose (kako čudno) z atmosfero. V tem pogledu bi delo lahko prineslo jasno zavest o tem, česa naša telesa ne morejo naseliti. Katera zvočna okolja naseljujejo visoke nadmorske višine in globine oceana? Katere nove dimenzije resničnosti bo ta projekt skozi skrb, tovarništvo in dialog razgrnil? (Iz pogovora z umetnico 14. oktobra 2022). Več o konceptualnem okviru njenega novega dela v avtorični izjavi.

Zgodbe iz Atlantika ponujajo medvrstni dialog med več bitji in vzpostavljanje povezanosti z okoljem s priznavanjem njegove dinamičnosti in odzivnosti, s čimer prestopajo prevladujoči miselni okvir. Umetnica *misli in ustvarja* z znanstveniki, s pripovedovalko, pevkama, irsko kulturo, Atlantskim oceanom, morskim psom orjakom in nežno lovkarico. V tem pogledu je potopitvena instalacija kolaborativno delo. »Človek nikoli ne razmišlja sam. Razmišljanje je vedno vaja v druženju, poslušanju in puščanju drugemu, da se ga sliši.« (González Valerio 2020, 29) Dialog in tovarišstvo sta temeljni premisi takega načina razmišljanja in ustvarjanja.

Umetnost je velikokrat polje, v katerem lahko uzremo prebliske upora proti hegemoniji. Pa vendar, ali lahko globlja zavest in miselni vzorci, ki ne izključujejo čustev – kot je skrb –, ali neinstrumentalni pristop do narave – kot je tovarišstvo –, postanejo bistveni element v poljih znanosti in znanja? Puig de la Bellacasa se sprašuje, ali lahko skrb v tehnoznanosti in naravi/kulturi pomeni več kot odgovorno vzdrževanje tehnologije in ne postane moralna vrednota, ki je le »dodatek« razmišljanju o stvareh. (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 65) Kako lahko vzpostavimo dialog/*mislimo*-z naravo, okoljem in nečloveškimi živalmi, ne da bi podlegli redukcionizmu, romantiziranju ali antropocentričnim vrednotam? Če epistemologije, predstavljene v besedilu, ponujajo miselne okvire, ki bi potencialno lahko na novo izoblikovali naš odnos do narave – drugačen od hegemonistične mainstreamovske »etičnosti« in trženja – bi jih bilo sploh mogoče vključiti v reprezentacijo stvari?

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Image: Robertina ŠEBJANIČ



Lena Ortega Atristain

LIVING WITH THE
SUBAQUATIC
Through Dialogue,
Accompaniment and
Care in the Work of
Robertina Šebjanič

Abstract

The notion of dominance, characteristic of Western/heteropatriarchal thinking, has primarily shaped and limited the frameworks of thought with which we relate to and inhabit the world. Other perspectives are urgently needed. The artistic work of Slovenian artist Robertina Šebjanič—who has worked extensively with the ocean—weaves art, culture and science through field recording, performance, installation and artefacts. Her work brings forth notions such as dialogue, care and accompaniment in our relationship with nature, the environment and non-human animals. Her interdisciplinary approach opens new dimensions of reality—which have often been ignored in the traditional representation of things—that differ from relating and inhabiting the world from the notion of dominance. In this sense, her work effectively brings creative content that can offer ideas to reshape these relationships. Such content can also open possibilities to think critically about the spaces we co-inhabit with others and how we all are environmental beings.

Keywords

Living-with, thinking-with, environment, habitat, field recording, dialogue, care, accompaniment, Aquatocene, aquaforming, sound environment, nature, ocean

Artist Statement by Robertina Šebjanič

Aquaforming and care

I keep care, empathy, solidarity and a reflection on co-existence with more-than-human animals and “thinking together” in these future paradigms at the heart of my work.

I am deeply touched by how this also resonates in the text, “Living with the Subaquatic: Through Dialogue, Accompaniment and Care”, which Dr Lena Ortega has written about my previous work.

My upcoming work is a continuation of this kind of search for expression. In it, my focus has shifted towards the Adriatic Sea and its deepest point, -1233m, in the south Adriatic region.

The Line | +1233m -1233m

The Line is an eager desire to get to know the foreign unknown sonic environment of the deep sea with the support of remote sensing and speculative interpretations of the unknown submerged soundscapes.

The Line | +1233m -1233m is a work in which I have been able to shift my perspective of experiencing horizontally into thinking of the vertical structure of the ocean and the atmosphere above it. The sonority of the deep sea at the pressure and in the atmospheres that we can reach only with the help of remote sensing technologies. I am trying to rethink our (dis)connection with aquatic realities through sonic interpretations. The *aquaforming* is happening due to our industrialisation of seascapes deep below the decks of our ships.

According to the Renaissance mathematician Evangelista Torricelli, the discoverer of atmospheric pressure, “*We live submerged at the bottom of an ocean of air, which is known by irrefutable experiments to have weight.*” The atmosphere is the ocean, and the ocean is the atmosphere, with its turbulence, presence and microclimate.

Introduction

The notion of dominance, characteristic of Western/heteropatriarchal thinking, has primarily shaped and limited the frameworks of thought with which we relate to and inhabit the world. This mindset commonly works from opposition and hierarchy: active and passive, the ones who make decisions and the ones who abide by them (Wittig 2006, 53, 54). These frames of thought have also permeated our relationships with nature, the environment and non-human animals, which exist/become meaningful insofar as they serve a purpose regarding *us*. For instance, human animals classify and discriminate against non-human animals hierarchically—within species of more or less importance—according to their purposefulness to us. These hierarchies are used to determine which non-human animal lives and which non-human animal dies since some are worthy of moral consideration while others are not (Bekoff 2013). Likewise, they are used to determine which animal deserves better, more specialised care and which one less so. Some domestic companion species, such as dogs and cats, have much more specialised care than others, such as domestic birds (Ortega 2021, 22).

In recent years, however, we have begun to understand culture and nature as inseparably and complexly intertwined (Whatmore 2002). Nature is no longer something different, divergent or “ulterior”. We now embrace the notion of causal reciprocity between organisms and environments: living organisms condition the environment, which is, in turn, conditioned by them. In contemporary biology, the relationship between organisms and their surroundings is mutually affecting (Ortega 2020, 104). The current state of ecological emergency is irrefutable proof that we need to figure out how these and other newly found realisations can reshape our relationships with nature to foster fairer, more respectful, less Anthropocentric approaches to nature itself, the environment and non-human animals. We need to learn to *live-with* others from an environmental-mutually

affecting perspective. For this reason, alternatives to dominant frames of thought are increasingly necessary.

Care, accompaniment and dialogue are dimensions of reality that differ from a dominant perspective and are present in Robertina Šebjanič's artistic work. These notions have commonly been neglected in dominant frameworks of thought and their representations. As proposed by philosopher Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, the dimension of care challenges how traditionally, in the representation of things, the meaning of affective and even loving connection has been overlooked (2017). Her proposal aims at displacing the boundaries of care in several aspects, namely, by setting this category against issues and debates that do not frequently address or touch upon it, yet not so much by engaging with a critique of care as other contemporary critical reorientations. Instead, thinking about care as a disruptive doing that can open up other reconfigurations engaged with troubling presents. Staying with care's potential to disrupt is not (only) about making visible the neglected activities we want to see more "valued"—for instance, as "productive" activities with an economical (as well as other forms of) worth that should be recognised. It is also about engaging with the situated recognitions of the importance of care that are displaced in established hierarchies of value and understanding how divergent modes of valuing care co-exist and co-make each other in sometimes devious ways (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 12). In terms of the ecological agenda, implementing her proposal could mean opening up incongruencies and divergencies on current discourses on eco-moralisation and eco-ethics or the recognition of non-human animal idiosyncrasies and subjectivities. It could also mean approaching nature from a non-instrumentalist perspective—where, as previously mentioned, nature exists insofar as it serves a purpose with regard to us.

This deployment of the idea of "care" is linked to the notion of accompaniment that underlies nature writer Nan Shepherd's

approach to the environment. She recounts how, over time, she learned to go into the mountains of the Cairngorms in Scotland, her home country, with no other purpose than to be there, without seeking to reach the summit of the mountain or dominate the environment. “As one visits a friend with no intention but to be with him” (Shepherd 2011, 38). At the time, her manner of venturing deeply, relating lovingly, into the mountain’s life was not considered acceptable—she could not find anyone interested in publishing her work—perhaps not even valuable, within the frames of nature writing. Shepherd spent hundreds of days and walked thousands of miles exploring these mountains on foot. She came to know places closely, slowly—and this closeness broadened and intensified what she grasped from her surroundings. As a result, some of the interconnectivity between the different realms and dwellers of the mountains became apparent, as did the elusiveness of nature itself. The more she knew about the mountain, the more she refused a singular perspective on it and its ways. “Knowing another is endless ... The thing to be known grows with the knowing” (Shepherd 2011, 108).

Shepherd’s notion of accompaniment through walking relates to the idea of dialogue that underpins the concept of soundwalk as developed by German-Canadian composer, radio artist and environmentalist Hildegard Westerkamp, which refers to an excursion with the sole purpose of listening to the environment—an exploration of our ear/environment relationship (Westerkamp 2006). Westerkamp’s notion of soundwalk asserts the concept of dialogue and regards the environment as active and responsive (McCartney 2006, 33). Her approach to participatory soundwalks establishes a respectful dialogue with other species and entities in the recording process and studio manipulation. Since very early in her artistic practice, she included her voice while recording the environment since she saw herself speaking *in tandem with it* (Westerkamp 2021). This plurality within her compositions rejects the notion of a unitarian code that perfectly translates all meaning—common in totalitarian discourses. Instead, her work is situated within “the struggle for

language and the struggle against perfect communication” (Haraway 1991, 176). Her compositions sway with a pendular motion between a listening soundwalk journey and her imagination, affect and emotion. They are not a “pristine” reproduction of the environment—which is in itself impossible—but somehow remarkably enable the listener to embody her sound journey experience. The notion of dialogue embedded in her interstitial processes is vital in allowing listener participation. “Subjective affective entanglement can dissipate otherness and, in this sense, embodied ecological challenges can be significant” (Ortega 2020, 109).

From this theoretical backdrop—that is, Westerkamp’s concept of environmental dialogue, the notion of care from the perspective of Puig de la Bellacasa and the underlying idea of accompaniment in Shepherd’s *The Living Mountain*—I will briefly address how these concepts are at play in *The Atlantic Tales* by Slovenian artist Robertina Šebjanič.

The Atlantic Tales: Selachophilia Cetorhinus Maximus & Limara Hians

The Atlantic Tales is a collaborative work that navigates between the limits of art, science, humanities and technology, weaving together mythologies and sciences. It is part of Aerial/Sparks, developed and produced by artist Louise Manifold and commissioned by Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture. It began on May 2019 with a 15-day research voyage on the RV *Celtic Explorer* through the shelf seas around the North Coast of Ireland as part of the Backscatter and Biodiversity of Shelf Sea Habitats (BaBioSSH) Survey. The team of scientists on board the vessel focused on studying sediment communities and using the latest sonar technology to map the seabed. For such purposes, they employed non-invasive remote sensory technology to better understand species diversity, giving the artist a new perspective on aquatic life. During the RV *Celtic Explorer*

residency, Šebjanič spent her days recording sounds, reading, writing and watching basking sharks, gannets, seagulls and jellyfish. She also spent time with the crew, attended the daily briefing and worked alongside them as they collected and analysed samples from the seabed. On one particular occasion, the team found a flame shell in the samples. This tiny organism is integral to the growth of the coral reef. Its presence revealed both what had been and the potential future of the ecosystem; in short, a living memory. Another animal particularly significant to the artist was the basking shark that filters plankton at the sea surface. These silent giants swam slowly and gracefully by the RV *Celtic Explorer*. Šebjanič decided to write a story about them and combined it with her field recordings and sean-nós vocals: "These are the stories of the waves of the Atlantic Ocean, of basking shark and flame shell, of their life present/past/future" (Šebjanič 2020, 56–57).

Dialogue, accompaniment and care as interconnected in the work of Robertina Šebjanič

The artist approaches her work by regarding the environment as active and responsive; that is, by establishing a *dialogue* as understood by Westerkamp. Šebjanič's works are about encounters with people, the ocean and its inhabitants. The stories of the Atlantic Ocean, of basking sharks and flame shells, of their life present/past/future are told by the narrator, the singers and the sounds of the ocean itself, thus rendering a multispecies/multi-being dialogue that is woven together in studio composition. The artist emulates the rhythm of the ocean waves by making specific words and sentences overlap, juxtapose and repeat themselves. In this sense, the work has no set beginning and end; it is a constant and perpetual movement dialogue. This composition features a specific perception of time: polytemporal time. The time of the ocean is interconnected, intertwining past/present/future events.

Artist and sound philosopher Salomé Voegelin explores listening as an act of relating to the world (Voegelin 2010, 3). Rather than perceiving *in* the world, listening is about resounding *with* the world of which I am part, of which all others are. She defines silence not as the absence of sound but as the beginning of listening (Voegelin 2010, 83). Šebjanič has been working for years with oceanic soundscapes; one of her focuses has been the effects of noise pollution on the oceans' inhabitants.¹ The beings she listens to are notoriously silent (within our range of perception, at least), and this silence not only enhances her awareness of her surroundings—we can hear the soft cracks and water bubbles in her field recordings—but also intensifies her imagination and sparks her curiosity about the stories of the depths of the elusive ocean. We are only able to catch a glimpse of underwater life. These encounters take place with a great deal of respect for the inhabitants of the site and for the sounds of the environment, which are subtly highlighted in the studio compositions.

¹ *Aquatocene/Subaquatic quest for serenity* (2016–ongoing) by Robertina Šebjanič investigates the phenomenon of underwater noise pollution created by human animals in the seas and oceans. The audio compositions of these subaquatic soundscapes encourage the listeners to reflect upon the anthropogenic sonic impact on the underwater habitat and marine life, as well as to heighten awareness and underscore the importance of maintaining safe, sound environments for animals living in the world's oceans, seas, lakes and rivers. The artist approaches this work with similar empathic strategies as the ones discussed in this text. In the compositions of *Aquatocene*, Šebjanič's use of technology in field recordings and composition breaks away from the notion of a code that perfectly translates all meaning characteristic of dominant discourses. Alternatively, she incorporates elements such as noise, small sounds, cracking or voices that often go unnoticed. This also resonates with Shepherd's approach to the mountain: it is not about recording the most pristine sounds—or reaching the summit—but about accompanying and slowly establishing a dialogue with the environment. She handles the field recordings with care and respect, not in an extractive way, but with an intent to amplify voices that otherwise remain unheard. *Aquatocene* is a concept as well, coined by the artist to refer to the processes of aquaforming (another term coined by her which relates to the status of waters in the age of Anthropocene and the human impact on the basic structure of aquatic habitats) in the Anthropocene era focusing on the anthropogenic noise pollution widespread in the underwater world (Šebjanič 2022a).

Chapter six of *The Atlantic Tales* is about the basking shark and the flame shell dialogue. Since both these creatures eat and release plankton, these microorganisms here serve as messengers. Although their cycles are similar, each animal filters their plankton. The water sieved through them carries information on their surroundings (Šebjanič 2021, 68). Water, the fluid-medium-everchanging body, is a living memory of the multiple dialogues of the dwellers of the seas.

In *The Living Mountain*, Nan Shepherd speaks of encounters with nature with no objective or purpose, more in the vein of a nature ethnographer than a scientist—the ways of the sciences are to represent, categorise, classify, systematise and separate. However, as discussed before, Shepherd learned to venture into the Cairngorms as one visits a friend, with no intention but to be with her.

[...] But why should I make a list? It serves no purpose, and they are all in the books. But they are not in the books for me—they are in living encounters, moments of their life that have crossed moments of mine. They are in the cry of the curlew sounding over the distances, and in the thin silver singing among the last trees that tell me the tits are there [...] (Shepherd 2011, 74).

The Atlantic Tales also focuses on the living encounters—past/present/future—among the two main characters, the waters of the ocean, culture and the artist herself. Šebjanič listens to the sea as one listens to a friend, with no intention other than mere accompaniment. When one listens to a place exhaustively, when one listens slowly, specificities, small details and intertwining relationships emerge. Much like Shepherd, Šebjanič is aware of the elusiveness of nature. Perhaps this is one of the reasons she has worked with the ocean extensively, not as an ephemeral observer but as a caring companion: “The thing to be known grows with the knowing” (Shepherd 2011, 108). Shepherd, through accompaniment, with no objective or set purpose shaping her observations—for, sometimes, the traditional ways of science frame and limit our attention, one “finds” what one

“seeks”—could make more novel connections in what she saw when venturing in the Cairngorms. She could see bird, animal and reptile in the deer or young fawn behaviour in young squirrels. She could recognise an alarmed deer for its “angry dog bark” or notice a duck and a drake flying in such perfect synchrony and unison that the two halves formed one organism (Shepherd 2011, 69–71).

The way that Šebjanič decided to weave the piece together is evidence that she was able to embody the rhythms encompassed by the ocean, its pitches, and its different continuous and discrete sounds. The artist used this information to determine the tempo and craft the structure of the studio composition. The field recording sounds of the ocean are in dialogue with the mix of the sean-nós songs, which in turn establish a conversation among themselves. Improvisation is an essential characteristic of this form of traditional Irish folk singing, known as sean-nós, as performers make stories their own, which adds to the plurality of voices that tell their stories in this composition.

Thinking about care concerning non-human animals is a tricky endeavour, especially when it comes to non-domestic animals. In domestic animal care, we commonly reinstate our Anthropocentric/Western/heteropatriarchal notion of “good care”, with its embedded hierarchy and discrimination—more important, less essential species—which is already questionable enough: we think-for and decide-for according to our parameters of what is valuable and desirable (Ortega 2021, 23). On the other hand, however, non-domestic animals many times do not exist/are neglected unless they are of use or importance to “us”. Through legal systems and political stances rooted in traditions and world views such as humanism and several monotheistic religions, we legitimise the control and destruction of individual non-human animals.

Furthermore, the legitimization of discrimination by human-animals against other sentient beings is even more complex and occurs on

many cultural, discursive, psychological and evolutionary levels. Speciesism is discrimination against individual beings based on their species membership (Corbey and Lanjouw 2013, 1). How to care for non-human animals and their environments? Can weaving emotional involvement, dialogue and accompaniment into relations open new possibilities? Is it possible to *think-with, live-with*? *The Atlantic Tales: Selachophilia Cetorhinus Maximus & Limara Hians* has a caring connection implicit in its title. This relationship is implied not only in the respectful approach of the artist to the sounds themselves but also in the artist's desire to tell the stories of beings that are otherwise not heard, in the patience involved in her listening and watching and in her careful regard for how these stories could create awareness among the non-specialised public who would listen to and experience them. Emotional entanglement dissipates otherness and promotes empathy.

In this sense, the artist strove to find a way in which the participants of her work could relate affectively to the ocean stories of *The Atlantic Tales*. The script intertwines science, culture, personal field experience and questions on the environment and ocean species. The artist also wrote an emotional score for the narrator and singers to embody in their reading and signing of the script. The reason for choosing sean-nós vocals was, in good measure, the characteristic tonality of this type of singing, which is slightly nostalgic, expressing emotion through melismatic ornamentation, since "a singer is expected to embody the spirit and sentiment of the song's narrative" (Costello 2017, 44). Another reason was to tell these stories from a tradition of cultural importance to Ireland, which makes sense in an artistic work that entangles natures/cultures. This type of singing, which is unaccompanied and performed solo, creates an overall solemn atmosphere: the stories told are not to be taken lightly. Šebjanič spent her days in the vessel listening, recording, reading, writing and observing. At the same time, she spent time with the crew and was present in their daily briefing and the collection and analysis of seabed samples. "A politics of care engages much more

than a moral stance; it involves affective, ethical, and hands-on agencies of practical and material consequence” (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 4).

Final Considerations

The Atlantic Tales portrays and proposes affective relationships to nature to foster awareness through empathy. To achieve this purpose, the methodology put forward by this immersive audio installation weaves together ideas from different dimensions of reality. It stimulates their embodiment by constructing a resonating atmosphere that can potentially provoke certain dispositions. *The Atlantic Tales* script entangles scientific knowledge, culture, affect, interspecies dialogue²/encounters and personal fieldwork experience. The way that voices are juxtaposed, overlapped and mixed with ocean field recordings emulates the rhythm of the ocean waves and gives a sense of oceanic time as understood and perceived by the artist—interconnected time, time that plaits events of past/present/future. The rhythm created by the songs and the field recordings of the ocean depths works as a technique of sonic-bodily participation because it creates an uneven pulse that constructs a bodily rhythm in its uneven looping. This type of pulse involves more

² Interspecies dialogue has also been explored in Šebjanič's work: *Aurelia 1+Hz project*, which is divided into the performance *Aurelia 1+Hz/Proto Viva Sonification*, which looks into a new critical redefinition of social values and a new attitude towards interspecies cohabitation, and the installation *Aurelia 1+Hz/Proto Viva Generator*, which deals with the biopolicy of prolonging life. *Aurelia 1+Hz/Proto Viva Sonification* is an interactive performance exploring interspecies communication phenomena. This performance takes place from the perspective of environmental dialogue where jellyfish and performer are mutually affected instead of a dualistic discourse between an actor (active) and receiver (passive). It features live-transmitted sound generated by *Aurelia Aurita* jellyfish and performer. Sound loops containing recordings of jellyfish in closed environments and prerecorded sonic experiments from the sea are mixed in a generative score assembled into an immersive sonic and visual experience (Šebjanič 2022b).

than a predictive beat which one can engage with mechanically. From the perspective of atmospheric perception, this immersive work creates an atmosphere³ with architectural and design components that build up a specific mood that emulate the ocean's depths. The strategic elements are overhead lighting, projections and overall darkness, as well as the voices of the sound composition, which add a solemn, melancholic, emotional tone to this atmosphere. These elements enhance participants' atmospheric perception, awareness and disposition. By heightening such capacities in participants, the work becomes an embodied experience that lingers in the body and makes it way to thought. The artist's interdisciplinary methodology, which creatively combines methods of the natural sciences, humanities and the arts, can offer ideas to reshape our relationship with nature, the environment and non-human animals. This methodology can also open possibilities to think critically about the spaces we co-inhabit with others and how we all are environmental beings.

³ The concept of atmosphere, from a meteorological stance, will be explored in the artist's new and upcoming work, *The Line +1233m -1233m*. This project will examine the acoustics of the atmosphere and pressure correlations at a point -1,233 metres deep in the Adriatic Sea and through the sound barrier 1,233 metres above sea level. According to the Renaissance mathematician Evangelista Torricelli, who discovered atmospheric pressure, "We live submerged at the bottom of an ocean of air, known by irrefutable experiments, that it has weight." The atmosphere is the ocean, and the sea is the atmosphere, with its turbulence, presence and microclimate. In this sense, the ocean/atmosphere is not a "space" through which bodies move, but an everchanging environment of multiple intersecting affects where mutually affecting relationships between organisms and their surroundings is visible. The correlation between ocean/atmosphere in this project may make visible the correspondences of the deep ocean by analogy simply because human-animals share a closer relationship (strangely enough) with the atmosphere. In this sense, this work could powerfully create awareness of what our bodies cannot inhabit. What sound environments inhabit the high atmosphere and the deep ocean? What new dimensions of reality will this project open by making the inaudible audible through care, accompaniment and dialogue? (From a conversation with the artist on 14 October 2022). See the artist's statement for more of the conceptual framework of this new work.

The Atlantic Tales differs from a dominant frame of mind by proposing interspecies/multi-beings dialogue and engaging the environment with an acknowledgement of its dynamic and responsive nature. The artist *thinks and creates with* the scientists, narrator, singers, Irish culture, Atlantic Ocean, basking shark and flame shell. In this sense, this immersive installation is a collaborative work. "One never thinks alone. Thinking is, in any case, an exercise in companionship, in hearing and letting oneself be voiced" (González Valerio 2020, 29). As presented here, dialogue and accompaniment underlie this notion of thinking and creating.

Art is usually where one can find glimpses of resistance to hegemony. However, can a keener awareness and more emotional thinking patterns—such as caring—or non-instrumentalist perspectives towards nature—such as accompaniment—come to play an essential role in the ways of science and knowledge? "Can care in technoscience and nature/cultures mean more than the responsible maintenance of technology and still not become a moral value just added to the thinking of things?" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 65) How can we engage in dialogue/*think-with* nature, the environment and non-human animals without being reductive, romantic or transferring our anthropocentric values? If other epistemologies, such as the ones presented here, propose frames of mind that could potentially reshape our relationship to nature—that differ from the hegemonic mainstream "ethical" and marketing—would it be at all possible to incorporate them in the representation of things?

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