

Antika kot intelektualni izziv za 21. stoletje

Intervju s Svetlano Slapšak

SUNČIČ: Večina ljudi, ki se v življenju redko ali nikoli ne sreča z antiko, nima najboljših predstav, kaj naj bi spadalo pod pojem »antika«. Z antiko so se bežno srečali v šoli, vendar je tradicionalistična predstavitev pri njih pustila vtis, da gre za nekaj povsem nereferenčnega, zapletenega, tujega, celo dolgočasnega, česar nikakor ne morejo povezati s svojimi izkušnjami v vsakdanjem življenju. Kljub temu lahko v popularni kulturi zasledimo implicitno in eksplicitno uporabo antičnih simbolov – od ideoloških prireditev, kot so olimpijske igre, imen za predmete iz vsakdanjega življenja, filme, nadaljevanke? Kako bi vi predstavili antiko sodobnemu človeku?

SLAPŠAK: Antika je neverjeten vir dobrih naracij, kar lahko vidimo v zlorabah na televiziji, na primer v nadaljevankah *Ksena, princesa bojevnica* in *Herakles*, ki ju lahko spremljamo tudi na slovenski televiziji. Obe nadaljevanki zelo spretno manipulirata z mrežo naracij, saj so možnosti neskončne in lahko povedo, kar se jim zazdi. Menim pa, da bo takšna popularizacija mitov, ki manipulirajo z najbolj bazičnimi predstavami, povzročala probleme predvsem najmlajšim, ker uničuje logiko in sistem argumentacije. Z drugimi besedami – najprej znanje, potem domišljija.

Vendar to predstavlja eno plat. Osebnostno namreč mislim, da je antika bolj aktualna kot kadar koli prej. Optimizem je po mojem mnenju nujen, ker od 70. let naprej antika preučujemo na povsem nov način, veliko bolj kontekstualno, veliko bolj drzno, v direktnem dialogu z novimi teorijami. Spričo takšnega načina raziskovanja menim, da se bodo rezultati šele pokazali. Problem predstavlja tudi dejstvo, da nekatera dela antičnih avtorjev

še vedno niso natančno prebrana, da jih še vedno ne razumemo, ker živimo v svetu, ki je še vedno obremenjen s krščansko moralno, s post-krščansko mentaliteto. V takšni situaciji na primer sploh ne razumemo, kaj je hotel Aristofan z obscenostmi, z zmerjanjem živih politikov s scene – politiki so namreč sedeli v gledališču in prisostvovali zmerjanju z odra – to so podobe in prakse, ki je sploh ne dojemamo. Podoben primer je tudi Evripidova *Medeja*. *Medeja* je tako drzna, tako radikalna, da je še vedno ne moremo prebrati, ne razumemo, kaj hoče Evripid povedati, ker smo zaradi malomeščanske morale, ki smo jo podedovali, preveč skandalizirani.

Obstaja še en vidik antike, ki je po mojem mnenju izredno pomemben za funkcioniranje pravne in civilne države, demokracije na splošno, kakor jo pač razumemo – jaz jo razumem predvsem z zornega kota atenske demokracije in potem vidim, kako slaba je moderna demokracija. Zato menim, da je preučevanje antike v mladih letih, v osnovni šoli ali v gimnaziji,

Antiquity as an Intellectual Challenge for the 21st Century

Interview with Svetlana Slapšak

SUNČIČ: Majority of people that only rarely or never become familiarized with Antiquity in their lives, are not able to establish a clear vision of what the notion of "Antiquity" really comprises. Their experience of Antiquity constitutes nothing more but a brief encounter at school, although the traditionalistic presentation has left them with an impression that it had comprised something utterly unreferential, complex, foreign, even tedious, which they were not able to connect with their everyday experiences. Nevertheless, we are able to detect an implicit as well as explicit use of Antique symbols in popular culture – i.e. from ideological events, such as the Olympic Games, names of everyday objects, titles of films and TV-series. How would you present the notion of Antiquity to a contemporary man?

SLAPŠAK: Antiquity is a remarkable source of good narrations, which may also be clearly noted through abusive uses on TV, e.g. in *Xena, Warrior Princess*, and *Heracles*, which are also being shown on the Slovenian TV. Both these series very skilfully manipulate with a network of narrations and, the opportunities being endless, they are able to say whatever they can possibly think of. However, I fear that such a popularization of myths that manipulate with the most basic conceptions may cause problems particularly to the youngest, since it is destroying the logic and the system of argumentation. In other words – knowledge first, then imagination.

However, this is only one side of the story. Personally I think that Antiquity has never been a more topical subject before than it is

now. Optimism, in my opinion, is necessary, because, since the 1970s, Antiquity has been studied from a completely different perspective: much more contextually, much more daringly and through a direct dialogue with new theories. In view of such a researching technique I think the results are yet to be delivered. Another problem arises from the fact that some works by Antique authors have remained examined with an inadequate accuracy. Thus, at present, we cannot comprehend them, since we live in a word that is still handicapped by Christian morality,

post-Christian mentality. In such a situation, we are not capable, for example, of understanding what Aristophanes tried to demonstrate with his obscenities and scolding



nujno, kajti antična besedila in primeri mladega človeka s svojo subverzivno vsebino vzbujajo k premišljevanju. Pomemben je občutek za slovnico, ne zgolj znanje, kar pomeni element subverzije in logičnega zaključevanja pri katerem koli predmetu. Branje antičnih primerov nedvomno razvija mentaliteto demokratičnega državljana. Seveda se lahko manipulira z antiko,

recimo na ravni krščanske ideologije, idej političnega totalitarizma, to smo že tolikokrat videli. Vendar kljub temu verjamem, da antična besedila in antična jezikovna konstrukcija ter podobe delajo sami zase, so nepredvidljivi, izven okvirjev predpisanih recepcij.

SUNČIČ: Znanje je tisto, ki torej edino omogoča komunikacijo s tako oddaljeno preteklostjo. Amy Richlin, ameriška feministka in specialistka za klasične študije, samokritično pravi, da se tako vneto ukvarjamo s preteklostjo, medtem ko živimo kot *alieni* v svojem lastnem svetu. Za mnoge specialiste za antične študije je žal značilno, da imajo sindrom steklenega zvona, da ne vedo, kaj se dogaja okoli njih, kaj je vsakdanje življenje. Kako lahko od takšnih ljudi pričakujemo, da bodo lahko dali kompetentno analizo in zaključke o oddaljenem času, kjer manjkajo ogromni deli sestavljanke, ljudje so že več tisoč let mrtvi in ne morejo odgovoriti na naša vprašanja? Ali je lahko nekdo, ki ne pozna lastnega sveta, dober strokovnjak za antiko? Oseba, ki je strokovnjak za antiko, se mi je velikokrat pohvalila, da nič ne ve, kaj se dogaja danes in ji tudi ni dosti mar, saj ji vedenje o antiki daje avtoriteto za vsa področja. Ali takšni osebi lahko zaupamo?

SLAPŠAK: Podobno pripombo bi lahko dali kateremu koli zgodovinarju. Situacija je še resnejša pri tistih, ki se ukvarjajo s sodobnostjo, vendar o določenih problemih v javnosti molčijo – ali še huje, »prilagajajo se« političnim razmeram. »Stekleni zvon« je ideološki konstrukt ravno tako kot »navadni človek«, ki je v totalitarnih sistemih lahko služil kot (slaba) samozashčita, v liberalnih pa kot (slaba) maska.

Vsi veliki znanstveniki v antičnih študijah, ki se jih spoznala, so bili odlični analitiki sedanosti, pripravljeni, da politično tvegajo, da se zaletavajo, da ščitijo svoje študente, da ne padajo v malomeščanske kalupe. Status »notranjega aliena«, nenehno radovednega opazovalca sedanosti, je nujen potem, ko se izprašajo mrtve priče iz daljne preteklosti. Na tak način razumem izjavo Amy Richlin.

SUNČIČ: Se vam ne zdi, da že sama izbira vsebin, besedil in šele potem interpretacije sama na sebi že vključuje pomembne ideološke značilnosti, ki neomogočajo »nedolžnega« branja antičnih besedil? Če realistično pogledamo, so vaše ideje idealistične, morda celo utopične.

SLAPŠAK: Utopične niso samo v enem elementu, in ta je ključni, in sicer v dinamizmu znanja. Ne glede na to, v katero

koli smer gre izobrazba, celo v totalitarnih sistemih, če omogoča znanje, potem že vsebuje element subverzije, ki jih bo

of the living politicians in the arena – in those times, the politicians actually sat in the theatre and took part in the scolding from the stage. These are the images and practices that are simply beyond our grasp. Euripides' *Medaea* presents a similar case. *Medaea* is so bold, so ultimately radical that, being too scandalised by the small-town morality, a hereditary taint passed on to us, we still fail to read it and understand what Euripides was trying to say. There is yet another aspect of Antiquity that is, in my opinion, of utmost importance for the functioning of a legal and civil state, or a democracy in general, as each of us chooses to understand it – I understand it particularly from the point of view of the Athenian democracy, which then enables me to see more clearly how dysfunctional modern democracy actually is. Therefore I think that the investigation of Antiquity at the early age – in

primary school or grammar school – is of essential importance, since the subversive contents and implications of Antiquity texts and examples encourage young people to think. It is not only important to have knowledge but also the understanding of grammar, which means an element of subversion and drawing logical conclusions at any subject. The reading of Antiquity examples undoubtedly enables a democratic citizen's mentality to evolve. Having said that, Antiquity can, of course, still be manipulated, for instance, on the level of Christian ideology, the ideas of political totalitarianism; we have witnessed that thousands of times. Yet, I still believe that Antiquity texts and Antiquity linguistic construction, as well as the imagery, function in their own right and are as such unpredictable, beyond the frames of prescribed receptions.

SUNČIČ: Knowledge is thus the only vehicle enabling communication with such a remote past. Amy Richlin, an American feminist and a specialist in Classical Antiquities, claims self-critically that we are so much immersed in the past that we have consequently grown aliens to our own world. Many authorities in Classical Antiquity, unfortunately suffer from the "glass-bell syndrome": they are not aware of what is happening around them, they do not know what ordinary life is. Can we actually expect that such individuals will be able to offer a competent analysis and conclusions on some remote era, where enormous pieces of a jigsaw puzzle are missing, the people are dead for more than a thousand years and cannot answer our questions? Can anybody who is ignorant of his or her own world really be a true intellectual authority in Antiquity? One expert in Antiquity often boasted of her ignorance as regards the ways of the world today, and she was also quite carefree about it since was quite confident that the knowledge of Antiquity guaranteed her the authority for all scientific fields. Can such a person be trusted?

SLAPŠAK: A similar observation could be attributed to historians as well. And the situation becomes even more serious in the case of people who deal with contemporaneity, but with respect to certain issues keep silent in public – or even worse: they "are adapting" to political conditions. The "glass bell" is no less an ideological construct than the "ordinary man", which in the times of totalitarian systems could serve as a (bad) self-protection and in liberal times as a (bad) mask. All the

great scientists in the field of Antiquity studies that I have met are also excellent analysts of the contemporaneity, prepared to take political risks, face a heavy barrage of fire, protect their students, and avoid drifting into small-town frames of mind. The status of an "internal alien", an indefatigable, endlessly curious observer of the present, becomes essential after the deceased witnesses from the ancient past have been examined. This is how I understand Amy Richlin's statement.

uničil. Slednje smo lahko videli tudi pri komunizmu. Komunizem je bil ideologija, ki je privilegirala znanje, vendar na svojo škodo. Zato ni bilo možnosti, da bi (državni) komunizem živel dlje, kot je, približno 50, 60 let. Vsako znanje prinaša uničenje sistema, ki ga omogoča. Znanje je »materija«, ki se nenehno preliva čez robove posode, v kateri se nahaja. Zato mislim, da je ogromni potencial klasičnih znanosti točno v tem, ker klasične znanosti, ki so vir vseh drugih humanističnih znanosti in na splošno vsega znanja, kot ga danes definiramo v Evropi, zahtevajo ogromno »energije pridobivanja znanja«. Če hočete biti strokovnjak za antične študije, morate poznati jezike, arheolo-

gijo, umetnostno zgodovino, literaturo, teorijo in tudi tako imenovane trde znanosti. Vse to mora biti del vašega znanja. Če imate znanje s tako širokega polja, imate določeno ekspertizo, ki premaga vsa druga polja, ki jih poznamo v humanističnih disciplinah. Morate se namreč spoznati tudi na antično matematiko, četudi ste specialist za antično književnost. Idealizem in utopija, imate prav, delno gre za to. Ne vidim jih v statusu »znanja«, ampak v stalnem iskanju znanja in širjenju njegovih meja. Na drugem nivoju razmišljanja, idealizma in utopije v tem primeru ne moremo uporabiti, ker cilj ni v iskanju »resnice«. »Resnica« je področje vere in/ali ideologije, ne znanosti.

SUNČIČ: Menite, da obstajajo ljudje, ki dejansko obvladajo vse te vede? Ob hitrem razvoju znanosti in tehnologije, ki je prinesla vedno večjo specializacijo, je nerealistično pričakovati, da bo posameznik obvladal tako široki spekter znanj. Še več - nekomu se bo zdelo izredno čudno in sumljivo, če bo kdo trdil, da se res spozna na tako veliko število raznorodnih znanosti. Mar pri takšni zahtevi ne gre za zanikanje antične maksime oὐ πολλὰ ἀλλά πολύ, *non multa sed multum*, ne veliko stvari, ampak veliko ene stvari?

SLAPŠAK: Morda takšnih posameznikov res ni veliko, vendar obstajajo, o čemer sem se tudi osebno prepričala, ko sem jih srečala. Gre za ambivalenten odnos med znanjem in tistim, kar se imenuje akademski vrhovi. Med vpisanimi potrebami znanja in disciplinarnih meja je nujno potreben intelektualni nomadizem, še posebej v antičnih študijih. Takšen nomadizem ohranja kolektivni spomin na starost oziroma na zgodovino preučevanja antike, po drugi strani pa uspešno subverzivno deluje na »fah-idiotizacijo«, kateri so se zoperstavliali

tudi največji interpretatorji »filološke metode«, nemški znanstveniki iz druge polovice 19. stoletja. V vseh smereh antičnih študij je potreben nomadizem, na primer branje strokovnjakov za antiko iz 15., 16., 17., 18. in 19. stoletja. Spet smo pri vaši pripombi o »realističnosti« takšnih zahtev: kdor hoče, ta zmore. Pred kratkim je umrl velik strokovnjak za antično matematiko, klasični filolog, Madžar. Svojo kariero je začel, ko so ga po dogodkih leta 1956, ko je bil že v zrelih letih, kot »nazadnjaški element« vrgli v kot nekega državnega inštituta za fiziko,

SUNČIĆ: Do you not think that the choice in its own right of the contents, texts and only then the interpretations, already incorporates the important ideological characteristics that render the mere “innocent” reading of Antiquity texts impossible? From a realistic point of view, your ideas are then idealistic, if not even utopian.

SLAPŠAK: They are not utopian only as far as one – and a key – element is concerned, which is the dynamism of knowledge. Regardless of what course the education is heading, even in totalitarian systems, if it ensures knowledge, then it already contains an element of subversion that will destroy them. The latter could also be seen in communism. Communism constituted an ideology that privileged knowledge, but to its own doom. Therefore there was no chance for (state) communism to persevere longer than it had, for approximately 50, 60 years. Every nature of knowledge leads to the fall of a system that had enabled it. Knowledge is a “matter” that keeps incessantly pouring over the brinks of a vessel, where it is located. Therefore I think that the enormous potential of Classical sciences lies exactly in that, since Classical sciences, being the source of all other humanities sciences and the entire knowledge in general, as it is defined today in Europe, demand an un-

bounded amount of “energy in acquiring knowledge”. If you wish to specialize your expert knowledge in Classical Antiquity, you need to master Classical languages, architecture, history of arts, literature, theory, as well as the so-called “hard sciences”. It all has to constitute part of your knowledge. If you gain the knowledge in such a vast field, you acquire a certain expertise that surpasses all other fields that we know in humanities disciplines. Namely, you have to understand the Classical mathematics, even though you specialize in Antiquity literature. Idealism and utopia, you are right, this is partly the case. I do not see them in the status of “knowledge”, but in the incessant search for knowledge and the expansion of its boundaries. On another level of reflecting, idealism and utopia cannot be applicable to this case, since the goal is not the search for the “truth”. The truth belongs in the area of faith and/or ideology, not science.

SUNČIĆ: Do you think that there are people who actually master all these sciences? Given the rapid development of sciences and technologies that have led to even narrower specializations, it is somewhat unrealistic to expect that an individual will master such a wide spectrum of knowledges. Moreover – it may strike one as very odd and suspicious when somebody will claim to master such a diversity of sciences. Does such a requirement in itself not imply the very denial of the Antique maxim *ὁ πολλὰ ἀλλὰ πολυ, non multa sed multum*, not many but much?

SLAPŠAK: Perhaps such individuals are indeed rare, but they exist, which I convinced myself of when I had personally met them. What we are dealing with here is an ambivalent relationship between knowledge and what is called “top academic circles”. Among the inscribed requirements for knowledge and disciplinary boundaries, the intellectual nomadism is necessary and essential, especially in

the domain of Antiquity studies. Such nomadism maintains collective memory of the age or history of Antiquity investigation, while on the other hand, it is successful in subversively affecting the “Fachidiotismus”, to which opposed even the greatest among the interpreters of the “philological method”, the German scientists in the latter half of the 19th century. Intellectual nomadism is necessary within all

da bi pisal poročila o zgodovini »trdih« znanosti. Iz kota je zrasla nova teorija razvoja antične geometrije... Tema me fascinira ravno zato, ker o matematiki in geometriji ne poznam pravzaprav ničesar

razen zornega kota tega znanstvenika. Po drugi strani, če sem kot študentka ves čas prelagala težke slovarje in tekste, dneve in noči prebila v knjižnicah, danes del tega opravi s pritiskom na gumb...

SUNČIČ: Ali lahko danes antiko opredelimo kot elitistično domeno? Sodobna ameriška strokovnjakinja za antiko in feministka Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz pravi v uvodu ene izmed svojih knjig, da je bogata Židinja. V preteklosti so se z antiko ukvarjali pripadniki meščanskih slojev, ki so na ta način utrjevali lastno »demokratično«, predvsem anti-aristokratsko identiteto. V 20. stoletju je obstajala predstava, da je antika študij za bogate brezdelne gospodične. Kdo danes preučuje antiko in ali ga lahko sploh definiramo?

SLAPŠAK: Na priporočilo moje učiteljice v osnovni šoli sem se v klasično gimnazijo v Beogradu vpisala po prvih štirih razredih. Mati me je vprašala, če se strinjam, jaz pa sem pristala. V klasični gimnaziji smo bili tako revni kot bogati, vendar je to bila družba, v kateri bogatstvo ni moglo biti ključnega pomena - torej smo mi revnejši imeli, če ne drugega, enako sproščenost, česar danes ne zasledimo več. Zahvaljujoč sistemu socialne države je študij klasične filologije še zmeraj dostopen vsem, tudi nižjim socialnim slojem; v prihodnosti bo verjetno cerkev tista, ki bo revnejšim omogočala študij. Ne vem, če bo takšna podpora prednost za znanost, ampak mladi znajo oceniti in se hrabro spuščati tudi v negotovo prihodnost, ki je kulturno opredeljena kot izrazito alternativna. Na

Zahodu, v Evropi in Ameriki, sem spoznala tudi izredno bogate strokovnjake za antične študije, pretežno naslednike, ki so se odločili, da ne bodo več »delali denarja«, ampak da se bodo ukvarjali s svojim intelektualnim hobijem. Tudi za njih je študiranje »žrtev«, na podoben način kot za tiste, ki se morajo ukvarjati z vsakdanjim delom, da bi lahko študirali po svoji izbiri... *say good-bye to money*, v vsakem primeru. Vsekakor, zadeve so drugačne v balkanskih krogih, kjer je izbor discipline povezan s sistemi oblasti in avtoritete, ki tam nikoli niso ločeni. Dovolite mi, da verjamem, morda spet »utopično«, da danes izbor antike kot discipline vsekakor označen z določeno stopnjo ločitve od kapitalistične mentalitete in od njene vseprisotne družbene prisile.

SUNČIČ: Veliko ste se ukvarjali s podobo in reprezentacijo intelektualcev v antiki. Kako opredeljujete antičnega intelektualca vis-à-vis povprečnemu moškemu oziroma državljanu, ki sedi v gledališču, gre v skupščino in podobno - kakšen je njun odnos? Pri tem ne mislim neposreden fizični odnos, ampak »nastrogenost«.

directions of Antiquity studies, for example, the reading of specialists in Classical Antiquity dating back to the 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Here, we again reach your remark on the "realistic" of such demands: where there is will, there is power. Recently, a great expert in Classical mathematics and a Classical philologist of Hungarian origin, passed away. He began his career in his ripe old age, when in the wake of the events in 1956, he was thrown as a "reactionary element" into a corner of some state institute for

physics, in order to write reports on the history of "hard" sciences. From that corner sprung a new theory on the evolution of Classical geometry ... This subjects fascinates me even more so, because I know nothing of mathematics and geometry, except for the point of view of this scientist. On the other hand, I cannot help but think: as a student, I spent entire days and nights constantly shifting heavy dictionaries and texts, whereas now, I achieve almost everything with a simple push of a button ...

SUNČIĆ: *Can Antiquity today be defined as an elitist domain? The contemporary American authority in classical Antiquity and a feminist Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz says in the preface to one of her books that she is a wealthy Jewess. In the past, Antiquity was the professional domain of the middle class citizens and simultaneously a means with which they consolidated their own "democratic" and, above all, anti-aristocratic identity. In the 20th century rose the idea that Antiquity was a course of studies intended for idle wealthy ladies. Who studies Antiquity today, and can the profile of such a scholar even be defined?*

SLAPŠAK: Upon the recommendation of my primary school teacher, I enrolled a classical grammar school in Belgrade after I finished the fourth grade. My mother asked for my consent and I gave it. Both rich and poor children attended classical grammar school, although it is true that in those days, we lived in a society where the financial status could not be of key importance. Therefore we the poorer children could, if not anything else, afford the same level of easiness, which nowadays cannot be perceived anymore. Due to the welfare state system, the classical philology studies are still accessible to anyone, even the poorest classes. However, in the future, I think, it would probably be the Church that will enable the poorest to study classical philology. I am not sure whether such a financial assistance will present any advantage for science, but young people are capable of sound evaluation and making courageous steps towards an uncertain future that is culturally defined as explicitly alternative. In the West, Europe

and the United States, I also met extremely wealthy experts in the field of Classical Antiquity, predominantly the followers that had decided not to "make money" anymore, but rather concentrate on their intellectual hobby. Even for them, the studying is the "victim" in a similar sense as it is for those who are forced to struggle through their everyday jobs in order to successfully finish the studies that they have chosen ... In any event, this means "say good-bye to money". The matters are, by all means, different in the Balkans, where the selection of the study discipline is closely connected with the systems of power and authority that have never been separated there. Allow me to believe, perhaps again in that "utopian" sense, that today the selection of Antiquity is omnipresent social coercion.

SLAPŠAK: Za antičnega intelektualca je bila značilna določena osnovna »akcija«, s katero si je zaslužil sovraštvo navadnih državljanov, in sicer dejstvo, da je hotel izstopiti iz kolektiva. S poskusom izstopa iz kolektiva je hkrati tudi razgradil demokracijo. Nesreča intelektualnega gibanja, ki ga lahko najbolj opazujemo v 5. st. pr. n. št. v Atenah, je bila predvsem v tem, da so vso energijo usmerjali v omejevanje demokracije. Na eni strani ste imeli zelo progresivne ideje o enakosti pri Platonu in Aristotelu, na drugi strani pa se je Aristotel kot izjemni strokovnjak z vsemi silami trudil, da bi dokazal, zakaj

ženska res ni enaka. Obstajali so torej napori, da bi se naprej izstopilo iz pripadanja kolektivu, tako da se po eni strani poglobljajo določena vprašanja, po drugi strani pa se intelektualci pridružijo oblasti. Slednje vidimo predvsem v Aristofanovih komedijah in še posebej v *Ptičih*, kjer intelektualci ponujajo svoje usluge novi državi. Takšni primeri ponujajo paralele med sodobno in antično situacijo, saj lahko vidimo, kako se intelektualci organizirajo v družbi, kaj uničujejo v svojih intelektualnih gibanjih: razen ustvarjanja obstaja tudi destrukcija.

SUNČIČ: Intelektualci so zaradi svojega posebnega vedenja v družbi po načelu marginalizirani: četudi tesno sodelujejo z ekonomskimi in političnimi elitami so izredno težko všečni širši javnosti, saj imajo navadni ljudje vseskozi občutek, da jih intelektualci ogrožajo, da so nori, neuravnovešeni, nevarni, izprijeni in podobno. Predvsem v 20. stoletju se je v splošnem imaginariju izoblikovala podoba o norem znanstveniku, ki jo uteleša Albert Einstein, reproducira pa jo predvsem popularna kultura, ki prek filmov, nadaljevanj in literature genialne ume predstavlja kot nore in mnogokrat hudobne in nevarne oportuniste, ki svoje usluge prodajo najboljšemu ponudniku.

SLAPŠAK: Intelektualci so vsekakor po načelu marginalizirani, o tem ni nobenega dvoma. Po drugi strani pa je osnovna kvaliteta intelektualcev, ki jo lahko zasledimo od atenske demokracije naprej, da so nepredvidljivi in to je tisto, na kar lahko računamo tudi v prihodnosti.

Dejstvo pa je, da so bili antični intelektualci, kljub temu da si občasno pridobili privilegije, bolj *outsiderji* kot »pomembni spremljevalci«. Razen tega od antike naprej obstaja stereotip o nenehni nevarnosti, ki jo predstavljajo intelektualci za državno stabilnost. Ne bodite tako prepričani v neprisotnost

klasikov v oblasti: v Angliji je v veljavi mnenje, da so diplomirani klasični filologi najboljši administratorji v državni službi, zato izredno lahko dobijo službo v tej dejavnosti! Če pa pogledate na primer situacijo v Franciji, predpostavka o neprisotnosti klasičnih filologov preprosto ne drži: humanisti iz najbolj eksotičnih disciplin, med njimi tudi preučevalci antike, niso bistveno različni od drugih javno prisotnih kritičnih intelektualcev. »Umaknitev v znanost« je po mojem mnenju le še eden malce perverzen odsev omenjenih balkanskih (in centralno evropskih) strategij oblasti

SUNČIČ: Your professional interest has greatly revolved around the image and the representation of intellectuals in the Antique cultures. How would you define an Antique intellectual vis-à-vis an average man or citizen, who sits in the theatre, attends the assembly and so forth? How is their relationship defined? With that I do not mean the direct, physical relationship but their attitude towards each other.

SLAPŠAK: Characteristic of an Antique intellectual was a certain basic "action" with which he had brought upon himself the hatred of ordinary citizens, and that basic action was his aspiration to withdraw from the collective. By the attempt of doing so, he simultaneously also decomposed the democracy. Particularly unfortunate about the intellectual movement, which can be most thoroughly observed in the 5th century B.C., was the fact that their entire energy was focused into facilitating the confinement of democracy. On the one hand, Plato and Aristotle fathered extremely progressive ideas of equality, while on the other hand, Aristotle as an outstanding intellectual authority, invested his entire efforts into proving as to why women are, in-

disputably, not equal to men. There were thus aspirations directed at breaking the ties with the collective, consequently giving rise to much more complex questions on the one hand, while on the other, the intellectuals join the political authorities. This can be clearly seen in the Aristophanes' comedies, especially in *Birds*, where the intellectuals bid their services to the newly formed state. Such examples offer parallels between the contemporary and the Antique situations. By drawing such parallels, it can be seen just how the intellectuals organize themselves within a society and what they are bringing to destruction in their intellectual movements: beside creation there is namely also destruction.

SUNČIČ: Due to their unique behaviour in society, the intellectuals are principally marginalized: even though they closely collaborate with the economic and political elites, they are extremely disliked by the general public, since the ordinary citizens cannot shake off the feeling that the intellectuals pose a threat to them, that they are mad, imbalanced, dangerous, perverse, and so forth. Especially in the 20th century, the idea that had been established within the general imaginary was that of a mad scientist embodied in Albert Einstein and predominantly reproduced by popular culture. Through films, series and literature, the latter presents the greatest geniuses as mad and ever so often as evil opportunists selling their services to the highest bidder.

SLAPŠAK: In principle, intellectuals are definitely marginalized; there is no question about that. Nevertheless, the basic quality that they have managed to maintain ever since the Athenian democracy is their unpredictability. And this trait is not about to disappear in the future.

On the other hand, we cannot dispute the fact that the Antique intellectuals – even though they were occasionally granted privileges – had the reputation of outsiders rather than

"vital companions". Moreover, there still exists the stereotype from the Antique times about a continuous threat that the intellectuals pose to the stability of the state. But do not be so confident that there are no Classical Antiquity experts in the government. In England, it is generally believed that classical philologists with a university degree have the best performance in government services; therefore they have no problem whatsoever getting employment there! But if one takes a

in avtoritet. »Navadni človek« je zmeraj v ozadju takšnih naracij, s katerimi se opravičujejo neumnost, svetohlinstvo ali kar koli že z bogatega smetišča zahodne in vzhodne represije in netolerantnosti.

SUNČIČ: Vrnimo se spet k osnovni predstavi, ki jo preberemo že pri Aristofanu v *Oblakih*: intelektualec je nekdo, ki ni nič prida. Svoje usluge prodaja najboljšemu ponudniku ali pa je - milo rečeno - čudak. Če vzamemo popularno Aristotelovo definicijo - intelektualec ni ζῷον πολιτικῶν, politično bitje, torej se razlika med navadnim državljanom in intelektualcem vzpostavlja že v tej osnovni predpostavki.

SLAPŠAK: Ključni element Aristofanove slike je – in Aristofan je seveda intelektualec –, da navzven ridikularizira skupino intelektualcev, kateri tudi sam pripada, ker misli, da je slednje koristno predvsem za skupino samo.

SUNČIČ: Sami pogosto poudarjate, da je Aristofan klovn, na nek način nor. In ker se zanj domneva, da je nor, mu je zaradi tega dovoljeno govoriti stvari, ki drugim niso dovoljene. Lahko bi rekli, da mu je zaradi tega dovoljeno govoriti resnico, vendar vztrajajmo pri podobi intelektualca - Aristofan je nor, intelektualce predstavlja kot nore in pokvarjene... Ali v tem lahko beremo samoparodijo in samokritiko, resnico ali morda ritualno inverzijo, s katero poskuša Aristofan zmanjšati napetost, ki so jo v atenski demokraciji ustvarjali intelektualci? Če je namreč rekel, da so nori in pokvarjenci, potem so ritualno v gledališču obdelali očitno zelo kočljiv problem, pred katerim se je znašla demokracija, ki je zagovarjala isonomijo, popolno enakost. Ali lahko za atensko demokracijo potem sploh rečemo, da je nekdo lahko govoril »resnico« na subverziven način, ne da bi si pridobil oznako norca?

SLAPŠAK: Norost je institucija in Aristofan je institucija norosti, zato deluje zelo pozitivno in ima tudi svoj ugled. Deluje v žanru, ki zahteva norost in v njem kaže vse, kar je odsotno iz »normalnosti«, torej marginalizirane skupine: postavi vprašanja žensk, intelektualcev, tujcev... V Aristofanovih komedijah so na najslabši način predstavljeni vojaki, skupina, ki jo neskončno prezira. Za vse ostale skupine obstaja vsaj nekakšno upanje, medtem ko so vojaki za Aristofana nemogoči. Vse se dogaja znotraj institucije norosti, ki jo atenska demokracija izvaja zaradi tega, da bi državljanji imeli ventile, da bi enkrat, dvakrat ali trikrat na leto sprostiti, se režali, zmerjali svoje politike, potem pa funkcionirali naprej. To je institucija, ki je današnja, moderna demokracija, še nima. S tega vidika smo precej zaostali v primerjavi z atensko demokracijo.

look at the situation in France, the presupposition of the absence of classical philologists simply cannot hold. Experts in the most exotic fields of humanities, including Classical scholars, do not differ much from other publicly visible critical intellectuals. The "retreat to science" is, to my opinion, nothing more than just another slightly perverse reflexion of the abovementioned Balkan (and Central

European) strategies of power and authorities. "Ordinary man" always lingers in the background of such narrations, which serve as the justification for stupidity, hypocrisy, or whatever one might think of, from the rubbish dump, as much opulent as it already is, of the Western and Eastern repression as well as intolerance.

SUNČIČ: Let us return to the basic notion that can be read already in Aristophanes' *Clouds*: an intellectual is somebody who amounts to nothing worthwhile. He sells his services to the highest bidder or is, to put it mildly, eccentric. If we take the popular Aristophanes' definition: an intellectual is not ζῷον πολιτικῶν, i.e. a politician, therefore the difference between an ordinary citizen and an intellectual is established already by this basic presupposition.

SLAPŠAK: The key element of Aristophanes' picture is – and Aristophanes is an intellectual, of course – that he openly

mocks a group of intellectuals in which he also belongs, because he thinks that mockery is beneficial particularly for the group itself.

SUNČIČ: You yourself often emphasise that Aristophanes is a clown, in a sense mad. And since he is presupposed to be mad, he is allowed to say things that others would never be permitted to say. One could say that, for this reason, he is allowed to speak the truth. But let us stand by the notion of an intellectual – Aristophanes is mad and he presents intellectuals as mad, corrupt ... Can we determine on such basis a self-parody and self-criticism, the truth or perhaps a ritual inversion with which Aristophanes tries to reduce the tension that had been created by intellectuals in the Athenian democracy? If he claimed that they were mad and corrupted, then they ritually treated a very delicate problem in the theatre, before which the democracy found itself, advocating isonomy, complete equality. Can we then actually claim that, within the framework of the Athenian democracy, anyone could speak the "truth" in a subversive manner without being designated a madman?

SLAPŠAK: Madness is an institution, and Aristophanes is an institution of madness. Therefore he functions extremely positively and retains his reputation. He functions within the genre that requires madness and manifests in it everything that is absent from "normality", i.e. marginalized groups: he raises issues relating to the status of women, intellectuals, aliens ... However, no one is presented in a worse light by Aristophanes' comedies than the soldiers, a group that Aristophanes holds in utmost contempt. While he still believes that

there is some hope left for the representatives of other groups, the soldiers remain beyond correction. It all takes place within the institution of madness implemented by the Athenian democracy with a view to give the citizens a chance to ventilate, relax once or twice per year, laugh, scorn their politicians and then continue with their everyday lives. This is an institution that in today's democracy is still something to be desired. In this respect, we lag considerably behind the Athenian democracy.

SUNČIČ: Mislite, da ni takšno stanje v sodobnosti predvsem posledica povsem drugačnega političnega sistema, totalne disperzije? Na načelni ravni lahko najdemo paralelo v sodobnih oblikah diskurza, v Sloveniji v varieteju TV Poper, kjer gre za določeno vrsto norčevanja, ki je v tem kulturnem okolju neznano. Se vam zdi, da pri TV Popru zasledimo podobno vrsto komičnega ritualizma kot v Aristofanovi komediji?

SLAPŠAK: Pri TV Popru lahko prepoznamo sredozemsko karnevalsko kulturo, ki je eden dragocenih ostankov v evropski kulturi, in sicer karnevalsko norčevanje. Osnovna kritika je sledeča: Tv Poper ni dovolj dober in predvsem ni dovolj nor! Norčevanja namreč ne izpelje do konca, ampak nenehno vztraja pri določenih likih, medtem ko se drugih nikoli ne loti, čeprav bi to bilo nujno potrebno in bi šele potem postalo prava komedija. Institucija norčevanja zahteva ogromno znanje: ni namenjena širokim masam v splošnem pomenu, ampak širokim masam, ki vedo. Vprašanje je, komu je namenjen Tv Poper. Če se vrnemo k Aristofanu: ko v svojih komedijah

parodira Evripida, pri tem domneva, da tisti, ki sedijo v gledališču, poznajo osnovni Evripidov »tekst«, iz katerega se norčuje, sicer štosov ne bodo razumeli, s čimer se soočamo sodobni interpretatorji Aristofana. Norčevanje iz intelektualcev predpostavlja, da večina ljudi ve, kaj tisti intelektualci počnejo, šele potem lahko razumejo norčevanje in se smeji. Norčevanje lahko gre v popolno obscenost, ogabnost in direktno zmerjanje, po drugi strani pa gre lahko v visoko intelektualizacijo. Takšne visoke intelektualizacije naša kultura ne pozna več, v tem je problem. Obscenost smo cenzurirali, obenem pa pozabili zakaj.

SUNČIČ: Kako bi nekomu, ki ne ve nič o Aristofanu in je za Evripida in Sofokla slišal zgolj v šoli - pozna na primer samo *Medejo*, *Antigono ali Kralja Ojdipa* - kako bi takšnemu predstavi antično komedijo v kontekstu? Kako bi prevedli podobe in predvsem štose v nekaj, kar bi sodobni gledalec vsaj malo razumel, v simbole, ki bi evocirali takojšnje prepoznanje?

SLAPŠAK: En takšen projekt sem zastavila s svojimi študenti, vendar žal v zelo slabem trenutku, in sicer pred vojno v Sloveniji leta 1991. S skupino študentov z arheologije in grščine sem režirala *Ženske v narodni skupščini*. Študentje so sami naredili prevod na podlagi aktualnih dogodkov, kontekstualizacija je bila povsem svobodna - nekateri so poznali grški original. V prevodu so se pojavljale

različne aktualne politične osebnosti danega trenutka parlamentarne demokracije v Sloveniji, in sicer z pravimi imeni. Zadeva je zelo dobro funkcionirala, ker so se študentje pri delu izredno zabavali. Študenti ISH-ja so pripravili prevod *Lizistrate* skupaj z menoj. Zadeva je v primerjavi s prvim poskusom zelo uspela, saj je skupina podiplomcev z ISH in njihovi prijatelji predstavila zavzemanje

SUNČIČ: Do you think that the situation as it today could have, above all, derived from a completely different political system, a total dispersion? In principle, one can find a parallel in contemporary forms of discourse: in Slovenia this could be the TV-Poper show manifesting a certain kind of mockery, which is a fair novelty in this cultural environment. Do you think that in the TV-Poper Show, a similar type of comic ritualism can be detected as in Aristophanes' comedies?

SLAPŠAK: In the TV-Poper Show one of precious remnants in the European cultural heritage can be identified, the Mediterranean carnival, comprising above all, carnivalistic mockery. The basic criticism relating to the TV-Poper show would be the following: the TV-Poper Show is not good enough and certainly not mad enough! The mockery itself is never brought to the very punch line. Instead, the show constantly revolves around the same characters, while others are never being dealt with, although this would be absolutely necessary in order for the show to develop into a true comedy. The institution of mockery requires an enormous amount of knowledge: it is not intended for mass audiences in a general sense, but to the masses that have the awareness of the contemporary issues. The question, however, is for whom the TV-Poper Show is intended. If we return to Aristophanes: when in his plays he parodizes Euripides, he

does so assuming that the audience is familiar with the basic Euripides' "text", which Aristophanes targets with his mockery, otherwise the audience fails to understand the humour of it. This is exactly the issue that the contemporary interpreters of Aristophanes are addressing. The mockery of intellectuals arises from the presupposition that the major part of the audience is aware of what these intellectuals are doing. Only when this presupposition is fulfilled can the audience fully understand the mockery and laugh. The mockery itself may turn into an utter obscenity, repulsiveness and direct scolding, but it may also turn towards intellectualisation on a higher level. The problem with such elevated intellectualisations within our culture is that they have ceased to exist. We have made obscenity subject to censorship and at the same time forgotten why we have done so.

SUNČIČ: Let us take, for instance, someone who does not know anything about Aristophanes and has been briefly familiarized with Euripides and Sofocles at school – he or she only knows *Medaea*, *Antigona* and *King Oedipus*. How would you present to such a person an ancient Greek comedy within a certain context? How would you translate the notions and, above all, the jokes into something fairly comprehensible to a contemporary viewer, or into symbols that would evoke imminent recognition?

SLAPŠAK: I set up such a project with my students, but unfortunately at a very bad moment: just before the war in Slovenia started in 1991. Together with the students of archaeology and Greek I directed a play *Women in the National Assembly*. The students themselves made the translation in the light of current events and the contextualization was completely free – only a few of the students knew

the Greek original. The translation outspokenly presented by their actual names various topical political personalities at that given moment of parliamentary democracy in Slovenia. The project functioned perfectly, because the students had immense fun working on it. The students from ISH, however, prepared their translation of *Lizistrata* in cooperation with me. Compared with the former

parlamenta s strani žensk. Prvo dejanje *Lizistrate* je bilo del prireditve, ki jo je ISH organiziral na Prešernovem trgu maja 2000. Vedno obstajajo dogodki, na katere se posamezna tematika lahko naveže in

jih kontekstualiziramo v sodobnosti, pri tem ni nobenih omejitev. Vse stvari nosijo »spomin« antičnih konceptov, na te se vedno lahko navežemo v vsakem času in prostoru.

SUNČIČ: Za antično komedijo je značilna izredna ostrina in žaljivost, vsaj kar se današnjega pojmovanja svobode govora tiče. Kako se lahko pri vpeljavi realnih oseb lahko izognemo preprekam, ki nam jim danes postavlja pravo, ki ščiti osebnostne pravice posameznikov, še posebej pripadnikov političnih in ekonomskih elit, ki so po definiciji tarča posmeha v stari komediji? Po padcu atenske demokracije v Atenah vpeljejo odločbo, da se komedija ne sme norčevati iz živečih oseb, kar pomembno vpliva na prehod žanra v drugo smer, predvsem v smer stereotipov, ki so smešni in niso povezani s točno določeno realno osebo. Takšen koncept odgovarja tudi modernim predstavitev, kjer se avtorji izogonej morebitnim tožbam s tem, da na začetku izjavijo, da je kakršna koli podobnost z realnimi osebami, mrtvimi ali živečimi, zgolj naključna. Kje je torej zanka, skozi katero se predstavitev lahko izogne težavam in še vedno ostane zvesta konceptu antiške komedije?

SLAPŠAK: Po sodobnih zakonih stara komedija ne bi bila povsem mogoča, kar bi danes govorilo v prid debati o spreminjanju zakonov. Vendar so zakoni pri tem še najmanjši problem, ker veliko večji problem predstavljajo znanje in mentaliteta. Določena kultura mora zapopasti in inkorporirati v svoj vrednostni sistem idejo karnevalizacije. V javnosti

boste zasledili mnenje, da to ni dobro, kajti že na prvi ravni paralelizacije se boste soočili s problemom politične korektnosti. Mislim, da ravno karnevalizacija govori v prid politični korektnosti, saj bi olajšala sprejemanje samega koncepta, k katerem se v javnosti sploh ne razpravlja.

SUNČIČ: Tudi pri nas obstajajo družbeni dogodki, za katere se predpostavlja kršitev pravil oziroma pravilo, da je v času, ki ga opredelimo kot »karnevalski«, inverzija pravila predstavlja pravilo. Omenimo predvsem pretirano alkoholiziranje, kjer je policija izredno popustljiva - pri praznovanju verskih in državnih praznikov kot so božič, novo leto in podobno - medtem ko pri vprašanju svobode govora takšne popustljivosti ne bomo zasledili. Če vzamemo katero koli Aristofanovo komedijo: kakšni premiki bi bili potrebni v slovenski mentaliteti, ki bi omogočili vpeljavo realnih osebnosti v priredbo v predstavi na odru *mainstream* gledališča? Ob tem bi seveda pričakovali, da bi v komediji omenjene oziroma ozmerjane osebe sedele v publiki in po antičnem vzoru vstale in se poklonile publiki in igralcem na odru.

project, the latter one was an even greater success, since the group of the ISH post-graduate students together with their friends presented the conquest of the Parliament by women. The first act of *Lizistrata* was part of the cultural event organized by ISH on Prešeren Square in May 2000. What I am try-

ing to say is that there are always occurrences that can be linked with an individual subject theme and contextualized within the contemporaneity – there are really no boundaries. Everything bears the “memory” upon antique concepts and the connection with the latter can be established at any given time or place.

SUNČIČ: Characteristic of antique comedy are the remarkable sharpness and offensiveness, at least as regards the contemporary understanding of the freedom of speech. When introducing real persons, how can the hindrances be avoided that are posed by laws protecting the rights of individuals and especially the representatives of political and economic elites, who – by definition were the primarily targeted in the ancient comedy? In the wake of the fall of the Athenian democracy, Athens adopted a decision according to which the comedy should not mock living persons. This bears an important effect upon the transition of the genre into another direction, predominantly into the creation of stereotypes, which are still funny but not directly connected with a certain actual person. Such a concept corresponds to modern shows, as the authors avoid possible lawsuits by announcing at the very beginning that any similarity with actual individuals, living or deceased, is only coincidental. Where, then, is the loop through which a show can avoid problems and at the same time remain true to the concept of Attic comedy?

SLAPŠAK: According to contemporary legislation, the ancient comedy could not be entirely feasible, which speaks in favour of a debate about the need to amend these laws. But the laws in this case present the lesser issue; the real problem is the knowledge and mentality. A certain culture has to comprehend and incorporate into its system of values the idea of carnivalization. To some extent, the



public opinion is opposed to such tendencies, since already on the first level of parallelization; you confront the problem of political correctness. In my opinion, it is precisely the carnivalization that speaks in favour of political correctness, since it would make it easier for the concept itself to be adopted, but the concept is not being debated in the public at all.

SUNČIČ: There are also certain social events in Slovenia that presuppose the violation of rules or presuppose that, at the time that is defined as carnivalistic, the inversion of a rule constitutes a rule in its own right. Let me just refer to, for instance, the excessive alcoholization, towards which the police show an extraordinary lenience, especially during the times of religious and national festivities, such as Christmas, New Year's Eve and so forth. On the other hand, no such lenience will be detected in addressing the freedom of speech issue. And if we again refer to any one of Aristophanes' comedies: what kind of move-

SLAPŠAK: Vse to je v prvi vrsti odvisno od politike, saj zgolj politiki, ki imajo distanco do sebe, lahko prenesejo takšno kritiko in parodijo svoje lastne osebnosti in politične funkcije, ki bodo imeli razumevanje za demokracijo v pravem pomenu besede. Ko pa govorite o popustljivosti do domnevno ritualizirane alkoholizacije, se je pri tem potrebno zavedati, da sploh ne gre za ritualizem, ampak za pretvezo za avtodestrukcijo, saj alkoholizacija nikakor ni ritualno nadzorovana. Pri tem se vzpostavlja razlika med alkoholom kot drogo in drugi vrstami droge, kjer se manjšina, ki konzumira ilegalne droge, maltretira, medtem ko se alkoholiziranim daje

potuha. Sprememba mentalitete pa podrazumeva drugačno videnje kulture. Kultura ni tisto, kar si večina predstavlja kot nekaj »poštirkanega« – državni pesniki in pisatelji, ki se prilizujejo vladajočim elitam, ampak kultura, ki bi pomenila še marsikaj drugega. V tem smislu bi potrebovali oddajo, ki bi nadaljevala in poglobila idejo, ki jo je poskušal predstaviti Tv Poper. V Franciji imajo vsak dan komentar vsakdanjih dogodkov z marionetami, *guignol* (Canal+). Obstajajo različne tehnike, tudi manj znane, ki jih lahko oživimo in prilagodimo posameznemu kulturnemu kontekstu.

SUNČIČ: Od padca berlinskega zidu so se pogledi na preučevanje antike spremenili tudi z vidika angažiranosti, ki v antičnih študijah ni ravno najbolj zaželen. Ameriške avtorice imajo v tem pogledu posebno mesto, saj so znane po precejšnjem radikalizmu predvsem s stališča feminizma in študijev spolov, medtem ko tako izrazitih političnih konotacij v Evropi ne bomo zasledili. Kakšno je vaše videnje politizacije in angažiranosti v antičnih študijah?

SLAPŠAK: V Ameriki imate ogromno izredno konservativnih preučevalcev antike, obstajajo pa tudi izredno radikalni aktivisti. Po mojih ocenah v Evropi prevladujejo konservativni preučevalci antike. Zanimivo je bilo opazovati, kako sta leta 1998 skupaj nastopila dva strokovnjaka, ki se sicer sploh ne srečata – ne strokovno ne drugače – J. de Romilly, francoska članica akademije, in Jean-Pierre Vernant, glavni teoretik šole, ki ji sledimo na ISH-ju. Skupaj sta nastopila proti izločevanju grščine iz francoskih srednjih šol. Pri tem lahko vidimo skupno nastopanje pri tistem, kar lahko opredelimo kot skupni interes. Antični študiji so

prostor, kjer se lahko srečajo povsem različne teorije in idejna gibanja. Pred kratkim sem v Franciji gledala na televiziji oddajo, kjer je mlajši strokovnjak za antiko izrazil prepričanje, da je preučevanje antike povezano z idejo konservativizma. To je vsekakor ena možnost, vendar ni edina in nujna. Politika in antični študiji so še vedno tesno prepleteni, čeprav se včasih na prvi pogled zdi, da ni nikakršne povezave. Dejansko lahko v antičnih študijah zasledimo različne politične tradicije, zato lahko vidimo, da se antični študiji nenehno spreminjajo in da sploh niso statični, kot bi si morda kdo mislil. Pred

ments would be deemed necessary in Slovenian mentality to facilitate the introduction of real personalities into an adapted play on the stage of a mainstream theatre? In such an instance one would also expect to see the persons, mentioned or mocked in the comedy, to sit in the audience and, according to the Antique pattern, stand up at the end of the play and take a bow to the audience, as well as the players on the stage.

SLAPŠAK: First and foremost, it all depends on the politics. It is only those politicians who are capable of distancing from themselves, handling such critique and parody of their own personalities as well as their political functions that will manage to acquire the understanding for democracy in a true meaning of the word. But when one talks about lenience towards presumably ritualized alcoholization, one has to realize that this is not ritualism at all but a pretence for self-destruction, since alcoholization is in no way ritually controlled. At the same time, a difference is established between alcohol as a drug and other kinds of drugs where the minority consuming illegal drugs is maltreated, while the alcoholized are offered support. The change in mentality, how-

ever, subsumes a different perception of culture. Culture is not what the majority perceives as something "starchy" – which is so reminiscent of the state poets and novelists flattering the ruling elite –; within its true meaning, the notion of culture comprises so much more. In this sense we would need a show that would continue and engage more deeply in the idea that has been started by the TV-Poper Show. In France, for instance, the TV channel Canal+ daily broadcasts the commentaries on everyday events with marionettes, *guignols*. There are various kinds of techniques, even less known, that can be brought to life and adapted to comply with individual cultural contexts.

SUNČIČ: Ever since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the views on the Antiquity research have undergone considerable change even as regards the degree of engagement, which in the Antiquity studies is not most desired. In this respect, American female authors occupy a special place, as they are known for their considerable radicalism, especially with regard to their feminism and gender studies. Such explicit political connotations are non-existent in Europe. What is your perception of the politization and engagement in classical studies?

SLAPŠAK: In America, there are a vast number of extremely conservative Antiquity researchers, but there are extremely radical activists as well. To my knowledge, Europe has predominantly conservative Antiquity researchers. It was interesting to observe the common efforts made by two experts in 1998 that have never even met – neither professionally nor in any other way. These two experts were J. de Romilly, a French member of the Academy, and Jean-Pierre Vernant, the major theoretician of the school followed at ISH. They both joint their efforts to prevent the elimination of the Greek language from

French high schools. Here one can see the joint action in what may be defined as a joint interest. Antiquity studies allow the space where completely diversified theories and ideal movements can meet. Recently I watched a TV show in France where a younger expert in Antiquities expressed his belief that the Antiquity research is linked with the idea of conservatism. This, of course, is one way, but it is certainly not the only way nor is it necessary. The politics and Antiquity studies are still closely intertwined, although it sometimes seems, at a first glance, as if there were no such connection whatsoever.

seboj imamo veliko dogajanje, ki bo verjetno označilo začetek 21. stoletja, antiglobalistično gibanje. Gibanje potrebuje naracije, ki so že danes precej

dobre. Antiglobalistično gibanje bi imelo perfekten material v antičnih študijah, da izkorišča naracije in uvaja nove rituale, se poigrava s kultu, z idejami, s podobami.

SUNČIČ: Povezovanje antike in sodobnosti glede vprašanja globalizacije je vsekakor zanimivo tudi z vidika helenizma in rimskega imperija, ki jih lahko označimo za paradigmo globalizacijskih idej in konceptov.

SLAPŠAK: Absolutno, helenizem in rimski imperij lahko poimenujemo globalizacijski projekti. Aleksander Makedonski je bil globalist, rimski cesarji so ravno tako bili globalisti. Vendar je rimska administracija puščala ogromno prostora za neke vrste lokalno upravo. Kvaliteta globalizacije v antiki pa se kaže predvsem z vidika mobilnosti in širitve znanja. Slednje se v sodobnem globalizmu kaže prek uporabe interneta, po drugi strani pa globalizacija danes pomeni predvsem uničevanje narave. Poznamo tudi posamezne ekološke katastrofe iz antike, kot je popolno opustošenje severne Afrike, ki je

nastalo zaradi pretiranega izkoriščanja zemlje in nepoznavanja narave, tako da imamo danes namesto žitnih polj in pašnikov puščavo. Paralel je ogromno, hkrati pa so tudi mnoge razlike. Za preučevalce antike je zanimivo dejstvo, da je antična globalizacija iz grščine in latinščine naredila svetovna jezika, ki tudi kasneje v rimskem imperiju ohranjata skoraj da enakovreden položaj, saj so predvsem intelektualci bili dvojezični, kar pomeni, da so obvladali latinščino in grščino. Morda lahko danes vidimo paralelo v angleščini, ki je predvsem z bumom interneta postala svetovni jezik.

SUNČIČ: Kako danes Grke in Rimljane interpretiramo v odnosu do naraščajoče ksenofobije, saj predvsem Grki veljajo za izumitelje sovraštva do tujcev? Herodot v svoji Zgodovini oriše tujce na precej bizaren način - od najkulturnejših, ki so Grki in Egipčani, do Skitov, Hiperborejcev, Etiopijcev, Amazonk in drugih, za katere veljajo že napol živalske in fantastične lastnosti.

SLAPŠAK: Grki tradicionalno res veljajo za izumitelje ksenofobije, vendar so oni živeli v drugem svetu, zato so svojega Drugega konstruirali tudi s pomočjo tujcev, žensk, sužnjeve in živali. Moški Grki so živeli v svetu tujcev in v tem svetu predstavljali manjšino z vsemi možnimi travmami. Ksenofobija je bila in je še vedno sprta z ekonomsko logiko, česar Grki niso spoznali, medtem ko so jo

spoznali Makedonci in tudi Rimljani. Atenska demokracija ni delovala v smeri odpiranja, ampak čimvečje restrikcije glede tujcev - kar se tiče pridobivanja državljanstev, mešanih porok in podobno. Slednje se je takšni politiki izredno maščevalo, saj je demokracija propadla in Atene so postale marginalna provinca velikih držav. Nova vojna v Afganistanu je naenkrat aktualizirala antično pojmovanje »bar-

In fact, one can trace various forms of political tradition within Antiquity studies, thus realizing that Antiquity studies undergo constant changes and are not a static discipline at all, as one might think. Unfolding before us we have a major activity that will probably mark the beginning of the 21st century, i.e. the anti-

globalistic movement. The movement requires narrations that are already adequately elaborated today. The anti-globalistic movement could find a perfect material in Antiquity studies to benefit from the narrations and introduce new rituals, play with cults, ideas and images.

SUNČIČ: Establishing of the connection between Antiquity and contemporariness with respect of the globalization issue is by all means interesting also from the point of view of Hellenism and the Roman Empire, which could be labelled a paradigm of globalistic ideas and concepts.

SLAPŠAK: Absolutely. Hellenism and the Roman Empire can be named globalization projects. Alexander the Macedonian was a globalist and so were the Roman emperors. Yet, the Roman administration allowed plenty of space for a kind of local governments. The quality of globalization in Antiquity manifests itself particularly as regards mobility and the expansion of knowledge. In contemporary globalism, the latter is manifested especially through the use of the Internet, but on the other hand, globalization today above all comprises the destruction of nature. We know of several ecological disasters from Antiquity, such as complete devastation of North Africa that occurred as a result of excessive exploitation of the land and utter ignorance about the laws of

nature, so that today North Africa is covered with deserts instead of wheat growing fields and meadows. The parallels are countless, but the differences, on the other hand, are not much fewer. What the Antiquity researchers find interesting is the fact that the Antique globalization created two world languages from Greek and Latin, which even later on, in the era of the Roman Empire, maintained a more or less equivalent status; intellectuals, in particular, were bilingual, which means that they mastered both Latin and Greek. Perhaps today we can see a parallel in the English language, which grew into a world language mostly by the Internet boom sweeping across the globe.

SUNČIČ: How do we interpret the Greeks and the Romans today in relation to the rising xenophobia, since it is foremost the Greeks, who are considered the inventors of hatred of aliens? In his *History*, Herodotus describes aliens in a rather bizarre manner – from the most civilized, such as the Greeks and the Egyptians, to the Scythe, the Hyperboreans, the Ethiopians, the Amazons and others to whom partly animalistic and fantastic attributes are ascribed.

SLAPŠAK: It is true that the Greeks are traditionally considered the inventors of xenophobia, but they lived in a different world, constructing their Other also by borrowing from aliens, women, slaves and animals. Male Greeks lived in a world of aliens where they represented an extremely traumatized minority. Xenophobia was and still is in conflict with

the logic of economy, unknown to the Greeks, but known to the Macedonians, as well as the Romans. The Athenian democracy did not function toward opening up but toward tightening the restrictions on aliens – issues concerning the acquisition of citizenship, mixed marriages and other similar issues. The latter had fatal consequences for this kind of policy:

bara«, tujca in drugega. Pametnjakoviče, ki razglablja o ključnih in nepremostljivih razlikah med barbarstvom in »civiliziranim« svetom, bi morda morali spomniti, da je izvor definicije barbara bilo nepoznavanje grščine. Torej je za izstop iz položaja barbara obstajal relativno enostaven individualni postopek: učenje grškega jezika. Naj prevedem: globalno lingvistično

usposabljanje, kar danes predstavlja predvsem znanje angleškega jezika. Ko poslušate Talibane ali njihove gverilske nasprotnike ali nesrečne begunce v afganistanski puščavi, ko govorijo angleško, imate pred seboj ljudi, katerih izbor je bil, da obvladajo novo polje komuniciranja. Kdo so torej barbari in kakšne zveze ima ta termin s politično realnostjo?

SUNČIČ: V helenizmu se vzpostavi ideja znanstvene avtoritete, ki je najprej vplivala na klasično filologijo kot prvo znanost in posredno potem tudi na druge znanosti. Kako se danes kaže podoba avtoritete? Poglejmo dva nekonvencionalna avtorja, ki sta pomembno vplivala na preučevanje antike v 20. stoletju, to sta Vernant in Vidal-Naquet, ki za mnoge raziskovalce danes predstavljata avtoriteto, ki jo lahko primerjamo z velikimi avtoritetami drugih teoretskih šol. V kolikšni meri obstaja znotraj šole polemika in v čem jo lahko preberemo? Marc Bloch pravi, da sta ga njegova učitelja naučila, da je zgodovinarjeva prva dolžnost biti pošten in da je dejanski napredek znanosti sad nujnega nasprotja med zaporednimi rodovi strokovnjakov, zato graja svoja učitelja, ko je potrebno in pričakuje, da ga bodo tudi njegovi učenci grajali.

SLAPŠAK: Osebno vidim ogromno razliko med njim in drugimi učitelji. Mislim, da je pri tem prostor za debato bistveno bolj odprt kot v nekaterih drugih teoretskih smereh. Vernant in Vidal-Naquet sta doživela že veliko napadov s strani svojih učencev. Vernantov način, ki smo ga imeli priložnost spremljati tudi v Ljubljani, je ponujanje predvsem vprašanj in ne odgovorov. S takšnim načinom lahko takoj pričakujete kritiko, takojšnje razširjanje teme. Vidal-Naquet in Vernant sta zahtevala etimološko preciznost, ki ne dovoljuje neumnosti. V etimologiji se neumnosti takoj vidijo. John Scheid in Jesper Svenbro sta postavila pod vprašanje etimologijo in njeno egzaktnost. Ni ju zanimala točna etimologija, ampak netočna

etimologija in naracija, ki izhaja iz nje. V tem ni šlo zgolj za kritiko, ampak za spodbijanje osnovnega teoretskega orodja teorije učiteljev. Kljub temu sta jima njuna učitelja stala ob strani in pomagala pri objavljanju njunih teoretskih del. Teorije namreč ne smemo jemati kot dogme, čeprav v evropski tradiciji zasledimo pretirano sklicevanje na avtoriteto, kar mnogokrat povroči stagnacijo raziskovanja.

Poglejmo Louisa Gerneta, po katerem se imenuje tudi pariški institut za zgodovinsko antropologijo, s katerim teoretsko sodelujemo na ISH. Njegova učenca Vernant in Vidal-Naquet sta ga potegnili iz popolne anonimnosti. Gernet je sicer veliko objavljajal po različnih socioloških revijah

the democracy collapsed and Athens became a marginal province of the great states.

The Antiquity's concept of "the barbarian", the alien or the other owes its actuality to the new war in Afghanistan. One should probably remind those who are "intellectualizing" on vital and insurmountable differences between barbarism and the "civilized" world that the term "barbarians" designated those people who had no knowledge of the Greek language. Yet, there was a relatively simple individual action to be undertaken if one wanted to

change one's status of a barbarian: the learning of the Greek language or, in other words, the global linguistic training, such as the active knowledge of the English language today. When one hears the Taliban, their guerilla enemy or the miserable refugees in the Afghanistan desert speaking the English language, one witnesses individuals who have chosen to master a new field of communication. Who, then, are the real barbarians and what are the connections between this notion and the political reality?

SUNČIĆ: Hellenism established the idea of the scientific authority, which primarily influenced the classical philology as the leading science and consequently other sciences as well. What is the image of the authority today? Let us consult two unconventional authors who had great impact on the 20th century Antiquity studies: Vernant and Vidal-Naquet represent an authority to numerous researchers and could be compared with great authorities of other theoretical schools. To what degree does the polemic extend within the school and how does it manifest itself? Marc Bloch said that his professors had taught him that the historian's first obligation is to be honest, whereas the actual progress in science comes as the result of the contrast between the successive generations of experts. For this reason, he criticizes his professors and expects to be criticized by his students.

SLAPŠAK: I, personally, see a great difference between him and other professors. I believe that there exists an essentially more open debate forum here than in several other theoretical streams. Vernant and Vidal-Naquet already experienced numerous attacks from the part of their students. Vernant, to whom we also had the opportunity to listen to in Ljubljana, offers mostly questions, not answers. Thus, he raises immediate criticism and achieves immediate expansion of the subject. Vidal-Naquet and Vernant demand etymological accuracy that does not tolerate nonsense. In etymology, nonsense becomes instantly apparent. On the other hand, John Scheid and Jesper Svenbro questioned the etymology and its exactitude. They were not interested in the exact etymology, but in the inexact etymology and narration arising from it. This was not a mere criticism, but an impugment of the fundamental theoretical instrument of the

theory of professors. Nevertheless, their professors supported them and helped them with the publication of their theoretical work. Theories must not be perceived as dogmatic, even though there is evidence of excessive referencing to the authority in the European tradition, which often causes stagnation in the research.

Then there is Louis Gernet, after whom the Institute of Historical Anthropology in Paris was named, with which ISH collaborates on the theoretical level. His students Vernant and Vidal-Naquet brought him out of complete anonymity. Even though Gernet signed numerous publications in various French sociological magazines, his work had no major impact on Classical philologists who did not read these magazines, and even if they had, they would probably have paid no attention to his theses. The case of Gernet is illustrative of the relationship between the generations: you

v Franciji, vendar njegovo delo ni imelo večjega vpliva na klasične filologe, ki teh revij niso brali, če pa že so, se za njegove teze nihče ni zmenil. Primer Gerneta pokaže tudi na odnos med generacijami: lahko ubijete svojega učitelja, lahko pa ga izberete in iz njega naredite učitelja. S tega

vidika je odkrivanje Louisa Gerneta in Ignacea Meyersona zelo jasno govori o ljudeh, ki hočejo imeti intelektualno kontinuiteto, ki sicer uveljavlja kritiko, vendar ne na način, da uničuje svoje predhodnike.

SUNČIČ: **Bi slednje lahko poimenovali post-modernistično postopek, pri katerem ni nujno uničiti izvirnika, ampak vzamemo samo tisto, kar nam ugaja, kot pravita Deleuze in Guattari v *Rhizomu*?**

SLAPŠAK: Ne vem, saj poznam zelo malo post-modernistov, ki niso ubili svojega učitelja. Vendar je to prednost današnjih raziskovalcev antike, po kateri radikalno izstopajo iz postmodernističnih praks, in sicer da morajo brati in poznati različne teoretske koncepte, tudi take, ki niso neposredno povezani z njihovim

delom. Odgovornost specialista za antiko je pri tem hkrati lažja in večja: lažja, ker je vse dostopno, težja, ker strokovnjak za antične študije mora brati tudi sodobna znanstvena, filozofska in literarna dela. Ne gre zgolj za interdisciplinarno povezavo, ampak za humanistično povezavo.

SUNČIČ: **Kakšno je vaše mnenje glede razlik v preučevanju antike? Mislite, da obstajajo nepremostljive razlike, čeprav se v končni fazi ukvarjamo z istim materialom, z istimi vsebinami?**

SLAPŠAK: Razlike se vzpostavljajo predvsem zaradi izoliranosti in pomanjkanja komunikacije. Ko ljudje začnejo komunicirati, se običajno izkaže, da četudi razlike obstajajo, niso niti približno tako velike, da bi predstavljale pregrado. Zato mislim, da je komunikacija različnih teorij nujno potrebna in konstruktivna. Problem je v tem, da se v Sloveniji na primer veliko govori o slovenskih slavistih, nihče pa ne govori o slovenskih klasičnih filologih. Podoba klasične filologije in klasičnega filologa je

izredno medla v zavesti splošnega državljana, lahko bi rekli, da sploh ne obstaja, saj niso prisotni na večjih debatah, kjer bi se izoblikovali kot ločena skupina z določeno identiteto, ki bi jo lahko prepoznala tudi splošna javnost. Pri tem trčimo ob problem števila, saj je slavistov v Sloveniji izredno veliko, medtem ko je klasičnih filologov le za odtенок. Moji spomini na srečanja jugoslovanskih specialistov za klasične študije pričajo, da se je vedno izkazalo, da je razlik veliko manj, kot bi si kdo mislil.

SUNČIČ: **Dotaknimo se vprašanje definicije Grkov oziroma širše antičnega človeka. Obstajajo različne interpretacije, ki jih na kratko lahko povzamemo na sledeči način: ahistorična, ki trdi, da se antični človek ne razlikuje v pomembnih**

can either kill your professor, or you can choose him and make him a professor. From this point of view, the discovering of Louis Gernet and Ignace Meyerson speaks very

clearly of the people who strive towards intellectual continuity, which does assert criticism but not in a way that destroys its predecessors.

SUNČIČ: Could the latter be termed the post-modern method which does not require the destruction of the original but postulates the selection of those elements that suit us, as argue Deleuze and Guattari in *Rhizome*?

SLAPŠAK: I could not say, since I know very few post-modernists that did not kill their professors. Nevertheless, this is an advantage for the contemporary Antiquity researchers, which enables them to radically stand out from the frame of post-modern practices: they have to read and be familiar with different theoretical concepts, including concepts that are not directly linked to their field of expertise.

In so doing, the responsibility of the Antiquity expert is both, easier and harder to fulfill: easier because he has access to every concept and harder because an Antiquity expert has to read also the contemporary scientific, philosophical and literary works. It is not merely a question of inter-disciplinary linkage, but also a matter of humanistic linkage.

SUNČIČ: What is your view of different approaches to Antiquity studies? Do you think there exist insurmountable differences despite the fact that we are all analyzing the same material, the same contents?

SLAPŠAK: The differences are established mostly due to isolation and lack of communication. When people start communicating, it usually turns out that the differences, even though they do exist, are not by far so great as to represent an obstacle. This is the reason why I find the communication of different theories necessary and constructive. In Slovenia, for instance, people speak mostly of Slovenian slavists, but no one speaks of Slovenian Classical philologists, which is a problem. The image of Classical philology and a Classical philologist is very vague in the consciousness

of an ordinary citizen. We could even say that it is non-existent, since the citizens do not participate in major discussions that could help define them as a separate group with a specific identity easily recognizable also by the general public. Here we encounter the problem of the proportion: while there are great many slavists in Slovenia, the number of Classical philologists is scarce. My recollection of the meetings of Yugoslav experts for Classical studies testifies of the fact that the differences are far fewer than one might think.

SUNČIČ: Let us touch upon the question of the definition of the Greeks or, in a broader sense, Antiquity man. There exist different interpretations which could be summed up as follows: the Ahistorical theory, claiming that the Antiquity man and the modern man do not differ in any relevant characteristics; the Continuity theory, subsuming the evolution in modern societies with traceable individual archaic elements; and the Discontinuity theory, claiming that the Antiquity man and the modern man differ to such an extent that any comparison between them is impossible, and therefore false. What is the way to proceed when studying Antiquity? Marcel Detienne says in the preface to his book *Dyonisos mis à mort* that the Greeks were not the Others.

lastnostih od sodobnega človeka, teorija kontinuitete, ki podrazumeva razvoj, kjer lahko še vedno zasledimo posamezne arhaične elemente v sodobnih družbah in teorija diskontinuitete, ki trdi, da so antični ljudje bili tako drugačni od sodobnega človeka, da je kakršna koli primerjava nemogoča in je zato napačna. Kakšno pot bi po vašem mnenju moral iti nekdo, ki bi se lotil preučevanja antike? Marcel Detienne v uvodu v svojo knjigo *Dionysos mis à mort* pravi, da Grki niso bili Drugi?

SLAPŠAK: Vprašanje je po mojem mnenju potrebno postaviti drugače, in sicer ne »kdo so bili Grki«, ampak »kdo sem jaz«. Ko veste, kdo ste, potem lahko poskušate prebrati Grke. Iz tega osnovnega izhodišča »kdo sem jaz« izhaja, kako berete katero koli delo. Vzemimo primer: vprašam se, kdo sem jaz – sem ženska in ukvarjam se z antičnimi ženskami. Kaj mene povezuje z antičnimi ženskami? Ne to, da so one bile ženske, ampak da se v kulturo vpisujemo kot ženske, ne kot spol

SUNČIČ: Ali bi potem rekli, da o kontinuiteti v imaginariju in tudi v praktikah lahko govorimo, na splošno z mentalitetami, kar je v nasprotju z nekaterimi osnovnimi predpostavkami francoske antropološke šole?

SLAPŠAK: Pri preučevanju antike, predvsem Grčije, je izredno pomembna točka ločitve med zahodno in vzhodno intelektualno tradicijo, saj se izkaže, da je lokalno znanje veliko bolj zapleteno, kot se zdi na prvi pogled. Zahod zahteva od Balkancev, da odgovarjajo njihovi predstavi o Balkanu, in sicer da so enostavni in kaotični, da so kolonizirani tako, kot je treba. Zaradi tega nastajajo celotni nizi stereotipov, kjer Grke (ki so tudi Balkanci) zaradi pomembne vloge v konstrukciji zahodno-evropske identitete in modela demokracije postavljajo na posebno mesto, češ oni ne morejo biti takšni, ker imajo tako slavno in pomembno preteklost. Vendar Grčija spada na Balkan in pozna povsem

po naravi, ampak kot spol, vpisan v kulturo. Vendar je takšen princip nevaren, če padete v stereotipe, zato temu vprašanju sledi vprašanje »kateri so moji predsodki?« Nadalje kontekstualiziram predsodke, iz krščanskega do socialističnega, prek recimo balkanskih, vse do osnovnih vprašanj. V zadnjih letih si pri tem postavljam tudi vprašanje kontinuitete in diskontinuitete: pri tem se je potrebno obvarovati predvsem romantičnih predstav o kontinuiteti.

drugačne modele, kot sta na primer anglo-ameriški ali evropski kontinentalni: na Balkanu lahko opazujemo sledi antičnih antropoloških vzorcev v vsakdanjih ritualih življenja sodobnih ljudi. Kolonizacija preteklosti je redko predmet refleksije in ker je ne teoretiziramo, ne prihaja do napredka v preučevanju antike s tega pomembnega zornega kota. Francoska antropološka šola na nek način uničuje idejo o kontinuiteti, po drugi strani pa bi morda, če tej šoli sledimo, na Balkanu uničevali idejo o diskontinuiteti, ki je povezana s kolonialnimi idejami. Pri tem bi našli kontinuitete, ki se povsem razlikujejo od evropskih predstav o kontinuiteti. Gre namreč za kontinuiteto

SLAPŠAK: One has to formulate this question differently: not "*Who were the Greeks?*" but "*Who am I?*". Once you know who you are, you can try reading the Greeks. This fundamental "*Who am I?*" starting point determines the way as to how I am going to read any kind of text. For instance: I ask myself who I am – I am a woman studying Antiquity women. What is the connection between me and the women of Antiquity? Not the fact that they were women, but the fact that we inscribe ourselves in the culture as women, not as a

natural gender, but as a gender inscribed in the culture. But such a principle can be dangerous and can lead to stereotyping. For this reason, the first question must be followed by the second one: "*What is my prejudice?*". Then, I must contextualize prejudice: from Christian to socialist, Balkanian, for instance, down to the very basic questions. In the recent years, I have been also considering the question of continuity and discontinuity. But in doing so, one must guard oneself from the romantic concepts of continuity.

SUNČIČ: **Would you say, then, that in general we could speak of continuity in the imaginary as well as practices by terms of mentalities, such understanding being in conflict with some of the fundamental suppositions of the French anthropological school?**

SLAPŠAK: When studying Antiquity, especially Greece, it is of extreme importance to distinguish between the Western and the Eastern intellectual traditions, because it eventually turns out that the local knowledge is much more complex as it would seem at a first glance. The West demands from the Balkanians to comply with its idea of the Balkans, which determines the Balkanians as simple, chaotic and justifiably colonized. Such an understanding triggers a whole series of stereotypes which elevate the Greeks (who are also Balkanians), due to their vital role in the construction of the Western European identity and the democratic model, to a privileged place by separating them from the Balkanians on the grounds of their illustrious and important past. Nevertheless, Greece is a part of the Balkans and is familiar with models that are completely different from the Anglo-American or the European-Continental model: in the Balkans, one can find traces of Antiquity's anthropological patterns in everyday rituals of modern men. The colonization of the past is rarely a subject of reflexion. And since we do not theorize it, there is no progress in Antiquity studies from this, important, point of view.

The French anthropological school destroys in a way the idea of continuity, while on the other hand, perhaps, if applying the French school in the Balkans, we would be destroying the idea of discontinuity, which is inter-related with colonial ideas. One would encounter ideas that are completely different from the European perception of continuity. It is a question of continuity of the colonized and the competence that must be addressed to anthropologists who advocate the idea of discontinuity. It is true that the Balkan continuity is not instantly apparent, but we are offered a model for reflexion, which makes the solving of theoretical dilemmas possible.

The competence is by all means of decisive importance because it has to be inter-related also with the local competence. When considering the Balkans' extremely conservative local competence, we should know that it could serve us as the model of the imagination of the colonized. Several American female theoreticians define "native knowledge" as the competence with no "external" authority. The concept of "native knowledge" is of vital importance for the critical research of the distant past.

koloniziranega in za vprašanje kompetence, ki ga moramo nasloviti na antropologe, ki zagovarjajo idejo diskontinuitete. Seveda ne morejo takoj videti balkanske kontinuitete, vendar nam ponujajo model premišljevanja, ki nam omogoča reševanja teoretskih dilem.

Kompetenca je vsekakor ključnega pomena, mora namreč biti povezana tudi z

lokalno kompetenco. Če govorimo o Balkanu, kjer je lokalna kompetenca izredno konservativna, nam lahko to koristi za model imaginacije koloniziranega. Nekateri ameriške teoretičarke definirajo *native knowledge* kot kompetenco brez »zunanje« avtoritete. *Native knowledge* koncept je nujno potreben za kritično raziskovanje daljne preteklosti.

SUNČIČ: Kakšni so vaši napotki glede uporabe teoretskih konceptov pri preučevanju antike v novem tisočletju? Kakšna je vaša vizija teorije?

SLAPŠAK: Obstajajo »notranji« in »zunanji« koncepti - pogled koloniziranega in kolonizatorja - ob tem se srečujemo tudi z avto-cenzuro. Koncept balkanologije, ki temelji na ideji kontinuitete od antike do danes, so zasnovali raziskovalci med 1. in 2. svetovno vojno v reviji *Revue internationale des études Balkaniques* (RIEB). Žal so njihove ideje izvenele v prazno, predvsem zaradi povojnega stika s komunizmom, v 90. letih pa so se soočale s problematiko nacionalizmov. Koncept balkanologije pa temelji na preučevanju multi-kulturalnosti in sožitja različnih kulturnih vzorcev na geografskem področju, ki ga imenujemo Balkan. Balkanologija ne določa niti časovne niti geografske meje med Balkanom, Apeninskim polotokom, severno Afriko in Malo Azijo. Osnovni fenomen pa je mešanje jezikov in kultur, kar je izredno zanimivo za preučevanje. V tem vidim možnost, da se francoskim kolegom pokažejo nekatere nove dimenzije raziskovanja antike s pomočjo teoretskih modelov, ki so jih razvili.

V tem smislu je polje branja antike povsem odprto in tako lahko pervertiramo pojem

klasično, ki naj ne bi pomeni klasično kot vrednote, ki obstajajo, ampak kot vrednota, ki jo iščemo. To je premik, ki se je po mojem mnenju zgodil od 70. let naprej. Moja vizija antike v 21. stoletju pa je predvsem povezana z idejo, ki je doslej še nismo produktivno raziskali, to je sposobnost virtualizacije, ki so jo Grki in ostali antični narodi imeli, saj so v mitologiji imeli ogromno virtualnih bitij, ki so bila sestavljena iz elementov znanih živih bitij - živali ali ljudi. Ta fantastična bitja so v antiki bila rezultat kombiniranja delov, virtualizacije, status »realnosti« je bil enako vprašljiv kot je danes - izziv razumevanja antike pa se poveča skupaj z našim tehničnim napredkom. Mislim, da bomo lahko šele zdaj razumeli grško mitologijo oziroma naracije, ki vsebujejo fantastična bitja. Tako je, kar se tiče slik. Glede besedil sem prepričana, da korozivnost antične intelektualne radovednosti še vedno lahko pripomore pri subvertiranju, izpraševanju in kritiziranju sodobnega sveta v stoletju, ki se je začelo na tako grozovit način.

Pogovarjala se je **Maja Sunčič**
(Intervju je bil narejen novembra 2001)

SUNČIČ: What are your instructions on the application of theoretical concepts to Antiquity studies in the new millennium? What is your vision of the theory?

SLAPŠAK: There are “internal” and “external” concepts – the perception of the colonized and the perception of the colonizer –, occasionally accompanied by auto-censorship. The concept of Balkanology that is based on the idea of continuity from Antiquity to present day, was conceived by the researchers between the two World Wars and published in the *Revue internationale des études Balkaniques* (RIEB). Unfortunately, their ideas passed by unnoticed, mostly because of the post-war contact with communism, while in the 1990s, they were confronted with the problem of nationalisms. The concept of Balkanology reposes upon the research of multi-culturality and symbiosis of different cultural patterns in the geographical area known as the Balkans. Balkanology does not determine neither temporal nor geographical boundaries between the Balkans, the Apennine Peninsula, North Africa and Asia Minor. The basic phenomenon is the blending of languages and cultures, which constitutes an extremely interesting research. I see a possibility here for the French colleagues to discover new dimensions of Antiquity research with the aid of theoretical models conceived by them.

In this sense, the field of reading Antiquity is completely open, which allows us to pervert the concept of “the Classical” that should not define “the Classical” in terms of the existing values but as a value that we are searching

for. This shift occurred, in my opinion, in the beginning of the 1970s. My vision of Antiquity in the 21st century is primarily related to the idea that so far has not been productively researched. I am speaking of the ability to virtualize, which was the characteristic of the Greeks as well as other Antique nations. Their mythology is full of virtual creatures composed of elements of known living creatures – animals or humans. Such fantastic creatures were the result of the combination of parts, the virtualization. As well as today, the status of “reality” was also questionable then – the challenge of Antiquity research rises in proportion with the technical progress. I believe that only today we will be able to comprehend the Greek mythology or the narration containing fantastic creatures. This applies to paintings. As for the texts, I am convinced that the corrosivity of Antiquity’s intellectual curiosity can still contribute to subverting, interrogating and criticizing of the modern world in a century that began in such a horrifying way.

Interview conducted by **Maja Sunčič**

(Realized in November 2001)

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