

ART
RESISTANCE, SUBVERSION, MADNESS
UMETNOST: ODPORNIŠTVO, SUBVERZIJA, NOROST

MONITOR ZSA

31/32

VOL. XI / No 1.2, 2009

ART
RESISTANCE, SUBVERSION, MADNESS
UMETNOST: ODPORNIŠTVO, SUBVERZIJA, NOROST

POLONA TRATNIK (ED.)

CIP - Kataložni zapis o publikaciji
Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica, Ljubljana

7.01:130.2(082)

111.852(082)

ART : resistance, subversion, madness = Umetnost : odporništvu,
subverzija, norost / Polona Tratnik (ed.). - Koper : Univerza na
Primorskem, Znanstveno-raziskovalno središče, Založba Annales,
2009. - (Monitor ZSA : revija za zgodovinsko, socialno in druge
antropologije, ISSN 1854-0376 ; vol. 11, no. 1-2)

ISBN 978-961-6328-73-9

1. Vzp. stv. nasl. 2. Tratnik, Polona
245065472


ANNALES
KOPER, 2009

MONITOR ZSA – REVIIJA ZA ZGODOVINSKO, SOCIALNO IN DRUGE ANTROPOLOGIJE

RIVISTA DI ANTROPOLOGIA STORICA, SOCIALE E ALTRE ANTROPOLOGIE

REVUE DES ANTHROPOLOGIES HISTORIQUE, SOCIALE ET AUTRES

REVIEW OF HISTORICAL, SOCIAL AND OTHER ANTHROPOLOGIES

REVISTA DE ANTROPOLOGÍAS HISTÓRICA, SOCIAL Y OTRAS

ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR HISTORISCHE, SOZIALE UND ANDERE ANTHROPOLOGIEN

IZDAJATELJ REVIIJE / EDITORE DELLA RIVISTA / ÉDITEUR DE LA REVUE / PUBLISHER OF THE REVIEW:

Univerza na Primorskem, Znanstveno-raziskovalno središče Koper, Založba Annales

Garibaldijeva 1, SI-6000 Koper-Capodistria

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ISSN: 1854-0376

ISBN 978-961-6328-73-9

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TISK / STAMPATO DA / IMPRIMÉ PAR / PRINTED BY:

Collegium graphicum d. o. o., Štepanjska cesta 11b, Ljubljana

SUBVENCIJA / SOVVENZIONE / SUBVENTION PAR / SUBVENTION BY:

Javna agencija za raziskovalno dejavnost RS,

Slovensko društvo za estetiko

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**CRITICAL RESISTANCE
UNDER THE CONDITIONS
OF GLOBAL CAPITALISM**

Polona Tratnik

NOTES ON CONTEMPORARY ART: CRITICAL RESISTANCE AND ACTIVIST APPROACHES

Introduction: contemporary tactics of resistance

If avant-gardes of the 20th century could be understood as a part of modern emancipatory plan, today the teleological version of modernity (as Marx and other left-Hegelians took it after Hegel) doesn't seem to correspond to the contemporary world and knowledge; the left-Hegelian calls for complete change, which would bring purifying results, are today acknowledged rather as utopian demands. However the question could be raised, whether there are any similar tendencies to modern or romantic avant-gardes in today's culture? What kind is contemporary critical resistance in cultural or artistic practices and what is its function?

Artistic and cultural practices that contain critical resistance, today follow the logic of information society and thus assert their voice in two manners: on one hand in the mycelium each receiver could be a potential broadcaster or each user a potential distributor, on the other hand in more radical approaches the cultural activists try to take over (to occupy) the broadcasting positions. Cultural activists aim to hold the information, to establish a matrix, within which they manipulate information.

In the postmodern era the power is significantly dispersed, the field of power is nomadic, decentralized and deterritorialised.¹ Therefore also the tactics of resistance have to be of a new kind. An artistic collective NSK has, for example, established a NSK state, of which one can become a citizen and get a passport. Contemporary critical projects and resistance practices originate in the legacy of the artistic historical avant-gardes² and in critical theory (Frankfurt school). They often use such strategies to provoke shock and scandal, and to perform riots. Yet, these practices correspond to social or cultural state of our time, where information is one of the privileged concepts.

Critical resistance today detects noise in informational systems and it as well performs noise on its own. Noise (as defined by mathematical theory of communication: 1948, C. E. Shannon, the father of the cyber age) brings mistakes, uncertainty, loses and incapability into the system. According to the informational theory, noise is at least as strong as the signal itself, or even stronger, and cannot be ignored.

Critical resistance and activist approaches in today's culture are important because they stimulate critical thought in global public. With critical deconstruction of the premises

1 As it is for example observed by Negri and Hardt. See: Antonio Negri, Michael Hardt, *Empire*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2000.

2 As they were most notably defined by Bürger. See: Peter Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974.

of contemporary society we can comprehend, how the production of (hegemonic) signals and noise functions.

In a similar way Noam Chomsky sees the role of the intellectuals – for him they are those, who can uncover the lies of the governments, analyse the actions in regard to their causes and motives, and they can also show their often hidden intentions. The power they have originates from a political power, the access to information and freedom of speech – the responsibility of intellectuals is in telling the truth and revealing the lies.³

Cultural field and its autonomy

Contemporary art is spreading from a closed world of art into the field of culture, thus today art is discussed as culture and an artist understood as a cultural worker. The opposite could be observed as well: the entering of social issues into the field of “art”.

Besides, as stated by Pierre Bourdieu, there are “all kinds of structural and functional homologies between the social field as a whole, or the political field, and the literary field, which, like them, has its dominated and its dominators, its conservatives and its avant-garde, its subversive struggles and its mechanisms of reproduction, the fact remains that each of these phenomena assumes within it an altogether specific form.”⁴ Like the political field, or any other field, the cultural field is a force-field, “which aim at transforming or maintaining the established relation forces: each of the agents commits the force (capital) that he has acquired through previous struggles.”⁵ But even if cultural field has a certain autonomy and intellectuals occupy special place within the dominant class, still “The fields of cultural production occupy a dominated position in the field of power,” thus “artists and writers, and more generally intellectuals, are a dominated fraction of the dominant class,”⁶

Contemporary artistic practices are also social-cultural practices, where it is irrelevant, whether we call them art or not. Art in contemporary society is still a relatively open or free locus (in comparison with other fields), it also allows performing more radical approaches, which are usually tolerated exactly because they are understood as artistic practices. However precisely this freedom pushes a radical voice into the field of artistic autonomy (as into socially separated field), which is understood as a socially controlled deviation sphere (a kind of “zoo”). For this reason a segregation of practices, which appear as artistic, takes place – each voice from this sphere is beforehand sentenced to minimal relevance and seriousness. Some attempts thus aim to exceed any limitation and control (therefore they could also be socially criminalized, thus their authors hide with nomadism, with ambiguous presentations and identities etc.).

3 Noam Chomsky, “Odgovornost intelektualcev”, in: *Somrak demokracije*, Ljubljana: Studia humanitatis, 1997, pp. 9–10.

4 Pierre Bourdieu, “The Intellectual Field: A World Apart”, in: *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*, MA, Oxford, Victoria: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2005, pp. 11–12.

5 Ibid., p. 13.

6 Ibid., p. 15.

Art as a political project: avant-gardes and a better today

Left-Hegelian philosophers with their critical philosophy stimulated the tendency towards change (Ludwig Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer, Karl Marx). The concept of avant-garde (which originates from military use; in politics and culture it stimulates progressive and radical accessions) was introduced to revolutionary thought in the 19th century and is a significantly modern concept. It could also be understood as the more radical version of modernity.⁷ It has to be emphasized that there is no avant-garde without an idea of progression to a certain aim or movement on the basis of a certain criterion (without the concept of a telos). Avant-garde is here in front of such movement, therefore it only makes sense if art moves in certain direction. In the moment, when we accept such cognition, we confirm teleological comprehension of art and history in general.⁸

Nicolas Bourriaud believes, that the avant-gardes of the twentieth century (from Dadaism to the Situationist International) could be understood within the tradition of the modern emancipation plan, as a part of modern project in “changing culture, attitudes and mentalities, and individual and social living conditions.”⁹ In his view, art was yesterday “intended to prepare and announce a future world: today it is modelling possible universes.”¹⁰ Art (of the nineties and later) has in Bourriaud’s view a historical chance, which he sums up in few words: “*learning to inhabit the world in a better way*, instead of trying to construct it based on a preconceived idea of historical evolution. Otherwise put, the role of artworks is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real, whatever the scale chosen by the artist.”¹¹ For Bourriaud nowadays, “modernity extends into the practices of cultural do-it-yourself and recycling, into the invention of the everyday and the development of time lived, which are not Messianistic utopias and the formal ‘novelties’ that typified modernity yesterday. There is nothing more absurd either than the assertion that contemporary art does not involve any political project, or than the claim that its subversive aspects are not based on any theoretical terrain.”¹²

Hybridization and transdisciplinarity

If on one hand contemporary art sets itself in contrast to modernist art, it on the other derives from the legacy of artistic historical avant-gardes. However in contrast to them contemporary artistic practices function more systematically and organized. In short,

7 See for example Calinescu’s writing about avant-gardes. In: Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity*, Duke University Press, Durham: 1987.

8 See: Polona Tratnik, *Konec umetnosti: genealogija modernega diskurza: od Hegla k Dantu*, Koper: Univerza na Primorskem, Znanstveno-raziskovalno središče, Založba Annales, Zgodovinsko društvo za južno Primorsko, 2009.

9 Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, Dijon: Les presses du reel, 2002, p. 12.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid., p. 14.

the nature of contemporary art is fundamentally related to the characteristics of contemporary culture and society – in contrast to modern culture a great role here plays the fact that today's society is informational and that the individual today functions within specific communication vehicles – it is not only the fact that we use internet and other informational systems, within which we function on the basis of inter-activity, but we also travel a lot, switch cultures and worlds instantaneously, and we also take elements from here and there and mix them, on account of this, it could be claimed, we are cultural hybrids.¹³

Principles of hybridization are already significant for the phenomena of postmodernism in art, when media begun to mix and the so-called nomadism through the history of art appears. However, with the principles of montage, collage and assemblage hybridization in art is already present in artistic historical avant-gardes. But in the recent theoretical essays about contemporary art the principle of hybridization is often even strongly emphasized. That is well harmonized with the tendencies in economical and social structuring in postmodern society. Also Julian Stallabrass notices praising of the “advantages of mixing cultures and hybridization” in the world of art, for which he believes is in fact a politically liberal side of speaking about globalization, breaking the cultural borders, which should accompany the supposed breaking of trading borders and consequently magnificent intertwinement of cultural influences, yet according to Stallabrass, this reflects a general vision of this accession – dreams of a global capital.

Furthermore, one of the basic principles in today's art is interdisciplinarity or transdisciplinarity. Contemporary artist must be ready to learn any skills or use any methods and tools, which are needed for the project or in the discourse he/she is entering or developing. In the case when the discourse and techniques are very sophisticated and it would be senseless that one artist would do everything and would be able to realize everything as a professional, the artistic project would rather include various professionals from different fields – for example some natural scientists. The working conditions and spaces could therefore be adapted, or non-artistic environments could be used very often – an artist could therefore work in a laboratory (Bio Artists cooperate with natural scientists and work in laboratories using scientific tools and techniques)¹⁴ or make a performance in an airplane (as for example Dragan Živadinov did in *Noordung Zero Gravity*). Artist could develop an innovative autonomous working space/research laboratory/living space/artistic installation (as did Marko Peljhan with his *Macrolab*¹⁵). In such a manner artistic practices are entering

13 As this has been described by Welsch as well contemporary cultures have in his view changed so much, that he has therefore introduced a whole new concept of culture, namely the concept of transculturality. In his view contemporary cultures “no longer have the insinuated form of homogeneity and separateness, but are characterized through to the core by mixing and permeations.” Wolfgang Welsch, “Transculturality: the Changing Form of Cultures Today”, in: *Filozofski vestnik*, vol. 22, nr. 2, 2001, p. 67.

14 See: Polona Tratnik, “(Bio)umetnost in manipuliranje z živim”, in: *Annales – Series historia et sociologia*, vol. 18, nr. 2, 2008.

15 See: <<http://makrolab.ljudmila.org/>> 28. 1. 2008. Peljhan's *Macrolab* project (1997–) started with the purpose of establishing an independent and self sufficient performance and research structure in isolation. *Makrolab* is focused on telecommunications, climate change and migration patterns. The primary thesis is that a unified theory for these fields

actual scientific, social, anthropological, political, philosophical or cultural discourse and thus become active critical participants in it.

Decentralization, nomadism and resistance strategies

The fields of social world are relatively autonomous, however, they also intertwine. Power is today here and there articulated in instant, hardly recognizable forms, still it is basically significantly dispersed and nomadic. Therefore it is also difficult to attack certain visible and solid centres, where power would be centralized and concentrated and which would exist in their fullness and integrity. From this perspective nowadays it is actually impossible to strive for revolutionary aims, which would bring redemptive purifying results.

The turn from modernity to postmodernity, which could in fact be understood as the shift from industrialization to informatization, and which is also marked by the shift from fordism to postfordism, which as well indicates the shift from production to consumption or reception. There is a strong accompanying tendency to be observed in contemporary culture, namely to interactivity or discursivity. Contemporary art practices are not in fact obliged to producing artefacts (on account of that it is also not relevant to speak of a “work of art as an aesthetic object” anymore). Contemporary art “work” is rather an “open work”, which is openly structured – similarly as conceptualized by Umberto Eco¹⁶ – but with even greater tendency to be a “work in process” or “work in progress”, a form of a discourse or an experiment. Rather than foreseeing the results and complete control here we meet the principle of experimentation, where a certain level of unpredictability is to be recon with. It could be claimed that these features are related to contemporary consciousness that there is no absolute way to truth and there is no universal knowledge, but we rather exist in a sphere of infinite unfolding and intertwinement of the horizons of interpretation or understanding (as claimed already by Hans-Georg Gadamer)¹⁷.

In democratic modes of communication, or in the model of a mycelium, an “observer” has transformed from a passive receiver to an active “user” of an “application”. In this case a project uses democratic method – the user is co-constructing the arising meanings.

will emerge from the project's isolation strategies, a method combining conscious physical, geographical, and political isolation on one hand, and a communications, close proximity and sensor/processor saturation, coupled with energy and biospheric autonomy on the other. *Makrolab* is envisioned not only as an architectural and engineering development process, but also as a highly networked sensor/processor and data aggregation and reflection system, with distinct mapping capabilities and future capability projections (such as the use of sensor carrying UAV's, autonomous robotic probes and full spectrum communications capabilities). On the social level, it provides a living and working environment of close proximity, shared knowledge and responsibility among the crew members. See also: Inke Arns, *Avantgarda v vzvratnem ogledalu: sprememba paradigme recepcije avantgarde v (nekdanji) Jugoslaviji in Rusiji od 80. let do danes*, Ljubljana: Maska (Transformacije), 2006.

16 Umberto Eco, *Opera Aperta* (1962). But rather see the later, revised version: Umberto Eco, *The open work*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989.

17 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. Tübingen: Mohr Verlag, 1960.

If an artistic critique is to be performed with using such model, it would produce a kind of referendum mode. Still, such practice manages information, for which it has created a matrix, which limits the discourse.

However the critical resistance practices in art and culture could also be more radically socially or politically engaged – they could manipulate information more directly. In the case of oligopoly net model (significant for broadcasting systems) there are certain centres for distribution of information, which are a sort of centres of power. Several activist approaches are focused on centres of media control or economic and political power. In such a manner activists practice parasitism, usurpation and subversion of dominant systems and related ideologies. Critical resistance practices question and manipulate symbolic, political or other kinds of social power.¹⁸

Critical, resistance and political strategies are of a great importance for contemporary art. Igor Zabel enumerated some of these strategies, which could be used in art. These are: (1.) revealing the overlooked and hidden mechanisms, which power uses for social surveillance and discipline, (2.) detecting alternative uses of existing mechanisms and technologies, (3.) looking for and developing alternative models of economical, social and political manipulation and (4.) searching for possibilities for parallel (sometimes only temporary) communities and social groups.¹⁹ Zabel also ascertains two key concepts of resistance strategies: autonomy (in the sense of “temporary autonomous zones” as explained by Hakim Bey) and invention. In the case of the first parallel spaces are created, which enable avoidance of dominant social systems, in the case of the latter art invents new instruments or uses, which enable this autonomy – as for example in the case of Marko Peljhan’s practice, who calls such strategies “the strategies of minimal resistance”. Peljhan is pointing to the fact that resistance art, even if it is on a large scale, is only a little point of resistance in comparison to large systems of economical, military and political power. Art has an ability to indicate the hidden relations of power and surveillance mechanisms of social domination, and can even show possible alternatives to these relations and models.

18 Just to mention some examples. Luther Blissett strives to sabotage centres of media control and power with actions of cultural guerrilla, with which he causes panic in various media. Brian Springer is warning about possibility of electronic resistance and guerrilla action with the use of satellite technology – with standard consumer satellite TV system he is exploiting a possibility to include an open TV channels and intercepts raw video material. Etoy is an artistic collective, which brings to light the possibilities of manipulation of international database network. smmark makes sabotages of corporative products – they for example intervened into computer video game and entered homoerotic contents into it, exchanged the voices of the toys etc. The group Monochrom warns about interference in individual’s privacy with global information system, network of cameras CCTV (Closed Circuit TV) in city and shopping centres and with other various electronic systems, with which enterprises carry out checking and control of the employees. A nice example of media activism is a project *Infocalypse Now!* by Sašo Sedlaček (2007), which is an initiative for establishment an autonomous media zone on 700 MHz. An initiative for worldwide high frequency radio or internet network, *Insular Technologies*, coordinated by Marko Peljhan, is in many aspects similar to it. Art practices can be activist also in the means of infiltration into art system, by which they can manipulate the power relations within the art or cultural field. Such an example is the practice of the group 0100101110101101.org, which even has a vague identity. It counts on possibilities of internet manipulation to demonstrate the contradictions of everyday cultural system.

19 Igor Zabel, “Sodobna umetnost”, in: *Eseji I: o moderni in sodobni umetnosti*, pp. 191–192.

In the essay “Nomadic power and cultural resistance” Critical Art Ensemble (CAE), an art collective, shows, how power has started to flow from structured, present and centralized power to power, which is now absent, invisible and decentralized – what used to be resistance is now domination and vice versa. CAE also speaks of vectors of world power, which have now drawn back to virtuality. Holding on the surface of the flowing power for CAE does not necessarily mean to agree and cooperate. Political and cultural activists are in a clumsy situation; nevertheless, they can produce disturbances.²⁰ Also for CAE the former strategies of subversion or hidden attack are questionable, since to know what we subvert means we suppose the oppression forces are unchangeable and that we are able to define and eliminate them.²¹ Today power appropriates subversive strategies. Fredric Jameson observed in the eighties that aesthetic production has “integrated into commodity production generally: the frantic economic urgency of producing fresh waves of ever more novel-seeming goods (from clothing to airplanes), at ever greater rates of turnover, now assigns an increasingly essential structural function and position to aesthetic innovation and experimentation.”²² But as CAE believes the merits should be acknowledged to those who resist. They are also convinced that the subversive act or product is however not appropriated as quickly as it is dictated by bourgeois aesthetics of efficiency.²³ Contemporary society is specific for its nomadic power, as they observe. The field of power is dispersed, it has no location and no steady point of fixation and it presents itself as a spectacle. A shift could be noticed from archaic space to electronic web. Although technology unites the dispersed field of power and the machinery of sight, which are both part of global empire, the field of power is now specifically nomadic – in such a panoptical space-prison (according to Michel Foucault)²⁴ the location of resistance is not necessarily to be defined, therefore the power of nomads is the strongest, when they do not need to occupy the defence position.²⁵

For elite it is important to be invisible, as it was observed already in the 50-ies by C. Wright Mills.²⁶ Contemporary elite displaces itself from centralized urban regions to decentralized and deterritorial cyber space. Now, how is it possible to critically estimate the subject, which we cannot locate, investigate and even not see, asks CAE. The revolutionary appeals (for example of the Situationists) are a dead strategy because they demand unpractical unity and in the history attempts that were gaining the property with occupation had proven to have sad results. In postmodern times of nomadic power the architectural monuments of power are empty and safe places, which only reveal

20 Critical Art Ensemble, *Elektronska državljanska nepokorščina*, Ljubljana: Založba / *cf., Sorosov center za sodobne umetnosti (Žepna zbirka), 1999, p. 6.

21 Ibid., p. 7.

22 Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, pp. 4–5.

23 Critical Art Ensemble, *Elektronska državljanska nepokorščina*, p. 7.

24 Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: naissance de la prison*, Paris: Gallimard, 1987.

25 Critical Art Ensemble, *Elektronska državljanska nepokorščina*, pp. 10–11.

26 See: Charles Wright Mills, *The Power of Elite*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

the traces of power. It is possible to occupy these spaces (bunkers), but in the best case such occupation would only be a disturbance, which can always be made invisible with media manipulation.²⁷

To hack: activist approaches

Hacker culture means a computer underground, but it is also a significantly postmodern moment, which defines an era, in which the production changes from a stable, material, physical system to more fluid, quick system of production of knowledge, observes Douglas Thomas.²⁸ Popular stereotypes about hackers express public fears of informational age. Hackers are also being criminalized. If protestant values are money, work, optimality, flexibility, stability and responsibility about the results, hackers present an alternative spirit of informatization, they practice a contra-ethic to the dominant one: they strive for social openness and complete freedom of speech, as observed by Pekka Himanen, who put stress on their *netnic*, which is defined by the values of activity and caring. "Activity in this context involves complete freedom of expression in action, privacy to protect the creation of an individual lifestyle, and a rejection of passive receptiveness in favour of active pursuit of one's passion. *Caring* here means concern for others as an end in itself and a desire to rid the network society of the survival mentality that so easily results from its logic."²⁹ Still, hacker ethics is not obligatory for all hackers, since hackers do not form a collective, he also believes.

In broader public hackers are a synonym for those who strive for free availability of web information and knowledge, based on them.³⁰ Contemporary world is marked with globalization and transculturality or multiculturalism, imperialism and terrorism, but also with new scientific and technological appearance, therefore in the reality of the first years of 21st century the questions of social power, social organization, (intellectual) property, state and political antagonisms and resistance are also being redefined, as Janez Strehovec observes. With new technologies, which enable global communication and activity in real time, new forms of domination, hegemony and segregation, as well as also resistance are taking shape.³¹ Within the activities that conceptually base on different forms of self-organization of subjects that do not agree, hackers have an important place. Hackers strive for free access to information, they hack firewalls of multinational and national institutions, yet their principal aim is not the content of the information, but uncovering the manners, or, the means of access to information, which is itself usually not really interesting for them.³²

27 Critical Art Ensemble, *Elektronska državljanska nepokorščina*, p. 18.

28 See: Douglas Thomas, *Hacker Culture*, Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

29 Pekka Himanen, *The Hacker Ethic And The Spirit Of The Information Age*, New York, Toronto: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2001, pp. 140–141.

30 Janez Strehovec, "Hekati ali imeti, hekati in imeti; razredni antagonizem v času spletne ekonomije, izobraževanja in kulture", in: McKenzie Wark, *Hekerski manifest*, Ljubljana: Maska, 2008, p. 244.

31 Ibid., pp. 241–242.

32 Ibid., p. 243. See also: Douglas Thomas, *Hacker Culture*, p. 67.

Early hackers belong to the underground and they hoped for a possibility of free access to information, but the hackers of the nineties already met the world, which is overloaded with masses of commodified information – now their activity gets also cultural and activist character.³³ Hackers understand themselves as a kind of avant-garde, they also write manifestoes, and the reference to Marx and the communist manifesto is often obvious in the case of McKenzie Wark's *Hacker Manifesto* (2004). Wark also considers the question of class and proletarian movement and the related transformation of private property into state monopoly and asks if there is a kind of class today that can open the question of property in another way.³⁴ Wark's manifesto is concerned with nonmaterial work and nonmaterial products, which are characteristic for contemporary information society, where the former industrial production is replaced with services with great emphasis on intellectual innovations.³⁵ As Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt (similar also Jeremy Rifkin, Paolo Virno and others) observe, in the last years of twentieth century nonmaterial work appears instead of industrial work, that is work, which produces nonmaterial products as knowledge, information, communication, relation and emotion response.³⁶ Wark believes that laws which protected the creators of intellectual services as for example copyright and patent recently protect above all the interests of corporative proprietors of intellectual property. Therefore Wark named the actual class of the exploited producers of intellectual services the hacker's class. What is significant for the contemporary situation according to Wark is that the formal traditional propriety relation is not relevant any more, but now we have a situation that originates from media basis of work with information, with their transmission and broadcasting. And this is a relation that is oriented to controlling mobile canals and currents of transmission of information e. a. vectors (from telegraph to broadband internet) – therefore Wark calls new class of exploiters vectorial.³⁷

Wark's Manifesto is reviving materialist philosophical tradition. But it even has pretensions as an activist intervention, what means that it wants to launch wider mobilization of readers and their engagement for abolishing the present state, where those, which are exploited are those who work innovatory in the world of abstraction.³⁸ This Manifesto also has obvious avant-garde ambitions, similar to those to which Walter Benjamin agitated, who believed namely that art attacks with most difficulty, but most significantly, when it is able to mobilize masses.³⁹ The term hack is by Wark understood widely, it is actually

33 Janez Strehovec, "Hekati ali imeti, hekati in imeti; razredni antagonizem v času spletne ekonomije, izobraževanja in kulture", p. 243.

34 McKenzie Wark, *Hekerski manifest*, p. 23.

35 Janez Strehovec, "Hekati ali imeti, hekati in imeti; razredni antagonizem v času spletne ekonomije, izobraževanja in kulture", p. 246.

36 Antonio Negri, Michael Hardt, *Multituda. Vojna in demokracija v času imperija*, Ljubljana: Študentska založba, 2005, p. 112.

37 McKenzie Wark, *Hekerski manifest*, p. 247.

38 Janez Strehovec, "Hekati ali imeti, hekati in imeti; razredni antagonizem v času spletne ekonomije, izobraževanja in kulture", p. 249.

39 Walter Benjamin, "Umetnina v času, ko jo je mogoče tehnično reproducirati", in: Izbrani spisi, Ljubljana: SH Zavod za založniško dejavnost, 1998, p. 174.

a synonym for contemporary creative and innovatory activity (specially in the field of social e-services) as it includes jobs as programmers, musicians, writers, but also engineers, biologists and other natural scientists, which are specially included into the actual social-economical relations, as Strehovec observes.⁴⁰

Where power is related to web or cyber world, the resistance strategies have to be suitably adapted to such technological bases and these subjects have to have hardware and software knowledge. Group Critical Art Ensemble was one of the first that announced electronic civil disobedient in reaction to institutions of e-empire and cognitive capitalism. Also hacktivism as a form of cooperation between artistic activists and hackers traces such challenges and for example attacks the servers of multinational corporations and sit-ins.⁴¹

To reveal mechanisms of codification, to practice deconstruction and/or to produce disturbances

Some critics of contemporary art believe that between the self-image and the actual function of contemporary art there is a deep precipice, as art is managed and included in new world order and in such a manner serves the interests of neoliberal economy. Julian Stallabrass thus, for example, sees art as a "sphere of freedom" in tight relation to free market; both should be the factors, which collectively create the prevailing system and its supplement.⁴² Although the critics of this kind bring to light several important comprehensions about functioning of contemporary art system, such view is yet too simplified and therefore it distorts the critical and resistant mechanisms that could be traced in many practices of contemporary art (as for example in media activism or in usage of tactical media) in its opposition. Media(artistic)activist groups or individuals are resisting the passive attitude to actual social and political issues. With artistic experiments they critically reflect the use of technological innovation, institutions of political, economic, media or informational power, social control and interference into privacy etc. On the one hand they look for the cracks in dominant texts, which inevitably arise in complex relations and games with power in social space, and with such practicing they perform deconstruction. On the other hand from the contradictions or disruptive forces,⁴³ which they find in such hegemonic texts, they develop strategies of oppositional reading,⁴⁴ which lead to developing strategies of resistance to

40 Janez Strehovec, "Hekati ali imeti, hekati in imeti; razredni antagonizem v času spletne ekonomije, izobraževanja in kulture", p. 245.

41 Ibid., pp. 242–243.

42 Julian Stallabrass, *Sodobna umetnost. Zelo kratek uvod*, Ljubljana: Krtina, 2007, p. 13.

43 I borrow the term from John Fiske, who wrote about disruptive forces in television discourse, which is managed by several strategies yet it still contains many disruptive forces. See: John Fiske, "Televizijska kultura: branja poročil, bralci poročil", in: Breda Luthar, Vida Zei and Hanno Hardt (eds.), *Medijska kultura: kako brati medijske tekste*, Ljubljana: Študentska založba, 2004.

44 As Stuart Hall observes, when decoding television discourse, the reader has three options: to read it according to the dominant discourse (the dominant-hegemonic reading), to read it negotiationly or oppositionally. See: Stuart Hall, "Encoding, Decoding", in: Simon During (ed.), *The Cultural Studies Reader*, New York: Routledge, 1993.

dominant discourses. Therefore they are developing critical and resisting strategies to the existing seemingly natural patterns and ideologies, which are actually culturally and historically conditioned (that is to the so-called "everyday mythologies", as these were discussed by Roland Barthes)⁴⁵, and to everyday forms of social and political domination. Here of the great importance are the modes of codification, which mean to in-form and simultaneously erect forms, as Bourdieu writes in his essay "Codification".⁴⁶ Codification namely influences on things to be simple, clear and communicative⁴⁷ and is therefore tightly related to discipline and with normalization of practices.⁴⁸ Successful codification is thus in close relation to raising discourses as dominant, it is related to dominant ways of thinking, value systems and ideologies. Critical and resistant art is thus a field of struggle, where dominant discourses and their modes of codification are revealed, questioned and criticized. In such a manner art offers different views, transforms the existing values, meanings and codifications, deforms them or can even act as a kind of a virus. As a disturbance in a system such acting is important for establishing critical consciousness in wider public.

45 See: Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Pariz: Seuil, 1957.

46 Pierre Bourdieu, *Sociologija kot politika*, Ljubljana: Založba / *cf., 2003, p. 131.

47 Ibid., p. 133.

48 Ibid., p. 132.

Bojana Kunst
CRITICAL POTENTIALITY

Paolo Virno, theoretician and activist of the Italian movement *Autonomia* from the 1970s, underscored some of the characteristics of the role of artistic labour at the centre of contemporary activity in his book *A Grammar of the Multitude*. These include the fusion of labour and political action, where contemporary labour has adopted many characteristics that used to pertain to political practice: "Poesis has taken on numerous aspects of praxis,"⁴⁹ says Virno. This means that activity and labour itself adopt the characteristics that used to be the features of public activity, such as, for example, virtuosity and performing. Labour becomes an activity without a final goal, yet it nevertheless unceasingly demands the presence of the other. Therefore it makes sense only insofar as this activity can be heard and seen. Labour is today closely connected with cognitive qualities, with the performance of linguistic competences, and with the ways in which labour itself is understood in art practices. Here, the material practice of art confronts a certain important difference in the understanding of its materiality. That shift is the result of the contemporary understanding of life, which is progressively appropriated and regulated by global capital and the global economy. This change results in the fact that today life itself is closely connected with the materiality of economic processes. Not only the potentiality of nature is performed and privatised in advance, but at the same time also aesthetic and cognitive competences of intensities, energies and events are at the core of contemporary commodification and the economy of entertainment. Critical thought thus needs to re-discover a way to articulate the potentiality of processes and protocols of life that may bring about a change in the ontological place of art itself. It is then not a coincidence that Allan Kaprow, an artist ›specialised in life‹ par excellence, when writing *Afterthought* in 2002 as a comment on his famous *Notes on the Creating of A Total Art* (1958), concludes his text with the following paragraph: "But what is then everyday life? Life of any kind? Biological? Personal? Cultural? Political? I don't have an answer, certainly not for anyone else. But it is clear that this is a central question remaining from the *Environments and Happening* of 1958."⁵⁰ It is necessary to examine both the *poesis* as well as the *praxis* of art. Is it still possible to think artistic practice within the processes of appropriation of life as a unique potentiality?

Protocols

How to exert this present in which we are all increasingly dispersed and more and more confronted with the commercial desire to keep ourselves going as an efficient future totality? Is this the future of inventive and global capitalism, when even our past will no

49 Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude*, Los Angeles, New York: MIT Press, 2004, p. 50.

50 Allan Kaprow, "Afterthought", in: Geoffrey Hendricks (ed.), *Critical Mass, Happenings, Fluxus, Performance, Intermedia and Rutgers University 1958–1972*, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2003, p. 7.

longer be understood as a singular past, but as the fragmented history of the still non-efficient capital? The important question is not really the question of future, which has already been appropriated by the more powerful discourse of global capital. It is much more important to open up the questions of different temporalities and parallel possibilities, to open up potentialities of the real.

Precisely the necessity of reflecting on the processes that these changes have brought about in the material practice of art is, in my view, deeply inscribed in the ways we think about critical potentiality today. The material practice here is not understood as a materialistic awareness of historical and ideological discourses, but rather as a constant physical connecting of collaborative protocols of knowledge production, bodily experiences, and inhabitations. Instead of the deconstruction of linguistic and ideological operations and the disclosure of differences, the employment of contemporary protocols of collaboration allows for the possibility of creating virtual spaces in between. In these spaces in between it is not only the continual negotiation between national experience, community interests, cultural values, and particular histories that can be detected. In-between spaces are also inter-territorial spaces, in which connections among many different cultural, historical, and artistic experiences are at work. It is these virtual spaces in between that enable the different practices to be articulated at once both inside and outside. These spaces are thus also the spaces of many parallel temporalities, which can nevertheless efficiently sustain themselves together precisely because of the employment of formal protocols. One of the basic problems is therefore how to conceive of connections and networking among different initiatives of artistic practice as the affirmative process of creating a different public. In such a process, collaboration is not the result of adjustment and appropriation of models of success on the global cultural market. It is the result of the articulation of different energies, permanent activities, and a creation of events that are, however, not necessarily events of our common and singular temporality. What is in question is therefore the enactment of the platforms of actualization, the affirmation of different modes of activity, where art is at the centre of social, cultural, and political processes.

The way this enactment takes place can be described more concretely by a notion that Ana Vujanović, the editor of the Belgrade magazine *THK (Walking Theory)*, used for *Maska's* activities, which can also be employed for the description of critical potentiality. Vujanović described *Maska's* activities as a sort of hacking of the virtual, wherein she understands hacking as the opening up of closed zones with the intention to transform their procedures or protocols and to recognize the virtual as the unrealized potentiality of the real. With this notion the author wants to draw attention to the inevitable contingency of this kind of practice and to the multiplicity of its strategies, which position critical writing in the unstable processes of continual rearticulating and detecting, in the continual entering and withdrawing from performing different material practices. Paradoxically, it is

precisely such instability that allows for »the opening of the current state of affairs to its potentialities«. ⁵¹ I think this is also a proper description for for any other theoretical or artistic initiative that would like to deal with material practice. The virtual space in between is created with the perpetual multiplication of the relation between the actual and the virtual within each of the stated contexts and their potentialities. Any platform of knowledge has to open up the potentiality for the unrealised thought of the real exactly through its skilled use of different collaborative protocols.

Our thinking about the modes of collaboration, networking, and the collective ways for opening up the space for the material practices of thinking thus necessarily faces the very dilemma that the contemporary protocols and multiple connections of our contemporaneity suggest – namely the question how the criticality of the virtual space in between is articulated, where criticality itself can be briefly described also as the ability of traversing between inside and outside. Could this also be the way of resistance to a rather hopeless standpoint concerning the emptiness of contemporary protocols of collaboration, which undermine the critical possibilities of activity precisely through universality and totality of contemporary economic, business, and technical protocols? It seems that contemporary protocols open up the possibilities for an increasingly universal emptiness of the global language of collaboration, closely connected with economic market procedures as well as with subjectivity, which safely inhabits the networks of decentralized control. Such a perspective can also help us understand the disappointed acknowledgment of the normalization of subjectivity that we are supposedly facing at the beginning of the 21st century, and which can be augmented with the problematic status of theory in relation to the actualization of materiality. The very process of normalization, which takes place, at least in the West, under the maxim of universal economic, political, and democratic success, has in the past years at the same time also marginalized the critical processes of the public, the ways of thinking and acting differently, while it enacts the relation toward the other as a legitimate empty protocol of tolerance. It also influences the conception of artistic subjectivity itself, where, as Susan Buck-Morris states, “the artistic freedom exists in proportion with the artistic irrelevance.” ⁵² In other words, it seems that artistic and creative powers are today isolated from social effect and self-realisation by virtue of their normalization. Jouissance of the private and arbitrariness of everyday life seem to be at the centre of post-capitalist production. The normalization of artistic subjectivity discloses the exhaustion of subversive and transgressive modes which have become an intrinsic part of contemporary commodification. At the same time we can detect the problem with the commodified jouissance of the private, which has unfortunately lost the revolutionary potential in the commodified jouissance of global happiness. Today, we are all users of this kind of protocols and the fact that there are

51 Ana Vujanović, “Maskino hekiranje virtualnega”, in: Bojana Kunst, Petra Pogorevc (eds.), *Sodobne scenske umetnosti*, Maska, Ljubljana, p. 87.

52 Susan Buck-Morris, *Thinking Past Terror: Islamism and Critical Theory on the Left*, London: Verso, 2003, p. 69.

increasingly fewer opportunities for traditional oppositional activity, which is proving to be an entirely disenchanted political style typical of the 20th century, is not the only problem. Rather, the tender spot is the fact that it is difficult to develop a passion for the real and affirmative act within contemporary protocols or, as the French philosopher Alain Badiou writes: The 20th century closes with a theme of “security, the impossible subjective novelty and the comfort of repetition.”⁵³ Perhaps this is the very reason why – similar to viruses and disturbances – collapses of protocol are feared so greatly in the globally connected world, while, on the other hand, many projects (emerging from the field of media art and performance) indicate the potentiality of this kind of participation in protocols to open up different formal possibilities. The real question at stake is not anymore how to find the way out but rather how to tackle the overall normalization with different protocols of disobedience and intensification.

That issue is the reason for Alexander Galloway’s statement that protocols nevertheless ‘may present a possibility’.⁵⁴ They may do so precisely through their formal emptiness, through the way in which they directly influence the body. Galloway writes that the formation of the protocol is not to be understood as a marginal problem, for it no longer avails only for the description of a consensual procedure of agreeing upon the procedures of performance, where the procedure with the same meaning for all parties involved is formed content-wise by way of negotiation. Etymologically, the word **protocol** refers to a fly-leaf which was pasted to the beginning of the document, while throughout the history it also designates an introduction text which epitomizes key points of the diplomatic agreement. Protocol also delineates bodily behaviour within the networks of social and diplomatic etiquette, which is rigidly discursively and consensually defined: what is in question then is a certain kind of behaviour within linguistic conventions, where the body is rigorously submitted to language. Galloway brings to attention another important characteristic of contemporary notion of protocol, which differs from its historical meaning: “However, with the advent of digital computing, the term has taken on a slightly different meaning. Now, protocols refer specifically to standards governing the implementation of specific technologies. Like their diplomatic predecessors, computer protocols establish the essential points necessary to enact an agreed-upon standard of action. (...) Yet instead of governing social or political practices as did their diplomatic predecessors, computer protocols govern how specific technologies are agreed to, adopted, implemented and ultimately used by the people around the world. What was once a question of consideration and sense is now a question of logics and physics.”⁵⁵ Contemporary digital and network protocols are thus strictly formal and without content. They are no longer something to be negotiated among discursive contexts and linguistic subjects, but are proving to be an issue of

53 Alain Badiou, *Dvajseto stoletje*, Ljubljana: Društvo za teoretsko psihoanalizo, 2005, p. 88.

54 Alexander R. Galloway, *Protocol: How Control Exists After Decentralisation*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: MIT Press, 2004.

55 Ibid., p. 7.

technical, logical and physical functionality. In his book Galloway mentions a simple example of speed limits in city districts. In one district the citizens work out an agreement and adopt strict laws for those breaking the speed limit law. They set up traffic signs and reinforce the radar control. In the other district the citizens reach a decision to set up speed bumps, placed on the road, in order to limit the speed of driving through the district. Now, which of the two solutions is protological? For Galloway the protological solution is the setting up of speed bumps, for what is in question is a physical system of organisation, which “materially forces the driver to slow down (...) with bumps the driver wants to drive more slowly. With bumps it becomes a virtue to drive more slowly.”⁵⁶ We could say that the first solution is of the language and has immediate effect on the thought (where the presence of the police ensures forced behaviour, resulting from a linguistic and lawful consensus), while the second solution directly affects the body: protocol, says Galloway, “always operates at the level of desire, at the level of ‘what we want’.”⁵⁷

The very emptiness of protocol, which is no longer subjected to discursive differences, opens up ways for the disclosure of possibilities for different social practices that simultaneously enact new possibilities of coexistence precisely by participating in multi-layered networks, where we use new networks to work against networks. In other words, protocol is a practical formal procedure through which different social practices can be developed. These are no longer grounded in linguistic conditioning and the isolated clash of concepts, aesthetics, and ideologies, but in division, networking, and transitions between the actual and the virtual, in the intensification of intensities and actual connections. As far as protocols are concerned, it is true that we still live in a certain golden age, which with the privatization of technology, communication, networks, and the internet, is, however, quickly approaching its end. Protocols can be used as a possibility only if they are not violently filled with content. (That kind of moralism in relation to technology and the global procedures of collaboration, whose language needs to be given back to them, is often encountered in art as well as in theory). First of all, it is necessary to know how to use them. Then, it is necessary to know how to develop with them the forms of collaboration that would resist interpretation, content, and prior formed discourse, and would instead offer the possibilities for multiple cognitive processes, for a practically sensate world and the material practice of dissemination. Protocol can thus still be understood as the process by which a different form of the common act, of a social and thinking practice can be articulated. Today, it is impossible to think any joint project that would want to enact something in common without re-thinking the potentiality of the employed protocol itself. This very employment may open other possibilities in our contemporary practically sensate world of mobility, communication, and constitution of a common language, which is being incessantly rearticulated through the enactment of different social and material practices of thinking and art.

56 Ibid., p. 241.

57 Ibid.

Performances

Another point that I would like to touch upon is the expanded notion of performance which presents an important point in common with the encounter of different articulations of critical thinking. It is common knowledge that performance today finds itself at the centre of various contexts of art, history and society and is closely connected with its political, scientific and technological characteristics. In my view, dealing with an expanded notion of performance is therefore not to be understood as a mere academic or theoretical topic, but rather as a unique material practice of thinking and writing, as one of the generators of networks and as a user of the protocols of collaboration which opens up and inhabits the space of specific practices of art and contemporary thinking.

The expanded notion of the performance event is thus not merely a question of the content by which different initiatives would aesthetically recognize and encounter one another. What it also concerns is the understanding of form, the actualization of the language of art, the formation of a discourse on art practices themselves, and the conflicting ways of how to think the practice of art itself. In such an understanding of performance a certain intriguing relation is at work. It can be described as a relation between form and potentiality. The very form can be understood as a temporal potentiality of thinking the real and, at the same time, the event itself becomes and constitutes itself precisely through the potentiality of formal multiplicity. In the event form has an immediate effect on the body, form is a protocol of the performance which places us, together with our desire, in the ways art could have been: It opens up different perceptual processes, intensities of the bodies, audibility of language and energies, the power of speech and gesture, where language once again opens up to imagination and potentiality. Thereby theory, too, is consciously revealed as a protocol of writing which is not merely an ideological, aesthetic or evaluative one, but one that presents a cognitive, sensate, corporeal and processual approach to certain events as well as their inhabitation.

Disclosure of protocols is not interesting from the standpoint of the institutional critique of art which today seems to be rather exhausted due to the appropriation of critical procedures by the global culture industry and commercialization. It becomes intriguing only when we practise and think of it at some other level, at the level of the constitution of protocols of performances, of becoming and articulating possibilities. That is to say, we think of it at the level of creating events, communities, at the level where performance is understood as a network of many contexts and connections, of parallel temporalities and formal multiplicities, as a process of actualization: "Despite the prevailing mythologies that continue to link the experience of art to individual reflection, we do look at art, inhabit the spaces of art in various forms of collectivity, and in the process we produce new forms of mutuality, of relations between viewers and spaces rather than between viewers and objects.

Beyond the shared categories of class or taste or political or sexual orientations another form of ›WE‹ is produced."⁵⁸

Conclusion

I would like to conclude with the conviction that the most important critical meetings were always brought about through initiatives that were not progressively oriented towards a common future, but were deeply aware of the different potentialities of the agency of the present. We can then become aware of the problematic ways in which we are collaborating on the contemporary cultural and spectacular market towards a common normality, so that finally we will all be ›normal together‹. Such awareness has serious consequences for the state of theory, too. If it does not want to become an ideal worker for the weak but nevertheless self-realizable subjectivity of contemporary society, it has to continuously reflect on its own production. It has to do something similar to radical art in Benjamin's sense, which needs to do more than make politics its subject matter; it must change the way it is made, distributed, and seen: Its very protocols then may present a possibility. It is not enough to be only a successful strategic critic in Von Clausewitz's sense, where an important point is to position oneself exactly in the position of the agent's point of view. As Agamben noticed, most strategic critique would disappear completely or would be reduced to minor differences of understanding if the writers could position themselves in all the circumstances in which agents find themselves.⁵⁹ But this does not mean, either, that critical thought has to be aware of its failure all the time and open itself up to the productive chains of linguistic operations and games. Today exactly such an endless language can immediately be commodified. Critical potentiality has something to do with the exposure of the real: Any platform of knowledge has to open up the potentiality for the unrealized thought of the real exactly through its skilled use of protocols: how it is made, seen and distributed.

This kind of understanding undoubtedly presents a special challenge to theory, which is here also disclosed as the actualization of a material practice and a mode of its own writing. Art no longer possesses the traditional utopian and emancipatory role of transforming life, the role that is today so successfully adopted by contemporary commodification in all its creative procedures. At the same time, this very connection to the potentiality of the real points to the fact that we are no longer dealing with practising the utopian transformation of life by way of art, which was still characteristic of the 20th century. Notwithstanding, we can still understand it as an open process of the articulation of the possible which can reveal the ways of being together. It has become a general truism that we live in a time where the potentiality of nature is performed and privatized in advance. At the same time aesthetic

58 Irit Rogoff, "WE: Collectivities, Mutualities, Participations", in: mode05. towards a new educational model in dance and choreography, mode05.org/blog/node/145 (September 2008).

59 Giorgio Agamben, *Means Without Ends, Notes on Politics*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

and cognitive competences of intensities, energies, and events are at the centre of contemporary commodification and the economy of entertainment. Critical thought thus needs to re-discover the way to articulate the potentiality of processes and ways of life that may bring about a change in the ontological place of art itself. It is necessary to examine both the *poesis* as well as the *praxis* of art. For this reason I conclude this short essay with two questions which I would like to leave open – similar to that openness of the future which, as Derrida states, cannot be future, if it is not at once understood as a “monstrous arrivant”.⁶⁰ First, can we think of artistic practice as an articulation of possibilities for actualities in which we live, can it also be a struggle for imagination and intensities? Second, can we think the practice of theory as a cognitive operation of corporeal events, can it also be a struggle for potentiality of thought and persistence of desire?

60 Jacques Derrida, *Points...: Interviews, 1974–1994* (Elizabeth Weber, ed.), Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995, p. 91.

Miško Šuvaković
**AROUND ALTHUSSERIAN-LACANIAN CRITIQUE OF
AUTONOMY OF ART: CLASS AND THE UNCONSCIOUS**

Critiques of “autonomy of art” are mostly based on alienation of *modern art* manifested through the loss of mimetic connection between the work and referent. This could be seen in all big re-establishments of realisms⁶¹ during the long twentieth century. Among the relevant critical grasps of “idealized autonomies of art” Althusserian-Lacanian debate in terms of its analytical and critical elaboration appeared.⁶² This debate started from *reading* the autonomy of art with two parallel positions of analysis and critiques:

from the position of analysis of sociability, and
from the position of analysis of unconscious.

Both positions have in the “autonomy of art” and “elucidations of arguments for understanding autonomy of art” offered criteria for recognizing the relevant role of censorship of social and sexual in modern art from the period of Enlightenment to neo-vanguards. From Althusserian-Lacanian position it appears that what excludes society from the artistic, and

Schema 1: Lacanian-Althusserian critiques of autonomy of art

Autonomous art	
Necessary censorship of “social” content of SOCIETY’S TRUTH in the field of social order and various regimes of “human condition”	Necessary censorship of “sexual” content of SOCIETY’S TRUTH in the field of unconscious interruption of individual regimes of rationalization or symbolic prefiguration of “human condition”
Althusserian approach	Lacanian approach
Althusserian-Lacanian approach	

with this exclusion social is being constituted, is not – what many would like to convince us in – some sort of pre-human chaos, indeterminable abyss of nature, place of the source of truth, but is an *already defined practice, a signifying practice*, real basis or *truth* of what Sigmund Freud called “unconscious” in relation to sexuality, and Karl Marx “class struggle” in relation to society.⁶³

61 Brendan Prendeville, *Realism in 20th Century Painting*, London: Thames and Hudson, 2000.

62 Redakcijski uvodnik: Mladen Dolar, Danijel Levski, Jure Mikuž, Rastko Močnik, Slavoj Žižek. See: “Umetnost, družba / tekst”, *Razprave (Problemi)*, no. 3–5 (147–149), Ljubljana, 1975, pp. 1–10. Translation: “Umetnost, društvo / tekst”, *Polja*, no. 230, Novi Sad, 1978, pp. 2–5.

63 “Umetnost, društvo / tekst”, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

Let us now look once again at the process from canonizing autonomy of art towards its criticism. The notion of art has essentially been defined in Western modern culture after the eighteenth century by the concepts, functions, and effects of "autonomy" of the work of art in relation to instrumentality, functionality, and usefulness of human labor and action in society and realizations of sociability. Art looks like *the* (the work) emptied from practical expectations in everyday life. By its autonomy, the art becomes something, simultaneously "exceptional" and "negative"⁶⁴ in relation to practical everyday life, strategies, and tactics of shaping the life, and thus, *shapes* that make the life in everyday living. Art is being interpreted as what is relocated from the life or what is placed on the territory that promises not being the territory of realization of power, need, instincts, desires, social goals, etc. Art is above all shown as something "exterritorial" or "transcendent" in relation to life and shapes of life. On the other hand, art in this artificiality, being other than life and need, being *artificial* or factitious, shows that it doesn't exist without human labor and human territories on which this labor and production of labor are shown as derived, accomplished, and specified by differences in relation to "pragmatic" or "practical" labor and production, i.e. acting. Art is "something" or *anything* given as "what" is emptied from the life in labor or production. But, there appears a contradiction by pointing out that art as *emptied from life* happens in the middle of life and in the way of living in a society becoming real or ostensibly independent from the society. Art becomes present by emptying itself from satisfying hunger, sexual desire, fear of death, accomplishing bodily, social, or *spiritual* goal. It is "here" alone, i.e. immanent to itself, and empty – more precisely, emptied – in its *wonderful beauty* beyond interest⁶⁵ and politics.

In order that *something* becomes "art" it must be autonomous in relation to pragmatic and practical life within a society and thus non-political, but it is exactly the realization of this requirement that is fundamentally "political" and possible only within the reallocation of social powers, possibilities, competencies, and functions. Autonomy of art is a "political project" by which both real and apparent *framework* or *territory* of "immanent effect" or "affectation" which in concrete historical society looks like non-political and autonomous in relation to society, and thus also to politics as acting within the society is being produced. Art is set up as institution or network of institutional relations through which artistic creation is recognized as the sphere of creation for *the sake of the art itself*⁶⁶ or, said in Adorno's⁶⁷

64 Christoph Menke, "The Concept of Aesthetic Negativity," from *The Sovereignty of Art – Aesthetic Negativity in Adorno and Derrida*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999, p. 3.

65 Imanuel Kant, "Dopadanje koje sud ukusa određuje bez ikakvog je interesa", "Analitika lepog", "Analitika estetike moći suđenja", in: *Kritika moći suđenja*, Beograd: BIGZ, 1991, pp. 96–97.

66 First use of the phrases "art for art's sake" (*l'art pur l'art*), which is most often ascribed to the French poet and critic Charles Baudelaire, was introduced in 1804 in the writing *Journal Intime* by Benjamin Constant. Constant derived this concept from Kant's and Schelling's aesthetical studies. See: Iredell Jenkins, "Art for Art's Sake", from *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/cgi-local/DHI/dhi.cgi?id=dv1-18>.

67 Theodor W. Adorno, "Funkcija", in: *Uvod v sociologijo glasbe*, Ljubljana: Državna Založba Slovenije, 1985, p. 62.

words, political function of certain social, cultural, and thus artistic practices that look like practices whose *social function to be without function* in concrete historical and geographical society is being signified. Emergence of paradoxical, but socially realizable concepts of "autonomy" of aesthetics and modern notion of art in culture took long time from Renaissance till the era of Enlightenment and, then, to constitutive influence on cultures of nineteenth-century modernity and twentieth-century modernism. The relevance of *class* i.e. *social struggle* in relation to art is seen as materialistic politicization of work of *language, style, or rhetoric* in the field of *ideology*.⁶⁸ It is about, in contrast to high-modernistic *metaphysical-existentialistic* and *engaged-existentialistic* critique of humanism⁶⁹, late-modernistic structural-materialistic critique of humanistic viewpoint and project of social struggle. Today art is as always *happening in conditions of class struggle*, and that means of complex order and performing sociability. There is *no* all-humanistic "human existence", *no* "human heritage" that would in its core be marked by the split that this social struggle brings in. Emphasizing general humanism, in any version, is always only a specific effect of oblique affirmation of a *specified* attitude or position within social struggle. Here, analysis must go to the end: in the "most neutral" thematic, in impressionistic still life, in innocent love poem – everywhere it is necessary – as to it "absent", "negative" determination – to recognize historically specified social poetry.⁷⁰ What is in humanistic – capitalist, civic – ideology of art shown is *reliance* on structuring working process on which it later relies as on *specific fetishism*: work of art as produced, but undoubted and non-problematic value. In other words, *labor and production process* in arts is set opposite to *labor and production processes* of industrial production, because artistic production is defined by primary craft unity of labor force and means of labor. This way, illusion that artistic production is a relevant sample of unalienated labor is being advocated – labor which is the emptied *face* of utilitarian labor.⁷¹ Social struggle is, and today we can see that the *struggle* is not only *class* but also racial, colonial, or neo-colonial, ethnic, national, generational, gender, globalistic, anti-globalistic, local, and above all, market. Autonomy of art, aesthetical disinterest or non-interest, formalistic, centering of the material itself and modes of work of art, the work of art itself, inner logic of development of the work of art, world and history of art, and also authenticity or universality of the work of art and art, are complex illusions which Western art obtains from *social struggle* by prefiguring the status of art as something special and exceptional, i.e. "immanent to the art itself", that is, *excepted* from the society and social struggles, meaning transcendent in relation to social and political. Art is shown and situated as *ideal* sphere of *unalienated humanity* beyond social conflict and thus realization of ideology of humanism as ideology that centers "immanent humanity" as the highest – impalpable – value of a society. It appears

68 Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses", in: Charles Harrison, Paul Wood (eds), *Art in Theory 1900–2000, An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Cambridge, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2003, pp. 953–960.

69 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Egzistencijalizam je humanizam*, IP Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo, 1964; Dušan Pirjevec, "Svet u svetlosti kraja humanizma", in: *Treći program RB*, no. 1, Beograd, 1969, pp. 151–177.

70 "Umetnost, društvo / tekst", op. cit, p. 2.

71 Ibid., p. 2.

in popular, but also professional discussions about art, that art is something that is *in itself beautiful, positive, ethically and technically good, accessible to all people*, etc. In order that every conflict society in the middle of social struggle is prefigured to itself and others as “the society of freedom” and *humanity*, and not as the society of contradictions and conflicts, *social-agents*, i.e. cultural workers, must in art and culture sublimate indication of social struggle by showing art and culture as something beyond or above any struggle and even, in transcendental sense, above life as such, although in its disinterest it serves the life. *Exclusion*, i.e. hiding, i.e. emptying: indications of the *signifying practice* in the work of art is a condition for existence of the *social*, but also a condition for existence of art as privileged autonomous practice within the social. Art is not in its most autonomous expression what reflects social in the experimental way, but it “represents” social by hiding or nullifying *signifying practice* through which and in which it emerges. Classical and neo-classical painting – smooth and dealt surface of Jacques-Louis David paintings – surface which hides the movement of the brush – or romantic music of speeded, for example, Schumann’s madness, show themselves in technical and apparent-sensual sense as works outside and above everyday life. And, by annulling the possibility of mediation of everyday life in the name of universal *transcending* look of the work, as if they annul the *signifying practice*, which as if does not exist, as if it is outside of the sphere of indication of the work of art.⁷² For example, phenomenological⁷³ aesthetics through their appeal to “return to the art itself” or through concentrating towards sensual appearance of art itself, give philosophical platform for hiding *signifying practice* in and around the work of art. It is, therefore, referred to dialectical turnover by which it is prefigured that *signifying practice* is the one by means of which social is being accomplished while with the work of art one shows that it does not exist and that with the work of art movement of the original, genuine, pre-expressive, i.e. pre-human chaos happens. Illusion created by the work of art, in the middle of social interests for that illusion, through showing that intuitive, spontaneous, authentic, created as if from nature, trans-historical or trans-geographic is *effect* produced by the *signifying practice* in the way that in what it creates it hides *itself* as the productive force of creation. Illusion in question here is not perceptive illusion of observing the work, but ideological illusion of identifying the work of art in relation to society and subject. In other words, the work of art emerges from *signifying practice* in the way that “it” is hidden/annulled in illusions about free and unrestrained indication of creative artistic act above and outside of social conditionality. *Signifying practice* is, therefore, the traverse interpretative path from Freud to Lacan, given as *real basis* of what can hypothetically be called *unconscious* and that *unconscious structured as language* in social struggle. *Signifying practice* is what the sphere of social must exclude in order to constitute ruling and surrounding social. Exclusion of *signifying practice* is, apparently, the condition for existence of the *social*. By this it is said that “social” is acceptable and prefigurable reality by which the horrifying and destructive *unconscious* is hidden, in

72 Ibid.

73 Nikolaj Hartman, *Estetika*, Beograd: BIGZ, 1979.

Lacanian sense, the Real⁷⁴, which would destroy the society if it could be prefigured. At the same time, *signifying practice* is necessarily the conflict within a society which is prefigured by making it invisible, noiseless, almost non-existent. Via *signifying practices* a society sets networks of representatives to cover and suppress the Real of the *signifying practice* in the name of symbolized and acceptable, i.e. endurable reality. Art is a “fine” instrument of producing the *otherwise than self* in the middle of life: showing or “reflecting” the otherwise than self in space of apparent neutrality, impracticability, disinterest, i.e. freedom. And that is the main contradiction of every definition of art: art must be autonomous in relation to everyday life of a society in order to be ART and being-in-work situated in the world as autonomous art makes it political within social struggles for power, shaping the life, possession, control, identification, simply said: being. There is no art without this contradiction of social struggle for domination and, thus: hegemony of this or that *center* of power.

Translated by Nada Harbaš.

74 Jacques Lacan, “RSI”, *Ornicar?*, no. 6, Paris, 1976.

Nikola Dedić

ART, NEUROSIS, PROJECT: FROM FORDIST TO POST-FORDIST MODEL OF PRODUCTION

The main aim of this paper will be to give an interpretation of contemporary art as a critical, political practice, i.e. in Althusserian terminology, as a practice which is a part of ideology but which, at the same time points out to ideology. At the same time, the paper will extract two possible paradigms: modern, characteristic for the Fordist model of production and postmodern, characteristic for the post-Fordist model. The main attributes of the modern paradigm were neurosis and Utopian project. I will take from Marcelin Pleynet the notion of neurosis, i.e. the analysis of the modernist artist as a revolutionary critic of bourgeois social values and a modernist "genius". The second characteristic of modern art was the idea of global social emancipation where the project is interpreted as a model of the operative manner that leads toward qualitative transformation of a given society. The paper will try to indicate, with the reference to post-Marxist theory of capitalist production, the qualitative change of contemporary art as a critical, political practice: instead of the artist as a "neurotic" individual (the artist as a bohemian, revolutionary, genius, etc.) the dominant figure today is the artist as an intellectual producer, while the position of art as an autonomous practice, isolated from the system of material production, is transformed into a kind of immaterial labor which is today the paradigm of the whole post-Fordist production. However, the paper will try to suggest the interpretation of the contemporary art as a kind of critical practice through the restoration of the idea of Utopia, but instead of Utopia as a temporal narrative (the project as a kind of temporal succession), the paper will suggest the interpretation of Utopia as a spatial metaphor, i.e. as a practice of micro-political defining of the relatively autonomous spaces which are not the part of the post-Fordist production of surplus value.

I

Marcelin Pleynet analyzes the painting in the context of class-struggle inside the ideological structures of bourgeois society. The basic characteristic of civil, bourgeois societies is the suppression of basic social antagonism-class struggle within the production process. The consequence of this is the belief that the elements of production belong, without the exception, to the bourgeoisie while the "antagonistic", revolutionary positions are neglected. However, bourgeoisie accepts only individual, separated conflict to the values of civil society. This is the construct of a "genius" which is basically the individual who is marked with the neurosis which is interpreted as a transgression from the normative social values and standards. In that way, the "genius" is firstly associated with the abnormality (neurosis) and after that he/she is praised as the exception, originality the subject who is the anti-thesis of

the masses.⁷⁵ This is the basic thesis of all evolutionist, formalistic theories and art histories. The modern artist is not involved into the capitalist organization of production, in the same way as the concept of the autonomy realizes for art, even virtually, its exemption from the process of commodity distribution. Because the artist is, in the theoretical sense, excepted from the material production and process of class struggle, his/her position is unavoidably marked with the connection between the subject and neurosis. Pleynet, in the spirit of the French poststructuralism, claims that the ideological character of such construction should be analyzed from the proletarian positions, i.e. from the positions of Marxism, psychoanalysis and linguistics, i.e. the painting should be analyzed not as an autonomous, neutral practice but rather as a signifying practice.

The second aspect of the modern aesthetic paradigm is the idea of the project of art which is the basis of the interpretation of art as the subversive social practice. Modern conception of the project is connected with Marxist theory of class-struggle which is developed as a reinterpretation and critique of the traditional, humanistic definitions of Utopia. For Marx and Engels utopian literature is critical because it targets the basis of the capitalist society, i.e. it reveals for the first time the class contradictions inside that society, especially through the request for the abolition of the contradictions between the city and the village, private property, hired work and through the proclamation of the new, harmonious society. But, on the other hand, social-utopianism is still the example of the metaphysical idealism; utopists accepts only the psychological development, the development of abstract man who doesn't have any connection with the past. In that way, those early utopists are too erudite and their concepts are too metaphysical.⁷⁶ In that way, Marxist critique of the notion of Utopia is based: 1. on the critique of idealism and ideology (Marx, for example, does not make a difference between philosophical idealism and idealism in the political sense); 2. on the interpretation of capitalism as a system which is marked with class antagonisms and 3. on the conceptualization of the Marxist historicism where the history is interpreted as a continual development from the feudalism, over manufacture production toward industrial capitalism which should be abandoned in the future and replaced with the classless communist society. Because of that, within Marxism two moments can be distinguished: *critical*, which is connected with the critique of idealism of previous Utopian projections of ideal society and *projective* which marks the continuation with the subversive potentials of previous Utopias, but while old, humanistic Utopias deal with spatial metaphors, Marxism reinterprets Utopia as a kind of temporal succession. It is possible to claim that Marxism in its most classical version (i.e. Marxism of Marx and Engels) made a definitive turn from the idea of Utopia towards the idea of project. The basis of Marxist project, implies the following: 1. there is a basic antagonism (class antagonism, economic exploitation) which determines all the other antagonisms inside a given society (cultural, political, gender, etc.

75 Marcelin Pleynet, *Ogledi o savremenoj umetnosti*, Beograd: Muzej savremene umetnosti, 1985.

76 Fridrih Engels, *Položaj radničke klase u Engleskoj*, Beograd: Kultura, 1951, p. 265.

antagonisms) and 2. historical development causes if not necessity then the "objective possibility" for the release of that basic antagonism, i.e. the world revolution will bring to the end this class antagonism and enable the emergence of the transparent, rationally guided society.⁷⁷

In the context of the debates about modern art, the reinterpretation of the modern project was developed in the theory of Giulio Carlo Argan and Filiberto Menna. According to Argan, art work is always routed into project, i.e. it is always materialized through the procedures and techniques that are most suitable for the emergence of the project. In other words, art work always implies the value which is irreproducible (the copy of art work, for example, always destroys that value).⁷⁸ Thus, the project is always the critique of a given situation, i.e. the project consists of the adaptation of a certain cultural process to the newly emerged situation. Three basic elements are constituents of such project: progress, value and modernity. In general, it is possible to distinguish two models of the project: the first one is mechanical, automatic and quantitative understanding of the project while the second is historical and as such it is based on the analysis of a given situation with the dialectical overwhelming of the given contradictions as its aim. The first model is characteristic for the industrial concept of the project and as such it is typical for the industrial societies. Its central element is quantity: industrial object can be repeated in the thousands of copies and it would not lose its essence. The change of the value inside the society is the consequence of this process: the value traverses from the individual to the "serial of individuals", i.e. to the mass which annihilates individuality where the subject is only a unit in the range. The second model of the project is characteristic of the art. Its central element is quality, i.e. artistic work, in its originality, tends to the maximum of quality with the minimum of quantity. In that way only an art work with its absolute quality, can be the radical critique of the mass culture and the civilization of a consumer production.⁷⁹

According to Filiberto Menna, there are two basic sources of the avant-garde and the modern project: romanticism and Utopia. Romanticism offered to the avant-garde the principles of the artistic engagement and the negation of a given social system. He writes about the engagement as a tendency of the artist to act inside the actuality with the aim to change it; romanticist art is developed between two extremes-nostalgia and Utopia.⁸⁰ Menna emphasizes that the engagement does not mean the glorification of the political but exactly the opposite: romanticist ideal tends to criticize the political perspective and to replace it with the technical and aesthetical perspective. It is the act where "necessity and

77 Slavoj Žižek, *Sublimni objekt ideologije*, Zagreb: Arkzin, 2002, p. 17.

78 Giulio Carlo Argan, "Problemi moderne umetnosti", in: *Porijeklo(r)t*, no. 11–15, Novi Sad, March 2001, pp. 26–28.

79 Giulio Carlo Argan, "Projekt i sudbina", in: *Studije o modernoj umetnosti*, Beograd: Nolit, 1982.

80 Filiberto Menna, *Proricanje estetskog društva. Esej o umetničkoj avangardi i modernom arhitektonskom pokretu*, Beograd: Radionica SIC, 1984, p. 40.

freedom, norm and exception, reason and emotionality, society and nature" are united. The second aspect of the modern project is Utopia: Utopia in its classical sense means the construction and projection of an ideal, harmonious society and "perfect space" as well. In the context of the debates about the notion of modernity, "The notion of engagement that was developed by the romanticist culture inside the artistic practice is transmitted onto the field of Utopia. Utopian dimension is transmitted onto the aesthetical dimension and they seek to engage themselves in the actuality so they could transform life. Together they reanimate and impel the poetics of modern artists and architects, creating of them the accurate keepers of beliefs or at least of supposition that such perfect space is not so far away and that it will not be lost in the future."⁸¹ Considering the phenomenon of the neo-avant-garde art of the 60's the concept of Utopia does not mean necessarily the idea of the perfect, isolated, harmonious social order (Utopia as a product) but it is rather the idea of Utopia as a ideological and creative model.

II

There is a question: how to think of art as a critique of ideology after the end of the modern aesthetical paradigm? My central thesis is: with the shift from the Fordist model of production (modernism) to the post-Fordist model of production (postmodernism) the art lost its marginal position inside the process of material production (the artist as a socially marginal figure, as a "bohemian", revolutionary, "genius", neurotic, considering his/her relation to the social normative values, on one hand and the concept of art autonomy which means that art is not involved into the process of capital reproduction, on the other) and it get the status of paradigm for the whole post-Fordist production in general. To verify this hypothesis I will refer to the post-Marxist thesis about immaterial labor.

The notion of immaterial labor means the changes that occurred with the shift from Fordist to post-Fordist model of production where the central moment is informational and cultural content of the commodity. The informational content of the commodity means that the change inside the working process happened and that the shift from the classical labor on the "assembly line" to the cybernetics, informational systems and computer control in the production process occurred. At the same time, the wane of the industry as a central place of the production and the presence of so called tertiary sector, i.e. the sector of services was also evident. The thesis about the cultural content of the commodity means that there is a whole spectrum of activities in the production process which were not considered as labor in the past: for example the use of the different cultural and artistic standards, fashion, taste, consumer standards, public opinion, etc. with the surplus value as its aim.⁸²

81 Ibid., p. 44.

82 Maurizio Lazzarato, "Immaterial Labor", in: Paolo Virno, Michael Hardt (eds.), *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, pp. 133–146.

Also, contemporary art does not work anymore with the autonomous artistic pieces/objects but rather with information, data and documentation. In the context of traditional aesthetics, the phenomenon of documentation as an artistic material does not exist: in the traditional definitions of art, the documentation belongs to the field of technical sciences/knowledge but not to the art and aesthetics. But the crucial change occurred with the emergence of conceptual art: conceptualism for the first time took the document, i.e. information as a basic material of the artistic creativity. With conceptualism, the art became *informational* in a strict sense.

This actually means, according to Boris Groys, that under the new regime of the authorship the work of artists is not anymore valued with the objects that they created, but rather in accordance with their participation at the important art exhibitions; to get acquainted with the work of some artist actually means to read his/her CV and not to look at his/her paintings: "Accordingly, they are measured not by their products, but by their participation in important exhibitions, just as actors are judged by which roles they have played, in which productions, and in which films. Even when one visits an artist's studio to get to know his or her oeuvre, one is generally shown a CD-ROM documenting the exhibitions, actions, projects, and installations that were planned but never realized."⁸³

The implications of such process are double: the artist became less "the creator" and more "the administrator" while, on the other hand, artistic object is replaced with the artistic documentation. To claim that the contemporary art is the result of the process of the artistic administration and not artistic creativity in fact means that whoever wants to act inside the art world (in the same way as in the space of business, politics and culture in general) he/she must formulate, as a basic step, the administrative project (documentation) which would be, in the form of the application, presented to the foundation for the approval or funding: "Consequently, every member of our society is constantly occupied with drafting, discussing, and rejecting new projects. Assessments are written, budgets are precisely calculated, commissions are formed, committees are convened, and decisions are made. In the meantime, no small number of our contemporaries reads anything other than such projects, reports, and budgets."⁸⁴ The contemporary artist is immaterial producer which means that he/she does not need to know certain specialist manual skills but rather the work in the field of symbolic and informational administration. According to this, contemporary artist is not so much different from any other producer inside the post-Fordist model of production: according to Paolo Virno, the main aim of any producer is to improve the connection between his/her own labor and other people's services.⁸⁵ This connection is

83 Boris Groys, "Multiple Authorship", in: Barbara Vanderlinden, Elena Filipovic (eds.), *The Manifesta Decade: Debates on Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Biennials in Post-Wall Europe*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2005, pp. 93–100.

84 Ibid.

85 Paolo Virno, *Gramatika mnoštva. Prilog analizi suvremenih formi života*, Zagreb: Naklada Jesenski i Turk, 2004.

the basis of production as a communicative administration. Contemporary production is organized not in accordance with vertical (factory) model, but rather with horizontal, network-like model (communicative network replaced "assembly line" as a basic organizational model of production). In other words; in the process of capitalist production the manual labor is replaced with the communication; it is interesting that the category of manual was central for Fordist production but also for modernistic art as well. Instead of manual labor/creativity, language and symbolic interaction became the central artistic "materials".

Does this actually mean that art lost its power of social critique and political subversion? The second main thesis of this paper is that it did not lose it because the art is, in its essence, Utopian. But the notion of Utopia, inside the post-Fordist model of production, is not possible to think of it anymore as of a modernistic teleological project, but rather as of a kind of spatial metaphor. To verify this hypothesis I will refer to the Groys' notion of the archive.

In his analysis, Groys compares the social role of mass media and the role of contemporary museum. In 19th century museum get the position of aesthetical normative, i.e. the museum was understood as the place where the criterion of a "good" art was defined. But today, the museum lost its normative role: in our time the media and not the museums define the aesthetical norm: for the majority of public the notion of aesthetical is defined by commercials, MTV, video games and Hollywood blockbusters. The protest against the museums (in the name of "real life") today is not any more the protest against conservative, dominant norms but rather the protest against any deviations from aesthetical norms of mass consumer societies, i.e. it is a call for aesthetical populism. In other words, for the exponents of media production, the museum is historically outdated place which is turned toward the past while the media are the place where truly new and innovative is produced; the media are allegedly turned toward present, actuality, "real life": novelty, i.e. actuality is presented in the media as the value for itself. Groys asks a question: can we learn from media what is specifically new, contemporary in actual historical moment? His answer is negative because the media does not have historical memory which would allow the comparison between the past and actuality, and only with this comparison it is possible to produce truly new and actual. Because the media does not have the possibility of comparison, they can only work in the field of fashion: "When the spectator as the referential point of view does not have anything else except the media, he/she lacks comparative context which would allow him/her to effectively make a difference between old and new, between the one that is the same and the one that is different."⁸⁶ Only the museums can still produce truly new, only from the position inside the museum it is possible to get to see the actuality. In that way the museum really lost its normative aesthetical role, but on the other side the media can

⁸⁶ Boris Groys, "Muzeji u doba masovnih medija", in: *Učiniti stvari vidljivima. Strategije suvremene umjetnosti*, Zagreb: Muzej suvremene umjetnosti, 2006, pp. 75–88.

not critically think their own position; immaterial production of the media culture is the space of uncritical conservatism. Only the space of art (symbolic space of the museum) is the space of radically critical discourse. This critique does not occur with the connection between art and everyday life, which was the belief of the avant-garde, but rather with the creation of *difference* between art and life where everyday life is documented by art. Rethinking of *difference* between the space of art and space of media production (life) leads us back to the rethinking of the concept about autonomy of art. But here we can no more talk about modernistic, metaphysical ideal of autonomy; today the art autonomy is purely topological difference between artistic and non-artistic.

This is the mechanism of Utopia as a narrative genre, as well. On one hand it is the ideal, isolated space without internal social antagonisms, the space of ideal social order: it is the concept of isolated (autonomous) community based on the principles of harmony and balance. This is also indicated by the etymology of the word: the meaning of the notion is deprived from the Greek words of *eu* (good) and *topos* (place) or from the word *ou* (no, non-place, i.e. non-existent place). But on the other hand, Utopia also means the radical negation of actual social order: Utopia is also a cut, rupture with "here and now" of actual society. According to Fredric Jameson, Utopia is the radical secession, dissociation as much as the construction of ideal society; Utopia is not only projective but also negative, critical category. For Jameson, Utopia is a radical difference, otherness which arises in the moment when there is not possible to imagine the concrete political alternative.⁸⁷ Utopia is the space of *radical difference* between the one that is "outside" (Utopia as a closed, autonomous, isolated space, took out from the system of actual production, meditation separated from the world of material) and the one that is "inside" (actuality of material production, practice, the acting inside the actual social relations). Utopia is in the strict sense social "interstice". Isn't that also the main characteristic of contemporary art? Art is inside the process of material production, art is functioning on the principles similar to those of post-Fordist immaterial labor which is the basis for the reproduction of surplus value but on the other hand art is also outside those processes because if some object should be recognized as artistic it must be took out from the world of everyday phenomena, and placed (archived) into the isolated space of artistic production of meaning. It is the basic act for the creation of ready-made: the ready-made is an object which is not, in its formal appearance, much different from any other everyday object but which gets the status of artistic piece only in the museum. But as Groys emphasizes, when the visual difference between the artistic and ordinary object is not so obvious, much more clear difference should be made between artistic and profane, everyday, non-museum context. Artistic piece which is not, in its formal appearance, much different from its surrounding, is possible to be perceived as such only in the museum. Ordinary objects in the museum are differentiated from other "ordinary" objects, i.e. if art

⁸⁷ Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*, London, New York: Verso, 2005.

wants to impose itself on life it must be different from the real life. Museum and art, with its discontinuation with the everyday life, became close to the classical heritage of Utopia as a space which is different from the space of everyday life. Artistic production is the activity of defining the *differences* between the one that is “inside” (the art world as the archive) and the one that is “outside” (the world of immaterial post-Fordist production). The space of art is the space of Utopia.

The notion of Utopia enables to rethink the phenomenon of re-politization of art: art is political not because it tends to unite art and everyday life, but rather because it builds the differences between artistic and profane space (i.e. art separates, in our time united concepts of Intellect, immaterial labor and hired labor which is the basis for the reproduction of surplus value); in that way, art is not political at the level of its content, but rather on the level of tactics for defining of Utopian spaces, i.e. the spaces of differential distinction inside the sphere of material production.

Matilde Carrasco Barranco
**CONTEMPORARY ART. SUBVERSION,
PLURALISM AND DEMOCRACY⁸⁸**

Introduction: The Paradoxes of Contemporary Art

This paper approaches the problem of the apparent neutralization of the critical and subversive potential of art, particularly contemporary art in our current pluralistic culture ruled by the market and the consumer society. This is indeed a current and very complex question that has been discussed for years, and so, it is impossible to satisfactorily address it in a single paper. Of all the questions involved in the matter, however, I will focus and reflect on some of those topics that I think are important to understand and to debate the problem. Bringing them together, I have organized them in thematic blocks labelled “subversion”, “pluralism” and “democracy”. So, there will be three main issues here. First, what does subversion mean? In which way can we expect artworks to be subversive? Second, how can we recognize subversion when this has become the norm of the artistic production? And third, the scope of that subversion related to the democratization of the public that paradoxically contrasts with the apparent elitism of the artworld.

I will start though with a preliminary description of the state of things. Nowadays art is immersed in a vast, tolerant and open cultural world, ruled by the powerful production and distribution mechanisms of the market, which offers a huge and diverse amount of products for everybody’s taste. In this scenario art competes with the rest of cultural goods and it seems to be doing very well for itself. In most western countries, and more recently in others, there is a great demand for art from museums, centres and foundations that, along with a powerful network of galleries, support and impulse artistic production as well as its social presence. Art has become a strong financial value, stable enough to be the shelter of investors in times of financial uncertainty, and in many places it is seen as a factor of economic dynamism. Therefore, many cities want their own museum, particularly their own museum of contemporary art, along with the organization of (international, if possible) artistic events.

This social, cultural and economic context looks then very convenient for art. Actually it can be considered the best in history. However, it has raised many critics and objections that paradoxically point to the loss of functional relevance for art, particularly visual arts in life. For example, David Novitz, in his book *The boundaries of art*, talks about the “ambiguous, almost a schizoid, attitude” that, at least in the western world, most people have towards art. According to Novitz, most people estimate that a certain sort of *high* and prestigious art is socially and culturally valuable but at the same time think that this

⁸⁸ This paper is part of my work as a member of the research projects supported by the Spanish M. E. C. (Ref. HUM2005-02533) and *Fundación Séneca* (Ref. 03089/PHCS/05).

sort of art is “unimportant and irrelevant”, elitist and incomprehensible, and locate it in “a world removed from ordinary everyday living” maintaining “a dignified silence on the really important bread-and-butter issues that confront us”⁸⁹. More recently, Yves Michaud has also pointed out the paradoxical social space of contemporary visual arts. They seem to be both inside and outside society, because together with their perfect integration in the cultural, social and economic network, the artistic practices occupy a marginal position, as it were a species in danger of extinction that needs to be protected. Michaud adds that this situation is convenient for both, society and art. Society integrates the visual arts in the cultural package, particularly as part as the tourism industry, getting an important symbolic and economic benefit. Contemporary art gets the protection which is necessary to compete with other more popular cultural productions. But especially paradoxical is the fact that much of contemporary art, while produced comfortably isolated and protected inside the limits of the institution, still claims subversion and political commitment as its goals. In these conditions, any attempt at transgression would only be formal because it will be born completely domesticated. Being politically inoffensive, contemporary art is promoted by institutions regardless of political colour.⁹⁰

Subversion

Certainly, subversion protected inside the limits of the artistic institution seems a contradictory task. Subversion implies breaking certain order, transgressing a particular set of rules, and this has modern roots. At least since Kant, the artist is no longer meant to follow a set of rules (like the artisan or the craft maker), and freedom substitutes imitation as the base of Art. From Shiller’s project of an aesthetic education of the man, art was connected transitively to social transformation and through Romanticism, the same art that (as access to the Absolute, to the Truth, to the Being, to God) was sacralised in a sort of new religion, was also secularized when it was given the highest pedagogical, social or political tasks.⁹¹ However, it is from the last part of the nineteenth century on when transgression is privileged as the aim of art.

Anthony Julius divides in three groups the transgressions of art in modern times, beginning with Manet, Flaubert, Baudelaire, we will find first a kind of art that breaks its own rules, that rejects the established artistic practices, but there will also be an art that violates taboos, people’s beliefs and feelings, and an art of political opposition, that challenges the Estate power⁹². Against the firmly normative conception of a classic and academic art,

89 David Novitz, *The boundaries of Art*, New Zealand: Cybereditions Corporation, 2001, pp. 32–33. In Novitz’s account, the paradox extends to *popular* art which is enjoyed by the majority whereas we insist in calling it *low* art.

90 See Yves Michaud, *Art, transgression et excès aujourd’hui*, Conference held as part of the course *Arte y Saber*. Sevilla, Tuesday, 11th of November, 2003. See its report on <http://www2.unia.es/artepensamiento03/ezine/ezine09/nov02.html>. All the translations made in this paper from non-English publications are the responsibility of the author.

91 See Marc Jimenez, *¿Qué es la estética?*, Barcelona: Idea Books, 1999, p. 118.

92 Anthony Julius, *Transgresiones. El arte como provocación*, Destino, Barcelona, 2002, p. 202, quoted by Miguel A. Hernández-

modern and contemporary art looks for a radical and continuous violation of any norm inside the institution and also tries to impact outside the artworld having a political and social effect. For decades now, these two possibilities, which were linked to the modern ideal of social, political and artistic progress, seem to be denied to art. On one hand, it would have increased the feeling that there is nothing else to transgress, nothing will surprise us; the capacity of innovation in the media and the messages seem to be exhausted; so the artistic offer will be full of re-makes and revivals; the artists can only return (return to *performance*, to *ready made*, to *body art* ...). On the other hand, the accumulation of “subversive” works of art would have grown along with the postmodern scepticism about any major social and political changes and, even more, about the capability of art to carry out any relevant effect in that area. Since subversion became the necessary condition of artworks, subversion became, by jurisprudence, the norm and that normality would neutralize it.⁹³

The institutions of art try to perpetuate themselves taking on board the ideas and the works of those that attempt to resist them, and also try to satisfy these resistances through the mere widening of the categories and institutions of art. But this dynamic of “resistance” and “assimilation”⁹⁴ would have become another of “subversion” and “subvention”. With these terms, Rainer Rochlitz⁹⁵ has described how nowadays the artist transgresses and the institution accepts the transgression and also subventions it, creating an illusion of freedom related to the limits that supposedly have been crossed. Of course, subventioning the subversion, the institutional system become stronger. According to Rochlitz, this is the way in which art works in its higher degree of autonomy, namely, that of sovereignty. The conquest of autonomy took centuries but, for Rochlitz too, the first step in the conquest of real autonomy will take us to Paris in the second half of the XIX century, when the artists managed to break with the religious and political tutelage. The freedom achieved was more social than formal, because tradition was still very powerful in this aspect. A higher degree of autonomy in the artistic language leads the way to, in Rochlitz classification, a second step. The artistic language gradually loses its external use and becomes a more idiosyncratic media that the public will have to learn. With its own language, richer and more independent, art reaches sovereignty; *appropriates any* aspect of reality and *intervenes* in it artistically in a provocative way through every new radicalization of language.⁹⁶ However, the independence and specialization of artistic language is such that from the public demands a deep knowledge of art history.

Navarro, *Eso lo puedo hacer yo*, Nausicaá, Murcia, 2007. In the conference quoted above, Y. Michaud points to the second category of transgression, where art flirts with the legal limits and the most accepted and respected moral values in society, as he thinks this is the only way in which art can still try to be subversive. However, in this paper I will focus on the first category and principally on the third, namely, political art, that one that Michaud and many others assume inefficient.

93 Cf. Félix de Azúa, “Yo diría que...”, *Archipiélago*, Barcelona, 41/2000, p. 19.

94 This is the account of Larry Shiner in *The invention of art (La invención del arte)*, Barcelona, Paidós, 2004). See particularly p. 309.

95 Rainer Rochlitz, *Subversión et subvention. Art contemporain et argumentation esthétique*, Paris: Gallimard, 1994.

96 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Art immersed in the same movement that leads to the differentiation and specialization of the logics of modern culture and so, like science, law or moral, has been looking more and more only to obey its own rules⁹⁷. For many, art and its dynamic of subversion become and end it itself; the connection between art and political action has been argued unnecessary, obsolete or absurd; contemporary art would look then depoliticized. On the contrary, we could think that everything done “by artists or cultural producers is, in one way or another, essentially political”⁹⁸. But even when admitted, the artists’ social and political commitment is often valued as limited or weak.⁹⁹ Rochlitz also points to this problem of efficiency and relates it to the changes in the context of reception of art; the independence of artistic language complicates recognition and will make it very difficult to control that context. Nevertheless, that same independence would allow the questioning of the automatism of ordinary language and perception and so, even canalized through the competent institutions, the artists can still exercise their autonomy and elaborate their own visions, through their own materials and present images susceptible to moving people to reflect on reality. Sovereignty means the irreducibility of art to the normal rules of communication and representation of reality. To say that art is sovereign is to admit that it cannot be domesticated in this sense and to recognize its possibilities of offering a heterodoxical experience.¹⁰⁰

The artists can then try their subversive action even when they cannot take for granted any effect in the political conscience of their public. But it will be better “to assume the risk and make mistakes than to condemn certain situations to invisibility due to a passive attitude”.¹⁰¹ Being difficult, the situation won’t be aporetic as Peter Bürger thought. According to him, for contemporary artists, while not being possible to go back to non-politicized works of art, they cannot relaunch the already failed avant-garde project.¹⁰² Nonetheless, I agree with Rochlitz, that this project can be considered failed only if we think that every avant-garde or subversive art is motivated just by the desire to change the world through art. It is a mistake to identify avant-gardism with an ideology of progress¹⁰³, but it is also a mistake to declare absurd any intention of political action through art. I think that the possibilities of acknowledging any aesthetic, cognitive or political advance in contemporary art will depend much on the way in which we read avant-garde’s significance and particularly its acclaimed failure.

Following Bürger, the historical avant-garde failed in the exercise of its autonomy and the double goal of being critical with the institution and doing so, conflating art to life. The neo-avantgarde institutionalizes avant-garde as art, in this way denying the authentic avant-gardist

97 Ibid., p. 37.

98 As Chilean artist Alfredo Jaar affirms in “Es difícil”, in Antonio Monegal (comp.) *Política y (po)ética de las imágenes de guerra*, Barcelona: Paidós, p.203.

99 Cf. Yves Michaud *El arte en estado gaseoso*, México, F.C.E., 2007, pp. 41–43.

100 See Gerard Vilar *Las razones del arte*, Madrid: Antonio Machado Libros, 2005, p.169.

101 Alfredo Jaar, *op. cit.*, p. 209, see also p. 205.

102 Peter Bürger, “Lautonomie de l’art dans n’histoire”, quoted by R. Rochlitz, *op. cit.*, p.35.

103 Cf. Jean Clair, *La responsabilidad del artista*, Madrid: Visor, 1998.

intentions. In his *Theory of avant-garde*¹⁰⁴, at least the *original* avant-garde keeps the heroic, and tragic, semblance that is denied to the sterile and degenerated artistic neo-avantgarde. This is pointed out by Hal Foster who argues that the problem with Bürger’s account is its melancholic *pathos*, in which a sort of art based in a pure transgression that would impact in life immediately is missed.¹⁰⁵ The authentic lesson of avant-garde, Foster says, was to show the historical nature of any art, contemporary art included, and now, due to the changes, both in the institution and life, and particularly immersed in a non-revolutionary *ethos*, artistic criticism has to change, acting in a more subtle and strategically punctual way.¹⁰⁶ This won’t be though, an exclusively artistic phenomenon; outside of art, the new political movements of global resistance, for example, do not arise with the revolutionary intention of taking power, but with the “more modest” idea of promoting transformations in different and concrete fields through the creation of specific *lobbys* or mediatic proposals.¹⁰⁷

Pluralism

The acclaimed failure of avant-garde art, historical and neo, would also have lead us to the current situation that can be described as relativist pluralism. In this situation all the artistic hierarchies have been knocked down and no style or artform or critical position is dominant. We would face a situation where anything goes, but nothing changes.

The current normalization of transgression and the aestheticization of non-artistic reality (characteristic of the sovereign level of aesthetic autonomy) – both mentioned earlier – have impeded the birth of many new genres and artforms that, trying to escape from a definition of the “artistic object”, would have encouraged an “institutional theory of art”.¹⁰⁸ Through this dispersion of artforms, it seems that there aren’t criteria for artistic excellence which the critics could appeal to; there is no aesthetic or artistic order, nor a sense of history to support our judgement. In this post-modern and post-historical pluralistic artistic scenario, any legitimization of art would come from the museum or the market which has offers for everybody’s taste.

In fact, this pluralism of genres and artforms matches the demands of the free market. In his article “Against Pluralism”¹⁰⁹, Hal Foster says, contrary to Adorno, that art has

104 Peter Bürger, *Teoría de la Vanguardia*, Barcelona: Península, 1987.

105 Hal Foster, *El retorno de lo Real*, Barcelona: Akal, 2001, pp. 12, 16.

106 Ibid., p. 30. This view connects with the doubts that Foster also has about the mediatic inefficiency of shock and scandal when they are not anymore “strategies against conventional thought”, but they have become “conventional thought”. See Hal Foster, “Contra el pluralismo”, *Episteme, Eutopías, Documentos de trabajo*, 186, Valencia, España, 1998, 24 págs. Reprod. en: *La Gaceta de Cuba*, La Habana, n° 5, September–October 2000, pp. 34–39. Electronic version available: www.criterios.es/pdf/fosterpluralismopdf, p. 13.

107 Cf. Yves Michaud, *Art, transgression et excès aujourd’hui*, *op. cit.*

108 Namely, art is whatever the institutional authority (museum, for example) says that it is. Charles Dickie has formulated and revised such a theory in *Art and the Aesthetics. An Institutional Analysis*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974; *The Art Circle: A Theory of Art*, New York: Haven Publication, 1984.

109 Hal Foster, “Contra el pluralismo”, *op. cit.*

become an industry itself in the consumer society that will incessantly have to provide *new* products. Being the main beneficiaries, many galleries, auctioneers, magazines and museums will actively promote art consumerism and so pluralism. Every new transgression, and its own multiplication, could be seen as an answer to a demand not so much artistic as external, as an anticipation of the logic of the market.¹¹⁰

Foster says that for the market to be open to many different styles, the artistic movements would have to multiply and a strict definition of artforms would have to disappear. A consequence of this is that criticism, once so important for artistic production, would not only have lost its authority but would also have been revealed unnecessary. Only a few artists and critics would miss a solid discourse in what Foster interprets as the acceptance of pluralism.¹¹¹ As synonymous of tolerance, pluralism is taken as a democratic value that favours freedom to judge and choose. However, Foster questioned this freedom for not being so real and transparent, and so accused that tolerance of being ideological. This will be due especially to the lack of discussion and criticism that pluralism would bring with it.

He describes pluralism as a situation that admits and *equalizes* every style or every sort of art, where the critical orders disappear substituted by the merely *risqué*. Without critical criteria, we will be unable to discriminate the works of art by their quality and so, critical judgment is reserved. This signifies an excessive tolerance that can lead to a sort of narcissism and indifference.¹¹² This situation of relativistic pluralism will make it more difficult for artists to provoke a reaction in the public to their proposals. According to Foster, the mobility in art, as in other social structures, would be imposed by consumerism and fashion, offering constant and often cyclic changes in their objects. This is a kind of mobility that paradoxically hides a deep social inertia.

If as Natalie Heinich defines it, contemporary art is a kind of “experience of the limits”, it tries to push the boundaries or cross every artistic, ethical, moral and civic limit,¹¹³ it will be certainly difficult to see which limits are exactly transgressed. As said from the beginning, transgression implies rules to transgress, but there seem to be no normative rules in contemporary art. In the indiscriminate coexistence of all artforms, art becomes an arena not of dialectical dialogue but of vested interests, of licensed sects: in lieu of culture – Foster concludes – we have cults.¹¹⁴ Foster is not the only one denouncing the academicism of some of the new artistic schools, neither in pointing out the nostalgic regression of others. And I agree with him that fighting against relativistic pluralism doesn’t necessarily involve a dogmatic position wanting to go back to some old truths. It is more likely that this fight looks to strengthen the voice of art in society avoiding an uncritical dispersion that turns it impotent.

110 Cf. Rainer Rochlitz, *op. cit.*, p. 41

111 Hal Foster, “Contra el pluralismo”, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

112 Cf. Rainer Rochlitz, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

113 Natalie Heinich, *L’Art contemporain exposé aux rejets. Études de cas*, Éditions Jacqueline Chambon, Nîmes, 1998; *Le triple jeu de l’art contemporain. Sociologie des arts plastiques*, Paris: Minit, 1998.

114 Hal Foster, “Contra el pluralismo”, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

In his review of some of the procedures of contemporary art, Foster denounces particularly the assumption of historical forms, but out of context and reified, without a conscience of historical and social limits. For him, this innocence of history of art and society, of the conventional nature of every art is dangerous, because it is ignorant of its own conditions. Understood as freedom of choice – Foster adds – pluralism not only works for the free market, but also pretends that art is “natural” and not conventional. I think he is right in demanding a deeper dialogue with art history to help with artistic appreciation. And so, it will be also necessary to return to a more committed criticism, to an ambitious judgment, and even to the defense of an aesthetic rationality as others, like Rochlitz, demand.

Nonetheless, if any art is subjected to conventions, the relativism reflected by the pluralistic artistic scenario can be moderated and limited. Although very critical himself with the “tribalism” in contemporary art, Yves Michaud has also argued that, instead of the fragmentation and pluralism in artistic practice, there is still room for artistic and even aesthetic criteria that would allow a certain level of consensus for appreciation and selection of artworks.¹¹⁵ These criteria will arise, according to Michaud, inside “communities of evaluation articulated with communities of production” where we can learn to identify and affectively react to certain artistic and aesthetic qualities, which are an “objective counterpart” but decided by convention.¹¹⁶ This double process of education and elaboration in which –following Hume – taste reaches normativity, being very complex and dynamic, will demand practice, comparison, and attention to others’ viewpoints, and will involve both the public and the artists. The artistic conventions will constitute a sort of – in wittgensteinian terms- “language games” that will deal not only with production but also with the reception of art (including modes of interpretation and evaluation). Conventions build up and shape the artistic institutions, are learnt through practice, and constitute a background to test any possible transgression. Therefore, it should be possible to evaluate the works according to criteria such as their pertinence, interest, significance and fruitfulness.¹¹⁷

Qualitative discrimination in art will be then possible in current pluralism described as “relativism under strict restrictions” or “conceptually organized”. Indeed, we could celebrate a pluralism through which art has expanded its modes of symbolization and so its chances of offering a new look on reality, altering and subverting the ordinary way of looking at things. This plurality represents “a sort of polytheist view”; a sane counterweight to the unifying and totalized point of view aspired to from science and technology, and also from the normative culture of law and moral. It will be a democratic guarantee, “an antidote against any pretension of eliminating the disagreement and the sovereignty of the individual”.¹¹⁸

115 Yves Michaud, *El juicio estético*, Barcelona: Idea Books, 2002.

116 Yves Michaud, *Ibid.*, pp. 26–27. Here, Michaud follows Wollheim’s *Art and its Objects*. History of art works identifying certain artistic qualities, but aesthetic appreciation is not restricted to the field of art and other practices would work in the same way (Michaud’s examples: how to become an expert in Tony Cragg’s sculptures, Spanish horses and rap music).

117 Cf. Rainer Rochlitz, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

118 Gerard Vilar, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

Democracy

But is the public also sovereign? So far, I have discussed the subversive character of art and argued for the necessity and possibilities of qualitative discrimination and criticism in a situation of normalized subversion. However, there are still certain aspects that have to do with the reception and people's reactions to contemporary art which have been already mentioned, but deserve now more attention.

When Rainer Rochlitz asks himself what the public have a right to expect from a work of art, he answers: "nothing, according to the supporters of the innovating movements of the twentieth century; everything, for those that vindicate the autonomy of taste".¹¹⁹ Since the times of Manet and Baudelaire, not just the critics but particularly the public would have seen their right to judge limited. After avant-gardism, the demand of art would have become a matter that involves artists and institutional powers excluding most of the public, deemed incompetent. Artists and institutions do not seem to share their criteria for deliberation with the public who, in the best case scenario, must trust them.

In "Against pluralism", to the illusion of change in a radical pluralist situation, Hal Foster added the illusion of democracy. Posed as a freedom to choose, the pluralist position plays right into the ideology of the "free market". But the current supermarket-mentality of the art world leads to an illusory freedom that actually cloaks sinister conservatism and even authoritarianism just beneath the variety-show surface. Due to the lack of critical criteria, old subjectivist values like genius and master piece come back to join others, such as the capacity to provoke scandal or the prices that the works reach in the market, all of them are values that capitalism manipulates at its whim. Art finally and completely succumbs to consumerism losing all of its vitality and subversive power. In a similar perspective, Jean Baudrillard too wrote, in *Le complot de l'art*, that contemporary art takes advantage of the impossibility of a solid critical judgment of value "in order to speculate with the guilt of those that don't understand it or understand that there is nothing to understand".¹²⁰ With a clear show of abuse of power, the rules of the game have been hidden from the public who would have been treated as a bystander, a mere consumer.¹²¹ The strategy looks successful, leading to the ambiguous, paradoxical, and almost schizoid attitude of most people towards art today, described at the beginning of this paper.

Now, I have already defended that "the artistic games of language" – using Michaud terminology – don't lack complete rationality and have certain rules that can be used to moderate relativistic pluralism. The problem seems to then be that many people will not be allowed to have access to them. The consumerist conformity of the public is again, not an exclusive phenomenon of the art world though. It seems to happen in many other fields of public discourse of our plural and democratic societies, particularly in politics, and weakens

119 Cf. Rainer Rochlitz, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

120 Jean Baudrillard, *El Complot del Arte. Ilusión y Desilusión Estéticas*, Buenos Aires: Amorrortu, 2006, p. 66.

121 *Ibid.*, p. 67.

the same democracy that it claims to defend. Like pluralism itself, democracy is not a state of grace and its ethical connotations cannot hide that it is basically a mechanism that should work right.¹²² The role of economic interests, publicity and other powerful production and distribution systems, is very influential, but people still keep the right to choose in the democratic market. And if it's true that you cannot fool all the people all the time, in democracy the arguments (artistic arguments included) should be convincing and people should be able to recognize their reasons.¹²³ Moreover, every vote should count. From this perspective, although many are right to express their saturation with the mediocrity that floods contemporary art, and their continuous suspicions of fraud, to talk about a deliberate deception or a *délit d'initiés*¹²⁴, or to say that artists do not have today any interest in the general public except when it's time to justify public funding,¹²⁵ would be – in my opinion – too global and indiscriminate a condemnation of artists and artistic institutions.

A process of democratization has certainly occurred inside the art world affecting the institution, the artists and the public. In the frame of a more universalized education and culture, the artistic institutions have increased in number and diversity, taking art closer to more people and – adding also the changes in the concept of work of art- making possible for more people to become an artist. Therefore, the artworld is nowadays bigger and more diverse than ever before and this connects with the worries – referred to above – about the confused coexistence of the good and the bad, the genuine and the false, creativity and farce, inside the boundaries of the artworld. That is why I think that the exercise of sovereignty that frees the context of reception involves certain responsibility from the part of the artist¹²⁶ and that some level of pedagogy is needed. Many museums have made the effort and have achieved that a wider public understand and enjoy the provocations and ruptures of contemporary art. There are also many artists whose concern for the public is not a pose, and beyond a cultural marketplace where there are admired and purchased without being listened to, are interested in having effective communication with the public¹²⁷, some of them develop even a pedagogical task as part of their job¹²⁸.

Now, in relation to the public, the democratization of art has hugely increased the potential public, but this hasn't transformed it into mass art¹²⁹. Even considering the increasing

122 Cf. Félix de Azúa, "Sólo quiero lo mejor para ti", *Diario ELPAIS*, 10th of November, 2005.

123 Cf. Slavoj Žižek, "Los europeos quieren más Europa", *Diario ELPAIS*, 8th of July, 2008.

124 Jean Baudrillard, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

125 Yves Michaud, *El arte en estado gaseoso*, *op. cit.*, pp. 38–39.

126 See Rainer Rochlitz, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

127 See Georges Didi-Huberman, "La emoción no dice 'yo'". Diez fragmentos sobre la libertad estética", in: VVAA, *Alfredo Jaar. La política de las imágenes*, Santiago de Chile: Ediciones Metales Pesados, 2008, p. 63.

128 Again, Alfredo Jaar is a good example. He divides his work in three areas. First, the installations that he exposes in museums and galleries. Second, what he calls "public interventions", with which he tries to reach a wider public. Third, conferences, workshops and seminars through which he wants to dialogue with new generations. "I see these three areas as absolutely equal and necessary; each one of them feed the others. Only diversifying my spheres of action I feel that I can reach a wider public". Alfredo Jaar, "Es difícil", *op. cit.* p.210.

129 If "mass art" defines – following Noël Carroll – in terms of its accessibility to wide audiences and its being produced and disseminated by technologies "capable of delivering multiple instances or tokens of mass artworks to widely disparate

number of visits to the museums and other artistic centres, many more people seem to be interested in television, pop-music, and other *popular* cultural productions. The fact is that since the concept of art began to rise as an intellectualized activity in the Renaissance, a sort of a more sophisticated, cultured, and restricted public that could appreciate the formal values, was demanded¹³⁰. Historical art seems more accessible on the surface, but a certain degree of knowledge was always required. Even more, it could be argued that democracy doesn't suit art¹³¹ and that it is not the vocation of art to diffuse itself democratically as public service.¹³² However, without denying that there always had been "painters for painters", the idea of an art that lives for itself, and whose worth should be decided by experts and professionals only is, I think, not only wrong but also counterproductive for art, although it has seemed to be the contrary. Art should not be afraid of the public's judgment, conforming itself to institutional protection and seeking refuge in the ignorance of the majority in a strategy that is often accused of being arbitrary, elitist and corporate way of securing the survival of high art in its competition with other cultural goods. Nonetheless, art needs a certain context to develop its critical task.

The artists would have multiplied the strategies with which they are trying to combat with the acclaimed current excess of information caused by an invasion of images that would neutralize their impact, even the hardest ones. The work of art would work then as "counter-information",¹³³ an act of resistance in such way that it dislocates our vision and simultaneously involves our thought. Certainly, image itself has suffered a great discredit, also due to the current aesthetization of society. Too many images blind us, dissimulate the reality, even more, trivialize it. However, images will be more necessary than ever before. Being true that images aesthetize reality and anesthetize our conscience. We should not choose to do without them, but to learn how to look at them with a reflective attitude. Parallel, when the problem is the reduction or absence of images that turns invisible certain realities¹³⁴, the artist can try to stage this invisibility with another selection and another

reception points" (*A Philosophy of Mass Art*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, p. 188). So defined, the category overlaps the range of "popular art," although Carroll insists on making a distinction between the two concepts. Popular art, he claims, is a much wider category, including many instances of art not technologically disseminated in the manner – according to Carroll – required by mass art. On the other hand, the feature of "accessibility" draws lines between mass art and art, in the sense discussed here. Now, we can think that the tourist industry has turned art into a mass or popular consumer product. Elsewhere ("A quick look. The experience of Art in the consumer society", *IV Mediterranean Congress of Aesthetics "Art & Time"*, *Irbid*, Jordan, 22–25 July 2008) I have defended that the "tourist" experience of art, in which art is consumed with the quick and easy digestion (accessibility with the minimum effort) associated to entertainment, being actually common and enjoyable, reduces in fact the value of art when trying to engage and challenge our perception, cognition and emotions, disconnecting with our conventional look at things and expectations.

130 See Larry Shiner, *op. cit.*

131 Cf. Félix de Azúa, "Triste atraso de los avanzados", *Diario ELPAIS*, 9th of December, 2005. Cf. also Jean Clair, *op. cit.*, pp. 16, 54, 58, 63.

132 See Yves Michaud, *El arte en estado gaseoso*, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

133 In the sense defended by Deleuze, quoted by Didi-Huberman, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

134 The information we get through mass media, such as television, would exert coercion on us through two different techniques which Didi-Huberman calls "nothing" and "too much". On the one hand, he means "censorship and destruction" of information, on the other, "asphyxia by proliferation" of it. See Georges Didi-Huberman, *Ibid.*, p. 39.

treatment of the images as opposed to that of the dominant information¹³⁵. Both cases show why the context of reception of images is so important.¹³⁶

Art offers its space to fiction and freedom from daily tasks and duties, and from the uses of current communication, to throw a subversive look on reality. In fact, it is because it frees spaces in which we can try to redefine the poetics of image, that the artistic context is one of the few spaces in which we can try to fight against the way in which images are usually consumed.¹³⁷ Nonetheless, our capability for answering and implicating will depend on whether we can recognize the political character of these poetics. Now, the social degradation of the visual discourse will demand an ethical concern about the way in which images are produced and used that should also address the public. This necessity for a critical reception of the visual discourse adds to the responsibility that the public also have to judge starting from the demands which the work of art itself presents. From this perspective every work of art looks for recognition that demands our time and attention.¹³⁸

On the other hand, the commitment of the public, namely, the recovery of their right to judge, supported and advised by a valiant criticism, has been argued crucial to free art from the perverse effects of the mechanisms of the market and the society of spectacle. Maybe then – as Mario Vargas Llosa has recently written – a new set of values can arise that allows the public to discern from authentic feelings and experience, and not because it is what they have read or been told, what is truly creative in the art of our time. Maybe then – he concludes – "art will emancipate itself from the snobs, the frivolous, and the speculators who confine it".¹³⁹

Finally, the attitude of indifference with respect to the public from which artists and institutions are accused will match the conservative attitude of rejection maintained by a large section of the public. Demeaning the judgment of people by arguing their complete ignorance and incompetence would be a point of view as indefensible as rejecting straight off an artistic production that you have not even bothered to try to understand. It seems to me that rejecting both positions and encouraging a critical dialogue between the artists and the public can help to make the voice of art stronger in society and so reap its benefits.

135 Jacques Rancière, "El teatro de las imágenes", in: VVAA, *Alfredo Jaar. La política de las imágenes*, *op. cit.*, pp. 71–78.

136 *Ibid.*

137 Antonio Monegal, "Iconos polémicos", in: Antonio Monegal (comp.), *op. cit.*, p. 19. Complementary, Didi-Huberman writes: "photojournalists have understood that the space of art is nowadays one of the few where the formal criteria of the producer of images are respected, and that the museum is, maybe, the only place in which the integrity of the information presented as they give it is guaranteed". Then, they (along with the artists) will carry out a counter-information task. *Op. cit.*, p. 63. As has been discussed here, all it needs is to reach the public.

138 Rainer Rochlitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 36, 89.

139 Mario Vargas Llosa, "Tiburones en formol", *Diario ELPAIS*, 5th of October, 2008. The context of this article is the recent debate which arose from the auction of Damien Hirst's works at Sotheby's, London, 15th and 26th of September, 2008.

Mojca Puncer
ODPOR UMETNOSTI
PROTI INSTRUMENTALIZACIJI

Uvod

Walter Benjamin v svoji znameniti razpravi o umetnini v času, ko jo je mogoče tehnično reproducirati, zasnuje teorijo politizacije umetnosti in analizo vloge tehnične reprodukcije v umetnosti.¹⁴⁰ Čeprav gre za tvegano in protislovno iskanje novih poti in možnosti za umetnost, ki izhajajo iz procesov interakcije umetnosti z vsakokratnim družbenim okoljem, je tu pomemben prispevek k preizpraševanju umetniškega avtonomizma. Z Benjaminom stopa v ospredje teoretsko osvetljevanje položaja umetnosti v tesni povezanosti z njeno družbeno funkcionalnostjo, zgodovinskostjo, političnimi alternativami in subverzivnimi potenciali. Opravka imamo s preходом umetniškega dela iz estetske sfere v okrožja resničnega, tehnološko obvladljivega in reproduciranega, političnega in družbeno integrativnega.¹⁴¹ Nove funkcije umetnosti se vzpostavljajo zaradi prehoda od umetniškega artefakta k procesu, dogodku in umetniški storitvi, ki je vselej v neki specifični funkciji kulture (novomedijska umetnost sodeluje pri proizvodnji kulturnih inovacij itn.). To se kaže tudi v tem, da poudarek danes ni več na razstavnih, marveč na komunikacijski vrednosti, ki se utrjuje v interakciji sodobne umetnosti z novo kulturno ekonomijo in medmrežnim aktivizmom.¹⁴²

Umetnost postane biopolitična, ko začne uporabljati umetniška sredstva za produkcijo in dokumentiranje življenja kot čiste aktivnosti, ki se godi v času.¹⁴³ Takšna umetnost se lahko razvije v razmerah današnje biopolitične dobe, v kateri je življenje samo postalo predmet tehnične in umetniške intervencije. Glavna skrb te politike je življenjska doba. Po Groysu biopolitiko pogosto zamenjujemo z znanstvenimi in tehničnimi strategijami genske manipulacije, ki imajo opraviti s preoblikovanjem živega telesa, medtem ko je ključni dosežek biopolitičnih tehnologij v oblikovanju življenjske dobe. Vire za tovrstno pojmovanje biopolitike najdemo pri Foucaultu in Agambenu, ki sta prispevala miselna izhodišča, pomembna za številne avtorje.¹⁴⁴ Sicer pa je bil Benjamin eden prvih, ki je na ravni teorije

140 Cf. Walter Benjamin, »Umetnina v času, ko jo je mogoče tehnično reproducirati«, v: W. Benjamin, *Izbrani spisi*, Ljubljana: Zavod za založniško dejavnost (Studia humanitatis), 1998, str. 145–176.

141 Cf. Janez Strehovec, *Oblika kot problem. Razprave iz estetske teorije*, Ljubljana: CZ, 1985, str. 8.

142 Cf. Janez Strehovec, »Od umetniškega artefakta k umetniški storitvi. Konceptualizacija interakcij sodobne umetnosti z novo ekonomijo in medmrežnim aktivizmom«, v: *Filozofski vestnik*, št. 1, letn. XXIV/2003, str. 183–200.

143 Cf. Boris Groys, »Od umetniškega dela k umetniškemu dokumentu«, v: *Likovne besede*, št. 67–68, 2004, str. 41.

144 Ključne reference za razumevanje biopolitike v tej razpravi so: Michel Foucault, »Rojstvo biopolitike«, v: *Filozofski vestnik*, št. 3, letn. XXIV/2003, str. 171–177; *Zgodovina seksualnosti 1. Volja do znanja*, Ljubljana: ŠKUC, 2000; Giorgio Agamben, *Homo sacer: suverena oblast in golo življenje*, Ljubljana: Študentska založba, 2004. Marina Gržinić sodobni svet umetnosti reflektira v razmerju do nove politike globalnega kapitalizma, »ki je biopolitika ali oblika dominacije nad tako imenovanim golim (reproduktivnim) življenjem«, v svoji analizi pokaže, da je mogoče sodobno kulturo misliti »na način genetične (kulturne) paradigme«, ki je speta z logiko delovanja biotehnologije kot oblike gospodarstva kapitala nad življenjem v pogojih globalizacij. »Ta kulturni kapital se veže na instrumente biopolitike, kot sta kloniranje in

razmišljal o prevladi tehnične reprodukcije nad živo produkcijo, ki se je začela pojavljati v njegovem času ter s tem povezanih možnosti instrumentalizacije in poblagovljenja umetniške prakse. Za Benjamina je idealna možnost popolne reprodukcije ali popolnega kloniranja pomembnejša od dejanskih tehničnih možnosti, ki so bile takrat na razpolago. V zvezi z Benjaminovim izvajanjem Groys zapiše: »Biti izvirnik in posedovati avro pomeni isto, kot biti živ. Vendar življenje ni nekaj, kar ima živo bitje 'v sebi': je vpis živega bitja v kontekst – v življenjsko dobo in živ prostor.«¹⁴⁵ Danes smo priče nenehnemu nadomeščanju umetnega, tehnično proizvedenega in simuliranega z realnim oziroma reproduktivnega z neponovljivim. Tako je kloniranje postalo »emblem biopolitike«, saj v njem »življenje ugledamo kot izvzeto iz lastnega prostora, kar je večna grožnja tehnologije«¹⁴⁶. Odziv na to »grožnjo« so različne obrambne strategije, ki skušajo preprečiti izvzetje življenja iz lastnega prostora z regulativi in prepovedmi.¹⁴⁷ Sodobna umetnost nove znanstvene in tehnične izsledke uporablja s kritičnim in dekonstruktivističnim namenom, kar je svojevrsten upor proti instrumentalizaciji. Po Groysu pa lahko umetniška praksa (Groys ima v mislih predvsem umetniško dokumentacijo in instalacijo) razkriva tudi drugačno pot za biopolitiko, namreč tako, da razvija strategije vnovičnega vpisa na osnovi konteksta, s čimer preobraža umetno in reproducirano v nekaj živega in neponovljivega.

Reproduktibilnost in v telo usmerjene umetniške prakse

Fascinacija s tehnologijo in znanostjo ni zaznamovala le umetniških avantgardistov z začetka prejšnjega stoletja, marveč je osrednje gibalo številnih sodobnih umetniških praks, ki med drugim tematizirajo tudi preobrat od užitka v igri avtomata k občutju nelagodja in grozljivega ob srečanju z brezhibno arteficalno-telesno strukturo.¹⁴⁸ Pomislimo lahko tudi

tehnologija transferja zelenih estetskih značilnosti, katerih motiv /.../ narekuje zahodni trg umetnin.« Cf. Marina Gržinič, *Estetika kibersveta in učinki derealizacije*, Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, ZRC SAZU, 2003, str. 14. Za preizpraševanje vezi med umetnostjo, estetiko in življenjem mdr. izhajamo tudi iz misli Maria Perniole (cf. M. Perniola, »Estetika oblasti in biopolitika«, v: M. Perniola, *Estetika dvajsetega stoletja*, Ljubljana: ZPS, 2000, str. 32–34). Posebnega pomena je »posredujoča« vloga umetnosti v razmerju do biotehnoških znanosti (umetnik nastopi kot »javni amater« – cf. Nataša Petrešin, »Potencialnost kulturnega uporništva: pogovor z Brianom Holmesom, Claire Pentecost, Markom Peljhanom, Igorjem Zabelom«, v: *Maska*, št. 5–6 (88–89), letn. XIX/2004, str. 86 – npr. v okviru razstave *7 grehov: Ljubljana – Moskva*, Moderna galerija Ljubljana, 2004/2005, ko področje, za katero ni posebej strokovno usposobljen, na primer biotehnologijo, preizprašuje v umetnostnem kontekstu; cf. tudi Jekaterina Degot, »Vojska amaterjev«, v: T. Soban (ur.), *7 grehov: Ljubljana – Moskva*, Ljubljana: Moderna galerija, 2004, str. 67–69).

145 Cf. Groys, *op. cit.*, str. 45.

146 Ibid.

147 Umetniško-aktivistični kolektiv Critical Art Ensemble (CAE) zagovarja kritični pristop k razvoju novih bioloških in medicinskih tehnologij, saj razume nove tehnologije kot del vseobsežne ekspanzije kontrole in kapitalističnega obvladovanja. CAE s svojo dejavnostjo spodbuja razmišljanje o mejah in prepovedih ter o pravicah posameznika v zvezi z znanstvenim in tehničnim eksperimentiranjem. Cf. <<http://www.critical-art.net>>.

148 Psihoanaliza je bila prva teorija, ki je sistematično izpostavila *unheimlich* dimenzijo projekta moderne, ki se izmika racionalizaciji (cf. Mladen Dolar (ur.), *Das Unheimliche*, Ljubljana: Društvo za teoretsko psihoanalizo, 1994). Mrtvo ni zgolj mrtvo in tudi živga se polašča mrtvi mehanizem, avtomatizem itn. (cf. Mladen Dolar, »Strah hodi po Evropi«, v: *Das Unheimliche*, str. 78).

na želeče stroje iz Deleuze-Guattarijeve filozofije¹⁴⁹, v dobi znanstvenih revolucij pa dobiva očaranost nad znanstvenimi dosežki, ki zabrisujejo meje med človekom in strojem, tudi nove grozljive razsežnosti.

Tradicionalni dualizem duše in materije v sodobni informacijski družbi nasledi dualizem sporočila in medija. Medij ni samo ločen od sporočila, marveč je pogosto videti bistveno razvrednoten kot mrtev nosilec, ki nima druge težnje kot biti instrumentaliziran. To nosi pomembne posledice tudi za umetnost.

Benjamin je opredelil vsebino kot bistveno značilnost umetniškega dela: vsebina in forma v umetniškem delu sta ena in ista stvar.¹⁵⁰ Z vsebino je naglašeno tisto, kar se ne pusti razbiti z dualističnim pristopom. Tako v umetniškem delu materialne forme ne moremo obravnavati zgolj kot preprosto podporo v službi prenosa sporočila kot zunanjega cilja.

Benjamin odkriva načine, s katerimi nas umetnost sooča s popredmetujočim učinkom instrumentalizacije človeškega bitja s tehniko po razmahu industrije, ekonomskega in tehnološkega napredka.¹⁵¹ Na bolj radikalen način lahko vprašanje, ki ga je odprl Benjamin, zastavimo tudi glede pogojev za realizacijo vpisa človeškega telesa v kreacijo umetniškega dela, ne da bi se ta vpis manifestiral kot oblika instrumentalizacije vsebine, utelešene s posameznim človeškim bitjem. Vsaka umetniška oblika je s tem vprašanjem soočena na specifičen način. Status človeškega telesa ni enak v vizualni umetnosti, živi uprizoritvi, performansu, body artu, kinematografskem delu ali biotehnološkoumetniškem projektu (pri slednjem imamo posebno v mislih v telo usmerjene umetniške prakse, kakršne predstavlja na primer Galerija Kapelica)¹⁵². Uporabe človeškega telesa kot modela, kot interpreta, animatorja ali konstitutivnega dela podobe/dela/projekta ne implicirajo niti enakih estetskih kodov niti enake vrste odnosov med telesom in tehniko.

Utelesiti vlogo v filmu ali v gledališču v tem pogledu ne vsebuje iste vrste učinka implikacije telesa interpreta in interpretacije posebnih oblik instrumentalizacije, ki jim je lahko izpostavljeno. Pri tem pridemo do radikalne pozicije Edwarda Gordona Craiga, ki trdi, da ni v človekovi naravi, da bi bil reduciran na status instrumenta v službi umetniškega dela.¹⁵³

149 Cf. Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *Capitalisme et schizophrénie, L'Anti-Œdipe*, Pariz: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1995.

150 Cf. Walter Benjamin, *Enosmerna ulica*, Ljubljana: Študentska založba, 2002, str. 45: »Vsebinska in oblika sta v umetnini eno: jedro.« (In nadalje: »Vsebinska je to, kar je preizkušeno. V umetniškem delu je snov balast, ki ga refleksija odvrže.« Ibid.)

151 Kar Benjamina vodi v posebno obravnavo tehnične reprodukcije, ne zadeva samo logike ekonomske racionalizacije, marveč je potrebno tudi, da pokažemo na logiko poblagovljenja, ki se pri tem razvije. V benjaminovski viziji estetska izvedba tehnik reprodukcije, kakršna se udejanja na primer v filmu, odlikuje funkcijo umetnosti, kolikor ta meri na osnivanje »harmonične igre« med človekom in tehniko, ki stoji nasproti tipu instrumentalističnih postopkov, značilnih za »prvotno tehniko«, utemeljeno na »dominaciji naravnih sil« ter »pokoravanju narave«.

152 Galerija Kapelica (ustanovljena leta 1994) se vse bolj osredotoča na presečišča med umetnostjo, znanostjo in novimi tehnologijami; doslej je že predstavljala projekte umetnikov, kot sta Stelarc in Orlan (znana primera eksperimentiranja s tehnološko stimulacijo in medicinsko tehnologijo), skupine Critical Art Ensemble (CAE), znanstveno-umetniškega laboratorija SymbioticA (primer eksperimentiranja s tkivnim inženiringom, s katerim se ukvarja tudi slovenska umetnica mlajše generacije Polona Tratnik) itn.

153 Cf. Edward Gordon Craig, »Igralec in nadmarioneta« (1908), v: E. G. Craig, *O gledališki umetnosti*, Ljubljana: Knjižnica Mestnega gledališča ljubljanskega, 1995, str. 54–78; str. 55; 58: »Vsaka človeška narava stremi k svobodi; prav človekova

Craigova refleksija se nanaša na gledališkega igralca, čigar telesna prezenca *hic et nunc* je jedro same vsebine dela in določa njegovo edinstveno umetniško naravo. V gledališču to isto telo igralca tvori bistvo dela in ne samo njegove podobe. Zaradi tega telo postane eden od »materialov« teksture samega dela. Vendar se po Craigu sicer upravičeni odpor zoper ta status izkaže kot ovira v estetski koncepciji, ki opredeljuje vlogo telesa v kreaciji resničnega umetniškega dela. Za Benjamina, nasprotno, ta odpor tvori sestavni del funkcije estetike telesa, kolikor ta meri k vzpostavljanju ravnovesja med človekom in tehnično opremo. To »ravnovesje« dopušča človeškim bitjem »pod nadzorom aparatur«, da se »ne odpovedo svoji človečnosti«. ¹⁵⁴ Človek, ki ga je uporaba tehnike na način standardizirane ekonomske racionalizacije instrumentalizirala do točke odtujitve njegove človečnosti, je tisto, kar je Benjamin označil s figuro avtomata.

Umetnost v času biopolitike: kloniranje kot emblem

Isabelle Rieusset-Lamarié se v svoji razpravi o kloniranju in umetnosti sprašuje, koliko je lahko umetnost učinkovita v svojih postopkih, ki so v temeljnem nasprotju s postopki instrumentalizacije, oziroma koliko so postopki instrumentalizacije živega, ki so na delu v biološkem kloniranju, v protislovju z ravnanjem v umetnosti? ¹⁵⁵ Kakor hitro umetnost obravnavamo z vidika instrumentalizacije ¹⁵⁶, je v soočenju s kloniranjem ni mogoče zreducirati na priložnostno stališče, katerega zastavek bi bil – ne glede na njegove antropološke

osebnost je torej dokaz, da je človek kot *gradivo* neuporaben za gledališče. »Pa vendar: vse čase, dokler bo trajal svet, se bo človeška narava bojevala za svobodo in se upirala, da bi jo kdo zasužnjil ali jo spremenil v sredstvo za izražanje tujih misli. /.../ in celo če bi igralec prikazoval samo svoje ideje, ki bi jih sam oblikoval, bi bila njegova narava še zmeraj podjarmljena; in njegovo telo bi moralo postati suženj duha; in zdravo telo se bo temu odločno uprlo, kot sem že pokazal. Človeško telo je torej zaradi navedenih razlogov že *po naravi* popolnoma neuporabno kot *gradivo* za umetnost.«

¹⁵⁴ Benjamin to misel razvija v povezavi s kinematografsko estetiko. Cf. Benjamin, »Umetnina v času, ko jo je mogoče tehnično reproducirati«, v: Benjamin, *op. cit.* V zvezi z omenjenim iskanjem ravnovesja med človekom in tehnologijo je zanimiva predstavitev programa Galerije Kapelica na festivalu Ars Electronica 2008 v Linzu: umetniška produkcija, predstavljena v posebni sekciji festivala pod naslovom »Ekologija tehnouma«, temelji na razumevanju ekologije, ki v tehnologizirano okolje z umetnostjo vnaša občutek za mero. Cf. Jurij Krpan, »Ecology of Techno Mind«, v: J. Krpan, S. Sajovic (ur.), *Ecology of Techno Mind: Ars Electronica 2008, Featured Art Scene: Kapelica Gallery, Ljubljana*, Ljubljana: Galerija Kapelica, Zavod K6/4, 2008, str. 7–11.

¹⁵⁵ Isabelle Rieusset-Lamarié, »La teneur de l'œuvre d'art comme résistance à l'instrumentalisation. (Les clones au risque de l'art)«, v: *L'art contemporain au risque du clonage*, Pariz: Publications de la Sorbonne & ACTE 91, 2002, str. 43–62.

¹⁵⁶ Z vidika Kantetove »filozofije umetnosti« (ta razlikuje med razredom teorij, ki se osredotočajo na opredelitev temeljnih izrazov za vrednotenje umetnosti, ter razredom vseh različnih instrumentalističnih teorij) v t. i. instrumentalističnih teorijah instrumentalno vrednost neke stvari ponavadi primerjamo z njeno intrinzično lastnostjo. Instrumentalna vrednost neke stvari je v tem, da je ta stvar sredstvo za doseganje drugih smotrov, medtem ko ima neka stvar intrinzično vrednost, če jo cenimo *zaradi nje same*, ne pa *zgolj* kot sredstvo za doseg neke druge stvari (vrednosti). Vendar pa je tudi »edinstvenost« (instrumentalna »dragocenost«, »vrednost«) še vedno lahko sredstvo, na primer za doseg estetskega izkustva. Slednje pa z zahtevo po »nezainteresiranosti« prereže referenčne odnose z zunanjim svetom, ki jih sicer vzpostavljajo moralne, kognitivne idr. lastnosti umetnin (etično/estetsko vrednotenje z argumentom (zmerne) avtonomnosti, ki je značilnost t. i. estetskega režima modernosti). Obstajajo pa tudi instrumentalisti, ki poudarjajo ravno referenčne vidike umetnine, na primer Nelson Goodman, ki je mnenja, da je vsa umetnost referenčna. Kajti če umetnine ne bi imele referenčne razsežnosti, ne bi bilo mogoče govoriti o njihovem prvotnem cilju, ki je v tem, da je izkustvo umetnin kognitivno. Cf. Božidar Kante, *Filozofija umetnosti*, Ljubljana: Jutro, 2001, str. 143, 153–158.

nasledke – ugledan kot popolnoma zunanji postopkom same umetnosti. Konfrontacija umetnosti z instrumentalizacijo ni nekaj naključnega, temveč je to vprašanje bistvenega pomena za umetnost. V tem gre po Rieusset-Lamariéjevi iskati tudi odporniški in subverzivni potencial umetniškega dela, tako po njegovi vsebinski invenciji kot tudi po njegovi avtonomiji, zoper postopke instrumentalizacije, ki mu hočejo naložiti neko zunanjo smotrnost, kar Rieusset-Lamariéjeva poskuša podkrepiti s sklicevanjem na Walterja Benjamina in Georga Wilhelma Friedricha Hegla.

V hegeljanskem pristopu nas tako zlasti zanima, zakaj se mora avtonomija umetniškega objekta uresničiti v upoštevanju avtonomije svojih delov in koliko ima ta zahteva specifične implikacije v t. i. upodobitvenih umetnostih. V glavnih obrisih sledimo tistim korakom analize Rieusset-Lamariéjeve, ki preizprašujejo pogoje, pod katerimi je konfrontacija z notranjo smotrnostjo vsebine živega bitja imela vpliv na estetsko refleksijo, zlasti z vidika upoštevanja avtonomije umetniškega dela. Zastavlja se vprašanje, kako se lahko zahteva časovnosti, ki je zunanja vsebini, pojavi kot temeljna forma instrumentalizacije? Ker gre biološko kloniranje vse tja do aplikacije zunanje časovnosti na živo bitje samo in ne zgolj na njegovo podobo, Rieusset-Lamariéjeva s pomočjo Benjaminove zastavitve razišče, kako lahko virtualne klone kot podaljšek kinematografskega vidika osebnega »gestusa« oživi notranja časovnost. Tako bi lahko dodatno podkrepili, da sta biološko kloniranje in virtualno kloniranje (kakršnega predstavlja filmska umetnost iz Benjaminove analize) neprimerljivi, ne le z vidika njune etične incidence, temveč z bistveno drugačne pozicije, ki jo vzdržujeta glede na estetsko izkustvo, kolikor »estetska sodba pusti, da vnanje navzoče obstaja prosto zase /.../, vtem ko predmetu privošči, da ima svoj smoter v samem sebi« ¹⁵⁷.

* * *

Z Benjaminovim razumevanjem vsebine kot ključne za umetniško delo je naglašeno tisto, kar se ne pusti razbiti z dualističnim pristopom. Tako v umetniškem delu materialne forme ne moremo obravnavati zgolj kot preprosto podporo v službi prenosa sporočila kot zunanjega cilja. Slednjič gre za to, da je umetniško delo v nasprotju s postopki instrumentalizacije. Instrumentalizacija reducira material, da ta ni drugega kot podpora nekemu smotru, ki mu ostaja zunanji. ¹⁵⁸ V hegeljanski problematiki, kakor jo tematizira Rieusset-Lamariéjeva, je ključno upoštevanje avtonomije umetniškega dela v prekoračitvi tega utilitarnega razmerja, ki naloži objektu neki zunanji smoter. ¹⁵⁹

Instrumentalizacija potemtakem pomeni neupoštevanje vsebine.

Rieusset-Lamariéjevo v tej zvezi zanimajo ovire razvoja tehnične reproduktibilnosti v njeni (neupravičeni) zahtevi, da se jo aplicira na vse medije (multimedia), kamor so vštet tudi tisti, katerih enkratnost je odvisna od vsebine. Posledice tehnične reproduktibilnosti

¹⁵⁷ To zapiše Hegel v svoji obravnavi estetskega razsojanja pri Kantu, cf. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Predavanja o estetiki: uvod*, Ljubljana: Društvo za teoretsko psihoanalizo, 2003, str. 79.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Rieusset-Lamarié, *op. cit.*, str. 44.

¹⁵⁹ Hegel, *op. cit.*, str. 76: »Kajti drugi smotri, kot so podučevanje, očiščevanje, poboljšanje, zaslužek, stremljenje za slavo in čast, se umetniškega dela kot takega ne tičejo in ne določajo njegovega pojma.«

vendarle niso iste za vse vrste medijev. O tem nam priča že razlika med sliko in besedilom: reproducirana na drugem nosilcu, slika ne bo drugega kot kopija. Še bolj konkretno se ta solidarnost umetniškega dela z njegovim nosilcem izkaže v konsubstancialnosti živega bitja z lastnim telesom, ki ga ni mogoče reducirati na njegovo »podporo«. Ta vidik podčrta že Kant, ko pravi, da sta »v živem /.../ smoter in materiatūra [Materiatür] smotra tako neposredno združena, da je eksistenca dana le, kolikor se v njej nahaja njen smoter«¹⁶⁰. Vendar Langton, oče »umetnega življenja«, ne preneha ponavljati, da je življenje oblika kompleksne dinamične organizacije, ki je v temelju neodvisna od svojega materialnega nosilca.¹⁶¹ To pojmovanje pokaže na globok dualizem sporočila in medija, ki utemeljuje družbo multimedijske reprodukcije. Toda brž ko je vprašanje multimedijske reprodukcije vprašanje samega življenja, instrumentalistična redukcija tudi živo bitje obravnava kot material.

Ta linija razmisleka razjasni dejstvo, da se biološko kloniranje v naši družbi ne pojavlja kot izoliran fenomen. Nerazdružljivo je od dualistične ideologije, ki pod krinko obravnava življenja kot tehnično reproduktivnega sporočila reducira organizme na gole nosilce, izrabljene v službi tega sporočila. Obravnavati nek živ organizem kot preprost nosilec, samovoljno izrabljen za prenos sporočila, ki je bilo izločeno iz njega, pomeni neupoštevanje njegovega nosilca. To se na primer zgodi, kadar se namerava reducirati transgensko žival na prenašalca človeškega gena. Redukcija živega bitja na status preprostega medija, izrabljene za prenos sporočila, po Rieusset-Lamariéjevi pomeni zaostritev dualizma družbe multimedijske reprodukcije. Transgenski kloni so v tem smislu skrajne realizacije postopkov instrumentalizacije, ki ne pomišlja vsiliti živemu bitju nek smoter, ki mu je bistveno zunanji, to je predvsem smoter njegove izrabe.

V benjaminovski viziji so umetniški postopki bistveno v nasprotju z instrumentalizacijo, ki ne spoštuje tega, kar izhaja iz vsebine. Ko je umetnost soočena »s tveganjem kloniranja«¹⁶², se učinek umetnosti na antropološko postajanje izrazi z uporom proti instrumentalizaciji. Tudi Georges Bataille je poudaril antropološki učinek nastopa umetniške dimenzije, ki utemeljuje specifiko človeškega bitja, ko postavlja v igro prekoračenje instrumentalističnega odnosa s tehniko s pomočjo estetskega posredovanja.¹⁶³ Vprašanje aktualizacije tega posredovanja lahko zastavimo ob nastopu vsake tehnike, ki vzbuja občutek groznje.

Estetske realizacije tehnične reproduktivnosti moramo v sodobnosti nujno soočiti s kritičnim pogledom na instrumentalizacijo in poglobljenje. Tozadevno je bil Benjaminov

160 Cf. analizo lepega, ki ima tudi po Kantu »formo smotrnosti«, v: Hegel, *op. cit.*, str. 80.

161 Cf. Christopher G. Langton, navedeno v: Rieusset-Lamarié, *op. cit.*: »Določeno življenje kot dinamičen proces utegne 'loviti' drug fizični material; material mora biti zgolj organiziran na pravi način. Samo kot določen, dinamičen proces, ki konstituira življenje – v kateri koli materialni bazi se utegne pojaviti – mora deliti določene univerzalne poteze – poteze, ki nam bodo dopuščale, da razpoznamo življenje po njegovih samih dinamičnih oblikah, brez reference na njegovo materijo.« Cf. tudi Christopher G. Langton, »Artificial life«, v: T. Druckrey (ur.), *Ars Electronica: Facing the Future, A Survey of Two Decades*, Cambridge, London: MIT Press, 1999, str. 261–268.

162 Takšen je bil tudi naslov razstave »L'art contemporain au risque du clonage« (14. oktober 2000–17. februar 2001) in z njo povezanega kolokvija, kjer je bila predstavljena tudi obravnavana razprava Isabelle Rieusset-Lamarié.

163 Cf. Georges Bataille, *La peinture préhistorique Lascaux ou naissance de l'art*, Genève: Skira, 1995.

namen ne samo uperiti ost na ovire tehnične reproduktivnosti, marveč poskusiti proučiti tudi njene pozitivne estetske potenciale. V resnici ne gre vseh realizacij tehnične reprodukcije reducirati na neko dejanje instrumentalizacije. Konkretni in etični učinki tehnične reproduktivnosti so brez skupnega merila glede na vrsto vsebine, na katero so aplicirani. Umetniškemu delu je z dejstvom njegove tehnične reproduktivnosti lahko zadana nepopravljiva škoda, vendar so tovrstni učinki neprimerljivi z zanikanjem, ki je na delu pri aplikaciji takšnih postopkov na živo bitje, katerega organska vsebina izhaja iz temeljne in kompleksne dimenzije utelešenja. Pri tem je potrebno poudariti, da so same tehnike reprodukcije podvržene načinom ekonomske instrumentalizacije.

S sklicevanjem na Benamina Rieusset-Lamariéjeva opozori na sodobne namere multimedijske reprodukcije del, kolikor se aktualizira kot prenos dela iz enega medija v drug. V postopku ločitve od teksture svojega specifičnega nosilca delo utrpí popačenje.¹⁶⁴ Refleksija ne sledi estetskim učinkom te »adaptacije« na drug nosilec, marveč pod pretvezo reprodukcije dela v vseh medijih pokaže na namere marketinga, kjer so različni načini umetniškega izraza reducirani na preproste nosilce, ki jih je mogoče integrirati v verigo poglobljenja; to kulminira v standardizirani reprodukciji izvornih produktov. V tej vrsti postopkov je sama tehnična reproduktivnost uporabljena kot preprosto sredstvo v službi smotrov, ki so bistveno ekonomski, utemeljeni na pristopu racionalizacije in standardizacije množice. Benjaminova analiza terja, naj se tehnik reprodukcije ne pomeša z načinom ekonomske instrumentalizacije, ki reducira možnosti izvedbe in nasprotuje pojavu najbolj izvornih estetskih potencialnosti, ki so lahko nosilke družbenih sprememb in bi utegnile sodelovati pri pojavljanju novih načinov ekonomske organizacije.

V benjaminovski viziji estetska izvedba tehnik reprodukcije nasprotno predpostavlja njeno integracijo v postopkih, ki ne izhajajo iz instrumentalizacije. S tega vidika je bistveno vprašanje zavesti, v kolikšni meri se vsebina umetniških del izkaže za skladno z njihovo tehnično reproduktivnostjo. V sodobni multimedijski kreaciji je namreč vsebina umetniškega dela takoj zamišljena kot reproduktivna tehnika. Zamisel interaktivnih vizualnih del, za katere internet ni le nosilec prenosa, temveč participira pri sami teksturi dela, je eksemplarična za to ravnanje, saj vpiše tehnike reprodukcije v samo vsebino del, namesto da bi jih izrabila kot način instrumentalizacije, ki popači vsebino dela s tem, da jo podvrže neki zunanji smotrnosti.

Benjamin je svojo analizo estetskih potencialnosti tehnične reproduktivnosti lahko dobro utemeljil na primeru filma, ker je film v osnovi zamišljen kot delo, katerega tekstura je po svoji naravi tehnično reproduktivna.¹⁶⁵ Zato aplikacija tehnične reproduktivnosti na film ni *a priori* odvisna od postopkov instrumentalizacije. Dejstvo, da so kinematografska dela

164 Za Benamina gre lahko ekonomska instrumentalizacija tehnik reprodukcije vse tja do »protinaravne« uporabe. Kar v nadaljevanju terja posebno obravnavo tehnike kloniranja, ne zadeva samo logike ekonomske racionalizacije, marveč je potrebno pokazati logiko poglobljenja, ki se razvije skozi biološko kloniranje. Smer za tovrstni razmislek v povezavi z umetnostnim poljem začrta na primer Marina Gržinić (cf. Gržinić, *op. cit.*).

165 Benjamin, »Umetnina v času, ko jo je mogoče tehnično reproducirati«, v: Benjamin, *op. cit.*, str. 161: film nudi Benjaminu primer umetniške oblike, katere značaj je prvič povsem določen z njeno reproduktivnostjo.

po sami vsebini tehnično reproduktibilna, jih izpostavlja načinom ekonomskega izkoriščanja, utemeljenega na standardizaciji množic. Kljub temu da kulturna industrija izrablja tehnično reproduktibilnost, lahko vsebina nekega kinematografskega dela ostane vsebina umetniškega dela, kajti njegova posebnost je, da je bistveno reproduktibilen, s tem pa ni nujno podvržen instrumentalizaciji, ki ga popači že s samim dejstvom njegove tehnične reprodukcije.

Če nas film sooči z učinkom tehnike kot instrumentalizacije, to vendarle ni dejstvo njegove tehnične reproduktibilnosti, kvečjemu po nekem ovinku. Namreč v razmerju do filmskega igralca, v tehnični reproduktibilnosti njegove podobe, kar Benjamin odkriva kot edinstven način, s katerim film sooči gledalca s popredmetujočim učinkom instrumentalizacije človeškega bitja s tehniko.¹⁶⁶ Igralec je soočen z načinom hibridne identifikacije med svojo dvojno pozicijo subjekta in objekta, med edinstvenostjo svoje fizične prezence *hic et nunc* in podobo samega sebe, ki je razstavljena kot estetski objekt, toda tudi kot blago. Vendarle se soočenje filmskega igralca s tem vprašanjem instrumentalizacije po Benjaminu dogaja v optiki prekoračitve, ki nakazuje možnost osvoboditve od te prisile. Drža igralca participira pri umetniških postopkih filma, kolikor skuša zaščititi specifično človeško vsebino posameznikove osebe v izkustvu njegove interakcije s tehniko. Benjamin ovrednoti držo filmskega igralca kot odpor zoper instrumentalizacijo tehnike. Pri tem pa ne gre do že omenjene radikalne Craigove pozicije, ki sicer zadeva gledališkega igralca.¹⁶⁷

To, kar se v benjaminovski analizi Rieusset-Lamariéjevi izkaže za temeljni razlog instrumentalizacije, ki preti človeški vsebini subjektov vse do tega, da jih spremeni v avtomate, je odtegnitev njihove singularne relacije s časom v vsebini izkustva. Vsebinska je po Benjaminu bistvena vrednost, ki je nerazdružljiva od izkustva in s tem tudi od odnosa s partikularnim spominom. Časovnost izkustva je utelešena v vsebini. Toda zaradi sodobnih reproduktivnih tehnologij živemu bitju grozi instrumentalizacija njegove notranje časovnosti, zlasti ko se vsebinska spomina živega bitja znajde na preizkusu reprogramiranja. Tisto, kar se upira instrumentalizaciji, ni oživljeno z neko zunanjo časovnostjo, temveč zasnavlja svojo notranjo časovnost skozi izkustvo kot edinstvenost njegove vsebine. Neupoštevanje vsebine pomeni neupoštevanje notranje časovnosti, ki je nerazdružljiva od vsebine, najsi gre za vsebinsko umetniškega dela ali za vsebinsko živega bitja. Neko živo bitje, ki nima več svobode, da bi vzpostavilo edinstven odnos s svojim spominom, ni drugega kot avtomat.

* * *

Na sledi Benjaminovi misli in s pomočjo izvajanja Rieusset-Lamariéjeve se lahko približamo učinkom tehnike biološkega kloniranja, ki sicer zasluži posebno analizo in se jih bomo na tem mestu samo dotaknili. Kar je v igri pri tehniki kloniranja ovce Dolly, v resnici zadeva spomin živega bitja. Gre za fenomen reprogramiranja celice, ki je glede na spremembe, ki so ji dopuščene pri delitvi, zmožna vrnitve v predhodno fazo, kjer bi bila znova »totipotentna«¹⁶⁸ oziroma zmožna sodelovati pri razvoju novega zarodka. V javnosti

166 Cf. *ibid.*, zlasti str. 160–163.

167 Cf. Craig, *op. cit.*

168 Prvih nekaj celičnih delitev po oploditvi so zarodne celice *totipotentne*, kar pomeni, da se lahko razvijejo v katerokoli od

krožijo številne metafore, s katerimi skušajo raziskovalci in novinarji poimenovati ta proces reprogramiranja; te metafore prinašajo kontradiktorne interpretacije. Reprogramiranje genoma med drugim pomeni, da je spomin določenih genov, ki so bili »neaktivni« v procesu diferenciacije celic, lahko reaktiviran. V prebujanju spomina ukine cenzuro, ki je utišala določene gene: ponujena jim je bila priložnost, da se izrazijo.

Dejstvo, da se diferencirane celice lahko v določenem primeru reprogramirajo, je že dolgo znano. O tem pričajo številni primeri delov rastlin, ki zadostujejo za potaknjence, iz katerih se bo razvila cela rastlina. Toda tudi neznanstven pogled zadostuje za opazovanje razvoja potaknjenca, da zapazi, kako ne izhaja »iz ničle«. Potreben je čas, da specializirani del neke celote, od katere je bil odtrgan, najde globalni spomin celote ter generira manjkajoče elemente. Koliko je star potaknjeneč? Koliko je star klon? Koliko je star živ organizem, ki se razvije na podlagi izbriša spomina predhodne faze njegovega življenja, ko je bil sestavni del nekega drugega organizma?

Kar v kloniranju bistveno prizadeva enkratnost bitja, po mnenju Isabelle Rieusset-Lamarié ni toliko pošastnost podvojitve kot manipulacija spomina. Kaj je s temi živimi bitji, ki so različnih starosti in so namesto s spominom na lastni razvoj obdarjeni s spominom življenja nekega drugega organizma, katerega del so bili predhodno? Kako poteka sobivanje teh spominov? Ali ne tvegajo zapadanja v konflikt? Ali niso ta živa bitja izpostavljena travmi nezavednega spominjanja? Ali bi utegnili proizvajalci transgenskih stvorov iti tako daleč, da bi jim podelili bioinformacijski program, s katerim bi v svojem umetnem spominu posedovali model avtoreprodukcije? Bi šli do preoblikovanja teh že tako hibridnih katur v »kiborge«¹⁶⁹, polžive »kiberkreature«, polorganizme itn.? Transgensko bitje je bitje, ki je šlo skozi konflikte med spomini. Transgenska kultura je po eni strani artefakt, ki je kot tak odtegnjen od kapacitete samoreprodukcije, toda ostaja tudi hibridno živo bitje, poseljeno s kontradiktornimi spomini, ki jih je nasledilo od vrst živih bitij, iz katerih je nastalo s hibridizacijo. Vsaka od celic (s)hrani spomin identitete bitja, katerega del je bila. Transgenska bitja so v tem smislu agregat spominov, zaznamovana z iskanjem izgubljene identitete. Ne nazadnje ta maligna množica lahko zaneti upor delov, ki se artikulirajo v razmnoževanju na škodo drugih organov. Proces, skozi katerega nek posamezen del prispeva k razvoju totalitete organizma, sodeluje pri kompleksni samoorganizaciji živega in se v tem pogledu aktualizira kot notranji smoter. Ta proces je brez skupnega merila s podreditvijo tega organizma, v celoti ali v delu, nekemu zunanjemu smotru. Pri tehnični instrumentalizaciji živega tako pride do neupoštevanja dinamike samoorganizacije. Organizem je podvržen zunanjemu smotru v postopkih instrumentalizacije, ki ga napravi za artefakt v službi zunanega smotra.

več kot dvesto tipov celic našega telesa. Vendar je proces diferenciacije hiter in repertoar celic, v katere se celice, ki so že dlje na razvojni poti, še lahko razvijejo, se čedalje bolj oži, kar pomeni, da celice svojo *totipotentnost* hitro izgubljajo.
169 Skovanka izhaja iz »kibernetike« in »organizma«. Cf. Donna Haraway, *Opice, kiborgi in ženske. Reinvencija narave*, Ljubljana: Študentska založba, 1999, str. 11. S proizvajanjem novih »hibridnih« oblik kreativnosti in modelov vednosti – v 90. letih prejšnjega stoletja je Harawayjeva prispevala subverzivne »kiborske prisposobe« – se lahko pokaže pot iz dihotomij, ki služijo utrjevanju dominantnih pozicij.

Sposobnost za upoštevanje avtonomije umetniškega dela, ne da bi terjali podredivitev njegove notranje smotrnosti nekemu zunanemu smotru, se po Heglu pojavlja kot dialektični moment, ki dopušča razrešitev nasprotja med človeškim duhom in naravo. Kadar vlada ta dualistična opozicija, se človek zave svoje ogroženosti: »Zakaj po eni strani vidimo, da je človek ujet v navadno dejanskost in pozemeljsko časovnost, da ga tareta potreba in stiska, da ga ogroža narava in da je ujet v materijo«¹⁷⁰. Po drugi strani pa človek kot duh »sam uveljavlja svoj prav in svoje dostojanstvo zoper brezpravje in surovost /.../ narave, ki ji milo za drago vrne za stisko in nasilje, ki ju je skušil od nje«¹⁷¹. Po Heglu je proti dojetju umetniškega dela kot koristnega orodja za realizacijo smotra, ki je izven področja umetnosti, treba trditi, da je umetnost »poklicana upodobiti ono spravljenost nasprotje ter ima potemtakem svoj končni smoter v sebi«¹⁷².

Sklep

Na videz zastareli postopki argumentacije, ki črpajo pri Heglu in Benjaminu, lahko tudi v razmerju do sodobnih umetniških praks, ki se soočajo z izzivi biološke konstrukcije telesa, razpirajo navdihujoče nove perspektive. Z razmerjem med biološkim bitjem in njegovo simbolno reprezentacijo se ukvarjajo zlasti tiste sodobne umetniške prakse, ki se osredotočajo na telo v primežu biotehnologije in biopolitike. Vstop tehnologiziranega telesa v svet umetnosti estetsko delo preobrača v etično vpraševanje; s preizpraševanjem telesne identitete ter meja med javnim in zasebnim pa estetsko in etično postavlja v razmerje s pravom in politično mislijo. Subverzivni potencial umetnosti se vzpostavi kot očitna protimoč glede na instrumentalizacijo živega takrat, kadar je njeno ravnanje radikalno in protislovno. V umetniškem delu artefakt, mrtev material, postane element dinamične kompozicije, ki se utelesi v vsebini forme; tako je dosežena raven organizacije, ki delu podeljuje določeno avtonomijo. Vprašanje avtonomije se zaostri v tisti sodobni umetnosti, ki poleg uprizorivnih praks telo investira v prostorske postavitve, interaktivne instalacije, raziskovalne platforme itn. Umetnost v svojem uporju zoper instrumentalizacijo stavi na ovrednotenje vsebine. To v sodobnosti poteka v povezavi z novimi postopki in procesi relativne avtonomizacije umetnostnega polja, ki so subverzivni v svojih poskusih vzpostavljanja vsaj neke minimalne distance do prevladujočih ekonomsko-političnih razmerij v družbi.

170 Hegel, *op. cit.*, str. 74–75 (moj poudarek).

171 *Ibid.*, str. 75 (moj poudarek).

172 *Ibid.*, str. 76 (moj poudarek).

SUBVERSION AND THEATRE, POETRY, VISUAL CULTURE, MUSIC

Tomaž Toporišič
**ARTAUD'S THEATRE OF CRUELTY AND
SUBVERSIVE STRATEGIES IN TODAY'S ART**

Starting point

The aim of our paper is to treat some aspects of subversive potential of contemporary live arts, especially in relation to links between notions of madness and artistic creation in theories of Michel Foucault and Antonin Artaud. We will try to question the utopian role of art as an instance that transcends those epistemic structures that determine how we think or even that we think.

Our starting point will consist of two statements belonging to Foucault and Artaud respectively, both reflecting on the specific (utopic?) function of art in contemporary society. They read as follows:

Throughout the nineteenth century, and right until the present day – from Hölderlin to Mallarmé, to Antonin Artaud – literature has only existed in its autonomy, it has detached itself from any other means of expression [*langage*] only by forming a kind of “counter-discourse” and by thus retreating from the representative or signifying function of language to find the raw being of language forgotten since the sixteenth century.¹⁷³

If theatre wants to find itself needed once more, it must present everything in love, crime, war and madness. [...] Everyday love, personal ambition and daily worries are worthless except in relation to the kind of awful lyricism that exists in those Myths to which the great mass of men have consented.¹⁷⁴

According to Foucault “literature has developed a specific autonomy”; it has detached itself from *langage* through a formation of a specific “counter-discourse”. Thus, it negates the representative or signifying function of language. Like medieval madness literature became a discourse that wants to return to its origins as the “truth” of the world and deals with a specific subversive power.

This subversive power was defined by Antonin Artaud (in “First Manifesto of Cruelty”) as a utopic power a theatre can obtain by presenting “everything in love, crime, war and madness”. According to Artaud theatre was like a plague; a disorder of the most horrendous type which brings with it both social and psychological disturbances. Such a disease, symbolically speaking, unleashes a “spontaneous” or “psychic fire” during which time man is no longer in control over his energies or his emotions, which seem to cascade forth. This release of energy which forces out passions of all types (for example, incest and sexual

173 Michel Foucault, *Les mots et les choses*, Paris: Gallimard, 1966, pp. 58–59.

174 Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and its Double* (trans. Mary Caroline Richards), New York: Grove Press, 1958, p. 85. See also: Antonin Artaud, *Collected Works*, Vol. IV (trans. by Victor Corti), London: Calder & Boyars, 1974.

abnormalities), provoking horror and vertigo in the hearts of audiences, leads up to a collective expulsion or regurgitation, followed by a purification of man through his own forces of evil. These tremendous “flames” or “luminescent suns”, as Artaud called them, which man discharges either during a theatrical performance or in moments of great stress (as during a plague) are also the same ones which he later transforms in his fantasy into symbols and then into the work of art.

Antonin Artaud also had a strong belief that theatre can perform a specific act of embodied transgression, within which the body-becoming serves as a site for restructuring cultural belief systems. He pioneered his theatre of cruelty as a practice, which begins through taking the body as a site of potential disorganization and then becomes a performance technique that instigates collective cultural subversions. For him the practice of dismantling cruelty creates a lucid body; a body open to possibility and change.

The three Janšas: Janez Janša, Janez Janša and Janez Janša

Following the schematically sketched thoughts of Foucault and Artaud about madness, plague, counter discourse and theatre as a plague we will try to describe possible traces of these thoughts in the work by three Slovene artists that all bear the same name: Janez Janša. Using two examples from their recent work or better artistic actions we will try to examine the traces of a specific Artaudian and avant-garde wish to celebrate madness as liberation from oppressive cultural constraints or – to put it differently – some examples of visual and live art events which continue the Dadaist (and Artaudian) urge to rebel against society, language and literature; try to destroy all established values and replace logical reason with conscious madness.

In order to understand the context of the three Janšas and their artistic and political gestures, we have to clear a bit the local context of their actions that may sound unfamiliar to most of non-Slovenian colleagues.

In August 2007 three artists, Davide Grassi, Emil Hrvatin and Žiga Kariž officially changed their names. They did not pick up just any name; they chose the name of the Slovenian Prime Minister, the president of the centre-right SDS party (Slovenian Democratic Party).

No doubt, the choice of name showed a certain agenda, but the three artists are not members of any artistic group or movement, they are – however – all active within the scene of Slovenian contemporary arts. Their short CVs read as follow:



Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
002199616 (Identity Card), Ljubljana, 2007
Print on plastic, 5,4 x 8,5 cm, courtesy: Aksioma



Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
002199341 (Identity Card), Ljubljana, 2007
Print on plastic, 5,4 x 8,5 cm, courtesy: Aksioma



Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
002293264 (Identity Card), Ljubljana, 2007
Print on plastic, 5,4 x 8,5 cm, Original lost; 2nd version:
002359725 (Identity Card), Ljubljana, 2008
Print on plastic, 5,4 x 8,5 cm, courtesy: Aksioma

JANEZ JANŠA (formerly known as Davide Grassi) was born in Italy in 1970. He graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Milan in 1994. Since 1995, he has been living in Ljubljana. He dedicates his work to the investigation of new media social contradictions and dilemmas.

JANEZ JANŠA (formerly known as Emil Hrvatin) was born in Croatia in 1964. He graduated from the University of Ljubljana's Faculty for Social Sciences and studied theatre directing in Ljubljana and the theory of theatre in Antwerp. His work is dedicated to the investigation of the role of conceptual strategies and tactics between theatre and society.

JANEZ JANŠA (formerly known as Žiga Kariž) was born in Slovenia in 1973. He graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana. His work is dedicated to the investigation of new media and the roles of media productions of individual, cultural, artistic and social identity in the contemporary world.

By changing their names the three Janez Janša deliberately entered into a chain of social and artistic transformations that were due to become executions of the *politically sliding signifiers* and barely readable and highly individual explanations of symptoms of construction and realization of political identities. As theatre critic, Blaž Lukan points it out in his essay "The Janez Janša Project"¹⁷⁵: the three artists, through their name change, produced a series, which is a common phenomenon or concept in contemporary (visual) arts. Thus, they produced a specific subversive artistic tactic in which the series *Janša Janša Janša* lead to the disappearance of the subject, to the emptying or desubjectification of a highly politically exposed subject. The series of Janez Janša produces a sequence of empty signifiers, it is authorised through absence; the self in the series appears as a "pure void" (to use the term of Slavoj Žižek). The series produces a posterior identity, which in turn raises the fundamental question of the referent. Thus the name and its owner, the original Janez Janša (if we can talk about the original Janez Janša at all) loses its strength and the series or readymade names Janez Janša gain their symbolic function.

Using the language and argumentation of Michel Foucault, we can claim that the three Janšas formed in their action a specific "counter-discourse". By retreating from the representative or signifying function of signature as a specific sign system and language, they did not exactly find what Foucault interprets in Mallarmé as the raw being of language forgotten since the sixteenth century. They nevertheless found a specific counter-discourse in a specific language of their actions in which all readymade names in exhibitions, theatre, multimedia performances etc. are being produced by the reality itself. The outcome of this creation is the inversion of the artistic creation. In this perspective all artworks or exhibits question norms of the reality, reproduction, mediation, identity and politics of art and everyday life, and above all the status of the work of art and object of art today.

By asking themselves whether the name itself is not a kind of readymade, Janša, Janša, Janša question the notions of "personal" and "proper". Thus they act politically and subversively: they stress the fact that names in themselves are far from autonomy: we had been named by the others, identified by the name given to us by the others; the qualities they link with our name are their own personal projections of a list of qualities of persons we might have never met.

Signature Event Context

Let us take as an example their action that took place in Berlin as a part of *transmediale* festival and which bears the title of Jacques Derrida's famous lecture "Signature Event Context". When three Slovenian artists, who all bear the same name "Janez Janša", walked through the Berlin Holocaust Memorial on 28 January 2008, with the aid of handheld GPS devices in divergent paths, so that the charting of their collective path signed their

¹⁷⁵ Blaž Lukan, "Projekt Janez Janša", in: *Amfiteater*, vol.1, no. 1, 2008, pp. 71–86.

name, they continually repeated the phrase "My name is Janez Janša, My name is Janez Janša, My name is Janez Janša ..." Thus Janša, Janša and Janša embodied a walking and talking signatures that had left the traces only in virtual space of the internet. In this unusual event or walking action, which is a part of their project "Signature Event Context", they crossed borders between conceptual art and "artivism" (artistic activism) exploring the interaction of live and mediatized. The performance provoked quite unusual reaction from the part of the festival *transmediale.08* that scheduled, cancelled and finally re-included it in the program. As a result, a (rather unusual) statement co-signed by the three artists and the festival board was published that reads as follows:

DISCLAIMER: The performative installation 'Signature, Event, Context' as proposed to the *transmediale.08* exhibition by Janez Janša, Janez Janša and Janez Janša had been accepted for inclusion to the exhibition. In the run-up to the festival due to the curatorial and ethical convictions of Nataša Petrešin Bachelez, the guest curator of the *transmediale.08* exhibition, a decision was taken with the festival direction not to include the project. However, after the exhibition opening, and following a discussion with the artists, the festival direction has agreed with the curator to re-include the project, while the curator would like to distance herself from the project. A documentation of the project is on display at the foyer of the House of World Cultures. Nataša Petrešin Bachelez, Stephen Kovats, Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša.¹⁷⁶

In their controversial artistic action, the three Janšas literally embodied or performed a question Jacques Derrida asked himself and the audience in his famous 1971 lecture and essay about deconstruction their action borrows the title from:

Does the absolute singularity of an event of the signature ever occur? Are there signatures?

Derrida's answer reads as follows:

Yes, of course, every day. The effects of signature are the most ordinary thing in the world. The condition of possibility for these effects is simultaneously once again, the condition of their impossibility, of the impossibility of their rigorous purity. In order to function, that is, in order to be legible, a signature must have a repeatable, iterable, imitable form; it must be able to detach itself from the present and singular intention of its production.¹⁷⁷

The performance of collective signature by Janez Janša, Janez Janša and Janez Janša opens up a new perspective of Derrida's deconstructive thoughts about the condition of possibility being closely linked to the condition of the impossibility. It demonstrates how effects of signature can become the opposition of what Derrida names "the most ordinary thing in the world" and how the absolute singularity of an event of the signature can transform itself into a line of repetitions, multiplications, iterabilities and imitations. The three

¹⁷⁶ <http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-l-0801/msg00044.html>, 18th November 2008.

¹⁷⁷ A communication to the *Congrès international des Sociétés de philosophie de langue française*, Montreal, August 1971. English translation ("Signature Event Context") published in Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy* (trans. Alan Bass), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982, pp. 307–330.



Signature on Holocaust Memorial

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
Signature Event Context, Berlin, 2008
Performance; Courtesy: Aksioma

artists stress the fact that not only a signature but also a name can become an object of imitation and even a radical appropriation.

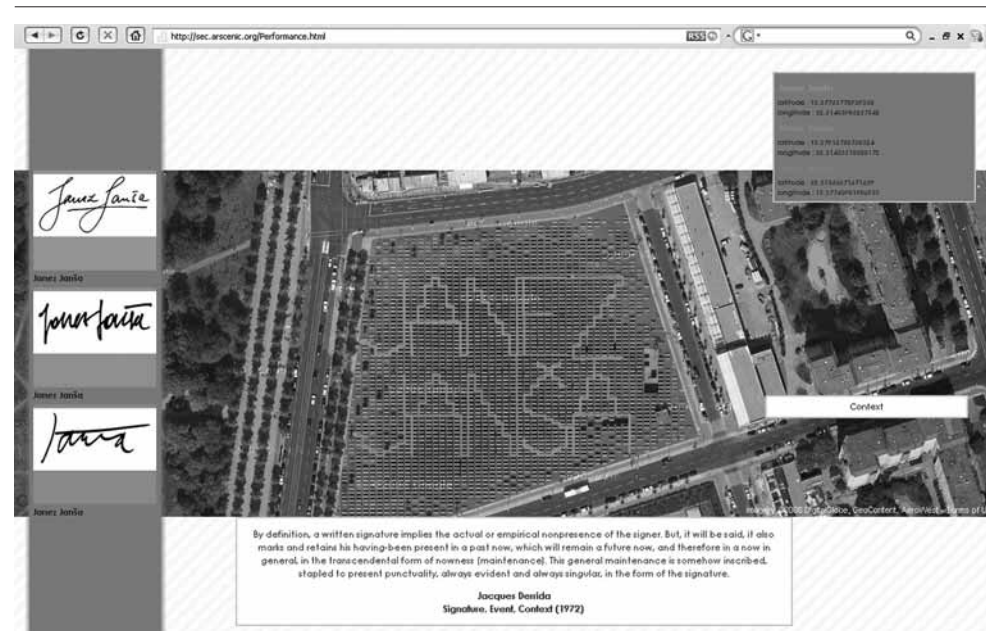
In their artistic actions the three artists expose the very fact that (as any other name) Janez Janša does not belong exclusively to somebody. It can be interpreted and used also as a kind of readymade. Taking on oneself a name of somebody else thus corresponds to the act of taking an existing object in a classical readymade scheme. It can be interpreted as an act of "expropriation" and an act of "depersonalisation".

Slovene National Theatre

Our second example will be the theatre production *Slovene National Theatre*¹⁷⁸, the fourth performance piece in a series entitled *Program!*¹⁷⁹, by artist Janez Janša, which deals with questions of a system of contemporary performing arts and its position in the wider societal and historical context. The program of the production carries a following sentence: "*Slovene National Theatre* reconstructs actual historical events: political demonstrations of

178 *Slovene National Theatre*, A theatre performance re-invoicing the sound dimensions of political public rage. Concept, directed by: Janez Janša. Cast: Aleksandra Balmazović, Dražen Dragojević, Janez Janša, Barbara Kukovec, Matjaž Pikalo. Opening night: 28th October, 2007, Stara mestna elektrarna – Elektro Ljubljana, Ljubljana.

179 For more information see: <http://www.maska.si/sl/produkcije/scenska/program/371/sng.html>, 15th February 2008.



Signature on Holocaust Memorial

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
Signature Event Context, Berlin, 2008
Performance; Courtesy: Aksioma

2006 which took place in certain Slovene villages. The story of the encounter between two different communities, which had enormous media coverage, is staged through the theatrical forms of the ancient chorus and radio play, as well as a live television and radio transmission. The combination of classical theatrical form and contemporary media transmission creates a moving spectacle and opens up anew the question of tragedy in today's world."¹⁸⁰

We could say *Slovene National Theatre*, this "theatre performance concerned with the sonic dimensions of political public rage", thus combines two different types of theatrical tactics, which belong to two historical territories on the map of Eurocentric theatre:

A) the classical theatrical form in which actors perform as a chorus commenting on the action as in ancient or classicist tragedy

B) the contemporary form of media transmission in which actors perform the exact sound recordings of television reports on events in the village of Ambrus in 2006, while simultaneously listening to them on headphones

As such, it embodies Artaud's notion of theatre as a plague. In its hybrid theatrical form it constantly addresses the audience and reconstructs actual historical events: political demonstrations of 2006, which took place in some villages in Slovenia. This hybrid form reconstructs the story of two communities: the larger group of rural Slovenes and the mino-

180 See: http://www.maska.si/sl/produkcije/scenska/slovensko_narodno_gledalisce/, 15th February 2008.

rity group of Roma people living on the outskirts of the rural community. This was a major media event and thus the reconstruction is staged in the manner of Auslander's junction of live performance and the mediatised spectacle, performativity and reproduction. This junction (in connection with the plot and the subject, which are directly political as they are bound to the media of television and radio) produces discomfort in the audience. It demands that they formulate a viewpoint towards the action unfolding on stage and respond to it, while being aware of their own powerlessness and deceptive participation, which is assured and at the same time imposed by the mediatised television event. We are witnessing a unique process of *auto-poetic feedback loops* (Erika Fischer-Lichte), a temporary community formed by performers and the audience which launches a specific theatre of revolt against what Auslander defines with *syntagms*, "live presence has depreciated in our mediatised culture" and "a fusion that we see as taking place within a digital environment that incorporates the live elements as part of its raw material [...in] the cultural dominant".¹⁸¹

The performance is well aware of the fact that we live in the firmament created by the prevalence of the mediatised culture, yet it deliberately resorts to performative culture, to the restorative processes of ritualistic theatre where the actual performative event – the confrontation of the audience with the village of Ambrus, and the consequences – takes place. The audience is thus forced to face the unavoidable self-reflection and images of themselves, their role in (not) taking responsibility for what happened in Slovenia about a year ago.

Janez Janša's piece *Slovene National Theatre* thus achieves a withdrawal of the aesthetic aspect of the theatrical event in favour of the typical political issues. Within this, as critic Blaž Lukan points out, an equally acute crisis of ethics is exposed:

The event of the Slovene nation, directed by Janez Janša (an intriguing collision!), is therefore "the case of the village of Ambrus", linked with, as we know, the exile, or rather, the deportation of the Roma family Strojčan from that village and all the accompanying occurrences which made for one of the darkest stains of the post-independence Slovenia. [...] Janez Janša stages the reconstruction of Ambrus in a kind of performative inversion by returning us to the actual event itself, or serving it to us as a temporal and spatial extraction from its original unfolding, and transcribes its media origin into a sonic performance piece, distributed amid four performers and a companion. However, the formal side of the (thoroughly professionally-executed) event is of little importance. What carries more significance is that, by reconstructing and transcribing the documentary material, Janša revives a fact that our political (and media) reality has suppressed largely. Taking Ambrus out of a (partially dictated, partly spontaneous) amnesic political and media reality is thus the essential quality of this event, which, despite not hiding its own performing or conceptual origins, inhabits the traumatic core of the Slovene political mythology.¹⁸²

181 Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*, 2nd edition, London: Routledge, 2008, p. 38.

182 Blaž Lukan, "Janša v Ambrusu", in: *Delo*, 2nd November 2007.



Triglav na Triglavu
Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
Mount Triglav on Mount Triglav,
Mount Triglav, 2007
Action
Photo: Gaja Repe
Courtesy: Aksioma

Exposing processes of cultural control

To slowly conclude: The three Janšas see performance and visual art of today not purely as a work of art, but as an event which comes into being by interaction of performers and the viewers. They try to put the audience in a state of insecurity and discomfort. In their actions, the common oppositions of subject and object, of presence and representation, and of art and social reality, disappear, while dichotomies appear to have evaporated. At the same time, the audience transforms and finds itself in a state that is alienated from the everyday social norms. Following the logic of Erika Fischer-Lichte's book *Aesthetic of the Performative*¹⁸³, the consequence of this is a destabilization of the perception of reality

183 Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Ästhetik des Performativen*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2004.

due to the liminality of an artistic event, and it may cause a re-orientation of the individual (which, let us not deceive ourselves, is only temporary).

Janšas thus count on the trigger for the change of our perception of reality and a simultaneous emergence and exposure of an abyss between the signifiers and the signified that establishes the credibility of the language of opposition. At the same time, their projects generate an Auslander-like politics of performance that is, "exposing processes of cultural control".¹⁸⁴ The projects discussed take on the strategy of artistic activism, radically appropriating various forms of addressing the audience, and thus building its own politics of art.

And, finally, to get back to Foucault and Artaud:

As we have seen in the two examples explored, we are far from Foucault's thought that literature can be granted the utopian role of transcending those epistemic structures that determine how we think or even that we think. We nevertheless persist in the belief that art can be interpreted as a foil to the arbitrary changes that bring about a new economy of discourse. Like dream, or perhaps more like medieval madness, it is characterized as a discourse that wants to return to its origins as the "truth" of the world.

And, to conclude in a metaphoric and somehow prophetic style of Artaud, with his citation:

It may be true that the poison of theatre, when injected in the body of society, destroys it, as St. Augustine asserted, but it does so as a plague, a revenging scourge, a redeeming epidemic when credulous ages were convinced they saw God's hand in it, while it was nothing more than a natural law applied, where all gestures were offset by another gesture, every action by a reaction.¹⁸⁵

184 Philip Auslander, *From Acting to Performance: Essays in Modernism and Postmodernism*, London: Routledge, 1997, p. 61.

185 Antonin Artaud, *Collected Works*, p. 20.

Dubravka Đurić
VISUALITY, ORALITY AND PERFORMATIVITY
AS SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS IN POETRY

In western cultures, verbal arts (poetry and prose) have been dominant for a long period of time as the most important of all arts. This statement implies that there is a hierarchy of arts in western culture that could be explained in Derridean terms by the domination of logocentrism. This is done by Ramsay Burt in his book *The Male Dancer* where he states: "One of the reasons why theatre dance has not received as much attention from theorists as other art forms is because the prioritization of verbal forms in logocentric western societies has led to the marginalization of the body. It might even be the case that, as Ann Daly has suggested, 'movement itself has traditionally been consigned to the realm of the feminine, set in opposition to male mastery over language'"¹⁸⁶. Logocentrism, as defined by Jacques Derrida, implies the privileged position of the Logos. British theoretician Anthony Easthope wrote that Derrida's book *Of Grammatology* recalled the way that western tradition has always valued speech as primary and writing as secondary to it.¹⁸⁷ And Madan Sarup interprets this as follows: "the rejection of writing as an appendage, a mere technique and yet a menace built into speech (...) is a symptom of a much broader tendency." He relates this phonocentrism to logocentrism, the belief that the first and last thing is the Logos, the Word, the Divine Mind, the *self-presence of full self-consciousness*.¹⁸⁸ According to this tradition, the mind expresses meaning, i. e., the signified, almost but not quite transparently through words, i. e., the signifier, and so writing is disparaged as derivative, merely a technical addition of the written signifier to the spoken one. Derrida claims: "writing, the letter, the sensible inscription, has always been considered by western tradition as the body and matter external to the spirit, to breath, to speech and to the logos."¹⁸⁹ The written – which Derrida terms the *graphemic feature* - is considered to be accidental to language. The transparency of language has been valued as the most important for the process of communication. American language poet and theoretician Charles Bernstein claimed that in the conventional theory of communication "communication is schematized as two-way wire with the message shuttling back and forth in blissful ignorance of (its) transom (read: ideology)."¹⁹⁰ And according to Anthony Easthope "conventional literary criticism" believes that "the poem can once again be fixed in place as expression of the author's experience and intention, and read in terms of personality and presence."¹⁹¹ In other words, author's intention, i. e., what she or he has to say to his/her reader,

186 Ramsay Burt, *The Male Dancer – Bodies, Spectacle, Sexualities*, London, New York: Routledge, 1995, reprinted 1996, p. 44.

187 Anthony Easthope, *Poetry as Discourse*, London, New York: Methuen, 1983, p. 13.

188 Madan Sarup, *An Introductory Guide to Poststructuralism and Postmodernism*, London, Toronto: Harvester / Wheatsheaf, 1993, p. 36.

189 Easthope, op. cit., p. 13.

190 Charles Bernstein, *Content's Dream – Essays 1975–1984*, Los Angeles: Sun & Moon Press, 1986, p. 239.

191 Easthope, op. cit., p. 6.

is what only matters. This was one of the reasons why in the making of the western literary canon, the extremely severe process of censorship took place. So, for example, the visuality of a poem, i.e., typographic, holographic and contextual variants, in Jerome McGann's term 'textual contition', what is written on the page is considered to be a secondary, unimportant element for literature itself, and poems that foreground these elements has been left out of the canon. This attitude led to the reduction of the text to its very meaning.

In 1991, in her important book *Radical Artifice – Writing Poetry in the Age of Media*, Marjorie Perloff points out that thanks to Derrida's elaborate dismantling of western logocentrism, we know that writing is not the natural representation of a prior speech.¹⁹² Referring to Derrida's notion of logocentrism, means to activate the critique of phonocentrism, i.e., the priority that has been given to speech over writing, based on the assumption of the presence of a speaker. Within the context of American poetry, and especially language poetry and its theory, one could agree with poet and theoretician Jed Rasula, who states that "several decades into the ontological readjustment sponsored by Derrida, purporting to wage holy war on logocentrism, it now appears necessary to reaffirm a certain oral plenitude so as to offset the glamour of intertextual materialism."¹⁹³

In *Reading Images – The Grammar of Visual Design*, Gunter Kress and Theo van Leeuwen have written about the dominance of the verbal, written medium over visual media, which has been coded in conventional histories of writing as natural phenomenon, common to all human beings. On the other side, writing was considered as the achievement of only some cultures. At the particular stage of their history, some cultures developed the need to make records of transactions of various kinds. Kress and van Leeuwen have shown that alphabetic writing developed out of iconic, image-based scripts, and according to them, in these original script forms, an object was initially represented by an image of the object. Within this narration, all cultures with forms of visual representation that are not directly connected with language are considered to be illiterate. They explain that before this had happened, there were two separate and independent modes of representation:

"One was language-as-speech; the other, the visual image, or visual marks. Each served a particular set of purposes such as the construction of histories and myths, the recording of genealogies and transactions, and the recording and measurement of objects. In the case of some cultures, however, the one form of representation 'took over' the other, as a means of recording; that is, the one form of representation became specializes – one could say, reduced – to function as a means of the visual representation of speech, perhaps in highly organized and bureaucratized societies."¹⁹⁴

192 Marjorie Perloff, *Radical Artifice – Writing Poetry in the Age of Media*, Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991, p. 36.

193 Jed Rasula, "Understanding the Sound of Not Understanding", in: Charles Bernstein (ed.), *Close Listening – Poetry and the Performed Word*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 234.

194 Gunter Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images – The Grammar of Visual Design*, London, New York: Routledge, 1996, 2006, pp. 21–22.

However, in the cases of some other cultures, the visual continued, along with the verbal means of representation. In these cultures there is no question of the priority of one over the other mode, and the visual has not become subsumed to the verbal as its form of representation.¹⁹⁵

Kress and van Leeuwen, also, point out that the history of the word *grammar* brings out clearly the subordination of the visual medium to the medium of verbal language. They indicate fact that cultures which still retain the full use of both media of representation are, from the point of view of 'literate cultures', regarded as illiterate, impoverish. But, from our point of view, it is possible to claim that these cultures have in fact a richer array of means of representation than that overtly and consciously available to literate cultures. Literate cultures, according to these authors, have systematically suppressed the means of analysis of the visual forms of representation, so that there is not yet an established theoretical framework within which visual forms of representation can be discussed¹⁹⁶. That is the reason why they discuss two kinds of visual literacy. In one, visual communication has been made subservient to the language and image have come to be regarded as unstructured replicas of reality, which they call 'old visual literacy'. In another, spoken language exists side by side with, and independent of, forms of visual representation which are openly structured, rather than viewed as more or less faithful duplicates of reality, which they called 'new visual literacy'. They suggest that these two kinds of literacy coexist in contemporary western culture, and they claim that we are in the middle of the shift in valuation and uses from the one mode to the other, i.e., from the 'old' to the 'new' visual literacy. And that is one of the reasons why, in the context of theory of poetry, it is important to theorise visuality as well as orality.

The literature seems today to be marginalized in western cultures as language art based on literacy, in comparison to visual art and theatre. Visual art and theatre seem to be more important today because they use visual signs and more directly participate in 'our' 'society of spectacle'. Within the field of literature, poetry is marginalized as a genre in relation to prose writing, because with the 'postmodern turn', the narrative function of language can be seen again as an important one. Still poetry is the field in transition which is capable of exciting transformation in the direction of visual and verbal performance.

The poet, visual artist and theoretician Johanna Drucker in her text "Visual Performance of Poetic Text" emphasizes the importance of visual aspects of the printed poem. She insists that visual means perform the work as a poem that cannot be translated into any other form. The visual performance of a poem, rather than being the presence of the author and/or reader, is about the presence of the poem. In this sense, one of the "great virtues of the print form has been its capacity to conceal gender and other aspects of physically

195 Ibid., p. 22.

196 Ibid., p. 23.

apparent identity – all those characteristics that contribute to the auratic whole of the poet as persona in a real-life performance.”¹⁹⁷ Analyzing different works from Mallarmé, Apollinaire, Marinetti, Huelsenbeck, Zdanevich, Lewis, Tzara, Kamensky, Picabia, to Lettrism and Concretism, and beyond, she explains that the idea of visual performativity derives from the conviction that there is a form of poetry that inheres in visual means that cannot be reproduced in another visual format without destroying the work or radically altering its significant producing qualities.¹⁹⁸

American language poet and theoretician Ron Silliman focuses on a similar problematic from another angle. From a neomarxist point of view, Silliman in his text “Disappearance of the Word, Appearance of the World” points out that “the capitalist stage of development is an anaesthetic transformation of the perceived tangibility of the word, with corresponding increase in its expository, descriptive and narrative capacities, preconditions for the invention of ‘realism’, the illusion of reality in capitalist thought.”¹⁹⁹ According to him, “/t/hese developments are tied directly to the function of reference in language, which under capitalism is transformed, narrowed into referentiality”²⁰⁰ In opposition to this, Silliman claims that within tribal societies the individual has not yet been reduced to wage labor, and material life has not required the consumption of a vast number of commodities, created by the work of other people’s labor. A similar could be said for language: language “has not yet been transformed into a system of commodities, nor subjected to a division of labour in its functions through which the signified overwhelms the signifier.”²⁰¹ According Silliman, the expressive integrity of the gestural use of language constitutes the meaning of “nonsense” syllables in, what he called the “tribal poetries”. At the time when this text was written (80s), Silliman thought that except for attempts at specifically anthropological explanations, there has been no room in literary theory for a poetry of this kind, and it is impossible to place it within the frame of western literary canon. He believed that in the reality of capitalism, denying as it must, any value in the purely gestural which serves solely to mark the connection between the product and its maker, the absence of any external reference is construed as an absence of meaning. In other words, writes Silliman, when the bourgeois is the rising class, the expressive, gestural, labor-product nature of consciousness tends to be repressed. In this process, “/u/nder the sway of the commodity fetish, language itself appears to become transparent, a mere vessel for the transfer of ostensibly autonymous referents.”²⁰²

197 Johanna Drucker, “Visual performance of the Poetic Text”, in: Charles Bernstein (ed.), *Close Listening – Poetry and the Performed Word*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 131.

198 Ibid., p. 149.

199 Ron Silliman, *The New Sentence*, New York: Roof Books, 1987, p. 10.

200 Ibid.

201 Ibid., p. 11.

202 Ibid., 11. See also Dubravka Đurić, *Jezik, poezija, postmodernizam*, Beograd: Oktoih, 2002, pp. 83–84.

The American language poet and theoretician Michael Davidson writes in 1989 that using language in the traditionally representational or narrative manner means to retain the structure of the difference – i. e., male-female, master-slave, word-referent – by which the individual is repressed. Attacking the expressivist paradigm of writing, language poets criticized the poetic line of previous generation of poets and its presumed relation to an ideal of voice and presence. As two versions of what American language poets considered to be an idealistic position, Davidson points to the Black Mountain poet Charles Olson’s idea of the line as a score for the voice and Beat poet Allen Ginsberg’s idea of the line as a dimension of mantric chant. Davidson explains that from the 1950s, the performative impulse was important in poetry readings, especially in San Francisco. The public readings were an occasion to place the poets physically before their listeners. Davidson continues that the “reading also foregrounds the oral impulse of so much /then/ contemporary poetry in which the poem draws from physiological and muscular resources (Olson’s ‘breath’ line) and engage the reader as a collective whole or tribe.”²⁰³ Davidson took the term ‘performative’ from J. L. Austin, who used it to describe those speech acts in which a statement ‘performs’ an event. Davidson explains that the literary application of the performative uses a heightened linguistic context, notation, or oral delivery to accomplish its ends.²⁰⁴

In 2000, Paul Hoover, poet and theoretician, pointed out that the introduction of electronic media – radio, television, and now the multimedia computer – has brought a return to the acoustic space and the privileging of the spoken word in performance poetry, and processual methods of composition in language poetry.²⁰⁵ This idea has been elaborated by Adalaide Morris in “Sound Technologies and the Modernist Epic”. She argues that the acoustical technologies developed in the first half of the twentieth century enticed and enchanted the ear of an audience that had come to conceptualize poetry, and she stresses, particularly the elite poetry of the written epic – as a silent inner event. As Eric A. Havelock and Walter J. Ong discussed, the mediated, amplified, insistent sounds of telephones, radios, loudspeakers, and tape records created a new orality, a ‘secondary orality’. It what they called ‘secondary’ or ‘new orality’ preserves much of the mind-set of the primary orality, but it is not a reversion to a distant past, because, technologized sound, according to Havelock, can never recreate the condition of preliterate orality.²⁰⁶

Michael Davidson finds that pervasive phono-centrism dominates contemporary poetics. Literary historians have explained the origins of this new oralism as a revival of romantic immanence and expressivism in reaction to the New Critical idea of impersonality and distancing. He stresses that for poets of the 1950s and 1960s, a new oral impulse served

203 Michael Davidson, *The San Francisco Renaissance – Poetics and Community at Mid-century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 20.

204 Ibid., p. 21.

205 Paul Hoover, “Murder and Closure: On the Impression of Reality in American Poetry”, in: Michel Delville and Christine Pagnoulle (eds.), *The Mechanics of the Mirage – Postwar American Poetry*, L3 – Liege Language and Literature, 2000, p. 8.

206 Adalaide Morris, “Sound Technologies and The Modernist Epic – H. D. on the Air”, in: Adalaide Morris (ed.), *Sound States – Innovative Poetics and Acoustical Technologies*, Chapel Hill, London: University Of North Carolina Press, 1997, p. 34.

as corrective to the rhetorically controlled, print-based poetry of high modernism. For T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, 'voice' was a rhetorical construct produced through personae and irony, and for postwar poets it becomes an extension of the physiological organism.²⁰⁷ For authors like Walter Ong, 'secondary orality' produced electronically, depends on a prior script, and is, as such, only a simulacrum of spontaneity and community. Davidson points to the importance of technological advances in typography, offset printing and magnetic recording which made possible this oral impulse. Rediscovery of formulaic oral traditions by Milman Perry, Albert Lord and Eric Havelock provided a link between avant-garde literary practices and earlier tribal cultures. These traditions offered alternative not only to print culture but to the era's tendencies toward standardization and uniformity.²⁰⁸

Charles Bernstein insists that a poem understood as a performative event and not merely as a textual entity and rejects the originality of the written document in favour of, in Andrew Benjamin's phrase, "the plural event". He stresses that poem is not identical to any one of its graphic or performative realizations, and cannot be equated with a totalized unity of these versions or manifestations. In this sense, the poem has a plural existence.²⁰⁹ In other words, from the oral point of view, we cannot value an original performance of the poem, because reading is an ever-changing phenomenon. And although performance emphasizes the material presence of the poem and of the performer, it denies the unitary presence of the poem, i.e., its metaphysical unity. Poetry reading extends the pattering of poetry into another dimension, adding another semantic layer to the poem's multi-formity. Its effect is to create a space of authorial resistance to textual authority. He concludes that "/f/or while writing is normally – if reductively and counterproductively – viewed as stabilizing and fixing oral poetic traditions, authorial poetry readings are best understood as destabilizing, by making more fluid and pluriform, an aural (post-written) poetic practice."²¹⁰

The recent worldwide popularity of slam, open-mike readings and spoken word readings forces us to discuss oral performances and all kinds of poetry readings, having in mind a note made by Jed Rasula, that the alphabetic term "reading" is now coded to mean oral tradition.²¹¹ Christopher Beach explained that the intersection of high and popular culture represented by the Beat poets anticipated the current trend toward a performance poetry that negotiates between a range of cultural discourses. It is interesting to mark that the language poetry movement was characterized, at the beginning, by graphic textualism, as a reaction to bardic approaches of the previous generation of Beat poets and Charles Olson's breath notations that was important for Black Mountain poets. Describing the writing practice of language poets, the Australian theoretician Rosemary Huisman points to their emphasis

207 Michael Davidson, *Ghostlier Demarcations – Modern Poetry and the Material Word*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1997, p. 196.

208 Ibid., p. 199.

209 Charles Bernstein, "Introduction", in: Charles Bernstein (ed.), *Close Listening – Poetry and the Performed Word*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 9.

210 Ibid., p. 10.

211 Jed Rasula, op. cit., p. 234.

on the material text and concluded that it is the logical end point of print poetry, i.e., of the fixed text of a poem printed on the page of the book, initially drawing attention to its language in visual display but ultimately self-reflexive, drawing attention instead to the visual display of its language.²¹² Hoover points out that different modernist and postmodernist poets, like Gertrude Stein, Louis Zukofsky and Charles Bernstein helped us to see literariness joined with the performance model of oral culture. Although in the 1970s language poets took as a motto for their work Robert Grenier pronouncement "I hate speech", their poetry is not been written for the page, but "ironically to be spoken."²¹³ In the Introduction to *Postmodern American Poetry*, Hoover explained that two relatively marginal influences of the 70s, language poetry and performance poetry, became increasingly dominant postmodern modes. Writing about performance poetry, he points to the importance of Jerome Rothenberg and his early interest in performance poetry, and his study of ethopoetics. It is not a surprise that performance poetry is multicultural, stressing that "/t/he activities that the multicultural poets resist are cultural genocide, the political and economic fallout from imperialism, and the homogenizing forces of modern technologies."²¹⁴ We could say that there is a performative turn in poetry, and we could agree with Christopher Beach that the trend toward more performance oriented poetries is one instance of the redefinition of the field. The performative turn is not obvious just in poets engaged in the spoken-word, performance and the slam scene, but also in the more experimental language-based poetry community.²¹⁵ Interesting aspects of slam and spoken-word poetry "are the hybridization of cultural forms, the emphasis on the body as an integral part of cultural semiosis, the analogy of the slam itself to a sports event with both individual and team competition, the emphasis on performance/performativity and entertainment/spectacle, the more explicitly violent and sexual content of much of the work, and the implicit parody of high cultural discourses."²¹⁶ According to Hoover, the effect of performance poetry has been to devalue the "poem as poem," i.e., poem as a self-contained object, and to reinstitute its instrumental function as communication.²¹⁷

212 Rosemary Huisman, *The Written Poem – Semiotic Conventions from Old to Modern English*, London, New York: Cassell, 1998, p. 76.

213 Paul Hoover, "Murder and Closure: On the Impression of Reality in American Poetry", in: Michel Delville and Christine Pagnouille (eds.), *The Mechanics of the Mirage – Postwar American Poetry*, L3, Liege Language and Literature, 2000, p. 8.

214 Paul Hoover, "Introduction", in Paul Hoover (ed.), *Postmodern American Poetry – A Norton Anthology*, New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994, p. xxxix.

215 Christopher Beach, *Poetic Culture – Contemporary American Poetry between Community and Institution*, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1999, p. 186.

216 Ibid., p. 125.

217 Paul Hoover, "Introduction", in: Paul Hoover (ed.), *Postmodern American Poetry – An Norton Anthology*, p. xxxix.

Evelin Stermitz
**ICONOGRAPHIC AND ICONOLOGIC
ART PRACTICES WITH THE HOOVER.
FEMINIST ARTISTIC SUBVERSIONS
OF THE FEMALE BODY AND THE HOUSEHOLD**

To understand feminist subversions in the visual arts, a feminist artistic practice that works towards a productive social change is to understand representation as a political matter and art as a political issue. In this context the women's subordination within patriarchal forms of representation and the understanding of "femininity" itself as a social construct has to be considered as relevant. There is a need for theory that goes beyond the personal into the questions of ideology, culture and the production of meaning. Culturally constructed meaning refers to a system of heterogeneous interacting codes, whereby every act is a social act.²¹⁸

"A radical feminist art would include an understanding of how women are constituted through social practices in culture; once this is understood it would be possible to create an aesthetics designed to subvert the production of "woman" as commodity."²¹⁹

Feminist art practice and contemporary positions subverting the categories of women's cultural production are discussed in the following text through visual examples, by depicting the female body as a political object and leading into the field of "the private is political". This artistic discourse is ongoing since the 1970s until contemporary examples of women artists' works, by visualizing feminist positions of an artistic articulation of womanhood in a male society and male dominated art world. In the foreground and in associating the following examples is the invention of the household with its tools as an artistic theme, when artistically articulating and subverting woman's definition in and by the society through them. The main fields in demonstrating these positions are photography, mixed media, video and new media art, by finding mutuality in-between the different media, through iconological and iconographic analyses.

To understand women's cultural production in a system of categories, four textual systems of strategies should be explained. These categories are discussed here after Laura Mulvey (1978), modified by Judith Barry and Sandy Flitterman-Lewis and visualized by the author through image examples of iconographic and iconologic comparisons and analyses of art works.

218 Judith Barry, Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, "Textual Strategies: The politics of art-making", in: Amelia Jones (ed.), *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, London, New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 53–54.

219 Ibid., p. 54.

Essentialist Position of the Female Power and the Body

When discussing women's art, there is often the (mis)believe in an essential female power, therefore one type of women's art can be seen as the glorification of an essential female power. As an essentialist position, this is based on the belief in a female essence residing somewhere in the body of women. This type of art is possible to see as reversing the traditional Western hierarchy of mind over matter, but also as an aesthetic of simple inversion. Feminist essentialism in art simply reverses the terms of dominance and subordination.²²⁰ "Instead of the male supremacy of patriarchal culture, the female (the essential feminine) is elevated to primary status."²²¹

The female body and bodily experiences are foregrounded in a dualistic/dyadic culture, viewing the woman as an opposite position. One example of such an artist is Gina Pane, the French body artist, where the artist involved self-mutilation and ritualised drawing of her own blood.²²² Her works are positions against the canons of beauty, but they are also in a pleasure/pain dichotomy, to involve the aesthetics of pain. She offers an act of artistic contestation, but within the dualistic tradition of Western metaphysics. In wounding, this work implies the suffering of women as a traditional cliché about women, the solidarity in suffering as a form of solidarity that has been imposed on women for centuries, as a bondage to women rather than bonding.²²³

Another artist to note is Hannah Wilke, she is using her body to objectifying herself to look at, as an art of seduction. By involving blotches on her body, she creates the dichotomy of beautiful and ugly or dangerous. In these seminal images of the photographs of her self-described "performalist" self-portrait *S.O.S. – Starification Object Series* (Figures 1–3), Wilke covered her body with small vulva forms she shaped from used chewing gums. The gums, mimicking the larger form of the folded sculptures, represent scars or growths and contrast with Wilke's flirtatious advertisement style glamour poses. "I chose gum, because it's the perfect metaphor for the American woman – chew her up, get what you want out of her, throw her out and pop in a new piece." said Wilke.²²⁴

"Being-a-woman is the essential presupposition underlying this art work: what this notion entails is assumed to be generally accepted, uncontradictory, and immutable. Whether art focuses on pain (immolation) or pleasure (eroticism), it does not challenge a fixed and rigid category of 'femininity'.²²⁵

One of a contemporary intersection of this position is the participatory web project and combined media installation *Looking for a Husband with EU Passport* (2000–2005)²²⁶ by Tanja Ostojić (Figure 4), where the female body represents also a socio-political

220 Ibid.

221 Ibid.

222 In reference to Gina Pane's works entitled "Discourse mou et mat" (1975) and "Action Sentimentale" (1973).

223 Judith Barry and Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, "Textual Strategies: The politics of art-making", p. 55.

224 www.artnews.org/gallery.php?i=109&exi=7223.

225 Judith Barry, Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, "Textual Strategies: The politics of art-making", p. 56.

226 www.scca.org.mk/capital/projects/tanja/.

instrument and is in-between pain, vulnerability, pleasure, eroticism and politics, moreover it represents the female body as a political object of European Union's legal and illegal migration discourse.

Subcultural Artisan Works

As a second strategy in feminist art practice, women's art can be viewed as a form of sub-cultural resistance. It presents artisan works, or female craft works, such as patch-work quilts and activities of women at home, which have been overlooked in a dominant art system. Like a feminist counter tradition in the arts, they represent a "hidden history" of female productivity to stimulate new areas of expression. As redefining art when including craft and previously neglected skills, the ideological patriarchal restrictive distinction between "high" and "low" cultural forms are avoided. However, it is also an essentialist position, as it views women with an by mainstream culture unrecognised inherent creativity and has limited ability to transform the structural conditions of producing art and the oppression of women, as it is a limited, un-theorised strategy.²²⁷

Contemporary positions of (post)modern artisan works, expanding and redefining this tradition of women's work, are works by Orly Cogan such as stitched and sewed drawings made on found vintage linens of political women's images,²²⁸ to view the personal as political, but also as artistically articulated female privacy, leisure time and irony of gendered women behaviours (Figures 5–8). "Orly Cogan updates a traditionally feminine craft with what critic Margaret Hawkins describes as a kind of 'happy-go-lucky post modern perversity'. Cogan's work addresses issues of identity, transformation, physiology, fantasy, humour, irony and the boundaries between the fictional fairytale and the mundane, as well as provocative power issues between the sexes. The result is a portrait of girlhood womanly ambitions as well as women's girlish ambivalence, creating an image of public intimacy."²²⁹

Another artist to note, working in the so called modified (post)modern craft, is Ghada Amer, a Muslim artist, emphasizing the theme of women's pleasure and sexuality as a taboo in today's Muslim society through large-scale works in acrylic, embroidery and gel medium on canvas.²³⁰

Separatist Isolationism

The third category of artistic practice derives from the aspect of potential isolationism. The dominant cultural order is viewed as a monolithic construction, where women's

227 Judith Barry, Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, "Textual Strategies: The politics of art-making", p. 56.

228 See website reference of Orly Cogan's works at www.orlycogan.com.

229 www.projectsgallery.com/Shows/CoganPrincess.html.

230 See more information about works by Ghada Amer at the website reference www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/artists/11763/Ghada_Amer.

cultural activity is A – submerged or B – placed entirely outside. This position can be regarded as an antidote to feminist essentialism, because it recognises, that both “form” and “content” of culture carry meaning. But it is also the basis of “separatist” – artists who do not identify with the art world, and second, the non-feminist discussion, where artists simply deny that their work is embedded in a social context, or that art-making is a form of social practice. This category includes two groups of women at opposite ideological poles, where the strategy of the first group is to establish their own society to combat patriarchy; but it fails to theorise how women are produced as a category within the social complex, or how femininity is a social construct.²³¹

“The productive result is an attack on the destructive dissatisfaction with being a woman that patriarchal culture fosters. ... this unproblematic notion of “femaleness” does not take into account that meaning is a dialectical process which involves an interaction between images and viewers. By failing to theorise how this meaning is produced within the social complex, this art considers the notion of femininity as unproblematic and positions women’s culture as separate and different from mainstream culture.”²³²

Feminist Art Working on the Social Discourse

“A final type of artistic practice situates women at a crucial place in patriarchy which enables them to play on the contradictions within it.”²³³ Artistic activity is regarded as a textual practice to exploit existing social contradictions. This position has intersections with other social practices, whereby the foreground of the issues involves the representation of women. The image of women is not accepted as an already produced given, but is constructed, which has the result of emphasising that meanings are socially constructed, demonstrating the importance and function of the discourse in shaping of social reality. Important is the difference between women making art in a male-dominated society and feminist art working against patriarchy.²³⁴

A feminist art evolves from a theoretical reflection on representations: “... how the representation of women is produced, the way it is understood, and the social conditions in which it is situated. ... also ... analysing cultural production from a feminist perspective.”²³⁵

For example, the work *Post-Partum Document* by Mary Kelly deconstructs the assumed unity of the mother/child dyad by mapping the exploration of psychic processes and indicating the construction of motherhood away from a biological truth.²³⁶

231 Judith Barry, Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, “Textual Strategies: The politics of art-making,” p. 57.

232 Ibid.

233 Ibid.

234 Ibid., p. 57–58.

235 Ibid., p. 58.

236 Griselda Pollock, *Vison and Difference*, London, New York: Routledge, 1988, pp. 227–231.

The important aim of this category of art is the critical awareness of the construction of femininity as a critical understanding of representation. The spectator is transformed from a passive consumer into an active producer of meaning, by being engaged in a process of discovery, rather than offering a rigidly formulated truth. The art work produces a critical perspective that questions absolute or reified categories and definitions of women.²³⁷

“Both the social construction of femininity and the psychoanalytic construction of sexual difference can be foregrounded if the art work attempts to rupture traditionally held and naturalised ideas about women. Finally, a theoretical approach implies a break with the dominant notion of art as personal expression, instead of connecting it with the social and the political and placing the artist as producer in a new situation of responsibility for her images.”²³⁸

Household Tools as Artistic Signifier

It was around the 1970s when household tools became an issue and iconologic/iconographic element in art. In these times, where the personal became political and social issues entered art, women artists subverted the household and transformed household tools into socio-political tools of art. The Hoover, a symbol for women’s household work, is subverted and merged into art as a political instrument. One image of this time has been created by Kirsten Justesen, *The Class Struggle / Klassekampen* (1976) (Figure 9), which is mutual to a social documentary photograph.

Another more elaborated iconologic and iconographic use of the vacuum cleaner occurs in the works of VALIE EXPORT. The artist uses household tools as an instrumentarium for subverted Madonna images (Figures 10–12). The ideological content of Botticelli’s *Madonna with Child* or Michelangelo’s *Pieta* is subverted with the exaggerated depiction of suffering and the idealized portrayal of woman as mother by confronting it with the crude realism of a housewife’s everyday life, here symbolized by the Hoover and the washing machine.²³⁹

Furthermore an iconologic/iconographic mutuality is between the work of Orly Cogan and VALIE EXPORT’s drawing, when using the tube of the oven or the Hoover as a phallic object directed to the vulva (Figure 6 and 13). As a gesture of obscure sexual desire fantasy, it shows filling up the emptiness of a housewife’s day unliteral into the body, almost incorporating the household tools in the body. Furthermore EXPORT is subverting and redefining Rafael’s drawing *Madonna in Nature* by bringing the traditional defined women’s allegories of saint/mother/whore into everyone’s home and into everyday life. A transcendent and mysterious image of a saint is transferred into a banal one of a housewife’s, where desire, fantasy and irony are combined into a scenario of a housewife’s emptiness and

237 Judith Barry, Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, “Textual Strategies: The politics of art-making”, pp. 58–59.

238 Ibid., p. 59.

239 www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/die-geburtenmadonna/.

desperate home situation and where images of saint/mother/whore clash all together. But it describes also an image, where the woman seems to be integrated in the scene together with objects as an object itself. A similar sexual-desire-fantasy-play occurs in Orly Cogan's work (Figure 6), where women are rather acting as doll-like home prostitutes embedded in a "fruitful" irony of housework duties and subverting the functional household tools in desirable objects, by being an object themselves.

A digression to the discourse of household tools is the common visualisation of power in both Wilkes and EXPORT's works (Figures 14–16). The example, to compare VALIE EXPORT's and Hannah Wilke's common sense of subverting the male dominated society and art world, is visible in their images when using the gun as an iconologic instrument. The gun can be defined here as phallic object, as an object of power, directed to an invisible "Other", to the unknown viewer and spectator, or to the construct of a male society in general. Although EXPORT's images occurred from the *Expanded Cinema* happenings, they are none the less a critique and subversion of spectatorship through reversing the dominance and control of "watching and being watched", as the gaze is defined as a male gaze. The woman's object position is particular visible in Hannah Wilke's image *So Help Me Hannah: What Does This Represent / What Do You Represent (Reinhart)* (Figure 14), where the artist is surrounded by lifeless objects, seemingly an object as well.

The Private Household in Media Art

Another similar subversion in the 1970s, a time of "the personal is political", occurred in video art. The media video liberated the silent image and involved the artist as an actor. To issue performativity as a major aspect was central in the women's performance videos from the 1970s. Recurrent themes were autobiography, identity, relation of the self to others, questioning of female stereotypes, and the expansion of self through personae. The performance video was personal, often articulated in the direct address of an artist performing alone.

The background of these works is the time when feminism was a new and powerful liberatory movement, video was a relatively new invention, and social institutions, including the art world, were undergoing radical reevaluation. The content of the videotapes is transgressive by distilling complex taboos, intrincating social relations and personal reality. The video artworks contain visual and performative strategies on how bodies are made to appear and signify as a negotiation that remains fundamental to the formation of a subject in social space.²⁴⁰

Performance art and video art were especially appealing because the new medium had no traditional history of excluding women and were also a challenge to formalism, as rejection of the idea, that everything necessary in a work of art is contained within it. The context

240 Maria Troy, "I Say I Am: Women's Performance Video from the 1970s", in: www.vdb.org/resources/isayiamessay.html.

of the work, including the reason for its creation, the historical background, and the life of the artist became considered to be significant. The negation of the division between art and life, artist and audience, understands art as social and experimental. This changed the role in art history of women artists, who have been model not maker, muse not master.

By re-conceptualizing their role as artists, women's body art destabilized the structure of conventional art history and criticism. The impact of performance was extended by video through the possibility of reiteration to be endlessly present and changed the nature of performance by enabling an intimacy. Incorporated as an element in live performance, video altered the experience of space and added a mediated presence and reception. Artists used this distance/intimacy to explore a range of psychosocial and psychosexual relations, e.g. Joan Jonas and Lynda Benglis. Important within this technological discourse is, for the woman performance artist, the ability to create and control time and space through video to acknowledge her own voice without interruption.²⁴¹

Also Ulrike Rosenbach and VALIE EXPORT view reflections of their own body images in their video performances, in contrast to cultural historically determined attributes of femininity, e.g. stereotypes of images of the history of painting and media images of movies, television and the advertisement industry. The artist's emphasis is on a subjective female perspective by questioning the roles of image, copy and media image. With their work they built up a public ongoing discourse about the critic on the media apparatus and its images, to come up with both the assumed neutrality of the media and its disguised dimension of gender as well as with the conflicts of power in a media society.²⁴²

In relation to women's privacy, and in means of "the personal is political", women artists explore domestic issues such as motherhood, sexuality, death, familial relationships, control of physical space and the preparation and consumption of food. Suzanne Lacy depicts with her work *Learn Where the Meat Comes From* (1978) the role of consumer and consumed by instructing proper butcher terms for cuts of meat by pointing them out on her body. "... she literalises the way women's bodies are traditionally dissected through objectification and fetishization and through this linkage between food, sex, and death, raises the taboo of cannibalism."²⁴³ The same taboo evokes the work *Hey! Chicky!!!* (1978) by Nina Sobell (Figures 17–19). In the video she appears playing with a chicken and obscures the imaginary distinction between woman as mother/cook and woman as sexual object in the mother/whore dichotomy. "It is a statement of the displacement of sexual desire on food and women's bodies and an expression of female ambivalence about motherhood."²⁴⁴

Martha Rosler's work *In Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975) shows and tells the ingredients of the housewife's day, but the tools have been used not for preparation of meals, instead she replaces the domesticated "meaning" of tools with a lexicon of rage and frustration.

241 Ibid.

242 Yvonne Spielmann, *Video Das reflexive Medium*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2005, pp. 243–244.

243 Maria Troy, "I Say I Am: Women's Performance Video from the 1970s", in: www.vdb.org/resources/isayiamessay.html.

244 Ibid.

As a feminist parody video it is considered a critique of the commodification of food and traditional women's roles.²⁴⁵ In this alphabet of kitchen implements states Rosler: "When the woman speaks, she names her own oppression. ... I was concerned with something like the notion of 'language speaking the subject', and with the transformation of the woman herself into a sign in a system of signs that represent a system of food production, a system of harnessed subjectivity."²⁴⁶

New Spaces in Virtual Reality?

A current position in the field of new media art is the subversion of the cyber world by cyber-feminist art practices. Core cyberfeminist actions are aesthetic/artistic strategies, not only as deconstructions of representations of gender, but also of traditional concepts on the net and in the institutions of tech-culture. Terms of these practices are to recode, remap, relocate, reconstruct. Cyberfeminist projects do not work as a massive front in a manner of counter cultural movements but they are subversive, infiltrating the mainstream with ironic breaks, citations and deformations.²⁴⁷

Nancy Paterson (Figure 20) states about cyberfeminism: "Cyberfeminism as a philosophy has the potential to create a poetic, passionate, political identity and unity without relying on a logic and language of exclusion or appropriation. ... The body, in virtual space, is no mere user-interface; VR offers the chance to trade-in, remodel, or even leave behind the physical nature with which we are, in reality, burdened. Outside forces which act upon us, impose restrictions, are gone."²⁴⁸

To enter cyber space means to leave the "meat space" behind, to enter the transcendental place of "mind over matter". For the body this can be a freedom of systems and norms. The body in the internet is free to choose and change between body concepts and fragments and therefore question them in their repressivity, but the body image on the internet is itself a surface, an interface.²⁴⁹ "Weirdly, cyberfeminism deals with preformed bodies, recreating concepts of feminine and subjective in multiple, analysing internet and other current micropolitic productions."²⁵⁰

245 Ibid.

246 www.ubu.com/film/rosler_semiotics.html.

247 Claude Draude, "Introducing Cyberfeminism", in: www.obn.org/reading_room/writings/html/intro.html.

248 Nancy Paterson, "Cyberfeminism", in: www.internetfrauen.w4w.net/archiv/cyberfem.txt.

249 Alla Mitrofanova, in: Andrea Jana Korb/Andrea Hapke, "Versuch einer Genealogie des Cyberfeminismus", in: www.userpage.fu-berlin.de/~brat/baba/text/rucyfem.pdf, pp. 137–138.

250 Ibid., p. 139.



HANNAH WILKE, (American, 1940-1993), S.O.S. – *Starification Object Series*. 1974–82. Gelatin silver prints with chewing gum sculptures, 40 x 58 1/2 x 2 1/4" (101.6 x 148.6 x 5.7 cm), Hannah Wilke Collection and Archive, Los Angeles.

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HANNAH WILKE, S.O.S. – *Starification Object Series*, 1974, Performalist Self-portrait with Les Wollam.

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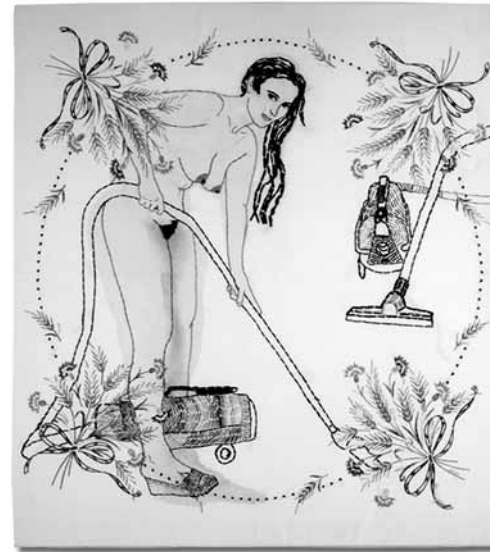


HANNAH WILKE, S.O.S. – *Starification Object Series*, Photo: Les Wollam, 1974, 17.8 x 12.7 cm.

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TANJA OSTOJIĆ,
Looking for a Husband with EU Passport,
 2000–05, Participatory web project /
 combined media installation.
 Photo: Borut Krajnc.
 Courtesy Tanja Ostojić.
www.scca.org.mk/capital/projects/tanja/
*The photograph is printed
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ORLY COGAN,
Woman's Work, hand stitched embroidery
 and paint on vintage linen.
The photograph is printed with the permission of Orly Cogan.



ORLY COGAN,
Coffe Break, hand stitched embroidery
 and paint on linen, installation.
The photograph is printed with the permission of Orly Cogan.



ORLY COGAN,
Saturday, hand stitched embroidery
 and paint on vintage linen.
*The photograph is printed with the permission
 of Orly Cogan.*



ORLY COGAN,
A Woman's Work Is Never Done, 2005, hand
 stitched embroidery and paint on vintage linen.
*The photograph is printed with the permission
 of Orly Cogan.*



KIRSTEN JUSTESEN,
 *1943, *The Class Struggle / Klassekampen*, 1976, b/w C-print on aluminium, 175 x 240 cm.
The photograph is printed with the permission of Kirsten Justesen.



VALIE EXPORT,
Erwartung / Expectation, 1976, re-positioning
 after *Madonna with Child* (approx. 1482) by
 Sandro Botticelli. Courtesy Charim Gallery, Vienna.
 The photograph is printed with the permission of
 Charim Gallery, Vienna.



VALIE EXPORT,
Die Geburtenmadonna / The Birth Madonna, 1976.
 Courtesy Charim Gallery, Vienna.
 The photograph is printed with the permission of
 Charim Gallery, Vienna.



HANNAH WILKE,
*So Help Me Hannah: What Does This Represent/
 What Do You Represent* (Reinhart), 1978–1984.
 From *So Help Me Hannah* series, black and
 white photograph, 60 x 40 inches, Edition of 10.
 The photograph is printed with the permission of
 Courtesy Donald and Helen Goddard and
 Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York.



HANNAH WILKE,
So Help Me Hannah, 1978, Performalist Self-portrait
 with Donald Goddard, black and white photograph,
 11 x 14 inches.
 The photograph is printed with the permission of
 Courtesy Donald and Helen Goddard and
 Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York.



VALIE EXPORT,
Rekonstruktion / Reconstruction, drawing, b/w,
 pencil on paper, 29 x 40,9 cm.
 Courtesy Charim Gallery, Vienna.
 The photograph is printed with the permission of
 Charim Gallery, Vienna.



VALIE EXPORT,
Madonna mit Gas-Schlauch / Madonna with Gas-Pipe,
 1973, after *Madonna in Nature*, Rafael, 1506.
 Courtesy Charim Gallery, Vienna.
 The photograph is printed with the permission of
 Charim Gallery, Vienna.



VALIE EXPORT,
Action Pants: Genital Panic, 1969.
 Courtesy Charim Gallery, Vienna.
 The photograph is printed with the permission of
 Charim Gallery, Vienna.

Aleš Erjavec

POWER, FREEDOM AND SUBVERSION: POLITICAL THEATER AND ITS LIMITS

A large segment of the global cinema-goers is probably familiar with Emir Kusturica, the Serbian film director, who twice received at the Cannes film festival the main award, *Palme d'Or*, and is regarded by some as one of the most creative directors in cinema during the 1980s and '90s. He is known for movies such as *When Father was Away on Business* (1985), *Arizona Dream* (1993), *Underground* (1995) and *Black Cat, White Cat* (1998). With his movie *Underground* he openly sided with Serbia in the Yugoslav conflict, later praised Slobodan Milošević, and left Sarajevo for Belgrade. Emir Kusturica, a Bosnian Serb, continues to promote the Serbian cause. The last public instance of doing this was a fiery, derogatory as well as highly poetic speech at a rally in Belgrade on February 21, 2008, which was being transmitted worldwide and which ended with the torching of the American, Croatian, Slovenian and Turkish embassies by the angry crowds. Kusturica addressed the protesters, angry because of the proclamation of independence of Kosovo, with a speech in which he likened the people of the NATO countries and others who supported the Kosovar independence to traitors, cowards, and sheep.

In this time of political passivity, of what is often described as the “posthistorical situation”, it is rare to see people taking sides and actively and passionately promote, defend, and fight for political causes. For some, such people are zealots and fundamentalists, while others—definitely a minority—see in them the only survivors who are still fighting for freedom which is freedom precisely because it remains undefined. Let me note in passing that this contradiction perhaps explains well the division regarding freedom in most of the revolutionary movements and events, with the philosophical roots of this division going back to Hegel and Schelling. As it has been claimed, “Unlike Hegel, Schelling leaves the problem of how to understand freedom open. A dialectic of recognition, of the kind that Hegel employs in the *Phenomenology*, that enables me to apprehend my own freedom by acknowledging the other as free subject, cannot, despite Hegel's claims, tell me what my freedom is....I must *already* be prereflexively aware what it is to exercise my freedom, otherwise there would be no way of *understanding* another person's demand that I exercise my freedom in relation to their appeal to my capacity for decision.”²⁵¹

It is not yet entirely clear whether we should refer to contemporary situation in relation to the current events, in our case in Serbia, as that of modernity, postmodernity, globalism, or it is but a situation of those on the cultural, economic and political fringes of the First World—something that has been, for Serbia for example, its historical role at least since the battle of Kosovo in 1389. What is clear is that it is not a situation inherently engendered by the countries of the First World.

251 Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity from Kant to Nietzsche*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003, p. 116.



NINA SOBELL,
Hey! Chicky!!!, 1978.
Courtesy Nina Sobell.
The photographs are printed
with the permission of
Nina Sobell.

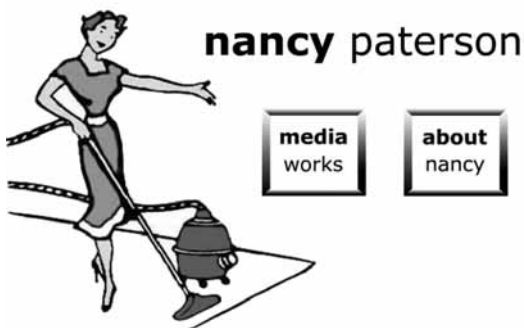


Image of Nancy Paterson's website
www.vacuumwoman.com.
The photograph is printed
with the permission of Nancy Paterson.

Political Theater

Let me turn to the actual theme of this essay. It is not a discussion of the life and work of Kusturica—although we shall soon discern similarities—but the career of Ljubiša Ristić, another figure from the recent cultural history of the ex-Yugoslavia. Ljubiša Ristić—less known than Kusturica, also because working in a more hermetic medium, namely theater—chose a similar trajectory in life, but carried it further than the mentioned film director.

To say that Ristić took his theater seriously may be an understatement. In his case one would almost exclaim that for him “The World’s a Stage”, for in his life Ljubiša Ristić (born in 1947) put events on the stage and he staged political events. The theater director, who was one of the main figures of Yugoslav theater from the seventies until the nineties, who was praised, in the eighties, at home and abroad for his “political theater” and his personal search and theatrical research of the revolution and the vicissitudes of those who identified with its ideas and utopia, who, after the beginning of the disintegration of Yugoslavia in early nineties, moved to Serbia as the last stronghold of Yugoslav beliefs and ideology, to become there the leader of a political movement, the aim of which was to bring together all leftist and progressive parties, while continuing his theatrical work, lives today in Belgrade, a little over 60 years old, in the old Sugar Factory in which until two years ago his theater “KPGT”, which executed 1,000 theater plays and consisted of 50 to 120 members, used to be located, with his wife, son and his elderly mother. He has left both politics and the theater, or, in his view, the two have left him. He feels persecuted, cannot attain any support for his theatrical work, and appears to be left in a past that no one cares about any longer.

In Ristić’s view, what is happening, is pure corruption of artists and “cultural workers”.

“As long as I remember—claims Ristić—political influence and the political criterium in culture were never equal to that of today. Today we have a double ideological intervention in culture and in art. One is the intervention of the party apparatus of the parties in power and the other is the intervention from abroad. Our culture is being run by foreign ministries of foreign affairs, foreign foundations, our cultural centers are financed by other countries, or culture is financed by the international community through the broken down booths of NGO’s and various foundations....What was once called Stalinism, is today at work in a much more efficient form and is called political correctness. Against Stalinism one could fight as an anti-Stalinist, as a leftist, a conservative, it does not matter. Today against political correctness you cannot fight.”²⁵²

In his 1988 book *Gesamtkunstwerk Stalin*, or as the title has been translated into English, *The Total Art of Stalinism*, the Russian philosopher, art critic and curator, Boris Groys, makes the following observation: “There would have been no need to suppress

252 Ljubiša Ristić, “Interview with Ljubiša Ristić by Radmila Stamenković”, in: *Politička misao i društvena istraživanja*, nos. 1–3, Belgrade, May 12, 2007, on-line edition.

the avant-garde if its black squares and transrational poetry had confined themselves to the artistic space, but the fact that it was persecuted indicates that it was operating on the same territory as the state.”²⁵³

Groys’s statement is valid if we regard the avant-garde actions within the historical framework of totalitarian or authoritarian society: there the realm in which the enunciation of politically dissenting or competitive voices is severely limited. But there is also a related, yet different story in modern history, namely the story of artists who intentionally entered the political arena—not as actual politicians as in cases such as that of the Czech playwright Václav Havel who became the first president of the post-1989 Czech republic, but of artists who, *as artists*, become involved in the broader political, utopian, social projects—*aesthetic projects* in short—namely projects initiated by political parties, groups or individuals whose purpose was not a straightforward acquisition of political power for the purposes of pragmatic political action or for personal or party gains, but who possessed a vision, believed in a utopia, and possessed the desire to bridge the gap between the sensible and the rational and thus create a unity which Horkheimer and Adorno found lacking in the contemporary realization of the project of Enlightenment. In brief, I have in mind the master narratives that Lyotard discussed, with which, as Michel Foucault claims, he had in mind especially marxism.

We find the first explicit discourse promoting the connection or even unity of the rational and the sensible in Schiller’s *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795). In 1825 Saint Simon refers to this link between the artists and politics as an already accepted liaison. The trend then reaches its temporary apogee at the time of the classical avant-gardes that Peter Bürger terms the “historical avant-gardes”. have in mind for example the general ideas promoted by the Italian and partly Russian futurists, with these endeavors reaching their most obvious and visible manifestation in the foundation of Marinetti’s Futurist Political Party (1918), or in actions of various active participants of the October revolution as found among Russian futurists and constructivists. The telegram sent by the Berlin Dada (Georg Grosz etc.) to Gabrielle d’Annunzio who occupied Fiume/Rijeka in September 1919, proclaiming “the capture of Fiume [to be a] Dadaist masterstroke,”²⁵⁴ reveals the extent to which art, politics and life—perhaps death (we only have to consider the gesture of Italian futurists, 43 of whom joined in July 1915 as volunteers the Lombardy volunteer bicycle battalion of the Italian Army) were all parts of the same aesthetic universal work of art.

A more minor role was that of sympathizers—such as Pablo Picasso who sided with the Soviet Union and the French Communist Party—although even these sometimes ended up doing more than simply showing intimate sympathy for various political movements and ideologies: consider the pro-Soviet orientation of the majority of French surrealists, or—an even better example—the case of the American poet Ezra Pound and his political propaganda in support of Mussolini and the Axis powers.

253 Boris Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992, p. 35.

254 Hans Richter, *Dada Art and Anti-Art*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1978, p. 109.

Contrary to Peter Bürger and his canonical interpretation of the avant-gardes of the previous century I wish to claim that it is too early to delete the notion of the avant-garde art from our vocabulary, although it is true that it has to be re-thought and reconceptualized.

In my opinion there exist two main trends in avant-garde art of the previous century: the first is art which professes autonomy of art and often also exists within such autonomy. Theodor Adorno could be considered its main theorist, with artists that he promotes and values—Beckett, Kafka, Schoenberg, Picasso—representing its excellent and paramount examples. There exists also another kind of avant-garde in the twentieth century. Some call it the politicized, the radical, etc. avant-garde—with its main characteristic being its fundamental necessity to overcome the limitations of art as such, its autonomy and its isolation from life within the institution of art. We may agree with Bürger that the project—if it ever was a conscious project and not mainly an intuitive desire—of these avant-gardes has first faltered and then disappeared, and that they were returned into the institution of art. Nonetheless, as Groys implies, there is a region of social existence in which art competes with politics. If politics attempts to reach into—perhaps “control”—all realms of social life, then art—as a subversion of the ruling ideology and politics—often emerges as an important player in such life. But before this happens there is usually a period in which the political and the artistic avant-gardes share the same aims.

If art, on the contrary, remains limited to the institution of art and becomes or remains a commodity, then it can, especially as a product of culture industry, fit unproblematically into the system of capitalist commodity production and material and symbolic exchange.

My claim in this respect would be that there exists also the third kind of avant-garde art which emerged in the former or present socialist countries and that we can see nowadays mainly in the visual arts emerging from contemporary China. What is typical for this avant-garde art is that it possesses all the characteristics of the classical avant-gardes and the neoavant-gardes except the orientation towards the future and is therefore a continuation of the avant-garde impulse from the earlier periods of the twentieth century. Another feature of this art is that it exists within the framework of postmodernism. In contradiction to much of western postmodern art the recent art from these countries is often highly politicized, this being so because the whole social environment in which it comes to existence is highly politicized, thereby representing an aberration within the present and recent global context.

In a book that we published some years ago²⁵⁵ we discussed the visual arts, mostly conceptual art and the fine arts that emerged in recent decades as a specific “third” form of avant-garde art. Here I want to turn to another instance of such art or, rather, artistic and life practices, namely the theater projects and ideas—theatrical and political—of the mentioned Ljubiša Ristić, one of the prime theater persons of the former Yugoslavia. As we shall see, with Ristić we leave the autonomy of art, to enter the problematic realms of recent political life.

255 See Aleš Erjavec (ed.), *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition. Politicized Art under Late Socialism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Although even in Slovenia this has today been mostly forgotten, in many respects Ristić, historically speaking, represents a predecessor to Slovenian and other postmodern theater artists from the space of the ex-Yugoslavia, such as Dragan Živadinov or Tomaž Pandur and others, be it in Slovenia or elsewhere in the ex-Yugoslavia.

The themes of Ristić's theater are still themes related to the first wave of the turn against the revolution—especially the October one. In his plays, Ristić, as many writers of the eighties as well as theorists of that time, regards October Revolution and the Soviet state “problematic” only at the time of Stalin. It is not the revolution *per se* that is to be blamed and criticized, it is not the idea, but its materialization in ideology and political practice that carry the burden of guilt—this being an anonymous guilt which is therefore no guilt at all, but a blind historical course of events. Ristić furthermore regards the historical story of Yugoslavia—its break with Stalin in 1948, its development of self-management socialism, its mixed economy etc.—as the only real alternative to the essential defects inherent to the Soviet system as developed by Stalin.

Ristić staged his political plays mainly in the eighties when also the Yugoslav system was breaking up. As was the case with Soviet Union which instead of having the future before it this future—socialism—withn Yugoslavia too, slowly began to emerge behind it, with the ethnic borders beginning once again to strengthen and with self-management socialism being replaced by postcommunist societies and states.

Instead of further developing self-management, Ristić saw, in the nineties, the development of nationalist separatism that was turning, in his belief, the wheel of history backwards. The younger generation of artists, be it in theater or the visual arts, disregarded such political issues. When they didn't, they exploited them for their own artistic aims, employing the then still ruling political ideology as yet another repository of props. Ristić, too, found himself at that time in the position of what Fredric Jameson has called the “vanishing mediator”—of someone who believes into the system and wants to help change it, with his purpose thus being not to eliminate it but to make it work better.

Ljubiša Ristić

Ljubiša Ristić was born in 1947 in a Serbian family in Prishtina, Kosovo. In 1977 he founded the mentioned “KPGT”: Kazalište, Pozorište, Gledališče, Teatar—four words which denote the term “theatre” in four main languages of the former Yugoslavia—in Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, and Macedonian. The name of the theater group was of course a political and an ethnic statement: Yugoslavia, which came into existence after World War I, was a multiethnic country, with its constituent national groups possessing different histories, religions, languages and even alphabets. In 1980 Tito died and in 1991 the first among Yugoslav republics, Slovenia, went independent. For some of its inhabitants Yugoslavia was the best possible country. An illustration of this could be the case of Balint Szombathy, an artist from what used to be the autonomous province of Voivodina, but is now officially

a part of north Serbia. For him, being of Hungarian origin, Yugoslavia was the best possible ethnic solution. After its disintegration he made its disappearance the main project of his artistic career. With the demise of Yugoslavia the government of Slobodan Milošević took away Hungarian cultural autonomy and dissolved the autonomous region of Voivodina, turning it into an integral part of Serbia. Since the early nineties the artist devotes his life to the re-creating and to the memory of no longer existing symbols, representations, artifacts, and paraphernalia of the state of Yugoslavia that is no longer there. Szombathy thus exhibits in the form of installations items such as money bills and coins, flags and train schedules for travel, for example, from his home town in Voivodina, Subotica, to Ljubljana: twenty years ago one traveled this distance without any hassle but now one needs three visas to make the trip. His whole artistic life revolves around remnants of a past that is no longer here.²⁵⁶

At the time of Yugoslavia Ljubiša Ristić was a well-known theater director, traveling and working all over the country. During the eighties he worked mostly in Slovenia, becoming known, in 1981, for his “political theatre”. In 1995—four years after the actual disintegration of Yugoslavia—Ristić became the president of JUL—a political organization whose aim was to politically unite and coordinate various leftist political parties within the remnant of Yugoslavia, with “JUL” (also meaning the month of July) being an acronym for the “Yugoslav Left”—“Jugoslovenska levica”. When Ristić became the president of JUL, Mira Marković, the wife of Slobodan Milošević (the latter being arrested in 2001 and then sent to the Hague) and until her emigration to Moscow in 2001 an influential political figure in Serbia, stated that they chose Ljubiša Ristić for the president of JUL for he was a more respected person than her.

It soon turned out that the project of bringing together various leftist political parties was not feasible and that the only member party that actually had political support among voters was the Union of Communists—The Movement for Yugoslavia, led by Slobodan Milošević himself. Ristić thus became a political public figure: from a well-known theater director he turned into a politician. Nonetheless, he stated in an interview in October 2007, that this is “not being involved in politics in a classical sense, but [is] a logical continuation of what I have been doing and thinking earlier.”²⁵⁷ Let me add that prior to this interview he became involved in politics in various ways: in 2000, for example, he was the president of the Foreign Policy Committee of the Federal Council of Yugoslavia, publicly predicting the creation of a federation between Russia, Bielorrussia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

One of Groys’s thesis in the book *The Total Art of Stalinism* is that Stalin in Soviet Union actually carried out an artistic project—a thesis that met with much criticism. Of course, we have to understand the notion of an “artistic project” in the sense of an “aesthetic” project, namely in the sense articulated by Schiller and Schelling. While Groys actually

256 For more on Balint Szombathy see Miško Šuvaković, “Art as a Political Machine”, in: *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition*, esp. pp. 116, 120.

257 *Gloria*, Belgrade, October 2, 2007.

broadens the notion of an artistic project to almost absurd dimensions, it is necessary to take seriously his remark regarding the avant-garde artists and their black squares impinging upon the same territory as the state, for the project of the Russian avant-garde in many respects crossed the borderline between art as an autonomous social phenomenon and art as a stepping stone into the realm of life as a social utopia. In the realm of society both the utopian social practice and the utopian artistic practice met—and, not surprisingly, it was the social practice that won, but mostly devoid of its utopian content.

A very similar view can be found in Ristić, who claimed that, “Theater must fight for a status equal to that of the world. It must take part in the production of the world. Theater either has this status or it is only a service station of the state, just like traffic police, a hospital, or a school.”²⁵⁸

Theater does not exist within the sphere of artistic autonomy, but is equal to the state. Or, as a younger Slovenian theater director claimed in 1984, also perhaps under the influence of Ristić, “theater is the state” and artists are, as the music group Laibach proclaimed at approximately the same time, politicians, with art being the highest form of politics.

Ristić directed a hundred or more plays throughout Yugoslavia, organized theater festivals, and was the director of numerous theater houses throughout the country. In 1980 he staged the play *Mass in A Minor* in the Slovenian Youth Theater in Ljubljana. At that time this theater was a somewhat marginal Slovenian theater whose target public were high school kids. With the arrival of Ristić the theater soon became known across Yugoslavia. Until today it has remained one of the central experimental theaters in Slovenia. In the opinion of Tomaž Toporišič, “the first form of politicized postmodernist theatre in Slovenia, characteristic of the second world of Central and Eastern Europe, appeared at the beginning of the eighties with Ristić’s performance *Mass in A Minor*...With his variant of political theatre, Ristić entirely abandoned the classic relationship between literature and theatre and, at the same time, heralded the entrance of art into the field of politics....The maverick character of this kind of political and explorative theatre was then illuminated by the young critic Vili Ravnjak: “The structure of such performances is of course no longer that of drama, but that of the essay. Instead of a story, there is a commentary...The theatre performance can therefore also be created independently from a literary and dramatic text. The traditionally understood playwright has therefore completely fallen out of this aesthetics, being replaced by the director, who is no longer a traditional artist either, but primarily a social critic.” Thus, direction and the theatrical event no longer formed the imaginary artistic, but the concrete political space. The political theatre of the eighties emerged as the meeting point of literature and spectacle. Its characteristic was precisely the linking of political engagement and theatrical experiment, the revolution of the mind and form. Interestingly, it sprang from the reading of tradition, for example, that of Bertolt Brecht; Peter Brook and his staging of Peter Weiss (*Marat-Sade*), Arianne Mnouchkine, etc.”²⁵⁹

258 Ljubiša Ristić, quoted in Dušan Jovanović, “Doručak kot Tifanija”, in: *Scena*, Novi Sad, XLII (4/2006), p. 31.

259 Tomaž Toporišič, “Traces of Political Seduction. Slovene Mladinsko Theatre 1980–2005”, in: Tomaž Toporišič et al.

As mentioned, the so-called political theater—the term first carried a pejorative meaning—of Ristić started with the *Mass in A Minor* in late 1980. The play was based on a novel by Danilo Kiš (1935-1989), a Hungarian Jew on his father's side, a Montenegrin by his mother, living in Belgrade and Dubrovnik, and a translator from French and Russian. In late seventies Danilo Kiš published a volume of short stories titled *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* which was soon translated into major European languages. In *Mass in A Minor* Ristić modified Danilo Kiš's story of a Russian revolutionary who ended in a gulag. "The myth of the revolutionary was traced from his youth through international adventures, personal and political, all the way to his demise in the menacing atmosphere of Stalinist purges and his ultimate disappearance in the frost of a gulag. The career of Boris Davidovich acquired mythic proportions, mixed with rumor and hearsay; on their exit the spectators [of Ristić's play] were even handed mock international newspapers announcing on their front pages in big letters that Boris Davidovich was recently seen somewhere in Moscow. His career, as it could be gradually pieced together by the spectator, became a portrait of exemplary revolutionary biographies, a composite of topoi of revolutionary trials, triumphs and failures. A variety of genres and scenic modes were utilized for each of the tableaux, such as cabaret chorus number, documentary drama, ritual, salon comedy, and revolutionary pageantry. Most of the dialogue was spoken in Slovenian, but there were sentences in Russian, Spanish, German, French, English, Hebrew, Italian, and probably some other languages."²⁶⁰

In *Mass in A-Minor* Ristić took Kiš's short story from the volume by the same title as a starting point, and added fragments and passages from Khlebnikov, Mayakovski, Thomas Mann, Bakunin, and Trotsky. The play was produced in a vaulted cellar space with the audience sitting on small stools in the middle. The actors were to some extent autonomous, free to choose their favorite phrases from the given texts.

In 1981 and in the next few years, when the play travelled around Yugoslavia and abroad, *Mass in A Minor* was the cause for Russian semiofficial protests, especially when the play started to be invited to international theater festivals. This play, first staged in Ljubljana, was then the beginning of the political theatre that in the eighties acquired broad dimensions throughout Yugoslavia.

The same play, first staged late in 1980 and then throughout 1981 in Ljubljana, was staged again in 1991—ten years later, at a period when Yugoslavia was about to disintegrate. The occasion was the so-called "Kiš Festival"—Kiš died a year earlier—organized by Ljubiša Ristić in Subotica in Voivodina. This time *Mass in A Minor* was performed by a group of very young people in a former synagogue. This is how a Serbian critic, today an emigre professor in Holland, Dragan Klaić, described the performance: "So in the summer of 1991, when Yugoslavia was already on the brink of collapse,...it was time to have a Kiš

(ed.), *Has the Future Already Arrived? Fifty Years of Slovensko Mladinsko Gledališče*, Slovensko mladinsko gledališče, Ljubljana 2007, p. 92.

260 Dragan Klaić, "Danilo Kiš: The Theatrical Connection", *Questia Media America, Inc.*, www.questia.com (original publication in 1994).

Fest[ival]—after Shakespeare Fest[ival] and Molière Fest[ival]....For the occasion, Ristić revised *Mass in A Minor*....With the demise of socialism and communist ideology, in the service of which Kiš's hero, Boris Davidovich, lived and perished, the [play] could not be interpreted any longer as a critique of Stalinism...but as a final farewell to communist anthropology, its dream of a new man exemplified by Boris Davidovich and by the altruism of his actual martyred peers and their notions of history. With exactly the same plurilingual text and the same stylistic features and special arrangement as the original production, the *Mass '91* was mellow, forgiving, a gesture of parting, not the tempestuous provocation of the original version."²⁶¹

In late eighties, the early nineties and until today, in Slovenia at least, a new group of theater directors—Vito Taufer in the Youth Theater and Dragan Živadinov with his Cosmokinetic Theater—crossed the boundaries of political theater to devote their attention to the theater as a spectacle or a series of tableaux, using as their thematic background everything from Quentin Tarantino to space travel. This theater, although to a large extent born from the basis created by Ristić—both of these directors were Ristić's assistants—ignored the direct political implications or explicit links that Ristić sought in his works. In Ristić's plays and performances theater was a world parallel world to the real one, construing realities of similar dimensions: those of life and death, of utopia and revolution, of the rise and the demise of an idea, while the younger generation dwelled upon fictitious realities and returned to the autonomous artistic space. It is questionable whether any other path was open to them, except a straightforward step in the direction which Ristić took with his political engagement—but this being a step that these younger theater directors identified with for some time only. For them socialism, self-management, revolution and the like were just ideas and motifs from a repository whose primary purpose was to offer building blocks for motifs that could easily be incorporated into their stage productions. In other words, while Ristić was in big strides leaving the theater to step on the political stage, his former assistants returned theater to the realms of fiction, make-believe and a Malevich inspired mysticism.

What about Ristić? May we say that his position is more ethical than that of his younger colleagues or is it less—judging on the basis of his adamant acceptance of what are considered today by the world opinion to be totalitarian, criminal and genocidal people and actions?

By this question we return to the notion of freedom that I have mentioned in relation to Hegel and Schelling. Has Ristić—who committed no visible crimes although he was at the time of the Clinton administration put on the list of people prohibited to enter the United States because of his proximity to the Milošević regime and his political activities—stepped across the line that separates the safe haven of the theater, safely hidden within its autonomous edifice from the activity on the political stage? In his own view and opinion one led to the other and there was no real separation between the two.

261 Ibid.

Enthusiasm

As Jean-François Lyotard notes, when referring to criteria, it “does not mean that... authority has at its disposal no criterion by which to make its evaluations, but that the applicability of the criterion in the given case is itself subject to evaluation.”²⁶² As we know, in his essay “The Contest of Faculties” published in 1798 and discussed by Lyotard before Michel Foucault did, Kant “made some of his most renowned remarks about the French revolution, and famously introduced ‘enthusiasm’ as the affect that accompanies the revolution in the souls of its more or less distant observers. Ever since Michel Foucault drew attention to Kant’s essay in his prominent first lecture at the Collège de France (1983) and Jean-François Lyotard published his short but significant book *L’enthousiasme* (1986), The Contest of Faculties has been something of a philosophical resurrection, especially in the realm of political thought.”²⁶³

The theme of Kant’s essay was the relation between law and philosophy, for law does not cover the realm of moral and practical aspects of humanity as does philosophy. To prove his point Kant referred to the French Revolution, which had happened some years before, to try to establish a criterion that could serve as the basis for determining the existence of the progress of humanity.

In Kant’s view, echoed by Lyotard, the criterion for such a progress, and therefore a “sign of history” which must be fulfilled in the present, the past, and in the future is an affect, that of enthusiasm, of the participants and even bystanders in the revolutionary events. In the words of Alenka Zupančič, “That which is objectively (and ‘eternally’) good about the revolution, yet never directly visible, registers as objective only by provoking a certain affect in the larger public. In other words, affect is an effect testifying to the existence of a cause that cannot be found on the level of what is discernible as empirical causality.”²⁶⁴

According to Kant, the enthusiasm they feel is a modality of the sublime feeling.²⁶⁵ What best determines the sublime is the indeterminate, the *Formlosigkeit*: “the sublime of nature...can be as if without form or figure”; “no particular form of nature is represented therein.” The same must be the case for the Revolution, and for all great historical upheavals—they are the formless and figureless in historical human nature.²⁶⁶

In other words, in historical events a formlessness sets in which makes us clueless regarding how to interpret them, how to establish a “cognitive mapping,” to use this notion of Fredric Jameson from 1984, that would allow for the setting up of our evaluative coordinates. “There is no empirical causal chain that one could point out as leading directly

262 Jean-François Lyotard, “The Sign of History”, in: Andrew Benjamin (ed.), *The Lyotard Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1989, p. 395.

263 Alenka Zupančič, “Enthusiasm, Anxiety and the Event”, in: *Parallax*, no. 37 (October–December 2005), p. 31.

264 Ibid., p. 33.

265 Lyotard, *op. cit.*, p. 402.

266 Ibid., p. 404.

to the event. An event is always an interruption in the usual course of things.”²⁶⁷ In Kant’s case the event is the enthusiasm, the “attitude of the onlookers as it reveals itself in public while the drama of great political changes is taking place.”²⁶⁸ “The incontestable event of good is thus enthusiasm, an affect that accompanies the revolutionary events, and not these events themselves. In other words, affect is an effect testifying to the existence of a cause that cannot be found on the level of what is discernible as empirical reality.”²⁶⁹

Conclusion

Let us stop at this point. It is not my purpose to judge Ljubiša Ristić and his creation of, or partaking in, various historical events.

The independence of Kosovo is a good instance of a situation in which the international law was sidestepped so as to make room for the legitimate and ethically equally defensible rights of the Kosovar Albanians to attain independence. In this case too, there exists no criterion by which we can make our evaluations, for the applicability of the criterion in the given case is itself subject to evaluation. There only exists a *différend*.

It is true that in the nineties Ljubiša Ristić may have been defending a system which at least in the space of Yugoslavia, as the Balint Szombathy story shows, had positive aspects and effects. Nonetheless, the Yugoslav story too was soon to become obsolete, and became a side effect or collateral damage of the global demise of socialism—not to mention the actions of Slobodan Milošević and his supporters. The system and the country collapsed, and Ristić’s step from theater to politics was a step of a similar kind. Or was it? Enthusiasm that Kant speaks of and that made Boris Davidovich—as so many other communists who ended in a gulag but still believed in communism—a victim of this very same revolutionary enthusiasm—also existed in the case of Ristić, whether we refer to his political theater or to his political actions. His freedom was the freedom of those who can and must be in opposition, who are against and not for—except when it comes to the utopia represented and presented by the events and actions on the theater stage. In this sense only on the stage there is to be found a difference between the aesthetic in life and the aesthetic in art.

On some occasions theater becomes the world—and Ristić made every effort to make the two interchangeable. Nevertheless, in Ristić’s case the world has deleted the theater, proving once again, that it is difficult if not impossible to unite the two, except as a temporary event within the unbound and undefined freedom. While Ristić may have seen his political actions as a continuation of the theater by other means, his life and his actions actually prove—as it was already the case with productivism in the twenties—that the border between art and life cannot be dismantled without losing one or the other. Art may create an event, but such an event can never exist (or perhaps it can *remain* to exist only for an

267 Zupančič, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

268 Kant, “The Contest of Faculties”, quoted in Zupančič, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

269 See Zupančič, *op. cit.*, pp. 32 and 33.

instant) in the realm of actual human history—and vice versa. The “real” of “life” is presented in art (theatrical or other) only as a representation: art’s step beyond its confines necessarily causes its elimination. Thus art that desires to transcend the autonomy of art and consciously reach into politics can paradoxically accomplish this—and thereby accomplish much or even the maximum, speaking artistically-wise—only if it consciously limits its actions to an active existence on the art’s side of the razor blade that separates “art” and “life”.

Laurel Seely
SARAJEVO CULT BAND SCH:
THE POLITICS OF FUTURE NOISE

In 1989 Sarajevo cult band SCH released an album on the Jugoton label titled *During Wartime* which, in its lyrics and sound, essentially anticipated Yugoslavia’s imminent descent into civil war. In an interview given in 1990, the artist behind SCH—Teno, alias Senad Hadžimusić—elusively described the album as speaking “about the eternal relationship between democracy, totalitarianism, and humanism...along with the obligatory admixture of fantasy that follows from the feelings and experiences of the postmodern era, the era of the near future projected onto certain social moments...about the phenomenon of leaders and subjects...higher and lower races...elitism (history as a graveyard of the elites)...an atmosphere of cantonal wars carried out in the very near future.”²⁷⁰ The chilling lyrics of the songs adumbrate in more vivid detail a coming era of violence, despair, betrayal, and demagoguery. To quote from a few songs which give a sense of the album’s sinister atmosphere:

A new day clears the mist
Rest at last
You are dead, battered
I am sorrowful, empty
The cantonal war goes on...
(from “Vagabonds”)

We’ve learnt to forget so easily
Like never before, like never before
(and) You
take me to the fields
remove me with one shot
don’t let me forget
kill me and never
never let me forget...
(from “Never Let me Forget”)

270 Džemal Bajraktarević, “Krajlevo dolaze iz neba,” in: *Naši Dani* (20 June 2002), p. 48. Translation mine.

Let me tell you of my master
He is everything to me
He's always been the same
He's (always) been everything
Don't lie to your master
He is everything to you
He gives you all you need
He's always been everything
Give your hand to the master
You are everything to him
He offers you for freedom
You are everything to him
(from "Master")²⁷¹

SCH has variously been described as avant-garde/post-punk/noise/industrial, but perhaps its only consistent quality has been its status as noise in the local music scene. SCH's sound has been described as "an exploration of monotony, a minimalist research into rhythmic and melodic forms, tracks infused with a maximally claustrophobic atmosphere, and surreal imagery," traits which certainly characterize this album.²⁷² *During Wartime*, while hailed by a small but dedicated core of fans and a handful of music critics, was largely ignored by the Bosnian public, which tended to prefer folk and pop. In fact, SCH is one of the few avant-garde bands that Sarajevo ever produced (Samir Šestan has written that their very existence in the city seems utopian),²⁷³ and since its inception the group has always been more popular in Zagreb, Belgrade, and Ljubljana than its hometown. Before the war, SCH's hard-core fans in Sarajevo numbered from 200-500, and Teno has described the band's local status as "somewhere between alternative culture and total marginalization."²⁷⁴ SCH has been described not so much as a band as an "artistic-political project," one which has experimented not only with sound but with forms of political activity as well. In the late 1980s, roused by an urgent sense of impending crisis, SCH's members formed the short-lived political activist organization Phase One, an endeavor that Teno would later disavow as futile. In a manifesto from the same year, SCH channeled the utopian vision of a future politics:

271 SCH published these lyrics in "Songs and Tales" (Lukavac, BIH: Graft, 1999). I have used the English translations provided in the booklet.

272 Ognjen Tvrčković, *Ljiljan*, 489 (3–10 June 2002), 49. Accessed on www.sch.ba.

273 Samir Šestan, "From *During Wartime* to *During Wartime... Again!*" (March 1999). Accessed on www.sch.ba.

274 Eldin Hadžović, "INTERVIEW: Senad Hadžimusić Teno", in: *BH Dani* (31 March 2006). Trans. Rida Attarashany. Accessed on www.sch.ba.

Political engagement in art stops being important once art completely separates itself, once politics stops being a limiting factor. Politics becomes completely unimportant and must wither away. Art interferes in politics as much as it would like. Politics in no case dares interfere in art...Politics stops being "vulgar," grows into a fine game, and becomes a part of the aesthetic entirety, a part of the creative totality.²⁷⁵

When I asked Teno in an interview what kind of impact he thought SCH had had in Bosnia, he responded bluntly, "nikakav" ("none whatsoever"), and instructed me to "forget that manifesto." He explained that he had long ago discarded the stance that aesthetics can intervene in the political realm in a subversive manner, and that he is now interested purely in sound. In present-day Sarajevo, he asserted, mainstream art is essentially in bed with politics. In the late '80s, though, the group believed completely in the gradual realization of a fusion of politics and aesthetics, one in which the former would be subsumed to the latter.²⁷⁶ However, even with so many signs pointing to an impending war, the public failed to heed SCH's warning, receiving *During Wartime* as mere noise and Teno's prescient words as static. In a 2002 interview, Teno described the relationship between subculture and politics in this way:

[SCH] are simply the alternative, everything that's destined to fail basically...SCH itself means nothing until the whole model changes. Our work will not change this model, ten such bands wouldn't do it. It can only happen through robust political action, one that's supported by many segments of society...The underground is simply all that which has no chance—in subcultural terms—to become that model...No chance of breaking through and becoming the dominant current.²⁷⁷

Despite *During Wartime's* failure to have the desired direct political impact in a society that lacked the civic institutions and the savvy public necessary to receive it, I would like to explore the possibility that Teno's despairing statements underestimate the puissance and longevity of sound's more subtle political resonances.²⁷⁸

275 Bajraktarević, p. 48.

276 From an email interview I conducted with Teno on 2 November 2008.

277 Robert Šoko, "An Interview with Senad Hadžimusić—Teno/SCH", in: *Radio Deutsche Welle Sarajevo* (July 2002). Accessed on www.sch.ba.

278 The "turn to sound" in cultural studies emphasizes the often overlooked political dimensions of sound. In the 1960s, Marshall McLuhan announced the demise of print culture and of the long hegemony of vision, with its linearity, analytic distance, and rationality. In its place he heralded the ascendancy of the electronic age and with it a return to the sense of sound—primitive, collectivist, and anarchic. In the decades that followed, critics in the field of cultural studies granted increasing significance to the soundscape, both as a semiotic system and as a potentially subversive space—in other words, as both a reflection of and an intervention in the realm of ideology. Members of the Birmingham School of Cultural Studies were attentive to sound, and to music in particular, as a key element of popular culture, one which was not always passively absorbed in a unidirectional flow from producer to consumer, but which could be consciously appropriated by listeners and adapted to address their own everyday needs and desires. These critics sought to highlight the utopian dimensions of popular music that they believed the more pessimistic formulations of Adorno and the Frankfurt School had overlooked.

In the introduction to their *Auditory Culture Reader*, Michael Bull and Les Back argue that the ascendancy of visualist epistemologies, with their impetuses to objectify and to universalize, have resulted in official neglect of the murkier auditory realm, with its subjectivity and intensely personal quality; both the subordinate status of sound to sight, and the differences of sound from sight, have given sound more freedom to subvert hegemonic paradigms.²⁷⁹ The work on the soundscape pioneered by the Birmingham School of Cultural Studies has more recently been supplemented by critics who, now taking as a given the value of popular music as an object of scholarly inquiry, have focused on the particular qualities of the sense of sound that afford it a unique political heft: its decentralization, non-linearity, irrationality, and multiple temporalities; the lack of analytic distance between subject and object; increased opportunities for emotional participation and listener involvement; the intimate connection with body, gesture, and movement; its ability to galvanize communities; its power to induce liminal states; and the inability of the ear to completely shut out sound (there is no aural equivalent of the eyelid). These critics pay particular attention to the deterritorializing effect of noise, the aural apotheosis of these non-visual qualities.²⁸⁰

As a first step in this investigation, I would like to apply the two subversive aspects of sound that these critics discern—its subordinate status to sight and its non-visual qualities—to the case of SCH and see what they reveal. To begin with the former, sound was only loosely regulated in 1980s Bosnia. Even in what was probably the most hardline Communist republic in the former Yugoslavia, official intervention in the realm of pop sound was at best sporadic and depended on the will of individual editors and producers rather than any official censorship policy or institution. According to producer Boro Kontić, founder of the legendary Sarajevo radio show PRIMUS, the realm of sound began to liberalize in the 1970s. While Sarajevo Radio One broadcast news stories with vetted ideological content, Sarajevo Radio Two, launched in 1978 and devoted to “non-political” topics like culture and documentaries, received little supervision, and as such became the seedbed for obliquely subversive ventures like the comedy show *Top Lista Nadrealista*.²⁸¹ According to Teno, SCH rarely experienced direct censorship and had no problem securing venues for public performances. However, the group did experience indirect censorship. SCH was long unable to publish an album because the directors of Sarajevo’s official record label, Diskoton, did not happen to like their sound, their texts, the fact that they sang in English and German, and most importantly, their unprofitability. SCH’s thwarted effort to put out an album had a mixed effect on their ability to impact the public; on the one hand, it inhibited the band’s development, but on the other, it enhanced SCH’s allure as the “eternal alternative” to mainstream pop culture.²⁸²

279 Michael Bull and Les Back (eds.), *The Auditory Culture Reader*, Oxford: Berg, 2003, p. 4.

280 For examples of this type of auditory criticism, see contributions to recent anthologies edited by Michael Bull and Les Back, Christopher Cox and Daniel Warner, and Erlmann Veit.

281 From an interview I conducted with Kontić at Sarajevo Media Centar, 14 October 2008.

282 From the email interview I conducted with Teno on 2 November 2008.

Ultimately, SCH’s difficulty in getting an album published points to what was probably the greatest factor preventing people from paying more attention to their work: while the realm of sound was relatively unregulated in 1980s Bosnia, non-mainstream music had no institutional paths for reaching a broader audience. Šestan has written despairingly of the state of Bosnian society in the run-up to the war:

Whereas in Slovenia and Croatia one found the humanist intelligentsia, the independent media and institutions, with their firm categorical apparatus, defending subculture and all that which strips naked the slogans and the privation of the system, often from a Marxist position, SCH in Bosnia encountered a wall of silence. In our darklands, the clash between subculture and the dominant ideologies which normally give birth to and helps maintain and develop positive social, political, and cultural values, amounted to little more than the solitary delusion and suicidal battles of SCH.²⁸³

Tragically, Sarajevo was just beginning to develop the civic and media infrastructure that would have made it possible for bands like SCH to have a more direct political impact when war struck. All of which points to the paradox of music like SCH’s in a place like Sarajevo—its sound may anticipate future socio-political forms, but present institutions lack the capacity to comprehend that vision or channel it into concrete political changes. This would suggest that the subordinate status of sound imbues music with true subversive potential only in places that have “ears”—that is, places where institutions have inculcated sophisticated modes of listening in the public and possess the will and infrastructure to reach that public.

While Teno was probably justified in giving up on the possibility of his music having a direct political impact, this does not discount the possibility of a significant indirect impact, one that is much more difficult to articulate due to the very qualities that make it possible. Auditory critics have done some intriguing work on this question in relation to the reggae sound system, particularly the effect of sublime noise on listeners. Julian Henriques argues that “sensory overload and underload both tend to circumvent the normal rational process”; the supersaturation of the senses and the pleasure of bodies in motion induced by sonic dominance shatter rational discourses in an ineffable, Bataillan moment of excess.²⁸⁴ However, this raises the question: if noise, as the most essentially subversive type of sound, operates at the level of the non-rational and the non-linguistic in discreet, non-quantifiable, ecstatic moments, then what kind of political impact can it have? The ambivalent political status of noise is mirrored in the difficulty in writing about it and even defining it. Critics have struggled to come up with an adequate description of what noise is. R. Murray Schaffer has described noise as the aggressive, undesirable byproduct of the machine age that we can

283 Samir Šestan, “Recapitulation,” (Grafit, September 1995). Accessed on www.sch.ba.

284 Julian Henriques, “Sonic Dominance and the Reggae Sound System Session”, in: Bull and Back, p. 458.

not help but hear;²⁸⁵ Mary Russo and Daniel Warner define noise as an ambiguous sound we do not want to hear.²⁸⁶ And in the most purist formulation, Simon Reynolds argues that noise is a sound to which we are unable to assign meaning; to attempt to do so is to strip noise of its power and, in fact, to cause it to stop being noise altogether.²⁸⁷ While these definitions differ, they all point to the problematic status of noise in relation to dominant notions of what “makes sense.”

The force of the “noisy” element in popular music first caught the attention of critics with the emergence of punk in the late 1970s. Critics like Iain Chambers and Dick Hebdige wrote extensively about the challenge to mainstream capitalist values posed by the punk subculture’s “iconology of disrespect” and “pure negativity.”²⁸⁸ They held that punk functioned as “noise in the system,” simultaneously blurring the boundary between music and noise and unmasking supposedly natural categories as in fact arbitrary and socially constructed. This argument suggests an intrinsic link between sound and ideology, a premise articulated in Russo and Warner’s suggestion that Western musical discourse is founded on the structural difference between noise (non-periodic vibration) and signal (periodic vibration), when in fact pure tone does not exist in music; the dichotomy between music and noise is historically conditioned and therefore purely ideological.²⁸⁹ Jacques Attali argues that in the 18th and 19th centuries the harmony of classical Western music played a central role in naturalizing the values of the emergent bourgeoisie and of early capitalist commodity culture. According to Attali, music in general channelizes violence by organizing noise into an order that reflects hegemonic political and social hierarchies. Noise, however, never completely disappears, but serves as the drive belt of historical change; noise lingers around the edges of the dominant paradigm, a dissonance that perpetually threatens to scramble the reigning harmony. Attali defines the political economy of music as “a succession of *orders* (in other words, differences) done violence by *noises* (in other words, the calling into question of differences) that are *prophetic* because they create new orders, unstable and changing.”²⁹⁰ This formulation posits noise as an act of epistemological terror against the greater violence of the ruling system. Noise’s antithetical relationship to the dominant cognitive framework suggests that it operates as a type of madness that can potentially expose the irrationality of supposedly sane master narratives.

The very name SCH (short for schizophrenia) points to the band’s function in Bosnian society. According to Teno, the band chose the name because “we believed that our society was truly sick. Since not one of the day’s leaders or leading intellectuals ever wanted

285 R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*, Rochester, Vermont: Destiny Books, 1994.

286 Mary Russo and Daniel Warner, “Rough Music, Futurism, and Postpunk Industrial Noise,” in: Christopher Cox and Daniel Warner (eds.), *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music*, New York: Continuum, 2004, p. 53.

287 Simon Reynolds, “Noise,” in: Cox and Warner, p. 56.

288 Iain Chambers, *Popular Culture: The Metropolitan Experience*, London: Methuen, 1986, p. 170; Iain Chambers, *Urban Rhythms: Pop Music and Popular Culture*, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1985, p. 176; Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, London and New York: Methuen, 1983, p. 65.

289 Cox and Warner, pp. 49–50.

290 Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985, p. 19.

to face the question of society’s health, or the responsibility of declaring ‘we are not well, something’s wrong, we’re either bad folk, or simply ailing,’ we decided to say: fine, we’re going to declare ourselves sick.”²⁹¹ In a perfect metaphor, SCH’s early posters reproduced a page from Teno’s medical records—legend has it that a diagnosis of schizophrenia ended his career as, incredibly, a police officer. Jonathan Sterne’s genealogy of socially conditioned practices of listening includes the development in the 19th century of what he terms “audile technique,”²⁹² which is “premised on some form of physical distance and some mediating practice or technology whereby proximal sounds become indices of events otherwise absent to the senses”; Sterne adduces as an example R. Lannec, the physician credited with the invention of the stethoscope.²⁹³ If we view SCH’s sound as a stethoscope of the social ills that were inarticulable in mainstream public discourse, then the patient was very sick indeed. SCH started playing during an uneasy historical moment, as political and economic changes in Yugoslavia were accelerating: the deaths of Tito and Kardelj, economic crisis, escalating tensions between ethnic Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo, and most importantly, the gradual replacement of socialism with resurgent ethnic nationalisms as society’s master discourse, a development that did not bode well for multi-ethnic Bosnia.²⁹⁴ Demagogues called out for Bosnian Croats and Serbs to repudiate their everyday, lived connections with their neighbors in favor of an ideology propagated from afar, and to substitute tendentious, often blatantly false histories for personal memories of shared experiences and often peaceful co-existence. SCH foresaw with harrowing clarity in songs like “Vagabonds” that many ordinary people would answer.

In the run-up to the war, ethno-nationalist discourses were at work eroding and fragmenting the collective Yugoslav aesthetic into ethnic enclaves at the level of literature, music, history, and commodity culture, a process that Andrew Wachtel argues began as early as the withdrawal of the Yugoslav state from the cultural sphere in the 1960s under pressure from ethnic nationalists and accelerated during the 1980s.²⁹⁵ The first battleground in the war between the proponents of the various ethno-nationalist discourses, then, was popular culture, including music. SCH’s sound, with its refusal to fit into any existing categories or to “make sense,” stood in stark contrast to genres like turbofolk, with their coherent, if appalling, ideological tenor. Critics have long argued that the worst types of pop music can have a deleterious impact on the listener through both its content and its form. In the case of turbofolk, this genre worked to re-program its listeners by naturalizing nationalist

291 Deutsche Welle interview.

292 Sterne defines audile technique as “a set of practices of listening that were articulated to science, reason, and instrumentality and that encouraged the coding and rationalization of what was heard.” Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Social Origins of Sound Reproduction*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2003, p. 23.

293 Ibid., p. 23.

294 Sabrina P. Ramet has written extensively about this particular political moment in *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milosevic*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2002.

295 Andrew Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation: Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998, pp. 4, 9.

ideologies and re-orienting their pleasures around specific affective objects. Teno has used the term “turbofolk” to refer not just to a musical genre but as shorthand for an entire primitive worldview, one which includes such components as football fanaticism, that he considers anathema to urban society.²⁹⁶ Critics like Adorno and Attali have pointed to the even more insidious effect of pop music’s form—its standardization and infinite repetition. Both have argued that the structural characteristics of pop music impede the listener’s critical faculties and tend to induce homogeneous, de-politicized modes of listening; as Adorno ominously warns: “the composition hears for the listener.”²⁹⁷ SCH counters the depredations of mainstream pop music on both fronts: it answers blatant ideology with poetic non-discursivity, and standardization with innovation, unpredictability, and continual mutation. Attali argues that “a network can be destroyed by noises that attack and transform it, if the codes in place are unable to normalize and repress them.”²⁹⁸ Mainstream culture was certainly never able to normalize SCH’s sound; their style has changed with every album, and they have always been ready to reject their music whenever it has been accepted by a broader audience or threatened to become commercially profitable. This “courageous suicidal tendency,” as Šestan describes it,²⁹⁹ has given SCH staying power as *the* dissident/dissonant voice at the margins of Bosnian popular culture. As the proponents of ethno-nationalist discourses gained traction and life became increasingly surreal—as the gap between official rhetoric and everyday life widened, as pop culture ventriloquized voices that had become hopelessly ungrounded from concrete reality, as people started to forget who they were and who their neighbors were—SCH’s work suggested that the so-called realm of rational discourse had actually gone completely insane. Just as auditory critics insist that noise exists at the very heart of music, so SCH held a mirror up to society, revealing the madness at the heart of supposedly rational discourses.

But the question still remains of what political effect any of this actually had if Bosnian society refused to recognize itself in this mirror. As mentioned above, one of the qualities specific to music is its sedimentation of multiple temporalities. Attali describes the temporality of music specifically as anticipatory; he argues that “every major social rupture has been preceded by a mutation in the codes of music, in its audition, and in its economy.” The realm of sound has the privileged role of “[making] audible the new world that will gradually become visible” due to its immateriality, which enables it to begin to structure new theoretical paradigms well ahead of material production.³⁰⁰ While Attali tends to portray sound’s anticipatory function in impersonal terms—almost as a machine’s automatic, self-correcting re-calibrations—there may be room in this model for personal, deliberate aural interventions. Teno himself has spoken of the imbrication of the present and the future

296 Eldin Hadžović, “The Krauts Strike Back, Live: SCH at CDA, Sarajevo, 10 June 2006”, in: *BH Dani* (16 June 2006). Accessed on www.sch.ba.

297 Theodor W. Adorno, “On Popular Music”, in: *Essays on Music*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, p. 442.

298 Attali, p. 33.

299 Samir Šestan, September 1995.

300 Attali, pp. 9–11.

at crucial moments in history: “we already supposed some events much earlier, such that in some way we experienced those events in society two times—when we thought about them, and then when it happened.”³⁰¹ The problem with the late ‘80s, however, was that no one was thinking about the ominous future aloud. Noise, then, with its uneasy co-existence of the present and the near-future, may be a way of thinking history in the future perfect tense that is especially important in moments of social crisis, when other types of discourse fail. Teno has asserted in interviews that he believes the role of the artist is to both depict accurately what is happening in the world and be a visionary of future developments,³⁰² a dual role that the album *During Wartime* fulfilled on the eve of war, and that SCH’s fourth album, *The Gentle Art of Firing*, which was produced during the bleakest period of the war in Sarajevo and yet presented the group’s softest sound thus far, fulfilled in its poignant anticipation of a peace that would not reign until decades into the future.

Noise only makes sense in the *future*, if it ever does, once it has been appropriated into the dominant framework and sense assigned to it, a process suggested by the distinction that Attali makes between noise and music—noise initiates a change in aural codes that is later officially stamped onto music; in other words, noise is future music. However, the question of noise’s political impact in the *present* moment may perhaps best be answered by looking at a description of one of SCH’s live performances (at CDA in Sarajevo, June 2006):

SCH’s first big Sarajevo gig for quite a while only drew a hundred fans or so...But those privileged few who attended that night were certainly given an audio-visual treat in the shape of a two-hour brutal perfectionist musical onslaught, the icing on the cake being the incredible video that played behind the band throughout the performance. The disturbing film, complete with explicit scenes of birth, death, love, explicit sex, games, and bloody violence, drew the eyes away from the scene itself, from which came the soundtrack in the shape of SCH’s melange of synthetic and organic noise, coupled with blinding, incessant strobe...the resulting tension serving to homogenize and hypnotize the initially cool audience, who had by the end of the concert come to display disturbing signs of serious interaction with the dark and apocalyptic, dehumanized and yet so very human machine thundering at them from the stage...SCH always were (and still are) a marriage of the irreconcilable—surreal reality, cruel tenderness, subtle noise, mechanical verve.³⁰³

Whatever effect noise has at the moment of release takes place in the elsewhere of sound, abrading the crisp contours of cognitive categories and eroding the legitimacy of master narratives. The inability to quantify or measure this impact means that noise’s power to propel us toward future forms, and potentially to shape what those future forms might look like (rather than only anticipating them), must remain an open question, answerable

301 Bajraktarević, p. 48.

302 Hadžović, 31 March 2006.

303 Hadžović, 16 June 2006.

only in retrospect. In thinking about SCH, it is interesting to draw some parallels with the phenomenon of Laibach and Neue Slowenische Kunst in Slovenia. Aleš Erjavec has argued that the 1980s represented a unique cultural moment for socialist societies, producing evanescent artistic movements which disappeared once postsocialism was achieved. These post-avant-gardes represented what Fredric Jameson has called “vanishing mediators” in the dialectic between the past and the future.³⁰⁴ During Slovenia’s transition from Yugoslav republic to independent state, NSK gradually became incorporated into Slovenia’s robust civic institutions and assumed an important voice in the cultural sphere. By contrast, SCH is a mediator that has not vanished, a bridge still arcing between a present and a future yet to come. Teno passed the war in Sarajevo and, after recuperating in Prague for several years, returned to his hometown. In a city whose twin auditory passions are turbofolk and the most insipid pop, Teno remains an unassimilated singularity, nearly the sole member of any sort of local counter-culture, still venerated by stalwart fans born in the ‘60s but virtually unknown to younger residents. Yet, with incredible optimism, he continues to produce critically-acclaimed albums on a regular basis, now primarily using his computer rather than musical instruments. Teno has said, “SCH cannot change anything, that’s clear, but it doesn’t mean we shouldn’t do anything.” In Bosnia, where one set of elites has been replaced by another (or by the same ones bearing new names), where civic institutions have further devolved since the war, where stagnation, pessimism, and cynicism reign, where two anti-theoretical halves prevent the country from moving forward, it is still not clear whether SCH can change anything; what is clear is that SCH is still noise.

304 Aleš Erjavec, “Introduction”, in: Aleš Erjavec (ed.), *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003, p. 27.

MADNESS – FILM, PAINTING, LITERATURE, THEATRE, INTERNET

Darko Štrajn
PIERROT LE FOU
AND ETERNITY IN THE SIXTIES

Intro(re)duction

There is a widespread cliché, which makes tick media presentations of the historic social, political and artistic space in time of the so called sixties. Especially in the realm of popular culture – which itself as a term became popular at the time – this cliché also in no matter which mode, or kind, or genre of art, or even of “life”, touches upon “craziness” as an attribute of a decade, which marks a whole epoch of modernism, apparently already in a transition towards post-modernism. As it happened, this particular perception of craziness as an aberration of the *zeitgeist* only had to pass to become classified as a nostalgic collective memory of something “we’ve all been through” in all possible senses within the realm of social life. It didn’t take that long after the remarkable year 1968, only ten years to be exact, when Régis Debray pointed out: “The official ceremonies, which were made possible by the tenth anniversary of May 68 – televisions, radios, magazines, newspapers, reviews, films, etc. – assembled in the enthusiasm and emotions all who have in this country a name, the authority, a medal. From left to right yesterday’s enemies are friends of tomorrow.”³⁰⁵ Another 30 years later brought about even heavier doses of reductionism within perceptions of the period in question. Probably most important implications concerning social change not just as a change of so called life styles, but as a change in power relations, now turned out to be only a part of some “romantic idealism” or some youthful exaggerations. Such public collective contextualisation of memory, which contained many images and sounds of what was one of the first great appearances of virtuality in a form of virtual revolution *avant la lettre*, was of course very helpful for the propagation of the above mentioned cliché. However, no matter how repulsive some participants of the “great events of 68” might find the cliché, it should be pointed out that the cliché was derived from **something**; it did not spring out of nowhere.

It is not our aim here to make up yet another version of what was the inner reason for a social upheaval within the Western world, which was labelled as revolution. It’s probably undisputable that a multitude of strangely congruent social movements, occurrences, phenomena, events, drugs, music, personalities, theories, works of art and movies affected mass perceptions of all kinds of realities. And, due to a growing comprehension of what Walter Benjamin was really saying about the age of reproduction and on interaction between perception and the perceived, formed a field for a breakthrough of before this time

³⁰⁵ Régis Debray, *Modeste contribution aux discours et cérémonies officielles du dixième anniversaire*, Paris: F. Maspero, 1978, p. 9.

unimaginable inventions within the symbolic universe. We can even argue that views of pluralities of realities overpowered positions of “one reality – one truth” intellectually and mass-culturally. Of course, artistic practices played a special social role as probably never before or after.

The world changed: which world?

Such notions as **craziness** or **madness** were preserved as discursive figures by living language (*parole*), whereas the establishment in the field of medical sciences, where psychiatry got situated with its institutions, intruded and infiltrated public space with its “scientific” jargon:

“The speech and the activity of madness³⁰⁶ were recorded by a medical science, which orients its research in a direction of knowledge on madness. A tradition of learning transformed mental patient into a necessary reservation for psychiatric knowledge. A patient is supposed to illustrate certain knowledge such as it is to be found in the manuals of psychiatry. Becoming an object of science a fool loses the speech of truth.”³⁰⁷

The sixties, continuing to the next decade, brought about the movement of now almost forgotten anti-psychiatry, which tried really hard to turn around and re-interpret relations between individual and society, between mental patient and psychiatric institution with its language permeating the “repressive social order”. Maybe the movement of antipsychiatry succeeded much more than we realise now.³⁰⁸ In a framework of not so much the concepts of anti-psychiatry, but in the framework of their broad residual effects, we can say that craziness is a category of interpretation. The hypotheses, following from this, would be that craziness in its recognisable acts and performances operates as an agency of externalisation of a set of symbolically represented relations, and as an indication of a reaction to vastly more serious category of madness. These two categories stand one against each other as a system against some particular subversive reflection, which can be whatever between interpretation, imitation, insight, work of art or in some instances even a scientific or political breakthrough. This could be a starting point to elaborate an understanding of the aesthetics of social practices of a particular time in history, when art was about to survive through a re-definition. Corresponding to the antipsychiatric opposition to the therapeutic aspects of the institutional order, we should recall the Lyotard’s remark: “That there is something

306 Both terms, craziness and madness, translate as *la folie* in French. Still the distinction between the two meanings exists and can be easily determined in any particular context.

307 Maud Mannoni, *Le psychiatre, son “fou” et la psychanalyse*, Paris: Seuil, 1970, p. 57.

308 An ambiguous success of antipsychiatry actually took place in Italy, where the psychiatric clinics and asylums were actually dissolved under “*legge 180/78*” in a great extent due to practices and theories of Franco Basaglia, one of the most visible “antipsychiatrists” along with Ronald Laing and Thomas Szasz.

anaesthetic in aesthetics is a lesson that the arts are the first to give us.”³⁰⁹ The redefined art utterly changes such “function” of art. In principle this re-definition was supposed to work in both directions: from art towards society and vice versa. Whether we speak of Beuys and his overturning of a relation between life and art or we take into account some other provocative gestures as Andy Warhol’s presentations of a principle of reproduction, the artist makes an effort to express craziness as an agency targeting the evasive and only implicit truth. These movements, which definitely overcame the mimetic function of art, became even more apparent in a multitude of radical actions, happenings, and other “unconventional” artistic phenomena of the sixties and early seventies all over the world. In some instances the distinction between artistic performance and social-political action had been blurred as in the case of Situationists, who contributed to the revolution of 1968 many aspects of a dramaturgy and imagery, which produced an effect of a recognisable form – well adapted to the emerging ubiquitous media.

Such cases as, for instance, a series of interventions by Peter Weibel and Valie Export in the framework of their “*expanded cinema*” (from 1967) in Vienna or “reistic” movement of the group *OHO* in 1968 in Slovenia are typical cases of the period. Of course, what was actually typical for these actions and interventions, has been their distinctiveness. So they were typical for not being typical. Such “artistic” phenomena as these could be now well catalogued, archived, etc., but one can easily argue that they continue to show a great resistance to any process of canonization, which was so characteristic for the preceding art of the bourgeois epoch. Still, these artistic phenomena, which are mostly classified as “modernist” and avant-garde, are well recorded at least in the history, and there is no doubt that they represent quite often the extreme limits of a number of directions of any artistic thinking. This modernist tradition however did change the world – if not the whole world, than it did change the world of galleries, museums, artistic manifestation, etc., which increasingly attract incredibly big crowds. So it looks like that the art in a narrower sense of the word followed the path of cinema, which was at the time still the central phenomena of mass culture in general, whereas nowadays the cinema is visibly losing that centre position as it is becoming by and large just the indispensable tradition of all technologically mediated performing and representational visuality.

It would take a lot more than only one limited paper to argue that cinema had an especially important role in structuring the very field, in which the avant-garde had a big role to play as a source of production of a range of new signifiers. Above all, films of the *auteur* cinema and related currents on the both sides of the ideological divide of the post-war period – materialised as the iron curtain – worked as artistic achievements in their own right and simultaneously they functioned as the context, which made the meanings (or destructions of meanings)

309 Jean-François Lyotard, *Postmodern Fables*, Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, p. 247.

of modernist art of the time clearly readable. Of course, different readings had to be articulated and so it happened that abundant and innovative theoretical discourses, deriving their vision from some breakthrough philosophies of the time (i.e. critical theory, existentialism and above all the nascent structuralism), worked in an increasingly interdisciplinary fields. As we know now, these readings are comprehensible through the artistic signifiers, with which they intensely interact. Unfortunately, these interactions brought about some unexpected consequences as well, such as broadening of these interactions to the capitalist market and the processes of “reification” as Fredric Jameson would point out in such a context. Anyway, these relations between cinema and other arts of the time are increasingly reflected in ever more sophisticated film studies. As we intend here to deal, more or less, with only one film, we won’t present a larger argumentation for our assertions. Let me only point out that the linkage between cinema and other artistic practice of the sixties was subtle and inseparable in any re(tro)spect. At the same time, due to the developments and transformation of all visual media, this linkage represented a unique beginning of interaction between different arts. The linkage was represented through exchanges of forms, which produced a mental space for a production of many floating signifiers, which have unfortunately become mainly leftovers of a revolution. This revolution in the realm of social and political practice of generations of radicals of the time remained an unfinished work of art.

Subversion of eternity and the notion of avant-garde

“Godard: forever engaged in work-in-progress, to be torn up by his next film ...”³¹⁰

What actually came first in the sixties: art or social action, and when it had become difficult to distinguish one from another? Naturally, such questions, which were raised in many variations throughout the sixties and seventies, aren’t meant to be really answered; what really counted were a variety of different attempts and acts in line of answering, many productions of new meanings, many uses of metonymy, crazy metaphors and coupling of incompatible notions and performances. However, a third instance should be taken into account, which operates within the complex linkages between art and social (as well as cultural) context. This instance is of course theory in manifold interdisciplinary articulations, which were developed in the 20th century. Especially those theories, which contained an element of aesthetics tended to blur or traverse distinctions between artistic, social and political realities. At the same time these theories and aesthetic practices developed new interactive modes of operation in just invented fields of social and artistic activities: undoubtedly historically unique and particular phenomenon of French *nouvelle vague* was inscribed into a “pattern” of cinematic invention, which had been preceded by a clear theoretical reflection.

³¹⁰ Thomas Elsaesser, *European Cinema Face to Face with Hollywood*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005, p. 49.

“It is remarkable for example how many of the film critics who rallied behind the Bazin-*Cahiers* line did in fact go on to make films themselves, using their knowledge of the Hollywood cinema as constant reference point in elaborating their aesthetics. The names are too wellknown to need much comment: Chabrol, Godard, Truffaut, Rohmer, Rivette, Melville, Doniol-Valcroze and others.”³¹¹

The film critics who transformed themselves into film directors (*metteurs-en-scène*), and who founded the *nouvelle vague* cinema, didn’t only change relationships in the complex processes of film productions. As the special and paradigmatic European phenomena in cinema, they had a broad impact in the realm of modern art, which still needs to be analysed further. In any case, the *nouvelle vague* cinema was closely associated with the notion of *auteur*, which played a role in all other movements in the cinema of the time in the West as well as in the East (above all in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia)³¹². There should be no doubt about the fact that this enormous impact, containing intellectual, aesthetic as well as some broad social and political elements, was made possible by a special power of cinema at the time. Since almost any production of cinema, with not so widespread exception of some amateur 8 mm films, depended on huge financial and organisational sources of production and reproduction, even quite long after the emergence of “*auterism*”, cinema couldn’t have been easily taken under considerations together with other forms of art.³¹³ Still, within the *nouvelle vague* cinema the “productive pathologies” (Elsaesser’s term), which were inscribed in the very relation between the two roles of critic and film-maker, operated behind a self-reflexive inversion in the process of film making. The uncontested power of the film media in the sixties of course marked the symbolic space for cinematic gestures, experiments, and networking with other arts and political practice. The critics of *cabiers* “made the cinema appear in almost every respect on an equal, if not superior footing with contemporary literature”. These trespasses were a “part of an effort to analyze film history and thereby consolidate critical standards appropriate to the medium.”³¹⁴ As these attitudes translated into films, they created a new cultural environment that corresponded to movements in other areas. So called anti-hero concept, which was actually not invented, but it was very visibly appropriated by most directors of *nouvelle vague*, represented

³¹¹ Ibid., p. 243.

³¹² I wrote about the synchronous tendencies in the cinematic movements of the time on both sides of the so called ideological divide in the article: Štrajn, Darko, “Identity in a notion of the Eastern and Western European cinema”, *New review of film and television studies*, April 2008, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 41–50. Also in this text some attempts to think the notion of identity in the scope, proposed by *Pierrot le fou*, were made.

³¹³ Thomas Elsaesser made a strong point in the text, to which we already referred here, that the position of *Cahiers* and the “system” of film-making in the framework of the *auteur* cinema was rather contradictory: “*Cahiers* defended Hollywood and the studio system, but made a cult of the individual artist that was suspiciously intellectual and European; they recognized the uses of genre formulations and conventions in a medium with universal appeal, but they praised in preference those films that managed to subvert the conventions and transcend the limits of the genre.” (Ibid., p. 245) Other interesting controversies, concerning the movement of *nouvelle vague*, surfaced through the criticism, articulated in another journal: *Positif*, which sharply attacked Bazin as even a “catholic obscurantist”.

³¹⁴ Ibid., p. 244.

an overturning approach to the “external” reality. Godard contributed a lot of material, which support this claim in many of his films, but especially visibly in *Pierrot le fou* (1965).

A contribution to the topic of craziness and madness, which we are about to look for in the Godard’s film *Pierrot le fou* (1965), is related to a very vague poetic vision, which inserts a word “eternity” into the film from a poetic intrinsic dialogue by Rimbaud. For reasons, which we are about to bring forward further down, the end of the film actually was not meant to be so decisive,³¹⁵ but to any spectator of the movie, it looked like that the whole film was shot only to make possible the ending, the surprising *finale*. Rimbaud’s poem *L’Éternité* or more precisely the last strophe of the poem (the English translation by an unknown lover of poetry was found on the net), is whispered by two voices:

“It has been found again.
What? – Eternity.
It is the sea fled away
With the sun.”³¹⁶

The whispering poetic dialogue comes after Ferdinand Griffon (“re-named” Pierrot by his partner and lover Marianne), the character played by Jean-Paul Belmondo, vanishes in the self-inflicted explosion of dynamite sticks wrapped up around his head. After the explosion on a sea shore the camera slowly turns towards the open sea strongly lit by the sun, and as light becomes more intense we hear whispered Rimbaud’s verses. Clearly, this aesthetically effective articulation hasn’t any function in the narrative of the film; its function is given through just described structural inner exteriority of the last scene of the movie. As in the poem so in the film the concept of eternity is in a way deconstructed, brought into the coordinates of some pluralized time, there is no “eternity opposed to the final and fleeting time,” therefore, there is no eternity as a transcending category; it is related to spatial categories, to ability of seeing and to reflexive powers of language.

The film ending makes a statement: Godard actually inserts a cinematic signature under the developments in the epoch of avant-gardes, and for them “art is much more than

315 Godard said that “the whole ending was invented on the spot, contrary to the beginning, which was organised.” Jean-Luc Godard, *Godard par Godard / Les années Karina (1960 à 1967)*, Paris: Flammarion 1985, p. 110.

316 Godard used the first version of the strophe from May 1872, of which the translation is given above:

Elle est retrouvée.
Quoi ? – L’Éternité.
C’est la mer allée
Avec le soleil.

More than a year later Rimbaud included the poem in the poetic composition “A Season in hell” (*Une saison en enfer*) and he used a slightly less poetic term in the answer at the end: instead of “la mer allée avec le soleil”, he much simpler put “la mer mêlée (mixed with) au soleil”. See also: Arthur Rimbaud, *Poésies, Une saison en enfer, Illumination*, Paris: Gallimard, 1984.

solitary production of works of genius”³¹⁷ Badiou, without directly writing on Godard, also gives a clear explanation of Godard’s handling of the question of eternity with a little help of Rimbaud. Saying that avant-gardes “want to force the recognition of the present,” Badiou makes a link to his notion of **passion for the real**. In view of Rimbaud’s statement: ‘One must be absolutely modern’, Badiou stresses that for avant-gardes: “Art is no longer essentially a production of eternity, the creation of a work to be judged by the future. The avant-gardes want there to be a pure present for art. There is no time to wait. There is no posterity.”³¹⁸ Although Badiou is by no means a philosopher of archives like for instance Foucault, he clearly suggests a somewhat generalised and broadened “definition” for the notion of artistic avant-garde. This Badiou’s small shift in an unpronounced definition of the notion of artistic avant-garde serves well as an explanatory scheme, when we try to grasp the specific enunciation from *Pierrot le fou*. It looks like that at the time, when we approached a rather unclear end of the epoch of avant-gardes Godard was well in accord with the poet, who announced the coming epoch: “Ah, some other way of being, simply, the other immediate perception of time, of the body, of space, some new mind, some new love.”³¹⁹ So Godard’s *finale* of *Pierrot le fou* could be also read as a comment of the very movement, into which the film inscribes itself. Finally, the point is the subject. Let us take another hint by Badiou, who says: “The avant-gardes, in this respect more romantic than classical generally maintain that art is the highest destination of subject.”³²⁰ This tendency, destination defying destiny, brings forward representations of subject, not unlike the psychiatric patients who, wanting to oppose the psychiatrist “cannot do anything else but turn to abnormal behaviour.”³²¹ Of course, the impressive, somehow quasi-impressionist ending of the film, comes after the whole film, for which Godard, himself wrote in *Cahiers*, that (...) we could say that Pierrot isn’t really a film. It is rather an attempt at the cinema.”³²²

My friend Pierrot

The film, which made use of “modernist” codes of discontinuity and flow of associations (especially suitable for a form of a movie), depicts madness, contained in the world system in the sixties through presentations of craziness of his characters and their visual and poetic contextualisation(s). “It would be tempting to argue that during this period of Godard’s work, discontinuity seems to be valued for itself as the standard of cinema of modernity anxious to put distance between itself and the idea of totality.”³²³ What was

317 Alain Badiou, *The Century* (translated by Alberto Toscano), Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007, p. 134.

318 Ibid., p. 134.

319 Sollers, Philippe, *Éloge de l’infini*, Paris: Gallimard, 2001, p. 367.

320 Alain Badiou, *The Century* (translated by Alberto Toscano), p. 135.

321 Maud Mannoni, *Le psychiatre, son “fou” et la psychanalyse*, Paris: Seuil, 1970, p. 16.

322 Jean-Luc Godard, *Godard par Godard / Les années Karina (1960 à 1967)*, pp. 106–107.

323 Jean-Louis Leutrat, “The Power of Language”, in: Temple, M., Williams, S. J. (eds.), *The Cinema Alone / Essays on the Work of Jean Luc Godard 1985–2000*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2000, p. 181.

the production procedure of this discontinuity? It seems that absolutely complete freedom to improvise, so unusual in cinema making before the time of *nouvelle vague*, was a most convenient approach for the unintended and not really planned effect. Godard did take a position of the subject he in a way created in and for the film, somehow metaphorically identifying himself with the character, who breaks the boundaries of ordinary bourgeois life. The break, the escape, forgetting the future, as elements in a construction of a road movie of sorts, based on a story, which can be told in one or two sentences,³²⁴ resemble a strategy of a subject, who “steps out of the system”, who, therefore, acts in a crazy manner. Godard declared in a long interview in *Cahiers* that he didn’t really think through the movie before shooting it. His editor Antoine Bonfanti mixed the movie without preparation: “He reacted with his buttons like a pilot of an airplane in the air gap.”³²⁵ Further Godard characterised his movie as “(...) a kind of happening, but controlled and mastered. Saying this, this is a completely unconscious film.” Since the *nouvelle vague* cinema was generally supposed to be linked to (Sartre’s) existentialism, it seems that Godard made a transition to structuralism in the movie: “The construction came at the same time as the detail. This was a succession of structures, which immediately imbricate one into another.”³²⁶ And this brings us to another aspect of this film, which opens a different gaze, exposing the relation between craziness and madness.

Where craziness and madness intersect seems to be the space, permeated by ubiquitous language, which in the film makes madness observable through delusions of subjectivity. What we mean here is that Godard interlaces the discontinuous chain of film sequences with “tools”, taken from language. Unlike in just any conventional film, in which the role of language is not specially accentuated, Godard makes cinematic gestures on the background of expositions of grammatical rules and violations of these rules. And this is made explicit (not only in this film) also by use of written language, or more precise: by inserting a moving image of an act of writing in between the scenes. Other means of comparing, uniting and contrasting language operations such as homophony are used abundantly.

“One could multiply these examples ad infinitum. The point is that Godard’s early films thus have a mimological aspect, not in the sense understood by Gérard Genette (i.e. of language imitating reality) but in the sense of profilmic reality imitating language. Not only does language suggest or ‘create’ both objects and gestures, but also it programmes the wider *mise-en-scène*, a montage of visual and sound effects.”³²⁷

324 Quite suitably the “story” is told by Stephan Eichenberg, an internet user, on www.imdb.com: “Pierrot escapes his boring society and travels from Paris to the Mediterranean Sea with Marianne, a girl, who is chased by hit-men from Algeria. They lead an unorthodox life, always on the run.”

325 Jean-Luc Godard, *Godard par Godard / Les années Karina (1960 à 1967)*, 1985, p. 108.

326 Ibid., p. 108.

327 Jean-Louis Leutrat, “The Power of Language”, in: Temple, M., Williams, S. J. (eds.), *The Cinema Alone / Essays on the Work of Jean Luc Godard 1985–2000*, p. 181.

This Leutrat’s observation leads us to another point, which follows from his accurate assertion on discontinuity; what happens to be subverted is the “continuity of meaning”. The character of crazy Pierrot, who travels through fractures and digressions of the film towards the shocking end, therefore represents a kind of legitimization of craziness in accordance with the nascent antipsychiatry. But one should not miss that this subversion of meaning is constructed with the same gestures as similar operations in the avant-garde art. Hence, craziness and art relate to each other in two aspects of revealing the madness, implicit in the world of continuity, of lawful apparition of consistent meanings, of institutional order and of domination. Godard made another very explicit point on madness of the fictitious totality/reality in his “camera-eye” contribution to the omnibus film “Far from Vietnam” (*Loin de Vietnam* – 1967), where in a paradoxical dialogue with the camera he resigns from making a movie on Vietnam, so he makes a movie on not making a movie.

Conclusion

“Created at first to reproduce reality, cinema became grandiose each time when it succeeded to outdo this reality by leaning on it, each time, when it had been able to furnish plausibility to strange events or to weird beings, establishing in this way a mythology of images.”³²⁸

It seems that we decided (together with Leutrat, Elsaesser and Godard) that discontinuity functioned as a main feature of the cinematic form, within which it was possible to decipher a particular display of a relation between notions of craziness and madness. Taking into account just cited Truffaut’s assertion, cinema – and we could add with Benjamin, that it all started with photography – had from its beginnings a very special relation with reality. It is a banal truism that photography and cinema took over the task of reproducing reality from other artistic practices.³²⁹ Taking into account all this complexities, which derive their attribute of complexity from reproduction of movement in cinema and from a whole range of dialectical interactions in the field of perception, we can understand how it has been possible that in the sixties cinema took such a great view of madness, contained in the reality of the system of domination of the time. However, since cinema always held somewhat separate position regarding other arts – cinema was an “art of sorts” and the media

328 François Truffaut, *Le plaisir des yeux*, Paris: Petite bibliothèque des Cahiers du cinéma, 2004, p. 51.

329 Of course, the potential of cinema related to “realism” was very soon re-defined, mainly due to the agency of movement within any cinema. Gilles Deleuze determined the complexity of cinema in terms of perception. “There is therefore a relationship between affection and movement (...) on the one hand the received movement, and on the other the executed movement, and which might make them in a sense incommensurable. Between the two there is affection which re-establishes the relation. But it is precisely in affection that the movement ceases to be that of translation in order to become movement of expression, that is to say quality, simple tendency stirring up an immobile element.” Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* (translated by H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam), London, New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005, p. 68.

at the same time – it had made its enormous impact, which didn't get a proper attention by theory.³³⁰ However, in view of representations of madness, cinema had an advantage in comparison to other aesthetic practices. Whereas artists like Beuys, Weibel, Šalamun, and many others did produce artistic acts by “acting crazy”, cinema of the time could take a double position: in picturing craziness as the effect of madness, presented in a variety of modes of realistic fragments and in offering “crazy movies”, what was performed through form or style, a choice of topic or specific acting, etc. Of course, we could now continue this discussion by bringing forward also other determining points concerning cinema as an industry. The system of production of movies was and still is one of the most decisive factors, which blur the “purity” of any aesthetic argument. Without descending any deeper into this very important problem field, let us only emphasize that it was the formation of *nouvelle vague* and subsequent other “independent” film movements, which was decisive for cinema's grand contribution to the topic of craziness.

But let's return to the topic of form of discontinuity as it was visible in the framework of some features of the *nouvelle vague*. Let's take a look at the both most emblematic authors of this movement: Godard and Truffaut. As much as the whole movement isn't easily definable, these two directors are somehow carriers of the most clearly expressed tendencies. But, are they really opposed to each other? At first glance it does seem that Truffaut differs from Godard precisely considering his handling of cinematic narration: Truffaut's films look much more “disciplined” and they “tell the story” in a quite ordered way. But, take one of the Truffaut's masterpieces, his epoch reflecting film *Jules and Jim* (*Jules et Jim* – 1962)! What we can see in this undoubted work of a cinematic genius, regarding the usage of discontinuity? We can clearly argue, that relationship in a relation: cinematic form – reality is turned around in the Truffaut's film. The discontinuity can be ascribed to the realm of reality, which is in the given case the reality of history. The discontinuities of history force subject to construct his/her own continuity (identity) and the cinematic narration supports this futile subjective effort, which is bound to finish in a tragedy of suicide, in a kind of a crazy reaction to madness of reality.

330 On the other hand cinema was always related to some artistic currents. Just remember the Russian avant-garde, German expressionism, and all varieties of “toying” with cinema by modernist artists from Cocteau to Warhol. The sixties, which finally brought forward the avant-gardes' stress on the artistic act vs. art work, also started the process of presentations, which developed a strong activity in the area of visual screen presentations. The proper theoretical recognition of cinema, which has been for some time followed, commented and instigated by to an extent isolated and academically “unworthy” film theory, arrived only in the late seventies, when the cinema studies became one of the central interdisciplinary fields worldwide – with some exceptions, among them also the exception of Slovenia, where cinema studies so far didn't get an appropriate post in a University, but none the less, they developed quite nicely outside the academic establishment.

Constantinos V. Proimos
MADNESS AS THE INSTANCE OF DECISION.
A PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATION OF LIGHT
IN REMBRANDT'S 1635 PAINTING
THE ANGEL STOPPING ABRAHAM
FROM SACRIFICING ISAAC TO GOD



Then he stretched out his hand and took the knife to kill his son; but the angel of the Lord called to him from Heaven, 'Abraham, Abraham.' He answered, 'Here I am.' The angel of the Lord said, 'Do not raise your hand against the boy; do not touch him. Now I know that you are a God-fearing man. You have not withheld from me your son, your only son.' Abraham looked up, and there he saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. So he went and took the ram and offered it as a sacrifice instead of his son. (Genesis 22: 10–13)

REMBRANDT, *The Angel Stopping Abraham from Sacrificing Isaac to God*, 1635, oil on canvas, 193,5 x 132,8 cm, St. Petersburg, Hermitage. Photograph © The State Hermitage Museum

In the history of European art, Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn (1606–1669) who is usually shortly referred to as Rembrandt, occupies quite a unique place. For, on the one hand, as P. J. J. van Thiel suggests, he has been a heretic in painting, not abiding by classicist rules and having an unorganized technique and no discipline in his brush. In his lifetime, therefore, he gave the impression that he merely squandered his talents³³¹ and as a result, not many of his students continued painting the way he did, after his death. On the other hand, in the course of 19th century, the Dutch nationalist movement in conjunction with the romantic reevaluation of art history raised him to the rank of a hero.³³² His work, however, particularly in his late years, would not be easily connected to baroque either, as his pictures are not agitated as Rubens's but are rather laconic, atmospheric and calm.³³³

Then, Jakob Rosenberg claims that it is surprising that Rembrandt's work "centered so strongly on religious art" and on biblical subject matters.³³⁴ In his generation much in contrast to the previous one in which his master Pieter Lastman belonged, Dutch painters were no longer dependent upon their Italian sources and thus did not favor historical and biblical subjects.³³⁵ Rosenberg claims that "Rembrandt stood almost alone in his large scale production of biblical works" a fact that he attributes not to the demands of the market or his patrons but entirely to his own inclination.³³⁶

Finally, both standard art history manuals like Hugh Honour's and John Fleming's *A World History of Art* and expert studies like Michael Bockemühl's monograph on Rembrandt, report on the mystery and arbitrariness of lighting in Rembrandt's paintings. Hugh Honour and John Fleming pin down "the mysterious, supernatural light" in which the main figures in paintings are "flooded."³³⁷ Bockemühl refers to the "dramatic light with sharp illuminating or darkening effects in accordance with criteria that are not empirical."³³⁸ He further maintains that "...it usually passes unnoticed that the direction of the light in such pictures only rarely accords with those lighting situations such as would occur naturally in the given circumstances."³³⁹ In this paper I shall attempt a reading of one of the most well known early biblical paintings of Rembrandt, *The Angel Stopping Abraham from Sacrificing Isaac to God*, 1635, oil on canvas, 193 x 133 cm, in the collection of St Petersburg, Hermitage. In my reading I shall address the problem of lighting in an effort to provide a better explanation of its role, along with Rembrandt's unusual insistence on painting

331 P. J. J. van Thiel, *Rembrandt, 1669–1969*, exh. cat. Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1969, pp. 17, 19.

332 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

333 Hugh Honour & John Fleming, *A World History of Art*, sixth edition, London: Lawrence King, 2002, p. 611. See also Mikhail Piotrovski (ed.), *L'Ermitage* (transl. Nathalia Moulatouli, Serafina Vassilieva), St. Petersburg: Editions d' Art, Ivan Fiodorov, 2003, p. 192.

334 Jakob Rosenberg, *Rembrandt. Life and Work*, rev. edition, London: Phaidon, 1964, p. 169.

335 *Ibid.*

336 *Ibid.*, p. 170.

337 Hugh Honour & John Fleming, op. cit. p. 611.

338 Michael Bockemühl, *Rembrandt 1606–1669. The Mystery of the Revealed Form* (transl. Michael Claridge), Bamberg, Köln: Taschen, 2000, p. 36.

339 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

religious scenes as well as his quite unique standing as a painter in terms of his technique. Based on Søren Kierkegaard's and Jacques Derrida's readings of Abraham's biblical story I shall argue that Rembrandt employs arbitrary lighting in order to illustrate madness as the instance of decision from the part of Abraham, the desperate father and God's chosen disciple. I hope to conclude that in order to understand the non empirical criteria of lighting, in Rembrandt's paintings, the reader needs to transcend the epistemological boundaries of art history as these are currently drawn in most positivist understandings of the discipline. For what seems to motivate Rembrandt is not something that can be thematized in the painting by virtue of historical analysis alone. It is rather in the paradox of faith that needs to be philosophically considered that the reader ought to find recourse to in order to adequately interpret the painting. Before however arguing for the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach, it is important to consider that the founding fathers of art history did not distinguish themselves from philosophers.

The mechanics of the scene

In Rembrandt's 1635 painting the biblical parable is illustrated at its most critical moment. Pale, agitated and emotionally distressed, Abraham has ceased all hope that a miracle may happen that will spare Isaac's life and has gathered all determination in order to slice his beloved son's throat. His pale face, uncombed hair and forehead deep wrinkles demonstrate the father's anxiety and terror who feels compelled to obey God's command and sacrifice to him his only son and heir whom he miraculously acquired in late age, with his wife Sarah. Laying upon an altar with the wood piled and ready to light fire for the offering, his son's torso protrudes slightly upwards as his father pushes down the face with a strong hand, in order to stretch the throat that will receive the fatal cut. The son's hands are tied behind his back revealing his nude and defenseless young body. Isaac's knee is bent in agony, his face is covered by the father's palm in an ultimate act of both protection and submission. The painting includes a distant view of a landscape in a dark background haze. The sky is heavy with clouds and the atmosphere is tonally contrasted as if to reveal the father's inner strife and the son's emotional despair. Cynthia P. Schneider in her study on Rembrandt's landscapes indicates that the artist shapes his approach to landscapes to help communicate the meaning of his story.³⁴⁰ Here too, the surrounding landscape becomes a device that not only reflects the emotional distress and grief of both father and son but aims to communicate this feeling to the viewer as well.

At the very moment when Abraham's hand forces the way of the knife towards his son's throat, an angel descends from the sky in a whirlwind movement and in a firm grip seizes Abraham's wrist. The angel's calm face and soft spoken words that he addresses to the tormented father as he points with his other hand to the sky and God's will, contradict his

340 Cynthia P. Schneider, *Rembrandt's landscapes*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990, p. 167.



PIETER LASTMAN,
The Sacrifice of Abraham,
1616, wood, 36 x 42 cm, Louvre.



CARAVAGGIO,
The Sacrifice of Isaac,
1596, oil on canvas, 116 x 173 cm,
Princeton (NJ), Collection Barbara Piasecka Johnson.

firm holding of Abraham's wrist. So sudden and strong is this firm holding of Abraham's wrist by the angel that the knife slips away from the old man's hand and is now found suspended in mid-air, before falling onto the ground. Abraham turns his head towards the angel in surprise and thus the viewer has the opportunity to observe his tears and the stamp of suffering on his face.

Rembrandt bases his composition on a painting by Pieter Lastman, his master³⁴¹ (Pieter Lastman, *The Sacrifice of Abraham*, 1616, wood, 36 x 42 cm, Louvre) but, in fact, he follows "a long tradition of depicting the climactic moment of deliverance."³⁴² Lastman maintained close ties with the circle of Utrecht Carravagists and thus Carravaggio's own treatment of the subject should also be taken under consideration, when reviewing the painting (Caravaggio, *The Sacrifice of Isaac*, 1596, oil on canvas, 116 x 173 cm, Princeton NJ, Collection Barbara Piasecka Johnson). Given Rembrandt's inspiration by some of Titian paintings³⁴³ and by his "rough manner,"³⁴⁴ it would also make sense to add to the genealogy of the picture Titian's depiction of the same story (Titian, *The Sacrifice of Isaac*, 1542–4, oil on canvas, 328 x 282 cm, Santa Maria della Salute, Venice). Titian first and then Carravaggio, widely employed the *chiaroscuro* which is so strategically used here by Rembrandt. Despite the references to the past, Rembrandt's depiction of the scene is quite unique in its dramatic impact and force. The sharply alternating dark and light areas seem to receive light from two directions: first from the sky above the event and second, from diagonally, above the viewer's line of

341 Honour and Fleming report how unusually responsive to other artists' work has Rembrandt been in the course of his career, indicating at the same time that he assimilated all such influences in his own work, op. cit. p. 606.

342 Mariët Westermann, *Rembrandt*, London: Phaidon, 2007, p. 126.

343 One such example given by Fiorenzo Fisogni is the figure of the seated soldier in *The Denial of St Peter*, 1660, inspired by Titian. See Fiorenzo Fisogni, Andreas Pappas (ed.), *Rijksmuseum* (transl. Maria Basti), Athens: Kathimerini, 2007, p. 98.

344 Ernst van de Wetering, "Rembrandt's method-technique in the service of illusion", in: Christopher Brown, Jan Kelch and Pieter van Thiel, *Rembrandt: The Master and his Workshop*, exh. cat., New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991, p. 16.



TIZIAN,
The Sacrifice of Isaac,
1542–4, oil on canvas, 328 x 282 cm,
Santa Maria della Salute, Venice.



REMBRANDT,
Abraham and Isaac,
1645, etching and burin, 15 x 13 cm,
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

vision. Rembrandt organizes the setting of the scene in strong, diagonal, linear arrangements, manifesting intensity and power in a picture that already involves ostentatious movement. Such typically baroque representational devices are further enhanced by the open-ended composition which encourages the viewer's imagination to reconstruct the environment of the scene beyond the material confines of the canvas.

The agent of light and the place of the observer

Bockemühl claims that the reason why Rembrandt portrays the story of Abraham's sacrifice at the climax of its action, as he does in other stories as well, is because he wishes to achieve the utmost vividness in his representation that will lead to a direct experience of the event from the part of the observer.³⁴⁵ To succeed in such representation of the climax of action, Rembrandt, always according to Bockemühl, employs so drastic means that he ends up violating the static nature of the picture.³⁴⁶ For example, the knife, in free fall, demonstrates Rembrandt's desire to make the observer understand the picture as if it were

345 Bockemühl, op. cit. p. 14.

346 Ibid., p. 16.



REMBRANDT,
Sacrifice of Isaac, 1650, pen and bistre, 18 x 15 cm,
Dresden, Kupferstichkabinett,
Staatliche Kunstsammlung Dresden.



REMBRANDT,
Sacrifice of Isaac,
1655, etching and drypoint 15,6 x 13,1 cm,
Vienna Graphische Sammlung Albertina.

in motion and help the viewer reconstitute in his mind the before and after of the event.³⁴⁷ Wanting however, to introduce time in the motionless instant, Rembrandt pushes pictorial art at its very limits and the possibilities of painting at their very end. In any case, the observer is given a prominent role, indeed. Not only the observer seems to be one of the sources of lighting for the picture without any obvious explanation from any of Rembrandt's commentators but she/he is literally *in* the scene as the foreground is generally protruding, so as to include his/her own body. Rembrandt would not have gone to such extremes if he did not have something that he wanted to communicate to the viewer or if he did not expect from the very act of observation to reveal something fundamental about the biblical event he illustrates. From the point of view of such constitutive a role that the observer occupies, the picture is unfinished and can be said complete only once this revelation, from the part of the viewer, has taken place.³⁴⁸

Indeed we see Rembrandt in his entire career and life to repeatedly paint biblical subjects and more importantly to come back to Abraham's Old Testament story. In 1645, ten years after his painting, he comes back to Abraham's story with an etching that depicts a phase prior to the sacrifice of Isaac in the mount Moriah. (Rembrandt, *Abraham and Isaac*, 1645, etching and burin, 15 x 13, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. Abraham is depicted explaining Isaac

347 Ibid., p. 18.

348 Ibid., pp. 63, 90.

that they have to go to the Mount Moriah for a sacrificial offering). In 1650 he returns with a sketch, testing an altogether different approach to the sacrificial scene, that he never completed (Rembrandt, *Sacrifice of Isaac*, 1650, pen and bistre, 18 x 15 cm, Dresden, Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlung Dresden). In 1655 he returns again, completing this time an etching that stands as a third version of the same story (Rembrandt, *Sacrifice of Isaac*, 1655, etching and drypoint 15,6 x 13,1 cm, Vienna Graphische Sammlung, Albertina). Westermann argues that the story "struck a chord in the young [Dutch] Republic, eager to legitimize its claim to political, religious and economic autonomy" for its leaders "identified their struggle for political survival with the ancient history of the Israelites."³⁴⁹ This political interpretation of Rembrandt's recurring inspiration does not cancel his apparent wish to confide to the powers of the viewer's active observation the full import of the story.

The initial painting of 1635 being the most complete and integral attempt of Rembrandt to portray the event of the biblical story, offers the best chances to provide an answer for his persistent return to the subject of Isaac's sacrifice. Light seems to be playing a pivotal role as it selectively points to the figures of action and prepares a location for the observer near the center of the event, thus becoming, according to Bockemühl, an agent or a vehicle of action.³⁵⁰ Apart from Bockemühl, Mieke Bal also bases her psychoanalytic reading of Rembrandt on light,³⁵¹ a fact that further substantiates its key role in the painter's production.

Faith as a passion for the Other

It is clear not only from Rembrandt's depiction but also from the biblical narration of Isaac's sacrifice that the parable of the story is Abraham's power of faith. As Søren Kierkegaard maintains, Abraham is in a state of divine madness, for he is indeed a genius of faith and no genius has ever existed without some touch of madness, according to Seneca.³⁵² Faith is so strong and supreme a passion that makes Abraham want to sacrifice his son that took so long to acquire. From an ethical point of view, Abraham is a murderer but from a religious point of view he is a knight of faith.³⁵³ The collision between the ethical and the religious aspects of his act causes Abraham to lose his sleep and suffer interminably.³⁵⁴ But, as Kierkegaard argues, faith is precisely the paradox that the single individual as such, stands higher than the universal, i.e. that Abraham's decision to sacrifice his son to God is worth infinitely more than the fact of his son's murder. The story of Abraham involves a teleological

349 Westermann, op. cit. p. 126.

350 Bockemühl, op. cit. p. 36.

351 See Mieke Bal, *Reading Rembrandt. Beyond the Word-Image Opposition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 1–3, 121.

352 Søren Kierkegaard, "Fear and Trembling", in: *Kierkegaard's Writings VI*, Howard V. Hong (ed. and transl.) and Edna H. Hong, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983, pp. 23, 106.

353 Ibid., pp. 30, 79.

354 Ibid., pp. 59, 62.

suspension of the ethical that immediately entails maddening effects.³⁵⁵ As Abraham is alone with his faith, so he is with his madness. Abraham has nobody that can understand him; he confides his secret decision to comply to God's will and sacrifice his son to nobody. He does not speak, neither to Sarah, nor to Eliezer, his servant, nor even to Isaac who asks him where is the lamb to be sacrificed because he does not dare reveal the truth. For there is no way that he can justify his act and if he were to communicate his decision to sacrifice his son, everybody would strive to change his mind. Therein lies his distress, extreme suffering and anxiety, namely that his terrible intention has to remain a secret that he bears on his own. For nobody can understand Abraham except by admitting the paradox of faith that makes a single individual stand in a secret, absolute relation to the absolute, i.e. God.³⁵⁶

Jacques Derrida commenting on the story of Abraham and on Kierkegaard's interpretation of it, claims that Abraham's responsibility towards God that makes him disregard both his accountability towards his family as a father and his duty to protect them, reveals in fact the condition of responsibility in general. For not only God but also every single other demands from me an absolute commitment.³⁵⁷ Responsibility in general requires both a general accounting and an absolute singularity. Thus absolute responsibility becomes irresponsible.³⁵⁸ The story of Isaac in fact, illustrates the most common and everyday experience of responsibility:

I cannot respond to the call, the request, the obligation or even the love of another without sacrificing the other other, the other others. Therefore day and night, at every instant, on all Mount Moriahs of this world, I am doing that, raising my knife over what I love and must love, over those to whom I owe absolute fidelity.³⁵⁹

Abraham obeys God and betrays his family; we opt for fidelity to our own people and betray all others. I am responsible to the one and fail my responsibility to all the others, Derrida claims, exactly as I feed every morning my cat and sacrifice to her all cats, animals and humans that everywhere die at every minute of starvation. Responsibility inevitably leads to sacrifice.³⁶⁰ The instance of Abraham's decision is maddening precisely because he is perfectly aware of the paradox of responsibility that holds him still and makes him wish for a miracle that will finally spare his son's life. The miracle is not coming and yet he has to decide to go on with his intention. His decision is not guided by knowledge but is in fact paradoxical as is all decision, i.e. ultimately mystically authorized or secret, because ultimately based on faith and singularity.³⁶¹

355 Ibid., p. 66.

356 Ibid., pp. 119–120.

357 Constantinos V. Proimos, "The Secret and Responsibility: Derrida's Interpretation of Kierkegaard", in: Ioanna Kuçuradi (ed.), *The Proceedings of the Twenty-First World Congress of Philosophy*, Ankara: Philosophical Society of Turkey, 2007, pp. 113–121, esp. p. 114.

358 Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death* (transl. David Wills), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995, p. 61.

359 Ibid., p. 68.

360 Ibid., pp. 70–71.

361 Jacques Derrida, "The Mystical Foundation of Authority", in: *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, Drucilla Cornell, Michael Rosenfeld and David Gray Carlson (eds.), New York: Routledge, 1992, pp. 11–12.

It is therefore my contention that the arbitrariness of light in Rembrandt's *Sacrifice of Isaac* is meant to portray the paradox of faith and furthermore the mystical condition of all responsibility. Light is paradox because it aims at a paradox revelation about faith and responsibility that it orchestrates well in the painting by allowing the observer an active role into the scene. The observer is thus individually summoned to consider for herself/himself her/his single relation to faith and responsibility and perhaps lean with sympathy over Rembrandt's work maybe because he himself felt, in his early years of prodigality and ostentation, as someone with a strained relation to his family responsibilities.³⁶² I do not want however to end up with a biographical interpretation of the painting, although it is true that biography, when properly used, may reveal many of the structural patterns that regulate meaning in art, sometimes independently of their creator's conscience. Rembrandt's profound reflection on the paradoxes of faith and responsibility communicated to the viewer via the arbitrariness of lighting in his 1635 painting *The Angel Stopping Abraham from Sacrificing Isaac to God* explain his quite singular preference for religious and biblical themes as well as his unique technique, neither classicist, nor quite baroque.

362 Rosenberg, op. cit. p. 23.

Paula Zupanc

**THE FRAGMENTED SUBJECT IN HONORÉ DE BALZAC
LE CHEF-D'OEUVRE INCONNU:
PRECURSOR TO POST-MODERNISM**

Balzac could be considered a painter if we take seriously the expression used to describe his writing as “depicting the French society from the time of the Restauration to the Monarchy of Louis Philippe”. The momentous *oeuvre* he created, *La comédie humaine*, is a tableau of life of the times – distinctive characters, variety of ideas, detailed description of various sites, of objects, and of situations. He depicted the material as well as the spiritual reality as he perceived it, and as he envisioned it. The Balzacian universe is as much representation as it is imagination. Baudelaire thought of Balzac, who was generally taken for an excellent observer of the human nature, as a visionary, a passionate visionary at that.

Balzac received as much criticism as praise from his peers as from the following generations of writers. André Gide accused him of burdening his writing with the heterogeneous elements which could not be assimilated by a novel, but nevertheless he admired Balzac as the supreme novelist, and the most fecund creator of master-pieces in the French literary history.³⁶³ Not to mention his public of the time who gulped his stories in the format of novels, as well as in the journalistic series. Nowadays, Balzac could be undoubtedly ranged at the top of the best-seller list in France, as well as globally.

As an amateur of Balzac, from the prime of my reading adventures, I was in awe of the tremendous artistic force, and creative energy he invested in his stories. I suffered with his characters, I died, and was resurrected with them. They continue to live in me, and through me, with a continuous vivacity, *real and unreal*, with all the force, and intrigue, of art that keeps madness at bay. What is his trick that ticks even in the post-modern hearts?

Being interested in literature, art, and philosophy, especially from the point of view of the “subject”, the work which I chose to examine is the well-known *étude philosophique* of Balzac entitled *The Unknown masterpiece*, which belongs to the volume X. of his gigantic *oeuvre The Human Comedy*. It is one of the three *études*³⁶⁴ which talk about the artistic creation, and madness.

In her book *Writing and Madness*³⁶⁵, Shoshana Felman presents (her translation of) the entry “Folie” in the *Encyclopédie* as “Blindness”, “blindness is the distinctive characteristic of madness. To deviate from reason knowingly, in the grip of a violent passion, is to be weak; but to deviate from it confidently and with the firm conviction that one is following it,

363 André Gide, *Journal 1939–1949, Souvenirs*, Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, NRF, Éditions Gallimard, p. 143.

364 *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*, Gambará, Massimilla Doni, in: *Études philosophiques*, Tome X, Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, NRF, Éditions Gallimard, 1979.

365 Shoshana Felman, *Writing and Madness*, Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1985, p. 35; *La folie et la chose littéraire*, Paris: Seuil, 1978.

is to be what we call *mad*.” She confirms that there exists a whole series of aphoristic statements issued by philosophers on madness, but it became questionable whether these pronouncements are philosophical or literary? The notions of philosophy, of literature, of madness, seem to Felman inherently related. She quotes Hegel, Rousseau, Nietzsche, and their thoughts on madness, as well as Bataille³⁶⁶, Foucault³⁶⁷, and Derrida³⁶⁸. Felman also analyses another Balzac’s story – *L’Illustre Gaudissart*³⁶⁹ where she deals with the rhetoric of the text and its way of presenting madness through irony.

The text I shall use as an example for my examination of the subject, which stands for the character(s) and the *sujet* of the story. I have chosen this work for several reasons, two of which bear mention here. First of all, as a work by a classic author, perhaps *the* normative novelist, the story fits in with the main lines of literary praxis as well as with the reification of this praxis in its institutionalized forms of literary history. If, in the work of a classic(al) author, various decentering mechanisms can be brought to light, there is no longer any need to grant priority to a marginal figure simply because of its marginality. In other words, if it can be shown a marginal to be ex-centric or norm-braking, we have succeeded at best in underscoring a tautology; but if we can show a central text to be aberrant, we are compelled to re-evaluate our conception of what is ‘normal’ and of whether or not a norm even exists. Consequently, a canonical text can prove itself to be more revolutionary than a non-canonical one.

The second reason for choosing *Le Chef d’oeuvre inconnu* is that the subject of the work – the ‘theme’ – is precisely that of the artistic creation, and the re-presentation of madness. Consequently, the story is thematically, as well as formally, conducive to this study. *Le Chef-d’oeuvre inconnu* is an example of a specular text as is also an example of the *mis-en-abîme* literary technique: the subject matter of the text, artistic creation, parallels the writing of the text itself, which is, after all, artistic creation. It is possible then that the work can inform the critic, and the reader, about its own creation. In the *mis-en-abîme*, the text entertains the relationship of similarity with what it talks about. That’s exactly what happens here as the specular relation is almost perfect – the story is almost entirely about the production of a work of art. The initial similarity that I have extrapolated from this *mis-en-abîme* depends on the assumed mimetic nature of the representation in the text. Nevertheless, this similarity is clearly one that is unsatisfactory to the author because of the inevitable conclusion that would be drawn: the artist does not succeed in breathing life into his creations but rather is doomed to fail. Therefore, this interpretation is not a felicitous one and is, at the same time, the implication of a paradoxical double bind: if the text is assumed to be verisimilar and mimetic, the conclusion to be drawn is that art is not mimetic and thus that Balzac’s story is not telling the truth. By admitting the paradox, the

366 Georges Batailles, *Sur Nietzsche and La folie de Nietzsche*, in: *Oeuvres complètes*, tome I, III., Paris: Gallimard.

367 Michel Foucault, *Folie et déraison. Histoire de la folie à l’âge classique*, Paris: Plon, 1961.

368 Jacques Derrida, “Cogito et histoire de la folie”, in: *L’Écriture et la différence*, Paris: Seuil, 1967.

369 Shoshana Felman, “Honoré de Balzac: Madness, Ideology, and the Economy of Discourse”, in: *Writing and Madness*, Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1985, pp. 101–115.

subject of the text becomes the paradox itself: the subject of the text is the problematic of representation. Redefining the word ‘subject’ in terms of problematics of representation serves not to further understanding, but only serves to pinpoint the locus of the problem. From this initial paradox of representation, itself posed as an *a priori* (or an *aporia*), the writing of the text proceeds.

To short-cut to this seemingly impassable paradox, the ambiguous specular relation, Balzac proposes in this text, as in many others in *La Comédie humaine*, a theatrical model instead of a narrative or pictorial one. In both, there is a necessary translation from one medium to the other (and in this translation lies a paradox): painting or narrative is not the same form – medium or dimensionality – as the human beings or objects that each tries to represent. In a theatrical model, though, it is evident that human beings as characters serve as representatives of ‘reality’, and there is no need any more for ‘translation’. In fact, under optimum conditions, the theatrical model is conceived as the creation of a simulacrum, a mimetic, non-diegetic copy that is indistinguishable from the original. A play puts people in the situations just as real people are in the situations in the world.

Maître Balzac posits a *mise-en-scène* at the beginning of the story to help re-form the parameters by which it is to be read. The first two paragraphs are an elaborate description of the scene, pertinent to set the stage for a play: the environment, the house at 7, rue des Grands-Augustins in Paris, where the narrative begins, on a chill December afternoon in 1612, a precise sketch of the character of Frenhofer, the oldest of the three painters (Poussin, Porbus)³⁷⁰ who meet in the studio of Poussin, as if we, the readers, were the scenic designers and the casting directors of the play: “Imaginez un front chauve, bombé, proéminent, retombant en saillie sur un petit nez écrasé, retroussé du bout comme celui de Rabalais ou de Socrate.”³⁷¹ The descriptions continue for several more lines until the narrator, or the *metteur-en-scène*, concludes: «Vous eussiez dit d’une toile de Rembrandt marchant silencieusement et sans cadre dans la noire atmosphère qui s’est appropriée ce grand peintre».³⁷² With the description of the protagonist, the play can now begin, and it will be signaled by three knocks, the *introît* of the French theater: «Le vieillard jeta sur le jeune homme un regard empreint de sagacité, frappa trois coups à la porte et dit ...»³⁷³ The three knocks have sounded and thus the play may start with the first bit of dialogue. Throughout the story, we find a great deal of dialogue, several didactic monologues on art, and a tragic ending to Frenhofer’s drama, a veritable *coup de théâtre*.

What is the subject of this story in the guise of a play? Or even, what are the subjects? The transformation of genres has resolved our initial question in a rather simple fashion. By positing a theatrical model for the story, the author tries to circumvent any problem of

370 Nicolas Poussin, the known French painter, indeed arrived to Paris in 1612 at the age of eighteen; the Flemish master Franz Pourbus the Younger was in his early forties in 1612, and very successful as the leading portraitist of his era; he made the portraits of Marie de Medici, Queen Mother and Regent of France.

371 Honoré de Balzac, *La Comédie humaine, Études philosophiques X, Le chef d’oeuvre inconnu*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, NRF, 1979, pp. 414–415.

372 Ibid, p. 415.

373 Ibid.

translation in representation: his characters, which might otherwise have remained textual figures, are seen to be subjects in their own right, living, breathing human beings, self-sufficient and free of the control of the narrator. Instead of “l'apparence de la vie”, they show the “trop-plein qui déborde, ce je ne sais pas quoi qui est l'âme peut-être”.³⁷⁴ Instead of being part of a painting or a narrative, they are real subjects: «Vous êtes devant une femme et vous cherchez un tableau. Il y a tant de profondeur sur cette toile, l'air y est si vrai, que vous ne pouvez plus le distinguer de l'air qui nous environne. Où est l'art? perdu, disparu». ³⁷⁵ It seems that the ‘subjects’ come alive because they have been able to step out of their frames: «un toile de Rembrandt marchant silencieusement et sans cadre». ³⁷⁶

The transformation or the translation of the narrative text into a theatrical mode has its shortcomings, even if it appears to rescue verisimilitude from perdition. As a solution to the problem of verisimilar representation, it is nonetheless inadequate for several reasons. The first is that too much text of the story has to be bracketed, dispensed with, and finally, ignored. Long stretches of narrative have no place in a theatrical model. And, consequently, the situation here, in which we bracket a part of the text, is strangely reminiscent of the bracketing of the subject in the structural exegesis. In this way, we deny the integrity of the narrative itself and therefore a willful misreading of the text is being produced. Secondly, it should be clear that there is no adequate solution to the problem of artistic representation in a medium where translation occurs. Thirdly, the model of the theater is inadequate because the bracketing of the narrative means the crossing out of the creative, writing subject: independent theatrical characters do not need anyone to move them – they have no strings. With the presentation of the theatrical model for his text, the author writes himself out of it a bit too perfectly.

Although there is a general tendency in most of Balzac's writing to attenuate the visibility of the author in order to create a verisimilar representation, he does not achieve a perfect invisibility. That is not Balzac's intention, as we can read/hear in the «Avant-propos» (Introduction): he wants to create «une grande image du présent», a fresco «copiant toute la société»; he wants to «peindre les faits comme ils sont». ³⁷⁷ In other words, there is an artist at work, although not so much a *metteur-en-scène* as a puppeteer – the omniscient third person narrator moving the almost invisible strings attached to his characters and providing their only means of existence.

I can sum up the subject/*sujet* of the Balzac's text, and my reading of it, as one in which there is an oscillation between an unveiling of the author's presence within the text, and an occultation of the author behind the mask of an omniscient third person narrator in which, as Emile Benveniste points out, the events seem to tell themselves. ³⁷⁸

374 Ibid, p. 419.

375 Ibid, p. 435.

376 Ibid, p. 415.

377 Balzac introduced his ideas and the project of *La Comédie humaine* in the Introduction, Honoré de Balzac, *La Comédie humaine*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Tome I., 1979, p. 19.

378 Emile Benveniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale I*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1966, p. 241.

The story tells itself and offers itself in consequence as a simulacrum and not just a copy or reality; at the same time, the author appears from behind his cloak of invisibility to guarantee the narrative as his own.

The two initial readings – a mimetic, verisimilar one and a theatrical one in which the characters are simulacra of human beings – are both reliant on the adequation between the thing and the idea, between the referent and the sign. Therefore I propose the inclusion of the function of adequator which will require a change from the first two possible readings – the figuration of identity and of translation – to a rhetorical figure, the *captatio benevolentiae*, the capturing of the reader's will or benevolence. This capture takes a form of a seduction of the reader wherein the reader allows the narrator to speak, feel, write, and ‘read’ for him or her. The *captatio* in the form of seduction is specular, as the presence of the narrator/seducer within the text brings about the specular reflection. Herein comes the question of style as it is the means, and the way, to capture the reader to insert himself/herself in the narrative. From latin *stilus* (stylus or stake), style is akin to “to stick”, “to instigate”, and to the Greek *stizien*, to tattoo. The style marks the body, writes on it (no doubt originally for sacrifice). Style then consists of repeated, obstinate, textual figures by which the narrator manipulates the reader within the text.

In *La Comédie humaine*, three stylistic devices stand out so clearly as their appearance is almost parodic: the negative interrogative statement, the phrase «je ne sais quoi», and the collective deictic, «un de ces», as in «par un de ces hasards qui ne sont vraisemblables que dans les livres ...» from *La Recherche de l'absolu*. ³⁷⁹ I shall analyse briefly the implication of these devices, using examples from *le Chef d'oeuvre inconnu*: «il y avait rencontré soudain une maîtresse, une de ces âmes nobles et généreuses». ³⁸⁰ The collective inscribes the object, here Gillette, the girl-friend of the painter-to-be, and the future model to Frenhofer, the *neophyte* Poussin, within a type, one assumed to be known by the reader. The reader is familiar with this sort of person, so there is no need to continue to describe her. The deictic “ces”, the demonstrative adjective that is a mark of discourse, has another function: as a mark of discourse – of speaking, not writing – it is an attempt to make the object itself present to the conversation by pointing it out *demonstratively*; the use of the demonstrative points to the validity of referentiality itself as well as its viability.

The phrase “je ne sais quoi” has a similar function, although it attains its goal by narrator's admission that he is not capable of a perfect description of the “uncanniness” present in the description of the scene or the character.

Rather more problematic, and the most pertinent to my effort to analyze the literary discourse of madness in Balzac's story *le Chef d'oeuvre inconnu* is the use of the negative interrogative. This stylistic device appears throughout the entirety of *La Comédie humaine*

379 Honoré de Balzac, *La Recherche de l'absolu*, in: *La Comédie humaine, Études philosophiques*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Tome X., 1979, p. 826.

380 Honoré de Balzac, *Le chef d'oeuvre inconnu* in: *La Comédie humaine, Études philosophiques X*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, NRF, 1979, p. 428.

with astonishing regularity, yet this question, so common elsewhere in Balzac's stories, does not appear at all in the narrative of *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*. Instead it appears in the dialogue, and specifically, in the discourse of Frenhofer: «Peut-être faudrait-il ne pas dessiner un seul trait, et vaudrait-il mieux attaquer une figure par le milieu en s'attachant d'abord aux saillies les plus éclairées, pour passer ensuite aux portions les plus sombres. N'est-ce pas ainsi que procède le soleil, ce divin peintre de l'univers?»³⁸¹ Or further on, «N'ai-je pas bien saisi la couleur, le vif de la ligne qui paraît terminer le corps? N'est-ce pas le même phénomène que nous présentent les objets qui sont dans l'atmosphère comme les poissons dans l'eau? ... Ne semble-t-il pas que vous puissiez passer la main sur ce dos?»³⁸²

Why does this stylistic device appears only in the speeches of this «singulier personnage qui discourait si follement»³⁸³ Frenhofer? This stylistic device has been passed over to the realm of the discourses of madness. Frenhofer's speeches, consisting of several monologues on the aesthetics of verisimilitude, belong in the realm of alterity, of alienation, of madness. Frenhofer's former pupil Porbus is told, «Vous avez l'apparence de la vie, mais vous n'exprimez pas son trop plein qui déborde, ce je ne sais quoi qui est l'âme peut-être...»³⁸⁴ Is it Porbus' Saint Mary in Egypt or is it Porbus himself that is referred to? Splitting the discourse of the text between the narrator and Frenhofer has allowed the latter to occupy a position of discursive specularity as well as one of alterity. His discourse refers not only to the paintings of Porbus, Poussin, or himself, but also to artistic creation in general, and in particular to Balzac's own artistic creation: to «Porbus», «Poussin», «*Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*». The discourse of madness, of the other, is allowed to speak about the same, the rational, the self: about the author of the text.

Here I include the thoughts of Shoshana Felman, resuming and quoting the questions posited by Foucault in the Preface to *History of Madness*: «How can we understand the Subject, without transforming him (or her) into an object? Can the Subject comprehend itself? Is the Subject *thinkable*, as such? To put the question differently: is the Other, not as an object, but as a subject, a subject who would not, however, amount to the same?...For the historian and the philosopher of madness the problem then is how, while analyzing History's essential structure of muffling madness, to give it a voice, restore madness both its language and its right to speak; how to say madness itself, both as Other and as Subject; how to speak from the place of the Other, while avoiding the philosophical trap of dialectic *Aufhebung*, which shrewdly reduces the Other into a symmetrical same; while rejecting all discourses *about* madness, how to pronounce the discourse *of* madness. Is such a discourse possible? Precisely how can one *formulate* a language which sticks in the throat, collapsing before having attained any formulation?

381 Ibid, p. 425.

382 Ibid, p. 435.

383 Ibid, p. 427.

384 Ibid, p. 419.

How can one *utter* a language that speaks by itself, uttered by no one and answered by no one?»³⁸⁵ Felman resumes with her own question: «How can madness as such break through the universe of discourse?»³⁸⁶

In the continuation of my textual analysis, I am going to proceed examining the rhetorical tools Balzac used to bring *madness* to speak itself in spite of all the narrative difficulties that stood on the way.

Balzac's copies of nature become simulacra if only there is a willing suspension of the disbelief of the reader: if there is a *captatio benevolentiae*. This capture, as a varying rhetorical figure, is dispersed throughout the text. The seduction of the reader is done not in one frame only, but it is done in pieces: it is paradoxical and fragmentary. When we "see" narrator as a "first-person", we cannot know what to do of the third-person stance elsewhere in the text, by which he penetrates into the deepest reaches of his characters' private lives. This inconsistency is resolved into fragments of text, first-person, second-person, and third-person, strung together by a mythic plot about mythic characters who don't exist. Such a conclusion is unavoidable, foreseen from the beginning when we try to meditate on the status of the so-called "realist" text. The text is not capable to attain the total verisimilitude or total objectivity: the tale doesn't tell itself.

Nevertheless, Balzac tried to solve this problem by installing the theatrical mode running in the parallel. The first scene in the Porbus' studio and the last scene in the Frenhofer's studio create the scenes of disorder, predicting the ultimate happening:

«Des écorches de plâtre, des fragments et de torses de déesses antiques, amoureuse-ment polis par les baiseirs des sciècles, jonchaient les tablettes et des consoles. D'innombrables ébauches, des études aux trois crayons, à la sanguine ou à la plume, couvraient les murs jusqu'au plafond. Des boîtes à couleurs, des bouteilles d'huile et d'essences, des escabeaux renversés ne laissaient qu'un étroit chemin ...»³⁸⁷

«En proie à une vive curiosité, Porbus et Poussin coururent au milieu d'un vaste atelier couvert de poussière, où tout était en désordre, où ils virent ça et là des tableaux accrochés aux murs».³⁸⁸

The rule of disorder, pieces scattered in an incredible chaos, fragments and torsos of antique goddesses lie about. «Ils aperçurent dans un coin de la toile le bout d'un pied nu qui sortait de ce chaos».³⁸⁹ This is another piece of body, but it is on the canvas: «Ce pied apparaissait là comme le torse de quelque Vénus en marbre de Paros qui surgirait parmi les décombres d'une ville incendiée».³⁹⁰ The foot is like the torso of an antique goddess; the canvas, quite remarkably, repeats the fragmentation found in Porbus' studio. Frenhofer,

385 Michel Foucault, *Folie et déraison. Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, Paris: Plon, 1961, p. 13.

386 Shoshana Felman, *Writing and Madness*, Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1985, p. 42.

387 Honoré de Balzac, *Le chef d'oeuvre inconnu* in: *La Comédie humaine, Études philosophiques X*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, NRF, 1979, pp. 415–416.

388 Ibid., p. 435.

389 Ibid., p. 436.

390 Ibid.

the mad artist who has taken over the inexpressible side of the narrator's discourse – that there never will be perfect copies – has shown the necessary and inevitable result of trying to copy nature. This «*dieu de la peinture*» can only create fragments, pieces, or a chaos of color, tone, and line: a formless fog. And perhaps the god too is fragmented and atomized, like the narrator himself who is torn between identity and alterity. In other words, as we return to the level of the text in general, there is a *sparagmos* of the referents and the signifieds; at best, there is a fragment here, or a partial object there. The subject matter of the text is in fact atomized, cut up until no more divisions can be made. No cohesive whole can be formed. Things resist representation, but more importantly, written language (or pictorial language) is incapable of representing.

What does written language do? As was remarked above, Benveniste defines the couple of locuteur -allocutaire as the speaker and the one spoken to. Within the text, the allocutaire is a fictional creation: it is part of the text, as writing, an absence parading as presence. The locuteur is the one who says "I". But "I" means the one who says "I" at the specific moment of discourse. At best the situation is tautological: the narrator talks entirely about himself while trying to talk about something else. But we also know that "I" is never where "I" is speaking, as seen in the eclipse of the presence of the narrator in the text. Though the "I" is writing/speaking, he is always moving away from the point of enunciation to hide himself, as if to say "I am not speaking; it is speaking."³⁹¹ It (ça, Id) is speaking; the story is telling itself. This then is the ultimate narrative feint of the subject: to elude being pinned down, to weave a text at each locus of enunciation to make the reader think that the text is referential when all it really refers to is the writing of the text. Instead of being directed out toward some external reality, the narrative is eminently self-referential.

I can now return to my initial question: what is the subject of the text? Possible answers (also offered by the Oxford Dictionary of Current English): 1) The subject is someone under the authority of another (the subject to the Queen, for example). The subject is thus the material submitted to *sparagmos*; it is the character submitted to the authority of the narrator (of the author-ity). 2) The subject is the essential substance. The subject is, as the self-referentiality of the work shows, the entirety of the text, its essence, is unveiled truth. 3) The subject is the ego or the agent. The subject is the narrator, constantly veiling his presence, unveiled by the reader as the true agent of the work, performing through his words. 4) The subject is a body of knowledge. The subject is a collection of information about the writing and erasing of a discursive presence. 5) The subject is someone acted upon. The subject is thus the characters of the text as well. What does it mean to say they are acted upon, since the agent is the self-effacing ego? They too are submitted to *sparagmos*, written upon, stylized for us to read. If we read them in their unveiled state, in their legibility, we shall perhaps not be pushed to read through them for the narrator. 6) The subject is a grammatical or logical term denoting entity or upon which something is

³⁹¹ Louis Marin, "The Autobiographical Interruption: About Stendhal's *Life of Henry Brulard*", MLN 93, 1978, pp. 569–617.

predicated. The subject is the syntactic anchor for appending the various predicates of the work. Consequently, the subject is a necessary posit for the text to exist. There must be a subject for something to be told. And finally, 7) a subject is a musical figure or phrase; it is part of a whole and constantly comes back like a Wagnerian leitmotiv, indefinable in its being, yet attractive and seductive. For the subject of the text is the repository of its desire as well. It is the desire of the subject to occupy the position of the Other from which he/she is allowed, authoritatively, to speak. It is thus a desire of appropriation and it – ça, the Id – source of desire, is telling the story. It is the desire of the *captatio*, the desire to convince the reader of the accuracy of the adequation made in the text - to convince him/her not only of the possibility, but also of the validity, of the representation. But it is finally that indefinable desire that is the trace of a presence, the same desire we find for the beauty of a Bachian line: *our* desire that re-turns this subject – this text – into an object/subject, not an alienated subject, but the subject/object of our desire, appreciation, and aesthetic sense.

Arthur C. Danto reminds us in his *Introduction* to the recent translation into English of *Le chef-d'oeuvre inconnu* by Richard Howard that "*The Unknown Masterpiece* is an allegory of artistic glory and erotic love ... Under the auspices of Balzac's Romanticism, a great work of art was equivalent in value to the body of a beloved woman. And if no one could see its greatness, that is what one must expect. Greatness in art is disclosed in time, as the body of the woman is revealed to the rightful eye..."³⁹² In his *Introduction*, Danto also touches on the narrative/pictorial technique of *mis-en-abîme* with which the whole series of creative works of art – narrative, musical, painting – extend their force and magic through ages and generations.

³⁹² Honoré de Balzac, *The Unknown Masterpiece* and *Gambara*, Transl. by Richard Howard, Introduction by Arthur C. Danto, New York: New York Review Books, nrb, 2001, p. 10, 25.

Danto informs us also that "In Balzac's novel ... it is the studio of the painter François Porbus; Frenhofer's is near the Pont St. Michel, a few streets away, near where Matisse, himself an admirer of Frenhofer, was to have a studio on the Quai St. Michel through the 1920s. Picasso executed a suite of etchings based on *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu* in 1927 for the dealer Ambroise Vollard, who published them in 1931 to mark the centenary of the novel. His own masterpiece, *Guernica*, was painted in the rue des Grands-Augustins.", p. 6.

Matej Vatovec
O DVEH OBLIKAH PSIHOZE,
GLEDALIŠČU IN INTERNETU

Dramatski koncept vsakdanjega življenja

Socialna psihologinja Mirjana Ule v svojem delu *Psihologija vsakdanjega življenja* naredi ekskurz o dramatskem oz. teatrskem konceptu vsakdanjega življenja. Stara sociološka teza o igranju (družbenih) vlog, ki jo lahko podaljšamo k Wittgensteinovim jezikovnim igram³⁹³ ter k vzpostavitvi pravil, ki omogočajo družbeno interakcijo, in končno do Lyotardove ekspanzije tega koncepta v epistemologijo.³⁹⁴

Uletova poudarja kompleksnost igranja vsakdanjih družbenih vlog, ki so vse prej kot enostavni izrazi – so zapletena mreža odnosov, ki se odvijajo hkrati: »ni čistih igralcev ali čistih gledalcev. Torej tudi ni čistih režiserjev, ki bi nadzorovali in usmerjali vse socialno dogajanje, vedeli za potek in smisel igre, drugi pa bi jo le izvajali.«³⁹⁵ Te igrane vloge (ki jih je več na glavo, več vlog na individua) so vloge, ki jih nič (nihče) ne režira. To so vloge, ki vznikajo same od sebe, pogojene z družbenimi odnosi (pravili), a kljub vsemu spontano nepredvidljive. Ne glede na to pa so ti družbeni odnosi s svojimi pravili dokaj normativni in v službi nečesa višjega: reprodukcije razmerij in ne nazadnje produkcijskih sredstev.

Drug moment je nekakšna intersubjektivnost, pomen igranja teh vlog v odnosu do ostalih: »[p]ojem vloge v dramatskem konceptu vsakdanjega življenja poudarja načine medsebojnega predstavljanja posameznikov; kaj želijo biti v očeh drugih ljudi in kaj dejansko so v očeh drugih ljudi. En in isti posameznik se lahko predstavlja drugim osebam kot cela vrsta dramskih oseb, to je vlog, pač ustrezno okoliščinam, v katerih se nahaja. Ni nujno, da so nekatere od teh vlog zgolj 'igrane', druge pa 'resne', lahko igra vse vloge enako 'zares'.«³⁹⁶

Naj to zaenkrat služi kot nastavek, ki bo potreben za razvitje enostavne teze, ki izhaja ravno iz vsakdanjega življenja. Če govorimo o subjektu, potem moramo v navezavi na zgornji predpostavki najprej ugotoviti, kam je umeščen subjekt in kaj sploh je subjekt v tem katoličnem menjavanju načinov (tisti tako prikupni *mode* v angleščini). Tu izhajam iz spinozistične predpostavke, da je substanca eno-vse, mnoštvo.³⁹⁷ Posledično je kategorija subjekta le tisti predmet spekularne prepoznave (oz. napačne prepoznave), predmet ideologije.³⁹⁸ Subjekt je tako le fantom, ki ga je pravzaprav potrebno dekonstruirati, tj. psihotizirati. Gre torej za to, da obstajajo posamezne (singularne) individuacije, ki so v nenehnem pretoku in odnosu druge z drugimi. Prosti tok, nič stalnega.

393 Cf. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford, Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2001.

394 Cf. Jean-François Lyotard, *Postmoderno stanje. Poročilo o vednosti*, Ljubljana: Društvo za teoretsko psihoanalizo, 2002.

395 Mirjana Ule, *Psihologija vsakdanjega življenja*, Ljubljana: Znanstveno in publicistično središče, 1993, str. 39.

396 Ibid., str. 40.

397 Cf. Benedictus de Spinoza, *Etika*, Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2004.

398 Cf. Louis Althusser, »Ideologija in ideološki aparati države«, v: L. Althusser, *Izbrani spisi*, Ljubljana: Založba *cf., 2000, str. 53–110.

Iz tega sledita dve pertinentni vprašanji: kdo in kako naj psihotizira in kdaj postane ta psihoza del sistema, tj. antropofagne dejavnosti kapitala. Na prvo vprašanje poskušam odgovoriti preko mišljenja gledališke prakse enega najinovativnejših italijanskih igralcev/režiserjev druge polovice dvajsetega stoletja, Carmela Beneja (ki je del svoje metode prevzel po Antoninu Artaudu). Drugo vprašanje pa je povezano s pojavom nekakšne »aktualne virtualnosti« po prihodu in razmahu internetnih tehnologij. Tukaj je je zanimiva predvsem genealogija od protokola IRC do spletnega mesta MySpace, kjer je poleg navadnih smrtnikov prisotna cela vrsta umetnikov (beri: glasbenikov) ter ne nazadnje znanih oseb, ki so že preminule (na tej strani lahko najdemo Jacquesa Lacana, Karla Marxa, Virginio Woolf itd.) in s katerimi se lahko tudi spoprijateljimo.

Odnos do subjekta je torej dvostranski: prvič je to vselej subjekt ideologije (napačno prepoznanje), ki kliče po razsutju, psihotizaciji; drugič pa je ravno odsotnost (oz. nekakšna formalna psihotizacija) tega subjekta lahko nevarna, če se začenja izrabljati v kolesju kapitalskega stroja. Kje je tu tista »zdrava« meja, kjer še lahko umorimo subjekt in ga raztreščimo na individualizacije (ekspresije substance) in negativni padec v postmoderno ulico brez izhoda (relativna psihoza, spodbujena s strani *sociusa*³⁹⁹)?

Psihotični subjekt antireprezentacije

Začenjam z obrnjenim vrstnim redom. Če obstaja prisila *sociusa* k ekvalizaciji⁴⁰⁰ (normalizaciji), se pravi, k normirani oz. normativni psihozi, potemtakem je zasilni izhod, luč upanja v obratu take ekvalizacije. Psihotičnemu subjektu reprezentacije moramo tako postaviti nasproti psihotični subjekt antireprezentacije, subjekt prakse, ki je zmožna to ekvalizacijo deekvalizirati.

V eseju »Un manifeste de moins« Gilles Deleuze tematizira kritiko reprezentacije skozi analizo gledališkega dela Carmela Beneja, poudarek pa da predvsem na dva vidika tega gledališča: subtrakcijo in manjšinjenje.

Pri Beneju gre za operacijo odstranjevanja nepotrebne oz. odstranjevanja normalnega, utečenega in ustaljenega. To je metoda Benejevega kritičnega gledališča: »odstraniti konstante ali nespremenljivke, ne samo v jeziku in gestah, temveč tudi v gledališki predstavi in v tem, kar je predstavljeno na sceni; torej odstraniti vse, kar 'udejanja' Moč, moč tega, kar predstavlja gledališče (Kralja, Prince, Gospodarje, Sistem), vendar tudi moč samega gledališča (Tekst, Dialog, Igralec, Režiser, Struktura).«⁴⁰¹

399 »Družbeni stroj ali socius je lahko telo Zemlje, telo Despota, telo Denarja. Nikoli ni projekcija telesa brez organov. Pravzaprav je telo brez organov zadnji ostanek deteritorializiranega sociusa.« (Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *Lanti-Edipo*, Torino: Einaudi, 1975, str. 35.) Socius je družbeno telo, ki ga sproducira kapital oz. despot, oblast. Navidezno deluje kot počelo, vendar je ustvarjeno počelo.

400 O pojmu ekvalizacije in njegovem protipolu, deekvalizaciji, pišem v članku »K deleuzovski topološki estetiki«, v: *Borec*, št. 639–643, letn. 59, 2007, str. 264–281.

401 Gilles Deleuze, »Un manifesto di meno«, v: Carmelo Bene, Gilles Deleuze, *Sovrapposizioni*, Milano: Quodlibet, 2006, str. 105.

Bene postane operator, ustvarjalec, ki zabriše utečene vloge in strukture gledališča in s to »operacijo« odstranjevanja ustvarja novo, odkriva tisto potencialnost,⁴⁰² pomen virtualnega in mračnega predhodnika.⁴⁰³ Benejevo kritično gledališče je odklon reprezentacije, je reprezentacija, ki zamaje ustaljene sheme gledališča in s svojo operacijo opravi tisti strukturni pretres, ki omogoča, da se pojavi mračni predhodnik, da se gledalčevo navajeno in leno oko zamegli, da ga zadane začasni strabizem, ki mu onemogoča, da bi na predstavo gledal naravnost, kot *po navadi*. To gledališče je ravno gledališče ne-navadnosti, gledališče, ki zahteva pogled s strani, drugačen pogled. Je gledališče, ki ne podlega pastem reprezentacije in oblasti, moči, gledališče norosti, ki je vzniknilo iz Artaudovega gledališča krutosti.

»Ko se [Bene, op. prev.] odloči *amputirati* elemente moči, ne spremeni samo gledališke snovi, temveč tudi obliko gledališča, ki preneha biti 'reprezentacija', medtem ko igralec preneha biti igralec.«⁴⁰⁴ Ta operacija odstranjevanja pa je vzročno povezana z omenjeno operacijo manjšinjenja, minoriranja. V že omenjenem eseju Deleuze namreč trdi, da je Benejevo gledališče manjšinsko; označba, ki jo razvije skupaj z Guattarjem v knjigi *Kafka: pour une littérature mineure*. Kaj je manjšinska književnost? Kot pravita Deleuze in Guattari: »[m]anjšinska književnost ni književnost, napisana v majhnem jeziku, ampak tista, ki jo ustvarja manjšina v večjem jeziku.«⁴⁰⁵

Ena od značilnosti manjšinske književnosti je ta, da je napisana v velikem jeziku – piše pa jo manjšina. Poleg tega je za manjšinsko književnost značilno, da je manjšinski avtor tisti avtor, ki pristopi k pisanju na revolucionaren način, tako da si izmisli jezik. »Vprašanje manjšinske književnosti, a tudi vseh nas je, kako iz svojega lastnega jezika izsiliti manjšinsko književnost, ki bo sposobna poglobiti jezik in ga usmeriti na zmerno revolucionarno linijo? Kako postati nomad in priseljenc in cigan v svojem lastnem jeziku?«⁴⁰⁶

Manjšinski avtor preobrazi svoj jezik do te mere, da »je treba seči z intenziteto vedno dlje, vendar v smislu neke nove zadržanosti, neke nove, še nepoznane izboljšave, neizprosne izbrušenosti: treba je vzravnati glavo.«⁴⁰⁷ Ravno zaradi inovacije, odstranjevanja, reinterpretiranja oz. ponovnega pisanja klasikov je Bene manjšinski avtor. »Klasične« uprizoritve Shakespeara so večinske, delo Carmela Beneja je manjšinsko. Večinsko je tisto, kar dela iz partikularnega univerzalno: »[z] ene strani se povzdiguje v 'večino': iz misli se ustvari doktrina, iz načina življenja se ustvari kultura, iz dogodka se ustvari Zgodovino. S tem se pretvarja, da se prepozna in občuduje, vendar se v resnici normalizira.«⁴⁰⁸

402 Cf. *ibid.*, str. 86.

403 Mračni predhodnik (*precurseur sombre*) je razpoka, strukturni operator, ki se pojavi po blisku, kot alegorizira Deleuze. Je mesto čiste razlike, ki se preko reprezentacije kaže za nazaj, je za nazaj vzpostavljeno prazno mesto, ki omogoči odvijanje dogodka. Več o tem cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, Pariz: PUF, 1968.

404 Deleuze, »Un manifesto di meno«, *op. cit.*, str. 89.

405 Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *Kafka. Za manjšinsko književnost*, Ljubljana: LUD Literatura, 1995, str. 24.

406 *Ibid.*, str. 29.

407 *Ibid.*, str. 38.

408 Deleuze, »Un manifesto di meno«, *op. cit.*, str. 91.

Bene, čeprav njegov oster kritik,⁴⁰⁹ izhaja iz Artauda in njegovega »gledališča krutosti«, gledališča, ki je javno razglašeno za antireprezentacijsko. Bene prevzame veliko prvin prvega manifesta gledališča krutosti. Predvsem je pomembno odvrčanje dramskih tekstov in zatrjevanje scenske pisave (*scrittura di scena*):⁴¹⁰ »[n]amesto da se vračamo k besedilom, ki veljajo za dokončna in sveta, moramo najprej odrešiti gledališče njegove zaslužjenosti besedilu in znova najti nekakšen edinstven jezik, ki bo na pol pota med gibom in mislijo.«⁴¹¹

Vendar je Artaudovo gledališče krutosti tudi gledališče, ki mora govorici iztrgati njene zmožnosti, se razvijati v prostoru, z zvočnim valovanjem učinkovati na občutenje, tudi s posebno izgovorjavo in dajanjem govornice predmetom ter vsemu skupaj dodati še glasbo, ples, pantomimo in mimiko. Režiser mora postati ustvarjalec, vreči dramskega pisca s prestola. Odrski jezik se mora razširiti, postati podoben sanjskemu jeziku, uporabiti je potrebno posebno intonacijo, govorico besede podpreti z drugimi govoricami: predmetov, glasbe in svetlobe. Gledališče mora obkrožiti gledalca, ga postaviti v sredino dogajanja, gledalec mora postati del predstave.⁴¹² Večino teh prvin Bene ohranja v svojem delu.

Poglavitni Artaudov cilj je torej antireprezentacija: »gledališče si mora z vsemi sredstvi prizadevati, da podvomi ne le o vseh vidikih stvarnega in zunanega sveta, temveč notranjega sveta, se pravi, človeka, ki je razumljen metafizično.«⁴¹³ Je *Artaud-Spinoza*, ki je neverjetno blizu Deleuzovemu pojmovanju aktualnega in virtualnega.⁴¹⁴ Cilj gledališča krutosti je ekspresija, tista ekspresija, ki omogoča vznik čiste razlike; dogodek, ki razodene razlikovalca, mračnega predhodnika, ki vzpostavi par aktualno/virtualno in ga tako problematizira, beži od reprezentacije.

409 V uvodu k prvemu delu svojega zbranega dela Bene piše: »Artaudovska scenska teorija-praksa je bila od konceptualizacije tekstov [...] do izvedbe predstave velika polomija (Artaud ostaja v reprezentaciji) [...]. Evroumetnost ni bila še nikoli tako zavržena.« (Carmelo Bene, *Opere. Con l'autografia d'un ritratto*, Milano: Bompiani, 2004, str. 4.) Ta kritična drža do Artauda izvira predvsem iz njegove fascinacije z vzhodom, zahteve po reprezentaciji vzhodnega gledališča, ki zavrača prakso zahodnega gledališča. Vendar v svoji kolonialni fascinaciji nad etno-antropološkim imaginarijem Balija Artaud pozablja, da je tudi to »metafizično« gledališče »divjakov« reprezentacija, le v drugem diskurzivnem sistemu. O tem cf. Jean-François Lyotard, »Zob, dlan«, v: E. Hrvatinić (ur.), *Prisotnost, predstavljanje, teatralnost. Razprave iz sodobnih teorij gledališča*, Ljubljana: Maska, 1996, str. 78.

410 Cf. Bene, *Opere, passim*.

411 Antonin Artaud, *Gledališče in njegov dvojniki*, Ljubljana: Mestno gledališče ljubljansko, 1994, str. 111.

412 Tega Bene sicer ne doseže z drugačno razporeditvijo prostora, temveč s tem, čemur pravi osvobodjena *phônê*. To je uporaba mikrofona, ki ojača igralčev glas, ga lansira med občinstvo in slednje s tem postavi v samo dogajanje. Kasneje, z razvojem svojega dela, dodaja Bene temu glasu kot objektu še končno točko osvoboditve: *playback*. V kasnejših delih se Bene poslužuje *playbacka* kot čiste osvoboditve govornice: »[i]z nje naredi ost, ki za seboj vleče podobo; podoba je popolnoma prešla v zvočno. Ne govori več ta ali oni lik, temveč sam zvok postane lik, določen zvočni element postane lik.« (Deleuze v: Bene, *Opere*, str. 1466.) Do mojstrstva pripelje ta element predvsem v *Macbeth Horror Suite* (1997) in v *Pinocchio* (1999), kjer so igralci le še »meso«, ki se premika na odru, medtem ko je glas (en in edini: Benejev) tisti pravi lik. O *phônê* kot objektu cf. Luce Irigaray, »The Stage Setup«, v: T. Murray (ur.), *Mimesis, Masochism, & Mime. The Politics of Theatricality in Contemporary French Thought*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997, str. 82–83.

413 Artaud, *op. cit.*, str. 114.

414 Aktualno kot spinozistični izraz substance, nekaj, kar postane bivajoče kot ekspresija neskončne možnosti aktualizacij. Virtualno kot ta neskončna substanca, neskončna možnost aktualizacij, potencialnost. Aktualno in virtualno sta tako obe realni, s tem da je aktualno izkustveno – je tukaj, virtualno pa le možno, potencialno – tukaj kot skrito – infinitezimalna točka vseh možnih aktualizacij. O tem cf. Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*.

Toda v čem je kvalitativna razlika, razlika v kritičnem potencialu med gledališčem, ki zanikuje reprezentacijo Antonina Artauda, in gledališčem, ki zanikuje reprezentacijo Carmela Beneja? Gre za osnovno razliko, ki jo Deleuze aplicira tako na slikarstvo kot na ostale umetnosti: odnos med abstrakcijo in figurativnostjo.

Umetnost Antonina Artauda je moderna: »[o]pustitev enostavne figuracije je splošno dejstvo Modernega slikarstva in toliko bolj slikarstva kot takega, vseh časov.«⁴¹⁵ Kot poudarja Hallward, loči Deleuze tri vrste modernizma, tri tipe umetnosti, ki se ukvarjajo z vprašanjem reprezentacije.⁴¹⁶ Prva je pot čiste abstrakcije, predstavlja jo Mondrian, ki popolnoma zapušča domeno reprezentacije. Drugi moment je abstraktni ekspresionizem (Pollock), ki tej abstrakciji doda občutenje kaosa, katerega rezultat je »enostavno kaotičen – 'zmešnjava'.«⁴¹⁷

Artaudovo gledališče je, kot smo videli, gledališče abstrakcije, uničenja jezika oz. njegove dekonstrukcije v gesto in nerazumljivost. Je nekaj, kar bi lahko primerjali s prizadevanji Pollocka ali Mondriana: preiskovanje umetniške prakse kot take, igranje oz. eksperimentiranje z mejami medija, z gledališkostjo gledališča.

Vendar ko Deleuze v delu *Francis Bacon: Logique de la sensation* govori o Michelangelovi *Sveti družini*, poudarja:

Oblike so lahko figurativne in lahko obstajajo pripovedni odnosi med liki – toda vse te povezave izginejo v prid 'resničnemu odnosu' ali resnični slikovni (ali kiparski) obvezi, ki ne govori več zgodbe in ne predstavlja ničesar drugega kakor lastno gibanje [...]. Zagotovo je še vedno prisotna organska reprezentacija, toda če pogledamo globlje, smo lahko pričre razkritju telesa pod organizmom, ki povzroča pokanje in otekanje organizmov in njihovih elementov.⁴¹⁸

Gre za izvleček čistega občutka, ki je osvobojen stroge reprezentacije in eksplozivne abstrakcije. »Takšen izvleček bo združeval razblinjenje figurativnega z ustvarjanjem *figuralnega*, tj. protiaktualizirane figure, virtualne figure, ki bo osvobodjena vseh okovov aktualnega.«⁴¹⁹ Tretji moment, ki gre onkraj čiste abstrakcije in abstraktnega ekspresionizma, najde Deleuze v delu Francis Bacona. Pri Baconu najdemo to čisto občutenje, osvobodjeni afekt/percept, ki deluje kot protiaktualizacija, kot beg iz reprezentacije skozi reprezentacijo.

In to iskanje in preiskovanje globine je nekaj, kar počne Bene. Bene je gledališki Bacon. Bene gre v abstrakcijo ravno skozi figurativno, ki postaja figuralno. Kajti reprezentaciji je namreč moč kljubovati, paradoksalno, le preko reprezentacije. Lahko bi parafraziral Derridaja in dejal: *il n'y a pas de hors représentation*, nič ni zunaj reprezentacije, zato mora antireprezentacija potekati znotraj reprezentacije, da bi lahko iz nje zbežala.

415 Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon. Logic of Sensation*, London: Continuum, 2003, str. xiv.

416 Cf. Peter Hallward, *Out of This World. Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation*, London, New York: Verso, 2006, str. 111–112.

417 Ibid., str. 111.

418 Deleuze, *Francis Bacon. Logic of Sensation*, str. 160.

419 Hallward, *op. cit.*, str. 112.

Taka gesta pa je ravno postati nor. Norosti tu nikakor ne gre definirati v kliničnem smislu: psihiatrično, psihoanalitično, psihološko ... Norost je prej stran oz. vidik kreativnosti, je tisto neskončno nabito zrno potencialnosti, ki omogoča kreacijo (perceptov in afektov v umetnosti). Reprezentacija, razumljena kot realno okolje (to, kar se nam kaže od zunaj), je nekaj, kar se mora razstaviti in ponovno sestaviti.

Tu gre za osnovni mehanizem delovanja psihoze. Pri psihozi se zaradi nagonskih vzgibov iz nezavednega jaz prične najprej boriti z Onim. Borba povzroči simptome, ki ovirajo običajno delovanje v družbi – realnem okolju. Nato simptome, ki so nevzdržni za realno okolje, psihotik prenese v novo realnost, izmišljeno realnost, ki je sposobna sprejeti nov način obnašanja. Tako se razvije psihoza v svoji popolnosti.⁴²⁰

Umetnik mora biti ravno takšen psihotik oz. se mora polastiti mehanizma psihoze in skozenj ustvariti nek nov pogled na realnost, ustvariti mora nekakšno presežno vrednost, ki pa vseeno deluje skozi reprezentacijo (v realnosti so spremenjeni določeni elementi strukture), le popačeno.

Tako dobimo psihotični subjekt, ki je, če se naslonim na Deleuza in Guattarija iz *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, ravno zmožen ustvariti nekaj novega, bodisi da gre za umetnika, filozofa ali znanstvenika.⁴²¹ Gre pravzaprav za držo, ki omogoča deekvalizacijo, tj. prehod iz reda v kaos, vlečenje »bežiščnice« oziroma so to, kar lahko ustvari umetnik, le »fragmenti, kosi ali kaos barv, tona in črt: neoblična megla.«⁴²² Ustvarjanje je pri Deleuzu in Guattariju omejeno na tri »izbrana« polja človeškega delovanja: filozofijo, umetnost in znanost, vendar bi morala biti ta drža pravzaprav *modus operandi* slehernika, če bi želeli izstopiti iz sistemskih okvirjev, ki trenutno vladajo v (zahodni?) družbi. A to je že novo vprašanje.

Psihotični subjekt reprezentacije

Pojdimo sedaj na drugo stran, tj. na spletno stran oz. spletne strani. Konec avgusta 1988 je finski študent Jarkko Oikarinen izumil Internet Relay Chat protokol ali IRC, kot se je akronim uveljavil v skupnosti uporabnikov protokola. Ta izum je sprožil oz. rodil spletno druženje, klepetanje (*chat*), pojav, ki se je razvil v različne vrste sodobne medmrežne komunikacije (portali, forumi, Messenger, Skype ...). Že leta 1991 je program postal svetovno prepoznaven, ko so ga uporabili za pridobivanje informacij o vojni v Iraku (potem ko so iraške oblasti prekinile vsa radijska in televizijska oddajanja).

Vmesniki za IRC protokol omogočajo enostavno in realnočasovno tekstovno komunikacijo med uporabniki, ki se družijo v klepetalnicah ali imajo zasebne pogovore. Osnova tega protokola je hitrejši način komuniciranja kot na primer pri korespondenci preko elektronske

420 Cf. Freudov spis »Izguba realnosti pri nevrozi in psihozi«, v: *Metapsihološki spisi*, Ljubljana: Studia humanitatis, 1987, str. 392 in *passim*.

421 Cf. Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *Kaj je filozofija?*, Ljubljana: Študentska založba, 1999.

422 Paula Zupanc, »The Fragmented Subject in Honoré de Balzac's *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*: Precursor to Post-Modernism«, pričujoča monografija, str. 152.

pošte. Toda po drugi strani je IRC postal pravo spletno gledališče, kjer si vsak uporabnik lahko izbere poljuben nadimek (če seveda ni že zaseden) in v pogovorih z drugimi uporabniki popolnoma »izumi« svojo osebnost. Za nadimkom in tekstom na ekranu ni nobene gotovosti. Uporabniki nikoli ne vedo, kdo (kaj?) je na drugi strani, s kom imajo opravka. Celotna skupnost, ki se povezuje preko IRC, je fiktivna oz. potencialno nepristna.

Kakšno povezavo ima to s psihozo oz. norostjo *qua* pogojem kreativnosti? V prvi vrsti možnost, ki jo IRC ponuja, odpira prosto pot realizaciji posameznikove fantazme. Če je bila ta funkcija nekoč ključna točka karnevalov, prireditev in ritualov v maskah, se je s pojavitvijo internetnih tehnologij osvobodila svojega mesenega jarma in prešla v popolnoma abstraktno obliko, v enice in ničle. Psihoza je lahko sedaj na planem vsak dan, vsako sekundo, ko je posameznik povezan na IRC, lahko permutira, hkrati igra številne vloge. Čisti abstraktni beg, bi lahko rekli, a zadeva ni tako enostavna. Preden razvijem tezo, poglejmo še novejšo razvojno stopnjo IRC, ki se je izoblikovala v spletne strani, namenjene komunikaciji v svetovni skupnosti uporabnikov.

Ena takih strani je MySpace,⁴²³ moj prostor (svet, *space* kot univerzum?). Med IRC in MySpace obstaja osnovna strukturna razlika; prvi je bil že v načelu anonimen, vse, kar sem kot uporabnik lahko izvedel o drugem uporabniku, je bil njegov nadimek ter eventualno (s poznavanjem osnovnih operatorjev), na katerem strežniku je povezan ter nekaj osnovnih informacij. MySpace pa izhaja iz popolnoma drugačne pozicije: ta spletna stran ni namenjena anonimnosti. Glavni namen je v javnosti osebe; uporabnik, ki se poveže na spletno stran, odda svoje podatke, ime, kraj in datum rojstva, večinoma pa si naložijo tudi lastne slike, posnetke, vodijo spletne dnevnike in poleg tega, seveda, komunicirajo med seboj.

Čista abstrakcija IRC se v MySpace spremeni v popolno konkretizacijo lika.⁴²⁴ Kot sem že omenil, je na spletni strani moč spletni prijateljstva ter komunicirati z drugimi uporabniki, ki pa so javni, o njih vemo veliko stvari. Osnovni podatki so demografski: spol, starost, kraj bivanja; nato sledijo uporabnikova zanimanja (splošna, glasba, film, televizija, knjige, heroji) in podrobni podatki (stan, namen vpisa na spletno stran, spolna usmerjenost, višina, astrološko znamenje, izobrazba, služba in povprečna letna plača!).

Na tej točki lahko predpostavimo dve tipologiji uporabnika: iskrenega uporabnika, ki se na spletno stran prijavlja z namenom mreženja in/ali iskanja partnerja, na drugi strani pa lahko najdemo zabavljača, psihotika, ki stran izrablja za realizacijo likov, ki jih sicer ne more odigrati. Z drugega vidika je zanimiv pojav zgodovinskih osebnosti na spletni strani. Bi radi postali prijatelji Hegla, Maa ali sv. Avguštna? – na MySpace lahko. Posameznik si lahko na MySpace ustvari več uporabniških imen, ki jih potem uporablja za igranje vlog.

Kakšen je cilj take skupnosti? Kako moramo gledati na uporabnost take spletne strani, kjer še vedno, kakor pri IRC, ne veš, s kom imaš v *resnici* opravka? Oglejmo si kratko zgodovino spletnega mesta MySpace, ki razkrije perverzno logiko, ki stoji za tem strojem.

423 Milejša oblika take spletne strani, ki pa si ne prihrani kontroverznosti in sprememb pojma vsakdanjega življenja ter praks, je Facebook.

424 Na tem mestu zapisujem lik, ker je kljub vsem tem podatkom še vedno mogoče igrati svojo osebnost, jo spremeniti v lik.

Zgodovina MySpace⁴²⁵ je bolj problematična, kot bi se lahko zdelo. Prijatelj št. 1 vsakega na novo vpisanega uporabnika, Tom Andersen (domnevni izumitelj strani), je v resnici le poteza službe za stike z javnostmi, izumljen zato, da prikritje bolj konkretne implikacije, ki se skrivajo za MySpace.

Spletna stran je namreč nastala kot produkt podjetja, ki je živelo od pošiljanja nezaželenih spletnih pošte (t. i. *spam*). Podjetje eUniverse se je namreč prvotno ukvarjalo z distribucijo spama 1.0.⁴²⁶ EUniverse (danes Intermix Media) je bilo večmilijonsko tržno podjetje, znano po spletnih straneh Skilljam.com, pop-up oglaševanju, nezaželenih množičnih e-mailih, spywareu in adwareu za kontroverznim omrežjem Kazaa. Zaradi novih zakonodaj o spamu, ki so jih začeli snovati v Kaliforniji, pa so kmalu začeli iskati alternativo za svojo dejavnost.

Chris DeWolfe, član UO podjetja Xdrive Technologies, Inc., ki je v obdobju razmaha kupovanja domen ponujalo brezplačni prostor na svojih strežnikih,⁴²⁷ je kopiral idejo spletne strani, podobne današnjemu MySpace – Friendster – ter tako nadgradil spam 1.0 na verzijo 2.0 in MySpace se je rodil avgusta 2003.

Da bi spletna stran zaživela, se je začelo pridobivanje osnovne baze uporabnikov preko natečaja znotraj podjetja eUniverse – če bi vseh 250 zaposlenih privabilo 10 uporabnikov, bi imeli začetno bazo 2500 ljudi. Po hitrem širjenju je imel eUniverse na razpolago že 50 milijonov elektronskih naslovov. S tolikšnim številom uporabnikov so napravili naslednjo potezo: namesto da bi naredili članstvo plačljivo, so v spletno stran integrirali oglaševalskega robota. Nato so vzpostavili mit o Tomu Andersenu, »izumitelju« MySpace, da bi naredili diverzijo od oglaševalske in spam narave spletne strani. Podjetje se je kasneje preimenovalo v Intermix, ki ga je zatem kupil Viacom (ki ima v lasti tudi televizijsko hišo MTV), kasneje pa Fox Interactive Media (v lasti News Corporation, ogromne medijske multinacionalke).

Videli smo, kaj v resnici poganja spletno stran. Ta psihoza, ki je načeloma dobra in potencialno nevarna (kot kritika ekvalizacije), ne postane na spletu nič drugega kot sredstvo kontrole⁴²⁸ za reprodukcijo produkcijskih sredstev. MySpace je ogromna oglaševalska stran, kjer sta pomembni vidnost in samopromocija. Zgovorno je sporočilo, ki ga uporabniški vmesnik pošlje sam, ko nekoga dodamo na seznam naših prijateljev: »Thanks for the Add« (»Hvala, da si me dodal«; pa tudi: »Hvala za oglas«!).

425 Izčrpno predstavljena v članku Trenta Lapinskega »Myspace. The Business of Spam 2.0«, je dostopna na spletni strani: <http://www.valleywag.com/tech/myspace/myspace-the-business-of-spam-20-exhaustive-edition-199924.php>, 20. 7. 2007.

426 Kot arhaične forme spama (preko e-maila) označi Trent Lapinski, *cf. op.* 32.

427 Dajanje zastojnega prostora uporabnikom se je izkazalo za ključno pri oblikovanju in razvijanju Spama 2.0 in MySpace.

428 Eden glavnih partnerjev spletne strani MySpace je podjetje Google. V zadnjem času se veliko govori o Googlovem izražanju osebnih podatkov, ki jih Google pridobiva preko brskalnikovih piškotkov. Ti piškotki si zapomnijo iskalne nize uporabnikov in z njihovo pomočjo lahko Googlov iskalni robot išče spletna mesta, ki so prirojena uporabniku. V tej luči ni zanemarljiva rubrika podrobnejših podatkov na MySpace o konjičkih, izobrazbi, službi in navsezadnje o povprečni letni plači. Na podlagi teh podatkov lahko iskalni robot točno določenemu uporabniku ponudi oglase, ki so zanj primernejši, oz. oglase, ki ga utegnejo privabiti.

Psihoza tako postane sredstvo kapitala, sredstvo trženja, ki se napaja preko težnje posameznikov, da se izražajo (moto te spletne strani bi lahko bil tudi *express yourself*). Vse se namreč vrti okoli posameznikove individualnosti, njegove posebnosti kot posameznika; če je ta posebnost preobrazena v fiktivno osebnost, v več osebnosti ali pa v zaigrano znano osebnost, nič ne de – le dokler to vklaplja zaslon, na katerega bo lahko robot pošiljal oglasna sporočila.

Dve vrsti psihoze

Imamo torej dva psihotična subjekta: prvega, ki je v službi kritike reprezentacije (ekvalizacije), ki z razpršitvijo navideznega, napačno prepoznanega (*méconnu*⁴²⁹) subjekta opozarja na normativnost družbenega; na ekvalizacijo kot sredstvo kapitala za lastno reinterpretiranje in ohranjanje. Drugi, psihotični subjekt družbenega, izum kapitala, ki z vzpostavljanjem ventilov *à la* MySpace omogoča ekvalizacijo in jo dela na videz nedolžno. Uporabnik, ki se počuti svobodnega v skupnosti⁴³⁰ svobodno mislečih ljudi, ki preko delovanja znotraj spleta mislijo, da delujejo na alternativni liniji, morda celo uporniško, je ravno produkt te skupnosti, ki je v lasti (sic!) enega največjih multinacionalnih podjetij. Ponavljam torej vprašanje iz uvoda: kje je tu tista zdrava meja, kjer še lahko umorimo subjekt in ga raztreščimo na individuacije (ekspresije substance) in negativni padec v postmoderno ulico brez izhoda (relativna psihoza, spodbujena s strani *sociusa*)?

Prvi odgovor je preprost in programski: boj ne more potekati na spletu. Če predpostavimo deleuzovsko delitev sveta na aktualno in virtualno, potem se splet ne uvrsti v drugo skupino. Rečeno drugače, internetno virtualno⁴³¹ je bolj realno od realnega. Delovanje preko spleta v obliki MySpace ne more biti kritično, ker je preveč pogojeno s potrošniškimi sredstvi (računalnik, hardware, software, ponudniki dostopa do interneta ...). Kljub nominalni demokratičnosti spleta in nemožnosti obvladovanja je še vedno močno povezan v kolesje kapitala.

In programski je tudi drugi odgovor: kritika reprezentacije in ekvalizacije lahko in mora potekati preko umetnosti (in seveda filozofije). Torej slika, fotografija, film, gledališka predstava itd., ki drsijo iz konvencij tržnega diktata, ki ostajajo (manjšinsko) znotraj medija, ki pa iz medija bežijo na svoj način, z minimalno abstrakcijo, ki zmoti oko, s preizpraševanjem medija in z izumljanjem novega (drugačnega) jezika v mediju. Tako kot sem pokazal ob Benejevem delu.

Subjekt naj torej ostane, a le kot »nori«, psihotični subjekt antirepresentacije, kot razpršeni subjekt brez trdne točke, subjekt imanentnega, ki je rešen svojega sidra v transcendenci.

429 Tu imam v mislih lacanovsko-althusserjansko napačno prepoznanje, *méconnaissance*, ki je prisotno tako v Lacanovem zrcalnem stadiju (napačno prepoznanje lastne podobe; *cf.* Jacques Lacan, »Le stade du miroir comme formateur de la fonction du Je«, v: *Écrits*, Paris: Seuil, 1966) kot v Althusserjevi interpelaciji (kjer se subjekt vzpostavi iz individua kot napačno prepoznanje klica: hej ti!; *cf.* Althusser, »Ideologija in ideološki aparati države«, *op. cit.*).

430 Primitivisti in anarhisti Zerzanovega tipa so sicer kritični do internetnih skupnosti, vendar te delujejo po podobnih pravilih kot anarhoprimitivistične. Skupnost, kjer veljajo pravila, ki bežijo iz pravil kapitalistične družbe. Toda ali je to sploh mogoče?

431 Virtualno, razumljeno vulgarno, kot nekaj neresničnega oz. kot navidezna resničnost.

**PERFORMANCE
AND BODY ART**

Miško Šuvaković
STRATEGIJE I TAKTIKE
PERFORMANS UMETNOSTI

Performans umetnost je režirani ili neregirani 'događaj' (*event, akcion*) zasnovan kao umetnički rad koji umetnik/umetnica ili izvođači realizuju sa ili bez publike u javnom ili privatnom prostoru.⁴³² Pojam *performance art*-a ima dva značenja: (1) uveden je ranih sedamdesetih godina i označava složene, unapred pripremljene događaje koje ostvaruje umetnik, koji je ujedno i autor, pred muzejskom, galerijskom ili slučajnom publikom; i (2) primenjuje se retrospektivno ili anticipatorski, kao identifikaciona oznaka za umetničke eksperimente, s događajima u rasponu od futurističkih festivala, dadaističkog *cabareta*, konstruktivističkih parakazališnih eksperimenata i nadrealističkih seansi, preko *happeninga*, neodade, akcionizma i *fluxusa*, *body arta*, događaja, minimalnog i postmodernog eksperimentalnog baleta, eksperimentalne i minimalne muzike, do postkonceptualnih, eklektičnih postmodernističkih, *tehno-performance* a i konceptualnih *performancea* u koreografskom plesu.⁴³³

Nastanak *performancea* posle drugog svetskog rata se povezuje sa umetničkom školom *Black Mountain College* u Sjevernoj Karolini u SAD.⁴³⁴ *Black Mountain College* od 1933. postaje centar eksperimentalne i intermedijalne umetnosti. Tu dolazi do susreta evropskih avangardnih umetnika (Josef i Anni Albers, Xanti Schawinsky) i američke modernističke umetnosti, stvara se duhovna klima za nastanak neoavangarde. U egzistencijalnoj klimi *Black Mountain Collegea* nastaju interdisciplinarni i višemedijski koreografski radovi Xanti Schawinskyog (*Danse macabre*, 1938), muzički eksperimenti Johna Cagea, koreografska istraživanja Mercea Cunninghama, akcije arhitekta i utopiste Buckminster Fullera (1895–1983), neodadaistički akcionizam Roberta Rauschenberga: *Meduzina varka* po Ericu Satieu iz 1948. Uticaj Johna Cagea na *Collegeu* bio je znatan od 1952. godine. Održao je predavanje o Huang Poovoj doktrini o univerzalnom umu kao anticipaciju večernjeg *performancea* u leto 1952. Serija belih slika Roberta Rauschenberga je bila postavljena u prostoru izvođenja *performancea*. Cage je čitao tekst o odnosima zen budizma i muzike s referencama prema tekstovima mistika Meistera Eckharta. Zatim je izvedena kompozicija s radio aparatom. Rauschenberg je puštao stare snimke s ploča, a pijanist David Tudor (1926–1996) je svirao na prepariranom klaviru. Charles Olson (1910–1979) i Mary Caroline Richards su čitali poeziju. Cunningham je plesao, kompozitor Jay Watt je svirao egzotične instrumente itd.

432 Amelia Jones, Andrew Stephenson (eds.), *Performing the Body / Performing the Text*, London: Routledge, 1999; i Tracey Warr, Amelia Jones (eds.), *The Artist's Body*, London: Phaidon, 2000.

433 RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance – Live Art 1909 to the Present*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1979; i RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance – Live art since the 60s*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1998.

434 Mark Hedden, "Notes on Theater at Black Mountain College (1948–1952)", *Forma* no. 9, Cambridge, 1969, str. 18–20, Marry Emma Harris, *The Arts at Black Mountain College*, Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 2002; Vincent Katz (ed.), *Black Mountain College – Experiment in Art*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002.

Razvoj neoavangardnog *performancea*⁴³⁵ traje od kasnih 40-ih godina do kasnih šezdesetih godina. Neoavangardni *performance* karakteriše težnja prevladavanja modernističke autonomije slikarstva i skulpture, kao i istraživanje intermedijskih veza likovnog, književnog, muzičkog i teatarskog eksperimenta. Neoavangardni eksperiment nastaje sinhrono u Evropi i USA. Najznačajniji predstavnik američkog *performancea* je John Cage. Iz njegovog rada nastaju neodada i fluxus. *Performance* karakterističan za neodada i fluxus je *happening*. *Happening* kao oblik spontanog izražavanja postaje ranih šezdesetih internacionalna umetnička pojava. John Cage je predavanjima na *New School for Social Research* u New Yorku od 1956. godine, pokrenuo umetnički i istraživački višemedijski rad. Sa njim su saradivali slikari, filmski umetnici, pesnici i kompozitori: Allan Kaprow, Jackson MacLow, George Brecht, Al Hansen i Dick Higgins. Dick Higgins je uveo praksu intermedijalne umetnosti. Allan Kaprow je delom *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* u Reuben Galeriji 1959. godine inicirao umetnost *happeninga*⁴³⁶. Robert Rauschenberg je događajem *Pelican* (1963) izveo složeno mix-medijalno delo – kao suočenje akcije umetnika, *happeninga*, eksperimentalnog plesa i ludističkog izvođenja. *Happening* je interaktivni, multimedijalni, intermedijalni i *mixed media*⁴³⁷ umetnički rad, koji se razvijao u neodadi i fluxusu, a prethodi zamislama *body arta* i *performancea*. *Happening* obeležava prenošenje slikarskih strategija akcionog slikarstva u prostorno-vremenske događaje. Allan Kaprow je pisao da je, sledeći Jacksona Pollocka, razvio tehniku *akcionog kolaža* koja se temeljila na razbacivanju velikih komada vrlo različitog materijala (staniola, slame, platna, novina) po prostoru. *Happening* je vodio i otvaranju modernističkih teatarskih formi spontanom i slučajnim događajima, tj. brisanju fenomenalističkih granica između redatelja, glumca i publike. Pojedini teoretičari o *happeningu* govore kao o teatarskoj skulpturi. *Happening* karakteriše težnja utopijskim idealima prožimanja života i umetnosti, što znači da se *happening* ne definiše kao realizacija spektakla nego kao svojevrsni simptom koji provocira učesnike i izaziva specifične neočekivane i nekontrolisane životne situacije i oblike ponašanja. U tehničkom smislu *happening* je određen proširenjem zamisli *ready made*-a na celokupnost ponašanja umetnika i publike, odnosno proširenjem i prenošenjem zamisli kolaža i asamblaža s razine slike i objekta na razinu prostorno-vremenskog događaja. U *happeningu* se kolažira životna aktivnost umetnika i publike, a istovremeno se njihovo svakodnevno ponašanje, nazori i vrednosti unose u umetnički događaj kao *ready made*. Zamisao para-hepeninga, tj. primene iskustava *happeninga* na filmski i teatar eksperiment, ostvarene su radom njujorškog udruženja *New American Cinema Group*, filmovima velike dužine (8 ili 24 sata) Andyja Warhola i kinoplastikom Stana Vanderbeeka (1927–1984), koja počiva na upotrebi više projektora istovremeno; ali i delovanjem

435 *Out of Actions: between Performance and the Object, 1949–1979*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1998.

436 Allan Kaprow, *Assemblage, Environments and Happenings*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1961; Michael Kirby (ed.), *Happenings. An Illustrated Anthology*, New York: A Dutton Paperback, 1966; i Udo Kultermann, *Art-Events and Happenings*, London: Mathews Miller Dunbar, 1971.

437 Richard Kostelanetz (ed.), *The Theatre of Mixed Means. An Introduction to Happenings, Kinetic Environments and other Mixed-Means Performance s*, New York: The Dial Press, INC, 1968.

teatarskih grupa *Living Theater, Dionizije 69, Teatar Laboratorijum Vroclav*⁴³⁸. U evropskom kontekstu *happening* eksperimenti očituju se u eksperimentalnoj poeziji (letrizam, konkretna poezija, zvučna poezija, telesna poezija), fluxusu (Joseph Beuys, Ben Vautier, Volf Vostell), bečkom akcionizmu (Hermann Nitsch /1938/, Otto Mühl /1925/), novom realizmu (Yves Klein) i postenformel umetnosti (Pierro Manzoni). U Jugoslaviji su rane *performance* radili Vladan Radovanović i Leonid Šejka (1932–1970) u Beogradu, Tomislav Gotovac u Zagrebu, i grupa *OHO* u Kranju i Ljubljani.

Pod Cageovim uticajem nastaje heterogena i hibridna anti-umetnička praksa fluxusa⁴³⁹. Georg Maciunas je različite akcije i događanja povezo u novi internacionalni pokret. Maciunas deluje u USA i u Njemačkoj, gde se susreće s nemačkom akcionom muzikom i dekolazom. Susreće umetnike kao što su Nam June Paik, Wolf Vostell, Joseph Beuys, Ben Vautier. Maciunas je organizirao više Fluxus festivala (*Festa Fluxoru*), koji su se oslanjali na tradiciju dadaističkih kabareta, a realizirani su u rasponu od avangardnih muzičkih koncerata i čitanja poezije do projekcija i *happeninga*. Održano je više festivala u Nemačkoj, Danskoj, Švedskoj i Francuskoj 1962. i 1963. U New Yorku su akcije organizirali George Brecht i Robert Watts. U formalnom su smislu dela fluxusa otvoreni i nekonzistentni multimedijalni, intermedijalni, dekolazni i *mixed media* radovi (akcije, događaji) i oblici ponašanja. Mnoga dela neodredivog medijskog karaktera su dvostruko realizirana: kao kratke upute za izvođenje rada (opis kako, što i zašto činiti u prostoru i vremenu) i kao izvođenja ili događaji pred publikom (festivali, hepeninzi, koncerti, akcije). U fluxusu jednaku važnost i tretman imaju Maciunasovi dijagramski programi festivala, fluxus festivali (događaji), police s fluxus knjigama, sviranje ili nesviranje muzičkih instrumenata (Nam June Paik i čelistkinja Charlotte Moorman, snimanje beskrajskih ponovljenih radnji na film, snimanje nagih tela (Yoko Ono).

Nasuprot neodadaističkom i fluxus *happeningu*, krajem 50-ih nastaju i tehnološki spektakli u okvirima kinetičke umetnosti i neokonstruktivizma⁴⁴⁰. Kinetički neokonstruktivistički eksperimenti nastaju kao događaji nove eksperimentalne i tehnološke civilizacije u kojima dolazi do kibernetskog povezivanja ljudskog i mašinskog (tehnološkog) izraza u jedinstveni kontinuitet kinetičkog, lumino i zvučnog događaja. U području kinetičkog i kibernetskog spektakla delovali su, između ostalih, nemačka grupa *Zero*, francuska grupa *GRAV*, ruska grupa *Dviženije*, Yaacov Agam (1928), Hans Hacke (1936).

Postavangardni *performance*⁴⁴¹ započinje sredinom šezdesetih godina u okvirima *body arta*, nemačkog i austrijskog akcionizma, procesualne umetnosti, konceptualne i postkonceptualne umetnosti. To je vreme kada se formuliše i pojam *performance umetnosti*. Treba razlikovati sledeće oblike rada: (1) stvaranje procesa s materijalima i energijama u kojima

438 Christopher Innes, *Avant Garde Theatre 1892–1992*, London: Routledge, 1993.

439 Achille Bonito Oliva (ed.), *Ubi Fluxus ibi mozus 1990–1962*, Milano: Mazzotta, 1990.

440 Oto Bihalji-Merin, "Vreme, svetlost, pokret", iz *Posle 45 – Umetnost našeg vremena I*, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Beograd: Mladinska knjiga, 1972, str. 258–291.

441 Henry M. Sayre, *The Object of Performance – The American Avant-Garde since 1970*, Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989.

je umetnik akter događaja (procesualna umetnost, siromašna umetnost (*arte povera*), antiform umetnost), (2) organizacija akcija u kojima je umetnik nosilac zamisli i realizator radnje u rasponu od spektakla i *happeninga* (bečki akcionizam⁴⁴², Beuysova socijalna skulptura⁴⁴³) do mentalnih i telesnih vežbi s prostorom i vremenom, te međuljudskom komunikacijom (Franz Erhart Walther /1939/, Klaus Rinke /1939/, Laurie Anderson, Adrian Piper), (3) istraživanjem tela kao mesta, skulptorskog materijala i psiho-biološkog organizma, u *body artu* nastaju javni i privatni *performanci* (Dennis Oppenheim /1938/, Vito Acconci /1940/, Terry Fox /1943/, Karel Miler /1940/, Petr Štembera /1945/, Jan Mlčoch /1953/, Tomaž Šalamun, Marina Abramović), (4) stvaranje potpunih *performancea* pred publikom kao razvoja *body arta* ili novih oblika izražavanja: ulična umetnost (Trisha Brown /1936/, *Gerilska akciona grupa /Guerrilla Art Action Group/*, Tomislav Gotovac), umetnost društveno orijentisanog ponašanja (Gilbert i George /1943, 1942/, *Nice Style*, Radomir Damnjan), konceptualni *performance* zasnovan na govornim činovima (Jan Wilson, *Art&Language*, grupa *Kôd*), politički *performanci* (Joseph Beuys, Adrian Piper, Dragoljub Raša Todosijević), feministički *performance* (Laurie Anderson /1947/, Adrian Piper, Rita Myers, Lynda Benglins /1941/, Rebecca Horn /1944/, Gina Pane /1939–1990/), *video-performance* (Dennis Oppenheim, Dan Graham /1942/, Ulrike Rosenbach /1943/), transformer ili travestitski *performanci* (Annette Messager /1943/, Urs Lüth /1947/, Luigi Ontani /1943/, Katarin Sieverding /1944/) i simbolički ritualni *performance* (Joseph Beuys, Mary Beth Edelson /1935/, Marina Abramović i Ulay /1943/, Harrie de Kron, Ben d'Armagnac /1940–1978/, Zoran Belić W.).

*Body art*⁴⁴⁴ je oblik delovanja i rada s ljudskim telom u procesualnoj umetnosti. *Body art* čine radovi umetnika koji svoje telo ili telo druge osobe izravno upotrebljavaju kao objekt umetničkog rada. U biološkom, fiziološkom, psihološkom i socijalnom smislu ljudsko telo postaje sredstvo, materijal i nosilac imenovanja, delovanja i saopštavanja namera i ideja umetnika. Telo umetnika ili izvođača u realizacijama *body arta* isključivi je nosilac događaja. Umetnik ne radi s predstavama (zastupnicima) nego s konkretnim fiziološkim, telesnim, psihološkim i bihevioralnim situacijama. *Body art* je posle 1966. sinhrono nastao u USA i Evropi. Njegova predistorija seže do *ready madea* i eksperimenata s vlastitim telom Marcela Duchampa (radovi *Tonsure*, 1919. i *Rose Sélavy*, 1920–21). Istraživanja posle Drugog svjetskog rata umetnika neodade, *happeninga* i fluxusa, kao i individualna postenformel istraživanja Yvesa Kleina i Piera Manzonijske stvorila su osnovu za nastanak *body arta*. *Body art* nastaje u urbanom postindustrijskom društvu, gdje su primarne funkcije ljudskog tiela otuđene i pomaknute na margine simboličkog prikazivanja i upotrebe tela. U početku se umetnici nisu bavili složenim i spekulativnim odnosima tela i rituala nego primarnim, infantilnim i elementarnim postdišanoskim činovima (hodanje, pravljenje grimasa, nanošenje

442 Peter Weibel (ed.), *Die Wiener Gruppe – The Vienna Group – A Moment of Modernity 1954–1960*, Wien: Springer, 1997; i Hermann Nitsch, *Orgien, Mysterien, Theater*, Munich: Verlag Darmstadt Erscheint das Buch, 1969.

443 Caroline Tisdall, *Joseph Beuys*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1979.

444 Lea Vergine, *Il Corpo Come Linguaggio (La 'Body-art' e storie simili)*, Milano: Giampaolo Prearo Editore, 1974.

bola, češkanje nosa, štipanje, ljubljenje). Režija događaja je minimalna, delovanje se temelji na direktnim uzročno-posljedičnim činovima, poštuje se prirodni tok i trajanje događaja, a naracija je redukovana. Radovi se prezentiraju kao događaji i situacije s publikom ili bez nje ili posredstvom tekstualne, dijagramske, foto, filmske i video dokumentacije. Cilj *body art* umetnika je postizanje pred-estetskih i pred-umetničkih aspekata činjenja i ponašanja umetnika, odnosno svođenje složenog estetskog i umetničkog smisla umetničkog dela na bihevioralni estetski smisao, značenje i vrednost. Razlikuju se: analitički, ekspresivni i bihevioralni *body art*. Analitički *body art* je formuliran primenom zamisli *ready madea* i tautologije. Ljudsko telo je objekt⁴⁴⁵ umetnosti i kroz različite operacije s telom ispituju se i tautološki demonstriraju pojavnost i funkcije tela. Umetnik utvrđuje, odabire i postavlja obične i neobične funkcije ljudskog tela kao umetnički rad. Tautologija je sredstvo kojim umetnik naglašava doslovnu, nemetaforičnu upotrebu ljudskog tela i procesa u koje je ono uključeno kao materijal i fenomen. Telo je činjenica i pristupa mu se kao oruđu ili mestu. Postupak kojim se ono koristi kao oruđe ukazuje na učinke tela. Dennis Oppenheim⁴⁴⁶ je u realizaciji umetničkog rada koristio svoja stopala ostavljajući njima tragove na pesku ili je izlagao telo zracima sunca. Terry Fox je izvodio telesne procese u kontekstualizacijama tela, prostora, zvukoba, organskih materijala i intersubjektivnim odnosa.⁴⁴⁷ Klaus Rinke je svojim telom podupirao zid, gredu, održavao ravnotežu. Telo kao mesto uslovljava rad na telu, na njemu se izvodi radnja, ono je podloga, ono se deformiše ili povređuje. Bruce Nauman je radio s grimasama lica, koje je zatim hologafski snimao i izlagao (1968) kao tragove interventnog mesta. Zamisao tela kao mesta povezuje *body art* i *land art*. Oppenheim je radio uporedo na zemlji i na telu. U radu *Identično istezanje* (1976) Oppenheim je povećane snimke otisaka desnog palca izveo kao makro crtež na tlu parka, transformišući mikro-sliku dela ljudskog tela u makro-pejzažnu instalaciju. Rad čeških *body art*⁴⁴⁸ (Karel Miler, Peter Štembera) umetnika zasniva se na tautološkim gestama (disanje, skupljanje prašine s pločnika rukom, nanošenje bola, izdisanje, premeravanje svakodnevnih prostora) koji imaju i jednu skrivenu političku poruku – pokazuju koliko je egzistencijalni svet socijalističkog čoveka sužen i sveden na minimalne gestove, činove i dosege. Ekspresivni (ili ekspresionistički) *body art* je para-ritualni, terapijski ili egzistencijalni *performance*. Telo umetnika, elementarni procesi s telom ili ekscenčni oblici ponašanja (autoerotizam, otuđenost, sadizam, mazohizam, narcizam, travestija, homoerotizam, histerija, autizam) postaju sredstvom izražavanja unutrašnjih stanja umetnika. Umetnik se lišava posrednika (slikarstva i skulpture) da bi direktnim činom i manipulacijom tela provocirao i izrazio osjećaj egzistencijalnog užasa, straha i potisnutih emocija i želja. Gina Pane je, na primer, žiletom povlačila linije po svojem dlanu oslobađajući potisnut seksualni nagon. Njen rad je rekonstrukcija *ženske agresije*⁴⁴⁹,

445 Vladimir Kopicil (ed.), *Telo umetnika kao subjekt i objekt umetnosti*, Novi Sad: Tribuna mladih, 1972.

446 Alanna Heiss (ed.), *Dennis Oppenheim – Selected Works 1967–90: And The Mind Grew Fingers*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1992.

447 Barbara Richardson (ed.), *Terry Fox*, Berkeley: University Art Museum, 1973.

448 Karel Srp (ed.), *Karel Miler – Petr Štembera – Jan Mlčoch 1970–1980*, Praha: Galerie hlavního mesta, 1998.

449 Lucy R. Lippard, *From the Centre – Feminist essays on Women's Art*, New York: Dutton Paperback, 1976.

koja je pre svega usmerena prema sebi (vlastitom telu), za razliku od *muške agresije*, koja je usmerena ka telu drugog. Predstavnici bečkog akcionizma su u para-ritualima povezivali primarnu ekspresivnu upotrebu tela s tradicijom njemačkog slikarskog, književnog i teatarskog ekspresionističkog eksperimenta. Marina Abramović⁴⁵⁰ je od 1973. do 1975. izvela seriju radova pod nazivom *Ritam*, u kojima je ispitivala fizičke mogućnosti svog tela. Marina Abramović je saradivala s nemačkim umetnikom Ulayem. Od 1977. godine njihov se rad počeo približavati para-ritualnom *performanceu*. Rane *body art* akcije Marine Abramović temelje se na: (1) provokativnom činu kojim se demonstrira individualna ili kolektivna potisnuta agresija; (2) ispitivanju fizičke i psihičke izdržljivosti ljudskog tela. Bihevioralni *body art* temelji se na demonstraciji elementarnih oblika privatnog ili javnog ponašanja, a ljudsko telo je osnovni nosilac radnje. Vito Acconci je izveo rad *Proces praćenja* (1969) u kojem je tokom 23 dana na ulici birao osobu koju bi pratio. Gilbert i George su, odeveni poput činovnika, ponavljali tipične radnje predstavnika engleske srednje klase. Pijući pivo u pubu ili prisustvujući otvorenju izložbe, oni se u jednom trenutku ukoče i određeno vreme ostanu u zamrznutom pokretu. U radu *Prekrivanje mog lica: gestovi moje bake* (1973) Nancy Wilson Kitchel je rekonstruirala tipične neurotične ženske pokrete i geste. Posebnu liniju bihevioralnog *body arta* predstavljaju transformer radovi, temeljeni na travestiji i homoerotizmu. Predstavnici bihevioralnog *body arta* su: Lygia Clark, Vito Acconci, Ben Vautier, Annette Messager, Luigi Ontani, Katharina Sieverding, Urs Lüthi, Hannah Wilke /1940–1993/, Ana Mendieta /1948–1985/, Paul McCarthy.

Minimalni ples⁴⁵¹ (*minimal dance*) ili eksperimentalni ples minimalističke orijentacije nastao je ranih šezdesetih godina kao reakcija na visokomodernistički estetski, simbolički i visokoestetizovani ples koreografkinje i plesačice Marthe Graham (1894–1991). Minimalni ples je vodio od plesa kao predstavjačke umetnosti ka plesu kao izvođačkoj umetnosti. Koreografi i plesači minimalnog plesa su proistekli iz dva centra novog plesa: iz plesnih radionica Ann Halprin u San Franciscu i iz preobražaja avangardnog plesa Mercea Cunninghama i stvaranja plesnog teatra *Judson Dance Theater*⁴⁵² (1962–1964) u New Yorku. Ann Halprin je delovala u međuprostorima eksperimentalne umetnosti, prvenstveno *happenin-ga*, revolucionisanja plesa i u traganjima za novim senzibilitetom i funkcijama umetnosti (na primer, gestalt psihoterapija). Merce Cunningham je izveo niz preobražaja modernističkog baleta u eksperimentalni ili avangardni ples. Balet (*ballet*), na način Marthe Graham, je bio umetnost precizno determiniranih autonomnih telesnih retorika i mimezisa telesnog prikazivanja spoljašnjih ili unutarnjeg sveta umetnika, a ples (*dance*) je bio eksperimentalna umetnost okrenuta emancipaciji telesnog pokreta i samog tela, konceptualizovanja koreografskih klišeja i destrukcija modernističkih vrednosti estetskog efekta koji baletsko delo treba proizvesti. Predstavnici minimalnog plesa i plesnog *performancea* su, između ostalih,

450 Marina Abramović, *Artist Body*, Milano: Edizioni Charta, 1998.

451 Sally Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers*, Wesleyan University Press, Middletown Con, 1987; Hrvatin, E. (ed.), *Teorije sodobnega plesa*, Ljubljana: Maska, 2001; i "Novi ples / Nove teorije" (temat), *TkH br. 4*, Beograd, 2002.

452 Sally Banes, *Democracy's Body. Judson Dance Theater 1962–1964*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993.

bili Ann Halprin, Yvonne Rainer (1934), skulptor Robert Morris, Deborah Hay, Alex Hay, slikar Robert Rauschenberg, Trisha Brown, Laura Dean, Lucinda Childs, Simone Forti (1935), Steve Paxton (1939) i David Gordon. Karakteristično je da su predstavnici minimalnog plesa težili izrazitom autorskom radu, što znači da su istovremeno bili koreografi, izvođači, scenografi i teoretičari plesa. Za minimalni ples karakteristična je radikalna redukcija baleta na ples i plesa na fizičku telesnu igru: (1) kroz doslovnu telesnu gestu doći do suštinske i primarne telesne, objektne, prostorne ili vremenske osnove plesa kao umetnosti koja povesnom alijenacijom proizlazi iz baleta, (2) kroz formalno, u stanovitom smislu sintaktičko, premeštanje i smeštanje tela u prostoru – telo se pokazuje i ukazuje kao element sintaktičkih transformacija i formacija unutar mogućih kontekstualizacija prostora-vremena-objekta-i-tela), (3) kroz redukovani i izolovani tautološki ili arhetipski pokret telom i pokret tela, telesni izraz nije realizacija fikcionalnog narativnog predloška, nego propozicija o plesu kao umetnosti), (4) kroz bihevioralne intersubjektivne odnose tela i hipoteza subjekta, (5) kroz rad s trajanjem, protokom, sažimanjem i rastezanjem fikcionalnog vremena pripovedanja ili specifičnog fikcionalizirajućeg vremena baleta kao umetnosti, odnosno, doslovnog vremena *plesanja* na sceni OVDE i SADA, (6) kroz promišljanje baleta kao istorijske institucije umetnosti iz konteksta plesa i igre, (7) kroz obrat od baleta kao telesne retorike u ples kao telesnu ljudsku igru (*ludizam*) i telesne igre u jezičku igru (*language game*) u smislu koji je preuzet, na primer, iz *Filozofskih istraživanja* Ludwiga Wittgensteina, (8) kroz emancipaciju baletnog tela-figure kao idealnog estetskog objekta u živo, konkretno bihevioralno telo, i (9) kroz uspostavljanje interkulturalnih odnosa između identiteta evropske tradicije igre i izvan-evropskih ritualnih i obrednih tradicija. Yvonne Rainer je praktično i teorijski razradila zamisli minimalnog plesa svodeći koreografiju (strukturu kretanja plesača) i scenografiju (ambijentalni poredak u kojem se odvija kretanje) na primarne i tautološke odnose tela u prostoru i vremenu. Ona u tekstu "The Mind is a Muscle. A Quasi Survey of Some *Minimalist* Tendencies in the Quantitatively Minimal Dance Activity Midst the Plethora, or an Analysis of *Trio A*"⁴⁵³ (1966) uspoređuje pozicije skulptorskog i plesnog minimalizma. Novi minimalni ples karakteriše: (1) odbacivanje modernističke autonomije umetničkih disciplina, ekspresivnosti i visokog estetizma, zato se novi ples već od sredine sedamdesetih godina naziva i postmoderna ples, a pojam postmoderna (*Post-Modern Dance*⁴⁵⁴) znači dekonstrukciju modernističkih kanona u baletu i plesu, (2) transformacija teatarskog sveta modernističkog baleta u svet umetničkog *performancea* (ples na ulici, po krovovima zgrada, u garaži, galeriji, muzeju, plaži, trgovini), i (3) istraživanje prirode, fenomenologije i konceptualizacija pokreta, telesnosti i ponašanja, u rasponu od tautološkog gesta plesača-izvođača (performera), do para-magijsko-ritualnog plesa, odnosno od doslovnog do fikcionalnog efekta telesnog pokreta, situacije ili događaja.

453 Yvonne Rainer, *Work 1961–73*, Halifax, New York: New York University Press, The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1974, str. 63–69.

454 "Post-Modern Dance Issue" (temat), *TDR*, vol. 19, no. 1 (T-65), New York, 1975.

Karakterističan preobražaj se desio u sedamdesetim godinama, kada je postalo moguće primeniti zamisao *performance arta* na različite umetničke⁴⁵⁵ i kulturalne⁴⁵⁶ prakse koje nužno nisu realizovane kao umetnički događaj. Umetničko delo – slikarstvo (Francis Picabia, Jackson Pollock), proza (Kathy Acker /1945–1997/), ples (Trisha Brown), teatarski spektakl (Richard Schechner /1934/, Robert Wilson /1940/, Jan Fabre /1958/), film (Sergei Eisenstein /1898–1948/, Yvonne Rainer, Peter Greenaway /1942/), fotografija (Garry Winogrand /1928–1984/, Joel-Peter Witkin /1939/, William Wegman /1943/, Cindy Sherman, Jeff Wall /1946/), land art (Robert Smithson /1938–1973/, Michael Heizer /1944/, Robert Morris), feministička umetnost (Carolee Schneemann /1939/, Eleanor Antin /1935/, Martha Rosler), asamblaž (Robert Rauschenberg, Jean Tinguely /1925–1991/) – za koje nije bitna poetička odrednica mimezisa (predstavljanja) ili ekspresije (izražavanja), već taktika izvođenja (*performing*) biva određena terminom *performance arta*.⁴⁵⁷

455 Henry M. Sayre, *The Object of Performance – The American Avant-Garde since 1970*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989.

456 Jon McKenzie, *Perform or Else: from discipline to performance*, London: Routledge, 2001.

457 Henry M. Sayre, *The Object of Performance – The American Avant-Garde since 1970*, Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989; Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked – The Politics of Performance*, New York: Routledge, 1993; *Out of Actions: Between Performance and Object 1949–1979*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1998.

Maja Murnik BODY ART PRAKSE: NEKAJ MISLI

Avtorica prvega in še danes enega najvplivnejših zgodovinskih pregledov performansa, RoseLee Goldberg, v predgovoru k omenjenemu pregledu zapiše tudi nekaj besed o performansu na splošno. Opozori, da je performer izvajalec ter da je drugače kot v gledališču to umetnik sam in redkokdaj igralec, ki bi predstavljal izbrani značaj nekega fiktivnega lika. Dogajanje v performansu malokdaj sledi tradicionalni zgodbi ali pripovedi.⁴⁵⁸ Kar tu opozarja RoseLee Goldberg, je to, da performans ponavadi ne uprizarja dramskega teksta (če že, pa je ta globoko dekonstruiran in »potujen«) ter ga v tem smislu lahko razumemo kot prelom z aristotelovsko paradigmo. Performer, ki na prizorišču pogosto nastopa sam, poudarja torej svojo fizično prisotnost; ne reprezentira več nekoga drugega, kot sicer velja po konvenciji tradicionalnega dramskega gledališča, ki je svoj vrhunec dosegla z naturalizmom. Če razumemo body art kot zvrst performansa,⁴⁵⁹ ga imamo pravzaprav lahko za performans *par excellence*. Kar se v njem uprizarja, je namreč performer sam, material postane njegovo živo telo, ki je ravno tu izrazito v fokusu in s tem vse, kar je vpisano vanj, na kar kaže, namiguje ali preprosto zgolj je. V body artu so telesa razgaljena; s svojo absolutno prisotnostjo, postavljeno v prvi plan, razkrivajo pozabljene, zamolčane, spregledane momente – najprej čisto individualnega, lastnega telesa in subjektivnosti, neizbežno vpisane vanj, in nato širšega, družbenega; pri tem je telo nekakšno presečišče brez središčne točke, ustrezne je rečeno, polje, prek katerega prečijo družbeno, politično, kulturno, in to v času, v procesu, torej odprto, nezaključeno, nedokončano.⁴⁶⁰

Kritika tradicionalnega reprezentacijskega gledališča

Načelno velja, da je vzpon performansa konec šestdesetih let izhajal iz kritike visokega modernizma – ali tudi kot ena izmed njegovih različic (npr. Pollockovi ustvarjalni akti slikanja), torej v okviru vizualnih umetnosti in ne iz kritike gledališča; tako so tudi prizorišča prvih performansov umetnostne galerije. V skladu s tem gledališki teoretik Patrice Pavis zanj predlaga izraz »gledališče vizualnih umetnosti«⁴⁶¹ in ga razume kot nekakšen novodobni *Gesamtkunstwerk*, saj združuje več prej ločenih zvrsti – vizualne umetnosti, gledališče, ples, glasbo, video, poezijo in film. Tudi avtorji prvih performansov okrog leta 1970 imajo večinoma izobrazbo s področja vizualnih umetnosti. Kljub temu pa je pomembno,

458 Glej: RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art. From Futurism to the Present*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2006 (1. izdaja 1979), str. 8.

459 To je tudi prevladujoči pomen body arta. Nekateri pa body art razumejo širše, ne le skozi njegov performativni, procesualni vidik, in k tej zvrsti prištevajo vsakršna dela, pri katerih gre za poseg v/na telo, kot npr. pirsinge, tatuje in slike na telesu.

460 V tem smislu lahko razumemo tudi naslov pomembne monografije o body artu avtorice Amelie Jones, ki se glasi: *Body Art: Performing the Subject* (1998) oziroma v slovenščini: *Body art: uprizarjanje subjekta*, Ljubljana: Maska, Študentska založba, 2002.

461 Patrice Pavis, *Gledališki slovar*, Ljubljana: Mestno gledališče ljubljansko, 1997, str. 531.

da so bile težnje performansa kritične tudi do tradicionalnega literarnega gledališča. Zgodnji body art performansi ameriškega ustvarjalca Chrisa Burdena (r. 1946) na začetku sedemdesetih let so bili celo eksplicitno naravnani proti tipu tradicionalnega iluzijskega odra in njegovi »varljivi« reprezentaciji. Tak je bil na primer performans *Shoot*, izveden leta 1971, pri katerem je Burden prosil prijatelja, naj ga z razdalje nekaj metrov ustrelji v roko. Performans je bil dokumentiran na videoposnetku. V intervjujih je Burden med drugim poudarjal, da so takšna dejanja bliže realnosti kot pa navidezni, zaigrani svet gledališča: »Zdi se, da je gledališče slaba umetnost. Dobiti strel pa je nekaj resničnega /.../ tu ni nobene elementa pretvare ali hlinjenja.«⁴⁶² Po mnenju RoseLee Goldberg je bil namen Burdenovih performansov spremeniti zgodovino reprezentacije nasilja, doslej zgolj naslikanega na platnu ali simuliranega v tradicionalnem reprezentacijskem gledališču. Upal je, da bodo pri občinstvu spremenili percepcijo nasilja.⁴⁶³

Za Burdena so bili torej tovrstni body art performansi sredstvo za ustreznejšo, »resničnejšo« realnost. S svojimi akcijami je kritiziral tradicionalno reprezentacijsko gledališče, ki je svoj vrhunec in hkrati zaton doseglo v naturalističnem tipu teatra v drugi polovici devetnajstega stoletja. Naturalističnemu gledališču je šlo za to, da bi čim bolj vestno prenesel zunanjo resničnost na oder, da bi jo čim bolj fotografsko in verno reproduciral. V prepričanju, da je to mogoče, je naturalistični tip gledališča veliko pozornosti posvečal natančni izdelavi scene, polne detajlov, kar je v nekaterih primerih šlo celo tako daleč, da so se v zaodrtju širili dodatni prostori, skozi katere je »potoval« igralec, preden je stopil na oder, na ta »izsek iz resničnega življenja«. Način igre v naturalističnem tipu gledališča se je trudil biti čim bolj iluzijski, dramski lik čim bolj podoben »pravi«, »resnični« osebi iz življenja. Takšno gledališče je podpiral t. i. tip italijanskega škatlastega odra z nevidno četrto steno, ki loči gledalce in dejanje na odru.⁴⁶⁴ Gledalci kot voajerji opazujejo dogajanje na odru kot skozi okno, ne da bi bili pri tem opaženi, dogajanje pa poteka neodvisno od njih; igralci se namreč vedejo, kot bi občinstva ne bilo. Seveda takemu tipu gledališča ustreza le določen tip dramatike; del klasične drame pa tudi ne, saj vsakršno igralčevo govorjenje v stran (t. i. *aparté*), prolog ali kakršenkoli drug nagovor občinstva rušijo gledališko iluzijo. Takšno gledališče, v katerem je vladalo gospostvo dramskega teksta in ki vendarle predstavlja dominantni model evropske drame, je bilo kritizirano že na začetku dvajsetega stoletja z nastopom avtonomnega

462 Burden v intervjuju leta 1973; nav. po: Marvin Carlson, *Performance: a critical introduction*, London, New York: Routledge, 1998, str. 103.

463 RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art. From Futurism to the Present*, str. 159. Interpreti so poleg omenjenega pri performansu *Shoot* poudarjali tudi kontroverzni odnos do nekaterih ameriških mitov, npr. fascinacijo s streljanjem in strelnimi ranami, ki so jih gojili vesterni, vojni in gangsterski filmi, po drugi strani pa odziv na resničnost vietnamske vojne, s katero je bila tako močno obremenjena tedanja generacija Američanov. Prim. <<http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/shoot/>> (dostopno: 25. 2. 2009) in RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art. From Futurism to the Present*, str. 159. Tematike potrošniške mitologije (in krščanstva) se je Burden dotaknil tudi s performansom *Trans-fixed* (1974), pri katerem mu je pomočnik z žebli pribil dlani na streho Volkswagrovega »hrošča«, nato pa so avto s križanim in do pasu golim Burdenovim telesom porinili na cesto.

464 Naturalistično gledališče, ki je bilo v svojem zgodovinskem času, torej v drugi polovici devetnajstega stoletja, vezano na družbeno(kritično) dramatiko, je neke vrste obnove doseglo v dvajsetem stoletju s ponovno vzpostavitev tovrstne (prenovljene) dramatike. Oder z nevidno četrto steno pa ima danes večina nacionalnih repertoarnih gledališč.

(režiserskega) gledališča (predvsem programski spisi (ponekod pa tudi uprizoritve) Craiga, Tairova, Mejerholda, kasneje Artauda so bili eksplicitno naravnani proti dominaciji teksta v gledališču). H kritiki so bistveno prispevale tudi umetniške zgodovinske avantgarde.⁴⁶⁵

Tudi body art je tako kot režisersko gledališče zavrnil sklenjeno psihologijo v dramskem tekstu in reprezentiranje nekoga/ nečesa drugega. Kot piše Hans-Thies Lehmann, se v performansu »v ospredje premakne 'život', provokativna prezenca človeka namesto utelešenja lika.«⁴⁶⁶ Život performerjevega telesa je tisto, kar body art eksplicitno postavlja v središče zanimanja in je tako v nasprotju s tradicionalnim reprezentacijskim gledališčem, pri katerem igralec uteleša lik, posodi mu telo, da bi izrazil nekoga/ nekaj drugega. Z živostjo performerjevega telesa pa pridobimo še en moment, ki ga sicer pozna sleherno gledališče, vendar ima tradicionalno reprezentacijsko gledališče do njega drugačen odnos: procesualnost. Body art ta moment postavi v sámo središče. V body artu se ne uprizarja dokončano, v sebi zaključeno delo, temveč proces; v središču performansa je »proizvodnja prezenca«⁴⁶⁷. S tem stopi v središče proces med odrom in občinstvom. Ne uprizarja se več objekt, ki ga občinstvo motri z varne razdalje, skrito za nevidno četrto steno reprezentacijskega gledališča, temveč je performans komunikacijski proces med performerjem in gledalci, še več, kot trdi Lehmann, se njegov uspeh in vrednost celo merita po tem – torej ne po nekih »objektivnih«, vnaprej določenih kriterijih, temveč po tem, kako uspešna je komunikacija z občinstvom.⁴⁶⁸

Uteleženi subjekt

Navedeno dodatno osvetlijo nekateri momenti filozofske misli francoskega fenomenologa Mauricea Merleau-Pontyja (1908–1961):

»Prostor ni več tisti, o katerem govori *Dioptrika*, mreža razmerij med predmeti, kakor bi jo videla kaka tretja priča mojega gledanja ali kak geometer, ki moje gledanje rekonstruira in je nad njim, pač pa je prostor, računani začenši pri meni kot točki ali stopnji nič prostorski. Ne vidim ga po njegovem zunanjem ovoju, živim ga od znotraj, zlit sem vanj. Sicer pa je svet okoli mene, ne pod menoj.«⁴⁶⁹

Koncepcijo evklidskega prostora, ki ga od zunaj motri hladno in nepristransko geometrovo oko, prostor torej, za katerega lahko rečemo, da ustreza iluzijskemu odru, Merleau-Ponty podvrže kritiki.⁴⁷⁰ Izenačuje ga s kartezijskim modelom razumevanja sveta.

465 Tako vidi RoseLee Goldberg začetke performansa v futurističnih literarnih večerih (t. i. »seratah«), uprizoritvah dramskih skečev (t. i. futurističnih »sintez«) in v akcijah dadaistov. Prim. RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art. From Futurism to the Present*.

466 Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramsko gledališče*, Ljubljana: Maska, 2003, str. 162.

467 Gumbrecht v: Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramsko gledališče*, str. 163.

468 Ibid., str. 162–164.

469 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, »Oko in duh«, v: *Horizonti*, letn. 1, št. 1, 2, 2004 (1. izdaja v izvorniku 1961), str. 41.

470 Opozoriti moram, da Merleau-Ponty ne govori o gledališču; vendar se njegove filozofske koncepcije in njene implikacije kažejo uporabne tudi na tem polju.

Vid, ki ga Descartes postavi na vodilno mesto vseh čutov (in v skladu s tem mu optika pomeni osnovo percepcije), izhaja iz monokularnega in statičnega očesa, ki hladno zre na svet. Takšno breztelesno oko motri prostor kot skozi velikansko okno. Svet se nahaja pred geometrom in pod njim kot »mreža razmerij med predmeti«. Geometer ima dostop do nje-ga in njegove resnice, le neprizadeto ju bo moral secirati, razložiti prek vzročno-posledičnih razmerij med posameznimi, izoliranimi deli. Takšno videnje sveta in prostora je značilno za kartezijanski perspektivizem, po Martinu Jayu prevladujoči skopični režim moderne dobe, katerega vrhunec predstavlja iluzija homogenega tridimenzionalnega prostora, vidnega od daleč z Božjim očesom.⁴⁷¹

Za Merleau-Pontyja pa se prostor začneja »pri meni kot točki ali stopnji nič prostorsko-sti«. Vendar se ne razgrinja pred ali pod opazovalcem, temveč ga ta živi »od znotraj«, je del nje-ga. Merleau-Pontyjeva vizija subjekta je tako drugačna in lahko ustreza razumevanju prostora in jaza v body art praksah. Merleau-Pontyjevo zavrnitev koncepcije evklidskega prostora imamo hkrati lahko za zavrnitev iluzijskega odra. Značilno je, da se body art pogosto uprizarja v umetnostni galeriji (Gina Pane, Ron Athey, Marina Abramović, Franko B., Stelarc) ali kjerkoli drugje – na ulici (Chris Burden), nad njo (zgodnji Stelarc), v operacijski dvorani (Orlan), na internetu (Stelarc) ter na drugih krajih, ki prvenstveno niso namenjeni umetnosti – toda zelo redko lahko body art spremljamo na klasičnem reprezentacijskem gledališkem odru.

Če se prostor pri Merleau-Pontyju začneja »pri meni« in je »okolje mene«, to zahteva tudi drugačno koncepcijo subjekta. Opazovalski subjekt in opazovani objekt se zdaj združujeta v subjektu samem. Še dlje, bistvenega pomena postane telo, ki je tu temeljni aparat percepcije in spoznavnega procesa; s tem Merleau-Ponty izpostavi kategorijo telesa, ki jo je prevladujoči del moderne filozofije zanemarjal.⁴⁷² Merleau-Pontyjeva filozofija telesa razume kot nezaključeno, performativno; ves čas je v aktu uprizarjanja, v rojevanju novih in novih pomenov; iz tega neskončnega procesa ni mogoče nikoli izstopiti in zavzeti hladne, nepristranske pozicije »geometra«. Tako dobro ustreza umetniškim praksam, ki se prvenstveno ukvarjajo s telesom.⁴⁷³ S svojim telesom smo vstavljeni v svet in neločljivo prepleteni z njim:

»Kot vidno in gibljivo je moje telo v množini stvari, je eno od njih, je ujeto v tkivo sveta in njegova kohezija je kohezija stvari. Ker pa vidi in se giblje, ima stvari v krogu okoli sebe, stvari so privesek ali podaljšek njega samega, kakor pod skorjo tičijo v njegovem mesu, spajajo k njegovi popolni definiciji in svet je narejen iz same snovi telesa.«⁴⁷⁴

Utelešeni jaz se sveta dotika v medsebojni dialektiki. Tkivo sveta, v katero je skupaj z drugimi stvarmi ujeto tudi telo, omogoča telesu povezavo in dostop tudi do nevidnega ozadja. Vidnost predmeta je namreč določena z nevidnim ozadjem, vključuje tudi telo in njegovo naravnost ter njegove pretekle in možne naravnosti. Iz tega je mogoče izpeljati

471 Glej: Martin Jay, »Skopični režimi modernosti«, v: *Horizonti*, letn. 1, št. 1, 2, 2004.

472 Tu tiči tudi eden od razlogov za oživitve zanimanja za Merleau-Pontyjevo misel v zadnjih dvajsetih letih.

473 Merleau-Pontyjevo misel je v zvezi s teoretskim mapiranjem body art praks izpostavila tudi Amelia Jones in poudarila predvsem njegov koncept intersubjektivnosti, ki ga je dopolnila s poststrukturalističnimi in feminističnimi raziskavami.

474 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, »Oko in duh«, str. 36.

intersubjektivnost kot dialektično prepletanje jaza in drugega. Za body art je to koncept, ki označuje razmerje med performerjem in občinstvom. Gledalec ni več udobno nameščen pred oknom tradicionalnega reprezentacijskega gledališča in skozenj zre na dogajanje na odru, temveč so gledalci udeleženi v dogodku, pogosto iz neposredne bližine izkusijo bližino performerjevega telesa. Izpostavljeno in pogosto izmučeno, poškodovano, bolno, pohabljen, smrtno telo je s svojim mankom postavljeno pred gledalca, ki razume, da je soudeležen v dogodku. Gledalca zavezuje, trka nanj, sili ga k zavzetemu, angažiranemu odnosu. Z uprizarjanjem meje, ki sproža pogosta vprašanja, ali gre tu za patologijo ali za umetnost, te prakse ne kažejo le telesa, temveč tudi križanje merleau-pontyjevskega nevidnega ozadja.

Začetki body arta okrog leta 1970

Body art se je kot samostojna zvrst uveljavil konec šestdesetih in v začetku sedemdesetih let dvajsetega stoletja. V tem času je bilo v ospredju zanimanja predvsem raziskovanje samega medija in kaj zmora ta povedati. V skladu z modernistično orientacijo so v performansih iskali njegove meje ter zmožnosti in se navduševali nad samim materialnim telesom. Ena linija začetnega body arta se je tako osredotočala na uprizarjanje različnih fizičnih aktivnosti, pogosto manifestacij elementarne telesnosti, na primer hoje, spanja, hranjenja, pitja, vzdrževanja ravnotežja. Režija je bila minimalna, naracija zelo preprosta. Cilj je bil priti do predestetskih in predumetniških vidikov delovanja in vednja.⁴⁷⁵ Eden takih performansov je bila pivska zabava Toma Marionija v Oakland Museum v Kaliforniji z naslovom *The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art* (1969). Marionij in Linda Montano sta leta 1973 tudi tri dni preživela z lisicami priklenjena drug na drugega, da bi »dosegla povečano zavedanje običajnih vedenjskih vzorcev«. ⁴⁷⁶ Pri tej liniji začetnega body arta se je kazala njegova tesna povezava s konceptualno umetnostjo.⁴⁷⁷

Po prepričanju Amelie Jones je v body artu prihajalo še do nečesa. V body art praksah od konca šestdesetih let dalje je prepoznala »premestitev ali razsrediščenje kartezijanskega subjekta modernizma«⁴⁷⁸, ki so ga opravljale z »intersubjektivnim angažmajem«⁴⁷⁹. Body art prakse tako v več smereh dekonstruirajo samozadostni in avtonomni subjekt visokega modernizma ter njegovo naravnost, kot ju je zagovarjal ameriški umetnostni kritik Clement Greenberg: »Greenbergova zgodba o abstraktnem ekspresionizmu kot zmagoslavnem vrhuncu velikega evropskega modernističnega slikarstva s svojim skrivnostnim kantovstvom jemlje avtoriteto naravnost iz njegovega zanikanja telesa, subjektivitete, čutnosti in želje.«⁴⁸⁰ Body art pa se ne

475 Miško Šuvaković, *Paragrami tela/figure*, Beograd: Centar za novo pozorište i igru, 2001, str. 45.

476 Marvin Carlson, *Performance: a critical introduction*, str. 102.

477 Že Duchamp si je leta 1921 obril glavo tako, da je na njej oblikoval zvezdo.

478 Amelia Jones, *Body art: uprizarjanje subjekta*, str. 19. Podobno meni tudi Miško Šuvaković, ki zapiše, da se je body art pojavljal kot kritična alternativa v kulturah, kjer je bil močan visoki modernizem oziroma zmerni modernizem z dominantnim slikarskim in kiparskim ustvarjanjem. Glej: Miško Šuvaković, *Paragrami tela/figure*, str. 45.

479 Amelia Jones, *Body art: uprizarjanje subjekta*, str. 19.

480 Ibid., str. 101.

zadovolji le z dekonstruiranjem modernističnega subjekta (tudi kot dominacije moškega blega subjekta srednjega razreda) in njegovim novim vzpostavljanjem kot utelešenega subjekta, temveč po mnenju Jonesove teži tudi k destabiliziranju struktur konvencionalne umetnostne zgodovine in kritike, kot so se vzpostavile z greenbergovsko teorijo modernizma. Naravnano je proti pojmovanju umetnika kot genija (tako ga je razumel modernizem), saj na površje spravlja nezadostnost telesa in njegovo nezmožnost, da bi se sestavilo v celoti. Skozi uprizoritve teles body art performansi po Amelii Jones postajajo uprizoritve subjektov oz. jazov.

Prehod iz šestdesetih v sedemdeseta leta dvajsetega stoletja, na katerem se je začel intenzivno pojavljati performans in znotraj njega body art, je bil obenem čas družbenega preloma. Upor in prevpraševanje družbenih vrednot sta segla tudi na to področje; eno pomembnih vprašanj je bila svoboda in s tem tudi svoboda telesa. V zraku sta bili eksperimentiranje in iskanje novih izkušenj, dejavna je bila kultura svobodne ljubezni in mamil. Politična vrenja, ki so se zavzemala za pravice različnih manjšin, so dajala vrednost individualnosti. Kot posebna vrednota se je tako pojavljalo iskanje resnice – individualne, samo-svoje, tudi skozi telesno/seksualno osvoboditev in kulturo drog. Bodiartistično telo je bilo pogosto presečišče tega dogajanja.

V tem smislu body art performansi na svojih začetkih okrog leta 1970 ni le preizkušal meja novega medija in kritiziral visoki modernizem. Ena od pomembnih teženj body arta je bila ta, da je hotel seči k avtentičnemu, »resničnemu« življenju. Po eni strani se je ta težnja kazala v kritiki tradicionalnega reprezentacijskega gledališča. Toda ni šlo zgolj za to. Precejšen del body art performansov (npr. Chris Burden, Vito Acconci, Gina Pane) je preizkušal meje zmogljivosti telesa, njegovo vzdržljivost, s tem ko so ga porinili do ekstrema in izpostavili bolečini ali znatnemu tveganju. Pomemben faktor je bilo iskanje nove izkušnje. Chris Burden je na primer v intervjujih poleg kritike tradicionalne gledališke reprezentacije navajal tudi to, da je hotel z ekstremnimi telesnimi situacijami izzvati določena duševna stanja. Šlo je za sredstvo za doseg tega cilja.⁴⁸¹ Tako je bila tudi Burdenova destruktivnost izvedena zelo neposredno; tu ni šlo za spogledovanje s smrtjo, za igro, ampak za preizkušanje skozi uničevanje, bolečino, poškodbo, ki bi bila lahko znatnejša, če bi se igra z nepredvidljivostjo in nadzorom slabše iztekla.⁴⁸² Burden tudi ni ponavljal performansov ali jih predhodno vadal.⁴⁸³

Družbenopolitična vrenja so, kot že omenjeno, podeljevala vrednost individualnosti in destabilizirala ter prevpraševala vrednote. Tako je Gina Pane (1939–1990), ki je delovala v Parizu, v sedemdesetih letih izvedla več body art performansov, v katerih je z britvico zarezovala v svoje telo (v zapestja, obraz, trebuh in v druge predele). Zanj je bila bolečina teh akcij ritualizirana, verjela je v njen očiščevalni učinek – ne toliko zase, temveč predvsem za družbo; njeno delo je potrebno, je menila, »da bi doseglo omrtvičeno družbo«.⁴⁸⁴ Tako je

481 Marvin Carlson, *Performance: a critical introduction*, str. 103.

482 Družba je prepoznala Burdenove akcije kot problematične, saj je bil po izvedbi performansa *Shoot* odpeljan k psihiatru.

483 Robert Horvitz, »Chris Burden«, v: *Artforum*, zv. XIV, št. 9, maj 1976, str. 24–31;

<<http://www.volny.cz/rhorvitz/burden.html>> (dostopno: 15. 2. 2009).

484 RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art. From Futurism to the Present*, str. 165.

na primer v performansu *Escalade non anesthésiée* (izvedenem leta 1970 in 1971 v njenem ateljeju) hotela usmeriti prst na pasivnost omrtvičene (anestezirane) sodobne družbe, ki se ni premaknila ob naraščajočem nasilju ameriških čet v Vietnamu.⁴⁸⁵ V performansu se je ustvarjalka bosa vzpenjala po posebej izdelanem stopničastem okvirju, sestavljenem iz ostrih, narezanih kovinskih delov. Njeno delovanje v sedemdesetih letih je imelo tako zvezo z uporom. Rane, ki si jih je povzročala na različnih delih svojega telesa, so kazale, da njeno telo ni le njeno samo in kot tako v njeni lasti, temveč je to predvsem družbeno telo, podrejeno psihološkimi, družbenimi, seksualnim, spolnim in kulturnim bremenom – npr. ženske kot ljubke moške družice z lepo, gladko, privlačno kožo, ženske kot rojevajoče matere –, da je določeno z njimi in podrejeno njihovim zahtevam. Akcije Gine Pane, kot npr. performans *Psyché* (1974), v okviru katerega je na trebuh z britvico zarezala štiri ravne črte v obliki križa, so bile krvav, boleč in ritualiziran upor proti temu.⁴⁸⁶

Vprašanje svobode okrog leta 1970 je prineslo tudi negotovost in odtrganost od trdnih temeljev, s tem je na plan prišla ranljivost, in tako se je po drugi strani v tem času pojavljala vse večji dvom v univerzalne kategorije, kot npr. v resnico in njeno dosegljivost. Prehod šestdesetih v sedemdeseta leta dvajsetega stoletja se tako razume tudi kot prelom z modernostjo, ki je zavezana teleološkosti, eshatološkosti, absolutnosti in total(itar)nosti, s tem prelomom pa sovпада tudi strmoglavljenje moderne umetnosti. K temu je pomembno prispevala francoska poststrukturalistična misel, ki je omajala številne paradigme moderne misli.⁴⁸⁷

Sodobne body art prakse

Skozi body art prakse se nista dekonstruirala le greenbergovski modernizem in njegova naravnanoost, kot trdi Amelia Jones, temveč vedno bolj tudi telo samo. Prve body art performerje okrog leta 1970 je zanimalo lastno telo kot nov, slabo raziskan umetniški medij. Tipali so njegove meje, eksperimentirali s telesom in se navduševali nad njegovo svobodo ter odprtostjo. Kasneje pa se je to telo vedno bolj odpiralo in razpiralo, dokler se na prelomu tisočletja ne prične drobiti in razgrajevati. Vse bolj se izkazuje, da je nezadostno in nepopolno.

485 Juan Vicente Aliaga, »The Folds of the Wound. On Violence, Gender, and Actionism in the Work of Gina Pane«, v: *Artecontexto*; <artecontexto.com/www/007/gina_pane_engb.pdf> (dostopno: 5. 11. 2008).

486 V projektu *The Reincarnation of Saint-Orlan* (od leta 1990 dalje) si daje francoska ustvarjalka Orlan (r. 1947) kirurško preoblikovati svoj videz (zlasti obraz) v skladu z nekaterimi najznamenitejšimi slikami in kipi iz zgodovine umetnosti (npr. Botticellijeva Venera, Leonardova Mona Lisa) in skuša s tem slediti zahodnemu idealu ženske lepote, kot so ga izrazili moški umetniki. Kot zapiše v *Carnal Art Manifesto*, »[k]arnalna umetnost ne nastopa proti lepoti operaciji, temveč prej proti konvencijam, ki jih ta nosi, in njihovemu kasnejšemu vpisu, posebej v žensko telo, a tudi v moško.« <<http://www.english.ucsb.edu/faculty/ecooc/courses/eng114em/surgeries.htm>> (dostopno: 25. 2. 2009). Eden temeljnih projektov Orlan tako izhaja iz podobne kritike spolno in ideološko obremenjenega ženskega telesa kot *Psyché* Gine Pane šestnajst let prej, vendar svoj odgovor zastavlja drugače, ko v svoje telo vključuje ravno tisti patriarhalni moment, ki ga hkrati kritizira. Poleg tega njeno delo vključuje nove metode in znanja medicine ter biologije, v skladu s povečanim zanimanjem sodobne umetnosti zanje. Več o delu Orlan na njeni spletni strani: <<http://www.orlan.net/>>.

487 Več o prelomu z modernostjo in moderno umetnostjo: Polona Tratnik, *Konec umetnosti: genealogija modernega diskurza: od Hegla k Dantu*, Koper: Univerza na Primorskem, Znanstveno-raziskovalno središče, Založba Annales, Zgodovinsko društvo za južno Primorsko, 2009, predvsem str. 275–416.

V tekmi z vedno bolj izpopolnjeno tehnologijo ostaja zakrnelo in nezmožno (kar je izhodišče Stelarcovih performansov); prav tako ne more doseči lepotnega ideala (kar tematizirajo projekti Orlan); podvrženo je manipuliranju in razgrajevanju ali celo razpadanju z dvoumnim in paradoksalnim momentom smrti in/ali življenja (bioart projekti Polone Tratnik).

V tem prispevku sem bila nekoliko bolj pozorna na tiste prakse body arta, pri katerih je v ospredju negotovo, poškodovano, smrtno telo. To je telo, ki v prvem planu prikaže svojo minljivost, parcialnost, ki pravzaprav opozori na to, da ne zmore. Ta nezmožnost, čeprav nekoliko drugače reševana in trascendirana, je tudi izhodišče avstralskega ustvarjalca Stelarca (r. 1946). Zanj je človeško telo vedno bolj biološko neustrezno, zastarelo (obsoletno). Stelarc ne išče avtentične, resnične, popolne, totalne/totalizirajoče izkušnje kot prvi performerji body arta, temveč izhaja ravno iz nepopolnosti telesa, iz njegove nezadostnosti. Zato meni, da morajo biti naša fizična telesa podobno kot računalniki neprestano nadgrajevana, da bi se lahko prilagodila visokotehnološki kulturi, ki smo jo ustvarili. Stelarc tako prek uporabe protez, medicinskih sistemov (npr. EMG), robotike, sistemov virtualne resničnosti, umetne inteligence in interneta, v zadnjem času pa tudi prek tkivnega inženirstva raziskuje druge, tudi neprostovoljne vmesnike z našim telesom.⁴⁸⁸ Tako njegovo delo raziskuje in širi koncept telesa ter prevprašuje njegovo razmerje do tehnologije, predvsem računalniške in biološke. Identiteta telesa, ki je bila še pomembna v zgodnejših bodiartističnih performansih, tu ni več v središču zanimanja; koža ni več meja bolj ali manj zaključenega jaza, s katerim se ta dotika zunanjega sveta, pogosto boleče ali z veliko rano (npr. Gina Pane), temveč je osmotska površina;⁴⁸⁹ pomembnejša postane njegova zmožnost povezovanja, upravljanja in modificiranja. Za projekt *Fractal Flesh* (začetek: 1995) so na primer izbrane osebe prek interneta na daljavo nadzorovale in usmerjale njegovo telo prek sistema elektronskih mišičnih stimulatorjev. Čeprav so bili premiki telesa neprostovoljni, se je to lahko odzivalo s svojo robotsko tretjo roko.⁴⁹⁰ V projektu *Ear on Arm* so Stelarcu pod kožo leve podlahti transplantirali uho, konstruirano iz biomateriala, ki nadomešča hrustanec; omikrofonjenje ušesa še poteka.

Sprva, v drugi polovici sedemdesetih in v osemdesetih letih, si je Stelarc skozi kožo zatikal mesarske kavljve in svoje telo pripenjal kot kos mesa; izpostavljal ga je bolečini in nevarnosti, da koža, pripeta na kavljve, popusti in telo pade na ulico, na obalo, na tla. Te t. i. suspenzije (oz. vissenja), kot je poimenoval serijo tovrstnih performansov, so raziskovale »psihološke in fiziološke parametre telesa«⁴⁹¹. V prvih suspenzijah je bilo telo statično, prebodeno s kavljvi je npr. viselo v navpičnem položaju, obrnjeno z glavo navzdol. Kasneje je bilo dvigovano in spuščano; gugalo se je v različne smeri ali se vrtelo okoli svoje osi nad mestom, nad obalo ali po jašku. Ti performansi so bili »strategija za fizično izčrpanje telesa in izpostavitev njegove zastarelosti.«⁴⁹²

488 Več o tem na Stelarcovi spletni strani: <<http://www.stelarc.va.com.au/>> (dostopno: 5. 11. 2008).

489 Moment kože kot prepustne tematizira projekt Polone Tratnik *37°C* (2001), pri katerem obiskovalec vstopi v tople kultivacijski prostor in postane del notranjosti živega organizma. V prostoru so gojene človeške kožne celice.

490 Prim. Marina Gržinić (ur.), *STELARC: political prosthesis & knowledge of the body = politična proteza in vednost telesa*, Ljubljana: Maska; Maribor: MKC, 2002, str. 203.

491 Stelarc, »Indifferent Body«, v: pričujoča monografija, str. 185.

492 Ibid., str. 186.

Telo je v središču pozornosti tudi pri slovenski ustvarjalki Poloni Tratnik (r. 1976). V njenih projektih od leta 2001 dalje je živa prezenca performerjevega telesa, procesualno uprizorjena, prikazana nekoliko drugače. V ospredju je še vedno telo; vendar se razdrobljeno, osamosvojeno in transformirano uprizarja samo, brez avtoričine polne in celovite prisotnosti. Drobci ustvarjalkega telesa so odsvojeni od sebe in postavljeni v novo okolje, v katerem z uporabo biotehnoloških orodij in znanj manipuliranja z živim materialom živijo dalje, vendar spremenjeni in včasih skupaj z drobci teles obiskovalcev. Tako na primer za projekt *Unikum/Unique* (začetek: 2006) obiskovalci darujejo vzorce mikroorganizmov s svojih teles, ki so nato gojeni v mikrokulturah in pod ustreznimi pogoji. V posebej urejenem razstavnem okolju (ki zagotavlja osnovne pogoje za njihovo rast) se združujejo v kolonije različnih barv in oblik in tako postanejo vidni s prostim očesom.⁴⁹³ Avtorica zapiše:

»Še živeči elementi so odsvojeni od človeškega telesa (donatorja) in so preneseni v 'zunanje' okolje, kjer živijo naprej kot del novonastalega, umetno formiranega organizma, kjer pa je poudarjena njihova fenomenalnost. Na ta način je dosežen drugačen vidik človeškega telesa, kar opazovalcu omogoča, da se opazuje z zunanje pozicije, kot drugo.«⁴⁹⁴

Merleau-pontyjevska tkivo sveta, v katero so skupaj z drugimi stvarmi ujeta telesa,⁴⁹⁵ razvija moment intersubjektivnosti. Telesa so v nenehnem gibanju, v procesu, »[v]si moji premiki načeloma nastopajo nekje v moji pokrajini, se prenašajo na karto vidnega.«⁴⁹⁶ Pride do tega, kar se ob projektu *Lasje/Hair* (začetek: 2005) sprašuje Mojca Puncer: »kaj lahko povemo o materialnosti telesa in v zvezi z njo, ko ravno zaradi nje telesa nikoli ne moremo fiksirati v preprosti objekt mišljenja?«⁴⁹⁷

Telo, kot ga uprizarjajo novejši body art prakse, je posredovano z dosežki znanosti, a obenem ohranja in celo še bolj poudarja svojo organskost in smrtnost. Po drugi strani pa se hkrati, ob teh premikih, tudi v zadnjem desetletju ali dveh nadaljuje linija ekspresivnega body arta, ki se brez vključevanja dosežkov znanosti neposred(ova)no ukvarja z eksistencialno tematiko. Tako na primer Franko B. (r. 1960), v Londonu situirani performer italijanskega rodu, uporablja lastno telo in kri kot platno, da bi »portretiral bolečino, ljubezen, sovraštvo, izgubo, moč in strahove človeškega bivanja.«⁴⁹⁸ Njegovo delo tako izraža eksistencialne momente človeškega bivanja, je v nekem smislu precej intim(istič)no. V zvezi s tem so verjetno tudi močni čustveni odzivi gledalcev. Tako se je npr. v performansu z naslovom *I Miss You* (2002) pred nekaj stotinami gledalcev v Tate Modern's Turbine Hall v Londonu gol in krvaveč sprehajal gor in dol po dolgem, ozkem traku belega platna, ki je asociiral na modno pisto in na katerega je kapljala kri iz njegovih ran. Mnogi so jokali.

493 Več o delu Polone Tratnik na njeni spletni strani: <<http://www.ars-tratnik.si/>>.

494 Polona Tratnik, »(Bio)umetnost in manipuliranje z živim«, v: *Annales. Series historia et sociologia*, letn. 18, št. 1, 2008, str. 213.

495 Merleau-Pontyja kot pomembno referenco za svoje delo omenja in razvija tudi avtorica.

496 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, »Oko in duh«, str. 36.

497 Mojca Puncer, »Zgodba o laseh«, v: Polona Tratnik, *Lasje/Hair*, Ljubljana: Galerija Kapelica, Moderna galerija Ljubljana, Galerija Miklova hiša, 2005, str. 8.

498 Prim. spletno stran Franka B.: <<http://www.franko-b.com/>>.

Prvi body art performerji okrog leta 1970 so raziskovali telo in eksperimentirali z njegovimi mejami. V sodobnih praksah pa se telo vedno bolj odpira in drobi; z dosežki znanosti ga je treba preiskati in na novo vzpostavljati, vendar bistveno predrugačeno. Tkivo, ki se odpira navzven, k drugim/drugemu, skozi *das Unheimliche* vrača vprašanja o tem, kaj se dogaja s telesom in na ta način tudi o tem, kakšnim spremembam jaza smo priče v sodobni družbi.

Stelarc
INDIFFERENT BODY⁴⁹⁹

We live in the time when flesh is circulating and organs are being detached from some bodies and relocated into other bodies. My blood doesn't only flow in my body, but circulates in other bodies as well. We can freeze female eggs and we fertilize them with sperm that has been unfrozen. Partially living bodies are proliferating. We can preserve dead bodies indefinitely, whilst simultaneously sustain comatose bodies on life support systems. Cryogenically preserved bodies await reanimation at some future time. We are in the age of the cadaver, the comatose body and the chimera. Nietzsche said that the living are only a species of the dead, and a very rare species indeed.

When I talk about Fractal Flesh, I mean bodies and bits of bodies spatially separated but electronically connected, generating similar patterns of recurring activity at different scales. What I mean by Phantom Flesh is phantom, not as in phantasm, but as in phantom limb. Haptic technologies will generate tactile and force-feedback experiences, enabling us to construct more potent physical presences of remote bodies, robots and AI agents.

The suspension performances explore the psychological and physiological parameters of the body. In the *Rock Suspension*, the body here is counter-balanced by the ring of rocks. The performance was terminated when the telephone rang in the gallery. A suspension performance also occurred at Mexico at the Sculpture Space, a larval rock area near the National University. This proved to be a rather painful suspension performance because I got sunburnt. The *Spin Suspension* was done in a seated position. The body spun for the 20 minutes of the performance. It was hosted by Artspace in Nishinomiya. The *Remote-Controlled Suspension* was sponsored by MOCA in Brisbane. Here the body is vertically suspended from a gantry crane in an abandoned warehouse and controlled its movements with the hand-held control box. This performance lasted about 20 minute. Everyone thought at first that it was only going to be an up and down suspension but the body could move forwards, backwards, sideways; left and right and it could also swing when it stopped suddenly. *City Suspension*, the performance in Copenhagen was a suspension 60 metres in height. It was lifted up from street level and moved above and around the Royal Theatre. A choreography of being hoisted up, extended to the end of the crane arm and rotated around 4 times before being lowered. So in this suspension performance the body physically exhausted itself and it exposed its own obsolescence. The New York *Street Suspension* was only four stories high but I still had a good view of the police cars that arrived after five minutes. It became difficult when soon after they pulled me back through the window the demanded to see my ID which was very difficult to produce immediately. I was arrested, not because of nudity

⁴⁹⁹ A lecture "Alternate Architectures: Excess and Indifference-Fractal Flesh, Phantom Bodies & Extra Ears", which was a basis of this revised written transcription, took place on 15th November 2008 within the event: XXII Muestra Internacional de Performance Accidentes Controlados, in Mexico City, Ex Teresa Arte Actual – Centro Nacional de las Artes. The text was transcribed from an audio recording by Rok Arih and revised by Stelarc.

or because it was some S&M action, but rather because I was a danger to the public. The *Last Suspension* performance had the *Third Hand* attached. In retrospect, these performances were a strategy to physically exhaust the body, exposing its obsolescence.

At first the *Third Hand* was a visual attachment to the body and here the mechanism is a prosthesis, not as a sign of lack, but rather as a symptom of excess. *Amplified Body, Laser Eyes and Third Hand* was performed at the Maki Gallery in Tokyo. The sounds that you heard were amplified body signals like brain waves, heartbeat, blood flow and muscle signals. The signals were amplified with electrodes on different parts of the body. To compose the sounds, you control the physiology of the body, thus by controlling your breathing, by relaxing or tensing the muscles you can actuate and modulate the sounds you heard. The laser beams which were projected from the eyes with optic fibre cable were modulated with heartbeat sound. In 1993 I decided to make a sculpture for the inside of my body. The *Stomach Sculpture* was fifty millimeters long and fifteen millimeters in diameter but fully opened it was size of a small fist. It was inserted 40 centimeters inside my stomach. It was a project that took 2 days of insertions to document about fifteen minutes of video. A medical endoscope tracked the insertion of the sculpture. You have to imagine this machine choreography inside the body which opens and closes, extends and retracts, has a flashing light and a beeping sound. The body here is not a container where the skin is a bounding of the self and a beginning of the world, here the obsolete and empty body becomes a host-not for a self, but simply for a sculpture.

This obsolete, empty and invaded body now begins to perform involuntary. In the performance *Extended Arm* so the left arm is computer controlled and is not under my agency. The computer generates signals to the muscle stimulation system and so for four hours this arm is moving involuntary and continuously, but the right side is controlling a mechanical arm and this arm is of primate proportions, it is a very long arm. The sounds that you hear are the sounds of the pneumatics, the compressor sound and external sensors amplifying the choreography of the limb. It wasn't a difficult leap to imagine that you could remote control the body and that's what happened with *Fractal Flesh*. By touching the muscles on this computer interface the computer model would move and one second later in Luxemburg my body would move accordingly. The muscle stimulation system has 6 channels of stimulation. People in Paris, Helsinki and Amsterdam were able to remote control my body in Luxemburg, thus this body becomes the host for the desires of remote agents. Another kind of split body experience is this construction of an upper body exoskeleton, a *Motion Prosthesis*. There are only three simple movements for each arm- up, out and with a bend making sixty four possible combinations of choreography. In this performance it is the avatar that actuates the upper body, whilst the lower body is free to move with its own agency. *Split Body: Voltage-In/Voltage-Out* was performed in Ljubljana at Gallery Kapelica. I had a head-up display so it was possible to see the screen behind me and the face of the person who was controlling me. All of these performances were done with a kind of posture of indifference, indifference as opposed to expectation, in other words you allow the

performance to unfold, you allow things to happen and thus making it less predictable. There is no narrative. Only modular and rhythmic activity. In these split body performances the body becomes both a possessed and a performing body. On the left side is "voltage in", on the right side is "voltage out". "Voltage in" to control the body, "voltage out" to activate the mechanical hand.

As well as manipulators, I have been also interested in insect and animal locomotion systems. *Exoskeleton* is a performance where the body stands on the robot and controls its movement with arm gestures and a control device. This is the first performance that was more dangerous for audience than for artist. When you are performing with this robot you not only look in the direction that you're walking, but you also listen to the sounds that the robot is making. You compose the sounds by choreographing the movements of the machine. We also tried to construct other kinds of walking machines. With *Muscle Machine*, as you can see lifting one leg up would lift three robot legs up and swing them forward. The problem with this robot when we first constructed it was that it took two steps forward and fell of the sideways, twisting its chassis. We had to change our plan because the robot was too heavy and it didn't function correctly. I decided that I would stand within the chassis of the robot and by using rubber muscles to activate the machine it resulted in a much lighter machine system. A rubber muscle can be one meter long and weigh only five hundred grams even with its aluminum connectors. It's very light compared to a steel cylinder actuator that might weigh 10-15 kgs. This performance was in London, at Gallery 291 in London in 2003. So human bipedal gait is translated into a six-legged insect-like machine locomotion. Lifting one leg up, would lift three robot legs up and swing forward them forward. This robot is still very much a work in progress. The *Walking Head* robot is an autonomous and interactive system. The robot sits and waits until it detects a person in front of it. It then stands up and performs a simple walking choreography, sits down and waits for the next person to come along.

For me, a zombie is a body with no mind of its own, a body that performs involuntarily. A cyborg is a human-machine system that increasingly becomes automated. We have always feared acting involuntary and we have always been anxious about being automated, but in fact we fear what we have always been and what we already became. We have always been zombie and cyborg bodies.

Blender was another kind of body construct, a liquid body. This project was a collaboration with another artist, Nina Sellars. We both have operations to extract 4.6 liters of biomaterial from our bodies. This material was mixed in an installation called Blender. The compressed air activated the blender blades once every five minutes to keep mixing the material from two artists' bodies. This was a kind of liquid body, the opposite of the *Stomach Sculpture*. Instead of a machine inside the body, here a machine installation becomes the host for the liquid body. And you can see from the scale that it is anthropomorphic in size. This collaboration was a collaboration not through the addition of ideas from each artist, but rather a collaboration physically subtracting from each body.

The *Extra Ear* project was first modeled on the side of the head. It was very difficult to find surgical assistance to construct the ear on my head. Anatomically it is not a good location, because it would have interfered with facial nerves which might have resulted in partial face paralysis. Not being successful finding any surgical assistance I decided in 2003 to grow small replicas of my ear using living cells. We have grown seven or eight small ears using mouse cells, human cells and the cells of the HeLa cell-line. A cast was made of my ear, scaled down and a polymer scaffold was produced and seeded with living cells. The small ear grows in a micro gravity bioreactor. Every three or four days the ear had to be fed with nutrients to keep it growing and keep it alive. This was a collaboration with TC&A and Symbiotica and was first shown at Gallery Kapelica in Ljubljana. The only problem was that it was a ¼ Scale ear and it would not have been visually adequate as part of my body. In 2006 with funding from a London production company we began the surgical procedures to construct an ear on my arm in Los Angeles. The first procedure was to implant a skin expander in the forearm, injecting sterile saline solution into it, producing an area of excess skin. These photos were also taken by Nina Sellars. The video cameraman fainted during the first operation. This biomaterial, called Medpor is a substitute for cartilage. It is a very porous material. Once the Medpor scaffold is inserted under the skin, the skin is vacuum sucked over the scaffold. The suction drain was on my arm for several weeks. During this time my cells grow into the scaffold adhering the skin to the scaffold. After six months you have what is called tissue ingrowth and vascularization occurring. It is still only a relief of an ear. We still have to surgically lift the helix of the ear and grow a soft ear lobe using my own extracted adipose stem cells. It is illegal to do this in United States, but we can do it in Spain. Also during the second operation we did insert a small microphone, the idea for this extra ear on my arm is that the microphone connected to wireless transmitter and in a wi-fi hotspot would become internet enabled. If you are here in Mexico City and I am in London you will be able to hear what my ear is listening to. As you can see in the video, even with the arm bandaged with a partial plaster cast, the surgeon is speaking to my ear and the microphone is picking up the sound and wireless transmitting it. A bodily feature is replicated, relocated and is now being rewired for additional capabilities. Although the ear is an organ on my body, the *Ear On Arm* becomes a publicly accessible, mobile listening device for people in other places.

The *Prosthetic Head*, was engineered 2002 by 3 programmers in San Francisco- Karen Marcelo, Sam Trychin and Barrett Fox. It was premised on two philosophical assertions. One by Nietzsche is that there is no "being" behind the "doing" (it is the action in-itself that's important) and also Wittgenstein's assertion that thinking is not located inside the head, it's located, for example on the paper on which you write or on the lips with which you speak (thinking is not simplistically located inside you). The 3D model was constructed using a 3000 polygon mesh, with the eye balls, tongue and teeth being separate moving components. The skin was done from the artist's face and this texture was wrapped around the 3D model. The talking head has a database and a conversational strategy, so it responds

to the person who interrogates it. It can respond to any question – personal or philosophical and it also has many dictionary definitions. The Head can also be creative. It can recite its own poetry and it can generate its own song-like sounds. If you ask it to sing a song, each time it will create a new one. It knows the person it is talking to. It will respond- "yes John, I remember you. We were talking about the meaning of life". The Head has a large repertoire of jokes and stories it can be prompted to tell you.

The digital skin for the *Prosthetic Head* generated the *Partial Head* project. We scanned the artists face and then we scanned a hominid skull. We digitally transplanted the human face over the hominid skull. So this face becomes a kind of "third face" neither fully human, nor merely hominid. A kind of alternate evolutionary construct. Using this visual data we made a 3D scaffold and we attempted to grow a layer of living skin over this scaffold. It only survived for several days.

There's some interesting research now called "Organ Printing". A hybridization of rapid prototyping techniques and tissue engineering. Imagine that instead of printing with colored ink, printing with globules of living cells. This can be done layer by layer on biodegradable paper, resulting perhaps in a section of artery that could be transplanted. But if we could input all the 3D anatomical data (on cell types and tissue structure) then in the future Hewlett-Packard would guarantee developing a 3D printer that could print complex parts and organs of the body. Of course the difficulty would be to animate an organ like the heart. You would have to put it into a vat of nutrients, at 37 degrees centigrade, with a blood supply and providing electrical stimulation. Hopefully you could kick-start it and have a beating heart that could be inserted into a patient. So there is a possibility now that we will have a proliferation of organs- not through harvesting them from living or dead bodies but instead from engineering and printing them. And instead of a "body without organs", now we will have "organs without body". Organs awaiting bodies.

Recently and with the assistance of Daniel Mournsey, I have a *Second Life Site*. There are images, video and installations of my Real Life projects and performances, but also some installations only possible in Second Life. I am also interested in performing in Second Life. Here, my avatar stands in front of the Prosthetic Head speaking. Its lip movements and arm gestures are actuated by the sound of the Head speaking. The choreography is made more interesting by the robotic arm connected to the avatar which is scripted to generate simple machine-like motions. Exploring alternate scripts and structures in Second Life will result in some interesting performance possibilities.

In demonstrating the muscle stimulation system, I've positioned the electrodes on different muscles sites with the volunteers. This will result in different kind of movements and these movements will be involuntary. It is possible to generate up to sixty volts of electricity with this device, but that would be too painful. I'll first turn on the electrode stimulation gradually and then increase the voltage until their arms move. The extender muscles contract, bending the hand back and even twisting the arm a little. This is a really beautiful movement. The deltoid muscles with this other volunteer are lifting his arm, and the flexors

bend the wrist and curling the fingers. And of course the biceps contracting bend the arm up. So if you can imagine, connected to a computer, all these movements can be programmed to occur with different intensities and varying speeds. And then if you imagine all of these electrodes on one arm then you can get quite complicated movements. At present there is really only one channel of stimulation for each arm. And although the sensation is initially disconcerting, soon they will begin to enjoy it.

So imagine an avatar being able to access a physical body and perform with it in the real world. The avatar would have a surrogate body that would allow an artificial entity to perform in the real world. And with the electrodes on facial muscles as well as limbs, not only would the avatar be able to move in the world but also it would be able to generate emotional expressions. It would be an inverse motion capture system. In conclusion the realm of the post-human may no longer reside in the realm of bodies and machines but rather in the realm of autonomous, intelligent, operational entities sustained on the internet and in electronic media. Bodies and machines are ponderous, they perform with friction and weight in gravity. Avatars perform smoothly and at the speed of light. Images are eternal. Avatars have no organs.

Answers by Stelarc to questions asked after his presentation:

1. Well, the Third Hand is actuated by electrical signals from the abdominal and leg muscles. Thus the 3 hands are capable of independent action. When writing the word "Evolution" with my three hands I had to keep my 2 eyes on what my three hands were writing. Because of the spacing of the three hands I had to write every third letter so the first three letters are E, L and I; V, U and O; and finally O, T and N. And because this performance was on a sheet of glass between the audience and the artist I had to learn to write the word back to front.
2. There is always the possibility of malicious people or the military using these new technologies for unethical purposes. The problem is not with the artist who exposes, undermines and experiments with new technologies with surprising conceptual and aesthetic outcomes. Remember that VR systems and the internet were once military technologies.
3. I think there are always new and unexpected ethical problems with any kind of technology. The philosopher Paul Virilio says that with every new technology there's a new kind of accident. So technology is always deconstructing and destabilizing. The ethical issues will always multiply and diversify depending on new interfaces and interventions.
4. This ear is a construction of excess, done especially on this body. It has required state of the art surgical skills and will use cutting edge stem cell techniques. It positions an ear on an arm. For me it is a soft prosthesis that becomes a publicly accessible organ for people in other places.

5. We can keep the body and the brain alive with the life support systems, but brains by themselves are not really useful unless they are connected to a body, to a pair of arms, to 2 legs. So a brain is not a brain if it cannot perceive, process, and manipulate the world. (Extending the question) So what you are saying is we should give the brains to the avatar, is that right? (Explaining the question) Well I think now we preserve the memory of a physical body through images, but in the future we might be able to preserve it with a hologram or even some kind of physical replicant of that body, this is quite possible, or even to upload your memories to a robot. This is plausible; it is not science fiction any more. It won't be the same body, though- it will be a different kind of kind embodiment!
6. What's interesting with Second Life for me is to think of it as a "second skin". It allows you to perform in alternate forms and in multiple ways, in a more fluid electronic space, telematically. Certainly it can be a 3D data space where information and images can be archived, where memories can be retrieved. And it is an interactive, reliable and robust virtual meeting place for people in other places.
7. It's not necessary to get metaphysical with these operational and interactive systems. Certainly they allow us to do things we couldn't do before. And generating emotional responses in machine systems is perhaps necessary but only because it is another kind of sophisticated behavior. Nothing unusual about that. Haptic technologies will not only allow more tactile experiences on the internet but also will enable us to generate a more convincing physical presence with force-feedback of the remote person. We will not only be able to see and hear a remote body but also now feel them, but I don't see any necessity to attribute metaphysical importance to this. More real-time, intimate, effective and seductive connection between people, certainly!



left:
SPIN SUSPENSION
Artspace, Nishinomiya
Photographer: Helmut Steinhauser
STELARC



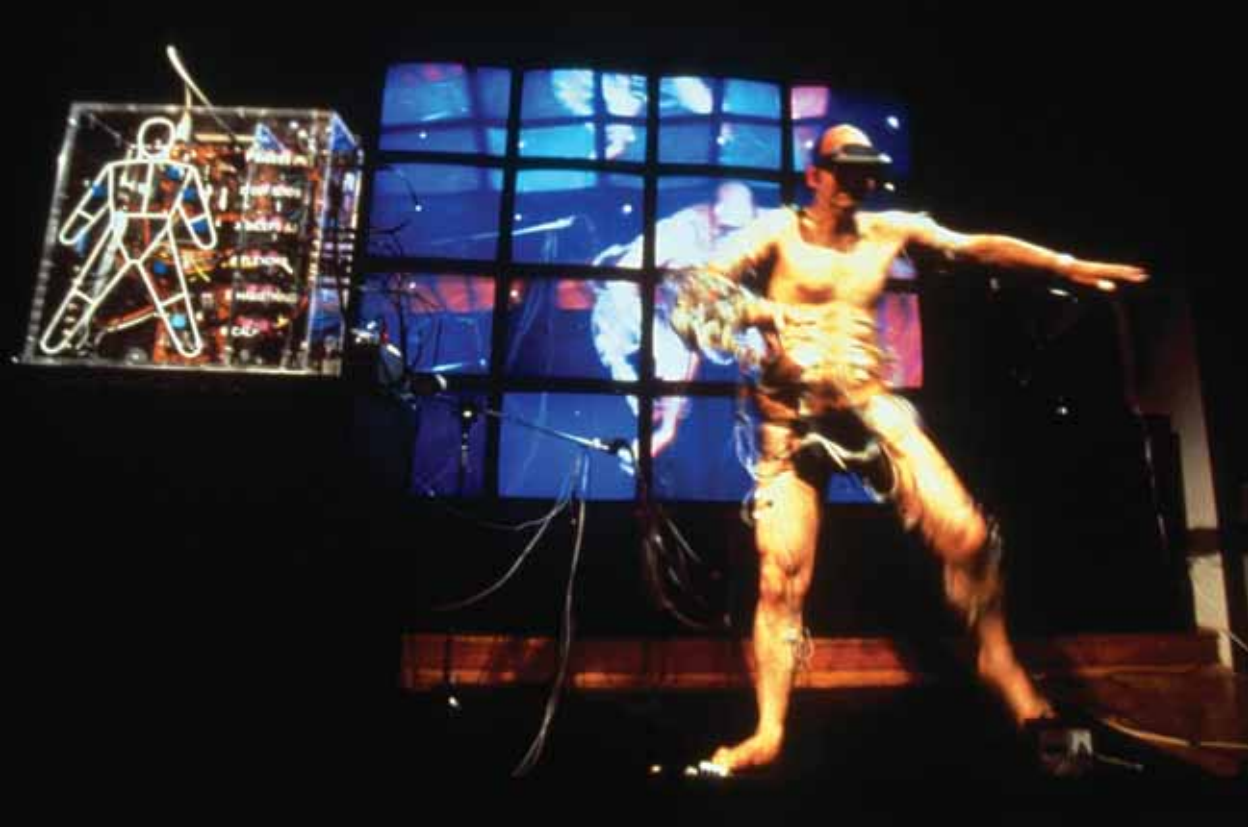
right:
THIRD HAND
Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagoya
Photographer: Simon Hunter
STELARC



AMPLIFIED BODY, LASER EYES & THIRD HAND
Maki Gallery, Tokyo
Photographer: Takatoshi Shinoda
STELARC

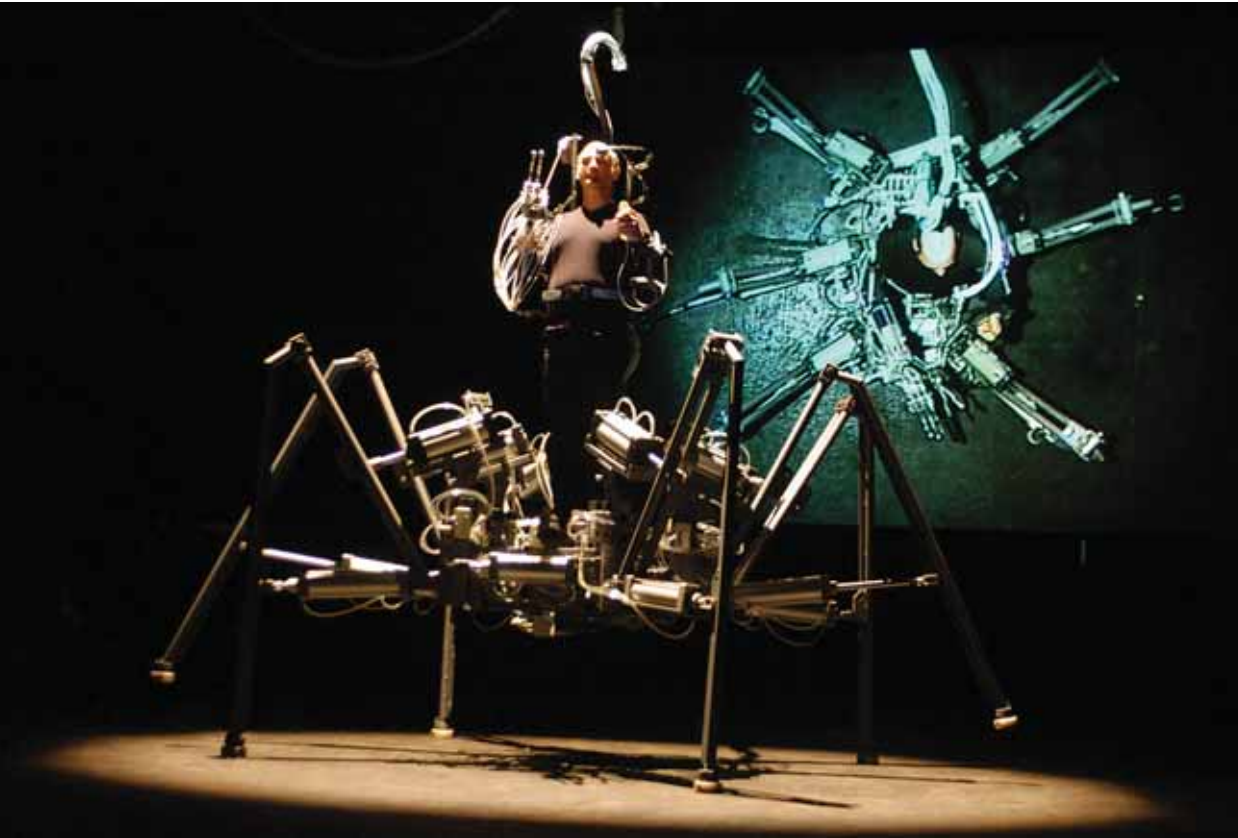


STOMACH SCULPTURE
Fifth Australian Sculpture Triennale, Melbourne
Photographer: Anthony Figallo
STELARC



left:
BLENDER
Technikunst, Melbourne
Photographer: Stelarc
STELARC & NINA SELLARS

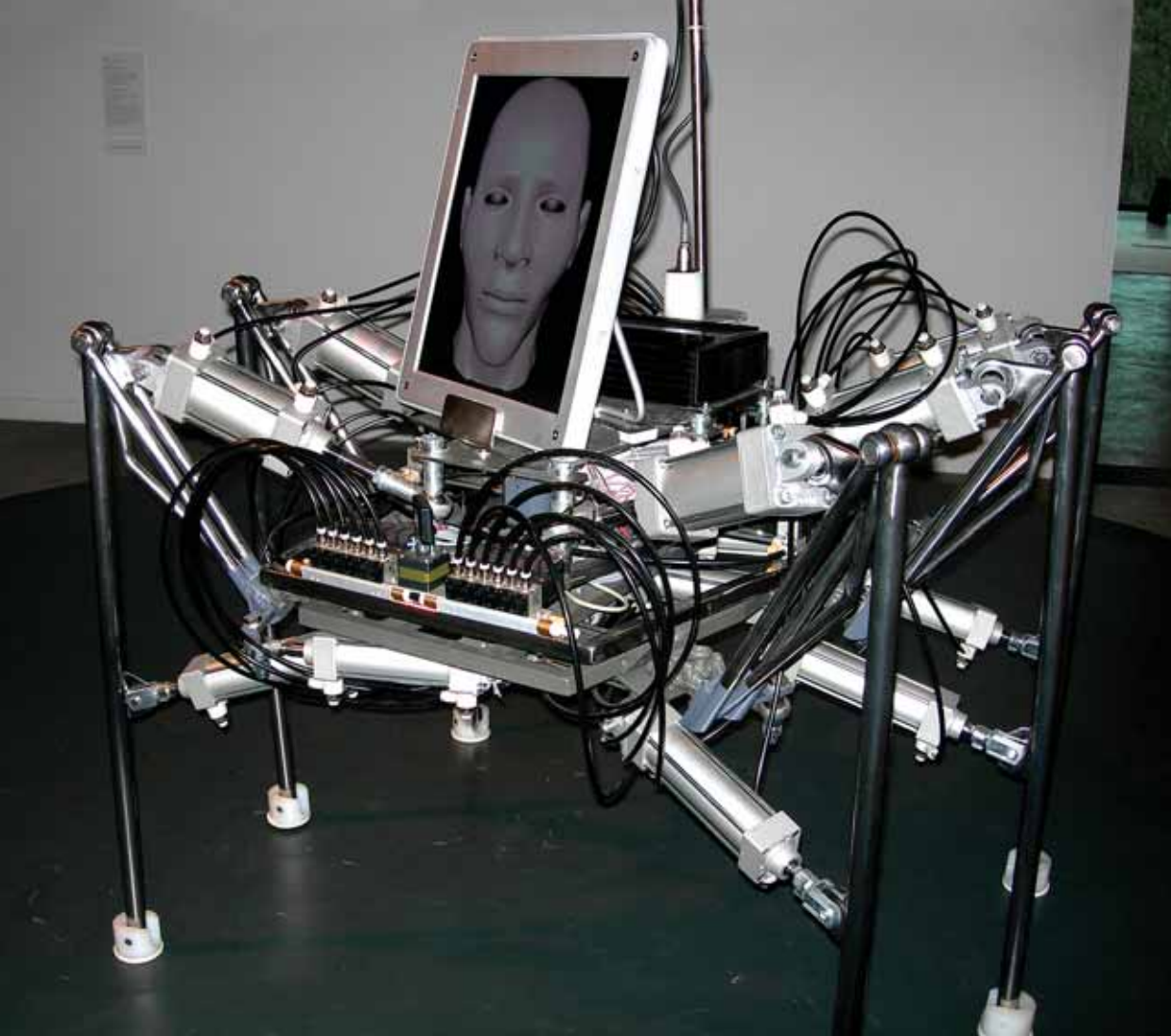
right:
SPLIT BODY: VOLTAGE-IN/VOLTAGE-OUT
Gallery Kapelica, Ljubljana
Photographer: Igor Andjelic
STELARC



EXOSKELETON
Cankarjev Dom, Ljubljana
Photographer: Igor Škafar
STELARC



SKIN FOR PROSTHETIC HEAD
San Francisco, Melbourne
Image: Barrett Fox
STELARC



left:
WALKING HEAD
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Photographer: Stelarc
STELARC



right:
EAR ON ARM
London, Los Angeles, Melbourne
Photographer: Nina Sellars
STELARC

HERMENEUTICS

María Antonia González Valerio
MIND THE GAP. HERMENEUTICS AND
ANALYTIC AESTHETICS ON NARRATIVITY
AND HISTORICITY IN THE ARTWORK

Noël Carroll states that the task of the philosophy of art is to identify the artwork;⁵⁰⁰ he proposes the concept of *identifying narratives* as a means for such identification. Narrative is concerned with the historicity and temporality of the artwork, but also with interpretation. Identifying narratives are a clear option to deal with such problematic art forms, such as the avant-garde, for example, because they have the advantage of dealing with the context of the work instead of treating it as an isolated object. A given work – whether an artwork or not – is so through its connections with preceding and succeeding works. Narrative is perhaps the best way of establishing, explaining and understanding these connections.

Although in general terms I agree with Carroll's proposal, I think that continental hermeneutics can give a new light on problems of historicity and temporality in the artwork contributing to the creation of a frame for narrative identity. The hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer is focused on issues of temporality and historicity,⁵⁰¹ while Paul Ricoeur's is on narrative identity, among other issues.⁵⁰²

My aim is to show that there can be a kind of interpretation that brings forth the narrative identity of the artwork and that this identity is not restricted to a means for identification, but is also the configuration of a dynamic identity for the artwork.

What is Art or which are the Artworks?

For the past fifty years analytic aesthetics has been trying — in fact, is still trying — to define the artwork. As Danto has put it “the question ‘What is art?’ was never understood as ‘Which are the artworks?’ [...] the distinction between works of art and ordinary things could no longer be taken for granted.”⁵⁰³ This problem may seem new (as Danto suggests) or may seem exclusive of analytic aesthetics, but it is not. It is true that continental aesthetics in general has not been interested in defining which works are to be considered artworks;

500 “That is, the recurrent task of the philosophy of art, as a matter of fact, has been to provide means to identify new and emerging work, particularly work of a revolutionary sort, as art.” Noël Carroll, “Historical Narratives and the Philosophy of Art”, *Beyond Aesthetics. Philosophical essays*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 102.

501 See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke 1. Hermeneutik I. Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1999; Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke 8. Ästhetik und Poetik I. Kunst als Aussage*, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1999.

502 See Paul Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 3. Le temps raconté*, Paris: Seuil, 1985; Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, Paris: Seuil, 1990.

503 Arthur C. Danto, “Art and Meaning”, in: Noël Carroll (ed.), *Theories of Art Today*, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2000, p. 131.

nonetheless it has tried, for the past century, to establish the specificity of the artwork; that is, to distinguish the work of art from other entities.⁵⁰⁴ Some of the most common answers, for example Heidegger's⁵⁰⁵, include distinguishing the work from the instrument and the natural being. Confronted with the avant-garde this answer turns out to be pretty simple and even naïve, one might say.

Nevertheless, the lack of interest in the avant-garde in some of the most prominent continental aesthetics⁵⁰⁶ does not prevent that continental aesthetics has accomplished a general comprehension of the artwork. This comprehension has established the artwork's unique character, and therefore, it has differentiated it from other entities.

I am aware that the kind of explanations that continental aesthetics provides for the artwork solves almost none of the problems posed by the avant-garde. One should also acknowledge that the principal aim of continental aesthetics is neither pragmatic nor epistemic, but ontological. I am not going to discuss here what this means, to use the artwork in order to solve ontological issues, such as the thesis Being-Language. What I want to point out is that time has been one of the main concerns when thinking about the artwork in continental aesthetics.

My intention is to inquire about the temporality of the artwork; because it is here the problem of narrative identity may begin, given that one of the main issues of narrativity is temporality.

A certain kind of temporality is also, for continental aesthetics, one of the main issues that allows us to understand the artwork as unique and to distinguish it from other entities, that is, temporality is one of the artwork's characteristics that cannot be thought of as exclusive of art, but, nonetheless, as constitutive of the artwork. For example, this kind of temporality is postulated by Gadamer as supra-temporality and as the artwork's own time.

The two questions — what is art and which are the artworks — should include time as a frame of interpretation because the content, the meaning and the status of the artwork are always related with temporality and historicity. Narrative is one perspective from which temporality may be considered, since it is concerned with temporal and causal connections among occurrences or events that need to be structured in a plot in order to obtain a meaning that is not given but constructed within the plot. Occurrences are not necessarily subject to narrative connection, but they can be embodied in a plot with the purpose of insertion in history and in art history. This leads to the question: why can narratives give a congruent and significant interpretation for the contested work and for artworks in general?

504 In a way, Plato opened up the debate when he specified the difference between poetry and philosophy. What is poetry and what makes this kind of *logos* different from philosophy is a question asked, for example, in *Phaedrus*.

505 See Martin Heidegger, *Die Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*, Stuttgart: Reclam, 2001.

506 For example, in Heidegger's and Gadamer's aesthetics. Although Gadamer in some of his last papers speaks of the avant-garde, he fails to provide a satisfactory answer, because he sees every artwork, whether classic or contemporary, as mimesis and *Weltanschauung*. Every artwork brings about a *Weltanschauung*, I agree with that, only the statement is too general and too abstract in order to generate a significant interpretation for a particular artwork. Speaking of conceptual art, French philosophy – for example, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, Paris: Minuit, 1991 – allege that the artwork must stand by itself; if the work fails to do that then it is not an artwork. But this cannot be a criterion for the contested artwork because it is too broad and too general.

One of the problems that Carroll tries to solve with identifying narratives is the art status of the work when it is contested. How can we know that it is an artwork? What reasons can philosophy provide to settle the status of the artwork? Carroll does not try to give a definition of art in order to avoid the problem of sufficient and necessary conditions. Therefore, according to Carroll, identifying narratives are a means of identification not a definition; but I argue that narratives can also provide the identity of the artwork given its constitutive temporality. Identity is not identification, inasmuch as the latter is only concerned with the art status and it comes out as an epistemic judgment that states only that the contested work is an artwork; it is a constative assertion. Identity, on the contrary, handles not only identification, but also a coherent interpretation of the work that reveals and creates its meaning, its uniqueness, its *Weltanschauung*. Hence, an identifying narrative is not the same as a narrative interpretation; the latter is broader and produces the meaning or possible meaning of the artwork, and this can be described as an aesthetic experience that deals with content, and not only with pleasure or disinterestedness⁵⁰⁷.

Why is the artwork a candidate for narrative interpretation? The artwork is subject to narrative interpretation because of its temporality. Time and historicity are constitutive elements of the artwork, and since narrativity is a way to deal with historical phenomena or occurrences, a narrative interpretation can originate and reveal the identity and meanings of the work. But, what kind of temporality and historicity are constitutive of the artwork, making it possible to talk about narrative interpretations?

The Artwork and its Temporality

The artwork is related with two kinds of temporality. The first one is the untimely (Nietzsche) as a rupture in history and continuity, as the emergence of something new, something that was not there before. This kind of time means that the artwork is an occurrence that brings about a worldview which stands there by itself and which opens up new possibilities of meaning. Due to its newness, the artwork stands at odds with tradition. One may argue that there are artworks that are a continuation of tradition, but in a sense continuation is transformation and not mere reduplication of the previous state of affairs. If the artwork were reduplication of the previous state of affairs it would be a copy, and there is no ontological way in which the artwork can reduplicate reality.⁵⁰⁸ Carroll has explained

507 Carroll has argued in favor of the content-oriented account of aesthetic experience, because he thinks it is nowadays the best answer to the issue. Nevertheless, I hold that the many kinds of aesthetic experience, of which Carroll gives an account, are not to be subsumed in one. Art can be experienced in multiple ways corresponding to the audiences and their expectations. See Noël Carroll, "Aesthetic Experience: A Question of Content", in: Matthew Kieran (ed.), *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005, pp. 69–97.

508 This argument is strongly related to the ontological status of mimesis, which I am not going to discuss here; for further references, María Antonia González Valerio, *El arte develado. Consideraciones estéticas sobre la hermenéutica de Gadamer*, México: Herder, 2005; and also María Antonia González Valerio, "Mimesis. Gadamer y la estética", in: Teresa Oñate (ed.), *Gadamer: Ontología estética y hermenéutica*, Madrid: Dykinson, 2005.

the ways in which the artworks relate to tradition as repetition, amplification or repudiation⁵⁰⁹, but he is referring to art tradition, whereas I am referring to tradition in Gadamer's terms, or also as the pragmatic history in Hans-Robert Jauss's terms⁵¹⁰, that is, world history.

Confronted with our worldview the artwork appears as an occurrence which breaks continuity, and in order to have an effect in history and in our worldview it must be inserted there by means of explanation and narrative interpretation – though not exclusively. This means that because the artwork deals with time as untime it emerges as something new, but its newness prevents it from having an impact on, let us say, "reality" or the external world – external, that is, to the artwork. Not only is its art status contested, it is at first incomprehensible; that is, the meaning of the artwork remains obscure. The obscurity is granted in as much as the artwork is ontologically different from the external world and it demands an aesthetic interpretation in order to understand not only its meaning, but also its aesthetic status. If the interpretation is not given, the artwork will not be understood as an artwork, but, for example, as an artifact or as a mere fragment of everyday life. This seems to be true especially for avant-garde art in so far as a trashcan can only become an artwork if it is inserted in an aesthetic frame, with an aesthetic interpretation or an aesthetic context. Hence, the need for interpretation depends on its temporality as rupture.

If the artwork is an occurrence in the aforementioned sense and an occurrence is what breaks temporal and historical continuity, then it is the task of narrative interpretation to restore the broken continuity by implementing narrative connections. What happens if this continuity or this order is not restored? Let us consider this according to the Aristotelian plot structure. The peripetia and the *pathos*, or disastrous occurrence, are the changes that break the original order; the development of the plot must bring this to an end by restoring order. Although, in general, this restoration implies moral concerns, I am only interested in highlighting the plot as a way to restore the altered order; and the most important element in the plot structure is connection or even causality.

The artwork is a peripetia that emerges as disruption and, most important, as change. Nevertheless, this change is not *ex nihilo*; if it is change it is so in respect to the previous order that it alters; hence, the previous order is within the change and it is a constitutive element of change. Therefore the change embodies the previous order; this means that the artwork embodies what precedes it and this constitutes its other temporality which is not occurrence but historicity. The artwork has two kinds of temporality: occurrence and historicity. The historicity is not construal; it belongs implicitly to the artwork.

There are some elements within the artwork that are manifest relations to the past artworks and to world history or to the original time of production; I shall call these "historical elements"; they are concerned with art and world history. Historical elements concerning art history can be thought of, as Carroll suggests, as repetition, amplification or repudiation.

509 Noël Carroll, "Art, Practice and Narrative", *Beyond Aesthetics*.

510 Hans Robert Jauss, "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory", *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.

Nonetheless this is not the only way in which an artwork embodies art history; that is, the link with the past artworks is not only an affirmation or negation of the previous art. Intertextuality and quotation are other ways in which the artwork embodies the past and they are not valid exclusively for literature; Bacon's painting *Study after Velázquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X* is a clear example of pictorial intertextuality that also shows the two kinds of temporality that I propose. The painting is an occurrence that is experienced as a disruption of everyday life, of previous art and of sensations and feelings in part due to the horrendous scream; but also its historical elements are evident, for example, the portrait, the realistic paintings, Ireland, Catholicism, Munch, etc.

Sometimes some of the historical elements are evident or manifest, as in Bacon's example, but there are several that require a more elaborate interpretation in order to be grasped; and not only when the artwork is contested, but also when we want to understand its meaning. If the artwork embodies historical elements, then these are part of the work's meaning, and should be grasped, at least in part. The comprehension of historical elements depends on the kind of audience; therefore it can be minimal as in a constative judgment or as in the insertion of the work in a genre (most of the time an audience can locate a work as a novel or as poem, as a painting or as performance) or tremendously broad as in art criticism.

If I call these elements historical it is because they have an inner connection with art history, as we can see in the insertion of the work in genres or trends (however flexible they are), and with world history, as the signs of an epoch that the artwork shows most of the time; the connection with world history is also shown by the links that an audience establishes between the artwork's worldview and the contemporary worldview.

Narrative Interpretation

Due to the two kinds of temporality that constitute an artwork, it is subject to narrative interpretation. What is narrative interpretation and how it differs from other kinds of interpretation? Certainly there are different ways and strategies to interpret an artwork, these strategies differ as long as their aims and ranges differ. It would be very naïve to consider only one kind of interpretation and to consider it as the proper or correct interpretation. An artwork is not always interpreted as art, and not only because it is contested. The interpreter can be looking for something non-aesthetic in the artwork, for example, biographical hints, historical data, the use of specific techniques, the artist's political filiation, the implicit ideology, etc. This kind of interpretation is not an aesthetical one since its principal aim is not the work as artwork but as cultural manifestation. I do not pretend to define what an aesthetical interpretation is or when it is accomplished; I simply want to state that there are different approaches to an artwork and that not all of them intend to experience or even classify it as an artwork.

Among the approaches to an artwork that intend to consider and regard it as an artwork, the narrative interpretation is not the only one; there are experiences that are concerned only with aesthetic pleasure or with the contemplation of beauty (among other

aesthetic categories); the contemplator will not try to bring forth a complex meaning of the artwork but to feel pleasure in the contemplation or even to look for a kind of entertainment. Not every audience will regard the artwork putting forth aesthetic and theoretical concepts or historical elements that may amplify the work's meaning. In this respect, narrative interpretation deals a lot more with the artwork's content than with aesthetic experience as pleasure.

Narrative interpretation aims to create a plot for the artwork given its temporality as occurrence. Therefore, one of the main purposes is to establish which elements within the work are subject to narration; these should be the historical elements. Regarding art history, narrative interpretation will focus on those elements that show the connection between the work and art history; for example, genres, themes and techniques that allude directly or indirectly to past artworks. This is a way to place the work in the art tradition, and if the work is to be understood as an artwork it must be placed in the art tradition because whatever the artwork is, it is so not autonomously but as transformation of the preceding order within art tradition. In a way, an artwork stands by itself as an occurrence, but also, and at the same time, it depends on history in order to have a certain kind of sense conferred to it. Every artwork is in fact and inherently connected to art tradition; the role of narrative interpretation is to make these connections understandable through the plot.

The ways in which an artwork is connected to art tradition and/or art history are not static or definitive. The historical elements belong to the artwork, the connections do not; they belong to narrative interpretation and to the plot, hence, the story can be told in a number of different ways without altering or adding elements that are not to be found in the artwork, for example, the author's intentions.⁵¹¹ The narrative interpretation emphasizes

511 The author's intentions have been an issue in the current debate between anti-intentionalists and intentionalists. Narrative interpretation does not consider that the author's intentions are the best or the only way to construe the artwork. Although I agree with Robert Stecker's statement that the artwork is the product of the artist's intentional activity and I think that they are to be held in consideration for the contested work, narrative interpretation does not postulate that the meaning of the artwork coincides with the artist's intentions; the meaning is discovered and constructed via interpretation; therefore, the cognitive value should be thought of more broadly than a series of utterance or mere statements of intention. The example given by Stecker about Sir Arthur Conan Doyle makes clear that Stecker is considering the artwork as a series of utterances subject to truth or falsity claims, but the artwork's meaning goes far beyond this kind of claims. See Robert Stecker, "Moderate Actual Intentionalism Defended", in: *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Nr. 64, 2006. Continental aesthetics has contended that truth in art is not a matter of correspondence; hence, I found John Gibson's thesis pretty interesting, since it states that "the conversation that exists between literary works and our critical practices is one of the mechanisms by which a culture articulates a sense of its world, and thus that literary works and our critical traditions are mutually implicated in a practice that itself bears cognitive value [...] our critical encounters with literature do not offer truth, at least not in the standard philosophical sense of the term." John Gibson, "Interpreting Words, Interpreting Worlds", in: *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Nr. 64, 2006, pp. 448–449. The artwork demands and puts forward a truth that cannot be apprehended with the standard philosophical sense of the term; narrative interpretation intends to deal with this kind of truth which entails also verisimilitude, therefore, Joseph Margolis' plausible interpretation that allows indeterminacy is an adequate way to frame narrative interpretation as a constructivist approach to artworks. I concur with Alex Kiefer who defends the contribution of the reader for the production of meaning in art. See Alex Kiefer, "The Intentional Model in Interpretation", in: *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Nr. 63, 2005, pp. 279–280. That is why I find the discussion between Carroll and Stecker about Verne's racism in *Mysterious Island* a clear example of the consequences of interpreting the artwork without the temporal and causal connections that

those historical elements that are important or pertinent to the kind of story that it is going to be told; this means that, as any story, narrative interpretation includes principles of selection and organization that are indispensable to the construction of the plot, since there is no plot that can, at once, contain all the connections that can be established for the historical elements. Not only does the plot select the historical elements, it also selects the past artworks with which the connection is to be established, and this selection constitutes a perspective of interpretation that is dependent on the aim and range of each interpretation. Which historical elements are to be highlighted and then connected depends on which art history or which fragment of art history the work is to be inserted in. Furthermore, because art history and art tradition are in constant change, narrative interpretations are always adapting the stories to incorporate the changes and to fit them into art history and art tradition.

Therefore, one single artwork can be subject to multiple narrative interpretations. If this kind of interpretation links the artwork with art history, then it also represents a way in which art history is updated; narrative interpretations influence art history because they provide reasonable explanations of the artwork in order to be admitted within art history.

Nevertheless, an artwork is not only related to art history but also to world history and a narrative interpretation that does not want to exclude the extra-aesthetic features should establish and explain the connections of the artwork with history inasmuch as art is historical, that is, it emerges from history, has a place in it and affects it. Hegelianism, Marxism and hermeneutics have insisted in the importance of historical perspectives for the artwork that do not constrain it to have an effect exclusively in the art tradition and in the art world. The effects of the artwork should be measured according to its impact on world history and on tradition in general terms, in order to elude an aesthetical purism that would only regard the aesthetic attributes of the artwork. Therefore, a narrative interpretation should consider this in order to structure a plot that has two directions, one towards art history and the other towards world history.

The historical elements that enable the connection of the artwork with world history and tradition can be considered as the worldview that is to be found within the artwork, since this worldview is a transformation and a statement that in a sense confronts the worldview to which the work historically belongs. Confrontation does not necessarily mean

a plot provides; if this connection were made, the problem would not be a problem at all, since once we insert the artwork in the fragment of history and art history to which it belongs, it is clear that the intention of the work – Verne's actual intention corresponds to another kind of discussion, for example, to Verne's political or ideological filiations – is not to depict a racist view of African Americans. Narrative interpretation can create a plot that connects Verne's novel with XIX century tradition and also with, for example, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, in order to create a congruent and coherent interpretation of the artwork and not of Verne's position vis à vis African Americans. See Robert Stecker, "Interpretation and the Problem of Relevant Intention", in: Matthew Kieran (ed.), *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*, p. 275; and Noël Carroll, "Anglo-American Aesthetics and Contemporary Criticism: Intention and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion", *Beyond Aesthetics*, pp. 185–189.

criticism or repudiation; the artwork is more or less a reaction, positive or negative, to the actual worldview. For example in Orwell's *1984* or in Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* the commitment to world history or local history is evident.

The two directions for the plot mentioned above will vary according to the artwork, since there are artworks whose commitment to art tradition is stronger than to world history and vice versa. Toni Morrison's novels or Goya's painting *El 2 de mayo* have a stronger commitment to world history than Duchamp's *Fountain* or Gabriel Orozco's *Oval with Pendulum*, and narrative interpretation should make it clear. Therefore narrative interpretation is far from being a definition; it deals with the specific features and historical elements of the particular artwork; hence, it is specific and singular for each artwork.

Even when an artwork has a stronger commitment to art tradition this does not mean that it can be interpreted only in that direction, since the link and the insertion in world history via a worldview is undeniable. The context in which an artwork is inserted is always double regardless of its intention to be only an art manifesto, because art says or states or represents or depicts something about the world, it emerges from it and must return to it, since art does not belong to an autonomous universe – an aesthetical or fictional universe.⁵¹² For that reason, the context that creates the possibility for a work to be an artwork cannot be comprehended solely as aesthetic, since the artwork's meaning is not only aesthetic and cannot be reduced to a confrontation with art tradition.

Hegel made it clear that art is not only art but a way in which a culture manifests itself through history. Therefore, the artwork as an occurrence has a double impact when disrupting order; it disrupts art tradition and tradition; hence, it must be reinserted in both.

Narrative interpretation differs from Hegelian art history as far as the latter needs to configure from the beginning a universal concept of art, that is, art as manifestation of the Idea, then it narrates art history as a totality conforming with the system, and last, Hegelian art history analyzes the particular artwork in order to explain and insert it within art history (which is part of the system) and world history (which is also part of the system). Hegel deals not only with totality, but also with a concept of art that precedes art history, even when the concept of arte must be adequate to art history and adapt itself to changes of art and world history.⁵¹³

This is precisely what narrative interpretation does not do; it does not produce an art concept or a definition of art because it takes distance from universal pretensions that try to explain with the same concept or definition the Lascaux caves, Sor Juana's *Primero Sueño* and Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill*, for example. Instead of elaborating a single concept for all those manifestations, it comprehends them as historical phenomena that require a frame of interpretation in order to be grasped as archeological phenomena (Lascaux caves),

512 Aesthetic autonomy, as a consequence of Kantian aesthetics, has been strongly criticized for its purism which prevents the artwork from having a significant and practical effect in the world. Marxism, postmarxism and hermeneutics have tried, for the past century, to gain ontological and historical effectiveness for the artwork.

513 See G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik I*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970.

as the account of a soul's quest (*Primero Sueño*) or as a product of entertainment (*Kill Bill*); or it can elaborate a narrative interpretation to comprehend the three as artworks.

Narrative interpretation does not require a concept or a definition; furthermore, it also avoids dealing with art history as a totality, since it only needs to insert the work in a fragment of history, inasmuch as the narrative begins *in medias res* and ends whenever it is pertinent, that is, the story does not necessarily end with the moment of the particular artwork (as Carroll states, because the purpose of his identifying narratives is only identification). Narrative interpretation may want to illuminate the meaning of the work attending to its effects in succeeding artworks. After all, the identity of an artwork does not lie only in the past; the forthcoming and the expectations are also part of its identity and are also historical elements. Therefore, I agree with Carroll when he states that "The identity of art (...) is conceived to be historical."⁵¹⁴ But I would add that this is so due to its temporality as occurrence.

On Narrative and Narrative Connections

To give a definition of narrative is, to a certain extent, the same as defining the artwork; the definition of narrative encounters more or less the same problems, for example, narrowness or broadness⁵¹⁵. Instead of defining narrative, let us focus on some of its fundamental features.

In a minimal sense a narrative is constituted by a plot whose essential characteristic is the connection between at least two events. For a narrative interpretation this would be the connection of the artwork with art and world history through historical elements.

According to Ricoeur⁵¹⁶, there are two kinds of connections: Temporal and causal. Temporal connections in the form of one-after-the-other are not subject exclusively to a chronological order.⁵¹⁷ To give order to a succession does not mean that it is enough to say "this comes after that". For a narrative interpretation that deals with the artwork it will never be enough to state that pop art comes after abstract expressionism. It is to a certain extent necessary to establish the link between both, but for narrative interpretation this will not be sufficient in order to understand the meanings or to account for the identity of pop art.

Succession is of course a central element of temporal connections, but not the only one. Furthermore, the plot requires causal connections in the form of "one because of the other". It is important to notice that temporal and causal connections are both necessary and that one cannot be subsumed into the other. Causal connections alone will give a structure but not a plot, and temporal connections will give only a succession, though not solely a chronological one.

514 Noël Carroll, "Art, Practice, and Narrative", *Beyond Aesthetics*, p. 72.

515 I have extensively analyzed fictional narratives in *La hermenéutica y la obra de arte literaria. Un tratado sobre la mimesis* (forthcoming).

516 See Paul Ricoeur, *Temps et récit I. L'intrigue et le récit historique*, Paris: Seuil, 1991.

517 Chronology is frequently broken for the sake of understanding as in flashbacks and prolepsis. The succession in time is not sufficient to create a reasonable order that accounts for events.

Carroll has given some conditions for narrative and narrative connection: 1. Contains more than one event. 2. Represents a series of events. 3. Must be about a unified subject. 4. The events must be connected, time-ordered in a sequence. 5. The earlier events in the sequence are at least causally necessary conditions for the causation of later events.⁵¹⁸

The argument sustained by Carroll coincides in general with the traditional ways of understanding narrative and even of defining it; for example, Gerald Prince states that narrative is “the representation of at least two real or fictive events in a time sequence”⁵¹⁹ and Dorrit Cohn that it is “a series of statements that deal with a causally related sequence of events that concern human (or human-like) beings”⁵²⁰.

Such definitions are centered in the connection issue, nevertheless there are other issues that are central to narrative and that can be thought of as the principal line for defining it, such as Luz Aurora Pimentel’s definition: “the progressive construction, via a narrator, of a world of human action and interaction, whose referent can be real or fictional”⁵²¹. The narrator and the created world are the central issues in this definition that sets aside the connection problem.

Can narrative interpretation be thought as a narrative whether fictional or historical and therefore be understood according to the parameters for fictional or historical narratives? Narrative interpretation does not seek to create a world, real or fictional, nor is it interested in the portrayal of characters – and the author is not a character in this kind of interpretation. It is far simpler in its structure and has as its central aim to establish connections between the artwork and history. Therefore, narrative interpretation is not, strictly speaking, a narrative, but a way of using narrative connections in order to generate a coherent and congruent interpretation of the artwork given its time as occurrence and historicity. Hence, I will focus on narrative connections which are a way to relate events in a causal and temporal way; the events related are, on one hand, the artwork or the contested work, and on the other hand, art history, art tradition and world history.

Temporal connections are to be established backward and forward – for the latter whenever it is possible. To create a sequence between past and present artworks is fundamental for art history and for narrative interpretation as far as art is a disruption that needs to be reinserted in continuity. Nonetheless, this continuity in history cannot be thought of as a simple one or as a statement of sameness in history. Quite the contrary, continuity is the result of change and transformation, therefore it is a “discontinuous continuity”, as it were, in which new occurrences are always happening, introducing an altered order which is finally reinserted in the previous one; for that reason it becomes a new order. Sequence, then, is not a progressive line in time since discontinuous continuity means that the lines

518 Noël Carroll, “On the Narrative Connection”, in: *Beyond Aesthetics*.

519 Gerald Prince, *Narratology: The Form and Function of Narrative*, Amsterdam: Mouton, 1982, p. 4.

520 Dorrit Cohn, *The Distinction of Fiction*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999, p. 12.

521 Luz Aurora Pimentel, *El relato en perspectiva. Estudio de teoría narrativa*, México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México/Siglo XXI, 1998, p. 10.

go up-and-down and create connections among many events and draw loops between periods of time. Therefore, temporal connections do not only assume the form of “one-after-the-other”. To interpret an artwork in this manner is to understand it as having no fixed relations with artworks (past or present), but mobile ones; the network of relations is the effect of interpretation.

Causal connections are perhaps the most problematic since the meaning of causality is too “strong” in traditional philosophy; for example, the necessary causality in Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*. When connection among events is to be thought of in terms of causality, philosophers have tried to attenuate the meaning of causality, as in Ricoeur’s case or Carroll’s case; neither of them is willing to argue that the previous event can be understood as the cause of the later one. In that sense, Carroll suggests the causally necessary conditions for the causation of the later event, which means that “the narrative connection must be causally relevant to the effect event”⁵²².

In a recent discussion, Gregory Currie⁵²³ recognizes that causation is central to narratives as a coherent set of connections between events, albeit he asserts that causality in this sense is more an illusion of dependence between events and that, hence, connection in narrative is an illusion. He proposes relations of reasons instead of causality, and by reason-based relations he advances this formula: “where *A* and *B* are occurrences, *A* is a reason for *B* if the agent’s belief in the occurrence of *A* was part of his or her reason for doing, or intentionally bringing it about that, *B*”⁵²⁴. The core of the formula is the agent’s belief and it is centered on the agent’s actions which, to a certain extent, are governed by reason. But for narrative interpretation the agent’s belief is controversial since it deals with author’s intentions.

Causal connections are in general conflictive for narrative interpretation because the past event – that is, the past artwork – and the present event – the artwork subject to interpretation – are neither the effect nor the result of one single agent. Therefore, the past artwork cannot be by itself the cause or the reason of the succeeding artwork; the connection is to be established a posteriori; can we assert that the past artwork is relevant to the creation of the succeeding artwork? The story to be told is, then, retrospective and it tries to locate the causes or reasons in a plausible way, rather than in a necessary one. Otherwise, if we assert that the past artwork was necessary for the succeeding one, the story will have the form of Hegelian art history which considers each moment as necessary in the development of the spirit.

Narrative interpretation is not a causal relation in a strong sense; Mexican revolutionary painting of the first half of the XX century, for example, is not the cause of Mexican abstract painting which comes after. Nevertheless, to understand the latter, a story must be told to make us aware of the connection between the one and the other as disruption.

522 Noël Carroll, “On the Narrative Connection”, p. 126.

523 Gregory Currie, “Narrative Representation of Causes”, in: *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Nr. 64, 2006.

524 Ibid., p. 313.

Abstract painting gains meaning when thinking about it as confronted with historical and revolutionary painting, but can we claim that if revolutionary painting had not existed then abstract painting would not exist either? José Luis Cuevas' paintings reacted to David Alfaro Siqueiros' as a matter of fact; the relation, however, is not causal in a strong sense, but meaningful, and that is what a narrative interpretation should make clear in order to construe both styles of painting.

Causal connections are to be understood as the meaningful relations that the interpretation creates for each artwork, and if I keep the term "causal", it is not only to distinguish it from temporal connections, but also to state that some elements of past artworks are relevant to the interpretation of present artworks, though relevant does not mean in this case, reason-based since that would make it dependent on an agent's belief.

Narrative Identity as a result of Narrative Interpretation

When Ricoeur advanced his model of *narrative identity* at the conclusion of *Temps et récit* and further explored it in *Soi-même comme un autre*, he was trying to understand the self between the anti-cogito and the cogito. Narrative identity, then, is a model for the self but the self is not the only instance that can be thought of in that way. Although the artwork cannot be assimilated to the self, because its mode of being differs at least in temporality and historicity – which is the issue that concerns us here – it is precisely its temporality which allows us to employ the narrative identity model.

The artwork's temporality differs from the self's one in one fundamental way: supra-temporality. The artwork is not limited by its original time of composition;⁵²⁵ it transcends time and history without being unhistorical. This transcendence gives a constitution to the artwork as identity-difference, as Gadamer suggests. Ricoeur has thought the identity-difference for the self in terms of the idem-ipse dialectic, that is, something remains just as something changes.⁵²⁶

Something that is temporal and historical in such an essential way⁵²⁷ is subject to narrative identity, since its identity depends, in part, on the stories told. In this case, story

⁵²⁵ Heidegger in *Time and Being* has explained the temporality of the *Dasein* as finitude and as *Geworfenheit* (thrownness). These characteristics are exactly what the artwork does not share with existence. Therefore, the artwork cannot be conceived in terms of the *Dasein* mode of being; its temporality is different and goes way beyond particular existences. Gadamer's aesthetics begins with this issue, that is, to comprehend the artwork beyond the temporality and historicity of existence. The categories with which Gadamer explains it are the *Gegenwärtigkeit* and the *Aktualität* of the artwork, which means that the artwork has its own present and continues to have an effect far beyond its original time of composition.

⁵²⁶ Change as constitutive of identity is fundamental for Gadamer's and Ricoeur's narrative identity. We can see in this a clear Heraclitean heritage: On those stepping into rivers staying the same other and other waters flow (DK22B12). As the same thing in us is living and dead, waking and sleeping, young and old. For these things having changed around are those, and conversely those having changed around are these (DK22B88).

⁵²⁷ "An entity that exists only by always being something different is temporal in a more radical sense that everything that belongs to history. It has its being only in becoming and in return." Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke I. Hermeneutik I. Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 128.

signifies interpretation. The artwork has a history of its own which as a story tells of the interpretations and meanings that it has gained through time, the connections that have been made between one particular artwork and others, etc. The artwork is in the stories told about it, and it is so because of its temporality and historicity. Were the artwork not immersed in history so profoundly, and were it not essentially temporal, we might then be able to give a closed definition. Art, however, and art tradition are always inserted in mobile connections throughout history which transform the meaning of art. In a way, the artwork embodies its meaning, as Danto states, but in another way, this meaning is subject to change and transformation due to the temporality and historicity of art. The story told by narrative interpretation puts forward an identity for the artwork that is not immediately given in the moment that the work comes to light, but is gradually shaped by its connections – temporal and causal ones.

Identity is neither identification nor definition; it is larger than identification and it is unfinished, therefore it is the opposite of definition, even to open definitions or cluster concepts. The identity is unfinished since there is no plot that can at once include all the possible stories that are to be told for one artwork; each plot has an end but each artwork is subject to a lot of plots that create its identity as mobile and unfinished. If I insist on the unfinished character of identity it is because it is the way to leave the work open for further interpretations, stories, appropriations, effects. In the end, we should speak not of an identity but of identities for the artwork which is always changing, while it always remains the same.

Identity is the result of the *idem* and *ipse*, sameness and selfhood dialectic, but this relation only emerges when we consider the temporal dimension which keeps the artwork in constant change through time and interpretations: "time is here the factor of dissemblance, of variation, of difference."⁵²⁸ Therefore, the identity of the artwork is shaped as an uninterrupted discontinuous continuity based on the principle of permanence in time.

With the artwork's temporality, as explained above, and following Ricoeur's narrative identity for the self, the artwork turns out to be: an occurrence which disrupts the previous order, something that demands its insertion in history and something that gains its identity through plots or narrative interpretations. This identity refers to another kind of time for the artwork which is not the untimely nor the historical but the supra-temporal; hence, we can state that the artwork both occurs and disrupts, then it is narrativized via temporal and causal connections and inserted in art history, art tradition and world tradition; finally, the narrative interpretations configure the identity of the artwork attending to historical changes and its equally changing reception. Its identity is the result of having a story and, just as with self identity, this does not come about in the first moment, nobody is born with an identity – though maybe almost everyone is born with a name that serves as identification or recognition nominally; Carroll's identifying narratives are perhaps subject to this kind

⁵²⁸ Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, p. 142.

of treatment, as recognition of the work as an artwork – but creates one in the interaction with world and people. To have an identity is to have a personal history and a story, it is to create one's self through the stories that we tell about ourselves and that we are told; as the Spanish philosopher María Zambrano has put it, narrativity is an ontological necessity for existence.⁵²⁹ And narrativity may also be an ontological necessity for the artwork, because it is in stories that it obtains an identity that is larger than the possible meanings that a critic can give for a given artwork. Therefore, narrative interpretations make the artwork's meanings denser and more understandable.

Narration, according to Ricoeur, operates with the organization of a singular occurrence in a continuous flux; hence, narration makes the occurrence a rational and comprehensible fact via its introduction in history. Narrativity is a way to make something intelligible, since it inserts the occurrence in "a story in which the sedimentation tends to cover and in extreme cases to abolish the innovation which preceded it."⁵³⁰ To cover innovation via sedimentation means for narrative interpretation to insert the artwork in history, in the sedimentation of history which is contained *in nuce* in the artwork as previous order.

If we concede that history and narrativity abolish innovation, we may not be surprised at Gilles Deleuze's attacks on narrativity – as a kind of Hegelianism – since he understands the artwork as innovation and occurrence that cannot be historicized⁵³¹. Innovation must remain as innovation, according to Deleuze, otherwise its possibilities for creating new times and spaces are suppressed. Nevertheless, as I have argued, another perspective from which the artwork may be understood is to insert its newness, via connections and plot, into history; narrative interpretation extends and makes the occurrence denser because meanings are larger when confronted and enriched by history and stories. Narratives do not annul the occurrence but insert it in history. To understand the ways in which narrative manages the occurrence let us focus on Ricoeur's proposal in order to continue with the construction of narrative interpretation and identity for the artwork.

Ricoeur calls "narrative redeployment" the possibility that narrative has to draw out the otherness already contained within the self; narrative interpretation extracts the historical elements contained in the artwork that can be thought of in terms of alterity; it is the presence of the other – past artworks, history, etc. – as a kind of palimpsest that is redeployed by interpretation which in turns generates the connections that can redeploy what lies *in nuce* in the artwork.

In *Temps et récit* Ricoeur speaks of the plot as a *discordant concordance* and as a *synthesis of the heterogeneous*; when narrative is employed to explain the self it means that plotting is a requirement of concordance (the plot in Aristotelian terms⁵³²) and simultaneously it is

529 María Zambrano, "Misericordia" in: *A propósito de Benito Pérez Galdós y su obra*, Bogotá: Norma, 1993.

530 Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, p. 146.

531 See Gilles Deleuze, *Pourparlers*, Paris: Minuit, 1990.

532 The plot is explained by Aristotle as *mimesis praxeos*; it is the most important part for the tragedy and it is the causal order in which change is inserted, like *peripetia* and *pathos*. See Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1450b22–1451a15.

the admission of discordances (the *peripetia* and the *pathos*); precisely this is what Ricoeur understands by narrative configuration: the mediation between concordance and discordance.⁵³³ The configurative act is the force of unification, according to Ricoeur, and this is what narrative interpretation does as an act of configuration; it treats the occurrence as discordance but, via the plot as restoration of order, it creates concordance in art tradition, art history and world history. Therefore, the artwork will appear in narrative interpretation as a discordant concordance: discordance is necessary to comprehend it as occurrence, just as much as concordance is also necessary to comprehend it as inserted in the flux of discontinuous continuity. This ultimately shapes the narrative status of the occurrence which by its own happening is already open to narrativity.

The narrative occurrence, then, is a source of discordance since it just happens and a source of concordance since it makes possible the continuation of the story and of history. The singular character of the artwork is a disruption that allows the progression of art history as variation and constant change. To tell the story in order to insert the new work in history is to create an order in change, to account for the transformations. And this insertion is accomplished by connectedness because the connection between occurrences – the plotting – allows the integration of the diversity, the variability and the discontinuity, which are essential for the artwork; integrating it but not annulling it since the artwork is to be understood as discordant concordance.

Ricoeur's theory, by contraposition to Deleuze's, does not present the occurrence (*peripetia*) as complete disruption because it also potentially entails what follows (its insertion in history). If the artwork did not potentially entail its insertion in history by means of plotting, it would remain solely as disruption; nonetheless tradition also means the capability of incorporating the variations in a discontinuous continuity. The act of plotting, then, constitutes an effect of meaning for the occurrence which by means of transfiguration becomes an integral part of history and obtains a dynamic identity given by the told story. The artwork in its identity is dynamic and not fixed as the result of the interaction between *idem* and *ipse*; this means that there are some elements in the artwork which constitute its sameness and which are not completely altered by interpretation. It is certainly a matter of debate to decide and identify those elements that remain the same through changes and history; this deserves further consideration, but for the time being I can say that the concept of sedimentation refers not only to the meanings more or less stable in tradition and which allow the comprehension of the work for an audience not contemporaneous to the time of the work's production. The concept of sedimentation refers also to the structure and configuration of the work. The elements which are subject to continuous variability are all those that require the reader's or spectator's participation. Roman Ingarden's⁵³⁴ and Wolfgang Iser's⁵³⁵ theories

533 See Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, p. 168.

534 See Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1973, Chapter 13.

535 See Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, Chapter 8.

of indeterminacy are pretty viable to understand the possibilities of variation which are already contained in the artwork and are not necessarily posited by interpretation. These theories are focused on literature; nevertheless the spaces of indeterminacy are something that every artwork leaves open for the participation of the spectator.

Furthermore, the dynamic identity of the artwork is shown in the relation between historical elements and connections. Since connections are posited and originated by narrative interpretation and do not belong to the artwork's structure, they are always mobile, hence, dynamic and subject to reconfigurations and diverse plottings. The redeployment of alterity is also dynamic inasmuch as it is carried out by narrative interpretation which is always telling different stories for the same artwork and thus making it a living thing.

The mediation of the other, of alterity – the previous order, the connection with past artworks and the narrative interpretation – is constituent of the artwork's meaning; therefore, the artwork can be considered as “soi-même comme un autre”, oneself as another. Hence, the artwork is not to be treated as an isolated object in the middle of nowhere or as standing absolutely by itself. Art is what it is through connections, through history, through the stories in which we place it and that shape our everyday life, art traditions and traditions. Narrative interpretation puts forward narrative identities for the artworks; without that art would only be art.⁵³⁶

⁵³⁶ I would like to thank Greta Rivara and Luz Aurora Pimentel for their helpful comments and criticisms.

ABSTRACTS / AUTHORS

POLONA TRATNIK:
Notes on Contemporary Art:
Critical Resistance and Activist Approaches

The paper discusses resistance endeavours in contemporary art and culture. Nowadays critical projects in culture originate in the legacy of the artistic historical avant-gardes, however they have significant contemporary features, yet they arise under global conditions. Contemporary critical practices detect noise in informational systems and they as well perform noise on their own. According to mathematical theory of communication noise brings mistakes, uncertainty, loses and incapability into the system and cannot be ignored. Resistance in art and culture today follows the logic of information society and thus asserts the voice in two manners: on one hand in the mycelium each receiver could be a potential broadcaster or each user a potential distributor, on the other hand in more radical approaches the cultural activists try to take over (to occupy) the broadcasting positions. Cultural activists aim to hold the information, to establish a matrix, within which they manipulate information. Critical and resistant art is a field of struggle, where dominant discourses and their modes of codification are revealed, questioned and criticized. In such a manner art offers different views, transforms the existing values, meanings and codifications, deforms them or can even act as a kind of a virus. As a disturbance in a system such acting is important for establishing critical consciousness in wider public.

KEY WORDS: contemporary art, critical art, resistance, activism, informatization, codification.

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BOJANA KUNST:
Critical Potentiality

The article analyses how today material practice of art confronts a certain important difference in the understanding of its materiality. That shift is the result of the contemporary understanding of life, which is progressively appropriated and regulated by global capital and the global economy. Not only the potentiality of nature is performed and privatised in advance, but at the same time also aesthetic and cognitive competences of intensities, energies and events are at the core of contemporary commodification and the economy of entertainment. Precisely the necessity of reflecting on the processes that these changes have brought about in the material practice of art is deeply inscribed in the ways we think about critical potentiality today. The material practice here is not understood as a materialistic awareness of historical and ideological discourses, but rather as a constant physical connecting of collaborative protocols of knowledge production, bodily experiences, and inhabitations. Instead of the deconstruction of linguistic and ideological operations and the disclosure of differences, the employment of contemporary protocols of collaboration allows for the possibility of creating virtual spaces in between. It is these virtual spaces in between that enable the different practices to be articulated at once both inside and outside. Protocols are then no longer grounded in linguistic conditioning and the isolated clash of concepts, aesthetics and ideologies, but in division, networking and transitions between the actual and the virtual in the intensification of intensities and actual connections. Critical thought thus needs to re-discover a way to articulate the potentiality of processes and protocols of life that may bring about a change in the ontological place of art itself.

KEY WORDS: potentiality, critique, art and life, protocol, collaboration, appropriation.

BOJANA KUNST, Ph.D. is a philosopher, dramaturge and performance theoretician. She is currently working as a researcher at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts – Department for Sociology. She is an assistant professor at the *University of Primorska*. She is teaching the course on philosophy of the body and performing arts in the postgraduate course *Philosophy of Visual Culture*. She is a member of the editorial board of *Maska Magazine*, *Amfiteater* and *Performance Research*. Her essays have appeared in numerous journals and publications and she has taught and lectured extensively in Europe. She published three books, among them *Impossible Body* (Ljubljana 1999), *Dangerous Connections: Body, Philosophy and Relation to the Artificial* (Ljubljana, 2004). She is also working as a dramaturg and artistic collaborator. She is leading the international seminar for performing arts in Ljubljana.

MIŠKO ŠUVAKOVIĆ:

**Around Althusserian-Lacanian Critique of Autonomy of Art:
Class and the Unconscious**

In my essay I discuss Althusserian-Lacanian critique of "autonomy of art". My "Critiques of "autonomy of art" are mostly based on alienation of *modern art* manifested through the loss of mimetic connection between the work and referent. This could be seen in all big re-establishments of realisms during the long twentieth century. Among the relevant critical grasps of "idealized autonomies of art" Althusserian-Lacanian debate in terms of its analytical and critical elaboration appeared. This debate started from *reading* the autonomy of art with two parallel positions of analysis and critiques:

- a) from the position of analysis of sociability.
- b) from the position of analysis of unconscious.

KEY WORDS: Althusserian approach, autonomy of art, class struggle, Lacanian approach, modern art, sociability, unconscious.

MIŠKO ŠUVAKOVIĆ was born in 1954 in Belgrade. He has been co-founder and member of conceptual artistic Group 143 (1975–1980). He was co-founder and member of informal theoretic and artistic institution "Community for Space Investigation" (1982–1989). He is member of theoretical platform TkH (Walking Theory, from 2000). He teaches aesthetics and theory of art, Faculty of Music, Belgrade (Professor). He teaches the theory of art and theory of culture, Interdisciplinary studies, at the University of Art Belgrade. He published books on serbian, croatian, slovenian and english language – recent books are: *Impossible Histories*, The MIT Press, Cambridge MA, 2003; *Pojmovnik suvremene umjetnosti*, Horetzky, Zagreb, 2005, *Konceptualna umetnost*, MSUV, Novi Sad, 2007, *Epistemology of Art*, TkH, Beograd, 2008.

NIKOLA DEDIĆ:

**Art, Neurosis, Project: From Fordist to Post-Fordist
Model of Production**

The main aim of the paper will be to give an interpretation of contemporary art as a critical, political practice, i.e. in Althusserian terminology, a practice which is a part of ideology but which, at the same time, indicates, points out to ideology. In the same time, the paper will extract two possible paradigms: modern, which is characteristic for the Fordist model of production and postmodern, characteristic for the post-Fordist model. The paper will try to suggest the interpretation of the contemporary art as a kind of critical practice

through the restoration of the idea of Utopia, but instead of Utopia as a temporal narrative (the project as a kind of temporal succession), the paper will suggest the interpretation of Utopia as a spatial metaphor, i.e. as a practice of micro-political defining of the relatively autonomous spaces which are not the part of the post-Fordist production of surplus value.

KEY WORDS: modernism, postmodernism, capitalism, Utopia, project, biopolitics, ideology.

NIKOLA DEDIĆ, Ph.D (1980) graduated at the Department of The History of Art, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade and completed his postgraduate studies at the University of Arts, Belgrade, Theory of Arts and Media Department. He teaches aesthetics and media theory at the Faculty of philosophy in Niš, Serbia. He is the author of a book *Ka radikalnoj kritici ideologije: od socijalizma ka postsocijalizmu* (Towards radical critique of ideology: from socialism to post-socialism).

MATILDE CARRASCO BARRANCO:

Contemporary Art. Subversion, Pluralism and Democracy

Nowadays, art has immersed in a vast and open cultural world, ruled by the powerful production and distribution mechanisms of the market, which offers a huge and diverse amount of products for everybody's taste. Parallel, the boundaries and hierarchies of (the so-called *high*) art have also disappeared leading to a pluralistic and relativistic artistic scenario. This pluralism of genres and artforms also matches the demands of the free market. So, in this competitive arena, art seems to be doing well for itself. But, having many advantages, the perfect integration of art in the cultural package seems to carry out the loss of the critical and subversive potential that particularly identifies much of contemporary art. As synonymous of tolerance, pluralism is accepted as a democratic value that favours freedom to judge and choose. However, if such pluralism eliminated discussion and criticism, this could turn the voice of art impotent for a democratic society, which is not free from threats.

KEY WORDS: subversion, pluralism, relativism, H. Foster, R. Rochlitz.

DR. MATILDE CARRASCO BARRANCO studied Philosophy at the University of Granada, Spain, where she received her Ph.D. in 2000 and worked as a research fellow until 2002. She has been teaching aesthetics and art theory in the University of Murcia, Spain where she is now a Senior Lecturer of the Department of Philosophy. She has widely published on ethics and aesthetics, and has also presented talks and papers to several national and international conferences. Her major current fields of interest are aesthetic theory, art and ethics, criticism, history of aesthetics and art.

MOJCA PUNCER:
Resistance of Art Against Instrumentalization

Seemingly old-fashioned argumentative methods derived from Benjamin and Hegel may open up some inspiring new perspectives in relation to the contemporary art. The subversive potential of art practices confronted with challenges in the biotechnological construction of the body and biopolitics can emerge as an obvious contra-power against instrumentalization of the living, as long as its activity remains radical and paradoxical. Each artwork brings dynamic to an artefact in a way that a dead material becomes an element of a dynamic composition embodied in the very content of its form. As a result, a certain level of organization is attained, which provides the artwork with a kind of autonomy. The artistic resistance against instrumentalization involves evaluation of the content in particular. It is based on those new practices and processes which bring a relative autonomization of the art field and which are subversive in their attempts to establish at least a minimal distance to the predominant economical-political relations in the society.

KEY WORDS: contemporary art, technical reproduction, instrumentalization, biotechnology, biopolitics, subversion.

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TOMAŽ TOPORIŠIČ:
**Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty and
Subversive Strategies in Today's Art**

Paper deals with subversive potentials of contemporary live arts, especially in relation to the links between notions of madness and artistic creation in theories of Foucault and Artaud. Furthermore, it questions the utopian role of art as an instance that transcends those epistemic structures that determine how we think or even that we think. It starts from two statements belonging to Michel Foucault and Antonine Artaud respectively and both reflecting on the specific (utopist?) function of art in the contemporary society. Using examples from contemporary performing arts the paper deals with some artistic approa-

ches that continue the Dadaist (and Artaudian) urge to rebel against society, language and literature; try to destroy all established values and replace logical reason with conscious madness.

KEY WORDS: theatre of cruelty, art as counter discourse, name, ready-made, subversive art.

TOMAŽ TOPORIŠIČ (Ph.D.) is a dramaturge, translator, theatre theoretician and critic. His primary research interests are the contemporary performing arts and literature, specifically the interaction between the two fields. Currently he is a dramaturge of the Mladinsko Theatre in Ljubljana and assistant professor in Cultural Studies department at University of Primorska in Koper. He is author of three books: *Between Seduction and Suspiciousness (Slovenian Theatre of the Second Half of the 20th Century)*, *The Vulnerable Body of Text and Stage (Crises of the "dramatic author" in the theatre of the 1980-s and 1990-s)*, and *Ecdyses of Drama and Theatre*.

DUBRAVKA ĐURIĆ:
**Visuality, Orality and Performativity
as Subversive Elements in Poetry**

The text deals with the ways how visuality and sound work in poetry, subverting the dominance of verballity (i.e., 'real' meaning of the poem's words), and with the notion of performativity in poetry. Logocentrism of western literature has been focussed on the meaning as supreme sense which a literary work has to have, while visual and sound performance of the text has been considered as secondary. In last ten years, approximately, poets and theoreticians of poetry speak of oral performance of the text as the way of destabilizing the primacy of the printed text, and of visual performance of the text on the printed page.

KEY WORDS: performative, poetry, subversion, verbal, visual.

DR. DUBRAVKA ĐURIĆ (Dubrovnik, 1961), an Assistant Professor at the Faculty for Media and Communication of Singidunum University. She has published the book on American Language poetry titled *Language, poetry, postmodernism*, and a book on Serbian women's poetry *Speech of the Other*. With Miško Šuvaković she coedited *The Impossible Histories*, with Vladimir Kopicl coedited and cotranslated anthology of American poetry titled *New Poetry Order*, and with the group of younger poets coedited anthology of *Discursive bodies of Poetry*. She coedits "ProFemina" magazine for women's literature and culture.

EVELIN STERMITZ:

**Iconographic and Iconologic Art Practices with the Hoover.
Feminist Artistic Subversions of the Female Body and the Household**

This paper is dealing with textual strategies of feminist subversions in the visual arts, whereby representation is understood as a political issue and art as a political matter. The women's subordination within patriarchal forms of representation and the understanding of "femininity" itself as a social construct is considered in a theory that goes beyond the personal into the questions of ideology, culture and the production of meaning. The constitution of women through social practices in culture is understood to create aesthetics to subvert the production of "woman" as commodity. Theories about feminist art practice since the 1970s and contemporary positions subverting the categories of women's cultural production are discussed through visual examples, demonstrating womanhood in a male society and male dominated art world. In the foreground and in associating the examples is the invention of the household with its tools as an artistic theme, articulating and subverting the woman's definition in and by the society through them. The main fields in demonstrating these positions are mixed media, photography, media and new media art, by finding mutuality in-between the different media through iconological and iconographic analyses.

KEY WORDS: feminist art, women artists, visual art, iconography, iconology.

EVELIN STERMITZ, M. A., M. Phil., a third-wave feminist, a graduate from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. She is working in the fields of photography, media and new media art with the main emphasis on post-structuralist feminist art practices. URL: www.evelinstermitez.net

ALEŠ ERJAVEC:

Power, Freedom and Subversion: Political Theater and its Limits

The author discusses the work of Ljubiša Ristić, the founder of the »political theater« in which this well-known theater director criticized the »revolution« but, paradoxically, from a revolutionary perspective. In the nineties Ristić sided with the Serbian government and the Milošević regime, to become a marginal cultural figure in the new millennium. Ristić's work and life witness to the impossibility of breaching the barrier between art and life, for in spite of incessantly attempting to transgress the limitations of the former, art cannot enter, *qua* art, the real of the latter.

KEY WORDS: Ljubiša Ristić, political theater, art and life.

ALEŠ ERJAVEC is a Research Director at the Institute of Philosophy, SRC SASA, Ljubljana, and a Professor of Aesthetics at the University of Primorska (Koper) and at the University of Ljubljana. He is the author of books published or in print in Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Berkeley, Changchun, Newcastle and Taipei and is the President of the Slovenian Society of Aesthetics.

LAUREL SEELY:

Sarajevo Cult Band SCH: The Politics of Future Noise

From R. Murray Schafer's prescriptivist polemic against the aggressions of noise in modern society, to Jacques Attali's descriptivist consideration of noise as a challenge to the ideological work performed by music, the status of noise has proved a particularly vexed question. Many critics nevertheless agree that the distinction between noise and music is culturally and historically conditioned; noise is a sound which, within a specific semiotic system, functions as a type of madness, disrupting the conventional order and challenging the naturalness of the categories that undergird it. This paper considers the political impact of the cult noise band SCH in 1980s Sarajevo. A central issue that the paper addresses is, did the characteristic qualities of noise—its anti-rationality, its close relationship to affect and the body, the collapsing of distance between source and receiver—give SCH the unique ability to challenge dominant discourses? Or did these very qualities undermine the group's potential subversiveness by rendering it completely unassimilable? What, if any, were the ways in which noise as deliberate provocation contributed to political change during this period?

KEY WORDS: noise, politics, music, Sarajevo, SCH.

LAUREL SEELY is a fifth-year Ph.D. candidate in Literature at the University of California at Santa Cruz. She is currently researching her dissertation, "Cultural Discourses of Bosnian Identity, 1980–Present," in Sarajevo.

DARKO ŠTRAJN:

***Pierrot le fou* and Eternity in the Sixties**

What was so crazy in *Pierrot le fou*, one of the most recognisable early Godard's movies? Before we start thinking about an answer, we should realize that the very attempt to give an answer to this question is on the same level of craziness as the question and its reference. Craziness is a category of interpretation, an agency of externalisation of a set of

symbolically represented relations and an indication of a reaction to vastly more serious category of madness. These two categories stand one against each other as a system against some particular subversive reflection, which can be whatever between interpretation, imitation, insight, work of art or in some instances even a scientific or political breakthrough. Godard's film, which made use of "modernist" codes of discontinuity and flow of associations (especially suitable for a form of a movie), depicts madness, contained in the world system in the sixties through presentations of craziness of his characters and their visual and poetic contextualisation(s). Where craziness and madness intersect seems to be the space permeated by ubiquitous language, which in the film makes madness obvious through delusions of subjectivity. This could be a starting point to elaborate an understanding of the aesthetics of social practices of a particular time in history, when art was about to survive through a re-definition.

KEY WORDS: film, aesthetics, madness, antipsychiatry, avant-garde, discontinuity.

DARKO ŠTRAJN, a philosopher and sociologist, works in a research programme in educational sciences at the Educational Research Institute and he lectures on film theory at the graduate school ISH – Institute for Studies in Humanities in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

CONSTANTINOS V. PROIMOS:
Madness as the Instance of Decision.
A Philosophical Consideration of Light in Rembrandt's
1635 Painting *The Angel Stopping Abraham*
from *Sacrificing Isaac to God*

Rembrandt's critics pay tribute to his pictures' lighting that, in accordance with baroque currents of the time, is deemed to be arbitrary. Drawing inspiration from his master Pieter Lastman and Caravaggio, Rembrandt is said to orchestrate an illumination of pictorial space that very rarely matches the natural situations he depicts. Light is rather artificial and as a consequence an agent of the story depicted in painting and a device that boosts into a climax the picture's intensity. The specific and particular use of light in Rembrandt's painting is finely illustrated in his 1635 picture bearing the title: *The Angel Stopping Abraham from Sacrificing Isaac to God*, an oil on canvas 193,5 x 132,8 cm, found at the Hermitage of St Petersburg. In this paper I shall attempt a philosophical consideration of light in Rembrandt's picture arguing that Abraham's faith and religious fervor make him defy all rational rules of contact and wish to sacrifice his only son, Isaac to God. Abraham himself, believing until the very end that something may eventually happen and Isaac's life will be spared is depicted during the instance of decision to

slice his son's throat. Having lost all hope that a miracle may happen, Abraham is pale, agitated and determined, for the instance of his decision to kill his son and subvert all known morality is madness, according to Soren Kierkegaard and Jacques Derrida, two among Abraham's philosophical portraitists. Therefore Rembrandt's light does have a philosophical task to illustrate madness as the instance of decision, based on the Old Testament story.

KEY WORDS: Abraham, decision, light, madness, Rembrandt.

CONSTANTINOS V. PROIMOS teaches philosophy at the Hellenic Open University and art history at the School for Art Conservation. He got a Ph.D. in aesthetics and philosophy of art from the New School for Social Research in New York (2001) and since then he has been teaching, curating and working as an independent art critic in Chania of Crete, Greece. He has published and lectured internationally and his book *On the Limits of Aesthetics. The Role of Art in Martin Heidegger's and Jacques Derrida's Writings* appeared in Athens in 2004. He is currently working on a second book project with the title: *Imagination in Power. Philosophy and Art History Around the Nineteen Sixties in Europe*.

PAULA ZUPANC:
The Fragmented Subject in Honoré de Balzac
***Le chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*: Precursor to Post-Modernism**

By analyzing the paradoxical narrative/theatrical structure of the well known story, *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*-*The Unknown masterpiece* by Honoré de Balzac, put in place to bring about the "subject" of the story, madness and creativity, I reflect on the inability of language to speak (about) madness. The 19th century French writer Honoré de Balzac created a gigantic opus of various *nouvelles* which were ultimately collected under the title *La Comédie humaine*. He depicted French society mostly from the time of the beginning of the Restoration through the reign of Louis Philippe in a so called *realistic* and *romantic* styles, which did not have much to do with comedy or the comic, but more with tragedy and the tragic. In a number of his stories, gathered under the title *Les contes philosophiques*, he went back to the times of Classicism, or even farther, in order to bring to light an idea which pertains to philosophy, and to processes of artistic creativity. The work under consideration deals with three very important philosophical questions for Balzac – artistic inspiration *versus* truth in painting, importance of nature *versus* artifact, and the delineation of geniality from madness. The author deploys various narrative and rhetorical techniques, and various modes of presentation to seduce the reader into the model (he presents) of verisimilitude. I also reflect on the inability of language to speak (about) madness through questions and

thoughts formed and posited by Foucault and Derrida, transferred and reflected upon in the critical study on writing, philosophy, and madness – *Writing and Madness* (1985) by Shoshana Felman⁵³⁷.

KEY WORDS: subject, narrative, narrator, *mis-en-abîme*, paradox, theatrical model, verisimilitude, artificial, god, nature, woman's body, fragments.

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MATEJ VATOVEC: On Two Types of Psychosis, Theatre and the Internet

Social psychology created the dramatic concept of everyday life – this notion is linked with the subject's everyday role-playing in different situations. From this everyday role-playing, numerous parallels can be drawn, going from theatre play to internet role-play. The main question in the article revolves around the particular mode of being of the subject, which is presupposed as the subject of anti-representation. All this is shown through the theatrical practice of Italian actor and director Carmelo Bene, as the subversive subject on stage (in art), on the other hand, the subversive play is shown through the analysis of the web page MySpace, for which it can be said only that actually it is only the product of the capitalistic production and reproduction (in this case of subjects) system, which gives the chimerical freedom of role-playing (the usual internet hiding behind pseudonyms that we knew in the era of the more »primitive« protocol IRC).

KEY WORDS: Deleuze, Bene, play, internet, MySpace.

MATEJ VATOVEC is a Ph.D. student of philosophy and theory of visual culture at the University of Primorska. He works on the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze (mainly on the concepts of difference, repetition and imagination) and Karl Marx. He is member of the Slovenian Society of Aesthetics. He published in the Slovenian reviews *Borec* and *Kino!* and has participated in various Slovenian and international congresses.

537 Felman, Shoshana is Professor of French Literature at Yale University.

MIŠKO ŠUVAKOVIĆ: Strategies and Tactics of Performance Art

The discussion deals with the notion of performance and the ways of defining interdisciplinary field of performance art. Performance art is posited as directed or non-directed 'event', 'action', articulated as artwork performed by artist or performers with or without their audience in public or private space. The term performance art has two meanings: (1) it is introduced in early 70s and refers to complex events, prepared in advance, realized by the artist, who is at the same time the author, in front of museum, gallery audience or in front of bypasengers, and (2) retrospectively or anticipatory, it is applied as identificatory mark for art experiments, in the range of futurist festivals, dada cabarets constructivist paratheatrical experiments and surrealist's events, through happenings, neodada, actionism and Fluxus, body art, events, minimal and postmodern experimental dance, experimental and minimal music, to postconceptual, eclectic postmodernist techno-performance and conceptual performance in choreographic dance.

KEY WORDS: action, art work, body art, event, performance art, fluxus, experimental dance.

MAJA MURNIK: Body Art Practices: Some Thoughts

Body Art can be understood as performance art *par excellence*, according to the fact that a performer does not represent someone else any more, as the convention of traditional drama theatre claims, which some earlier Body Art practices explicitly criticized (e.g. Chris Burden); on the contrary, a performer emphasizes his physical presence. What is staging here, live body in the process is; even more, precisely this body is brought into focus and therefore everything inscribed into it and everything it points out, alludes or simply is. The philosophy of Merleau-Ponty emphasizes the body and understands it as something opened; it is all the time in the act of staging from which it cannot be stepped out and assumed a cold, neutral position of a "geometer". Thus his philosophy in some moments corresponds well to these art practices.

In Body Art practices from the end of the 60s onwards Amelia Jones, one of most discernible researchers of the area, recognized the dislocating and the de-centering of the autonomous Cartesian subject of modernism. But through Body Art practices not only modernism was deconstructing, but the body as well. If the first Body Art performers were interested in their own bodies as in a new art medium and were touching its borders and capabilities, later the body has been opening more and more, until at last it has started to crumble and decompose itself.

KEY WORDS: body art, Merleau-Ponty, body, performance art.

MAJA MURNIK (born 1976) is an Assistant at the Department of Cultural Studies, Faculty of Humanities Koper (University of Primorska, Slovenia) and a postgraduate student of Philosophy and Theory of Visual Culture at the same faculty. She graduated from Comparative Literature and from Dramaturgy at University of Ljubljana.

STELARC: Indifferent Body

STELARC has performed with a Third Hand; a Virtual Body and a 6-legged walking robot. He is surgically constructing and stem cell growing an ear on his arm. He is presently Chair in Performance Art at Brunel University and Senior Research Fellow at the MARCS Labs at the University of Western Sydney. He was Honorary Professor of Art and Robotics at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh and has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Laws from Monash University in Melbourne.

MARÍA ANTONIA GONZÁLEZ VALERIO: Mind the Gap. Hermeneutics and Analytic Aesthetics on Narrativity and Historicity in the Artwork

Noël Carroll has postulated *identifying narratives* as a means to establish art status. This paper follows and further develops this line of thought by introducing the temporality of the artwork as a relevant issue in the understanding of narrative when applied to art. The temporality of the artwork is explained in three different modes: as occurrence, as historicity and as supra-temporality. I have tried to show how this constitutive temporality of the artwork is subject to what I have called *narrative interpretation* which I have distinguished from Carroll's *identifying narratives*. My contention is that narrative interpretation is a way to connect the artwork with preceding and succeeding artworks and that through these connections it configures the work's narrative identity as a dynamic one. I have made use of Paul Ricoeur's concept of *narrative identity*, reformulating it in order to reach a narrative interpretation that focuses on the artwork's historical elements as inserted in a plot. Therefore, this paper introduces concepts from continental hermeneutics that help to provide a frame for both *narrative interpretation* and *narrative identity*.

KEY WORDS: hermeneutics, narrative identity, narrative connection, interpretation, time.

MARÍA ANTONIA GONZÁLEZ VALERIO has a Ph.D. in Philosophy. She is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature, National Autonomous University of Mexico. Her principal fields of study are Aesthetics and Ontology. She is the author of *El arte develado. Consideraciones estéticas sobre la hermenéutica de Gadamer* (México: Herder, 2005), *La hermenéutica y la obra de arte literaria. Un tratado sobre la mimesis* (forthcoming). She collaborates in several research projects in Mexico and Spain. She is member of the Mexican Association for Aesthetics Studies.

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