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Walking Theory

TkH

Walking Theory (in Serbian *Teorija koja hoda* – TkH) is a common project by Ana Vujanovi}, Jelena Novak, Ksenija Stevanovi}, Bojana Cveji}, Jasna Veli-kovi}, Bojan Djordjev, Sini{a Ili} and Mi{ko [uvakovi}. These persons are students of three faculties of Belgrade University of Arts: Faculty of Music Arts (FMU), Faculty of Drama Arts (FDU) and Faculty of Visual Arts (FLU) along with a FMU professor. The activities of the group unfold within the frame of the Belgrade Centre for New Theatre and Play. The areas and segments of research they plead for encompass a wide span: from concrete creative process – composing, painting, directing – to more speculative and verbal expressions of artistic phenomena in the context of Musicology, Aesthetic of Arts, Theatrology and Cultural Studies.

The Group:

Through the Walking Theory project we strive to explore the space between the primary media, i.e. to connect the artistic-performative act with theoretical texts that determine, encircle and define it. By implementing interdisciplinarity, we do not strive however to be classified within the frame of alternative and Avant-garde currents nor do we belong to them. Our departure point is an acknowledged academic tool, especially in the presently ruling Postmodern context. What brings together our various media is the field of theory. In that sense, interdisciplinarity is not a field of tranquil and easy security; it effectively engages in obliterating the solidarity of the old disciplines (solidarity in the sense of each of the disciplines keeping its portion of territory) in the interest of studying the Text, i.e. the situation of theoretical performance. The fundamental premise of such procedure is the open concept of art and the world of art. Our primary task is not creating a theory of art but to conceptualise artistic phenomena. We will particularly put an effort into describing the conditions under which certain concepts are being implemented and understood within the frame of culture. This means that we see each work of art as an effect of the consensus within the society, i.e. a particular social group. In other words, what is being considered as art is not the result of the ontological traits of works or art as such; the perception (grasping) of something as being artistic is also a product of that what could be seen, heard and felt by the eye, ear and body – the atmosphere, artistic theories, the knowledge of history of art, art worlds, interpretations.

The participants of the Walking Theory project understand it as the space of creating consensus rather than the space of synthesis of a few like-minds. Their departure positions are different to an extent where Walking Theory cannot and does not want to be the realisation of the utopia of an ideal artistic circle. Quite the contrary: the concept of the project as a group-cell is constantly scrutinised by permanent changes of the rules of the game that has to be played to its end. The movement and the fluid moving represent the implemented strategy and/or tactics, i.e. the vacillation in making the final decision, the one that totalises all other possibilities of discourse. Therefore, Walking Theory is intentionally a performative theory, a theory that offers its body.

The group:

We want to investigate and demonstrate the conditions under which the “We” of the group has been constituted. We want to emphasise that our We is not unalterable; it

is the consequence of interaction and conflict of primary artistic paradigms, of conscientious agreement. We are therefore in quest for those factors that “close” and fixate the meaning and the context, striving to make them visible and work with them. We do not share the jargon; we do not take for granted the understanding of certain terms. Definitions are the subject of consensus and verification. We know that there might be and that there are more of them than the ones at hand. We does not mean Ana, Jelena, Ksenija, Bojana, Jasna, Bojan, Sini{a and Mi{ko, but a theoretical platform that is established and offered by Walking Theory. We does not represent a community of eight Authors but the problematisation and correction of our infinite Ego intentions. Thus the Author-function of each of us is conditioned by the platform on which we float in the waters of theory and the world of art. We promise/s a sort of unity but We at once question/s if it is possible at all.

Let us get back to the beginning. Walking Theory is a common project of Ana Vujanovi}, Jelena Novak, Ksenija Stevanovi}, Bojana Cveji}, Jasna Veli-kovi}, Bojan Djordjev, Sini{a Ili}a, and Mi{ko [uvakovi}. It is their theoretical We. In fact, the problem that is more significant than the problem of shifting from I to We is the problem of constituting of I itself. They leave the question *Who am I?* to those who believe that I could be somebody and, instead of that, offer the answer to the question *What am I?* I neither wants to have a unique identity nor to be determined by it. Their I are identities. What kind of identities? I wants to avoid to be fixed, it wants to have open possibilities; I wants to be unstable, fleeting, shifting. Their We is the discourse of such I's; that We is the offspring of the Pilgrim, the brother of the Tourist and the Player and a distant relative of the Stroller and the Vagabond. **We is the Walker.**

The Group:

We is the choice in which all I's sing – sometimes in harmony but most of the time in an apparent cacophony. Still, what is at work here is eventually polyphony: the establishment of different registers that determine the variable context of We. We walks in the space between established disciplines, acknowledged canons and phenomena. We is the Walker.

The Walking Theory project will realise one part of its programme in the space of Theatre Bojan Stupica.

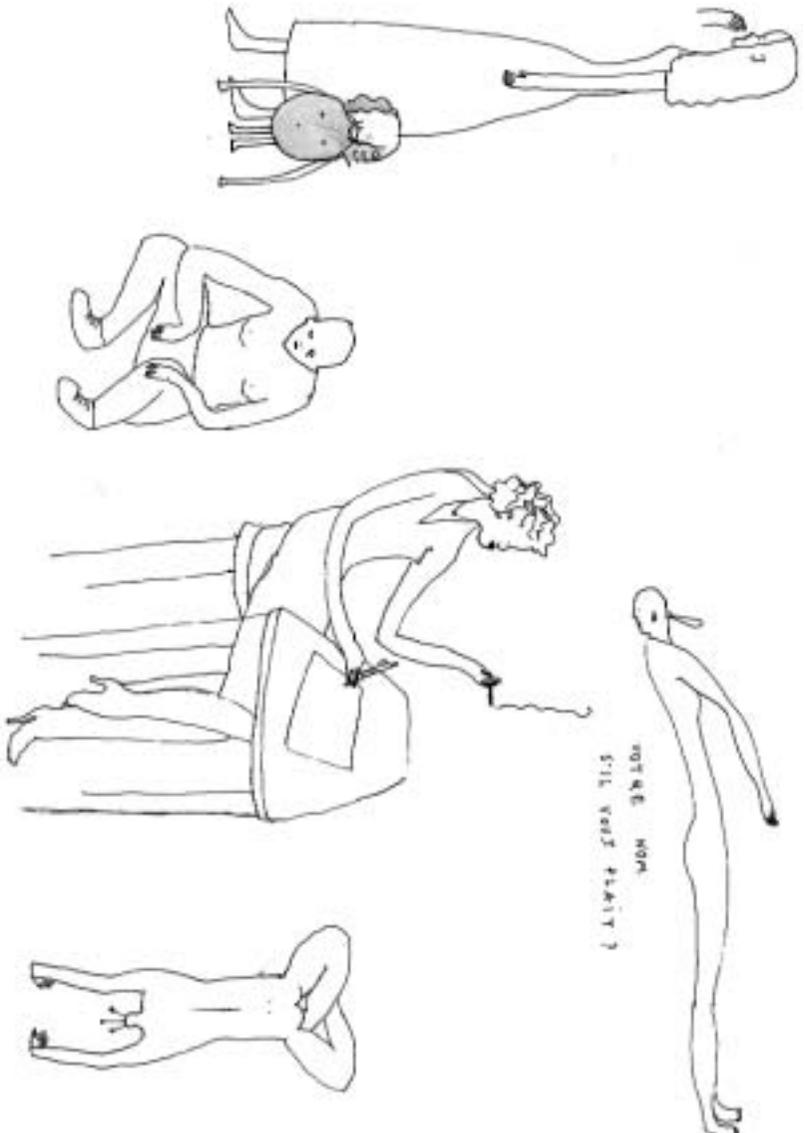
What you are about to hear, see and experience is related to theatre in the following manner: it looks like it, but it isn't. The stories that are about to unfold are neither stories of events nor stories of stories. They tell you their stories. They perform their game. The performing of stories is the playing of the Game in which you, the Audience, take part. The rules of the game are known in advance. The basic rules are:

1. The first rule of the game is the dialogue – accepting the game. “THIS IS A THEORETICAL PERFORMANCE AND NOT A THEATRICAL SPECTACLE OR A REVIEW OF AWARDED STUDENT WORKS FROM THE SAME CLASS”
2. The second rule that we offer to you is: “THE TEXT IN OFFERED NEWSPAPERS SHOULD BE READ DURING THE PERFORMANCE” – the one who will not read them may remain in the hall but will not be able to play the game.
3. The third rule – Be careful. “THIS IS THE GAME OF PROMISES THAT WILL NOT BE FULFILLED.”

Enjoy! THE CONTRACT IS DONE! THE GAME HAS BEGUN!

Translation by: Katarina Pejovi}

THEORY



Technologies of *Performing* IN *Performance Art*

Mi{ko [uvakovi]}

Approach to the Apprehension and the Concept of Performance Art

The apprehension and conceptualizations of *performance art* are multi-signifying and ill-defined in their numerous current or retrospective uses, applications and *performance* in different theories and histories of art in the 20th century. The apprehension and the term *performance art* had been conceptualized in the late 60s and early 70s in neo-avantgarde tactics, less frequently in strategies, transformations and overcoming of closed boundaries of defining the visual¹ – most importantly, high-modernist – work of art, and visual arts in general as arts based on creating, making or producing authentic, self-inferential, self-contained, and all-accomplished pictures and sculptures as *pieces*. Afterwards, in the late neo-avantgarde, the idea of performance art was, in theoretical interpretative and historicist terms, retrospectively applied to different open, experimental, processual and action art works, conceived and performed as events. However, the late neo-avantgarde concept of performance art was in interpretative, anticipatory and programmatic, i.e. hegemonic terms, applied to quite different postmodernist art works which have been performed and based on the concept of realization of events². The idea of performance art was applied in music,³ literature,⁴ radiophony,⁵ film,⁶ theatre,⁷ dance,⁸ opera,⁹ art practices aimed at cultural work,¹⁰ in electronic mass

¹ Here we foremostly refer to the 'creation' of painting or sculpture transformed from *piece* to *work*. See Arthur C. Danto, "Artworks and Real Things", in *Art and Philosophy – Readings in Aesthetics*, ed. by W.E. Kennick (New York: St. Martin Press, 1979), pp. 98-110

² Jon Mckenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance* (London: Routledge, 2001)

³ Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music – Cage and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

⁴ *Close Listening – Poetry and the Performed Word*, ed. by Charles Bernstein, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); and *Sound States – Innovative Poetics and Acoustical Technologies*, ed. by Adalaide Morris (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

⁵ *Wireless Imagination – Sound, Radio, and the Avant-garde*, ed. by Douglas Kahn, Gregory Whitehead (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992)

⁶ David Curtis, *Experimental Cinema* (New York: A Delta Book, 1971)

⁷ Christopher Innes, *Avant Garde Theatre 1892-1992* (London-New York: Routledge, 1993)

⁸ "Nove teorije plesa" (thematic issue), *TkH*, 4 (Belgrade, 2002), pp. 9-135

⁹ Herbert Lindenberger, *Opera in History – From Monteverdi to Cage* (Stanford Cal: Stanford University Press, 1998); and Rose Lee Goldberg, "Theater, music, opera", in *Performance. Live Art Since the 60s*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998), pp. 62-93

¹⁰ *Discourses: Conversations in Postmodern Art and Culture*, ed. by Russell Ferguson et al. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990); and *The Artist's Body*, ed. by Tracey Warr, Amelia Jones (London: Phaidon, 2000)

media.¹¹ At this point, it is necessary to stress that the conceptualization of performance art was not created in synthesis of different proceduralities, from individual arts into a new multi-disciplinary integrative 'super-discipline' of new art. The apprehension and concept of performance art are applied to often incomparable art practices from different diachronic and synchronic contexts, which identify the act of realization of the work or the event of the actualization of the work as an *event-as-art work*. The attention is shifted from the finished/static object– or piece– as a finished product, to *performance* as a *process*¹² within the realm of art and culture. The history of performance art is constructed as a narrative of comparative maps of strategies and tactics of identification and interpretation of different constructed or random procedures of authors' *nomadic performance* of the art work as an event. The art work of *performance art* is, most frequently, a heterogeneous event situated in quite subjective, social and historical moments of late capitalism and its hegemonies imposed on the second-postsocialist and the third-postcolonial world.

In observing different examples of use or, just, recalling various models of performance art in contemporary theatre, we could put forward a thesis that the examples of performance art in historical avant-gardes¹³ were external, 'beyond-theatrical' nomadic attacks on the institutions of theatre. In the avant-gardes, performance is based as the anticipatory, innovative and excessive action out of the context, meaning, the specified world and localized theatre institutions and environments. The art experiment was enacted in the intermediary space of different autonomously situated arts. In neo-avant-gardes¹⁴ of the late 50s and 60s the most radical examples of theatre were transformed from inside towards the *happening*, i.e. they 'asymptotically gravitated' towards performance art. For example, in the examining of the instrumentality of actor's 'body' out of the context of dramatic motivation in Grotowski's theatre laboratories¹⁵, in the practicing of political activism as theatre or paratheatre or beyond-theatre actionism in the productions of *Living Theatre*,¹⁶ in founding of the complex multi-variant ethno-, ritual- or therapy-oriented practices and theories through *existentialized* and anthropologized practice of performance, according to Schechner¹⁷ etc. A certain affinity was perceived for transgression as a trespass, that is, a formal egress outside of the canonized modernist autonomously situated limits of theatre. As opposed to that, with the postmodern theatre, for example, since the Wilson's work *Einstein on the Beach*, a third possibility also emerged – and that was introducing of 'beyond-theatre' experiments, models and tactics into an elaborated and hegemonic systems of work in theatre. Thus the concepts and phenomena of performance art appear as procedures of concurring deconstruction of stable characteristics of theatre within its canonic institutions and, besides, as recycling and implanting of *performing* into

¹¹ Michael Rush, *New Media in Late 20th-Century Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001)

¹² Julia Kristeva, "The Subject in process", in *The Tel Quel Reader*, ed. by Patrick Ffrench and Roland-François Lack (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 133-178

¹³ For example, dadaist performance in Zurich's *Cabaret Voltaire* (1916), cubist-dadaist production of the *Parade* (1917) in Paris or Picabia's complex multimedia stage piece *Relâche* (1924)

¹⁴ On the atmosphere and tactics of neo-avantgarde theatre, see the catalogue *Bitef 5* (Belgrade, 1971); and Christopher Innes, *Avant Garde Theatre 1892-1992*

¹⁵ Jeri Grotowski, *Ka siroma{nom pozori{tu}* (Belgrade: ICS, 1976)

¹⁶ *The Living Book of the Living Theatre*, ed. by Carlo Silvestro (New York: Greenwich CT, New York Graphic Society, 1971); and The Living Theatre, *Paradise Now* (New York: Random House, 1971)

¹⁷ Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory* (London-New York: Methuen Drama, 1988)

the theatrical, within the realm of the hegemonies of theatre as a dominant practice in performing arts. A certain theatre, dance, opera and music-performance works were created under indeterminate influences or applications of concepts and phenomena of *performance* from *performance art*. Problematic, marginal, auto-reflexive, deconstructionist or transgressive procedurality of *performance* from *performance art* is applied to *performing* of the work as a whole or *performing* of fragments within more complex modernist or postmodernist realizations in theatre, dance, opera and music. On the one hand, the context of theatre as performing art discipline was thus opened and expanded, but on the other, the anti-aesthetical, pro-conceptual and para-technical procedurality of *performance art* was re-aestheticized and technically canonized. Early theatre works of Robert Wilson¹⁸ *A Letter for Queen Victoria* (1974) or *Einstein on the Beach* (1976) were created through the transfer of *performers'* arbitrariness, alienation and director's constructivism into the deconstruction of drama theatre and its evolutions. For example, *Einstein on the Beach* features the deconstructing of drama theatre into a theatre of architectural or visual images, where relatively autonomous author's *writing* (*écriture*) of the composer (Philip Glass), choreographer (Lucinda Childs) and director (Robert Wilson) are programatically opposed. The opera cycle¹⁹ of John Cage *Européras 1&2* and *3&4* (1987, 1990) would seem almost as an ordinary opera cycle had there not been *performing* of intervention, destruction of formal-aesthetic-as-technical *character* of the opera by introducing the role of chance in the writing of the libretto, composing of the music and the treatment of set and costume.

Cage tried to break all the typical institutional-poetic canons in opera art by anarchistic annulment of the authorial first-degree-authentic creative act. He set the opera's *multigender text* as a simultaneous *performing* of eclectic randomly chosen samples from various historical opera works. Theatre piece *De macht der theaterlijke dwaasheden* ("The Power of Theatrical Madness", 1984) by Jan Fabre was performed in accelerated and metastatic *recycling* of the concepts of transavantgarde practice in painting. Transavantgarde practice in painting is the post-historical, arbitrary, eclectic and collage/montage production of the literally and the fictional in the realm of the concrete image. When the concept of transavantgarde is transferred and set into the theatre work, a performed theatre event becomes a system of confronted and discontinual post-dramatic visual-stage-scenes. Fabre worked with two characteristic levels of performance: (1) with first-degree performance on stage, which deconstructs the important phenomenal aspects of the director's interpretation of the dramatic, in the name of the visual theatre and (2) with second-degree performance of the institutional transfer of concepts, procedures or paradigms of one art like painting into another art, like theatre. In so doing, he renders these two levels as performance in the realm of marked erotizations of representational phenomena. In psychoanalytic²⁰ sense he underlines that performance is, actually, *passage à l'acte*, inciting of the reality of the unconscious for the purposes of theatre post-aesthetic ecstatic bliss (*jouissance*). Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker,²¹ in a series of neatly conceived and highly aestheticized pieces, like

¹⁸ *Arhitektura u teatru. Robert Wilson*, ed. by Sanjin Juki} (Sarajevo: Poslovna zajednica profesionalnih pozorišta BiH ID, 1991)

¹⁹ Herbert Lindenberger, "Regulated Anarchy: John Cage's *Européras 1&2* and the Aesthetics of Opera", in *Opera in History from Monteverdi to Cage*, pp. 240-264

²⁰ Jacques-Alain Miller, "Jacques Lacan: Opombe h konceptu *passage a l'acte*", in *O nekem drugem Lacanu* (Ljubljana: Analecta, 2001), pp. 45-56

²¹ *Rosas – Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker* (Tournai: La Renaissance du Livre, 2002)

Just before (1997), *Drumming* (1999), *I said I* (1999) or *In Real Time* (2000), introduces elements which do not belong to the integrating and time-set aestheticism of high-elitism in the late post-modern dance. Those unexpected *rough* elements belong to the margins of dance life. Besides, these performances are set on the loose and largely arbitrary formal open structures of connecting dance parts. Loose, arbitrary and open structure is what recalls or suggests the atmosphere of performance art. Thus, the Keersmaecker's accomplishment is that highly-aestheticized dance becomes de-ontologized or relativized by displaying unstable and arbitrary relations between the dominant-exceptional and marginal-trivial aspects of dance technique as a 'machine' of microsocial behaviour. On the other hand, she aestheticizes the elements which potentially belong to performance art, by bringing them to the level of centered dance technique or stylized production of dynamic relations of dance figures. As a choreographer, she simultaneously positions the performer's body as a *literal body* from performance art and as a *non-literal body* or a *figure* from dance. Unlike her, Jérôme Bel²², in a series of conceptual choreographic performances, like *Show must go on!* (2000) or *Jérôme Bel* (2001), appropriates the conceptual and phenomenal character of *performance art* to problematize the status of dance as an art which is centered and canonized around the *self-understood* functions of dance technique. Bel's dance performance is not a performance of canonized stage dance behaviour determined by tradition of the evolution of dance techniques in modernism and post-modernism. His realization of dance is characteristically a *performer's work*, because he as an author, with his co-performers, performs a 'piece', but also because the stage behaviour of his performers is not determined by the intentionally anticipated aesthetic results, but by the concept of autoreflexive examining of different multi-registered identities of the author, the performers and the audience. He performs and suggests uncodified behaviour of the choreographer, dancers and spectators in the context of dance and in so doing, through quite practical body acts, he raises the questions of the status of dance as a historical and current art practice, respectively. When the apprehension and the concept of performance art were established in art histories and theories, it was possible to apply the concept of performance in interpretative, theoretical and poetical terms, to those works which are not events. The idea of performance art was applied to those works which come out of a creative or productive act, which, in a way, advocates or interventionally anticipates and, of course, defers the process of performance. The object, text, image in a painting, photography, screen image, poster, advertisement, environment/installation, media construction etc. are all interpreted as *traces*²³ which advocate and demonstrate already finished *processes of performing*. In that sense, the abstract paintings of Jackson Pollock, Jasper Johns or Marc Devade; feminist films of Yvonne Rainer or gay movies of Derek Jarman; video installations of Bill Viola; deconstructivist and pornographic fiction of Kathy Acker; pop-rock spectacles of Laurie Anderson; para-theoretical texts of John Cage; photographs of Joel-Peter Witkin, Cindy Sherman or William Wegman, are all interpreted as works of performance art or as works with certain/uncertain aspects of performance art. However, these works are not 'events' in front of an audience, but their phenomenal appearance and semantic function are interpreted as *traces* of painter's, director's, writer's, composer's, sculptor's or photographer's bi-behavioural act of accomplishment of the work as an intervention on the work itself or an intervention through this work on the

²² See "Dosije Jérôme Bel, Xavier Le Roy", in "Novi ples/Nove teorije", *TkH*, 4, pp. 94-101

²³ Jacques Derrida, "Freud et la scène de l'écriture", in *L'écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967), pp. 293-340

context of the presentation.²⁴ The act of the interventionist accomplishment of the work is what the work apparently displays and advocates, and that is, in this perspective, more important than the story told, image presented or the written symbolic order itself. For example, the work of Cindy Cherman *Untitled Film Still # 21-23* (1978) is a series of photographs which present stills from acts of a masked actress, but they are not documents of public or private performance. These are directed sequences or shots prepared and performed for the photographic shoot.²⁵ The photos are intentionally shot so that, most often, they look like stills from well-known movies from the 50s. She scenically designs images for photography and filming and thus produces visual photographic and film *representations* of fictional spaces, situations and events for the gaze, that is, the act of watching, recognition and identification. Her photographic images produce socially situated visual surplus of meaning, value and sensuality. That visual surplus of meaning is beyond one's grasp, it is non-centered, slipping and shifting, often metastatic and therefore destructive. The work of Cindy Sherman is *American* in its performance of confrontation with the system of urban and media production, exchange and uncontrolled consumption of goods, values, meanings and visibility. Her works reconstruct the material system of performance of production, exchange and consumption of fictionality through anticipations of entropy in the visual image, because her photographic images render uncertain representation, which escapes clear recognition and identification. Her work in its phenomenal and semiologically representable structure does not only exhibit what it in direct, that is, first-degree terms speak about. As if, her work *speaks* that the artist exploits those 'subjects' or any of the media she uses, as an *interventionist performing practice* in the complex existential *world* of the social conflicts of the late capitalism.

Conceptual Potentiality Against the Potentiality of Phenomena in the Heterogeneous Realm of Discursivity

Interpretation of any work of performance art, for example, leads through development of complex relations of exchange and effects of the individual-actual events and the universal potential of the concepts. In that sense, philosophically-phenomenologically speaking, Stelarc's or Nauman's *idea* is something that stems from *themselves* through an event that has to be mediated and translated into a thought, understanding and experience, of the Other. The idea is then a kind of a *vehicle* for conceptual translation of the state of mind, conscious-subconscious-unconscious, life activity or experience into a project. Stelarc's pierced skin and hanging body emerge from his power to conceptualize, for example, his life activity as an intentional provocation and enduring pain. He conceptually envisages and phenomenally *performs* his life activity, through formal potentialities of a *behavioural text*. That behavioural text potentially connects his life activity as an instrumental text, with various other texts of culture, which are also traces or *traces of traces* of other *life activities* and their conceptualizations, from which certain works of art and theory were conceived. For example, at this point we speak about the potentiality of the concept of pain which *can/potere/* also be the deferred pain of the betrayed Christ on Carravaggio's painting "The Betrayal of Christ"

²⁴ Henry M. Sayre, *The Object of Performance – The American Avant-garde since 1970* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989); or *Performing the Body / Performing the Text*, ed. by Amelia Jones, Andrew Stephenson (London: Routledge, 1999)

²⁵ Rosalind Krauss, "Cindy Sherman: Untitled", in *Bachelors* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999), pp. 101-159

(1602) or the 'pain' of *dead* Christ on the painting "The Entombment of Christ" (1602-04)²⁶ or pain of agony/as/erotic-pleasure of the hero who speaks in first person in the Sacher-Masoch's novel "Venus in Furs" (1870)²⁷ or autoreflexive pain rendered as the voice of the man dying from AIDS in Derek Jarman's film *Blue* (1993).²⁸ Roughly speaking, if we accept this dynamic scheme, then the *life activity* of the performer, supported by the concept, is driven to a potential form, to be performed *by the body* in the behavioural process as a phenomenon. Phenomenon is what sensually/corporeally appears to other bodies, i.e., to bodies of the observers/audience which translate it into the concept of life activity which perceives or comprehends the externalized life activity of the performer's body. On the other hand, Nauman's neutral instrumentalization of his own body comes from his power to conceptualize, for instance, his life activity as deliberate de-aesthetizing and annulment of anticipated expressivity in the context of modernist identifications of the artist as the origin of authentic and true emotions. He situates his act and behaviour, demonstrating that the presence of the body is not centering of *live* and *vital* presence. The *presence* is an effect of indexing of the phenomenon as the trace, as the trace of the erasure of the trace. That is, Nauman points to the shift from the position of the strong subject as the *hot* spring, the origin of the phenomenon-work in painting, like with the examples of Pollock or Rothko, to the position of the neutral subject as the *cold* cavity of the *spring*, the origin of the act in the work. Through Stelarc's or Nauman's performance art works *I* perceive and comprehend their life activities or at least their conceptual notions of those life activities. I perceive them through the dynamics of the event which *confronts our bodies* as punctuations in the actual perceptive, which means interactive, time and space of actuality. The complex intersubjective and interactive relation of 'him' performer and 'me' observer stands on the conviction that the event really happened. And, then, through conceptual understanding: the plan of presentation of the notion 'pain' or plan of presentation of the notion 'infantility' become comparable and usable for establishing some *universal* philosophical knowledge about the human subject as the subject of pain or the subject of infantility. Stelarc's pain and Nauman's infantility are introduced in the game of potential notions, which are the instruments of universality. Because, I *alone* can not experience Stelarc's pain *alone* – for me, his pain becomes *pain* only through potentiality of conceptual relations, relations with numerous concepts of pain of Christ, Sacher-Masoch, Jarman and others. Only through potentiality of conceptual relations, the coldness and neutrality of Nauman's work become *coldness* and *neutrality* for me.

Against thus postulated, logocentric model, from the 'origin' to the 'hiatus' of thought, it is also possible to postulate a pro-deconstructivist position, which leads from philosophical to theoretical mapping of interpretations of performance art. According to the pro-deconstructivist position, the *concept* is not understood as the *origin* of thought from the life activity that constitutively precedes the text as a material, sensually accessible order of signs. The concept is, on the contrary, interpreted from the pro-deconstructivist and later elaborated theoretical perspective, as a *material text of the project* by which the plan is postulated. The plan brings the art work into relations with other art works or their textual projects, which are entangled in complex and ambiguous relations with other texts of culture at the anticipated *place* of thought. It is possible to pronounce quite a 'hard'

²⁶ Leo Bersani, Ulysse Dutoit, *Caravaggio's Secrets* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998)

²⁷ Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, *Venera u krznu* (Belgrade: Teagraf, 2001)

²⁸ Marina Gr`ini}, "Hysteria: Physical Presence and Juridical Absence & AIDS: Physical Absence and Juridical Presence", in "The Seen – Le Vu" (thematic issue), *Filozofski vestnik*, 2 (Ljubljana, 1996), p. 51

statement: *I will never know what Stelarc or Nauman authentically or truly feels and thinks through the presentation of a body exposed to painful actions or a body lead by infantile drives. I can not know any of these artists' intentions, desires, feelings or constructions, i.e. lives. Their behaviour is not a faithful image or an apparent expression of their feelings and thoughts. On the contrary, it can be assumed that their thoughts and feelings are potential images of overwhelming, shifting or humming texts of culture. We can ascribe to Stelarc's gestures of pain or Nauman's acts of infantility any, meaning arbitrary, conceptual apprehensive potentialities of indexing: sadomasochism, alienation, autoaggressiveness, para-Christian or dervish-esque ecstasies, ironical or cynical behaviour of the artist, dematerialization of the art work, transgressiveness in relation to the canons of art and culture, violation. Behaviour of the artist is a kind of a behavioural text, which builds up at the material limit (membrane, skin) of Stelarc's body the potentialities of the concepts. At this point, artist's behaviour is also a kind of text of deference of what sensually can not be perceived and verbally can not be expressed. The behaviour of the artist as a behavioural text addresses our intelligibility, which exists as a machine for comparison of texts and which connects a 'text' with a text into a sequence which creates the potential for understanding of established meanings of pain. The pain does not exist for me, as a spectator, without the textual comparisons with behavioural texts of other artists. Those texts imply that his body is in state of pain only when they are in comparison with other behavioural texts about the body under pain and with verbal texts which locate or describe or interpret 'the depth of pain'; or, with my learned and acquired identifications of pain. For me, as I watch the body in pain, the pain is not the effect of some authentic induction or aura (sic!) which passes from him to me. We identify ourselves with the text of pain or the text of absence of pain, in a designed moment of body made up and stage set, so that the body can be seen as a body under display of pain, body under display of enduring pain, body under display of control of pain or body under display of absence of pain. This is not about setting a stage for the relationship between texts which relate to performing of phenomena. Nauman's performance, i.e. his performances in the 60s,²⁹ are identified as performance of infantile behaviour of the artist (walking along a given geometric pattern, monotonously playing one tone on the violin, repeating one body action, making faces, touching or playing with testicles, smearing the body with shining oil or glaring paint) in textual surrounding which is aroused and brought under suspicion. His behaviour is a text-symptom: text on which the slipping of the meaning of totality of potentiality is enacted. Nauman's performance is not identified as an authentic or true human acting from self, through self and for self. It is provocative and behaviourally post-Duchampian³⁰ positioning. Nauman's performing is a tactical intervention within defined meanings, values and individual existential and social horizons of modern art and her sublime, aesthetic and ethical criteria which float in the atmosphere of the Western dominant culture. His walking appears as an individual, quite localized and fragmented, act which can not be universalized. The artist replaces his universally aimed creative act with 'cold' and 'neutral' phenomenality of his behaviour, which, in absence of any dramatic expressivity, points to his behavioural 'politics'. His work is about the politics of behaviour, and not about the expressive power of behaviour. Therefore, in post-deconstructivist theory terms, one can talk about performance art as a textual production in which the 'textual' samples of*

²⁹ Bruce Nauman – *Werke 1965 bis 1972* (Düsseldorf: Städtische Kunsthalle, 1973)

³⁰ Cf. *The Duchamp Effect – Essays, Interviews, Round Table*, ed. by Martha Buskirk, Mignon Nixon (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1996)

behaviour, speech or documentation are performed – samples which the artist enacts and inscribes in the place of the anticipated 'idea'. The role of the text is paradoxical: it opens the body to the concept and separates the concept from the body, deferring it textually into the fictional space of narration and knowledge about performance art. Performance art appears as mapping of heterogeneous behavioural practices and pointing to the marginality and secundariness of pain or infantility as traces among traces, and not as a *live* or *life-giving* ingredient among ingredients, in relation to established dominant canons of *mimesis* and *expression* within the Western art and culture.

Phenomenological Potentiality and Ontology of Multiplicity in Relation to Performance Art within the Discursive Field of Potentiality of Indexing

Phenomenological potentialities are based on the conceptual demonstration how the individual body *performances in performance art* are performed and enacted, i.e., how they happen for the body or before the body in the real, or fictional, or VR space and time. *The body situation* is a static relation, or arrangement of bodies or objects in space and time. The situation can be interpreted as a frozen event, a selected and extracted still from the *flux* of events, a suggested absence of the 'process', a motionless event or, perhaps, a terminated event, etc... The Event (*Ereignis*) is conception, growth, endurance, work, action, termination, endless repeating, monotonous repeating, continual metamorphosis, discontinual shifting, accelerated action, deference in time and space, focusing on the object of desire, loss of an object of identification etc...³¹ The potentialities of the phenomena of *performance art* establish a relation between the sheer experience of the event and conceptual rendering of events and experiences of the events. The human body is, for the most part, a carrier or a medium of the action in performance art. Besides, the human body also involved in the process of reception of an *event*. However, the body is never *just a body*, even when the artist tends to display just a body in the play of transformation of metaphoric figural mediations in the matter-of-factness of presence. When Dennis Oppenheim (*Reading Position for a Second Degree Burn*, 1970) exhibits his everyday body as a 'place' or when Franko B. (*I Miss You*, 2002) puts forward only his white, bloody non-referential body on the catwalk, reducing the multitude of potentialities of meaning in the body, they do not reach the 'body itself'. Oppenheim and Franko B. use the body as an *instrument* or a *machine* of sensual display, a machine for production of potential relations between the body and the object, body and space, body and time, body and body. The body is just an anticipated *figure* which helps us focus on the 'body itself', which is never simply present here and now as just a body.

From the semiologic perspective, the *presence of the body* is a potential relationship, signifying relationship, anticipation of meaning of the body and deference of the body as the carrier of the sign in the exchange of the meaning of the texts. Every body is in the field of transformation of the discursive realm and, therefore, is a *figure*. For instance, when in performance one shoots a gun and Chris Burden gets wounded (*Shoot*, 1971), he becomes a kind of a textual knit for all potential

³¹ Françoise Proust, "Kaj je dogodek?", in "Filozofija i njeni pogoji – Ob filozofiji Alaina Badiouja" (thematic issue), *Filozofski vestnik*, 1 (Ljubljana, 1998), pp. 9-19

meanings: autodestructivity, masochism, fatalism, immediate facing with the pain here-and-now, urban senseless violence, mediation of universal pain through the individual pain, challenge of permitted or forbidden, facing danger, American obsession with guns etc. His behavioural text is introduced into the *performing machine* of multiplication of potential textual identifications within culture. Every performance is a textual potentiality of intertextual confrontation, exchange, in fact, *promiscuity* of meaning that circulates or flow around the corporal-behavioural, which escapes each or any statement. The semiologic perspective subsumes sensual impressions under the interpretative multiplications of meanings within the directed event and uncontrolled webbing of *information* in culture. The semiologic perspective helps or inhibits communication and understanding, in the radical censorship of the phenomena or, more precisely, in the translation of phenomena to a message or a multiplicity of referring messages.

From the traditional phenomenological perspective, the presence of the body is a initiation for a special kind of encounter in which *something* displays itself by its own self. Behavioural human body, *which is, in semiologic terms, always something else*, prepares itself to be displayed as *only a body by itself*. The body, however it might be obscured by the webs of potential accidents, should enable the sheer body *here-and-now* to appear before us and for us. It is anticipated that *the sheer body* appears as a *house of the being* from the naked sexual body of Carolee Schneemann (*Meat Joy*, 1964), from artificial cynical bureaucratic masked/demasked bodies set as sculptures of Gilbert and George (*The Singing Sculpture*, 1970), from travestying multireferential body of multiplying visualizations of Yasumasa Morimura (*Double/age /Marcel/*, 1988), from the castrated body of Bob Flanagan (*Auto-Erotic SM*, 1989), from surgery-operated and corrected body/face of Orlan (*Omnipresence*, 1993), from Ron Athey's body possessed by the virus (*4 Scenes in a Harsh Life*, 1994), from the para-mythic and para-ritual body of Marina Abramovi} (*Balkan Baroque*, 1997), from Valentina ^abro's body of an ordinary pregnant woman as a *house of the Other* (*Ultra-Intro*, 2002) etc, etc. The traditional phenomenology searches for *just a body* as a phenomenon out of the relativity and illusions of everyday appearances: as something which is display-of-self-by-one's-self, and relates to a special kind of encounter with Something. That encounter, as a real exceptional encounter, is anticipated and expected as the ultimate meaning of the artistic and aesthetic act within *performance art*. From the relatively new phenomenological perspective, the *presence of the body* is determined by a shift from the semiotic representation of the body as a signifying anticipation of figures to representation of the effects of individual bodies. At this point, we talk about representation of an event which contains *not-only-body* or an event which is a *performance of not-only-body*. The syntagm *not-only-body* means that the 'body' does not appear as *just a body* behind the layers of apparitions, in Platonic sense; apparitions of daily occurrences, in Heideggerian terms, discursive practices (Foucault), traces of culture (Derrida) or textual experience of history (Kristeva). The body is 'something' conceiving, commencing, it works and acts, producing or behaving between³² many potentialities. The potentialities are not only meanings, nor just complex identities, but also sensual/corporal appearances, out of control in an open and ambiguous world. The body is not a signifier³³,

³² Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, "Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible...", in *A Thousand Plateaus – Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Continuum, 2002), p. 277

³³ Guattari in an interview to Catherine Backes-Clément (1972), "Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari on Anti-Oedipus", in Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations 1972-1990* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 21-22

which means an initiation for one letter, one sign, one code, one word or one text – the body is not a signifier for a determinable meaning which will be used for reading of the identity of that body. The body is a behavioural *machine* in which *fluxes of content and expression* of appearance and mediation of the body here-and-there-and-then, here-and-now or here-in-between, do not depend on the signifier. The bodies are for us, most often, *bodies-in-between*. They are caught in the event of experience, communication and physical/sensual/corporal confrontation of fluxes intersected by potentialities that exist and lead to different incomparable registers of recognition and identification of the body. Each individual body is in multiple³⁴ intersection of different fluxes: flows of emerging and unfolding. There is no body of one and exactly *that* centered identity. The individual body belongs at the same time to different identities: racial, ethnic, class, age, professional etc. Applied in traditional phenomenological terminology, the flux would be a 'produced phenomenon in progress' which is transformed or, actually, deterred, potentially ceaselessly. In that sense, Laurie Anderson's performance *Stories from the Nerve Bible* (1992-93) represents a complex multimedial machine of production of corporal-audio-visual³⁵ images on the concert-screen floor. Here we do not meet, for example, *one body*: Laurie Anderson's body. Here we meet a multitude of simultaneous multiplications. We meet the light, neon, fleshy, gender, political, private, public, economic, entropic, expansionist, illusionist or literal; then, rock-and-roll, performer's, arty-designed or lost in the world, decentered in human presence and media-deferred, which means, alienated body. Stage machine produces the body fluxes. Laurie Anderson³⁶ is not a painter/sculptor which comes out on stage and awards her audience with her artistic painting-sculptural act as a public stage event. She seemingly or, perhaps, really abandons the profession of a visual artist as a producer of objects and enters the context of stage and media *performance* of popular music. She becomes a performance artist, composer, performer, singer, director³⁷. Laurie Anderson takes over and embraces competencies of a *super rock star*, realizing herself in that domain through concerts, spectacles, video clips, single and LP records, CDs, interviews etc. She designs an *androgynous* artificial figure of a singer-performer on stage and in media representations. She is a rock star, reflecting certain intellectual and artistic references from visual arts and befitting institutions of the art world, as she exhibits documents from concerts, produces works, publishes private diaries, writes pro- or para- or auto-referential theoretical writings, conceives complex interdisciplinary performances.³⁸ In fact, she appears in the similar realm of construction of identity of multimedia artists like Yoko Ono, David Bowie, Brian Eno, even Joseph Beuys. On the other hand, she became a rock star emerging from the environment of elite and experimental visual art. Anderson has abandoned the context of visual arts at a certain historical moment. This was a moment when the relationship between the world of high

³⁴ Peter Hallward shows, referring to Badiou, that the central problem of contemporary philosophy is articulation of thought inherent in multiplicity, "Badiou's Ontology", in *Badiou – a subject to truth*, p. 81

³⁵ Johannes Biringer, "Returning to the Body with Memories and Screen Lives", in *Media & Performance – Along The Border* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. 63-72

³⁶ *Laurie Anderson – The Record of the Time; Sound in the work of Laurie Anderson* (Lyon: Musée d'Art Contemporain, 2002)

³⁷ See the statement in the interview of William Duckworth with Laurie Anderson: "I see myself more as a director, and occasionally a performer and composer, than as a performance artist", in *Talking Music* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1999), p. 384

³⁸ Laurie Anderson, "from For Instants", in *Individuals: Post-Movement Art in America*, ed. by Alan Sondheim (New York: A Dutton Paperback, 1977), pp. 69-83

art and the world of popular art and culture became relative, when the borders of high art and popular art became very permeable for mutual exchange of constructed identities, forms of representation and production-exchange-consumption of aestheticized cultural environments. Working with relative relationships of elite and popular art Anderson found herself taking a post-Situationist position³⁹ of *being-in-between*. And *being-in-between* means being in between: the world of autonomous art and entertainment industry; American art as popular and European art as elitist; American art as a production aesthetics and European art as a creative aesthetics; the artist and the entertainer; the male and the female figure of representation of gender identity; the natural and the artificial *being/organism*; stage and screen figure/body; etc... As a rock singer, Anderson carefully develops an identity of an intellectual and *arty-rock* star, which expects from her audience a certain intellectual and critical attitude. She stimulates their intellectual attitude by multimedia *images* and multimedia conveyed *narratives* which are amplified and aimed at verbal performance, artificial stage design as the setting for the behaviour of the performer, modification of sound of the human voice and music instruments, construction of scenes by lighting and setting up the spatial audiovisual images. She speaks about herself, or more precisely, about her body as a *vehicle*,⁴⁰ showing herself as a stage-media setting of micro-multitudes in motion, micro-machines, desiring machines, molecular formations in flux, intersections of fluxes etc, etc. Her work would be just one in many cases in the history of *performance art* if observed merely as a crossover or transition from the elite realm of *performance* into another realm, the realm of popular *performing* art. However, there is also a potentiality of multi-register interpretation of her work. It is possible to approach any of her concert-spectacles⁴¹ in a consumer, rock-enjoying, pop-rock-identification or *arty-fancy* or intellectually pro- or para- critical-theoretical way. These options stand on comparative simultaneous levels of performed multimedia-event, as an art work in-between the high and popular culture. But, if her artistic work is observed in accordance with the criteria of the Duchampesque tradition of work with *readymade* phenomena, then it might be claimed that every concert-spectacle performed by Laurie Anderson, with a big co-performer and technical crew before a huge audience, has two incomparable levels of structuring of the phenomena: (1) the first level is the level of a concert-spectacle, typical for any super-rock concert, with a special audience, its ecstatic behaviour and behavioural participation; and (2) the second level is the level of *relationship* of the visual performance artist, which sets her existential, behavioural and professional life as a simulacrum of a rock-star in the actual system of pop-rock music as entertainment industry. If this second level of work is accepted, then it is possible to see that her work 'exists' through *performing* of complex interventions on the institutional system of the entertainment industry. The institutional system of entertainment can not be directly perceived by watching/listening to the concert-spectacle, but by intelligible-critical interpretative mapping of relationships between different events of concerts-spectacles within the broader cultural frameworks, i.e. the effects of the entertainment industry. One level is the level of phenomena of body performance in a concrete space and time, in the framework of the social institutions of popular culture, and the second level is the discursive *performance* of a macro-project or macro-politics within the institutions, statuses and functions of

³⁹ Guy Debord, *Društvo spektakla* (Belgrade: Anarhija / blok 45, 2003)

⁴⁰ Laurie Anderson, *Empty Places – A Performance* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991)

⁴¹ E.g. performances: *United States* (1979-1983), *Wired for Light and Sound* (1983) or *Stories from the Nerve Bible* (1992-93)

popular culture. In a single work, Laurie Anderson works synchronically and inter-ventionally with two different phenomenologies of *performance*. She works with multimedia phenomenologies of a stage performance and with potential phenomenologies of political-institutional performance. Her work is an *ontology of multitude*, because it simultaneously exists in different, almost incomparable, registers of reception: actual indulging in music, light or images at the concert and intelligible critical and reflexive understanding of entertainment industry as production of political objects. For example, the status of the audience, in her work is multi-signifying. The audience is the target group which she addresses seductively, offering enjoyment. Laurie Anderson addresses them through a multimedia concert-spectacle. At the same time she serves as an entertainer to that audience and she uses the audience as an object or a symptom in testing the system of the institutions of popular culture. But, she also rewards the audience with a conceptual and meta-critical potentiality of understanding the simulacrum which she performs on, in or through the institutions of popular culture. Thus postulated phenomenology of multiplicity in the analysis of performance art is the interpretative quest for the way in which something that acts and resists the immediate coding or fixed meaning is established in performance art. The resistance to coding or performing of the message acts like a complex multi-register *atmosphere* which, quite carelessly, I could call *existence*.

The Phenomenological and/or Discursive Aspects of Performance Art: Ontological Questions

The idea of performing can not be observed neither as a direct, nor a certain, nor a homogenous *unit*, *tool*, *drive* or a *vehicle* of establishing a work of performance art. The idea of *performance* can not be described exclusively through its performative functions. The performance is a way of giving reference related to the statement, but also something beyond the speech, image, body or appearance. Also, performance is a system/practice of interpretations, established between concretization of each individual act in progress and its surrounding meaning, opening to the potentialities of cultural identifications as a discourse⁴² or through the discourse. However, the interpretation is not a clear or unambiguous verbal statement about the orientation of the phenomena in the field of discursive potentialities. Quite the contrary, it is the opening of heterogeneous potentialities which sometimes act through feasible meanings (text-sign-meaning) and, most often, act as performed atmosphere of potential meanings around the body in the event. Discursive potentialities are based on effects of the utterability, i.e. advocating of the work of performance art as a textual/intertextual material, surrounding order in cultural contexts. Therefore, *performance* exists as a fissure and hiatus, but also a nexus and linkage between phenomena which unfold through the body, and a discourse which moves the body in the whirlpool of potentiality from one cultural register of identifications to another.

My concluding remark is that performance is not a sum total of morphological, *by their own nature* differentiated acts, processes, gestures, behaviours, i.e., actions, procedures or, even, methods of performing of behaviour in art and culture. Definition of performance as morphologically different procedures of representa-

⁴² Mi{el Fuko, "Diskurzivne tvorevine", in *Arheologija znanja* (Belgrade: Plato, 1998), pp. 36-44

tion, expression, construction, simulation or performativity describes and explains performing as a field of heterogeneous and incomparable *ontologies* or concrete *morphologies*. For example, in the history of modernism *representation* and *expression* are interpreted as completely opposed strategies and tactics in producing an art work. The modernist revolution in redefining the status of the art work is with certain artists (Kandinsky, Artaud, Barba) and theoreticians (Croce, Greenberg, Barba, Danto) interpreted as a consequence of the shift from strategy and tactics of representation, to strategies and tactics of expression. On the contrary, the post-modern theory demonstrates (Oliva, Owens, Biringer) that expression is a specified tactics of *representation* within complex historical, posthistorical or transhistorical tactics of representation or mimesis of mimesis, as a *whole* or *non-whole* metaphysical horizon. The causes of this are numerous argumentations which aim at demonstrating that between the 'inner determination' (e.g. according to Kandinsky) and external-material order of the work, a causal directing and connecting relationship of the expressive leaving of traces does not exist. The behaviour of the artist in performance art is not externalizing of the internal into the external world of traces from depths. The behaviour of the artist in a performance is a behavioural representation, which always points at and refers to the anticipated potentialities of the traumatic, demonic or mental, through always-external interpretative textual focusing. And, therefore, my concluding remark reads as follows: performance is a name for the tactics of regulation and deregulation of the orientation of primarily behavioural acting as representative, as expressive, as constructive, as simulationist or as performative. What matters are not different morphologies of the performance, but ways of focusing the function of any procedure of performing in the realm of phenomena and in the realm of discourse. In other words, a specific performance, which is recognized as representative, as expressive, constructive, simulationist or performative is not determined by the attributes of representation, expression, construction, simulation or performativity, but by the functions of representation, expression, construction, simulation or performativity. And orientation is a procedure of regulation and deregulation of potentiality of behavioural phenomena and textual potentialities as fluxes in a chosen, inferior or superior discursive realm. For example, Gina Pane in her work *Death Control* (1974) displays to the gaze her body/flesh⁴³ with crawling worms⁴⁴. Her performance as if expresses the anxiety, morbidity, fear of death or invocation of death, but, she also works with the complex systems/practices of advocating the body in painful, lethal, arousing or critical situations of human existence. The discursive orientation of behaviour grasps her work and situates it or moves, regardless of the fact that I feel her/my own repulsion/anxiety/fear. My own repulsion/anxiety/fear is suggested in my observation of her face covered with worms and in my identifications with her face as a face of potential death. The effect of her work is not an effect of opening of her depth through a corporal interactive act, but phenomenal and discursive focusing of the functions of performance on the situating of a corporal phenomenon in relation to certain and uncertain potentialities of discourse. Her behaviourality is, therefore, a *screen* of projecting hypothetical 'depths', which is nothing else but a carefully regulated/deregulated effect of focused functions of performance in redirecting the intersected fluxes in motion.

Translation by: Irena [entevska

⁴³ On complex motivations of the 'body/flesh/meet', see Michael Hardt, "Exposure – Pasolini in the flesh", in Brian Massumi, pp. 77-84

⁴⁴ Gina Pane: "I was living in posthumous time. Covered with maggots, my flesh detached by maggots: flesh of my flesh, two fleshes living together, one nourishing itself from the other: process of life in a continuum of time" – quote from *The Artist's Body*, p. 101

The Way To Make Something Yours Is That You Fuck It Up By Giving It Your Body; *Powered by Emotion*, Medium Specificity or Situation?

Bojana Cveji}

Sometimes speaking about one performance can mobilize so many other works, media, and genres so that, eventhough it doesn't mix media, but belongs to one single performing art, it produces *chaosmosis*, a dynamic passage and stirring of the field of performing arts *en large* via one medium: dance. *Powered by Emotion* (further referred as *PbE*) is such a performance, made by Märten Spångberg on the basis of reconstructing an improvised dance from *Goldberg Variations*, Walter Verdin's film of Steve Paxton's improvisation and performance with the same title. By *chaosmosis* here, I mean the movement of several registers of a problematic unfolding in *PbE*:

Are we dealing here with a parasite (eating on a masterpiece), a bastard-product (the undesirable evidence of criticality), a hybrid (cross-breed of works and media) or, in juridical terms, a clandestine performance because of its unauthorized trespass on another's territory? In other words: what is the status of the artwork *PbE*?

In the lack of what is considered an expertise training for dance (Spångberg, not being a conventionally trained dancer but being specialized in the field of dance and performance as a critic, theorist, dramaturge, performer), how does the performance produce a distinct specificity of its medium 'dance'? Does performing become a medium in itself when it operates by way of a single, unrepeatable mediation, which stems from a specific specialized training Spångberg undertakes to make the reconstruction of Paxton's improvisation for the specific media situation his performance creates? In other words, does media specificity only apply to single instance of one performance, concept, project?

Does *PbE* require virtuosity to be rethought, this time along the biopolitical lines of labor without a product?

Before I plunge into these questions, I owe the readers a little history.

In 1986, Steve Paxton, in this case relevant to be mentioned as the pioneer of contact improvisation, started out a project of dance improvisation based on the two famous Glenn Gould recordings of *Goldberg Variations* from 1955 and 1982, Gould's first and last recordings. Why call it a project: Paxton was performing the improvisation over many years in various situations, from theatre venues, festivals to the woods in nature, and Walter Verdin filmed one instance of an improvisation in 1992 and made it into dance video. The fetishistic multiplication of author-icons already began with Paxton (from Bach to Gould to Paxton) to be continued with Spångberg. Twelve years later, a musicologist, performance theoretician and performer, Spångberg reconstructs the first part of the videofilm (Variations 1-15 on Gould's 1982 version) performing himself the movement Paxton generated in the improvisation taken from the videofilm. As a second part to this performance called *Powered by Emotion*, Spångberg sings the leading vocal on the instrumental background to four songs from *Buena Vista Social Club*. The album, as we know, revived the pre-revolutionary *son de Cuba*, suppressed after the advent of Fidel Castro, and grew into a global mainstream blockbuster thanks to the initiative and production of Ry Cooder (1996) and Wim Wenders's film (1999). In place of Bach's Aria Spångberg sets an excerpt from the Köln Concert of Keith Jarrett, and the reason for that is a peculiar coincidence of dates: one year after the first session of contact improvisation occurred, Jarrett performed his notorious Köln Concert, sitting down at the piano without a score or reliance to the traditional jazz idioms and played a full-evening concert improvisation.

Regardless of whether she is knowledgeable to read out all these references, the spectator is caught by a process of heterogenesis: a dynamic ideography, where the cognitive and sensory activities are all the more vertiginous when intertwining matters of aesthetics and politics at a high speed of switching media, instruments, techniques, authors and societies of reference. And they are:

Bach's composition of the *Urtext*, the authentic non-edited edition;

Gould's recordings, the first to be of a studio but as if live in-one-go playing of his interpretation from the beginning to the end, and the last made in the digital editing of miniature fragments of pieces with advanced technology;

Paxton's danced improvisation, captured and edited by Verdin's camera;

The improvisation of Cuban musicians in the tradition of *son de Cuba*, in Cooder's studio production and Wenders's film reproduction (which largely contributed to the global popularity of the album).

So, the poetic procedures already include various forms of mediation: from Bach's composition via Gould's first interpretation to his last editing recomposition in the recording studio; from Paxton's dance in the improvisation listening to music with movement to the filmic framing of Verdin; traditional improvisation of the Cuban musicians going into professional studio production, postproduction under Cooder's guidance and reproductive representation of that process in the film of Wenders.

Attending *Powered by Emotion* in the presence of Steve Paxton and engaging in a discussion with Spångberg, Paxton and a group of artists and dramaturges gathered

around the project of Connexive “Vera Mantero” in Vooruit Gent in March 2004, I realized there was nothing more problematic than insisting on the hierarchy of generative production and correlative reproduction. A protocol respectful of a fundamental ontology of artwork would have to announce *PbE* as Paxton, amused by Spångberg’s performance, recommended:

“*Goldberg Variations* by J. S. Bach, played by Glenn Gould, improvised by Steve Paxton, filmed by Walter Verdin, and reconstructed by Mårten Spångberg”

But what can guarantee an order from original to copy in *Goldberg Variations*, or, do we travel in our reception from the idealized Pythagorean hearing of Bach, through the fetish of ear-oriented body of Gould, a dancer whose listening involves the response of the organic body to music with motion (as Paxton says), a non-dancer for whom Gould’s music only assists to scaffold and fix someone else’s improvisation into choreography. The musician’s was to be a highly specialized body, the dancer’s body trained but behaving in a mixed regime of remembering ballet with the muscle of a contactor, and the non-dancer’s body foreign in reproducing the subjective expression and personal style of the dancer. Alien body, meaning just another, but also *the* other in kind, in the lack of skill and technique, inefficient and inappropriate.

If we followed the trajectory suggested by Paxton, it wouldn’t be difficult to understand why Paxton, and even Gould before him, chose to perform (on) *Goldberg Variations*. This set of variations from *Clavier Übung* vol. IV can hardly be considered a musical work in its paradigm, but it rather belongs to the social practice of music which had no other *telos* than a social purpose, occasion and ownership by dedication, as well as it is a pedagogic mission, serving as an encyclopedic display of various compositional techniques. That Western musical tradition has assimilated it into its musical canon is, as with most of music prior to 1800, a case of projecting the 19th century concept of musical work to the practices of music-making before music acquired the autonomy of art. *Goldberg Variations* are a kind of *pièce de circonstance*, enlivened by the anecdote saying that Bach was commissioned by the Russian ambassador count Kaiserlingk to write a piece which Bach’s pupil Goldberg could play to the sleepless count suffering from insomnia. If there was space and interest to develop an analytical account of *Goldberg Variations* in this text, it would show that Bach’s method of “composition by variation” doesn’t produce organic unity of a piece, but a baroque monistic stance closer to Spinoza and Leibniz: the quest for the greatest diversity within the greatest unity, hereby from a single pattern, the theme, each variation being equally singular and important like a theme. The chief principle governing the sequence of the variations is, thus, local contrast in character, rather than a whole of the cycle of 32 variations be perceivable in the large scale rhythm of canon+ 2 variations. Each variation, including the too elaborated to be only a theme, and repeated in the end, aria, is a self-contained recomposition of the underlying harmonic ground and phrase structure. Bach’s cryptic and witty trickeries (32 bars of Aria and 32 pieces in the set, or the last *Quodlibet* variation weaving folk song refrains “I have for so long a time been away from you” and “Cabbage and beets have driven me away; had my mother cooked meat I might have longer stayed”) only prove gestures and not procedures of making an organic whole of variations. So it seems perfectly suitable for Gould to take up *Goldberg Variations* twice to move away from concert-like inter-

pretation to studio work of recomposition. From the biopolitical point of view, *Goldberg Variations* are a product of work as *poiesis*: the product of labor separates from its creator by way of the score, so that in Bach's time, after the payment of the commission, it fulfills its purpose. According to Paolo Virno's biopolitical view, virtuosity is a concept only when labor acquires the autonomy of artwork.¹ In that sense, a performance (musical concert or dance) and improvisation in particular, produce an event out of the illusion that the product cannot be separated from the act of its generation. Virtuosity is, thus, an activity that fulfills itself, finding a purpose in and of itself, not being objectivized in the final product, as the phenomenon of the artwork doesn't last longer than the performance. The second prerequisite for virtuosity is its performativity: it is an activity that requires the presence of others, i.e. emerging only in the presence of an audience.

In his lecture "Labor, Action, Intellect", Virno says that Gould was the pianist who rendered his virtuosity apolitical, nearing his artistic activity as close as possible to the idea of labor with extricable products. This is how Virno explains Gould's act of leaving the concert stage for the studio where he would devote himself to exploring the techniques of recording and editing leading to the product of compact disc. Gould's move reflects the paradox of a conservative and at the same time radical intervention of the performer. There's not much excuse to play a masterpiece once again, unless one really has another interpretation: "I would like to shock the listeners to the extent that from the first note they are aware that something different is going to happen," said Gould in an interview in 1968 when he had already 4 years been retreated from the concert podium. But the eccentricity of *GV* is paradoxically conservative at the same, as it should have a convincingly Bachian reason behind it, Gould also says, meaning the interpretation should strive for a fidelity to the ideal entity of the musical work: the most homogeneous and accurate instance of the ideal unity of the work. On one hand, he abandons the phenomenon of bringing music into being from the original source of live performance, the one-timeness of a spontaneous creation here&now. On the other hand, he uses multiple takes and splices of small fragments, and needs the temporal displacement in the process of editing, to eliminate inaccuracy and create an even more homogeneous entity of that particular work. If the commercial standards had permitted it, he would have issued variant performances on the same discs to make the listener participate.

The interest in personal intimation with a musical work brought Paxton to Gould's recordings. If Gould's method is analytical, Paxton proceeds from the point of synthetic, holistic and organic experience. Musing on the difference between the 1955 and 1982 versions, Paxton stresses that however the moment of performance can be fixed and manipulated today, this fixity cannot be experienced twice the same. "Every time I listen, I am different, my body undergoes different experiences, different conditions of reading, different states of spirit." Improvising while listening to a CD recording is equivalent to searching for ever new spacing, new directions, new relationships to the notes of a sound painting, sonic sculpture or acoustic architecture in various occasions of performing in theatre venues or nature. As if he aims to restore the liveness of Gould's humming baritone that guided Gould in his playing, Paxton extends it to movement, embodying a live response to listening. His performance conveys a form of everyday existence, as if *Goldberg*

¹ Paolo Virno, "Labor, Action, Intellect", in *A Grammar of the Multitude* (Los Angeles-New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), pp. 47-72

Variations replaced a partner in contact improvisation. Music provides support and resistance like another body or acoustic environment with which the dancer communicates maintaining an internal concentration in his own body as well as openness for contact. Until the video-recording, Paxton's improvisation produces work without a final product. In Virno's terms, it would occupy the place of Action, "political," as it operates in a public context, not disturbing but interfering with it. It is exterior and contingent, conditioned by the "buzzing" of the many, many others observing it. When Paxton dances in the solitude of nature, the production without a product returns to itself, becoming a form of existential, rather than performative action. So do many improv jam sessions acquire a similar aura of a self-contained private event, not needing the presence of an audience.

Finally we come to Spångberg. If contact-improvisation in the 1970s broke the ground of a new territory of dance, represented by the communal body of the contact, abolishing instruments of dance in order to produce movement out of the function of a physical relationship between two or more bodies and the experience of it, then Spångberg's transformation of Paxton's autograph (the recording of an improvisation on video) into an allograph (choreography), or writing, shows three registers of deterritorialization.

First of all, Spångberg introduces a mode of reproduction comparable with karaoke, showing in the second part of the performance, when he sings a real karaoke to *Buena Vista Social Club* that karaoke is far too present in our daily life to play a transgressive role on stage. He reconstructs Paxton's movements by lending his foreign body to the site of the authentic speech of the other, to the landscape of Paxton's "I dance the dance", or would that be more like "I dance Paxtonism", similar to Pollock's and Cage's claim "I create like nature" or "I am nature" or to "imitate nature in its manner of operation." To reconstruct Paxton's movement with an non-expert body is like inhabiting a self-expressive self-contained world without its assumptions, beliefs and techniques, imitate the sound of a foreign speech without understanding or being able to maintain the structure of that language. Spångberg performs *subjection*, undergoes the speech of a master without the knowledge of his language. As in the logic of hacking, he reveals the mode of subjectification, a way of making something yours by repeating it with uncanny difference, or bastardization. "The way to make something yours is to fuck it up by giving it your body," the American visual artist Mike Kelley writes.² *PbE* doesn't parasitize on a masterpiece, but it exits out of Paxton like a bastard and a clandestine, an alien body which isn't authorized neither for the discipline of dance nor Cuban music. This bastardization isn't parodic, because its intentions for literal reproduction work by the effect of approximate double: yes, this is almost like Paxton, but it's not, it strives for his expression, or we strive for him to reach it, we stand by his efforts. But at the same, who is this Spångberg? Somebody who is neither pedestrian, amateur, perhaps he is a correct player of someone else's idiom. So we stand by his striving body, as long as it is an impersonal somebody, desiring and trying to achieve the impossible.

Second. Spångberg deterritorializes the territory of improvisation, in other words, draws a line of flight from the motives of emancipation in contact improvisation as well as the ideal of authenticity of Cuban music. His work shows that improvisation after many years of practice, even if it had been initially led by the libertar-

² Mike Kelley, "Theory, Garbage, Stuffed Animals, Christ," in *Educational Complex* (Vienna: Generali Foundation, 1996)

ian quest for a body free from rational control, sediments the characteristics of a modernist high art practice (style, technique, virtuosity, mannerism, specific medium autonomy of movement which are attributed to an authorial signature). Lending his broken voice to the tunes of Ibrahim Ferrera, Spångberg processes the opinions by which the album *Buena Vista Social Club* configures our sensorium, our daily scopic+sonic environment. And these opinions are: “music transcends politics,” “let’s reestablish the link with the past of Cuba that has been lost,” or the desire of Wenders, after his film “Until the End of the World” to seek for the authentic “people bigger than life itself” (taken from the interviews with Wim Wenders).

Third and last line of flight. We shouldn’t forget that *PbE* is a solo, and that a solo in the ethic of performance represents the site of a contesting self-affirmation. Subjecting utterances of individual expression (by Paxton or Ferrera) to a karaoke reproduction, Spångberg indicates that self-expression is today a means of depoliticizing art in the age of global capital. He doesn’t achieve this effect by denying authenticity or speciality by way of an ordinary body – as it had been partly the critical edge of the 1960s – or by making it into a forgery and parasite. With the passion of a not-allowed, at first glance, literal, but not naively fascinated intrusion, he is making space for the expression of whatever body, whatever subject. A *quodlibet ens*, a “being such that it always matters.” Singularity of his body doesn’t spring from an aesthetic of equivalence between the spectator and performer (“what he can, I could do as well”), but from freeing it from all the tenets of individualism: inner necessity and ineffability, objective talent, technical merits. It doesn’t emancipate the spectator by promising a free individuality, and at the same time it doesn’t cancel the singularity of solo expression. With a body striving for the impossible (“being Steve Paxton”) and existing without authority on a foreign territory, Spångberg exposes just desire, being as such, that is, whatever you *want*.

The medium of dance in this performance proves that it doesn’t need the tactic of inter, mixed or multi-media crossing in order to exit the territory of essentializing the phenomenon of bodily movement. *PbE* reconfigures the medium as a situation of mediation, of mobilizing heterogeneous territories (media, instruments, authors, social contexts) for the questions: what is the value of anybody-somebody as a unit of a multitude? of my body, my receptive ears who have access to almost everything, bathing in the sounds of *Buena Vista Social Club*? Can there be virtuosity without technicality, but in any body’s activity of desire for the impersonal, *quodlibet* production of knowledge and pleasure?

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Whither Cyberformance?; Notes on Net-theatre as a Symptomatic Theatre Practice

Ana Vujanovi}

The question recalls Derrida who recalls Marx (in *Spectres of Marx*), with its tone of 'Marxist Messianism' without the Messiah, but let us start from the beginning...

The conceptual realm of the new, digital media and arts is still unstable and many of the concepts are not systematically established. (That does not imply its absolute freedom, but the fact that none of the existing positions has achieved absolute domination in this realm.) In order to avoid ambiguity, I straightforwardly underline that at this point I tackle the practices emerging within the world of performing arts, realized through digital technologies (IT, ICT), and performed in VR or on-line environment: that is, net performance and theatre or *cyberformance*.¹ Performing arts world embraces many practices based on digital technology which cannot be examined in a single article, since there are many differences between them even when they bear phenomenal resemblance. Their status-functions in the performing arts world are not the same just because they are based on the same technical procedures, but because they are determined by a specific politics in use of the media and by acting in particular micro contexts of performing arts. But my account of net-performance will relate to many of them, indicating wider issues of confrontation with screen image-event, available more or less at the same time, more or less all over the planet. The newly-addressed problematic is *symptomatic*² for a theatre institution – and related to the penetration of digital technology into a live performance, as well as to the changes of the social status of an artwork, which increasingly loses its exclusivity and disrupts the social situation of the reception from an audience. Therefore, this article focuses on the problematic location (*the tiger's jump*) of cyberformance in the context (history, institutions, paradigms, social status) of Western theatre, i.e. on the conceptualization of 'dangerous connections' of the net performance and the surrounding institutions of theatre as an artistic, social, and cultural institution.³

¹ The concept *cyberformance* (from *cyber* + *performance*) was coined by Helen Varley Jamieson; it denotes performance made in on-line environment.

² I use the concept of symptom in the materialistic-psychoanalytic terms of Marx and Lacan, elaborated by Slavoj Žižek in *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989) or *Sublimni objekt ideologije* (Zagreb: Arkzin-Sarajevo: Društvo za teorijsku psihoanalizu, 2002), and "How Did Marx Invent the Symptom?", in *Mapping Ideology*, ed. by Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 1995)

³ I adopt the meaning of the phrase 'dangerous connections' from Bojana Kunst in "Dangerous connection; body as author", *Frakcija*, 20-21 (Zagreb, 2001)

Since, by the middle of the 90s, there was already a full library available on digital media and Internet⁴, I shall enter the core of the theoretical discourse on cyberformance, where Internet is considered both as a creative art media and as a cultural practice. The net theatre emerged around 1996, in USA and Western Europe, where it remains to be the most advanced. Along with the geopolitical non-democratic globalization through and on the Internet, the artistic non-democratic globalization through and on the net theatre proceeds as well. Therefore, almost all its references relate to Western culture and art, and its XX century theatre. The digital technology, especially the Internet, with its faintly-limited flow of information, is instrumental to the global, meaning, faintly limited, Capital. When I am discussing the faint limits, I literally imply Marx's terms of the anonymous structural logic of trans-nationality, -individuality, etc. of the capital, which gets a huge boost in the digital age. For the Internet, as for the capital, it is all the same, in a way. It is as though it has its own logic that does not have much to do with its participants – both are *de-politicized*. When it comes to net-theatre I am interested in the question: Can we *re-politicize the Internet (the global capital)* by this art? And how can it perform the tiger's jump and avoid being trapped by the reconfirming structure of the web in which it operates? Is it possible to incite a kind of 'malfunction', a spot where the faintly-limited expansion of the Internet starts to squeak and discloses itself as very limited? Which means: economically and politically determined.

My experience in working on such a project confronts me with problems and material impossibilities that I could not so clearly see before.⁵ That is the reason I combine here the questions which emerged from this work and a wider theoretical approach which is set *a priori*.

Net-theatre is not a homogeneous artistic field, whose practices share a unique poetics. It is rather an erosive field, which consists of a non-uniformed complex of micro-conceptions and –practices performed by the authors from various disciplines, with different educational backgrounds, aesthetic criteria, and political, artistic and theoretical propositions. The field can be loosely outlined from the complex, critical and theoretically aimed projects by Igor [tromajer, often in collaboration with Bojana Kunst; over disciplinary and phenomenal confrontations (high art: pop culture, play: hypertext, performer: avatar) featuring in the works of Hamnet Players, Desktop Theater, Avatar Body Collision, Helen Varley Jamieson; formal experiments and research in reception of contemporary art by Karla Ptacek in her project Artificial Stage, or by Trickster Theater; and trans-disciplinary net-art practices that insist on the performative aspect, such as the net-actions, 'trans-actions' and visual works by Bureau d'études, hypertexts by Sophie Calle and Michael Joyce, performance-interviews by Ricardo Dominiguez and Coco Fusco, or the net-art platform Incident by Gregory Chatonsky; all to agitating net-actions by Electronic Disturbance Theatre, LB/a.f.r.i.k.a grupp, project OUT by Anne-Marie Schleiner, Raqs Media Collective, Ricardo Dominiguez, etc. There is also a border and the fields outside that border, where various theatrical CMCs are performed: net-discussions, -forums, -chats in IRC, and net-events for

⁴ E.g. Simon Penny, *Critical Issues in Electronic Media* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995); Margaret Morse, *Virtualities: Television, Media Art, and Cyberculture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998); Lev Manovi-, *Metamediji; izbor tekstova* (Belgrade: CSU, 2001); Mark B. N. Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media* (Cambridge Mass-London: The MIT Press, 2003); Brian Holmes, *Hieroglifs of the Future* (Zagreb: WHW-Arkzin, 2003); *Uncanny Networks; Dialogues with the Virtual Intelligentsia*, ed. by Geert Lovink (Cambridge Mass-London: The MIT Press, 2003); etc.

⁵ In 2003-2004 I worked on the theoretical support to the production of the first digital (CD-Rom, LAN, Internet) performance in SMN – *Psychosis and Death of the Author: Algorithm YU03/04.13*.

several participants in MUD and MOO. Some of them intentionally originate from the system of performing arts, such as the work realized by the group of artists in Up-Stage, whose interface is the typical IRC, or Desktop Theater who works in the Palace. But sometimes the same on-line environments build up contexts for other communicational practices, like various *events* in the Palace rooms that do not refer to performing arts, but are nonetheless theatricalized – they resemble (net-) theatre.

Therefore, the criterion according to which some of the practices still represent theatre while others stay outside of its borders, could be the institutional criterion of the structure of the art world, i.e. how a certain work arbitrarily pertains to this or that institution. Following the argument of the institutional theory of art (excluding here Dickie's thesis on 'candidate for evaluation'),⁶ the first question we come across is: where and how we contextualize net-theatre? If cyberperformances belong to theatre, and many of them actually do acquire that institutional status, what happens then with the contemporary theatre? What is the institution that embraces and calls those practices theatre like? And what are the *feedbacks* like? Which counter-strike for this openness must the theatre embrace into its own history? *Whither cyberperformance?*

I will try to examine these questions, using a metaphor of the tiger's leap of cyberformance into the theatre institution, through its irritating inscription into the theatre history. The syntagm 'tiger's leap' and the approach to the process of historization pertaining to it are taken laterally 'from aside'¹ from Benjamin's text *Historical-philosophical Thesis*, via Slavoj Žižek's lucid elaborations of 'the tiger's leap' in the terms of Lacanian psychoanalysis.⁷ I shall start accordingly with the claim: "To articulate past in its historicity does not mean to comprehend it 'as it really was'. It means, to master the memory as it flashes in the moments of danger".⁸ The key word of Benjamin's concept of history is Germ. *Eingedenken*, translated here as 'memory'. However, Žižek notes that it cannot be translated as 'memory', 'reminiscence' or 'transmitting oneself mentally (into something)'.⁹ For Benjamin, *Eingedenken* is the one-sided appropriation of the past. So, the tiger's jump is the jump of a certain present into the open past that has been anticipating it. According to Žižek, thus would the history be established retroactively as it always was, since for Benjamin history is a text, i.e. a series of events whose historical dimension will be determined afterwards, through their inscription into the symbolical networks.¹⁰

The intervention of the present into the past, which 'seams' the past there-and-then from the discontinuous here-and-now position, is the aspect of cyberformance whereby its positions in the theatre system could be established and illuminated most closely. Artificial as it is, net-theatre (as opposed to many other theatre and performance practices from the XX century) by definition does not have any opportunity to overcome its pre-artificial nature and to offer it to the market, which is – paradoxically, at first glance – annoying for the theatre institution

⁶ See George Dickie, "What is Art?; An Institutional Analysis", in *Art and Philosophy*, ed. by W.E. Kennick (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979); Arthur Danto, *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986); Richard Wollheim, *Umetnost i njeni predmeti* (Belgrade: Clio, 2002)

⁷ See Walter Benjamin, "Istorijsko-filozofske teze", in *Eseji* (Belgrade: Nolit, 1974); and Slavoj Žižek, *Sublimni objekt ideologije*

⁸ Walter Benjamin, "Istorijsko-filozofske teze", p. 81

⁹ Slavoj Žižek, *Sublimni objekt ideologije*, p. 187

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 185

itself.¹¹ If history is empty homogeneous time of the official historiography, in lateral historiography, it is discontinuous time 'filled with the present', which is accessed from a safe distance. Net-performance often uses the tactics against theatre, as a lateral theatre practice emerging from a secluded space on its margins. But Benjamin does not apprehend the tiger's leap as an *a priori* resistant gesture, but connects its functionality with its relation to the ruling capital.¹² This is the basic point in my account of the tiger's leap of cyberformance, whereas at the moment we enter the net-theatre world, we enter the world of the overwhelming proximity of the global liberal-capital.¹³ It includes all performing arts, so the question cyberformance raises to all, self included, is: As capital is inevitably here, how to deal with it, then, and who controls it, anyway?

How is this question raised? What is the nature of an art practice which is based on such a purpose? Net-performance could be conceptualized by means of wider currents present in the art world of the 20th century: research-based art (net-theatre as research-based theatre), post-art and -media (net-theatre as post-theatre) and meta-art and -media (net-theatre as meta-theatre).

In the art world of the 20th century, net-performance could be classified in Giulio Argan's terms as '*art based in research*'.¹⁴ It should be understood in a wider sense than one suggested by Argan (relating to the art practices from the late 1950s). Research in art and by way of art requires "an ability attributed to art to address and resolve certain problems, or for addressing the artist as the problem that should be resolved".¹⁵ This means that art as research – as opposed to a 'normal' (Thomas Kuhn) artwork – introduces some elements and competences of meta-discourse on art into the art practice. After Argan, non-research-based art departs from the established values, while the research-based art tends to identify values or to identify itself as a value.¹⁶ In the realm of cyberformance the interweaving of meta-problematization and art practice (as the production of 'pieces') is constitutive for many works and, what is more important, is already established by its post- and meta-positioning within the art system. Net-theatre does not normally work in the system of history, tradition and actual paradigms of theatre as in its natural environment, whose techniques (procedures, concepts and solutions) are being accepted and used for the production of new pieces. Instead, the techniques are seen as the *problems* of the artwork. One of the leading net-theatre groups, Avatar Body Collision places on its homepage, as a point of departure, the following questions: "How is technology changing our definitions of theatre?" and "What place does cyberformance have within theatre?".¹⁷ Helen Varley Jamieson, an author from this group introduces ABC at Empyre network as follows: "We are exploring the meeting of The Body and The Avatar, the meeting of theatre and the internet, how internet technology might be used in theatre (not simply as a tool for distribution/broadcast) and how the physical Body performs in cyberspace. Our

¹¹ "Istorijsko-filozofske teze", p. 80

¹² Ibid, p. 87

¹³ On the monopolies of Bill Gates and politicization of liberal economy by Clinton's administration, see Slavoj Žižek, "Bauk još uvijek kruži!", in Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Komunistički manifest* (Zagreb: Arkzin, 1998); and Brian Holmes, *Hieroglyphs of the Future*

¹⁴ Giulio Carlo Argan, "Umjetnost kao istraživanje", in *Studije o modernoj umjetnosti*, ed. by Ježica Denegri (Belgrade: Nolit, 1982)

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 153

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 154

¹⁷ See <http://www.avatarbodycollision.org>, 11. 2003

work sits in the space between Theatre and New Media, which is still largely undefined territory, and we hope that with our experiments we can push the boundaries and initiate discussion".¹⁸

As for this statement, the post- and meta-theatrical statuses of net-theatre are due for contextualization. They emanate from the theses of Joseph Salazar, Rosalind Krauss (and Mark Hansen) and Lev Manovi-. In the system of theatre, net-theatre is a variant of *post-theatre* since it is set up as theatre after the 'death of theatre', according to Salazar's logic of death of the opera.¹⁹ In fact, it should be understood as a theatre practice which uses history, works, knowledge, and concepts of theatre as its first-degree material – instead of presenting, expressing, representing or performing external referential content, using these only as a medium. By the evident use of theatre elements as its material, net-theatre shows what normal theatre hides by its non-self-evident reproduction of practices and concepts for transmitting other contents – and that builds up the ideological position of theatre in the social system of relations of production. Likewise, net-theatre could be determined as post-theatre, after the concept of 'post-media (condition)' by Krauss.²⁰ Benjamin's statement is that the mechanical reproduction in the media of photography and film created a threat to the 'auratic art', but thereby anticipated the strong political impact of art which came with it, once being mass reproduced. Krauss takes this statement further, toward the post-media of the 1970s, which she perceives as a constitutive element for all the 'hybrid' art forms that refuse to identify themselves with the specific media and thus become a platform for destroying the aura within all art disciplines. Mark Hansen introduces these statements into the problematics of the current digital media that offer possibilities of unlimited cross-conversion of data and enable technical equality of all media materialities, launching thereby a literal 'post-media condition'.²¹ In other words, the digital media, as the current 'hybrid' media system, anticipate the pure flow of data, disposed of the need of differentiation into particular media genres. Because of these artistic-media procedures, I define net-theatre as meta-theatre, using the Manovich's characterization of new media.²² As he puts it, meta-media are 'media beyond media', secondary in relation to the primary traditional media, and also to the overall media platform from which specific media emerged. The key word for the tiger's leap of net-theatre should be added at this point: retroactively. The examples of the works that feature this are numerous. Among the typical is the net-ballet *Ballettika Internettikka* part I (2001) by Igor [tromajer and Brane Zorman.²³ The artist [tromajer works here with the super-smooth signifier of the sublime body in ballet (the continuous smooth figure) and deconstructs it to its discontinuous material elements. In simple terms, he manages the internet streaming of his live performance (series of simple moves and actions) that carves ruptures into the smoothness with short breaks between screen images, which are not available to the audience. The banal but far-reaching question of the audience is: What is he doing in these few seconds? – a question that has been impossible to raise in the

¹⁸ Empyre forum empyre^a lists.cofa.unsw.edu.au, <http://www.subtle.net/empyre>, 09. 14. 2003

¹⁹ See Filip-@ozef Salazar, *Ideologije u operi* (Belgrade: Nolit, 1984)

²⁰ She develops the concept of *post-media* from Benjamin's thesis on the *medium of mechanical reproduction*; see Rosalind Krauss, "Reinventing the Medium", *Critical Inquiry*, 25-2 (Chicago, 1999); and "A Voyage on the North Sea" – *Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999)

²¹ See Mark B. N. Hansen, "Introduction", in *New Philosophy for New Media*, pp. 1-17

²² See Lev Manovi-, *Metamediji...*, p. 74

²³ www.intima.org

traditional *ballet blanc*. Actually, the rupture-question has to be hidden in the *ballet blanc*, otherwise the phantasmatic circus would be immediately disclosed and the ballet would lose its privileged status of the sublime object (of ideology). *Ballettika Internettikka* part I interweaves retroactively the ballet and its mechanism of gaze-desire-identification, which entangled it into the system of production relations, never to speak about itself. Similarly, the dramatic cyberperformances (by Hamnet Players, Desktop Theater, Plaintext Performers) often use classical plays from drama history of the West (by Beckett, Shakespeare, etc.), but these are not used as taken-for-granted universal treasures of sense and value, whose stories should be re-told to modern souls or whose plots should be adopted by any new medium. Instead, the texts are performed as live, actual screen hypertexts which re-read classic-drama-archives as a relatively open combination of Western signifiers that could be enacted, recombined and relocated from one context to another, producing new meanings and values. In this procedure the 'secret of a classic piece' is displayed at the place of an ideological *point de capiton*, which fixes them in this or that context. Important theatre procedures, the post- and meta-theatrical net-theatre is symptomatic for, are the social procedures of offer, consumption and exchange of pieces via the regulated system of assigning quasi-ontological properties at the place of pure-non-ontology ('sociability').

In the light of that thesis, it could be seen that what determines net-theatre as a research-based art is the fact that it does not derive from the established paradigms and procedures of theatre, but from the difficulties in conceptualization of theatre paradigms and procedures, including the net-theatre itself. It is performed by an art practice, instead of some meta-discourse on art. The procedure demands the basic paradigms of the XX century theatre, of live performance and presence, as well as many micro-problems, such as the creation and status of a drama play, libretto, choreography, musical score, performance techniques, modes of body representation, time and space, the material process of performing, etc. By way of cyberformance and at its place, net-theatre enacts the crossing and re-reading of certain concepts and practices of performing arts, or practices and concepts of performing arts in confrontation with other social and cultural issues. It makes it a *problematic as well as a problematizing art practice*, which addresses the *problem of art* in the place of the expected *work of art*. The tactics of [tromajer and Zorman's net-ballet *Ballettika Internettikka* part II (2002) should therefore be considered in this light. It is performed physically and thematically as a guerrilla 'ballet invasion' of the space of Bolshoi theatre in Moscow, the 'holy site' of *ballet blanc*, i.e. as a direct intervention of the net-ballet practice into the heart of the ballet paradigm. The action is shot by a web cam and streamed live via Internet, so that the spectators may see it on the screen in real time. The distinct issue here is that the (net-ballet) practice is not targeted *against* the paradigm of ballet. The paradigm is not a static system, out of touch with the practice, but it is merely enacted by the practices that establish and preserve it. But the practices are material, unforeseen and thus always betraying a bit. This is why the core of (every) system is fragile: in the constant anticipation-and-fear from the practices generated by the system.²⁴ And this is also why [tromajer's ballet should be perceived as problematic and problematizing. It identifies itself as a ballet work not because of the assumption of using ballet techniques in order to tell one more ballet story and

²⁴ See further Rastko Mo-nik, *Beseda... besedo* (Ljubljana: [KUC, 1985), p. 117

thus reinforce the paradigm. It intrudes in a guerrilla way into the tissue of the ballet paradigm and displays its elements, procedures and solutions, defining itself as a (net-) ballet work by self-observation from the site of the ballet paradigm. In that sense, the beginning of the ABC project is also a telling example. It started after the cyberperformance *WaterSwar's* by Helen Varley Jamieson and Jill Greenhalgh at the Transit 3 Festival in Odin teatret (Holstebro 2001), which provoked objections and discussions in the audience, not willing to accept such art practice as theatre.²⁵ The argument demonstratively repeated the already well-known arguments within the theatre practices of the 20th century, based on the paradigm of 'presence' (like in the theatre anthropology and Odin teatret itself) and the traditional Western theatre (for which presence is merely an instrument of the mimetic representation of external contents). When seen in this light, the discussion undoubtedly shows how art practices which change system(s) establish themselves as new canons for the new-coming ones, and also as the key for reading all the practices that had been in existence hitherto.

There are many examples of such net-theatre work, but I am not going to dwell on them here, hoping that I offer one possible functional clue for them. At this point, I would like to note that my observations aim at stressing that net-theatre has a historical opportunity to demonstrate by itself, that the only really problematic/izing art practice is the one which is not focused on products and the supplying apparatus for art production, but to the 'reticent observation' of it. Although this is not the case with all the works in the field of net-theatre (as is for the works I put forward), it is more important that net-theatre has inscribed in itself, in its technique, an opportunity. The crucial difference between particular works is whether this opportunity is placed at the service (deliberately or not) of the liberal capital or invested in its critique, deconstruction or the resistance to it. Basically, the common opportunity lies in the symptomatic status of net-theatre, which unveils the production mechanisms and their social statuses, normally hidden in both dramatic and 'post-dramatic' (H.T. Lehmann) theatre. Theatre necessarily stays within the social systems of production. The post-dramatic theatre – which is supposedly more 'trans-cultural' (W. Welsch) and less 'totally-ideological' than dramatic – with its transnational networks (foundations, projects, programmers, workshops, and flexible *freelancers*), also goes hand in hand with the trans-national liberal capital, without entering the discontinuous place of breaking from it. Of course, it cannot extricate itself from the social relations, since they constitute it, but it can assume different positions. And conformism is the 'normal state' of contemporary theatre, indeed. Because of that, the interferences are in the most brutal way visible in its symptomatic practices. Net-theatre is clearly displaying its common use of conflict weapons of globalism-and-capital – digital media and ITC²⁶ with the hegemony of Microsoft, (non-) commercial softwares, default interfaces, censorship, copyrights, unequal access to the net, browsers' directions, identity mimicry, simulations of self-techniques, domination of English language, etc. The mere illusion of the nomadic net-theatre groups which exist as a proletariat in free space of the VR, dispersed all over the planet, is quite transparent. Right at the top or bottom of the homepages of their web sites, visitors are attacked not by the VR but a Social-Real infrastructure: the transnational foundations and corporations, academic systems, subsidized cultural centres, etc.

²⁵ See Helen Varley Jamieson, Tanja Markovi}, "X (Body + Avatar) = Cyberformance; X = *Collision*?" (discussion), *TkH*, 7 (Belgrade, 2004)

²⁶ See further, Lev Manovich, "Digital Constructivism: What is European Software?", in *Uncanny Networks*

This is why, as I have shown, it does not make sense to maintain the mutual exclusiveness between net-theatre and theatre. Instead of the anticipated clear oppositions and confrontations between the two, we always touch upon dangerous connections. One of them, the basic one I would say, is the class struggle, the struggle for domination over the means of production. And “class struggle Š...¹ is the struggle for rough and material things, and without them the delicate and spiritual ones can not exist”.²⁷ Therefore, it should be repeated, again and again, to the theatre institution, that the struggle is only enacted as the struggle for a (new) *technique*. Conversing about the topics like ‘is it good or not’ – is fruitless. What is essential here is the question: in whose hands is it?

Translation by: Ana Vujanovi}

²⁷ “Istorijsko-filozofske teze”, p. 80

Dramaturgical Function of Ko{tana's Singing in Petar Konjovi}'s Opera

Ivana Stamatovi}

Regardless of different aspects of manifestation of singing throughout the history of opera genre, we could claim that there is a general agreement in the world of music as to what *singing is*. Generally, it seems that we would not be mistaken if, in this instance, we understood singing through a difference, as opposed to speech. Nevertheless, some issues of opera dramaturgy appear as very complex problems. This complexity comes from two lines of questioning. The first line relates to the concept of dramaturgy, its definition and methods of study of dramaturgy in works of art, bearing in mind the specific structuring of different arts. The second line of questions is related to the synthetic nature of the opera genre and ways in which different procedures of dramaturgical formation of individual texts in opera (music, written and stage texts) ultimately build up opera dramaturgy.

Let us, briefly, examine the first group of questions. The concept of dramaturgy in theoretical contributions is not unanimously defined: it is understood in different and often quite contradictory ways. For example, Anne Ubersfeld defines this concept in a range of meanings, from structure of theatre text; style or poetics of the performance, to the activities of a dramaturge in the German or post-Brechtian meaning of the word.¹ Patrice Pavis differentiates the initial, classical, Brechtian and post-Brechtian concept of dramaturgy.² He points to the process of expanding of this concept's referential field, from the set of "rules, even instructions for building up plays", imperative for playwrights, from "constitutional elements of dramatic construction of each classical text", that is, "the work of the playwright and the narrative structure of the play" without the primary interest for the stage set-up of the play, all to the totality of the ideological, formal and content-wise structure of the play, set in the 'three dimensional reality', that is, in its actual performance. Vjeran Zuppa accounts for five basic ways of contemporary understanding of dramaturgy: etymological, conceptual, formal-analytical, structural and semiotic.³

In art theory, the referential complexity of this concept is not considered a problem but, on the contrary, one of its important and enduring qualities. Therefore, examining different aspects of dramaturgy in a work of art can be founded on any

¹ Anne Ubersfeld, *Ključni elementi pozorišne analize* (Belgrade: CENPI, 2001), p.18

² Patrice Pavis, *Dictionnaire du théâtre* (Paris: Dunod, 1996). In this article we used Ljubi{a Mati}'s translation to Serbian that was published in *TkH* no. 3.

³ Vjeran Zuppa, *Uvod u dramatologiju* (Zagreb: Antibarbarus, 1995), pp.64-65

of above mentioned comprehensions. We shall address the topic of examining specific aspects of opera dramaturgy from the perspective of etymological meaning of the concept of dramaturgy (*drama* – plot, *ergia* – action, accomplishment). That meaning is essentially twofold: accomplishment of something and accomplishment through something, i.e. accomplishment of the action and accomplishment through the action. We found the cause for such a choice in one of the main courses of the historical development of opera. This course is linked with the strivings of opera composers to harmonize the dramatic action with the music, aiming at ultimate levels of harmony between dramatic and musical narrative. In so doing, they often assumed that the action or 'what is accomplished' derives initially from the libretto. We therefore raise the question: can the action be reduced only to the events narrated in the literary text or, what is more likely, does a particular kind of action, as a vocal and/or instrumental performance (action) exist in the music text as well? What kind of action is accomplished on stage: music, literary or stage action? Does a certain course of events initiate a particular vocal expression or the logic of music (vocal) events implies creation of a particular dramatic situation in the libretto? We shall answer these questions descriptively, examining some aspects of featuring of singing (as the level of music text which 'drives' the text of the libretto) in opera. In opera, singing appears in three different ways. First, it can be understood as "exalted or 'to the arche-language of the humankind reverted' declamation".⁴ In this sense, opera singing manifests itself as an aspect of vocal interpretation of a dramatic text. It therefore carries a task of an interpreter of the narrative, as consequent as possible.⁵

Here described way of understanding of the relation between the music and the words in opera rests on conviction that the dramatic potential of opera lies in the text, that is, the action is bound to the libretto. However, 'in the opera aesthetics nothing has been creating greater confusion than equiposition of drama and text'.⁶ Through the opera reform composers (e.g. Christoph Wilibald Gluck and Richard Wagner) aimed at finding means and methods for music to follow the course of the dramatic action, omitting, by the way, to answer the question: why was it necessary to impose that imperative on music? Why should opera be required to be a singing drama?

From today's perspective, it seems that the answers to these questions can be found in one of the fundamental aspects of opera, that is, in the fact that an opera is a *construction* coming from different arts assembled in one piece, and that its construction methods in the majority of opera works (particularly of the XVIII century) were hidden from opera audiences. As such, opera rests on the lack of perception of reality, and "the loss of the real... frequently allows the artist... to increase the effectiveness of his chosen form of reality".⁷ Intermediary form of reality can relate to concealing of the mechanisms of the opera's construction or, on the contrary, to display or giveaway of their workings. Understandably, the traditional opera was based on the first procedure (the paradigmatic example could be Wagner's music drama). However, throughout the history, it appeared that it could not at the same

⁴ Carl Dahlhaus, "Tradicija i reforma u operi", in *Estetika muzike* (Novi Sad: Knji`evna zajednica Novog Sada, 1992), p. 96

⁵ By consequence, we do not imply here musical representation, nor approaching of melody to the inflections of spoken words, but to the congruity of musical development with the dramatic development.

⁶ Carl Dahlhaus, op. cit., p. 96

⁷ André Bazin, *What is cinema?* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), vol. 1, p. 29. Quoted from Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror. The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington-Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 3

time possess both a well elaborated dramatic narrative and the music that would be on equal terms with it at any time. Opera could not imply both the reality of dramatic action and (conditional) reality of its, as Pavis put it, three-dimensional realization. 'Reality' of the genre is lost at, precisely, the moment when the stage is set, because the opera faces the spectator with a twofold task. On the one hand, the spectator needs to 'suppress' the fact that the real actors/singers act out obviously fictional characters and events and, on the other, to neglect, up to a point, the fact "that characters do not sing but are sung".⁸ It was, therefore, 'unjust' that composers for a long time demanded of music to act *as if* the opera characters sing, although in reality, they do not.⁹

It seems that binding music to the meanings of the sung text that lasted for centuries distracted the attention of the opera composers from the very musical expression. That is, in spite of the level of concern that creators paid to the dramatic action and its appropriate musical and scenic support, we cannot overlook the fact that "what drives the itinerant opera devotee is the desire for vocal and musical moments, never visual ones",¹⁰ nor, we would add, literary or dramatic moments. The visitor does not come to the opera theatre to *watch* the performance, nor to *follow the plot* (even when the libretto is not based on one of the typical dramatic patterns which existed throughout the history of this genre), but to attend an opera performance primarily to *listen* to the singing. Regardless of whether the audience is closely acquainted with the libretto or does not possess any knowledge of it, they can not hear every word that characters on stage are singing. The causes of this inability come from one completely rational reason: it has been empirically determined that syllables become unrecognizable when being sung (or spoken) at the frequency above 600 Hz, that is, above pitch-level of high E. However, even when a vocal part extends below this pitch, while attending a vocal performance, a certain kind of spontaneous (and inevitable) choice between the meaning of the text and its sound is made in the minds of the members of the audience. We could say that the audience chooses between the verbal and therefore *rational*, perception of the course of the sung dramatic action (related to the subject of the opera) and *aesthetic* pleasure in listening the mere singing, relieved of (external) verbal meaning.¹¹ The opera history shows the fact that the choice has (almost) always been made in favour of the pure vocality.¹²

In that sense, singing in opera can be considered in a different way as well, from the perspective of the voice-object as an autonomous constitutive element of the opera's texture. From the perspective of the audience's relation to the autonomization of the voice, we could define the process of liberation of the voice-object from the ver-

⁸ Michel Poizat, *The Angel's Cry. Beyond the Pleasure Principle in Opera*, trans. by Arthur Denier (Ithaca-London: Cornell University Press, 1992), p.144

⁹ This statement does not apply to the characters who possess music expressiveness as an indispensable feature of their personality. We shall address this topic in more depth later.

¹⁰ Michel Poizat, op. cit., p. 35

¹¹ Understandably, knowing who is in question here does not necessarily either decrease or enhance the intensity of pleasure in listening to an opera performance. On understanding of a music piece and pleasure in listening, see: Mirjana Veselinovi}-Hofman, "Zna-aj razumevanja muzi-kog ostvarenja za estetski do`ivljaj", in *Estetsko zadovoljstvo i moderna umetnost* (Belgrade: Esteti-ko dru{tvo Srbije, 1997), pp. 135-142

¹² This statement can be backed up with an example related to opera ensembles. Whether it is an ensemble of accord or ensemble of discord, simultaneous appearance of different texts on the opera stage does not affect the understanding of the course of events. If we listened in drama theatre to the simultaneous speech of dramatic characters, we would face the sheer impossibility to understand the meaning of the words they have spoken. However, if we, while listening to an opera ensemble ignore the verbal language and focus exclusively on the music, then we see that synchronicity of mutually different musical lines is not an impediment to the perception of the specific 'flow' of the opera.

bal meaning (his 'exit from language') as the inversion of the process explained in psychoanalysis as the entrance of the subject into the symbolic order in Lacan's sense. "Once the subject has entered the symbolic order (language) its organic needs pass through the 'defiles' or narrow network of signification and are transformed in a way which makes them thereafter impossible to satisfy".¹³ From the perspective of the first vocal manifestation of the subject, what is irretrievably lost is the materiality of his voice, emptied of meaning attributed to him by the Other (most often, the mother). This, so to speak, 'virgin voice' is impossible to reclaim, because in every next utterance it is burdened with all the more dense layer of meanings attributed to him. Considering the fact that in the child's conscience such a voice is connected to the initial fulfillment of its particular need, the voice becomes the inevitable part of child's first sense of pleasure. The two mentioned aspects of the voice – as the impossible object of desire (meaning, the Lacanian object /a/), on one the hand, and as the first source of pleasure, on the other – manifest themselves during the listening of an opera performance. *Jouissance* in listening of singing, apart from the words that are being sung, is the recall of audience's memory of the state that preceded the language and confrontation with the object (a) of *jouissance*, absent in reality. Opera singing appears as a "memory of the prelinguistic, undivided state of Creation",¹⁴ so it carries a potential to activate in audiences' conscience the trauma of the entrance into the symbolic order.

This point has completely different effects on the audience of female and male gender. Nevertheless, whenever a gender difference is mentioned, it is understood that one of the defence mechanisms from the trauma that we just described is effective exclusively for the male audience, because a man projects his lack on the female characters, as those who are marked with deficiency 'by nature' (not-all, *pas-tout*). Thus the woman "incarnates the 'lack of a lack'"¹⁵ equalling with the voice, in a sense. From this angle we can illuminate the fascination with high female voices, which exists from the times of the first opera. Throughout the history of the opera genre the composers faced the female characters with all the more demanding technical requirements and, beside other things, raised the upper part of the soprano range to frequencies that disable comprehension of the text, emphasizing features of the voice as a self-contained acoustic object, rather than as a 'conduit' for the verbal text. At the same time, the creators 'weaved' the dense web of pure, 'seductive' sonority that we today, *post festum*, interpret in a way discussed above.

If we understand singing in opera as a pure vocal manifestation, then the problems of opera dramaturgy can be ascribed to dramaturgy of vocal performance.¹⁶ Therefore, we ask the question 'whether and how the music follows and explains the dramatic text' in the opposite direction: whether and how the text follows and explains the music? We ask ourselves not whether a certain course of events in the text does require a certain type of vocal manifestation (song, aria, *arioso*, recitative, declamation, cry or even silence), but is there, in the musical texture of the opera, a need to explain to the audience the flow of mutually different types of vocal performances through the verbal language?

Although it can be admitted that opera was created with a purpose to be sung, it seems that such a way of 'narration' of the dramatic text on the opera stage is not

¹³ Madan Sarup, "Lacan and psychoanalysis", in *An Introductory Guide to Post-structuralism and Postmodernism* (New York-London-Toronto-Sydney-Tokyo-Singapore: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), p. 23

¹⁴ Theodor W. Adorno, "Bougeois Opera", in *Opera Through Other Eyes*, ed. by David J. Levin (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 39

¹⁵ Michel Poizat, op. cit., p.150

¹⁶ Vocal performance is a broader concept than singing. Vocal performance includes any kind of vocal manifestation on stage (singing, speech, scream...)

conditioned by any cause inherent in that text. The singing, in fact, substantially changes the pace and flow of the drama. That is, the singing of certain words by definition happens more belatedly than the utterance of the same words. Besides, the singer is, during the performance, unable to independently influence the overall effect of the sound, but has to harmonize his with the interpretation of other performers on stage and musicians in the orchestra ensemble, while all of them are indeed submitted to the 'will' of the conductor. At last, we could say that in opera *the words adapt to the tones*. Music, therefore, appears as the dominant text in opera, and within its framework the singing has absolute primacy as opposed to instrumental performance.

Finally, is there a specific dramaturgy of a vocal interpretation? We could claim there is, but – as neither the first way of establishing the dramaturgical link between the text and the music is not in all operas accomplished in a single way and with equal intensity – the range of its manifestations varies from one piece to another. It seems that the conditions for addressing this problem would be much more instructive when compositions of the authors who problematized the question of traditionally understood interrelations between opera texts are concerned.¹⁷ However, we believe that the certain aspects of dramaturgy of the vocal performance can be assessed in traditional operas, as well. Therefore, we shall pay more attention to them later on in this article. Bearing in mind the already exposed groundings for our approach to dramaturgy of opera works, by adopting this perspective we acknowledge that the 'opera action' is in a lesser or greater degree associated with the music text of the opera.

The third way of appearance of singing in opera works is related to singing *in* singing, i.e., to those parts of the music score that performers on stage perceive *as music*.¹⁸ In such instances the two aspects of manifestation of singing in opera, which have already been described, merge in a certain way. Vocal numbers incorporated into the action on stage as its integral part are submitted for analysis from two angles: on the one hand, meaning of the words that certain characters sing and the scope in which the features of the music language 'double' those meanings, and, on the other, the mere fact that the characters sing regardless of which words are being sung. Precisely this way of singing, related to the character of Ko{tana in Petar Konjovi}'s opera (*Ko{tana*), will be the subject of our analysis in the next part of this article. As this composer was, at the same time, the creator of the opera libretto, it seems that examining of this problems should in general terms subsume the importance of Ko{tana's vocal numbers in the drama written by Bora Stankovi}, the interventions made by Konjovi} in this respect, by adapting the play and, finally, the dramaturgical function of Ko{tana's singing in this opera.

Bora Stankovi} emphasized the vocal numbers in the play by his subtitle "a play with songs from the life in the city of Vranje".¹⁹ Understandably, the ways in which

¹⁷ Here we refer to works of composers from the 20th century. Bearing in mind that we are not acquainted with all the tendencies in opera composing, we cite works of Philip Glass and Louis Andriessen, as those which offer feasible explication of these problems.

¹⁸ These problems are postulated in the musicological literature on the level of the difference between opera singing and opera speech (e.g. Peter Kivy, "Speech, Song and the Transparency of Medium", in *Musical Worlds. New Directions in the Philosophy of Music*, ed. by Philip Alperson (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania University Press, 1994), pp. 63-68). However, we do not accept this interpretation exclusively, because it ignores the fact that the audience actually perceives the speech of the opera characters as singing.

¹⁹ Stankovi} added this subtitle to the second version of the play, written immediately after the opening night in the theatre. Initially, Ko{tana was titled "a theatre play in four acts".

the play was set on stage were various and largely dependent on the inventiveness and skill of the theatre companies. Judging by the reviews from the Serbian theatre critics, we can deduce that a certain operettic or melodramatic potential, contained in many songs within the play, faced the directors with major difficulties and resulted in performances which often did not meet a favourable critical judgement.²⁰ For instance, after the opening night of *Ko{tana* at the National Theatre in Belgrade in June 1900, Jovan Skerli} wrote: "When the curtain was lifted, there came a bulk of Vranje women in white. The skirts rustled, *ducats* tinkled, and they started to sing [*ano du{o*, [*ano mori*. I thought that we were going to watch (...) a string of colourful images from the folk's life with many songs and dances, and a compulsory wedding in the end".²¹ It should be mentioned that the directors' inscenations related to the text which contains considerable dramaturgic flaws. They reflect not only in the quantitative relations between verses that are being sung and spoken, but also in some aspects of the dramatic structure which is "simple, (...) very slow, loosely connected".²² The action flows without a real plot and dramaturgic turning points, often receding in the background against the numerous attractive vocal numbers. Their function is largely exhausted in the acoustic 'painting' of the colourful Vranje region, but there are some of them which partly affect the course of the action.

This remark is largely related to the numbers assigned to the lead character. Although some of those are descriptive (e.g. *Kraj Vardar mi staja{e* from the Second, or *More, nasred sela* from the Third Act), certain numbers contain a substantial dramatic potential. If such songs are reduced to what is functional, and flow into the main stream of the course of the action, then they do not appear as a melodramatic element.²³ As if, for instance, with her song *Bog ubio, Vaske, mori* from the Second Act, Ko{tana foretells her own tragic fate:

*Bog ubio, Vaske, mori, tvoju staru nanu,
[to te dade vrlo nadaleko,
Nadaleko, Vaske, tri godine dana*²⁴

She manages to relieve Hadji Toma's anger, aroused by his son Stojan's dissolute behaviour and to soften his heart with the song *Stojanke, bela Vranjanke*, also in the Second Act of the play. During this song, the character of Hadji Toma transforms from the relentless landlord, resolute and ready for anything to restore peace in his home, to a man broken with painful memories, who speaks of his failed hopes, unfulfilled desires and opens the long-locked doors of his soul. Toma's identification with the character from the song *Triput ti ~ukna na pend`er* is deeply poignant, immediately preceding the culmination of the first scene of the Third Act when the Hadji reaches for a gun to kill his own son.

In the second scene of the same act Ko{tana refreshes Mitke's memories of his youthful passions,

²⁰ Compare quotes from various reviews in Dragoljub Vlatkovi}, *Ko{tana na sceni 1900-1975* (Belgrade: Muzej pozori{ne umetnosti SR Srbije, 1979)

²¹ Jovan Skerli}, "O Ko{tani", in Borisav Stankovi}, *Izabrana dela* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1958), p. 252

²² *Ibid.*, p. 263

²³ Dr Vladimir Jovi-i}, "Zapisi o Stankovi}evoj dramaturgiji", *Teatron*, 7 (Belgrade, 1976), p. 49

²⁴ A curse on the mother of the maiden Vaska, who sent her far away /on compulsory marriage/ – *translator's note*.

*Zapali me, Dude, izgore me,
napravi me suvo drvo,
suvo drvo javorovo.
Od drveta sitan pepel,
od pepela miris sapun,
pa s's njega da si miješ,
Dude, mori, belo Dude, svoje lice,*

and with a song *Devet godina minaše* she reminds him of his past disillusion and unhealed wounds:

*Devet još k}eri da imam
nijednu Mitki ne davam.*

Thus Ko{tana initiates the intimate exposure of yet another tragic fate: in these segments of the drama it becomes clear that she is not the only victim of the fatal unwritten laws of the patriarchal Vranje.

Beside the effect of the words of Ko{tana's songs on the dramatic events, we could say that the mere fact that she is singing, regardless from what *she* is singing about, features as an immediate cause for certain dramatic turning points. Ko{tana is identified in the play with her voice – the symbol of her beauty and youth. When in the second scene of the Third Act Mitke wants to hear a “pure ... soft, full ... sweet voice, like the first kiss of a maiden” he wants the reflection of Ko{tana's voice, like the „the acoustic mirror“:²⁵ the sheer life, joyous and calm, the life which irresistibly blossoms out of its enforced path, defying the norms and confines of the outside world. At the same time, Ko{tana's 'powerful' voice, as Hadji Toma puts it in the Second Act, is that impossible object of desire, which like a fatal touch or a gaze, drives Stojan, Mitke and Toma to bitter words and hasty acts. Therefore, when in the end of this act Arsa delivers his 'verdict', Sal-e exclaims: “She will sing no longer!”. But, it turns out that this is not important anymore. Ko{tana was promised to a man who could not hear her voice. Right in the unravelling of the drama (and the opera) it is revealed that Ko{tana's 'removal' from men's gaze as far as she can be removed, is not enough. To restore the social order, it is necessary that she is kept far away from men's ear, as well. Let us repeat, as the 'lack of a lack', as a double threat to the established gender, and even racial, order, Ko{tana is punished twice. Ko{tana's singing is not exhausted in Stankovi's play only in the (re)direction of the course of the dramatic action, but also in the quantitative and qualitative terms it appears as the most important instrument used by the author in shaping her character. He assigned to her even thirteen numbers, and “comparison of the strength of Ko{tana's words with the power of her singing indicates the incredible inferiority of everything that was left outside the musical articulation”.²⁶ In that sense, it is important to note that Ko{tana's first appearance on stage relates to a singing act. Right through a song one, an almost essential aspect of Ko{tana's character is revealed, strongly emphasized in the play: “Ko{tana does not live on singing, but she lives to sing and lives in her songs”, she immerses herself in singing and expresses herself through songs.²⁷ Ko{tana often refuses to accept money for her performance even when she sings on someone's orders.²⁸ This testifies to her

²⁵ The concept of the female voice as the acoustic mirror was elaborated by Kaja Silverman, op. cit., 7

²⁶ Dr Vladimir Jovi-i}, op. cit., p. 49

²⁷ Id.

²⁸ Concerning the fact that the play *Ko{tana* was based on real characters, it might sound interesting that the Gipsy, whose life inspired Stankovi}, in her time raised the issue of copyright and demanded a fee, that she believed rightly belonged to her.

deep and sincere investment of self in what she does for a living; as if singing about feelings of the others indirectly also 'speaks' about her spiritual and emotional world, which remains unknown to her audience. It seems that singing elevates Ko{tana into the world of poetic beauty, far from the city's *han* and Gipsy *mahala*, the world in which she can freely breathe, think, feel, love and suffer.

Commencing the work on the libretto, Petar Konjovi} addressed the task whose difficulties largely grew out from the flaws of the play. The composer was fully aware of them: "Stankovi}'s text lacks, so to speak, the central point or the central pillar on which and around which the fate of the main character will stand and develop. For in this text, the main character, Ko{tana, is actually a supporting character, too: similarly, all the other main protagonists of the story are at the same time supporting figures".²⁹ Konjovi} tried to overcome these difficulties in the three versions of the opera created in the period of seventeen years.³⁰ Working on the libretto, the composer submitted the literary pattern to numerous amendments and abridgements, which applied to the singing numbers as well.³¹ He thought that singing in Stankovi}'s work had lost "its symbolical tragic meaning", becoming "non-meaning" because the "original ... text is overflowing" with songs.³² Therefore, he discarded a large number of songs, keeping some of them, while he added a few songs, mainly assigning them to the chorus.

After all the alterations, the number of singing acts that Konjovi} conferred to his heroine was reduced to seven. They are present in all the scenes of the opera, except in the fourth and the sixth.³³ The composer incorporated them into the course of the dramatic action in three, largely immersed, ways: as a logical sequence of the dramatic events on stage, as an immediate incentive for their development and as a dramatic action itself (when a certain character or situation develops or transforms during a song). The contents of Ko{tana's songs and the fact that singing does indeed exist, have equal influence on the course of the dramatic action. In that context, we already, in the overview of the play, mentioned the songs *Triput ti ~ukna daskalica* and *Devet godina mina}{e*. Their function in the third and the fifth scene of the opera respectively, remains unchanged and, therefore, we shall not pay further attention to them.

Rather, we shall examine the scenes in which the function of Ko{tana's singing is such that in unfolding of the musical text of the opera, the processuality of the music text dominates the literary, i.e., the scenes in which a certain sequence of vocal manifestations requires additional explanation assigned to the verbal language. Such segments in Konjovi}'s opera are isolated and relatively scarce. One of them features at the beginning of the second scene, when Ko{tana sings the song *Jovane, sine, Jovane*. This is her second musical, but first visual appearance on stage. While in the first scene the composer modelled Ko{tana's character obliquely, through a biased ear and using the other protagonists in the opera, in the second scene he allowed her to 'speak' for herself. She does it with a song.

²⁹ Petar Konjovi}, "Razgovori o Ko{tani", in *Knjiga o muzici srpskoj i slavenskoj* (Novi Sad: Matica Srpska, 1947), p. 112

³⁰ The first version of the opera was written in 1931, second in 1940, and the third in 1948

³¹ For detailed discussion on the relations between the play and the libretto, see: Sne`ana Nikolajevi}, "Odnos izme|u Stankovi}eve i Konjovi}eve *Ko{tane*", *Muzi-ki talas*, 1-2 (Belgrade: 1997), pp. 34-43

³² Petar Konjovi}, op. cit., p. 111

³³ The fourth scene of the opera was written in its second version. This scene is entirely focused on Ko{tana and it might be said that it represents one of the most important alterations that Konjovi} made in relation to the original text of the play. Namely, with this scene the composer rendered the character of Ko{tana in more depth. Through conversation and confrontation with herself she "becomes aware that all that ... wasting... of her gifts which arouse instant love, enchantment or affection is in vain". (Petar Konjovi}, op. cit., p. 112)

Before she starts to sing, Ko{tana is gazing at the forest. From the moment when Magda confirms to her that this is “that vast, desolate, dark mountain”, Ko{tana starts retelling the contents of the song. Her part covers the range from D^1 to F^2 . Its highest tone features only as she sings the first two syllables of the word ‘*Jovane*’. In this segment of the opera the focus is on apprehending the contents of the story of the tragic end of Jovan’s life, in attendance of his parents and sister, who were forced to sing and dance with joy. Therefore, the vocal part covers mostly the middle register of the soprano range, i.e., below the frequency of high E, as a limit for the comprehensibility of the sung text. Ascending fourths are a distinct feature of the leitmotif *Crni goro, crni sestro*, to which symbolism of the transience of youth is attributed. Elaborating this leitmotif in the instrumental parts Konjovi} developed and accentuated the meaning of the sung text with music, modelling the sequence of music events in accordance with the flow of the dramatic action.

Ko{tana then starts to sing for the protagonists present on stage. They are, again, already acquainted with the contents of the verses. After this song, during the orchestral postlude, “everyone is moved, especially Magda who wipes away her tears”. We ask ourselves: what caused such an intense reaction from the listeners? Was it provoked by the meaning of the verses or the fact that they were sung in a certain way? Konjovi} quoted the text of a traditional folk song, but not its melody. It was composed in the spirit of folklore. It is rendered in a variational strophic form, meaning that Ko{tana transforms the melody of the song during her performance. The ambitus of the melody of the first strophe is the fifth ($A \text{ flat}^1$ - $E \text{ flat}^2$). The melody, centered in A flat minor with Lydian fourth, is harmonized mostly with subdominant and tonic chords which include many added tones and dissonances with free resolutions. Thematically, there is a motif and its repetition with minor melodic changes.

Example 1

Petar Konjovi}: *Ko{tana* (Belgrade: Dr`avni izdava~ki zavod Jugoslavije, 1946), Scene II, No. 109, bb. 2–5.

In the second strophe, the key and the harmonization remain the same, but the ambitus of the melody is expanded ($A \text{ flat}^1$ - F^2). There are more thematic transformations in this strophe than in the previous one: the m.3 of the example starts with the highest pitch harmonized with $VI^{6/3}$. Thus Ko{tana changes not only the melodic shape, but its expressive potential, too.

Example 2

Petar Konjovi}: *Ko{tana*, Scene II, No. 109, b. 2–No. 110, b. 3.

In the third strophe the transformations of the song are even more emphasized. Namely, the key and the scale are changed (E flat minor with Lydian fourth and Dorian sixth), the melodic ambitus is octave ($E \text{ flat}^1$ – $E \text{ flat}^2$). Similarly to the previous strophe, the melodic climax is not reached through the stepwise motion, but through a melodic leap (minor seventh).

Example 3

Petar Konjovi}: *Ko{tana*, Scene II, No. 110, bb. 6–9.

The practice of changing the text or the melody of a traditional folk song is quite common for the folklore tradition. However, when this procedure appears in an

opera the question is raised, how is it used for opera purposes? Namely, by subjecting the melody to increasingly perceptible changes, Ko{tana intensifies its expressive features. Thus she creates increasingly high levels of autonomous music tension which does not culminate in the verses of the song, but 'exceeds' them and grows further, disposing of their 'burden': Ko{tana's performance ends just with the words: "Is this that mountain, auntie, the desolate, vast mountain?", sung in the highest register in this scene and in *fortissimo* dynamics.

Example 4

Petar Konjovi}: *Ko{tana*, Scene II, No. 110, b. 10–No. 111, b. 4.

Obviously, the processuality inherent in music resists the constraints of the literary text. It is not possible to break it, regardless of the fact that the text of the song is being sung; as if the words recede up stage and exist only, so to speak, that something could be sung on the stage. This is supported by the fact that the words of this sentence are impossible to comprehend because they are sung in the highest register of the soprano range. The singing voice transforms into a pure acoustic object. So, the *singing in singing*, as one aspect of vocal performance in opera, caused the appearance of certain features of the next vocal manifestation, that is, another type of vocal expression. Therefore, we could conclude that the intense reaction of Ko{tana's audiences is not aroused by the story, but by the way in which the story is told, i.e., sung.

Understandably, this does not mean that the text of the song is completely irrelevant for the course of the drama action. The coupling of Jovan's tragic death with the enforced singing and dancing appears as an announcement or a premonition of Ko{tana's tragic fate. Also, it is certain that the contents of the song, that Ko{tana had exposed just before her performance, aroused her emotional reaction. However, the structure of the opera after the song *Jovane, sine Jovane* is not conditioned by the contents of this song (by events in the text of the drama), but by the logic of musical events, that is, the specific *music dramaturgy*. In Borisav Stankovi}'s play Ko{tana speaks and sings. In Petar Konjovi}'s opera she only sings. Does this difference create also a difference in the dramaturgical function of Ko{tana's singing in these works? The answer is affirmative. Although Ko{tana's songs in the opera appear immersed in opera singing, we discuss here two mutually different elements within the framework of the music text of the opera. Opera singing as real singing and opera singing as simulation of speech can enter in a continual or discontinual relation, that is, interact in a cause-effect manner or alternate without mutual causalities. Therefore, the function of a certain character's singing in an opera should not be exhausted only on the level of the meaning of the verses, but on the level of autonomous development of the music flow. Such examples are very rare in the traditional opera because, as we have already seen, opera music struggled for a long time to overcome the imperative to be modelled, in an almost mimetic way, in accordance with the course of the action in the dramatic text. Once the music events are freed from that burden, conditions are created that the music, as it is colloquially said, does not 'stand still', but, like the action in drama, 'flow' in consequence with its specific nature.

Translation by: Irena [entevska

Matrix in Opera

Jelena Novak

Repetition – The Erotics of Geometry

I'm running. Entering the theatre hall. Semi-darkness. Slightly stuffy. A blend of various odours: cigarettes, perfumes, sweat. I'm late, it has already begun. Two women sit at the table right-stage. They wear grey trousers with braces and white shirts. They count to eight in a faltering manner and utter texts in English. Meanwhile, their fingers perform a slow "dance" on the tables where they sit, as if typing on imaginary typewriters. I try to capture the "story" thread, contained in the uttered texts. I realise there is no story. There are merely seductive "cold" voices and words filling the space. And the light... The choir members slowly amass on the stage. There are more and more of them. They also utter the names of numbers in a rhythmical manner:

1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8¹

(It already lasts for quite a while. I begin to muse: counting as measuring of an imaginary space, counting that fills in the space, counting that at the same time measures time, counting that lasts in time... I find the rhythmical uttering of numbers pleasant. The dragging of time... If only it wouldn't end now... I am beginning to enjoy it...)

1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4 5 6

...the compulsion of repetition... the inexorable process of an unconscious origin by which the subject brings himself into agonising situations, repeating old experiences without remembering the original template but with a very vivid impression that it is something that is entirely the consequence of actual reality...²

¹ The quoted series of numbers that "stretches" throughout this sub-chapter of the text is a paraphrase of the sung text of the first knee play of *Einstein on the Beach*. It is interpolated with quotations from the *Dictionary of Psychoanalysis* by J. Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis, *Rje-nik psihoanalize* (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1992) – which refer to the clarification of the need for repetition.

² J. Laplanche, J.B. Pontalis, Op. cit.

2 3 4 5 6 7 8
1 2 3 4³

...the tendency of renewal is, on the other hand, a function that strives through various means to establish the pre-traumatic state; it uses the occurrences of repetition for the benefit of the I...⁴

2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

...the clinical experience, namely, shows that the obsessive doesn't comply with the work on the withdrawal of the captured or against capturing. It aims towards the impossible, towards the annihilation of the past event...⁵

2 3 4
1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

...the suppressed attempts to return to reality by means of dreams, symptoms, incarnations; however, that which was unfathomable, returns over and again; like an unredeemed ghost, it is restless until a solution is found...⁶

2 3 4
1 2 3 4 5 6
2 3 4 5 6 7 8

...are these attempts of the I to gain control over excessive tensions so that it breaks them down into pieces and then reacts to each separate piece?⁷

1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4 5 6
2 3 4 5 6 7 8
1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4 5 6

...example: the subject reproaches him/herself for wasting the money on buying newspapers and wishes to call off the spending by demanding his money back. Since he doesn't dare to do it, he presumes that buying another newspaper would bring him relief. Yet the kiosk is closed and the subject throws on the street a coin of the identical value as the price of the newspapers...⁸

2 3 4 5 6
2 3 4 5 6 7 8
2 3 4
2 3 4 5 6
2 3 4 5 6 7 8

...does the compulsion of repetition truly challenge the prevalence of the principle of pleasure, as Freud also asks himself?⁹

³ The choir is joined in its counting by a female voice over loudspeakers

⁴ J. Laplanche, J.B. Pontalis, *ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 324, 325

⁶ J. Laplanche, J.B. Pontalis, *Op. cit.*, p. 371

⁷ J. Laplanche, J.B. Pontalis, *Op. cit.*, p. 372

⁸ J. Laplanche, J.B. Pontalis, *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

They ceased counting!!! How awkward; and I was just beginning to wrap myself into the rhythmical rituality, the hypnotic repetition. A short pause came about. A very short cut that might last for merely a second. Still, that brief silence has a very sharp, uncovering effect. It's like suddenly turning the light on or having an ice cube slip under your T-shirt down your back. A-flat major fills in the space. Saxophones:

Mi Fa La

Mi Fa La

Mi Fa La

Then, voices divided in two groups appear "over" saxophones. They pronounce at once and in the same rhythm the names of various tones they sing. They also count but in fact they count the tones. And repeat, repeat...

Repetitiveness in the "process"¹⁰ deprives the listener from any mental reflective action aimed at grasping the entirety of the composition. In order to achieve that, the "process" functions as the organiser of the perceptive lack of attention and concentration. The auditor is guided by the sound but never to a particular point. As every point in the "process" reproduces the previous one, the need to retain, memorise and participate is gone. What is paradoxical is precisely the combination of strictness and unpredictability that is embedded in this type of music. As much as the succession of sounds seems definite, it is impossible to predict it at any moment, the consequence of which is a constant oscillation of the listener's attention.¹¹

It is possible to interpret the repetitive listening process consequently implemented in the work *Einstein on the Beach* from the perspective of the production of meaning and sense in the systems of societies organised in a capitalist manner. Namely, this music shows the traits of the capitalist economy of branding and power, the economy whose traits are depicted by Slavoj Žižek: "The elementary characteristic of capitalism consists of its inherent structural imbalance, its hidden antagonistic character: constant crisis, constant fundamental changes of living conditions in it. Capitalism has no "normal" equilibrium condition: its normal condition is a constant production of excess – the only way for capitalism to survive is to expand itself (...) producing more for human needs than any other social-economic system, capitalism also produces more needs to be fulfilled (...) this vicious circle of desire whose visible gratification only increases dissatisfaction is what defines hysteria (the latter according to Lacan).¹² Similar to capitalist relations within which it is created, Glass's music is characterised by a formal unbalance¹³ but also by a constant need to produce exaggeration. This exaggeration is reflected in its own multiplication, both within the frame of the same work and the frame of the entire oeuvre.

¹⁰ In the context of a minimalist musical work, process means a composition procedure based on the principles of repetitive unfolding of the material.

¹¹ According to Herman Sabe, "Minimalism – Versions of a World View", *Trži program*, 60 (Belgrade, 1984), p. 309

¹² Slavoj Žižek, *Metastaze u`ivanja* (Belgrade: XX vek, 1996), pp. 24-25

¹³ Let's take as example the formal pattern of the musical flow of *Train*, Scene 1, Act 1 of *Einstein on the Beach*; a pattern that might be schematically depicted in the following way: a b a1 b1 c a2 b2 c1. Each of the sections is based solely on one thematic material whereas the namesake sections (e.g. a, a1 and a2) are based on the same motif which is, however, elaborated in a different way in each of them. This asymmetrical sequence of different sections is atypical for the traditionally shaped music forms. Given the fact that the achieved asymmetry of formal shaping lies in the composer's intention to constitute a prevalently repetitive-additive process, which is in function of the new perception of work of music, we conclude that the formal shaping of composition is placed in function of the very auditive "process".

I pretend to believe in Freud and psychoanalysis and keep thinking why I feel repulsion towards the 19th-century opera. The fetishisation of romanticist voice goes beyond my body's tolerance limits. Trauma: I abhor the operatic voice, its rigidity, artificiality, its failure to become the machine, its desperate struggle to hide the body that conditions it. The 19th-century opera has always been a trauma for me. Is this why I repeatedly listen to *Einstein on the Beach*? Do I want to forget the encounters with romanticist operas? *Einstein* is the first opera that has pleased my taste. Perhaps it is precisely the frustration with the romanticist-expressive-nationalistically intoned Belgrade concert scene that has instigated my fascination with the "non-rhetoric", "dry", "mechanical", "objective", "geometrical", almost "architectural" music of Philip Glass.

I keep asking myself, still pretending to believe Freud, what would be the moment of 'trauma' for Wilson and Glass. They ushered in the ideology of repetition. Glass's music is a serious blow to the 19th-century music, the master of concert halls, but also to the 20th-century modernism. It has developed from the 20th-century Avant-garde – as a remote echo, on the one hand, of Webern's pointillism, and on the other hand, Cage's experimental music. Yet it departs from modernist music and by stepping onto the territory of opera it enters the realm of postmodernism. It is in postmodernism that Glass shows all his "frustrations" about music, juxtaposing them all within the tissue of his repetitive music-machine. His music is the music *through which another music is heard and repeated*. Through repetitive patterns and parallel fifths, fourths and octaves that prevail in the sound world of *Einstein on the Beach*, we also hear the "echo" of Gregorian chant, over and over again... Asked if he was recycling other music in his music, Glass replied: *In my view, all things are accessible, any style. If I am in a position to make it functional in my music and to bestow it with sense, then I use it. In that case, I see no barriers connected to history or location. Pieces of work come about to life as historical moments but after that they exist as a kind of technique.*¹⁴ Glass produces an "expendable" kind of music but in this music he also "expend" other kinds of music. And there are many "techniques"; they are accessible and they await to be recycled, over and over again... Since they gain new value through recycling, a new quality, they become actual once again. They repeat their duration...

The Architectonic 'Body' and the 'Body' of Music

Could... Could I... Could I write... Could I write about... Could I write about opera... Could I write about opera in the language... Could I write about opera in the language of architecture?

When it comes to Robert Wilson's directorial procedure, the terms 'architecture', 'architectonic', 'geometrical' are often in use. It is known to a certain extent what is architectonic or 'out' of architecture in his performances yet it seems that no one is thoroughly certain about it. What is the seismology of his architecture? What is the basic function of that architecture? What is architecture and how does it exist in Wilson's directing? Is it:

- geometricisation of space in the way of repeating 'series'?
- filling in the space with geometrical elements?
- time distribution by the rules of arithmetic?

¹⁴ From the interview with Philip Glass, September 23, 1998, in the occasion of the premiere of the opera *White Raven*. See in Jelena Novak, "Everything Available" (a conversation with Philip Glass), *International magazine for music New Sound*, 14 (Belgrade, 1999)

This is no utilitarian architecture. One doesn't live in it. One merely temporarily dwells in it within the frame of theatre's space and time. Is it tomb architecture? What is the principle of construction and functionality of Wilson's architectural object? Is its architectural form, like many others, determined by climatic conditions and construction material? Is it a religious object? Is it lined with granite or marble? Is it made of plaster or alabaster? Is its inner space lucid or not? What is the plastic decoration like, or the colour of architectonic elements? Does its basis gradually expand and does it outgrow the terrain point? What is the foundation like? And the installations? What does its construction lean on? Does it have fake corridors and ramps like a pyramid? Is it on the ground level or it has floors? What is the construction of the ceiling? Is it an open public space? Is it the exterior or the interior? What is its relation towards human body? What is its body? Architecture has always been in direct relation with body, the human body or the divine body. It represented protection, shield, shroud, shelter...

Throughout history, opera and architecture have always been in a specific relation. One could say that it is the opera that was performed within the frame of architecture. Opera has been staged in theatre space, in buildings specially constructed for this purpose, opera objects. The language of architecture that these buildings spoke did not influence what was performed within them. There was a tacit agreement that the building in some way was the forum of that city's music scene. One could assert that the earlier operas resembled the dramatic theatre to a much greater extent than the opera *Einstein on the Beach*. It is precisely the resolution of the relation between music and dramatic action that was the central point of those earlier operas. Who should be in the forefront? In the whole situation of spectacle, the opera building had to be in accord with the glamour that permeates the institution of opera.

Yet in that sense the operas of Robert Wilson brought a radical change. It seems that the question of where the opera should be performed becomes superfluous. The opera building, building-as-architectural-object, loses its function of enveloping the opera-event. Opera "came out" of the object-building and became the object of the staging of architecture (unlike the earlier operas that were staged within the architectural objects). Architecture entered opera and deconstructed it.

Einstein on the Beach takes place within the frame of another space/theatre space, (theatre institution), and in reality it takes place in the proscenium stage. This is no first-degree architecture that limits a carefully chosen space, which should be inhabited. This is the architecture that settles in another architecture in order to dwell in it virtually for a certain time. This is meta-architecture, the second-degree architecture. The whole institution of architecture is perceived as the signifier that is joined by the signified of the opera. The architectonic arrangement of elements in space and their geometricisation takes place in the frame of primary architecture – proscenium stage.

In Wilson's opera, music has the function of reinforcing: it is 'incessant'¹⁵, connecting, geometrical¹⁶; it is the constructive element. It is that very binding tissue

¹⁵ The sudden beginning as well as the unprepared ending of the composition creates in the listener the impression of hearing merely a fragment of a permanent music continuum. In that sense, Glass comments his own understanding of a music piece: "It is possible to experience the best music as a single event, with no beginning or ending." Glass' music is indeed as some kind of sound hank: it is impossible to predict the flow of events in it as much as it is impossible to be prepared for its beginning and ending.

¹⁶ Tracking events in the frame of the segments of the formal pattern is reduced to tracking the repetitive-additive process and its development and only indirectly and even not necessarily to the realisation of the formal unity of the piece. Namely, different sections of this composition could indeed be seen as entirely mutually independent. There are no 'warning' passages between them whatsoever; the

that fills the architectonic space, the tissue that does not allow the dissipation of architectonic space, the tissue that holds “the object” together. *Einstein on the Beach* is an opera of multiplications, of soaring multiplications, geometrical series, and duplications.

Matrix – Occupation of the Virtual Space of Opera

I will make a comparative reading of three operas by Philip Glass. Two are produced in collaboration with Robert Wilson (*Einstein on the Beach*, *Monsters of Grace*) whereas the third one is produced in the ‘posthumous collaboration’ with Jean Cocteau (*La Belle et la Bete*). How is the opera space modified in those three cases?

In the opera *Einstein on the Beach*, there is the proscenium stage. This space is in the space of the theatre building. In the frame of the space of the Italian box there are geometrical arrangements of elements. The figures move within the proscenium stage space; they are limited by that space; yet they create their own sub-spaces within it. Facing the illusionistic space there is also the audience space, a space in front of the Italian box. They are separated by an imaginary screen. A screen that is in fact a virtual border between the two mentioned spaces. The screen is actually the virtual border, the frontier between the territory of the audience and the territory of opera actors. Yet there is another screen-canvas that is occasionally used in this opera as part of the set design and on which yet another dimension is being projected. What joins the two territories is music; it is the reinforcement of music, one that the performers share in reality.

In the second mentioned opera – opera for the Philip Glass Ensemble and the film by Jean Cocteau – the situation is far more complex. The opera is executed so that the members of the Philip Glass Ensemble perform live on stage the music that is precisely synchronised with the lines of the actors in Cocteau’s film deprived of its sound score for this occasion. Moreover, the opera characters are doubled – the characters from Cocteau’s film have their live Doppelgangers who sing on the stage. There are several screens on the stage. There is a screen that is located at the bottom of the proscenium stage, the screen where Cocteau’s film is shown. Hence one screen has already entered the territory of the stage. This entire screen is actually placed behind the ‘virtual’ screen that separates the audience from the opera actors. One screen is in front, and another behind the stage; one virtual 3D space is in the film; furthermore the film is on the opera stage whereas the virtual screen still separates the audience from the stage events.

The third opera in which I consider the problem of opera space is the digital opera in three dimensions *Monsters of Grace*. It is pre-designed that the audience watching this opera wears glasses that enable the illusion of the three-dimensional space. The virtual screen that was thus created between the audience and the stage became the space of the spectacle unfolding. This is an opera “in” the screen. Thanks to the glasses, each spectator has the impression of participating in the spectacle or at least being in the realm where the actors are. The audience is

borders between them are impermeable, producing the ‘scissor effect’. Much as the various sections that follow one another do not reveal any mutual causal relationship, these connections are also non-existent between the very models for variations that are the units of those sections. The ‘scissor effect’ is present in that case since, due to numerous repetitions, the possibility of any anticipation of future events in the musical flow is completely gone. A similarly unpredictable effect is produced when the model is followed by its literal repetition, its additive repetition, the material of a new section or the end of composition. Hence, paradoxically, the flow of this course of music is equally monotonous and ‘exciting’ since it is impossible at any moment to predict the future course of events.

The perception of *Einstein on the Beach* as architecture means that it is possible to draw that piece:

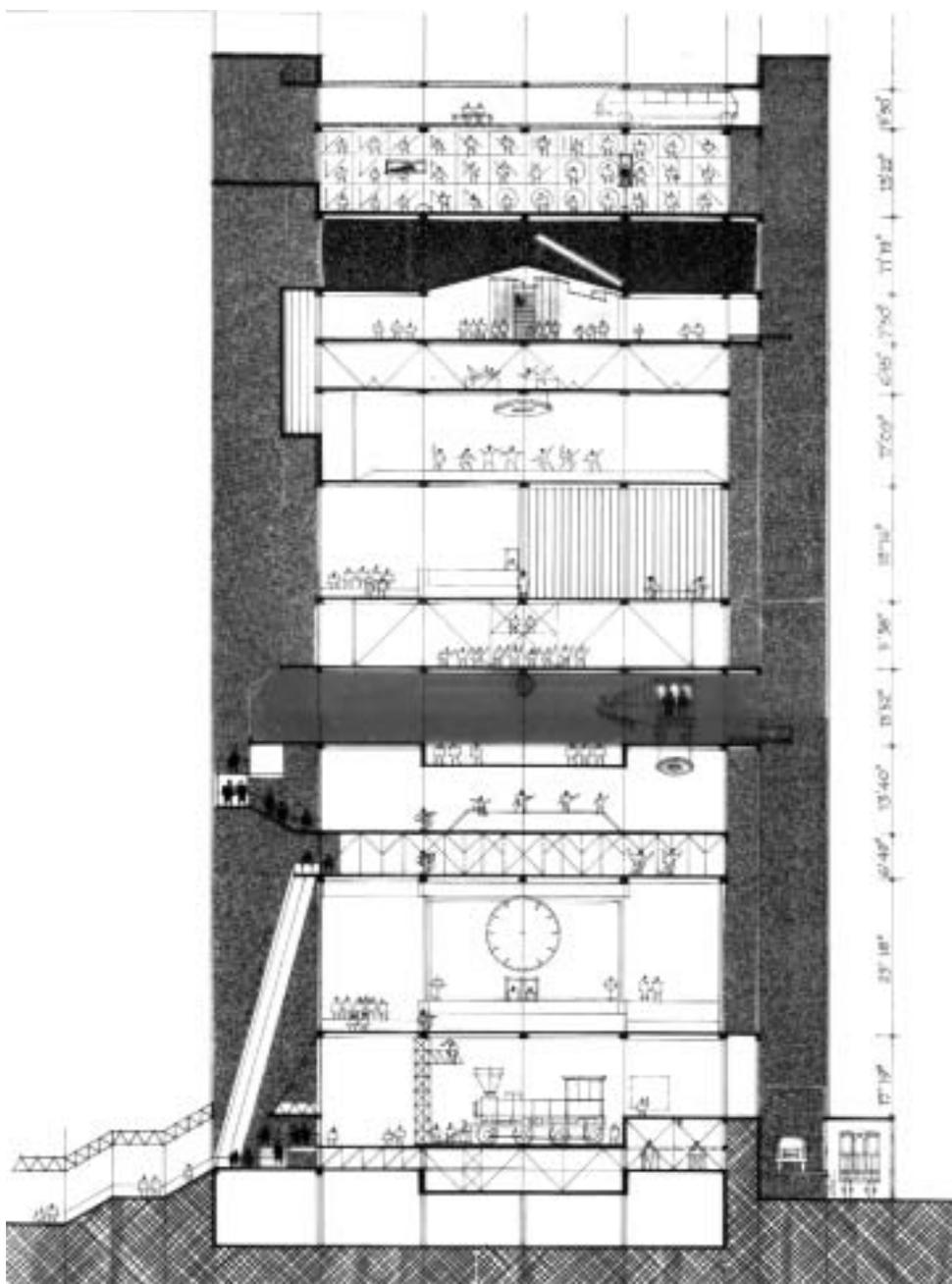


Illustration by M. Novak

allowed to “virtually” conquer the stage space, to virtually dwell in it, hence co-existing with the stage events. One enters the virtual space by means of specially designed glasses that even display the Wilson/Glass trademark. This work is symptomatic – it shows the path of opera towards mass media and high technology, at once deconstructing the concept of opera genre.

Einstein on the Beach – The Beginning of Post-History of the Opera Genre

The idea of the end or “the death” of opera¹⁷ launches the question of its historical sense today. Is the historical sense of opera confirmed even today by the operas of Philip Glass, Robert Wilson, Michael Nyman, Meredith Monk, Steve Reich, Louis Adriessen, Bryan Ferry, Luciano Berio, Tan Dun, Jasna Veličković and John Adams? Reinterpreting and reconstructing a discipline in the aftermath of its “death” are the characteristic traits of the Postmodern époque. Determined by the quest for the lost ideal of Greek tragedy, being born through a (unsuccessful) trial of mimesis of an antique manner of stage, music and literary depiction and expression, opera continued to follow its fate even after its “death”: “the opera after opera” (Postmodern opera) continued to depict, but this time the depiction (mimesis) of the system of opera (which is already a mimesis of the manner of depicting the ideal of Greek tragedy) and the practice of its presentation, thus establishing itself as a “third-degree” construction of presentation.

Following the modernist ‘peaks’ attained in the operas of Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Berg and the composers of the French les Six, it is possible to trace the beginning of the “Renaissance” of the art of opera precisely from the creation of Wilson’s and Glass’s “poly-genre” *Einstein on the Beach*. It is by no chance that one of the initiators of music Minimalism was the author of the first post-historic opera. It is as if the hypnotic repetition that evokes ambient/spatial associations was the main motive/reason for the frequent crossing of minimalist composers to the realm of “music scene” and film scores.

Michael Nyman was the first to use the term Minimalism in music. He defined it as “(...) reducing the sound activity to an absolute minimum through mostly tonal, repetitive material with the aid of very strict processes”.¹⁸ Still, it could be asserted that it was the music written for *Einstein on the Beach* that was the first post-minimalist music. The music of *Einstein on the Beach* marked the loosening of ties between the signifier and the signified and the introduction of new signified’s in the game. Glass’ rigid repetitive works that were created until the mid-70’s of the past century focused on the “problem” of examining the music structure of the very immediate phenomenon of structuring the music flow.¹⁹ Yet, with the stage quality that was introduced with the music of *Einstein on the Beach*, the signifier’s order of music became open for the influence of new signifiers. The usage of repetitive technique is characteristic for post-minimalist works while the strictness of process is weakening in comparison with minimalist processes. The tonality is frequent yet not explicit, whereas the inclination to reduce the ‘sound activities’ to

¹⁷ Analogue to the concept of the end of art by Arthur Danto. See Arthur Danto, *The Psychological Disenfranchisement of Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986)

¹⁸ According to Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1974), p. 179

¹⁹ In the sung texts that were used in *Einstein on the Beach* the solmisation syllables mark the height of the sung tones of music models whereas the numbers mark their rhythmical structure. The tautological relation between the music and the sung text in *Einstein...* brings to the utmost peak the modernist ideology of reducing the language of art to dealing with presentation of its own structure.

the absolute minimum has vanished. Post-minimalism is characteristic for the late works of Philip Glass, Steve Reich and Louis Adriessen, who continued their creative work in that direction following their minimalist works; the same applies to a number of contemporary composers who did not create minimalist works but use the minimalist repetitiveness. Among them are Aarvo Pärt, John Adams, Michael Nyman, Michael Gordon, Julia Wolf etc. When it comes to the works of those authors who continue to compose on the basis of their Avant-garde systems, post-minimalism in music is one of the types of postmodernism that are possible to denote as the “evolution” of Avant-garde.²⁰ In the case of post-minimalism, that ‘system’ is the minimalist repetitive ‘process’.

The shift from modernist to postmodernist music in the opus of Philip Glass happened exactly at the point of his entering the realm of opera. In modernism, the language of music was “smashed”, whereas in postmodernism a new order of different codes is introduced in the music language. The postmodernist musical work may be perceived as a map of disjointed details, as “artistic analytical machines that function as parts, as gears of one another.”²¹ In this context of “disjointedness”, the minimalist music process appeared as an exceptionally convenient device. Due to its repetitiveness, namely, the process is very easily perceivable on the audio level. At the same time, the process could be identified with Glass’s musical minimalism; eventually it became emblematic for him. Being so easily recognisable, the process is very convenient in the role of one of the “gears” and Glass uses it in that sense. In the opera music of Philip Glass, the process is the ground associated with various music codes in different operas: the Gregorian chant in *Einstein on the Beach*, popular music in *Photographer*, Pagan Expressionism in *Ekhmaton* and romanticism in *Beauty and the Beast*. In the operas of Philip Glass, music has become merely one of the equal factors in constituting the “unrelated parallelisms” of its three “texts”. The music in them is not “out of opera”; it is not an organic part of the opera tissue. It is, the same as the other “texts”, one of the disconnected parallelisms, alienated but in co-existence with the others in the schizoid tissue of the opera.²²

The music of *Einstein on the Beach* has partly deviated from the first-degree representation. It often shows ‘how music depicts the out-of-music’. Let us consider this problem on the example of the composition *Train*, scene 1, act 1 of *Einstein on the Beach*. There is the opinion that traditional artistic Western European music is dialectical and that repetitive music stands in contrast to it with its non-dialecticality, by replacing the concept of the work with the concept of process as well as with the principle that no single sound is more important than any other sound²³, with its non-expressive and non-representative character opposed to the powers of depiction and expression of the traditional dialectical music. It is emphasised that this music depicts merely its structure and the order of its constituents.

But let us deal with the “body” of music. We shall do this on the example of scene 1, act 1 of the opera *Einstein on the Beach: The Train*. The usage of train in this non-narrative opera dedicated to the physicist Albert Einstein stems from the evo-

²⁰ According to Mirjana Veselinovi}-Hofman, *Fragmenti o muzi-koj postmoderni* (Novi Sad: Matica srpska, 1998), p. 63

²¹ Giles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, “Anti-Oedipus”, *@enske studije*, 4 (Belgrade, 1996)

²² According to Rosalind Kraus, the implementation of the term ‘schizoid’ on a cultural phenomenon does not denote its medical sense. In this context, schizoid should be understood as an analogy: the comparison of structure of several comparative models. See in Rosalind Kraus, *The Originality of the Avant-garde and Other Modernist Myths* (London: The MIT Press, 1985), p. 22

²³ This remark may be connected with the non-hierarchical model of rhizome, the model of “the tree trunk different from the model of the tree”, defined in the writings of Post-structuralist theoreticians Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari.

cation of Einstein's experiment of measuring the inertial train system. The renowned scientist executed this experiment by elaborating the relativity theory. Probably inspired with the hypnotic pulsation of the sound of the train engine and the sound reference that this pulsation established with his then-repetitive works,²⁴ Glass elaborated the 'train theme' three times in the opera. Besides the aforementioned scene on the 'subject' of train, the opera also contains the scenes *Night Train and Building*.

Yet, the composer plays with the conventions of representation in music. He refers indirectly to the sound of train, through disrupted codes. The usage of uneven number of units in the measure i.e. the usage of mixed rhythm disables the creation of iconic relation between the sound of Glass's composition and the literal sound of any train. The most evident trait of the literal sound of train is removed – the even, symmetrical pulsation. In Glass's composition, the pulsation is exactly the opposite – uneven and asymmetrical, but remaining even. Hence Glass does not make an effort to literally present the sound of the train; he presents the way by which it is possible to literally present the sound of the train.

But what is the place of Glass and his opera opus in the denouement of the drama of the opera? From 1975 up until today, besides various pieces for instrumental ensembles, music for theatre productions, film and dance that he creates throughout his entire opus, Philip Glass wrote about twenty operas and two pieces whose genre was defined both as operas and theatre pieces with music. Through the insight of genre definition of these operas, our knowledge on the traditional genre of the opera is once again provoked. The traditional opera genre already appears as meta-genre given the fact that opera is a music genre and its sub-species genres of the genre. Defining the genres of his operas, Glass problematises the status of the genre of opera, introducing and combining opera elements in a number of ways. Thus the very idea of genre becomes the theme of new opera pieces, the material that constitutes operas. The semantic and aesthetic border hence crossed points out to poly-genre, emblematic for postmodernism.

One could perceive *Einstein on the Beach* as the departing point of all Glass' latter operas. It is even possible to see/hear it retroactively in some of them. This is the case, for example, with the opera *O Corvo Branco*, whose structure and form is 'permeated' with the structure and form of *Einstein on the Beach*. The opera *O Corvo Branco* is also created in collaboration with Robert Wilson. The identical procedure is implemented in this opera's global composition as in *Einstein on the Beach*: In both cases, there are sections between the acts (in this opera, there are five of them) that are named knee-plays. *O Corvo Branco* has four knee-plays with the figures of two ravens and the Writer-Narrator appearing in them. In *Einstein on the Beach*, it was two women that appeared in those sections. Yet, in both cases, it is possible to make an imaginary fusion of those knee-plays into one "story" which in turn might or might not be in direct relation to the flow of other events in the opera. They make a distinct "story" that is periodically interwoven in the fragmentary opera action. Both musically and stage-wise, these knee-plays may be intertwined and observed as a form of visual and musical variations.

Historically, opera started as a widely popular artistic form and it continued to develop in that direction. The social status of the 18th-century opera could be com-

²⁴ It is possible to bring to the iconic relation the constant pulsation of repetitive models of Glass' music and the pulsating sound of the train moving across the rails.

pared to film and its role in today's mass media society. One of the essential reasons for the-then wide popularity of opera and today's massive popularity of commercial films lies in their capability to give a chance to a wide circle of recipients to make their wishes come true by identifying with the characters and situations through which the objects of the audience's desire are realised in the media of these arts.

Following the elitism of modern art and the appearance of the operas of Philip Glass, opera is brought back to the popular domain but in a different manner. Philip Glass asserts that opera has always been a popular form). He also emphasises that no high music education is needed for the reception of his operas. Glass consciously "plays" with the elements of music, literary and theatrical texts of his operas. This is confirmed by his deliberation on the usage of foreign languages in *Akhmaten*: "I used languages as an exotic medium and I even played on the card of their exotic quality in *Aekhnaten*. I wanted to obtain an exotic sound using exotic languages. When you hear the languages you have never heard before, this certainly contributes to the glamour of the piece." There is a multitude of various procedures that affirm the "popular" in Glass' operas: the susceptibility and simplicity of melodic, rhythmical and harmonious patterns; the usage of untrained voices that are closer to the reality of the average recipient; choosing for the theme of the opera the life of such figures as Mahathma Gandhi and Albert Einstein; the introduction of film in the opera; the exotic quality of language as the need for the glamorous; the attractiveness of stage elements etc.

About the Question of Exoticism

*Orientalism was more the answer to a culture that produced it than to its presumed object that was also the product of the West.*²⁵ Edward Said

The question that could be launched in relation to the opera *Einstein on the Beach* and the exotics is at least two-folded: on the one hand, it is possible to ask if, why and for whom *Einstein on the Beach* is exotic; on the other hand, what was it that the authors of this work appreciated it as exotic in relation to Einstein. There are authors that see the development of minimalist music as a sort of "exoticism". Such stance is supported by the chiefly conceptual kinship of the repetitiveness of "process" with particular exotic non-European techniques such as meditation. The most distinctive trait of the technique of meditation is that its centre is not the differences but the repetition. Repetition could be understood as a long fixation of one object or a repetition of a particularly chosen word or movement. The meditative technique probes the manner of observation and this is where its greatest kinship with minimalist music lies. When the sense is constantly forced to receive the same stimulus, what happens is the process of de-automatisation of functional perception; hence the object is not placed in a certain context but is over and again "dissolved". The paradox reached through this kind of observation is the following: The world that is perceived thus becomes "as new".

Learning from Ala Rakha and Ravi Shankar, Glass obtained the knowledge on the techniques implemented in Indian music. There is an opinion that the method of adding time units implemented in traditional Indian music could be juxtaposed to the Western principle of "time distribution" in which greater units are constantly

²⁵ Edward Said, *Orientalizam* (Belgrade: XX vek, 2000), p. 37

divided into smaller ones. The said influence of non-European music on Glass' poetics was crucial for the shaping of his mature style. He uses the non-European heritage in the context of Western European art without identifying it with the context from which this heritage derives. He is a Postmodern artist – a traveller, a tourist, a nomad who effortlessly uses the traces of other music (and not only music) cultures. In this context, Mertens comes forward with the opinion that “But this use of non-European techniques should not be regarded as the foundation of their work, but rather as a symptom of the ability of the modern culture industry to annex a foreign culture, strip it out of its specific socio-ideological context and incorporate it into its own culture products.”²⁶ This points out to the mechanisms by which cultural products of marginalised “exotic parts” are being cleansed of their indigenous meaning and exploited as well as re-branded in another context.

Glass points out to his own frustration with the false unity of the world of Western music. He does not comply with the division of music into different “hostile” worlds: “...for a very long time, for hundreds and hundreds of years, we have divided music into the music of Western and non-Western world. But you see, this is untrue. In fact, the world is only one. But this is some kind of invention created for the most part by Western education and, on the other hand, it is also the result of geography but also of many other reasons for which some worlds would never be able to get together. For a long while, if you wanted to understand in what way Western and Eastern music “get along”, you had to travel. Once I travelled by bus from Tangier in Spain all the way to New Delhi. I brought a radio with me. I listened to it throughout the journey. And then, when you do that, you begin to realise there are no interruptions in so many different worlds. Listening to music in this way, I realised there was a strong continuity. In other words, I saw how the world of music was constant and incessant. But we divided it. That is why I am not particularly interested in the non-Western-Western music division. I am interested in the music that belongs to human beings because the activity of someone's engagement and investment in the world of music is very steady, very wide and deep. It is not confined to such petty things as the languages we speak and the clothes we wear.”²⁷ He sees the continuity precisely in the discontinuity of different music worlds. And in his own music he transformed this music discontinuity into continuity.

Similar is Glass's relation towards the languages used in librettos of his operas. Almost all of them are written in different languages. In *Einstein on the Beach*, it was English as well as the language of numbers and solmisation syllables; in *Akhnaten*, it was ancient Egyptian, Accadian, Hebrew, English, neutral syllables and the language of the audience before which the opera is performed; in *Satyagraha* this is Sanskrit; in *Photographer* it is English and in *Beauty and the Beast* it is French. An overview of his other operas shows that there he also operates with different languages. This relation towards language emphasises its effect and substantiality whereas the signifying content is of secondary importance. Furthermore, the languages used were the languages of different areas and from different époques. Similar to languages, the themes of the operas come from different time and geographic zones. There is no such thing as the continuity of geography and history – those are the archives whose data Glass uses and brings into co-relation tearing down all spatial and temporal barriers, creating along a multi-cultural, i.e. geo-aesthetic work.

²⁶ Wim Mertens, *American Minimal Music: La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich, Philip Glass*, New York, 1983, p. 88.

²⁷ From the conversation of the author with Philip Glass conducted in Skopje on September 10, 1999

Besides the previously mentioned analogies with the systems existing outside of the music that belongs to Western European tradition, it is possible to point out to all the analogies with the elements of Rock, Pop and Jazz – the popular music genres. In that sense, it is interesting to observe Glass's method of creating the Philip Glass Ensemble. Just like Pop stars, Philip Glass performs with this band consisting of saxophones (analogous to Jazz bands), electric keyboards (analogous to Pop and Rock bands) and a vocal as the band's frontman. Besides this, Glass insists that his music is being performed extremely loud. As it often involves electric instruments and amplified classical instruments, the final result is a deafening sound – typical of Pop music concerts...

Opera came about as a typically European product. It could be even claimed that, as such, it represented especially to American composers an exotic "territory" that was supposed to be conquered. The conquest was set in motion and in the final outcome, observed from our perspective (us as the members of South-Western Balkan cultural space), the opera *Einstein on the Beach* emerges as a piece of exoticism. It is everything that we find "luring", remote and inaccessible at this moment in time: it speaks in a musical/theatrical language foreign to this milieu; it is a product of late capitalist society that never was here; it is "slick", "pure", "conceptualised"; theoretically grounded; powerful in the marketing, economic and historical sense; it is in the position to rule. And it was, much like orientalism, more of an answer to the culture it was derived from (American pragmatic capitalism) than to its supposed "object" (e.g. "exotics", Pop culture) – also a product of that culture.

Translation by: Katarina Pejovi}

(A) Land (in the) South/Southeast

Nevena Dakovi}

(The topic of *cinema as performance* is a multi-fold challenge because of the many perspectives of interpretation which it offers. *Cinema as performance* draws attention to a new *cinematic discourse* promoted in contemporary production but also to the analysis of a new theoretical *discourse on the cinema*. It is uncertain if this new discourse leads to the promotion of a new direction for cinema theory/studies or if it is an echo of the *Great Doctrines*, which have been applied belatedly in our part of the world.

The basic ventriloquist tradition of cinema theory/studies supports itself as the *echo of Great Doctrines*, i.e. the application of general social theories to the domain of cinema. Our cinema, as a demonstrative case study additionally supports, is accustomed to the local practice of analyzing the films of the Third World through the theories of the First World. Appropriation and application are thus only variations of the same approach because in no case could one take it as a reverse trajectory, whereby an authentic theory of the cinema study acquires the legitimacy of a general (social or artistic) theory, i.e. immediately becomes a *Great Doctrine*. The ambitious framework – put by the editors of the journal – as a search for discourse of the “age of post-socialism, which has the potential to inscribe itself as such in the global map” seems quite contradictory but only up to the moment when the name of Slavoj Žižek appears (“this discourse has references to the work of Slavoj Žižek, but these references do not need to be unquestionable”). In spite of Žižek’s explicit love for film and the productive links between film examples and his theoretical texts, the value and applicability of these theories goes far beyond the framework of cinema studies. On the other hand, if we focus on the 7th art, then Žižek’s huge popularity and frequent quotations are tempered by the assertion that one cannot draw out a consistent method from his theory and that the applicability of his theories is limited a priori to works responsive to his own approach. In other words, the theory is valid for the so-called “Žižek film”, which includes works of Hitchcock, but also Kieslowsky, Benigni and others whose common denominator – besides the theoretician being fond of them – is often insufficiently discernible (cca. Elsaesser/Buckland).¹ This “lack” of perfection justifies the

¹ Criticism and summary of Žižek’s theories are summarised and quoted after Thomas Elsaesser, Warren Buckland, *Studying Contemporary American Film* (London: Arnold, 2002), pp. 220-249

“excess” of a venture of parallel writing on the new cinema discourse through @i`ek’s optics adjusted to local production, the accompanying politically generated banalisations and complex, automated elaborations. Therefore, a description of the new cinema discourse induces a new discourse on cinema, in which formal analysis, narrative deconstruction, and post-modern interpretations are interwoven as a conglomerate of historical, national, and political considerations, providing answers to each of the questions: WHAT, HOW, and WHY.

As case studies for this Post-modern theorization in the broadest sense, many Serbian productions come to mind: *We are no Angels (Mi nismo an/eli*, 1992, directed by Srdjan Dragojevi); *Underground (Podzemlje*, 1995, directed by Emir Kusturica); the opus of Radivoje Andri} and Dejan Ze-evi}, including naturally in many ways borderline and overly transparent *Angels 2 (An/eli 2*, 2004, directed by Dejan Ze-evi}), as citation-homages to the trends of the commercially successful mainstream. *Land of Truth, Love and Freedom (Zemlja istine ljubavi i slobode*, 1999) and *South-Southeast (Jug-Jugoistok*, 2005) by the author tandem Milutin Petrovi}-Sa{a Radojevi} prove to be rich and relevant case studies for neo-Lacanian / @i`ekian readings, due to their complex citations and wider intertextuality. The debut of the director Radojevi}, *Kisses (Poljupci*, 2004) may be placed within the same interpretative scope. Last but not least is the genre rewriting/transposing of the criticism of other authors into selected theoretical codes. This essay has been developed as a game of translating subjective evaluations and recognitions from reviews and interviews² into a meaningful and organized (objective to the extent possible) theoretical discourse supported by thematic and structural psychoanalytic explications of texts, intertextuality, and media simulacra.

@i`ekian Frame of Reference

In spite of his long presence and numerous works (which were first reaching us in their originals, and later on in partial (*Filmske sveske, Re-*) and full translation (*Sublimni objekt ideologije / The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 2002; *Manje ljubavi vi{e mr`nje / Less Love-More hate*, 2001) the popularity of the theories of Slavoj @i`ek will remain stigmatized for some time by the controversially interpreted article on the bombing of Serbia, *Not Enough and Too Late* (1999). Nevertheless, to be fair, his popularity is not exactly based on the wide strata of society who would see anti-Serbian hostility in his writing rather than a condemnation of ambivalent relations between Milo{evi} and the international community, as the author himself declared. A few will take any interpretation unreservedly, even now when a moment of “rehabilitation” has come after his departure from “theoretical grace”.

For cinema studies, the segment exclusively oriented toward politicized considerations is less significant when compared to global postulates summarized by Elsaesser³ in some theses. To begin with, @i`ek – together with Joan Copjac and Juliette Flower Maccannel – belongs to a group of neo-Lacnians “not-constituted as a school”, focused on issues of ethics in Psychoanalysis. Second, neo-Lacanian Psychoanalysis offers a general model of reception and interpellation, while @i`ek offers his own, specific model of interaction with @i`ekian, i.e above all Hitchcock’s texts (which brought him international fame). Third, a central option for interpretation of cinema mostly draws on the “political ramifications of the theory of

² A list of reviews and interviews used is given at the end of the paper.

³ Elsaesser, op. cit.

Psychoanalysis". Repoliticisation thus concurrently liberates cinema studies from the terror of the "theory of gaze" and "gender difference", offering a framework that may suit the high politicization of Serbian cinema⁴ (as well as many other national cinemas and endorse the premise that cultural production is inherently political. Notions such as "authoritativeness without authority", i.e. without its symbolic legitimacy, are frequently used in theory, as well as issues of democracy vs. totalitarianism and of universalism vs. multiculturalism. The interpretation of a text is a kind of thriller quest for obsessive elements, 'the symptom and traumatic kernel' associated with the relation of temporality and subjectivity, post-gender identity, the formation of trauma as well as time-space narrative determination.

A 'space-embodied' time voyage, given in the form of non-linear narrative, is paradigmatic for Serbian historical/neo-war/political film. Skipping over a series of theoretical performances (admittedly, through the Hollywood mainstream production and the context of America), we come to an observation that the new ethical imperative, among other things is for those whose motto is: TO DREAM THE PAST IN ORDER TO REMEMBER THE FUTURE. Thus the causal nexus of the narrative becomes the return of the repressed from the future. The past writes out the future as in a mirror, only to have it returned from out there as a trauma, in multiplied timelines of a series of films such as *Pretty Village/Pretty Flame* (Lepa sela lepo gore 1995, directed by Srdjan Dragojevi), *Premeditated murder* (Ubistvo sa predumi{ljam, 1996, directed by Gor-in Stojanovi}), and *Land of Truth, Love and Freedom*.

Diagnosis: South

In Petrovi}'s films there is a pattern of continuity guided by viewing both texts as a variation of the same matrix but also as a psychoanalytical cross section in the Freud-Lacan-neo-Lacan manner. In *Land of Truth, Love, and Freedom*, the director explores the transcendence of a personal and collective trauma; while *South-Southeast* analyses the unreservedly diagnosed collective and personal paranoia. "If the 20th century was a century of schizophrenia," in a country delineated by myth and irony and torn between different identities, epochs, political parties, idealism, narcissism, and ostracized contempt in the period of sanctions and bombing, then "the 21st century is definitely the victory of paranoia". The tag line of *South-Southeast* is: "The question is not whether you are paranoid but whether you are paranoid enough?" Paranoia as the key word describes a number of things, from the author's concept and intention to the causal motivation of narrative structuring. Petrovi} states: "Every stylistic figure is paranoid. Art in general is sheer paranoia", which leads to the madness of thinking that "there is always something else besides what is apparent and obvious". The quest for latent meaning is the guiding principle of hermeneutics but also the concise definition of the excess that makes the invisible visible, as expressing the inexpressible and repressed. The paranoia of characters and of the story, makes the text itself paranoid, not because it is written by a person imagining to be persecuted – but because this person becomes structurally revealed to be the persecutor of his/her own basic meaning. The text is not merely a symptom of something else but first and foremost of itself. The search for elementary meaning or the impossibility of consensual reinstatement of the main narrative⁵ has been seen by some as the serious flaw of the film. A somewhat sub-

⁴ One should also add the adherence of cinema Serbs to the term *drive's creatures* or the application of the thesis on "stealing the pleasure" in the analysis of *Pretty Villages...* (B. Andjelkovi)

⁵ A summary given in a dozen newspaper reviews is: *South-Southeast / Jug-Jugoistok* is identified as a „psycho-political thriller“. Sonja Savi}, once a popular Serbian actress settled in Slovenia for ten years, visits Belgrade to make arrangements about an inheritance with her mother and brother Milo{.

tlar formulation is that there is discord between this ambitious idea and a maladroitness performance (I would like to distance myself from the debate on why high ambitions are intellectual and whether they are too high only because of this or perhaps because of something else). Perhaps it is really too ambitious to expect from a common spectator (wittily described by Ivan Jevi} as a “callow and plain moviegoer”) to grasp it. However, the unanimous agreement that this is an avant-garde film is in itself already an answer. Avant-garde remains avant-garde (or dies young) because it is not for the commons, but for the elite, the hermetic, and for those who have been initiated. It dwells on the margin and it does not become part of the establishment or mainstream, least of all as measured by viewer ratings or targeted audiences. Reviewers also criticized the epilogue made in the manner of TV Pink, which may legitimately be regarded as a director’s maneuver resulting from the lack of courage or a reluctance to express a clear position. A good counterargument is that this is a *mise-en-abyme* as Mieke Bal would define it; it is a passage which retroactively gives the key for reading the previous narrative as a global metaphor. And... a case of *Sorry Never... (Izvini nikad...)* which arose after the film and resulted in the temporary removal of the show from TV, confirmed the interpretative directions that lead to selected theories of Psychoanalysis and politics. The thought that they knew something that we do not know only consolidates paranoia as the key word...

Intertextuality and Transtextuality

The style trademark of Milutin Petrovi}’s opus is the saturation with intertextuality,⁶ that goes from quotation and homage to refined allusion, and inevitably leads to meta-film quality. *Land of Truth, Love, and Freedom* transparently begins with a direct quotation of *The Magic Sword* (*^udotvorni ma~*, 1950 by Vojislav Nanovi}) and continues with poetic expansion. From the unconsciously appropriated style of Makavejev in *Innocence Unprotected (Nevinost bez za{tite*, 1968) to Godard and genre allusions to didactically skillful investigations of the relations of cinema and Psychoanalysis everything aspires to a four-layered meta-film structure. The theses of Freudian Psychoanalysis are elaborated in the concept of the film, therapy sessions and through the monologue of Boris Milivojevi}. Patients belong in a madhouse or at least in regular therapy sessions; the exterior is a correlation of the interior “chimneys” being swept during the therapy etc, while the catharsis of an individual comes through death, becoming a redemptory suffering or a remedy for the madness of a nation, otherwise incurable in our society. The triad *mad-house / Psychoanalysis / film-within-a-film* which goes on in the hero’s imagination (Levin’s images projected on the screen in our heads, a film which only has such imaginary existence) supports recognizable allusions to Bulgakov’s novel, *The*

Suddenly, she starts claiming that her daughter Sofia – a child that no one believes to exist (a reference to *Bunny Lake is Missing*, 1965, directed by Otto Preminger, a reference which would be missed by a number of spectators and critics without the author’s notes) – has been kidnapped. When her brother calls the police, Sonja admits that she made everything up. The persistent inspector Despotovi} receives information that the child does exist and he continues with his search in spite of the classical decision by his superiors that he is off the case. Sonja keeps her secret that the father of the child is the Minister of Foreign Affairs, fearing that this might be used by the foreign Secret Service Agents who kidnapped the child. The Minister, of course, denies everything, labelling Sonja’s behaviour as sheer paranoia and accusing her of being part of a scandalizing team. The resolution of the plot would be an homage to Hitchcock, if it were not for the post-scriptum made in the TV Pink style.

⁶ Differentiating transtextuality and intertextuality, Dubravka Orai} Toli} defines the latter as all that which brings the text in relation with other texts and the language of culture; *Teorija citatnosti* (Zagreb: GHZ, 1990)

Master and Margarita. The last scene of the transition to the eternal harmony of the cinematic world of wishes fulfilled is then, of course, a paraphrase of a corresponding scene in the film adaptation of the novel (1972, directed by Aleksandar Petrović). On the other hand, these might be the initial symptoms of a manic obsession with rethinking the film itself.

Both works, and especially *South-Southeast*, have stepped on a safe @i`ekian ground of Psychoanalysis pervaded with politics through a general political and critical frame of reference. A story of authoritarian society without symbolic authority (order or protection) is our reality, while authoritarian hedonism is experienced by only a modest percentage of the population, in an environment where paranoia thrives at all levels. *Land of Truth, Love, and Freedom* claims that art is superior to life via Bulgakov, for whom art is eternal (because manuscripts, and in this case films, do not burn). *South-Southeast* is associated with Truffaut, being also an homage to *Cahier's* cinephile spirit and titles from those that make the eternity of genre to some of the most beautiful odes to the cinema ever filmed. The authors of the films seem to agree with the answer to two questions made in *Day for Night (La Nuit Americaine)*, 1973, directed by François Truffaut: "Are women magical?" and "Is cinema more important than life?" Women are magical indeed and Cinema is more important than life. Nedeljko Despotović has chosen a film story in which things that are happening to us will find their safe refuge and source... Truffaut wrote the most beautiful (psychoanalytical) collection of interviews with Hitchcock. And Hitchcock is adored by @i`ek and a couple of million of other people, including some of the most significant filmmakers and film thinkers.

If we take cinema as being bigger than life then we might be able to conceive some explicit intertextualities (such as that "Stam-Genette" celebrity intertextuality) under the term of transtextuality, conceived of as everything which puts the text in relation with reality and natural languages. Both films discussed here are associated with politics on many levels but in a form already set and recycled by the media. Someone stated at the film promotion that *South* was a film about the assassination of \in|i}, which is far less obvious than the fact that *Land* is a story about bombing and the grand finale of a fall. Dimitrije Vojnov quotes the opinion of an anonymous friend of his that the insider confession of Vladimir Beba Popović had determined (genre-wise) our existence. "The rate of car chases, bugging, secret meetings, testimonies and blackmails described by Popović certainly shows that our life may be best defined as a thriller". Correlatively, the director admitted that he was guided by a wish to convert the out-of-film (but in our case not the non-cinematic) reality into a film. "The idea was to show the monster to the people so they can experience catharsis once the invisible becomes visible". Catharsis is no longer a privilege of the effect of Aristotelian-determined texts but of a reality that efficiently and effectively induces paranoid catharsis.

Symptomatic casting for the film exploits the polyfunctionality and polysemantics of the names of a number of renowned filmmakers. Outstanding creators' figures are signifiers of both fictional characters and their real life counterparts, established in the local cinema. For all that, Puri{a Djordjevi}, as a Big Chief of the agency, and young agents, featuring the names of the "new Belgrade school" (Radivoje Andrić, Srdan Golubović), are a less complex and a precise hit than the double role of Rade Marković in *Land of Truth, Love, and Freedom* and in *The Magic Sword*. And to top

it all, Rade Markovi} is also, by coincidence, the namesake of the chief of State Security Service structure in the age of Milo{evi}. In *South-Southeast*, the most problematic moment is the “emergence” of Sonja Savi} from the oblivion of cult films of the 80s; whereas, as a real *touché*, the director Petrovi} appears as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, a great artistic and political demiurge.

Simulacra, Reality, and Paranoia

Links between Serbian cinema and contemporary history mark a return to the theses of the media’s mechanisms according to the theories of Baudrillard, Bazin, and Godard. War films, but also political thrillers, are examples *par excellence* of the efficiency of media simulacra, a copy of the world, which exists only within its frame of reference. Images are not strong enough to penetrate the frame and the reality is too powerless to exist outside the frame. Therefore, recent wars or surreal political events happened only in the way as seen on the screen. The recently terminated events acquire the potential of interpretative narrativisation; therefore, a (simulacral) action/interpretation replayed by the media remains within the frame. Without the potential of narrativisation, current events realize the quest for the sense in parallel constructed media frames. Films based on recent events ensure indisputable recall to reality in a derived form; the memory of a film replaces collective memory of the event and becomes a “dreamed past” on the grounds of which we remember the future. Hence paranoia is an alibi for a chosen strategy of representation including the finale in the TV Pink manner because the political turmoil, which has arisen and is still present, cannot be restrained, not even by the media. According to a Freudian “prescription”, the experience of reality is being therapeutically converted from neurosis into a bitter and comical series of slips and lapses which consciously build film structures. If one turns to Lacan, the deconstruction of authority and the swelling of chaos continue in the authoritarian world deprived of symbols of authority.

An analysis of the process within the boundaries of film theory makes passing references to critics – from Bazin to Mourlet – who operate by an assertion (an epigraph of Godard’s *Le Mepris* (1963) that “camera substitutes our gaze in order to offer us a world that corresponds to our desires” i.e. that it substitutes our gaze with a world that corresponds to our desires. In both versions, which are subtly but substantially different – because a film is either a documentary revelation of the world or its substitution by an imaginary construct – the fictional war and politics are tamed by the text and transform political turmoil, confusing emotionality and ethical pluralism of everyday existence caused by the disintegration of the system of standards and boundaries. The intractable reality gives rise to a paranoid mind and its visions but the paranoid mind also forms with equal efficiency the entropic reality as the only one available to the exhausted audience.

The following film reviews and interviews with authors were used from web site www.montage.co.yu/jug/press.htm:

TANJUG – 22. februar 2005.

Bogdan Zlatic – *internista kriti-ar*, 20. februar 2005.

V. Djurdji} – *Politika*, 6. 2. 2005.

- Aleksandar Kostić – *Danas*, 7. 3. 2005.
Dubravka Lakić – *Politika*, 6. 3. 2005.
Nenad Polimac – *Globus*, 11. 3. 2005.
Nikolić – *Glas javnosti*, 23. 1. 2005.
M. Vukotić – *Republika*, 5. 3. 2005.
M. Vukotić – *Republika*, 15. 3. 2005.
Milan Vlačić – *Blic*, 7. 3. 2005.
L. Golubović – *Kurir*, 19-20. 3. 2005.
Vladimir Crnjanski – *Dnevnik*, 19. 3. 2005.
Dimitrije Vojnov – *Kurir*, 24. 3. 2005.
Timofejev – TV B92, 19. 3. 2005.
Vladislava Vojnović – *intervju sa Milutinom Petrovićem za sajt Popboks*
Ivan Bevc – *Yellow Cab*
Valentina Delić – *Ekonomist magazin*, 21. 3. 2005.
Ivan Jević – *Vreme*, 31. 3. 2005.
A. S. Janković – *Yellow Cab*, april 2005.
T. Njeđić – *kompletan intervju sa Milutinom Petrovićem, Blic nedelje*, 10. 4. 2005.

Translation by: Katarina Pejović

From the Über-Marionette to Neuromancer: a Brief Review of the Deployment and Development of Technology in the 20th-Century Theatre

Aleksandra Jovi}evi}

Although technology in theatre is usually represented as neutral, as a sheer tool, this text will be an attempt to problematise that stance and demonstrate that the technological changes have altered the essence of the theatre more than is customarily believed. This text grew out of the idea that the use of digital technology in theatre should be observed in its relation towards the historical avant-garde of the 20th century. The historical avant-garde has invented a whole array of new formal languages that are still in use today, while the new digital and cyber theatre is introducing an equally revolutionary group of communication techniques. Therefore, the use of digital technology definitely represents the new avant-garde, because the changes that it is bringing are no less radical than the new forms created during the historical avant-garde. The appearance of a large number of theoreticians and creative artists, i.e. creators/theoreticians on the theatre art and theory scene of the theatre of the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century has already marked the arrival of “a new wave” of the theatre avant-garde. What has set aside theoretical orientations over the last ten years was their perception of performance process as the consequence of the digital revolution that has flooded all the arts, including theatre.

Thanks to the triumph of the digital paradigm, the contemporary theatre is faced with new and diverse possibilities of presentation. That certainly requires numerous adaptations, starting from the way of thinking to different creative strategies. Those changes are inevitable despite the resistance against any change whatsoever, i.e. the desire that classical drama theatre be frozen as such. On a general theoretical level, one could speak of the obstinacy of the advocates of classical theatre (whatever that might mean) who reject to accept the pluralism of ideas, attitudes and perspectives being offered by the new digital era in the theatre. Still, the fact remains that each new technology in the history of theatre has radically changed

the way of perception since it were not merely the social relations and thereby the significance of theatre in society which were changing, but also the theatre's aesthetic function.

A digital model of organisation also spread quickly onto the "cultural vectors" that were ruled by the analogue model. If Henry Ford was the avatar of digital economy, then it was his contemporary, Marcel Duchamp, who was the avatar of digital culture.¹ With his series of *ready-mades*, Duchamp struck a powerful blow at the value system of the analogue, placing banal objects in the context of high culture. His argument that no object has a value in itself until it is positioned within the semiotic net that defines its meaning, was well beyond his time. It could not have been widely accepted in a period obsessed with romantic concepts of the artist whose work of art was observed as a unique testimony to artistic genius, i.e. it was believed that neither man nor machine could replicate any great work of art whatsoever.

The roots of the deployment of technology are found in the historical avant-garde, which appeared in art at the moment of the appearance of new forms of notation and representation (photography, film) i.e. new forms of observing and representing reality. The avant-garde in the theatre was the first form of opposition to the objective, mechanical, documentary view and reproduction of the world that was made possible by new technologies. Due to the fact that the "competition" with media machines came about, certain "subjectivity" was legitimate. Futurists relied on speed and sublimation, Dadaists and Surrealists on illogical and nightmarish combinations, Expressionists on the subconscious; hence the "old reality" existed everywhere, only presented from unusual angles.

A radical turnabout occurred at the moment when the representatives of the historical avant-garde in the theatre turned towards new ways of approaching and using the previously accumulated media in the theatre. In that way, theatre began to change its nature, transforming into itself into *post-theatre* or *meta-theatre*, since it was using all the media at its disposal as its basic material. Previously, the major change or "crash" had occurred with the "de-literarisation" of Western European theatre, which had been until then traditionally determined by dramatic texts. In "*The Art of the Theatre: The First Dialogue*" Edward Gordon Craig wrote that the "the place of the poet is not in the theatre, that he never sprouted from the theatre, and that he cannot belong to the theatre" and went on from this "discovery" to form the idea of the "unfinished" dramatic text, or, more precisely, the text of the performance.² Between 1900 and 1930, this requirement was repeated by almost all representatives of avant-garde movements, from the Futurists to the Constructivists, the Dadaists, the Surrealists and the Bauhaus adherents, along with Meyerhold and Piscator. It seems that *de-literarisation* became the code word of an entire period in the historical avant-garde. This daring liberation of theatre from literature was definitely connected with the doubt in what represented the language of that time. In his essay "The Stage as the Dream-like Image" ("Die Bühne als Traumbild", 1903), Hugo von Hofmannsthal demanded that the theatre create an image in which not one centimetre should be devoid of meaning. Objects and bodies were to be translated into a new language that was to renounce its semantic qualities.³

¹ Aleksandar Bo{kovi}, "Strategije otpora u digitalnoj eri", in Critical Art Ensemble, *Digitalni partizani* (Belgrade: CSU, 2000), p. 12

² Edward Gordon Craig, "Umjetnost kazali{ta (Prvi dijalog)", in *O umjetnosti kazali{ta* (Zagreb: Prolog, 1980), p. 104

³ Erika Fischer-Lichte, *History of European Drama and Theatre* (London-New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 285

Therefore, it seems to me that Hofmannsthal's *de-semantisation* of language and *semantisation* of the body and objects are equally determinative for the new theatre as is the deployment of new technologies. For example, Artaud reacted in a similar fashion in *A Letter about Language* (1932): "Besides the culture contained in words, there also exist a culture contained in movements. There are also other languages in the world, apart from our Western language, which has impoverished and dried out ideas and in which ideas are presented to us in an inert state and therefore incapable of quavering the system of natural analogies, as is the case in Oriental languages".⁴

The demand that the theatre be "de-literarised" was primarily founded on the crisis of language during that era. However, the main motive for such a procedure grew out of the concept that theatre was an art *sui generis* and that it should not serve as an intermediary for the presentation or interpretation of the works of other arts. Craig insisted on the standpoint that each art was defined by the unique quality of the material that it used. The materials of theatre are movement, voice and stage design. Theatre should therefore cease to imitate reality but also people as individuals and personalities. The objective of Craig's creative effort should have been an impersonal force, since "there is something that Man has not yet mastered (...) That is Movement"⁵.

Craig speaks to the man of the future and/or the theatre of the future. He named the first chapter of his book "The Artists of the Theatre of the Future": "Having thought about it, I am dedicating this book to that brave individuality in the world of theatre, who will one day overpower it and reshape it."⁶ The theatre of the future that Craig advocates is the theatre of movement, i.e. the theatre that makes the invisible forces of movement visible and gives them presence. With such an objective, the theatre must discover diverse instruments of presentation, which, naturally, opened up a new question as to whether the actor's body was the appropriate material. Craig himself offered the definitive answer that the human body, by its nature, is completely useless as the material of the new art.⁷ Craig was radical in claiming that, if it is impossible to replace the actor, then the actor must transcend his/her body by transforming it into machine. "Take away the actor and you take away the means by which a debased stage realism is produced and disseminated... the actor must go and his place should be taken by the inanimate figure that we may call the *Übermarionette*, at least until a better name is found."⁸ If the theatre of the future is possible at all, an artificial figure must be created since it will not compete with life – it will surpass it. The *Übermarionette* would become the instrument through which the theatre would finally uncover "the spirit of movement".⁹

Craig's theatre of the future went further than rejecting the illusionist theatre of the middle classes; it also completely annulled the idea of individuality, a concept

⁴ Antonin Artaud, "Prvo pismo, Pisma o jeziku", in *Pozorište i njegov dvojniki* (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1971), pp 123-124.

⁵ Ibid, p. 46

⁶ Ibid, p. 21

⁷ "For, a chance is an enemy of the artist. Art is precisely the antithesis to the pandemonium created by bringing together many coincidences. Art comes into being only deliberately. Therefore, in order to create a work of art, it is clear that we may take only those materials which we can count on. Man is not such a material." (E.G. Craig, *The Actor and the Übermarionette*, p. 52)

⁸ Ibid, p. 66

⁹ Ibid, p. 68

that had existed in Western culture from the Renaissance, dominating all European stages. In advocating the *Übermarionette*, Craig invoked non-Western cultures in which the concept of the individual was either unknown or merely a temporary state. Consequently, Craig supported not only the beginning of a new era in theatre history, but also in the history of European culture, if not also in civilisation as a whole, believing that the art that would grow out of Movement would be the first and final faith of the world. "I would like to believe that men and women would achieve that objective for the first time together. How fresh and lovely that will be! Since this will be a new beginning, it will open up to the people of the next century as an inexhaustible possibility."¹⁰

Craig undoubtedly opened up the questions of the inexhaustible possibilities of the new spirit of movement, time, technology and machines. One of the consequences of the second Industrial Revolution was the speeding up of communications. In fact, this has changed the way of life to such an extent that the Italian Futurists proclaimed it to be "the source of inspiration". Futurism was the first to proclaim the beginning of the 20th century as the "shortest century in the history of humankind" or even as "the century of the extreme" (Hobsbawm), whose oscillations ranged from mass crimes and wars, attempts of violent breaking with the past, to what could be defined as the "Golden Age" in which there were long-reaching improvements in the area of living conditions and the development of science and technology. In the first Manifest of Futurism, published in *Le Figaro* on February 20, 1909, the Futurists proclaimed their stance towards the new era, enriched by a new beauty, the beauty of speed, pronouncing the automobile to be an artwork more beautiful than the Nike of Samothrace, admiring the industrial beauty of factory chimneys and the smoke ripping the clouds, bridges that spanned rivers like gigantic athletes, locomotives that ripped the railway lines etc. In the manifest *La nuova religione morale della velocità* (1916), speed was elevated onto the pedestal of adoration, to a new religion. The futurists saw war as the sole hygiene of humankind, and speeding up and challenging fate as the prayers directed to God.¹¹

The synthetic-syncretic character of Futuristic theatre (for lack of a better term), growing on the wave of Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* (which Craig somewhat mocked), gave rise to the prototype of the artist of the future. The typical "Futurist", whatever his/her basic orientation, tried to be creative in more than one discipline. Arnaldo Gina described this artist in his declaration *L'uomo futuro* (1933): the futurist is aware of the laws of revolution, and of its complex philosophical and psychological influence, based on the phenomenon of renewal applied to the stale atmosphere that had reined all arts, as well as politics, science and the entire bourgeois mentality. The Futurists went so far as to call for a renewal of the cosmos in their manifesto *Ricostruzione futurista dell'universo* (1915), in which artificiality was glorified as the highest form of naturalness.¹²

¹⁰ E.G. Craig, *The Artists of the Theatre of the Future*, p. 49

¹¹ See *Il Teatro di Varieta*, in *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti e il Futurismo*, ed. by Luciano de Maria (Milano: Mondadori, 1973), pp. 111-120. For a broader insight into the futurist movement, see Aleksandra Jovičević, "Futuristi-ko pozorište iznenađenja", *Scena*, 1-2 (Novi Sad, 1997), pp. 50-60; also Tihomir Vučković, "Izbor i prevod tekstova italijanskog futurizma i pozorišta", *Scena*, 7 (Novi Sad, Jan-Feb. 1971), pp. 95-128; Michael Kirby, Victoria Nes, *Futurist Performance* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1986). As far as Italian language texts are concerned, apart from the above-mentioned study by de Maria, the following stand out in the huge number of titles: *Futurismo e futurismi*, a catalogue of the largest exhibition on the Futurists to date, held at the Grassi Palace in Venice in 1986, as well as Claudia Salaris, *Dizionario di futurismo* (Roma: Editori riuniti, 1996)

¹² See *Sintesi del futurismo, storia e documenti*, ed. by Luigi Scrivo (Roma: Bulzoni, 1968)

In all their 68 manifestos, the Futurists advocated the usage and combination of all the ways and means of modern technology in the theatre; in other words, of everything that could simultaneously have a full effect on all the senses of the audience. In the manifesto *The Synthetic Theatre* (1915), which was compiled by Marinetti, Cora i Settimeli, it is stated that, in order to remain in the spirit of the Futuristic ideas of speed and movement, a synthesis of the facts and ideas should be drawn up in the smallest possible number of words, while performance had to be swift and concise like the acts in nightclubs, circuses or music hall. This idea was once again a certain “de-literarisation” i.e. the liberation from all conventions of classical dramatic text – from exposition, imbroglio, denouement, characterisation, identification with the heroes, the logic of the plot – since the audience was not obliged whatsoever to understand the logic of any story line.¹³

What really required condensation were not the classics, but the diversity of life itself as present in streetcars, cafés and at railway stations, life remaining recorded in the minds of people, like a dynamic, fragmentary symphony of movements, words, noise and light. The futurists wanted to create a theatre with direct sensory effects, like the vibrations of reality, made up of fragments of events, mixed together, chaotic, and confused. *The Synthetic Theatre* arrived at the discovery of the “subconscious, undefined forces, pure abstraction, fantasy, and physical insanity”, which in a certain way brought them nearer to Craig’s invisible forces. Traditional standards of “probability” and the “photographic” in art were completely discarded.

One of the ideas of synthetic theatre was to achieve the same speed and perception as in film; hence simultaneity was one of the stage devices for achieving the film-like effect of fast passing from one place to another by eliminating spatial distances through the condensation of time. The Futurists tried at all cost to draw the audience completely into their shows, as, for example in Cangiullo’s *Lights! (Luce!, 1919)*. In the theatre that was completely dark, the actors mingled with the members of the audience and once the shouting reached its climax, the lights suddenly illuminated the stage and the curtain fell. This short but significant piece contains the direct link with Dadaist and neo-Dadaist performances that at that time have started to unfold in Munich and were later staged in Zurich and Paris: in this play, Cangiullo made a simple theatrical “object” from the emotional reactions of the audience members, eliminating the formal concept of presentation along with the characters, the venue and the plot. The compression of the text, the simultaneous nature of presentation and the complete engagement of the audience during the show represent the basis of Futurist theatre to which they gave form through their syntheses, in addition to their demand for casting aside the means and techniques of theatre.

The Futurists were the ones who carried out a revolution in theatre similar to Duchamp’s in visual arts. They did not only change the time and space of the theatre act but also its sensory quality. It does not seem illogical to draw parallels between the machine-produced speed that the futurists admired so much and “the spirit of movement” that Craig invoked. Nor can one ignore his proposal for the ideal theatre that is surprisingly similar to the birth of the film art and techniques, which took place at the same time. Cinematography made topical several principle conditions of the theatre of the future: it can certainly be described as an art that

¹³ *Il teatro futurista sintetico* (Marinetti, Settimeli, Cora), in *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti e il Futurismo*, op. cit, pp. 164-171

used technical attainments or technical process, which enabled movements to be produced, filmed and reproduced.

But more than this invention, it was World War I, or the Great War, that has completely changed the awareness of the people who took part in it. In his book, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Paul Fussell describes experiences of British troops on the Western Front from 1914 to 1918 and the ways they were depicted in literature. Along with the literary dimension of the trench experience of great English men of letters, there are examples of how some of them enjoyed themselves in Paris with Can-Can dancers and champagne, or at some cabaret show, while the roaring of canons could be heard in the distance on the Western Front. A spirit of impermanency permeated everything, but it was not clear whether real life was at the Front or in Paris (because, if 'real life' was real, then military life was 'a simulation').¹⁴ In that sense, Fussell's remark that war was so farcical, perverted, cruel and absurd that he could not at all define it as real life is particularly interesting. The experience of war as theatre facilitates mental escape for the participant who does his 'duty' without involving his real 'I'. Based on the analogy between theatre and war, this book underscores the nostalgia that some of the soldiers felt towards theatre, so that some of them gave themselves up to theatre life when on leave.

After World War I, the overriding opinion was that advanced technology and the booming cities were not indicators of progress but rather a reflection of the last moments of civilisation – a civilisation that had attained its critical mass and was going up in flames (Oswald Spengler). In Russia of the time, just as the accelerated spread of industrialisation had introduced Russian economy to the economy of Western Europe, so the artistic movements became closely connected with developments in other European centres. For instance, when the first Futuristic manifesto was published, the First Manifesto of Russian Futurism was published at the same time in Russia, therefore that year is considered the key year both for Russian Futurism and Cubo-futurism.¹⁵ At the same time, Russian theatre became an almost ethical proclamation for the Constructivists who believed that it was necessary to transcend useless and obsolete tools such as brushes and paints and that the artist should use real material in real space. Deprived of their natural field of research – architecture – the Constructivists turned to theatre and the shaping of revolutionary propaganda for the industry. Theatre offered the best possibilities for realisation of their highly mechanised Utopia, which was in pathetic disharmony with material circumstances surrounding them.

The theory of Constructivism was not only the aesthetics but also an entire philosophy of life. This did not refer only to man's new environment, but also to the new man himself. That man was supposed to become the king of that new world, but as a *robot-king*. This Utopia conceived of a world in which art would no longer be an empire of dreams into which the workingman would withdraw in order to rest and establish equilibrium, but was to represent the very essence of his life. The

¹⁴ Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford University Press, 1977)

¹⁵ Admittedly, Camilla Gray claimed that the relationship between the Italian Futurists and the Russian movement under the same name was complex and contentious and that the name 'Futurism' was all that connected the Italian and the Russian movement. Marinetti was reported to have stated after his visit to Russia in 1914 that "The Russians are false Futurists who are distorting the real sense of the great religion of world renewal through Futurism". In her opinion, Cubo-futurism was a more appropriate term for describing the Russian movement, both in literature and the visual arts, whose dual development could not be distinguished, therefore that was the term she used to denote the post-primitive creativity in Russian painting after 1910. (See Camilla Gray, *Ruski umetni-ki eksperiment, 1863-1922* (Belgrade: Izdava-ki zavod Jugoslavije, 1978), p. 94)

Constructivists quite knowingly tried to become artists-engineers, establishing that besides typography and posters theatre was the most fertile field for their experimentation. It was there that the artist could use the most modern processes and skills, with the result nonetheless not being reduced to the level of something that was machine-made – which was inevitable in mass production where industrialisation required standardisation, even in Russia at that juncture.

When Meyerhold decided to engage Liyubov Popova to make a “stage machine” for his production of *The Magnificent Cuckold* (1922), which would be mobile and designed for open-air productions, that versatile stage machine with multiple uses, a small piece of “anti-art” whose value was established according to the degree of its usability, served him as a catapult in a new way of play-acting in theatre and as a banner in the battle against aestheticism. Meyerhold’s wish was to liberate the stage of its Naturalistic attributes, the coulisses and the portal location of play. What makes that production important even today is not only its stage design but also its first use of *biomechanics*, Meyerhold’s system of actors’ training. “If Craig claims that ‘play-acting is not art’ then one should understand that he is having in mind only anarchic systems and the absence of any concern for the material being staged under the conditions of a meaningful plan...” wrote Meyerhold on the occasion of the publication of Tairov’s *Notes of a Director*.¹⁶ When Meyerhold set the basics of biomechanics and the actor of the future, his initial idea was that art should be founded on scientific concepts and that the creativity of the artist had to be a conscious act, while the work of the actor in a workers’ society had to be treated as production that was essential for the correct organisation of the work of all citizens.¹⁷

Observing the labour of experienced workers, Meyerhold claimed that he had noticed an absence of superfluous, unproductive movements: rhythm, a correctly placed centre of gravity and stability. Movements created on those foundations were characterised by “a dance quality”; the working process of an experienced worker always reminds of dance and it is then that labour attains the border of art and that subsequently fully relates to the work of the actor in future theatre. Constructivism required from the set designer to become an engineer, while biomechanics required that the actor organise his/her material, that is, that he/she used his/her body in the correct way. The actor was obliged to train his/her material-body in such a way that it could fulfil all the externally imposed assignments at that very moment. If the requirement of the actor’s play was the implementation of a particular task, then it was required of the actor that he/she use an economy of expressive means which would guarantee “the preciseness” of movement and would contribute to the “swiftest carrying out of the task.” First and foremost, the actor brings his/her material onto the stage, and that is his/her body.¹⁸

Meyerhold proposed the method of “Taylorisation” (the scientific organisation of work conceived by the American engineer, F.U. Taylor) as intrinsic to the work of the actor in order to achieve the maximum result. The *Taylorisation* of theatre opened up the possibility for that what had previously been performed in four

¹⁶ V.E. Mejerhold, *O pozorištu* (Belgrade: Nolit, 1976), p. 161

¹⁷ “Work should become easy, pleasant and uninterrupted, while the new class should make use of art as *something essentially necessary*, as a help to the operations in the work process and not only as a leisure pastime: we must *change not only the form of our creativity but also the method*.” (Ibid, p. 166)

¹⁸ “It is nice to say body, but only the movement of the body in the space is the greatest thing – that is co-ordination, so that we can obtain a separate torso, separate arms and legs and a separate head. It is then necessary to put together that body, and to put it together so skilfully that all the nuances of co-ordination will make us marvel at that very skill and experience of co-ordination.” (Ibid, p. 218)

hours to be played in one hour and that was why the actor had to master the natural capability of reflexive excitement – “a person who masters that capability, depending on his/her physical possibilities, may now aspire to this or that type of role”. Since the art of acting is an art of plastic forms in a particular space, it is essential that the actor study the mechanics of his/her own body. This is necessary for the actor because each expression of strength is subject to unique laws of mechanics (“while the actor’s creativity on stage is nothing other than an expression of strength, the power of the human organism”); finding the right solution for his/her physical condition, the actor enables the situation in which the “excitement” emerges, which captivates the members of the audience, involving them into the actor’s play-acting and representing the essence of that acting. Those *points of excitement* sprout from a whole series of physical situations and states, which are coloured by these or those feelings. Feelings appear in such a system, and the actor always has a solid basis: the physical pre-condition.¹⁹

A year after the death of Erwin Piscator (1966), many changes that had occurred in Euro-American theatre opened the way to influences of his theatre, something which Piscator himself could not have foreseen, bearing in mind the countless obstacles that he had encountered in his work. The re-publication of his book *The Political Theatre*, although a chaotic collage of sorts rather than a logical synthesis of his creativity, prompted certain members of the new generation to proclaim it to be the most significant book since Brecht’s *Little Organon for the Theatre*. If Brecht’s ideas about the Epic Theatre were essentially political (since they were based on a critical and didactic view of the complex mechanisms of the world), these ideas in Piscator’s case were fully subordinate to political theatre. Among other, Brecht spoke of Piscator’s *electrification* of the theatre, thanks to which he managed to create complex stage images in the majority of his productions. To Brecht, Piscator was a *de facto* dramatist who was capable of putting together a production or a stage text out of various documents and scenes, creating a specific dramatic assemblage out of them.

The idea at the heart of his theatre was that it should deal with major political themes that were the most relevant for the time in which they were originating, for example, the social and economic revolution of the 1920s, and sifting through the Nazi past during the 1950s and 1960s, but in such a manner as to invoke stormy reactions among the public and force it to consider the issues and to debate them. Technology was meant to be in the function of intensifying these issues and of explaining historical and economic connections. Piscator’s embodiment of theatre a venue of revolution did not contribute to changes in politics but it has certainly altered the nature of theatre itself. His contribution was perhaps the most important on the level of dealing with current themes, which also contributed to the usage and development of new methods of presentation and deploying new technologies.

From the very onset, Piscator was showing a strong political orientation and a feeling for the reality that surrounded him: “My counting of time starts with August 4, 1914. Since then, the needle on the barometer has been rising: 13 million dead / 11 million invalids / 50 million soldiers in the armed forces / 6 billion shells / 50 billion cubic metres of gas. What is in this ‘the development of personality’? No-one here is developing ‘as personality’. Something else is developing it. War

¹⁹ In the end, Meyerhold gave the following definition: “*Biomechanics aspires through the experimental method to establish the laws of stage movement and, on the basis of the norms of human behaviour, to create an exercise for training actors.*” (Ibid, pp. 168-169)

blocked the way of a twenty-year-old. Destiny. Every second teacher became superfluous.”²⁰ In 1927, when Piscator founded his theatre, the Piscator-Bühne, after a stormy and contradictory season at the Volksbühne, he had an opportunity to further develop his ideas about the electrification of political theatre. It is then that Piscator more clearly articulates his idea of the task of revolutionary theatre: it was not a matter of merely reproducing reality, nor was theatre to be a mirror held up to its time, nor was the task of theatre to change matters with theatrical means, nor to act idealistically; but rather its primary task was to take *reality* as the starting point and to stress social discrepancy as an element of accusation, upheaval and the establishment of new order. Piscator explained that in his view the application of technology in theatre was not an end in itself, since the means he utilised did not serve solely to enrich the stage apparatus but to intensify the scenic into the historical that was tightly linked with the application of Marx’s dialectics in theatre, something that could not be attained by dramatic texts. An important production in that sense was the staging of Alexei Tolstoy’s text *Rasputin, the Romanoffs, the War and the People That Rose Against Them* (1928). In this piece, besides the documentary and dramaturgical function of film, he achieved its third, didactic function. A didactic film contains objective, current and historical facts; it teaches the viewer about the material that the viewer has to master. The didactic function of film is to expand material both spatially and temporally. The second part of the film segments explained the causes of the October Revolution, by showing the dismal living conditions of the masses. The film segments were projected on to a kind of dome, which was above the heads of the audience members, after which the stage opened up and the atmosphere was thus set for the first spoken words. This film has intervened in the development of the plot and represented “a substitute” for a scene, because, while a scene expends a lot of time in its explanations, dialogues and events, film enlightens the audience about the situation in the play with a few swift images, just like the Antique chorus.

Considering that the architecture of theatre was most closely linked with the form of drama i.e. that one has an effect on the other, Piscator arrived at the idea of *total theatre*. Although it was never implemented, this idea reflected all what had survived as far back as from the time of Plato: a considerable number of scientists, philosophers, visionary architects, founders of political parties and religious sects, avant-garde artists and writers of SF novels had constantly dreamt of the discovery of a real and total theatrical experience, of a return to the Golden Age of theatre (actual and fabricated). These immodest suggestions, projects, plans and prophecies often seemed impractical, unwieldy, and pretentious but they did represent the desire to restore primacy of the theatre that is believed to have existed once i.e. that the social or aesthetic Utopia would be attained. Because of its twofold – social and aesthetic – function, the theatre has served through the centuries as a powerful Utopian laboratory, setting in motion alternative models of thought and behaviour as well as alternative forms of existence in relation to conventional forms of reality.

Piscator believed that the form of theatre dominating his time (and still dominating ours!) represented an outlived form of absolutism. He called it the ‘court theatre’ which, in its division to stalls, balconies, boxes and galleries, maintained the social strata of feudal society. That form inevitably conflicted with the real tasks of

²⁰ Erwin Piscator, “Od umjetnosti ka politici”, in *Politi-ko kazalište* (Zagreb: Cekade, 1985), p. 9

theatre at that juncture, when drama i.e. social relations were undergoing changes. When he started working with Walter Gropius on a theatre adjusted to the new situation, it was not because of a need for technical expansion or enhancement, but because that form had to reflect the new social relations and aesthetic needs. Entrusting Gropius to design his new theatre, Piscator set forth a whole series of Utopian demands for him to comply with, which were oriented to the creation of a highly technically developed, variable theatre instrument that took into account the diverse demands of directors and offered maximum opportunities for active inclusion of the members of the audience in the stage events, in order that those events leave the strongest possible effect on them.²¹

Although it may seem at first glance that the aim of Piscator's and Gropius's total theatre was the accumulation of refined technical devices and effects, these were still only a means for achieving one sole objective: involving the members of the audience in the events on stage. Piscator and Gropius had in mind the theatre as a depersonalised and pliant stage instrument that would not hamper directors; a venue allowing for the possibility of developing diverse artistic approaches. The intention was that the director would shape his own personal work according to his own creative force in that huge and spacious machine.

Gropius was also the founder of Bauhaus, the artistic movement that advocated new unity between art and technology. One of the Bauhaus ideologues, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy reiterated the idea of the total theatre in his essay "Theatre, Circus, Variety" (1924); he repeated the idea of total theatre as a "great, dynamic-rhythmic process" which would encompass all technical and artistic media. It was about time, wrote Nagy, that all technical attainments (film, the automobile, lifts, aeroplanes, optical instruments, etc.) be used for the complex stage apparatus, since the time had come for that type of theatre production that would no longer permit the masses to be passive observers but that would fuse them with the action on the stage. Such a stage required a new director with thousand eyes, capable of understanding and controlling all the elements of modern communication.²²

We may recognise some of Nagy's ideas in the contemporary user of digital technology, who transforms himself into a director with a thousand eyes, equipped with browser, programmes for analysing pictures, programmes for visualisation, memory and computer design. Although hybrid areas will continue to exist and although the meta-narrative of the analogue will definitely maintain certain spheres that it has traditionally held, such as high art theatre productions, the digital paradigm has found its space: *virtual theatre*. Mediated by a thin sheet of glass, instead of an outing to the theatre, the virtual universe of digital precision will penetrate through diverse networks to its audience, which will be in constant quest for swift re-combination of expanded fields of bit data. For example, in William

²¹ "My total theatre made relevant by technical equipment enables the director to utilise the perspective of the stage, the proscenium and the round arena and/or all of them simultaneously, within one production. The oval auditorium rests on 12 slim columns. The three-part Italian box stage is located behind the three intervals of columns of the elongated part of the oval, which, like pliers, encompasses the protruding rows of seats. Acting can be done on the central stage or on one of the lateral stages, or on all three at the same time. A device similar to an endless lift, placed horizontally and in two rows, makes it possible by way of its stage vehicle to make very quick and very frequent changes without the shortcomings of a mobile stage. A slanted ring of seats placed in amphitheatre fashion rises above the columns of the auditorium, in extension from the lateral stages, so that the stage events can unfold around the audience etc." (For a detailed description of "total theatre" of Walter Gropius see "Entstehung und Aufbau der Piscatorbühne", pp. 94-95)

²² Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, "Theatre, Circus, Variety", in *The Theater of the Bauhaus*, ed. by Walter Gropius (Middletown-Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), p. 49-73

Gibson's futuristic novel, *The Neuromancer* (1984), which established a new sub-genre in science fiction known as *cyberpunk fiction*, interactive computer technology in that distant Dystopia enables the participant, the so-called *interface cowboy*, to perform a full physical transformation through the selected role. Each emotion in the situation within the framework of simulated fantasy is in fact experienced, often with dangerous results. That Dystopia, backed by the Utopia of cyberspace and virtual reality, shows that the virtual body is, in fact, a body of great potential, that nothing is unchangeable and that everything is possible.

Briefly, to paraphrase Lev Manovich, software has become the avant-garde, which should, of course, be understood in two ways. On the one hand, software codifies and naturalises the forms of the old avant-garde. On the other hand, the new principles of the software approach to media represent the new avant-garde of the meta-media society.²³ All this clearly shows that new metaphors will continue to develop in the era of Digital Technology and evolve into forms of presentation that are as yet inconceivable.

Translation by: Katarina Pejovi}

²³ Lev Manovi-, "Nova avangarda", in *Metamediji* (Belgrade: CSU, 2000)

Avant-garde Cuisine: Recipes for Works of Art

Bojan Djordjev

Notes on a Contemporary Avant-garde Work

This year I had the opportunity to attend/take part in an interesting art event. The minuscule Rococo palace Solitude in Baden Württemberg and its (former) labyrinth gardens were the setting for a concert by Jennifer Walshe: *Solitude Sound Geography – A Walk in the Park* (May 2004). The composer Jennifer Walshe (the author of the concert) and the ensemble *Apartment House* performed works ranging from Kurt Schwitters to their own experiments in music. What all the works had in common was their notation method, that is, the fact that all works were performed on the basis of verbal scores i.e. instructions instead of notes. The works performed included *Ursonate* by Kurt Schwitters, *Stripsody* by Cathy Berberian, *Water Yam* by George Brecht, and pieces created in the Fluxus circle by La Monte Young, Nam June Paik, and George Maciunas. Other performances included works of Max Neuhaus and Alvin Lucier. John Lely and Jennifer Walshe, from the newest generation of composers in Britain and Ireland, contributed to the event with their most recent works.

At first glance, this unequivocally avant-garde concert looked like a baroque fiesta or a garden party, both in its form and in performance methods. Each composition was performed at different corners of the park, while the audience strolled from point to point, all ending in *readymade* “fireworks” – the sunset. The time in which the concert was performed (the beginning of the 21st century) as well as the method of performance clearly place the event in the context of post-avant-gardes that reexamine past art techniques and adopt their language critically, using it on a meta-level.¹ The artist in this case is not “merely” the composer but also the conceptualizer and realiser of the whole art event. By arranging this amusing avant-garde “song-book”, the artist ensures herself a sort of legitimacy, placing her own works as well as the works of her peer composers in a wider social-artistic context of the history of (avant-garde, i.e. experimental²) music. In his book *The Return of*

¹ “Post-avant-garde: art movements, groups and individual analytical, critical, parodical and simulational strategies of completion, criticism and second-stage (meta) use of modernistic and avant-garde art and culture”, Miško [uvakovi], *Pojmovnik moderne i postmoderne likovne umetnosti od 1950* (Belgrade: SANU-Novi Sad: Prometej, 1999), p. 252

² According to Michael Nyman, it is important to make a distinction between experimental and avant-garde music of the 20th century. He assumes that the latter one belongs to the post-Renaissance tradition and it is connected to Serialism (Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music – Cage and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 1). Experimental music, Cage and his followers, emerges in the period and within the contextual frames of Neo-avant-garde (Black Mountain College, Neo-Dada, Fluxus etc.); thus in this text it is placed in the corpus of the 20th century avant-garde music.

*the Real*³, Hal Foster argues that within the frame of contemporary art the mechanism of reconnection with historical artistic practices functions mainly to support the disconnection from present practice and/or the development of a new one.⁴

In the same way, Jennifer Walshe positions her work within the current world of music, giving it legitimacy and verification. The history of music (or at least one of its lines) is seen here as a loosely continuous evolution. Generally speaking, avant-gardes – as the term itself implies – fit into an evolutionistic conception of art, because each “previous” avant-garde embeds itself in the *mainstream* art – at least from the present day perspective. After all, evolution is not necessarily a peaceful development, but principally a cumulative one.

In this context however, attention should be made to another aspect of this work. The method of performance and the format of *Solitude Sound Geography – A Walk in the Park* (Saturday afternoon, a park, a popular weekend resort for citizens of nearby Stuttgart, a prestigious art institution with “exotic” foreign artists in the middle of “hidebound” southwest Germany) unequivocally offer themselves and the works of historical avant-garde and neo-avant-garde music as a kind of *entertainment*. There is no more Revolution or Utopia; what is left is a spectacle, prepared after an old *recipe*, but in a new context of the Western, neo-liberal, capitalist consumer society. This is most convincing at the very beginning of the event, when the composer-performer Jenny Walshe performs *Ursonate* sitting in the crown of a tree, wearing a long red wig, reading notation from cards tied to brightly coloured balloons. *Stripsody* by Cathy Berberian is a composition for vocal soloist performed on the basis of a score which, instead of notation, uses comic book sounds with typical onomatopoeia – written sound effects (grrrrrrr, zzzzzzz, bang-bang... and some less discernible).⁵ Further, in the composition by Max Neuhaus, *LISTEN*, the word “LISTEN” is stamped on the palms of the audience. They are then guided through a *found sound environment*, in this particular case alongside the court stables with their typical sounds. And the finale – *I Was Sitting in the Room* by Alvin Lucier – is performed in the vestibule of the castle, a space with ‘cave’ acoustics and a view to the Western skies at sunset. The audience is reclining on pillows, while a recorded voice, played and re-recorded, is fading due to the acoustics of the space... the moment when the voice disappears is perfectly synchronised with the descent of the sun below the horizon (*readymade* “fireworks”).

Avant-garde Recipes – Redefining of Art (Work) and Resistance to Western Logocentrism

In the text that follows I shall not further dwell on the status of the artistic avant-garde today, although my concert description already offers a possible stance. The description of the concert is used to introduce consideration of “(auxiliary) avant-garde texts”: blueprints, recipes, scores, instructions, written proposals for the performing of a work of art. In the experimental music of the 20th century (And the *Solitude Sound Geography*... concert may be seen as its provisional digest) there are numerous uses of text as a notation. I am interested in the correlation between these and formally similar texts/instructions appearing in the avant-gardes of other

³ Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real* (Cambridge Mass-London: The MIT Press, 1996)

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5

⁵ Although this piece was composed for herself as a performer, Cathy Berberian, the Maria Callas of experimental vocal music, believed that a soundman/woman from radio dramas and TV shows would have been an ideal performer of the piece, yet all sound effects should have been performed only by his or her voice.

art forms (e.g. conceptual visual art). First, what is their status and their function in the “world of art”? Are they to be taken only as instructions for the performance of a work of art or are they to be already considered as works of art? Why are they almost indispensable accessories of avant-garde art practices, concepts, and works? In other words, why do avant-gardes need that kind of textual “support”? Support for what? Understanding?

In this text, which partly also includes the texts that are being discussed, I shall not only examine and interpret them but also arrange them side by side and offer them to the reader’s insight.

A kind of a *missing link* in this artistic practice of avant-garde(s) is precisely the instructions-scores of George Brecht’s *Water Yam* – a box with event-scores printed on cards. The scores are compositions but are also intermedia works⁶, which place equal importance (at least in the performing process) onto the sound and the image. Also, they are chronologically in the middle of the time span that I am dealing with: a span from the Futurists to the concert described here, which was held in May 2004.

The artistic texts encompassed by this text are usually regarded as marginal products of the avant-garde artistic practices of the 20th century. The very emergence of avant-gardes at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, with their plurality and acceleration, is “accompanied” by artistic texts. Therefore, I am not speaking about manifestos, a textual form which the artists (avantgardists) took over from political revolutionaries, nor am I speaking about auto-poetics and statements⁷. Here I refer to texts, which appear either as art works outside of literature or as scripts, instructions, descriptions of art works present in performance arts and in music. A question in point is: what connects Kurt Schwitters’ *Ursonate*, the descriptions-scripts of *body art* performances by Marina Abramovi}, and the textual scores of John Cage?

Kurt Schwitters, who is foremost a visual artist, participated in historic avant-gardes in the first half of the 20th century. The scope and method of his work in art are an example of the typical avant-garde strategy of intermediality and the practice of art between the margins of traditional media and disciplines. He is a painter who composes (*Ursonate*), who is engaged in theatre (*Merztheater*), and is active in the field of architecture (*Merzbau* – destroyed in an air raid of Hannover in 1943). Later George Brecht, in his text on Fluxus, emphasised this aspect which is typical for avant-gardes: “...The misinterpretation of Fluxus seems to be the result of comparing Fluxus with the movements or groups of which individuals have shared some common principles or an agreed-upon program Š...¹ Perhaps they shared the common feeling that the boundaries of art were much wider than the conventions make us believe, or that art and those ancient boundaries are no longer very useful”.⁸ Similarly, Marina Abramovi} in the early 70’s goes beyond the boundaries of painting into the field of *body art* and performances in her proj-

⁶ Nyman, op. cit, p. 79

⁷ “Manifestos of Neo-Dada and Fluxus have the form of a statement (a personal, subjective declaration), a programmatic scheme and concept for realisation of an art work. Alternatively, they are treated as art works (the text of a manifesto is an art work)... this text does not aim to present the stances, intentions, and values of the artist but to transform the form of the manifesto into an open art work. An open art work (manifesto as an open art work) is a text which contains certain meanings (messages) but also propositions for the reader’s action, which is the realization of a happening”, [uvakovi}, ibid, p. 178, or “Statement as a metalanguage art work”, ibid, p. 327

⁸ George Brecht, “Quelque chose à propos de Fluxus”, *Art Press*, 15 (Dec-Jan 1975), pp. 14-17; translation based on George Brecht, “Something About Fluxus (May 1964)”, in *Fluksus – izbor tekstova* (Belgrade: Muzej savremene umetnosti, 1986), p. 45

ects – the most characteristically with the cycle *Rhythm*. Or John Cage in his lectures, theoretical performances, mushroom gathering, chess games with Duchamp, and so on, went beyond not only the traditional medium/discipline of music but also the entire understanding of art at that time.

In addition to combining artistic media and disciplines, thus redefining the status of a work of art, one of the key characteristics of historical avant-gardes is most certainly resistance, subversion and fight against the logocentrism of large European philologically-oriented cultures. Above all, this is manifested in the hyperproduction of *new* texts which stretch the logics of written texts and literature to their ultimate limits – from the onomatopoeic pieces of Italian Futurists (Luigi Russolo, *the art of noises*) and Russian Cubo-futurists (such as the opera *Victory Over the Sun* by Kruchenykh – where the libretto consisted of language stripped to vowels) to Dadaist nonsense, Surrealist automatic writing, etc. And while Cubo-futurists invented their own 'Zaum' language, in which Russian was reduced to elementary sounds in order to recall fundamental primitive forces of the sounds themselves, Dadaists rose against the nonsense of the real world (World War I) through nihilistic nonsense in poetry and their cabaret events. Hence, two diametrically opposite tactics have had highly similar results.

The two aspects of avant-garde – (constant) redefining of the status of the work of art and (textual) resistance to logocentrism – are also crucial for understanding the avant-garde texts dealt with here.

Redefining the status of the work of art (the form, the limits and its position within the conventional framework of art disciplines) required constant "auxiliary" clarification, theoretical support and explications. Avant-garde artists challenged the dominant views, convictions and artistic canons of the time. Therefore, depending on the context of historical avant-garde, they took a stance either against the separation of art from life (e.g. in France) or against art in service of national program (e.g. in Germany), while neo-avant-gardes were mostly against high modernism and art as self-explanatory. Due to the refusal to refer to the already established manners of understanding art and the reception of artworks, each new work of theirs had to have a kind of specific explanation (applicable to this case). In the same way, each new avant-garde movement in the early 20th century was launched with a manifesto, to be replaced after World War II with fundamental poetic and pro-theoretical texts elucidating new artistic concepts, new understanding of the works of art along with criticising and challenging those that were previously valid.

In this way, each occurrence of a new work, group or movement that emerge on the margins of the earlier institution of art, becomes the expansion of the concept of art or redefining of the notion of medium or the discipline in the manner of "... this too this too and this toois art". But this expansion in avant-gardes is not left to the subsequent interpretative judgment of "the world of art" and its agents on the meta-level (of criticism, science, aesthetics, art market etc.); avant-garde artists themselves confront the world of art with this expansion in their articulated texts with new propositions (see instructions for LISTEN by M. Neuhaus). Indeed, in some cases – for example the *Fluxus* or even any performance art work (because of the transient nature, uniqueness and "unobjectiveness" of performing arts) – the

TWO EXERCISES

George Brecht

Consider an object. Call what is not the object "other."

EXERCISE: Add to the object, from the "other," another object, to form a new object and a new "other."
Repeat until there is no more "other."

EXERCISE: Take a part from the object and add it to the "other," to form a new object and a new "other."
Repeat until there is no more object.

I
TACIT
II
TACIT
III
TACIT

Marina Abramović

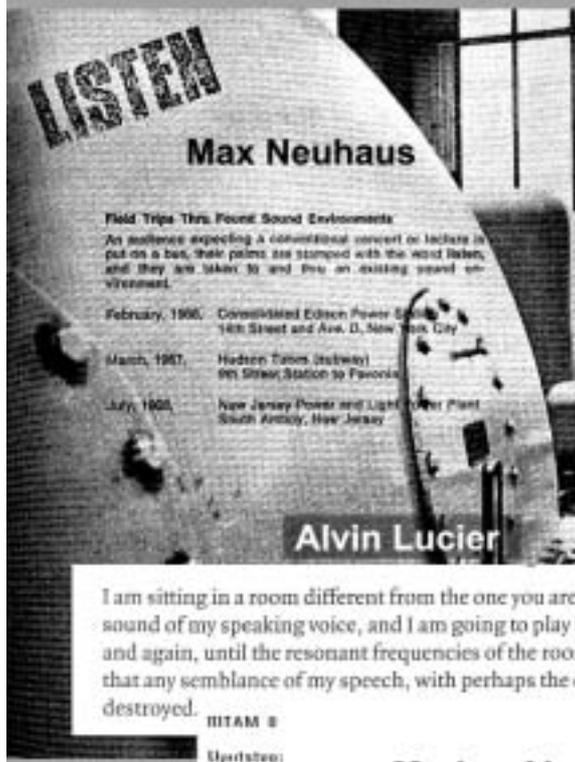
... UMETNOST MORA BITI
LEPA ...
... UMETNIK MORA BITI
LEP ...
Sadržaj akcije
1. Sjedim na stolici s čekljom i čekam da kosa (metalnom) u rukama
2. Čekljom i čekam kosa ponavljamći reći:
»Umetnost mora biti lepa, umetnik mora biti lep«
3. Čekljom i čekam kosa dok mi se kosa i lice ne izobliče

NOTE: The title of this work is the total length in minutes and seconds of its performance. At Woodstock, N.Y., August 29, 1968, the title was 4' 13" and the three parts were 33", 2' 40", and 1' 20". It was performed by David Tudor, pianist, who indicated the beginnings of parts by closing, the endings by opening, the keyboard lid. However, the work may be performed by any instrumentalist or combination of instrumentalists and last any length of time.

John Cage
4'33"

FOR IRWIN KUPFIN*

JOHN CAGE



Max Neuhaus

Field Trips Thru Found Sound Environments

An audience expecting a conventional concert or lecture is put on a bus, their points are stamped with the word Listen, and they are taken to and thru an existing sound environment.

- February, 1966: Consolidated Edison Power Station, 14th Street and Ave. D, New York City
- March, 1967: Hudson Tunnels (subway) 9th Street Station to Pavonia
- July, 1968: New Jersey Power and Light Power Plant South Amboy, New Jersey

Alvin Lucier

I am sitting in a room different from the one you are in now. I am recording the sound of my speaking voice, and I am going to play it back into the room again and again, until the resonant frequencies of the room reinforce themselves so that any semblance of my speech, with perhaps the exception of rhythm, is destroyed.

MITAM 2

Upristao:

Na stolu se nalaze predmeti koje možete upotrebiti na meni.
Ja sam objekt.
Vremena trajanja: 6 časova (20h-02h).
Sva odgovornost preuzimam na sebe.

1975.
Galerija Studio Morra
Napoli

Marina Abramović

MITAM 2

Dolji prostor osvetljen sa 12 spotova jačina 0 kv.

Događaj sniman sa dva statična kamera super 8 mm; jedna kamera postavljena od mene prema publici, druga od publici prema meni.

THREE TELEPHONE EVENTS

- When the telephone rings, it is allowed to continue ringing, until it stops.
- When the telephone rings, the receiver is lifted, then replaced.
- When the telephone rings, it is answered.

Performance note: Each event comprises all occurrences within its duration.

loška
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Uzlet
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kijuč

Spring, 1961

Bez obzira na ovakvo stanje, akcija se od-

DRIP MUSIC (DRIP EVENT)

For single or multiple performance.

A source of dripping water and an empty vessel are arranged so that the water falls into the vessel.

Second version: Dripping.

G. Brecht
(1959-62)

objekta upotrebljenog u svesnom i nesvesnom stanju.

George Brecht
from *Water Yam*

texts/instructions themselves acquire the status of a work of art in the context of museums, collections, history and historiography of art and the art market).

Avant-gardistic resistance to Western logocentrism is realized precisely through their texts. With the emergence of post-structuralism, the text is no longer considered merely a medium in transmitting logos (a formula: thought-speech-writing) but instead is considered that, by its own materiality, it substantially determines or even generates significance and sense. The post-structuralist criticism (i.e. deconstruction) of logocentrism may be most consequently observed at Jacques Derrida who utterly reverses the logocentric process of thought-speech-writing, giving primacy to the material practices of *écriture*/writing. A similar criticism may be found at Roland Barthes, for instance in his texts *Writing Degree Zero* and especially *From Work to Text*. The text is no longer a work that represents a thought but instead is an intervention into one's thought. Instead of mediation – deed, act, execution, performativity. The text becomes a comprehensive term for the generation of meanings, or a work/a process as realisation/concretisation of the text.

In avant-garde art, in accordance with this type of critique and the reversals of logocentrism, these 'marginal' texts appear as representatives of a work or as works in their own right, but outside of the frame of the "parent" institution of literature: they appear in music (e.g. texts-instructions-artifacts of the Fluxus circle) and in visual arts (e.g. in conceptual art, the texts-art works of Goran Trbuljak, later also the texts-descriptions of Marina Abramovi}). One also may understand in this key the earlier mentioned textual practices of historic avant-gardes, for example the libretto of the *Victory over the Sun*. In historic avant-gardes, allogical texts were generated, which were in conflict with the centuries-long tradition of (logical) literature; for examples, instead of poetry there is DADA, instead of a musical work there is the *Ursonate* where the text is both the work and the notation. Therefore, these texts stand in opposition to literature and standard literary forms.⁹ In neo-avant-gardes, texts appear instead of notation. With the development of experimental music, one of the targets of attacks was precisely notation. Thus in addition to various graphic presentations, more or less precisely written instructions also appear as an alternative to classical notation (regardless of whether the notation system or an entirely new graphic solutions are used). The golden age of such "literary" notations begins with Cage's notorious *4' 33''* and is later continued with artists associated with *Fluxus* (George Brecht, Nam June Paik, La Monte Young, and others). With the development of conceptual art and its breakaway with artworks as objects, there appeared texts, propositions, theoretical discourses and documents, instead of or accompanying the object (which is, in that case, a literal realisation of the text). Thus in performance arts, which are not based on a dramatic text or any other literary model, there appears a sort of "textual notation". In some cases, this is similar to propositions from conceptual art (e.g. Marina Abramovi}). In others, it is an elaborate system of particular rules and tasks to be performed (e.g. Yvonne Reiner and the *Judson Church* group, *happenings* in Neo-Dada). Sometimes it is even a full simulation of dramatic text but without narration or psychologically defined characters (e.g. Robert Wilson, *A Letter for Queen Victoria*, Richard Foreman etc. – a remote echo of such practice is also the text/performance of *FRIDA KAHLO – Una pierna y tres corazones*, published in *TkH* issue No. 3). By the end of the 90's, so-called "conceptual dance" emerges

⁹ "Works of textual art differ from essays, poetry, fiction or philosophical discourses because they are generated through a development of a problem of visual arts (painting, photography, cinema, sculpture, ambient art, performance) in a medium of a text, that is, in written (linguistic) language". [uvakovi}, op. cit, p. 340.

in Europe, which – similarly to conceptual art in the 60's and 70's – refuses to generate art works/pieces in an unproblematic manner. Instead, it begins to question the fundamental defining terms and the status of a dance, the dance work, the performing body, the body of performing and the choreographic thinking. Here again appears the need for descriptive texts-instructions for (the realisation of) performance art works. The examples of the use of texts/instructions (but now with unambiguous post-avant-garde awareness) may be found in works by Jérôme Bel, Thomas Lehmen, and Petra Sabish. In the dance performance *Shirtology* by Jérôme Bel, readymade performance instructions are prints on numerous T-shirts (as logos, slogans, even the score of Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*) which the performer takes off, one by one, carrying out the performance according to the instructions written on the shirts. On the other hand, Thomas Lehmen developed the *Schreibstück*, a book of instructions for the performance that the choreographer prepares with three performers (at the premiere in Berlin three versions were presented simultaneously, in an overlapping sequence: from Berlin, Tallinn and Lisbon). For her performance *Discussion*, Petra Sabish has developed a system of written instructions ('take your time to deviate the subject', 'do something', 'say something and let pass this something as a quotation' etc.) on the basis of which performers/dancers carry out the performance. But in this case, the instructions are seen exclusively by the dancers and not before the performance, while the audience may see them only after the performance.

In the end, the title of this text is also its conclusion, inspired by the concert of Jennifer Walshe discussed in the introduction. The central event at the concert of the 20th century avant-garde and experimental music that uses descriptive texts instead of standard notation was the performance of a composition by Jennifer Walshe, *Ingredient Concepts for Demulcent Cake*. The composition was performed on the basis of a score that simulates culinary recipes. Thus it re-activates and employs the practice of earlier avant-garde and experimental textual scores in a typical post-avant-garde manner. Besides this though, it also foregrounds one of the basic explicit or implicit logics of all these avant-garde artistic practices: through opposing, problematising, and refusing Western notation in music or the dramatic text/libretto in performance arts or propositions of a visual art work taken as an object in visual arts, and also through working multimedially and inter-disciplinarily, they prevent themselves from being readily "self-explanatory" and "universally accepted" (and even acceptable). At that point they arrive over and again at the need for explanations of the propositions of art, i.e. written instructions, similar to a recipe, which precede or replace or run in parallel with a work of art. Isn't it true then that this avant-garde textual practice is not excess but it explicitly shows the immanent logic of each "self-explanatoriness" in art, which always begins with a specific political-ideological-philosophical- ... – artistic recipe that gradually ossifies until it becomes "universally accepted" and thus "self-explanatory"?

Translation by: Katarina Pejovi}

Choreography-In-Process: Nikolina Bujas-Prista{

A Discussion between: Nikolina Bujas-Prista{,
Bojana Cveji}, and Ana Vujanovi}

From: Ana Vujanovic; Date: Wednesday, October 16, 2002 10:30 AM; To: Nikolina Bujas-Pristas; Cc: Bojana Cveji; Subject: **INTRODUCTION**

Since Bojana, Nikolina and I live in different places, with e-mail being one of our basic modes of communication, we will conduct this conversation through an exchange of e-mails between the three of us. One of the fundamental, customary and expected objectives of conversations to be published in a magazine could be to present to Belgrade readers a young Zagreb choreographer and dancer, Nikolina Bujas-Prista{, one of the founders of the BADco theatre-dance group. However, apart from this basic objective that we have set before all three of us, we will make an attempt that a contemporary and current 'choreographic-dance concept-and-practical work-in-progress' such as Nikolina's be conceptualised, contextualised and expressed in clear speech, poetically (on Nikolina's part, with our help) as well as theoretically and interpretatively (on the part of Bojana and myself, with Nikolina's help) – doing that at the very moment of its emerging, processing or 'pounce take-off'. We believe that attempting to accomplish that objective, the discussion will also be significant, beneficial and stimulating for young local choreographers, dancers and theoreticians/critics, particularly at the time of the early inception of the Belgrade dance scene that began last season with the opening of the dance scene of the BITEF theatre.

To start with, Nikolina, you could briefly introduce yourself to our readers.

From: Nikolina Bujas-Pristas; Date: Monday, October 21, 2002 7:10 PM; To: Ana Vujanovic; Cc: Bojana Cveji; Subject: **CV**

I was born in Zagreb in 1976. I completed the School of Rhythmics and Dance in Zagreb, have collaborated with Kilin Cremona (Cunningham technique), and taken part at the Alvin Ailey Dance Centre summer school and at numerous workshops (Norio Yoshida, Martin Sonderkamp, Martin Kravitz, Lanonima Imperial, DV8, Nienke Reehorst & Inaki Azpillaga, Martine Pillet, Neodanza, Russel Maliphant, Tamara Huilmadt, David Zambrano, Performingunit). From 1994 to 2000, I was member of the Zagreb Dance Ensemble. I am currently studying English and Comparative Literature at the Faculty of Philosophy (Arts) in Zagreb.

From 1995 to 2001, I participated as dancer and/or choreographer in the following projects: *Lovci -e`nje / Casadores de saudade, Nadohvat sje}anju / Within*

Reach of Remembrance, Ispovijedi / Confessions, Krava Licario Sveta Oppiano / Cow Licario Sacred Oppiano, @urba duše / La prisa del alma etc.

In 2000, I founded the BADco (the Nameless Author Company) together with Goran Sergej Prista{, Pravdan Devlahovi} and Ivana Sajko. BADco has until now staged four projects: 2000 – *^ovjek.Stolac / Man.Chair*, directed by: Goran Sergej Prista{; 2001 – *Diderotov ne}ak ili krv nije voda / Diderot's Nephew or Blood Is Thicker than Water*, directed by: Goran Sergej Prista{; *2tri4 / 2Three4*, choreographed by: Nikolina Bujas (2), Pravdan Devlahovi} (*Three*), and, Aleksandra Janeva (4) (the 2 choreography was my first independent project.); and 2002 – *Solo Me*, choreographed by: Nikolina Prista{ and Pravdan Devlahovi}.

From: Bojana Cvejic; Date: Wednesday, October 23, 2002 10:18 AM; To: Nikolina Bujas-Pristas; Cc: Ana Vujanovic; Subject: **YOUR CONCEPTION OF THE APPROACH TO DANCE**

Your formation in various dance schools, as well as your choreographic work and solo projects in which you yourself dance, also in the framework of your collaboration with directors on other productions, indicate that you are interested in the medium, in 'dance within dance'. I am putting this observation as a question because on today's dance scene a particular trend has become manifest; the trend that conceptualises dance from a cynical distance as a subject of social commodification, thus aspiring to dematerialise the phenomenon of dance in the name of the dance discourse: in this sense, what is it that determines your approach?

From: Nikolina Bujas-Pristas; Date: Monday, October 28, 2002 12:45 AM; To: Bojana Cvejic; Cc: Ana Vujanovic; Subject: **INTEREST IN THE BODY**

My approach is essentially determined by the interest in body as something that never fails to amaze me with its resistance and free-flowing nature, something which it is both possible and impossible to be manipulated; something that presents a daily problem for me. Sometimes it seems to me that it has its own life outside of me, that it 'thinks' more quickly than I do. In that sense, the position of choreographer means nothing else to me than a possibility to prepare the terrain, to set firm frameworks for what really interests me: the directness of experiencing the body in movement, its capability to exchange at lightning speed on several parallel levels, in the dynamics of its own movement, with other bodies moving simultaneously in the same space, with gazes and stimuli from the outside.

I find the fact that dance exists solely in the present moment and hence disappears in every second of its duration still having very concrete effects, the fact that my body carries out a certain activity that offers the audience the possibility of establishing a particular relationship with what it is watching – with me and/or my body and intentions – a sufficiently open channel for impact.

Paradoxically enough, I am more interested in how the body can dematerialise dance.

From: Ana Vujanovic; Date: Monday, November 04, 2002 10:26 PM; To: Nikolina Bujas-Pristas; Cc: Bojana Cvejic; Subject: **THE PROBLEMS OF BODY**

Your answer, in which you postulate the body in a fairly ambiguous way, leads me to launch Barthes' question about the body in the context of your dance: "Which body? We have more than one..."

On the one hand, it seems to me that, to you, the body as your primary choreographical interest and instrument is in some way the (basic) object of your work in choreography and dance. The choreography you stage as a firm framework for working with the body and/or on the body may be interpreted in that sense. Still, on the other hand, it is as though that object somehow assumes the competence of the subject ('the thinking body') through your choreographic/dance 'confession' and 'appreciation' of its resistance, wilfulness, unpredictability and evasion of emancipation. Hence it would really have a possibility to dematerialise – through its own material nature – the established, assumed or expected phenomenon of dance. I would like to know which of the two concepts is closer to your way of thinking and/or to which of these two your use of the notion of the body refers. In this sense, the debate on the concept of the body or the status of the body in your dance can also be further developed by your consideration of the possibility of the body as the very source of life of the stage, that potentially subversive venue of non-discursive (pre-discursive, supra-discursive, discursive in passing. . .) freedom of the body in its full presence on stage; or, conversely, a stage body as a discursive product and effect which, by its own presence merely indexes (makes a promise and then *splits*, heralds and then puts aside) total presence (without discursive determinants). .

From: Nikolina Bujas-Pristas; Date: Friday, November 10, 2002 9:15 PM; To: Ana Vujanovic; Cc: Bojana Cvejic; Subject: **CHOREOGRAPHY/DANCE ON THE REVERSIBLE PATH FROM CONCEPTS TOWARDS REALISATIONS**

To be frank, I do not know whether I would necessarily decide on either possibility, or, perhaps it would be more precise to say that, at this moment, I am evidently choosing both, since that is what dance enables me to do. The area of my creativity lies between the thinking of the objectified body and the subjectivity deprived of subject.

Those two positions are interwoven to such an extent that it is very difficult for me to determine where they begin, and where they end. Choreography and its conditions emerge as the consequences of a certain decision (for example, I shall dance with my eyes closed or I shall dance with my eyes closed etc.); due to this fact there are frequent conflicts between what I want from my body in a particular choreography and what is pleasant and familiar to my body. My body is one that has been subjected for years to various disciplinary systems only in order to expand the range of its movements. The way in which I use my body is thus determined to a certain degree by those systems (I am not a ballerina, a mime, a gymnast, or the like). However, although I apply the knowledge of those systems, I cannot escape them, since they are facts inscribed in my body, which is only a tool.

It seems to me that the 'thinking body' or, more precisely, the body which finds refuge in thoughts, is perhaps more frequently an idea that helps in the thinking of dance than the actual fact; it is perhaps more something that I aspire to in order to be able, at least from time to time, to leap into the sphere of what is unknown



Fleshdance, photo: Tomislav Medak



to me, something I don't decide about. William Forsythe explained it well when he said that the less one controls the movement the more one knows about it, the more one understands its differentiated forms and dynamics. "You try to deprive your body of movement, rather than thinking of producing movement."

My choreography/performance/dance is always located on the reversible path from thinking, decision and ideas towards realisations. There are excesses on that path into the unknown, flashes of lack of control, surprises. And it is only then that one can no longer speak merely about the dancing body but of a body dissolving in movement, a body evaporating and, as such, having a possibility to become a body that dematerialises dance.

From: Bojana Cvejic; Date: Wednesday, November 13, 2002 1:18 AM; To: Nikolina Bujas-Pristas; Cc: Ana Vujanovic; Subject: **ASSIGNED-PRODUCED AND THE RELATION TOWARDS THE SPECTATORS**

Are the decisions that you make – those you have mentioned (dancing fonts, dancing with your eyes closed) – those that ensure a minimum of what is set in a situation in which you further develop the 'behaviour' of the body that can surprise, produce something incomprehensible or something utterly familiar? Is that the minimal investment of constructional thought as the establishment of the initial framework within which the other aspect of thinking in working with the body then develops?

Could you describe those further steps? What is the relationship between the processes of what is set and what is produced, the thinking body and the forms of control, which you establish intellectually (and probably also affectively)? Do you think in that process about the audience members? Can your body duplicate itself, as if it were not 'your body' but a body from which you emerge and which you observe, something like "je est un autre, mon corps est un autre, est le corps d'un autre", to paraphrase Rimbaud.

From: Nikolina Bujas-Pristas; Date: Tuesday, October 19, 2002 12:25 AM; To: Bojana Cvejic; Cc: Ana Vujanovic; Subject: **THE "HOW" OF THE CHOREOGRAPHIC/DANCE PROCESS**

I intimately experience every process and every new production as a new field that has to be examined and re-examined and challenged.

In 2, dancing with closed eyes was my wish and insisting on it became a problem that had to be thought through in the choreographic and dance sense. In some way it was the maximum of the assignment and what had to be done was the subtraction from the spectrum of possibilities. And while for some time, even after the work had begun, I didn't know exactly what I wanted, I knew very well what I didn't want: closing my eyes as a way of achieving some unattainable inner element, a state, an undefined dance improvisation (in the sense of dancing whatever as long as my eyes are closed), a sentimental intimacy between two female bodies in a space, thematising blindness etc. Those were the issues that emerged at rehearsals. There were also communication problems: on the one hand, problems between the two of us (solved by the sounds we produced); on the other hand, in relation to the spectators (the signals we sent with our palms which were at once the only sig-

nals directly oriented towards the audience, tentatively speaking). Furthermore, merely depriving ourselves of the possibility of sight became insufficient since, after a while, we were increasingly in control of moving through the space; hence I wanted to make an even greater limitation of movement: dancing only with my legs and feet or only with my torso and arms, with my legs in an unstable position, and so on. Thus the aspiration I had when I started working remained as something that was not abandoned (at least until something proved to be impossible) but it acquired increasingly narrowing foci

Solo Me is a different story. I was interested in thematising the idea of (self)beginning as well as whether it was possible at all to communicate with someone else from the position of performer.

As far as direct communication is concerned, or perhaps it would be better to say – encountering and/or exchanging – one moment of affirmation of that theme is at the level of the very staging of the dance material in relation with Pravdan (Devlahovi}). In other words, the production is constructed in such a way that individual solos are performed first, followed by the 'duet' in which the materials are juxtaposed, changing 'owners', metastasising, to eventually conclude as two solos once again but this time infected by one another. Thus what interests me in contact with the spectator is located somewhere in that direction, as a second affirmation of the same theme: discovering the area of common experience despite the diverse positions. Once again allowing sensitivity towards the other. Partly placing your security in other hands (entering into physical contact with a member of the audience), even allowing others to speak on my behalf (opening the space for misunderstanding and mutual discomfort); drawing near to the limits of losing body outlines (to a place where my gaze is so close to that of the spectator that the function of gaze disappears). Just as the fact of Pravdan's (and not only Pravdan's) authorship had an influence on my choreography, so too does the fact of the spectator influence each individual performance.

(Self)beginning makes up the formal foundation of my first solo. During the preparations for the production I read Peter Sloterdijk (*Coming-to-World; Coming-to-Language*). I was enticed by sentences such as: "Only someone who is already begun can begin", or, "Perhaps the fact that the beginning of the game can be construed only subsequently does really belong to the game rules", so I also wanted to play a bit with those multiple beginnings. To that end, I choreographed 14 different dance phrases and put them together in various combinations, going from the end towards something that I set as the zero/starting point. But to my dramaturges, Ivana (Sajko) and Sergej (Prista{}), that idea simply did not materialise. Dancing fonts was Sergej's suggestion, after I had been struggling for more than a month with that *How???* Consequently, I took only the first set of movements, refined it and established it as the basic choreographed sentence ('a sentence without grammatical rules'). In the end, the entire choreography consists of writing out that sentence in eight different fonts. Thus each time after the sentence had been written, I return to the beginning, which is always the same. In that way, the issue of the beginning was solved, at least in the formal sense. However, the 'true' beginnings take place solely in contact with the spectator. From the sentence (fixed dance material) to the footnote (direct contact with the spectator), and back to the sentence means a drastic alteration in attention for me, falling out of what is fixed into

the direct and back, from which I cannot exit unaffected. That is why I say: the 'true' beginnings take place only in those moments since they demand from me to collect myself over and over again and move forward with what I have received – from the beginning...

It is important to note now that the stratification of initial ideas took place in a process and depended not only on me but also on Pravdan, Ivana and Sergej.

Now I would like to go back a little to what always and exclusively depends on me, and that is: How to dance? Choosing the fonts was a simple matter. I took a historical encyclopaedia of typography, searched for fonts that I could link historically or formally with dance techniques that I was using (for example: *Helvetica/Cunningham*, *Prozac Light/acrobatics*) or which provided me with a visual quality that I wanted to achieve in movement (*Elliot's Appolo Blue Eyeshadow*, *Windings*, *Arial Narrow Special G2*). Then I just adhered to the selected structures and ways of dealing with them. In other words, from the moment when I know exactly what I wanted, the only thing to be done was to force the body to do precisely that. . .

Now I would like to go back to the part of the question: "Can your body duplicate itself, as if it were not 'your body', but the body from which you emerge and observe it, something like 'je est un autre, mon corps est un autre, est le corps d'un autre'...?"

Yes and no. Namely, I can never see my body as it dances, or experience it as a spectator. Anyway, this is also said in the production: "Nothing is more public than that which is invisible to me" (P. Sloterdijk); in that sense, I have the feeling 'que mon corps est le corps d'autre'. It may sound banal but when I watch myself on a video I have the feeling that I would never know or be able to repeat what I see. Nevertheless, from the position of someone who does that, I cannot say 'est un autre', because I experience that dance on a daily basis; the body records it in its senses so that, apart from moments of exceptional 'transparency' in the body, I also feel that body as my own.

From: Ana Vujanovic; Date: Thursday, November 21, 2002 11:56 PM; To: Nikolina Bujas-Pristas; Cc: Bojana Cvejic; Subject: **SOCIAL -CULTURAL CONTEXTUALISATION**

To conclude, I would like to ask a question that relates to your stance towards the contemporary Croatian dance scene and your place within it. How would you contextualise yourself in that framework? What are your influences or relations there? Do you recognise certain 'trends' in that scene and do you identify with some of them or do you confront them with your choreographic concept and dance? Is your micro-social and/or micro-cultural framework important to you? How do you deal with it in your work, or do you ignore it altogether?

From: Nikolina Bujas-Pristas; Date: Tuesday, November 26, 2002 12:22 AM; To: Ana Vujanovic; Cc: Bojana Cvejic; Subject: **ANOTHER WAY OF LOOKING AT DANCE**

As a dancer, I came out of the Zagreb Dance Company, an ensemble with 25 years of continuity in contemporary dance. At a certain moment, that ensemble was com-

pelled to take over a very important role in the education of (largely) female dancers; something that it continues to do to this day. However, at a certain point, the institutionalised nature of the relationship, the artistic orientation of the ensemble, and the dynamics within such a relatively enclosed group ceased to be what I needed to move forward. It was because we saw things in a different way that the BADco. came to life as a group. Frankly speaking, my first choreography emerged out of my need to show that I saw dance in a considerably different way; but it also emerged out of a specific emotional revolt against, let us say, the contemporary Croatian dance scene. I am speaking about the *2tn4* project in which, besides me, both Pravdan and Aleksandra (Janeva) did their first author work. Since we had the impetus, accompanied by the unreservedly friendly and artistic support of Sergej and Ivana, we began to believe that we could do it... and had to(!).

In my opinion, Croatian dance has been comfortably floating for some time in a vacuum because of certain social reasons but also apathy, intellectual and artistic 'inertia', lack of information (dance does not need knowledge or opinions but emotions and so on). In this I definitely do not want to infer that the information was not there (*Contemporary Dance Week*, workshops, *Frakcija*, Eurokaz), but they often did not penetrate deep enough, or they needed time to do so. For example, the works of Milana Broć have never been systematically analysed because the generation which could have testified to it has never written about it in an insightful manner (it is only this year that the *Dance Week* will show a reconstructed choreography by Milana Broć). The situation is the same with *Kugla* Theatre and *Coccolempoco*.

Still, I think that the situation is slowly changing. This is also due to the fact that the whole issue has been slightly decentralised thanks to the emergence of some young people (not only dancers), such as @eljka Sančanić, the heterogenous group EkS-Scena and others, who approach dance in a critical manner and have enough obstinacy and feel a need to fight for their ideas and aspirations. Those gaps that have come about due to a serious lack of new authors have gradually started filling up.

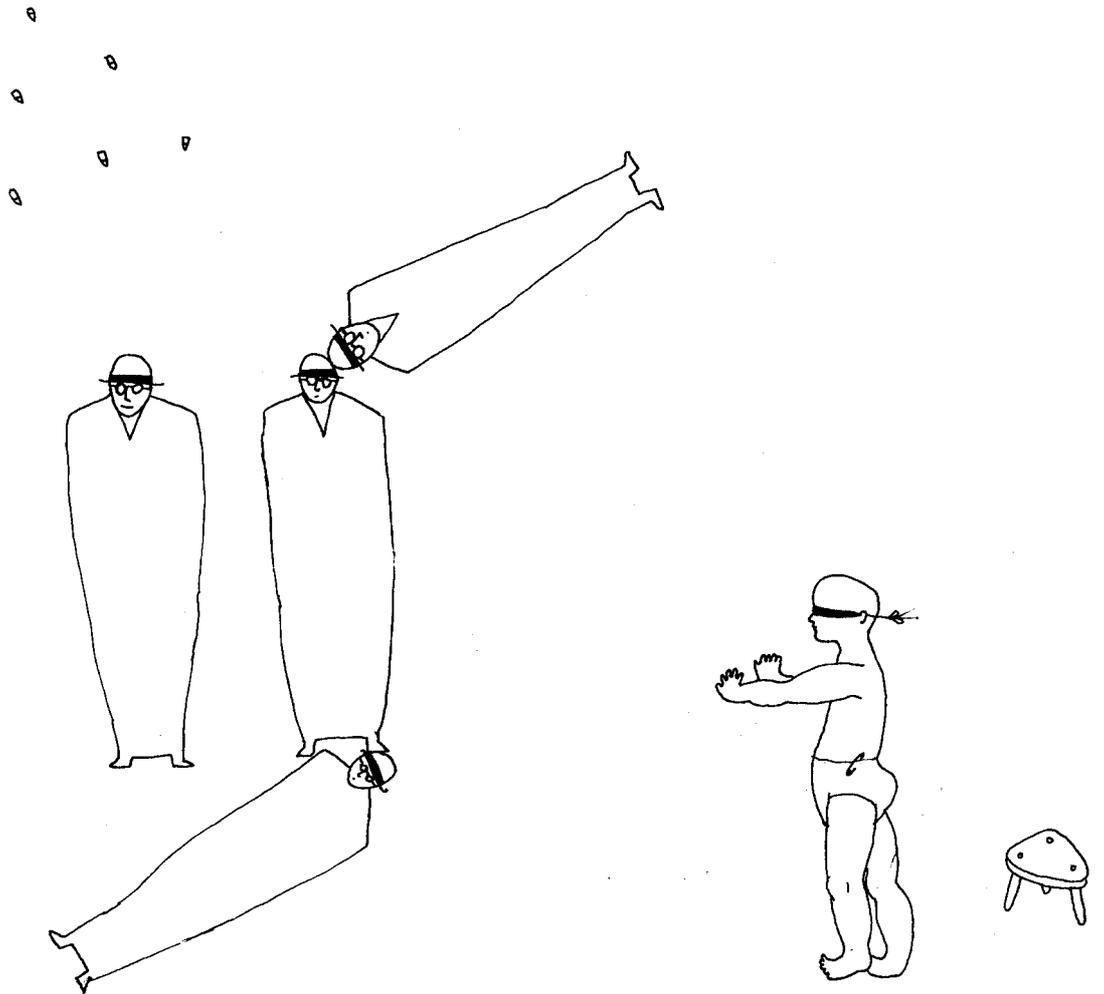
What is important in a context which, in general, does not give much reason for optimism, is that there are people with whom you can enter into polemics, with whom you can have a dynamic relationship, influence them and be influenced by them, be stimulated to work and reflection. Actually, this is not merely important – it is an imperative.

Translation by: Katarina Pejović



WORKING

THEORY





cartoon
Siniša Ilić

text
Ana Vujanović

In Search of Lost Guilt:
Anti-Theoretical-Psychoanalytical Hypercartoon

dramatis personae

- S - emerging subject
- A - the big other
- a - the impossible object of desire
- \$ - the split subject
- i(a) - the imaginary other
- I(A) - I-ideal
- d - the place of desire
- s(A) - the function of the big other
- m - the imaginary I
- ◆ - phantasm
- ♠ - intention

*All visual materials used are part of "The Desert of Picture"
by B. Djordjev and S. Ilić.
All similarities to characters and situations in the cartoon
are purely unintentional.

1 (Choice is at once impossible and prohibited)

I(A): Or on the tower top, somewhere in the forest, on the outskirts of Stuttgart...

a (distractedly): aaa-h

i(a): of the falusoid tower

A: In Fact

I(A): On Him
(Silence.)

A: As in the Limbo...

A: If you take it – you will regret it. If you don't take it – you will regret it.

S (only a silhouette): Whatever I do – I will regret it.



a: aaah. more



A: Yes, you will regret it.



(S leaves someplace for a short while)

a: and more

(S comes back, seemingly the same silhouette.)

A (mysteriously): Do you feel regret?



(Choose the conjunction:

2 I regret it, 3 I don't regret it,

4 I don't understand what is it that you want)

2 (I regret it)

\$ (cries): Leave me.

(A still keeps quiet although knowing that \$ expects the answer)

\$ (trotting): Why do you keep quiet?

\$: (wretched and crumpled): Say it.

\$: This is unbearable...

I(A): Look at me, see how I do it.

a: And more and more and more

I(A): But perhaps

\$ (wines): ... Tell me.

(Silence)

\$: PLEASE!

A: The more you feel guilty the more you are guilty Amen.

\$ (S who has become a fucked up subject of clear contours):

I regret it. I feel guilt. Awful...

(Silence.)

\$: Am I guilty?

(Silence.)

\$: I can't be saved!

((A says nothing. Awaits, a wiggles her ass, intentionally unaware of the world around her.)
(A waits... a flies like a carefree fly above the black espresso coffee cups. /Looks like K. Minogue in Moulin Rouge!)



a: More more more
a: More more more
a: More more more
a: More more more

\$ (S who has become a fucked up subject of clear contours): I regret it. I feel guilt.
Awful...

(A says nothing. Awaits. a wiggles her ass, intentionally
unaware of the world around her.)

\$. This is unbearable...

!(A): Look at me, see how I do it.

\$(cries): Leave me.

(A still keeps quiet although knowing that \$ expects the answer)

\$(drooling): Why do you keep quiet?

(A waits. a flies like a carefree fly above the black espresso coffee cups

/Looks like K. Minogue in Moulin Rouge!)

\$. (wretched and crumpled): Say it.

(Silence.)

\$. Am I guilty?

(Silence.)

a: And more and more and more

!(A): But perhaps

\$(wines): ... Tell me.

(Silence)

\$. PLEASE!

While A files her nails, !(A) draws attention to her,
a absent-mindedly flies, \$ falls apart in thousand pieces,
goes into shambles, goes to fucking hell, dismantles
and becomes forever alienated from ~~himself~~.

(Choose the continuation:

3 I don't regret it, 5 destroy A,

6 pay attention to !(A))



f \$ (S who has become a fucked-up subject of semi-clear contours): I don't know what is it that you are asking me. Che vuoi? ...

e So bizarre...

f \$: This is really odd... What is it that you really want?

d I(A): Look at me, see how I do it

b \$ (sceptically): Leave me alone. What do you want now?

e (A still-keeps quiet although knowing that \$ desperately speaks the answer.)

e \$ (with deep lack of understanding): Why do you keep quiet? (Almost feeling sorry for not understanding what is being asked from him.)

e ... I mean, I can understand alright what you ask me but what do you really want?

f A (I don't understand what is it that you want)

(A says nothing. Awaits. a wiggles her ass, intentionally unaware of the world around her)

(Choose the continuation:
2 I regret it,
6 pay attention to I(A),
7 summon a ('to help'))

\$: Wait...
Be quiet now...
(Increasingly insecure)
Tell me, Me?
(Silence.)

\$(disturbed). Say it.
Don't keep quiet...
What do you want
from me?
(Silence.)

\$(slightly hysterically):
What is it? What do you want
from me?
I(A): But perhaps

\$(begins to have a fit):
What is it with you? Hey!
What are you doing to me?
PLEASE!
A (finally):
What I want from you,
you already want from me.
Double defense. Amen.
\$(totally hysterically):
No! Hold on. Come on. I don't get it.
Take it. No. Hold on. I can't.
No.

(A(A) awaits. a flies wiggling her ass as a carefree fly over black espresso coffee cups;
she has a small hallo over her head. /Looks like K. Minogue in Moulin Rouge identifying with herself//)

While A files her nails, I(A) draws attention to her, a absent-mindedly flies and buzzes the mantra:
more more more, \$ falls apart in thousand pieces, goes into shambles,
goes to fucking hell, dismantles and becomes forever alienated from him/herself.

5 (Destroy.D)

(A files her nails and peacefully looks at the panorama through the window of a café on top of a tower. \$ collects his shambles from fucking hell and fucks up back again into the subject of clear contours.)

\$: And what do you think... This is it?

A: You speak. Not me.

\$: Oh no, this time I won't give in.

A: A-ha.

\$: Well, that's how it is. You'll see. I simply don't give a damn for all your recalls. I am me.

I(A) (hastily): A-ha.

\$: And what do you want now?

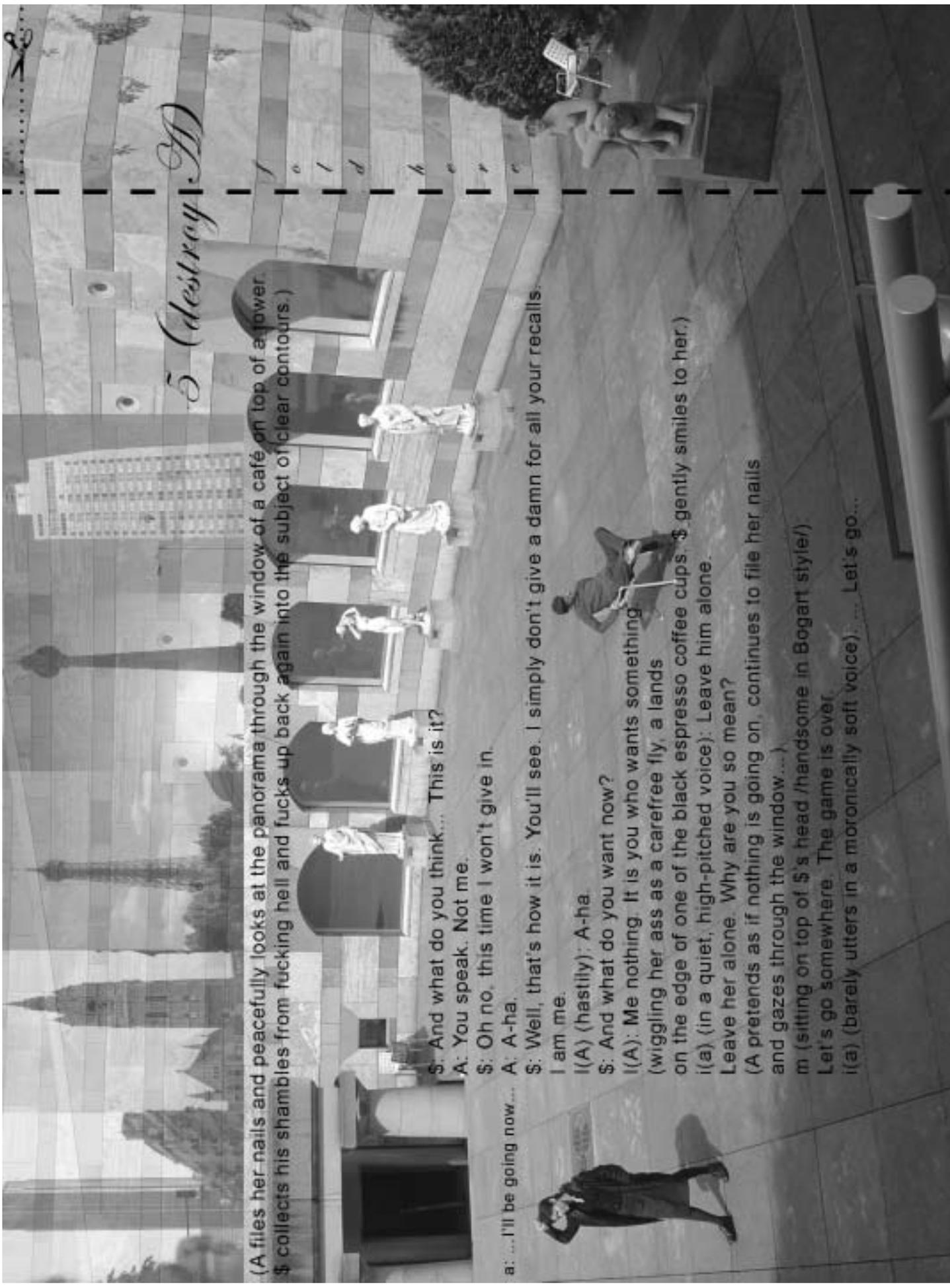
I(A): Me nothing. It is you who wants something (wiggling her ass as a carefree fly, a lands on the edge of one of the black espresso coffee cups. \$ gently smiles to her.)
i(a) (in a quiet, high-pitched voice): Leave him alone. Leave her alone. Why are you so mean?

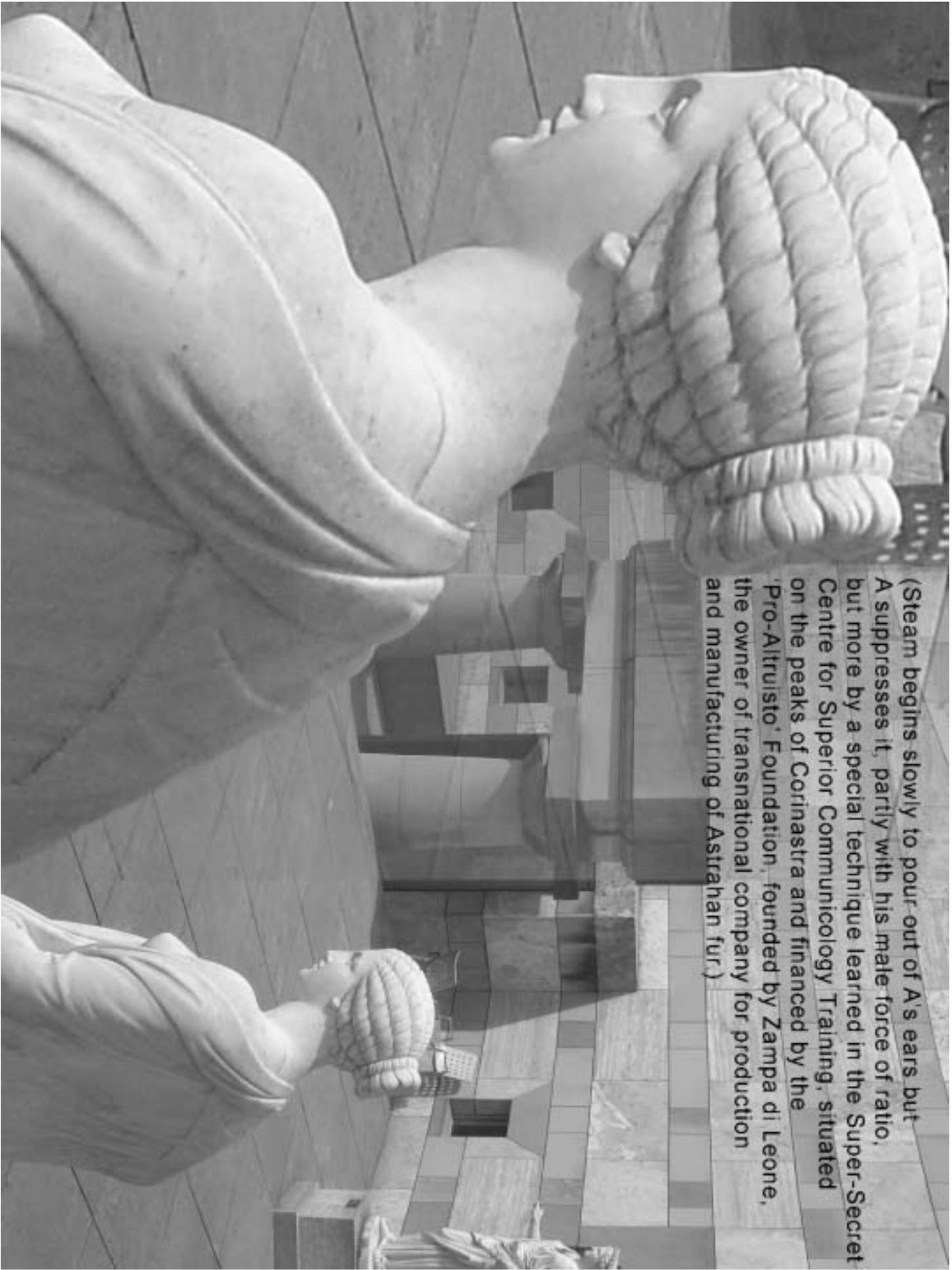
(A pretends as if nothing is going on, continues to file her nails and gazes through the window...)

m (sitting on top of \$'s head /handsome in Bogart style/)

Let's go somewhere. The game is over.

i(a) (barely utters in a moronically soft voice): ... Let's go...





(Steam begins slowly to pour out of A's ears, but A suppresses it, partly with his male force of ratio, but more by a special technique learned in the Super-Secret Centre for Superior Communicology Training, situated on the peaks of Corinestra and financed by the 'Pro-Altruisto' Foundation, founded by Zampa di Leone, the owner of transnational company for production and manufacturing of Astrahan fur.)



(A becomes restless. The steam is pouring out more and more from her ears. Speaks to herself):

Do not succumb to your desire.

Do not succumb to your desire.

(... Everybody departs...)

(A): Hold on. Wait! Where did our little rhombus disappear?

What have you done? Are you insane?

(Panic reigns. Everybody searching for rhombus. \$ also throws himself into the crowd.)

\$ (screams out loud): Here it is!

(Hush. \$'s raised fist in close-up.)

\$ (hits A in the forehead with the rhombus, as with chirokeen): DIE!

A (pulls the rhombus out of his split forehead bathed in blood; wipes away the blood and the wound with his palm and stands up; he is big;

abnormally bigger than the others):

The game is over.

\$ (stupefied): It's not fair.

(and falls apart into thousand pieces,

goes into shambles , goes to fucking hell,

dismantles and alienates forever

from him/herself.)

(Choose the continuation:

1 the choice is at once impossible and prohibited.)

(...A files her nails and calmly looks at the panorama through the window of a café on top of a tower.
\$ collects its shambles from fucking hell and fucks himself up into a subject of clear contours.)

6 pay attention to I(A)



\$: And what do you think... This is it?
And the end?

A: You speak. Not I, I am present.

\$: No, no, this time I won't give in.

A: A-ha.

\$: Well, that's how it is. You'll see.
I simply don't give a shit for all your summons.
I am me.

I(A) (hastily): A-ha.

\$: And what the fuck do you want now?

I(A): Me nothing. It is you who want something...
a fuck?

(Wiggling her ass like a carefree fly, a lands
on the edge of one of the black espresso cups.
\$ catches it like an ordinary fly and throws her on the
floor. In the bottom of the stage, m silently mourns a.)

\$: Why is it so quiet?

I(A): ... So quiet. A-ha.

(as if nothing is going on, A goes on filing her nails
and gazing through the window...)

\$: You are no more beautiful as you used to be. And you've grown smaller.
You used to be taller... and younger... It's boring...

I(A): You don't need me anymore?

\$: This is all gone...

I(A): Now you are in a worse shit.
(A hums): Do not succumb to your desire. Do not succumb to your desire.

\$: No, it's great now... Now I'm like you. Ugly, small and old.
I'm going by myself from now on.

(\$ gets up to move and falls apart in thousand pieces, goes into shambles,
goes to fucking hell, dismantles and forever alienates from him/herself.)

(Choose the continuation:
1 choice is at once impossible
and prohibited.)





(A files her nails and calmly looks at the panorama through the window of a café on top of a tower. \$ gathers his shambles from fucking hell and fucks himself up into a subject with clear contours.)

\$: And what do you think... This is it?
 A: I don't think... or is it you...
 \$: No, this time I won't give in.
 A: A-ha.



S: Well, that's how it is. You'll see. And don't summon me as a

I couldn't give a shit for all your summons. I am me.

A: You? A-ha. Why are you surprised when I call you a

I(A) (hastily): A-ha.

S: What the fuck do you want now?

I(A): Me nothing. It is you who want something. A fuck?

(Wiggling her ass like a carefree fly, a lands on the edge of one of the black espresso coffee cups.

Gazes straight into \$'s eyes with one long and irresistible gaze. \$ gently smiles at him.)

a (suddenly acquires a voice): Leave him alone. Leave her alone. Why are you so nasty?

(as if nothing is going on, A goes on filing her nails and gazes through the window...)

\$: Did you hear me?

(A doesn't reply.)

\$: I'm asking you if you've heard this?

A: No... no, nothing was heard.

m (sitting on \$'s head /handsome in Bogart style/):

i(a) (barely utters in a soft voice): ...Let's go...



when you are a



?

anymore.



Let's go somewhere, kid.



(Darkness. A scene of "wild sex" in an Oriental ambiance with thousands of small fetishes. Noise. A is restless. Speaks to herself):
Do not succumb to your desire. Do not succumb to your desire.
\$ (breathlessly, but happy and content): Cut the crap.
Several voices, intermittently sniggering: Cut the crap. Cut the crap. Cut the crap...
(The sex goes on. Squeals and shrieks.
Enjoyment goes to and beyond the borders of pleasure. Differences and equalities are treated as normal. All of it is crazy. Disaster. The picture is shaking.
The stitches of society are about to be torn. Help. Call someone. Say: 'It's important'.)

A (cannot stand it anymore: gets up and abruptly puts the light on /holds a Book in her hands/): The game is over.
\$ (jumps): I'm going to pull out of it and (and remains in the air – petrified. Then falls apart into thousand pieces, goes into shambles, goes to fucking hell, dismantles and alienates forever from him/herself.)



fold here



fold here



The End



(Choose the continuation:
1 the choice is at once impossible and prohibited)

Cyberchick Vs. Real Time

Maja Pelevi}

File

Open - GOOD MORNING

Edit

Select all

Copy

Paste

Alarm Clock

- Open your eyes. Welcome to **tHE** real world. Look at **tHE** clock.

Six o'clock, zero minutes, zero seconds.

00000000000000000000...Close your eyes.

Alarm clock

File

Open - HANG OVER

Select all

Copy

Paste

- Insert : Aspirin 1000 mg; Alkaseltzer 500 mg; Protein 33 g; Dairy
15 g; Lactose 4,1 g; Calcium 125 mg. Energy 45 calories.

File

New Blank Document

- Open your eyes. Welcome to **tHE** real world. Look at **tHE** clock.

Six o'clock, five minutes, zero seconds.

00...Throw **tHE**
covers off. Yawn. Stretch. Feel a gentle wave of tiredness, weakening
of concentration, mental fatigue.

Blood pressure 90-60

Insert : Asparagine 25 mg; Glutamine 25 mg; Pyridoxine chloride 10
mg.

Edit

Replace

Blood pressure 120-80

View

Full Screen

– Swollen eyes. Dark circles. Two acne on **tHE** left **cHEek**, one on **tHE** fore**HEad**. Crumpled right side of **tHE** face. Complexion – greyish.

HElp

HElp

HElp

Clear

New Blank Document

Insert

Picture

From camera

– Tanned. 50 kg. Pert behind.

Zoom

File

Open – MORNING ACTIVITIES

Select all

Copy

Paste

– Forty eight steps to **tHE** bathroom. Loss of calories due to slow walk: 2. Brush teeth. Wash face. Take off nightie. Shower – five minutes. Dry off. Hair dryer – five minutes. Day cream. Scales: 55 kg 320 gr.

Insert : Obedial 500 gr.

Opening of bowels.

Scales : 55 kg.

Get dressed – 10 minutes.

Make-up – 10 minutes.

Thirty steps to **tHE** **kitchEN**.

Open – BREAKFAST MONDAY

Copy

Paste

Insert : Boiled egg. Toast. Juice.

Morning sickness.

HElp

www.netdoctor.com

Search

Accompanied by **HEadacHE** – no

Vomitting – no

Joint pain – no

Last unprotected sex – no

Insert : Ibuprofen 1000 mg

Clear

Hysterically take things out of **tHE** wardrobe. Throw on **tHE** floor.
Stamp on **tHEm**. Occasionally rip fishnets.

HElp

Downloads and Updates

www.gap.com

Items in bag:

10 Items

Items in bag:

20 Items

Items in bag:

30 Items

hip tip

be **tHE** first

get it now

31 Items

pay by credit card-yes

Clear

File

Open - DAILY ACTIVITIES MONDAY

Update - yes

Insert

Delete

Select

Alignment and Spacing

Borders and Shading

Undo

Personal reminder : Sister's birthday.

www.netgift.com

Buy **tHE** most!

Buy **tHE** best!

Send

Update - complete

Space

Enter

Delete

Messenger : Call me. I miss you.

Delete.

Messenger : If you change your mind come to mine tonight.

Delete.

Ctrl Alt Delete

Shit

Restart

www.chatchatchat.com

User name: bemyvalentine

e-mail: bemyvalentine^a bemyvalentine.com

birthday: 14.02.1981.

clear

birthday: 14.02.1986.

update

something about yourself: pretty,sexy,ready to dance

how do you feel today ☺

new message from lover boy: Send me your picture sexy!

File

Open

Picture Folder

ME-BEAUTIFUL

Edit

Select all

Filter

Artistic

Neon Glow

Save

Send.

Open – LUNCH MONDAY

Copy

Paste

Insert : Meat. Tomatoes.Bread.

Open – TV

Insert : News.

www.astro.com

Free daily horoscope-created especially for you

Login

Today your attention will be focussed on your work. **THE** Mid**HE**aven is strongly connected with **tHE** ego structure. This is especially important if you are a meditative person.

Break **tHE** glass. Scream. Get hysterical. Pick up **tHE** pieces. Throw **tHEm** in **tHE** bin.

www.netdream.com

Look at **tHE** yellow dot. Relax. Imagine a flower. Can you see it?
Click yes. Can you feel it? Click yes.
You are now in a state of total meditation.

Escape.

Messenger : I got your present. Thank you. You could come over
tonight. I've got your favourite cake.

Delete.

Messenger : Are you finally going to reply! I've got a surprise for
you :)

Delete.

Open – SPORT MONDAY

Attach electrodes to stomach.

Start 30 min.

End.

Update – mail.

CHEck

CHEck

CHEck

Messenger : I can't take this any more.

Delete.

www.howtohavegoodsex.com

Search

Blonde, green eyes, athletic build, 22 years old.

Enter

English, french.

Enter

Pilot

Enter

Married

Enter

Turn on **tHE** camera. Turn it away from you. Watch him masturbate.
Touch yourself. Look at his genitals. Touch yourself.

– Little girl, turn that camera towards you.

Touch yourself.

– Let me see a bit of you.

Touch yourself. Slowly turn **tHE** camera towards you.

– What do I want to look at your t-shirt for?

Touch yourself. Slowly lift **tHE** t-shirt up.

- A bit more.

Touch yourself. Slowly lift **tHE** t-shirt up even more.

- You've got good tits. Do you want to show me your face?

Escape

Delete

Disconnect

- Thirty steps to **tHE** bathroom. Strip. Shower - 10 minutes. Take off make-up - 10 minutes. Brush teeth. Forty eight steps to **tHE** bedroom. Loss of calories due to fast walk - 4. Put on nightie. Get into bed.

Insert : GOOD NIGHT

Shut down computer.

Translation by: Svetlana Dim-ovi}

Xerox – Cloning of an Ideal Body

A Visual-Theoretical Intelligence Test

Maja Mirkovi}

Shattered context of representation of male body in sport. Squeezing out of the context of placement of body in a space typical for sport.

Ideal male sportive bodies become figures that indicate something else: dance, literature, detective movies, erotic ecstasy. For sport is all that (or at least could be) but due to the way of representation we recognise it exclusively through one – constructed and offered – way that in turn becomes typical. In other words: acceptable, expected, recognised(able) as the only possible...

By changing position, the body is left merely with elements used in building the impossible (ideal) image. Still recognisable/acceptable, it is now in function of showing (indicating) something else. In this case, that “else” are common references to the language of painting from popular histories of art.

In the field of media, using sport events and persons from the world of sport for promoting products and merchandise in the consumer society has become a matter of habit, standards and expectations.

Does this make possible/allows/requires the usage of typical language of painting, or the language used when talking about painting, for the purpose of popularising sport?

Is the product of such game (acquiring someone else’s appearance, a specific kind of masking with someone else) truly trading places, the slipping away of the expected (event, content), or is this the answer to the expectations of a more precisely determined target group?

Is the fact that we see things/notions/scenes in a certain way really the product of manipulating with habits?

This approach might as well be read as a new kind of popularisation of sportswear, sport spirit and other products of sport designed for the population with higher education.

Let us say that, by creating an (one) ideal space in which mind and body are equally present/important and barely divisible, I offer “absolute” pleasure to the person that reads books and visits Sunday matches with an equal passion.

I speak about similar strategies of a “Postmodern market” where different products for exchange and consumption merge and intertwine; e.g. sport and painting. Nowadays it is possible to talk equally about both practices

(products), both from the position of culture and the economic-marketing point of view. More precisely, through the production and offer of samples (role models) for identification, both practices, filtered through mass media, have become a part of popular/mass culture.

Ideal male body in the role of guide through history of art:

Choose your option and write in the field below each painting.

Option 1: Henri Matisse, *Joy of Life*, 1905

Option 2: Mon-En, *Untitled*, 1987

Option 3: Giovanni Bologna, *Rape of the Sabines*, 1583

Option 4: Clodion, *Bacchante and Satyr*, 1775

Option 5: Anonymous author, *Confrontations*, 2000

Option 6: Gianlorenco Bernini, *The Ecstasy of St. Therese*, 1645-52

Option 7: Pablo Picasso, *Mother and Child*, 1921-22

Option 8: Umberto Boccioni, *The Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*, 1913

Option 9: J.B. Greuze, *Village Bride*, 1761

Option 10: Antonio della Pollaiuolo, *Hercules and Anthaeus*, cca. 1475

Warning: two of the options are excessive.

Concerning performance

It is possible that I may soon become a performer for the one I consider to be the performer (the exposed one).

As I concluded that I wasn't obliged to trust the performed

since this is not what is (obligatory) required from me,

what I still owe to my existence is my gaze;

neither its interpretation, deliberation, nor the quest for the

fleeting of accidental, gazes of eye, palm, ear, brain, heart, stomach;

The dance performance requires a direct, absolute and brilliant gaze of absent desire for the non-existing dancer (Alain Badiou, Mallarmé)

Film implies the two-folded gaze,

the direct gaze of the cinema spectator who

gazes through another gaze, since the gaze is indirectly direct;

the gaze that becomes voyeuristic when the lights go down, or

the gaze that is voyeuristic from the onset. (Laura Mulvey)

Theatre expects faith in something else and chooses the coloured spectacle instead of empty performance.

But knowing that empty is not necessarily void,

sport justifies the absence of need to be trusted by setting an obvious goal.

The success of accomplishment is an assessment accessible to anybody who is looking.

Translation by: Katarina Pejovi}











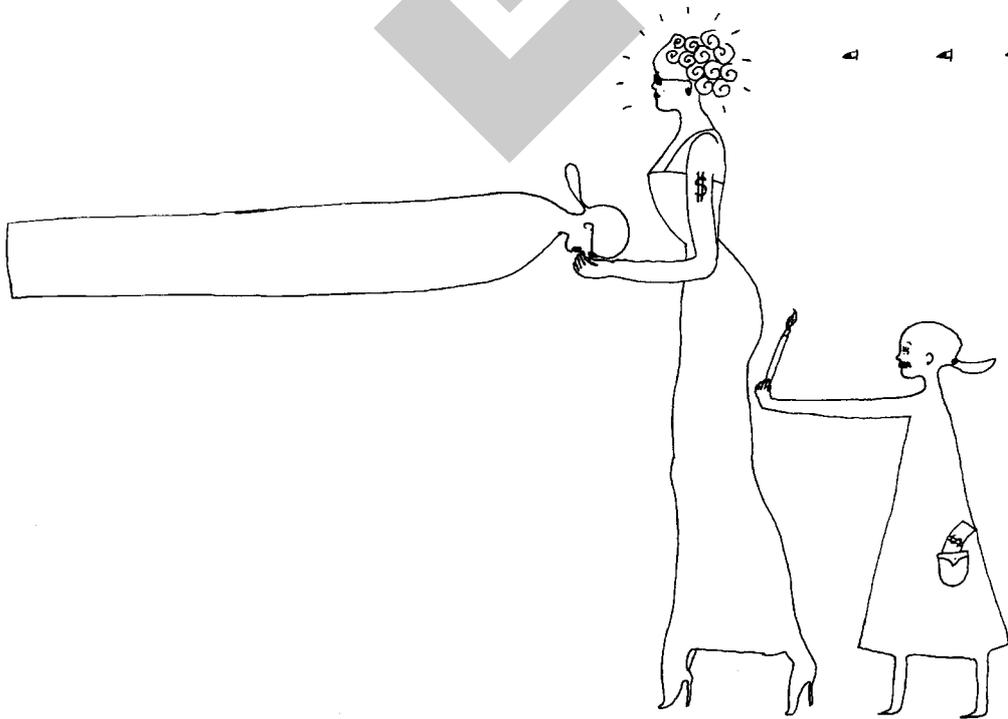




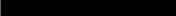




THE OPEN WORK



DISCUSSIONS



The Open Work: Does it Deserve Theory Today?



Bojana Cveji}
Ana Vujanovic

The field of performing practices struggling nowadays to establish new categories of work, activities and works in art, without daring to call themselves experimental, is indeed vast and highly heterogeneous. We would say that those are the practices of choreography, theatre and performance in Europe from the 90s onwards; generations bonded with the force of necessity to measure the bestowed legacy of the open work by means of the economy of liberalism. Is the connection between the open work as suggested in 1958 by – anyone still remembers that? – Umberto Eco and the contemporary attributes of openness, mobility, flexibility, volatility etc. merely historical? What is there left of the problem of *opera aperta* that would be worth the investment of a new theory, a theory which would risk its cynical charm for the sake of opening possibilities for affirming multitude, potentiality, the notions of constitution of artistic work outside the frame of pre-calculated limitation of discursive practices?

Beyond the Poetics of Open Work

Let this be an opportunity to consider what the current issues in the performing arts discourses owe to the open work of Neo-avant-garde from the end of the 50s to the 70s. Collaboration and collectivity in the field of organisation and methodology of artistic work; spectatorship and critiques of the theatre apparatus in the domain of experience and interpretation, strategy and tactics of performing on the site of presentation...¹ – these are the actual concepts that erase the programme of Neo-avant-garde utopias under the assumption that the critique of the 'author' func-

tion are the openness of reception and self-reflective scrutinising of art as the open concept of game concluded in the 60s and the 70s.

The pragmatic consequence of Eco's first and only explicitly focused treatise on the open work was the perception of homology of formal structure of the work of art and "the way in which the world is actually described."² Observing the range of phenomena – from the first live TV broadcast, the influence of Zen-Buddhism on the so-called alternative youth culture and some artistic practices of the 60s, Mallarmé's concept *Le Livre* and Joyce's early novels, to programmatic open-form manifestations in Abstract Expressionism, Informel, Serialism and aleatory of Boulez, Stockhausen and Berio – Eco introduced a new approach to form, an approach that grasps the poetics in a transversal unity with ideology. "An artist does not understand *openness* as a fixed trait of the inevitable fact; on the contrary, he/she chooses it as the production programme and, moreover, offers the work in a way in which the greatest possible *openness* is being promoted", and he/she does it in order to "advance the *acts of conscious freedom*" in the performer, the interpreter, the spectator and the listener, placing them "as the active centre of a network of inexhaustible relations between which he/she restores his/her shape without being determined by a necessity that prescribes definitive modes of organisation of the consumed work." Another possibility is entrusting the recipient with creative participation in the shaping of *work-in-motion* in order to give "a free and inventive answer" in the course of the interpretative act by which he/she concludes that which the author has begun. Eco, however, sets

¹ See Bojana Cveji}, "Collectivity, you mean collaboration"?, *Fracija*, "The Production of the Collective" ("Proizvodnja zajedni-kog"), br. 30-31, Zagreb, 34-43; Bojana Kunst, "On strategies in Contemporary Performing Arts", *Maska*, Ljubljana, January 2003, pp. 10-14

² Umberto Eco, *The Open Work (Otvoreno djelo)*, Veselin Masle{a, Sarajevo, 1965

the boundaries of the open work: he warns that the author “doesn’t know exactly in which way the work is going to be brought to conclusion but he/she knows that the work brought to conclusion will nevertheless always be his/her work, not some other work, and that in the end of the interpretative dialogue it will materialise a form that is its own form, although organised by someone else, in the way he/she could not entirely predict.” This is “not an amorphous call for an indiscriminating intervention: this is a call, neither necessary nor unison, for an oriented intervention that would enable us to introduce ourselves freely to a world which is nevertheless always the one that the author had wanted.”³

Openness has acquired various forms in various media of mainly performing arts, with the function of drawing away as much as possible from *representation* and *interpretation* towards the *performative*, which here is a constitutive act of the shifting relation between author, performer, work and its perception-reception. It is especially the experimental practices in American music, dance, happening and performance art of the 60s (practices not accounted by the European theoretisation of the open work)⁴ that have radicalised the interventions in constituting the work of art. While Cage practised the ‘death of author’ through chance operations and indeterminacy, the members of Fluxus movement were breaking any artifactuality of the work as created object. While Kaprow’s happenings were transforming collage in an inadvertent or directed action and interaction with the audience, and theatre collectives such as the Living Theatre and The Performance Group were working on surpassing the border between the autonomy of staged text and the very performance led by the idea of merging art and life, the dancers gathered around Judson Church and the Grand Union formation were developing the open concept of choreography as a script before or aside, different and separated from dance talk and the ephemeral presence of dancing body.

As a sum, these practices are chiefly classified as open work merely for their tendency to fundamentally shake the phenomenon and the concept

of the work of art established in Modernism. At present, any reflection on the prospects of openness requires to reduce the history of performative effects to the procedure of creating a work of art in the context of the transformation of society. The first is certainly the function of author that transforms itself both by abolishing the expression of the artist’s inner necessity and, connected to that, the organic and abstract-formal teleology of the work of art, as well as the separation of intellectual from productive work that is connected in the history of Western art with the skill and the technique of creation. Another is the intervention on the formal structure of work: 1) open, because it requires finalisation during performing; 2) assumed and therefore arbitrary by way of *ready-made*; or 3) projected in the form of instruction or score that does not necessarily include the performing and public reception. The third is the constituting of performance as the author’s act, in place of presentation and interpretation of the work according to the ideal of fidelity – best advocated in the 60s by the introduced improvisation practices.⁵

But if we take the example of contact improvisation – one of the contemporary techniques of body training in dance today, during the 70s introduced as a sublimated form of merging life and dance into physical behaviour of communal body that dissolves the object of work – we are compelled to observe how open form practices of the 60’s and 70’s ideologically reconfigure once they go beyond the breaking point. In other words, the open work is also one of the narratives of the historical project of Modernity, which marks the end of autonomy of art in the “de-auratisation” and conceptual de-materialisation of the work. Hence Cage’s *4’33” Tacet for Any Instrument or Any Instruments, Trio A* and *Continuous Project – Altered Daily* by Yvonne Rainer as well as conceptual art that shifts the artistic work into the field of meta-linguistic discourse on the concept, the phenomenon and the sense of art – to mention merely the most radical developments – have entered the history of the 20th century avant-gardes as model references of self-reflective examination of artistic practice that defines and interprets itself under the

³ Quotations taken from Bojana Cveji}, *The Open Work in Music: Boulez, Stockhausen, Cage*, SKC, Belgrade, 2004

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ On the concept of the work of art see Bojana Cveji}, *Beyond the Borders of Musical Work: Performative Music Practice of Erik Satie, John Cage, Fluxus, La Monte Young and John Zorn*, M.A. thesis, manuscript, FMU; Belgrade, 2005, pp. 8-55

assumption that art is an “open concept”⁶ The other ideological thread delineates the end of art in the open work as the metamorphosis of art into the forms of aesthetisation of everyday life, where the open work – in the Neo-leftist key of the 60s – represents “new sensibility... according to the criterion of reality – a process in which art transcends itself on grounds of accomplishments of science and technology.”⁷

Arbitrariness and the Unexpected (im)possibilities of Openness

Following those preliminary concepts, the problematics of openness – in art as well as theory – might be (and has been) approached also by engaging new/different notions. One of the central notions among them is *arbitrariness*.

Already at first glance, the notion of arbitrariness might be connected with openness: as soon as something is arbitrary, it also has to be open; if the artistic work is left to chance, it is open by this sheer fact. Still, the question remains on how we determine this notion. As we have adduced regarding the poetics of the open work in the period of Neo-Avant-garde, arbitrariness is being used in the sense of aleatory as a poetic principle of artistic practice that causes the openness of work (behind which there is no author-Father, its form being unfinished and deprived of signifying immanence). Hence arbitrariness is explicitly present, for instance, in the music of John Cage. Here however we shall focus on the notion of arbitrariness the way it has been developed in semiology and post-structuralism ever since the 70s, where it implies the lack of motivation of signification. Instead of natural, organic motivation, decision, social agreement and convention are being introduced. This type of arbitrariness has been introduced since the 70s as the intentional artistic principle, like in postmodernism: in the cases of Robert Wilson, Jan Fabre, Richard Foreman and others, where the derived attempts of opening the stage sign – the offers of signifier that shift from chain to chain and thus arbitrar-

ly connect with the multitude of the new signifieds. Thus a fist raised above the head on the stage bears no more a particular meaning of revolution that burns in the chest of the author but is open for the process of audience reading. But even in the lack of intention, arbitrariness – re-read in poststructuralism – acts as necessity, a foisted decision of every work of art (even if its tendency is to close). The question is: is it not so then that each work of art is open if it is arbitrary on the level of significance?

Departing from St. Augustin, sign is ‘something that stands for something else’ (*aliquid stat pro aliquo*)⁸. The contemporary science of sign evolves in two directions: one departs from Saussure’s linguistics, Hjelmslev and the Structuralists, and the other from Pierce and Morris. According to Pierce, sign is a triadic model; but from de Saussure on, the dyadic constitution of sign is dominating, being accepted and further developed in (Post)structuralism. According to de Saussure⁹, sign could be described as a sheet of paper with two inseparable sides: one is the signifier, the other the signified. The notion is reached via the signifier as it is the only element of sign that is sensually palpable. The process at work between the signifier and the signified is named semiosis: the process of creation of meaning (Lat. *semiosis*). Hjelmslev’s studying of sign¹⁰ is close to de Saussure’s thesis although he further decomposes the sign onto: the expression level and the content level, the association between them being the relation. Each level has its form and substance; thus within the structure of sign we may distinguish between: expression form, expression substance, content form and content substance. Also according to Hjelmslev, expression and content adhere one to another and are implying each another by determination. In structuralism, Barthes revives de Saussure’s thesis, thus ascertaining: “*Sign* is a (double-faced) slice of auditivity, visibility etc. *Signification* may be understood as a process; it is an act of connecting the signifier with the signified, an act of

⁶ See Morris Weitz, “The Role of Theory in Aesthetics”, in *Philosophy Looks At the Arts; Contemporary Readings In Aesthetics*, Joseph Margolis (ed), Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1987, pp. 143-153; and Ana Vujanovi, *The Destructive Signifier/s of Performance*, SKC, Belgrade, 2004, Part I

⁷ Herbert Marcuse, quoted by Bojana Cveji, *The Open Work...*, pp. 30-34

⁸ See Vladimir Biti, “Sign” (Znak), in *Dictionary of Contemporary Literary Theory*, Matica hrvatska, Zagreb, 1997, p. 411, and Miško [uvakovi], “Sign” (Znak) in *Dictionary of Modern and Postmodern Art from 1950*, SANU, Belgrade; Prometej, Novi Sad, 1999, p. 695

⁹ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Courses in General Linguistics (Opšta lingvistika)*, Nolit, Belgrade, 1977

¹⁰ Louis Hjelmslev, *Prolegomenon to a Theory of Language (Prolegomena teoriji jezika)*, GHZ, Zagreb, 1980

generating the sign.”¹¹ Later on, he comes to the thesis on the opening of sign and the signifier’s productivity whereas the structure of sign remains the same. Even in Lacan’s studies, where the signifier is mainly oriented towards other signifiers, thus penetrating the signified, the Saussurian structure of sign and the arbitrary connection between the signifier and the signified remains intact. The same applies to Derrida: in the concept of *écriture*, it is even amplified by emphasising material practices of *écriture*, which defer without pointing to concrete ‘original’ signifieds.

In the frame of structuralism, semiotics and early narratology, there is a dominating thesis on the signifier as the element of sign that renders the signification. Furthermore, in the frame of Post-structuralism, especially concerning the notions of scripture, intertextuality and signifier’s practice, the signifier is being perceived as a generating element, one that launches

and produces the signification. What is left almost unchanged is the thesis on the arbitrary conjunction of the signifier and the signified. A typical example is that the word ‘cow’ signifies the notion of cow, without motivation and the inner relation of the signifier with the notion. An obvious proof of arbitrariness is that the notion of cow is signified with various signifiers in various languages. From structuralism and even de Saussure on, the connection between the signifier and the signified is considered the result of long-term communication practice rather than their inner relation. This leads to the conclusion that the connection between the signifier and the signified is based on a collective habit or custom, i.e. convention, hence it is arbitrary: random and unmotivated.¹² This thesis is thoroughly elaborated in (post)structuralism whereas in the world of art it is this thesis that breaks the organic relation between the author and the work, activating the practices of author’s death (Barthes, Foucault), moving from work to text (Barthes), intertextuality (Kristeva) and *écriture* (Barthes, Derrida). A typical example of such arbitrariness are the significations of Wilson’s productions from the 70s and the 80s where there is an insistence on the

distance between the signifier and the signified, which enables a previously unimaginable openness of signification.

Although the thesis on the arbitrariness of signification – mainly enabling the separation from ‘humanities’ both in theory and art – has fulfilled its historical role, it also has its “blind spot”. This will be the subject of our deliberation moving towards further conceptions of openness in art. Already some Structuralists have pointed out the possibility that arbitrariness was not so open as it may have seemed in the beginning. For instance, Emil Benveniste contests the arbitrariness of the relation signifier-signified and asserts that the only arbitrary relation is that between the signifier and the referent. This means that a sign may arbitrarily refer to various signifieds: this or that cow, from case to case. But such arbitrariness does not exist in the relation signifier-signified; hence the signification has practically never been opened. As Benveniste points out, the relation between the signifier and the signified is the effect of collective training; thus the signification is not arbitrary but, quite the contrary, determined – and no individual is free to alter it. In a similar key, Lévi-Stauss points to the conventional nature of the relation between the signifier and the signified, one that closes the signification with social consensus. In accordance with this, he determines that a sign is arbitrary only *a priori* and not *a posteriori*. And *a posteriori* means in individual performance. This is the obstacle that was encountered by many experimental artistic works striving to break the established signifying ties, such as the postmodern theatre of images and theatre anthropology, and especially the emancipatory works aimed towards direct communication with the audience. For the signification of the work, i.e. the legibility in these artistic poetics and practices turns into loss, a victim of (so much promising and perhaps because of that often all too easily accepted) a rejection of signifying conventions. Here all explanations that ‘the audience did understand something after all although it didn’t correctly read the meanings are utterly futile since the point is in that the signification is lost in the moment in which the work of art is rejecting the institutional frame without

¹¹ Roland Barthes, *Literature, Mythology, Semiology* (*Knji'evnost, mitologija, semiologija*), Nolit, Belgrade, 1979, p. 313

¹² De Saussure’s first principle of sign is ‘arbitrariness’, see *Courses in General Linguistics*, pp. 135-139

engaging with it. The critical thesis is therefore that in the case of a *posteriori* arbitrariness of signification, signification is open but already lost.

The impossibility of a *posteriori* arbitrariness could be explained precisely and consequently through the notion of *interdiscourse*, yet not in the way it is being developed by Jürgen Link¹³ but Michael Pêcheux¹⁴. Pêcheux's notion emerges in the frame of Althusserian theory and is based on Althusser's thesis on *the complex contradiction* of the real (asymmetrical relation cause-effect that constitutes the real). Elaborating on the notion of *interpellation*,¹⁵ Pêcheux explains with the notion of interdiscourse the mechanisms of constituting evident truths – truisms by which the discourse places individuals in particular (stipulated by discourse) roles of the subject. According to him, in each discourse there is the in-between space where the previously constructed paradigmatic presumptions are at work: general, universal knowledges and the basic syntax rules. Hence the new signifieds also inevitably merge with the established signifying matrices. Through the identification of individual with 'transparent' matrices the *universal subject* is being constituted, whereas the distancing from those identification strongholds leads to stepping out from universality and establishing the *individual subject*. Yet even then the *a posteriori* arbitrariness of significations is impossible since the individual subject is also unable to evade the interdiscursive mechanism.¹⁶ In this 'free' discursive field – where he/she arrives without replying to the interpellation and steps out of the general idiom into the individual idiom – he/she is already awaited by the identification models from the complex and contradictory network of discourses. Althusser thus explains both the constitution and constitutive role of subject in ideology: "The category of subject is constitu-

tive for all ideology as much as ideology has the function (that defines it) of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects."¹⁷

In the in-between space of individual expressions of individual subject we find again the tacit, self-explanatory, paradigmatic presumptions that determine their interdiscursive position. Hence the real individuality is disabled, a position outside the interdiscursive network and hence also the arbitrary relation towards the consciously constructed content of expression. In other words, the individual as subject does not reach the non-discursive or the individually configured discursive field even through the critical interpretation of transparency of universal signifying matrices. The possibility of opening is closed with the *a priori* arbitrariness of signification that is introduced into the institutional system; hence the subject merely enters the field of differently configured discourse. Each discourse displays the difference between that which is explicit and intentionally expressed and that which is independent from explicit affirmation and acts as the ideological support to expressed contents, even in the case of individual expression. On grounds of such notion of interdiscourse, the problem of produced-and-accumulated significations in the very discourse, independent from the subject's intentions, becomes central. According to Althusser and Pêcheux, the subjects of discourse are its arbitrary constructs, the effects of interdiscursive networking that, given its transparency, perceive it as their 'natural environment'. The resulting pessimistic conclusion is that even when it is perceived, the individual *a posteriori* arbitrariness of discourse is impossible for them as they are already in (another) discursive formation.¹⁸

In the field of theatre, for instance, Patrice Pavis criticised in a similar manner Eugenio Barba's intercultural production of *Faust* (ISTA, 1987).¹⁹

¹³ Since the beginning of the 80s, German semiotician Jürgen Link establishes the notion of interdiscourse on the line of implementation of Foucault's 'discursive formations' in constituting elementary literary patterns, of which elaboration and combinations consist the creation of literary works.

¹⁴ Michael Pêcheux, "The Mechanism of Ideological (Mis)recognition", in *Mapping Ideology*, Slavoj Žižek ed., Verso, London, 1995, pp. 141-152; Vladimir Biti, *Dictionary of Contemporary Literary Theory (Pojmovnik suvremene književne teorije)*, pp. 148-149

¹⁵ See Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses", in *Mapping Ideology...*, pp. 128-132

¹⁶ Pêcheux departs from Althusser's thesis that it is the very

obviousness of the fact that the individual is a subject, the elementary ideological effect; see "The Mechanism...", p.147

¹⁷ "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses", p. 129

¹⁸ "...it is essential to realize that both the one who is writing these lines and the reader who reads them are themselves subjects, and therefore ideological subject (a tautological proposition), i.e. that the author and the reader of these lines both live 'spontaneously' or 'naturally' in ideology in the sense in which I have said that 'man is an ideological animal by nature'", *ibid*, p. 129

¹⁹ Pavis, Patrice, "Dancing with *Faust*: A Semiotician's Reflections on Barba's Intercultural Mise-en-scene", *TDJR*, vol. 33, no. 3, 1989, pp. 37-57

He points out that Barba's arbitrary engagements and fusions of elements of different cultures are not only opaque for transcultural readings but with the planned introduction of those elements in the syntactic matrices of Western narration, his staging merely re-elaborates the traditional humanistic principles of the West. Through this, his directing introduces them as a 'neutral general principle', thus leaving to the spectators an utterly conformist imperialist position of reading. And all this unintentionally, it should be added, following the logical structure of narrative syntax, which has unnoticeably 'sneaked through', and with thus structured discourse re-read the new, promisingly open content.

It was already Paul de Man that introduced that place of primary distance between the discourse and its subject that promises the openness of *a priori* arbitrary signification and disables it *a posteriori*. In his book *Blindness and Insight*, he explains the thesis on the contingency of the empirical intention in the following way: "The totality of (artistic) form by no means implies the correspondence with the totality of the constitutive self. Neither in its origin nor in its development does the totality of form derive from the fulfilment of the person constituting the given form. The distinction between the personal form of the author and the self that achieves the measure of totality of the work manifests concretely in those separating fates. Separation is not a matter of contingent accident but it is constitutive for the artistic work as such. Art emerges out of and with the help of this separation."²⁰ We shall therefore conclude this part with Althusser's thesis from *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* on the inability of the individual to distance him/herself from the position of subject of the discourse by taking the competence to arbitrarily establish the significance: "Individuals are always-already subjects."

Towards the Contingency of Procedure and Protocol

What kind of shift the open work experiences following the end, after "68", but also following the Postmodern 80's, when the concrete achieve-

ments of Avantgarde utopia are being assimilated by the tactics of artists on the market of the late capitalism economy? The practices persisting in promoting the freedom of co-creative participation of performers first had to make a transfer to the New Age form of social therapy – if we take a look at the dissemination of contact improvisation and the so-called Authentic Movement at present, or the late work of theatre collectives such as Living Theatre, Eugenio Barba and Odin Teatret or the popularisation of Cagian experiment in the work of Scratch orchestra in the late 70's. Within the materialisation of form in the manner of experiment, openness is reconfigured in the domain of significance, i.e. the discursive practice that emerges and launches many contexts in the interpretation of a work. Performing no longer relies on the power of arbitrariness as/well as on chance, spontaneous improvisation, the literality of everyday actions or a call for spectators' participation. It does not aspire to openness when those are the values absorbed by the everyday life of new media and the ecstasy of communication, connectivity and the intrusion of the private in the public space (and vice versa). That is why performing in the critical segment of the practice of performing arts in the 90s returns within the frame of spectacle and simulation in order to produce in spectators the resistance and/or enjoyment in the excessive identification with the role of spectator. Openness as formally unfinished and the process of congenial finalisation of a work shift from the function of openness towards the contingency of *procedure and protocol*. Procedure is the stake for programming the concept such as the language game by which the work is being created in establishing proviso-ry and variable rules that interact with the world of art, i.e. the dominant fictions in that art. To say today that a certain performing arts work puts forward the open concept means that it displays a new proposition in the form of materialisation of the stance on what that art is or could be in relation to historical definitions of the given art. The proposition we have in mind here is not analytical and meta-linguistic, the one that has replaced the aesthetic with the theoretical object in the realm of conceptual art. Here the proposition is articulated by self-referentiality of

²⁰ Paul De Man, *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, 2nd edition, University of Minnesota Press – Methuen, Minneapolis, London, 1983, p. 41

performing, i.e. the emergence of excessive statements; e.g. in dance/theatre performance or in the performance in the form of attitude or question: “This is choreography”, “Is this still theatre?”, i.e. “What is performance?”

Thus in the 90s choreographies were proposed that did not necessarily imply bodies in motion but in turn confronted themselves with the historic remnant of the dancing body on the stage (Jérôme Bel, Vera Mantero, Boris Charmatz, Xavier Le Roy, Maria La Ribot). Here openness reflects in the poetic departure point: if the author wants to proceduralise a new attitude of self-reflection on what dance is, the definition of dance must be taken as the initially arbitrary (and not ontological) construction by definition. The procedure of conceptualisation in the manner of ready-made attitude “This is choreography” requires a protocol by which the attitude is presented to the audience. And this is precisely the point of transfer from the arbitrariness of signification – as understood in the postmodernism of the 80s by its fragile subject that strives to escape institutional protocols – to current artistic practices that work with and through the protocols of artistic institution. Let us take as example the performance *Project* (2003) by Xavier Le Roy (author of concept) and a group of dancers-choreographers who signed the choreography and performance. Briefly, the proposition consists of playing sport and invented games: football, handball and “corners”, so that those games are being established one next to another, one over the other and the third one, with performers changing the team-attributes and playing several games at once, thus manifesting the increasing complexity of structure and the virtuosity of playing. The movement springs exclusively out of the function of playing; therefore all physical traits of body in space and time are determined by the game rather than by the aestheticised according to some autonomous ideal author’s subject. The procedure of announcing the proposition of dance includes the protocol by which the spectator has to be interpellated in the role of spectator in the theatre and thus questioned if he/she and how he/she accepts, experiences and interprets this performance as a *choreographic* performance, i.e.

how this choreographic proposition relates to his/her assumptions and knowledge on dance as well as the status and the function of dance in culture. Although neither the procedure nor the protocol cannot be entirely arbitrary, given that they rely on our perception of movement borrowed from sports in the place of specific movement of dance art, openness reflects in the author’s game – strategy of questioning spectators in the lack of recognised convention.

The connection is open, a short circuit established between the systems of rules of superimposed games (that most certainly betray the conventional procedure of sport game) and the theatre system i.e., more narrowly speaking, the spectatorship that becomes the viewpoint of the theatre system that observes the system of the performance of sport and as-if-sport games. Thus the specifics of medium are being reconfigured: namely, dance does not prove itself by the autonomous speciality of historical discipline and essential, necessary and sufficient traits of movement. The specifics derive out of the specific reconfiguration of heterogeneous elements, which enter the proposition “This is choreography”. Let us quote just some of the orientations of choreographic propositions in the past decade: subduing the movement to the operation of performative; the metamorphosis of movement into the virtualisation of identity, form, body behaviour; the replacement of original dance with social-spectacular mass culture; replacement of body movement with the movement in the manner of the open text. Within those frames emerges a multitude of possibilities, i.e. questionings of the field via the horizon of ‘immanent’ specific signification of movement based in self-expression, narrative representation or formal-abstract affirmation of dance language and style.

Examining the relation between the experimental practices of the 60s, postmodern practices of the 70s and the 80s and the critical practices of the 90s in performing arts, one may observe a paradigm shift from the openness in formal as well as signifying aspects of poetics towards the openness of procedure and protocol in representing a particular concept of art for the world of art.

While the first establishes an open form and structure out of poetic proceedings of conceiving, performing and experiencing the work, the other introduces and executes the arbitrary signification open for numerous free, unmotivated and arbitrary readings; the third opens the otherwise closed concept of art towards the plurality of propositions. It imposes the plurality of propositions although it didn't give it the mandate to do it, even not in today's art world.

The first Neo-avant-garde practice is experimental since it explores and re-invents the specifics of the medium out of the altered constitutive relation into the emergences of works, obliterating the finished organic object, therefore autonomous in the immanence of its own language. The second prepares the artistic practice and the artistic subject for the society of late capitalism and free market, i.e. for the third and actual conception, that being critical, departing from the practices of the 90s, for it interbreeds and reconfigures the existing specific knowledge on the medium into the new specifically i.e. always differently heterogeneous propositions for the given art, thus criticising the Modernist aspiration for the homogeneity of signification even in an open form. Hence openness shifts from the author, performer, interpreter and the resulting form of work to the procedure and protocol, strategies and tactics of spectatorship in relation towards the open concept of art. To speak about the concept, open, and unbounded, as is the language game (Wittgenstein), means that the performance determines a sequence of facilitating rules for the given occasion. The open concept of choreography counts on the unpredictable situation that would require from us to change our idea on choreography. Before we may say that a new concept has emerged out of a certain choreographic proposition, most probably many if not all threads of content of this future concept already exist. Consequently, the new seems to be at once the break from and the continuity with the old. What we are dealing with, therefore, is transformation rather than repetition. Continuity is of crucial importance for the work of open concepts, thus permeating the ever-changing live practice. We may see transformation, continuity

and dissemination only if we do not imply closed paradigmatic examples that we would treat as ideal types for the requirements of aesthetics. We certainly have to renounce the so-called 'monster-barring' (or the exclusion of border examples that cause trouble in classification) since all cases become more or less monstrous, emerging out of the bonding in non-reproductive relations. What do Thomas Plischke and Juan Dominguez, Christine De Smedt and Alice Chauchat, Mette Ingvarstsen and Antonia Baehr, have to do one with another? Almost nothing except that their practices stem out of the closed concept of Dance. In other words, these practices betray the essentialist convictions that have reigned the dance ever since classical ballet until the still modernistically founded practices of the choreographers of the generation of the 80's who desperately hold on to the idea of Dance as the invention of the body in motion with immanent significations.

Let us summarise now the difference between arbitrariness and contingency in order to see how the horizon of the open work from the period of Neo-avant-garde is nowadays crumbling into the crevices of micro-agitations, pragmatic sets of partial insights, interventions and techniques of opening the social space. And if arbitrariness did open the work of art towards the open concept so that it programmatically carried out the open shaping of form/event and signification, promising to free the communication between the author, the interpreter and the recipient from the necessity of (self-)expression, it did so with a gesture of totalisation resulting in the reduction of the field to the systems of generating situations of the type "anything goes but not everything happens". Chance, probability and uncertainty in complex order programmes VS chaos, decision by free choice as well as multi-layered sense in the process of signifying – all these are procedures of arbitrariness of form and signification that were *liberating* by freeing the artist from responsibility, in the spirit of emancipation of the 60s and the impetus of micro-practices of plural subjects in the 70s and the 80s, defining "responsibility as the ultimate irresponsibility towards oneself" or "purposeful purposelessness" (Cage's

principles). Today, the unpopular names for them are aesthetics of indifference and aesthetics of rejection.²¹

Arbitrariness hides the point of view, i.e. it puts into perspective the significance of the fact that each proposition – even from the standpoint of pluralism – is being announced by someone. It is therefore significant to see the specifics of proposition in the inevitably partial conditionality of knowledge it produces. Proposition is announced by someone but the multiplicity that results from the stance on the pluralism of proposition is not a matter of functional differentiation of an artistic field. It is not sufficient to say, as the programmers nowadays do in the spirit of diversity management, “there is something for everyone, everything has its particular audience”, as if the audience were left with the freedom of choice.²² Artistic fields are still hierarchically stratified – and perhaps even more strictly and conservatively in the aftermath of September 11 – according to the asymmetrical distribution of the power of knowledge rather than meaning; in other words, according to the capacity of entering the institutional market and, subsequently, the participation in the distribution of the perceptible. “All stances are equally contingent; this does not mean that from the pragmatic point of view, all stances should be treated as equally ‘legitimate and valid’. Š...¹ all stances and viewpoints are *not* equally valid precisely because they have material effects of which the benefit and the damage are asymmetrically distributed in the social field.”²³

The contingency of a certain proposition has to do neither with the *necessary* – if necessary is that, which can under no circumstances be impossible – nor with the *possible* – if possible is something that is *perhaps* true. Contingency is based on material effects of conditionality, placing and embodiment of the partial perspective of a certain proposition as the position in the given field. Contingent: something that is *in fact* true, although it would be altogether different under different conditions. How else should we understand the reduction of the multitude of procedures in contemporary choreography to the

utterly unfitting and incorrectly applied term “conceptual dance”? How to explain the resistance or indolence of Western European performing arts scene and discourse to consider authors as Antonia Baehr, Alice Chauchat, Christine De Smedt, Juan Domingez, Mette Edvardsen, Christine Gaigg, Nada Gambier, Mette Ingvarsten, Eva-Maria Keller, Vera Knolle, Cooqui Jerez, Anne Juren, Carlos Pez, Petra Sabisch, Márten Spångberg, Amaia Urra, instead of classifying them under “conceptual dance” or pushing them to the margin of “the remainder” of “conceptual dance”, and still being incapable of explaining what is and what is not “conceptual” in the works of those highly diverse authors? It is very unpopular to quote the names in a sequence since there looms the danger of reducing them to the representatives of a certain paradigm. Our aim is far from the affirmation of whatever kind of unity or communality; we strive to point out to the expansion of the field of choreography – when the transition is made from generic defining to deliberating particular propositions.

If the definition of art in the (early) period of the open work was anti-essentialist, nowadays it is procedural. In other words, we cannot be gratified with the attitude of openness in the spoken act of Donald Judd: “This is a work of art if I say so”. The institutional theory of art, emerging in the 60s in the vicinity of Conceptualism, coincides in the 90s with the neo-liberal economy of institutional market, along with strengthening the consensus on their cynical humour. This leads to the creation of appearance of the expansion of field while in fact what is at work is the critique exhausting the target as long as it is in power: the apparatus of theatre... the century in which the director in the quest for self-identity on stage plays the leading role. The expansion of field implies a specification of the content of proposition, the questions ‘why’, ‘for whom’ and ‘how’, and with what consequences. One of the consequences of that expansion goes against the criteria of success of programmers and authors, and that is the essential specification of spectator,

²¹ Aesthetics of indifference refers to the New York group of artists under the influence of the so-called Duchamp effect: John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns. Aesthetics of rejection is a term mainly used to denote the tendency of transforming tradition in European Neo-avant-garde and late Neo-modernism within the frame of

Postmodernism, as are James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Helmuth Lachenman, Joseph Beuys.

²² See Elke Van Campenhout and Bojana Cveji}, “The Mapping”, *Etcetera*, year 23, no. 95, February 2005

²³ Cary Wolfe, *Critical Environments: Postmodern Theory and the Pragmatics of the “Outside”*, Minnesota, 1998, pp. 80-81

carried out much more discreetly than the rough division between the intellectual-professional and the lay-consumer audience. Particular propositions correspond to particular audiences but the border between them is always prone to shifting.

Recent Perspectives: Open is Virtual

We imported contingency from the critique of causal logic as a category, which crossbreeds possible-arbitrary with motivated-unnecessary. Yet our stance is still determined by the rationalist non-essentialism that resolves the problem of arbitrariness with contingency or non-linear causality. In other words, we use contingency in order to assert that there is an excess of causes for the representation of reality in knowledge to be able to maintain the causal order of phenomena as the effect.

Therefore the introduction of procedural approach to defining art as the open concept in the theory of art. Analogue to the concentric model of knowledge, the function of artist's expression is here relativised by the game of intentionality, contextual predetermination and chance. Thus the emphasising of the abolishment of the freedom of subject in the interdiscursive field, where each new and different configuration of discourse is also always prepared. Yet although the discursive formation is indeed prepared or rather enabled by the system of institutional protocolling of the discourse, the change it introduces and/or may introduce is not always foreseen and controlled, especially if our interests allow for the conception of future as open. First and foremost, the institution itself is not a transcendental category out of reach of material practices, but is materially structured by the executions of individual discourses. Thus the relation between the artistic institution and practices functions according to the conventional relation of statement and expressions as it was critically established by Rastko Mo~nik: "The notion of convention is a tautological notion Š...¹ and it never expresses anything else than this pseudo-rule: 'If I speak Ix in the speaking position X, I

spoke what in the speaking position X was the only possible and the only thing that should have been said'". Nevertheless – and we took this crevice into account as well – "what is necessary here is that the speaking position X (however tightly conventionally structured) is updated, fulfilled and realised only after I utter Ix", adds Mo~nik.²⁴

Our stance had so far followed the theory of social constructivism, which "accomplishes" openness through the loss of objectivity, the autonomous existence of the world, making it constantly dependent (here contingent) on interpretation. Newer perspectives – we do not dare to classify them under one paradigm – from biopolitical theory, the chaos and complexity theory, second-degree system theory in biology and sociology, to the more recent philosophy of science, see openness as a category belonging to "things", before and after the interpretation of subject and the nominal constitution of signification".²⁵ "Signs are qualities... And qualities are worth more than simple logical traits and sensory perceptions. They encompass a potential – the capacity to experience the affect or to be submitted to a force, as well as the capacity to act affectively or to dismiss force."²⁶

The philosophy of Gilles Deleuze along with the theories he developed with the psychiatrist Félix Guattari have influenced the formation of the stance of non-essentialist materialism, shifting the focus from the binary logic of real-possible to the multiplication of the relation actual-virtual. Here we deal with a genuine shift of interest from the logic of identity to the politics of differentiation that goes beyond the opposites/oppositions that structure binary pairs. Possibility is the matter of limited scope of the potential: what something might become without ceasing to be what it is. The possible reflects in the real and vice versa, since here we operate in a binary mode, where the real is the existing and the possible the non-existing, maintaining all traits of the existing. Virtual, in turn, is not opposed to the real. A thing becomes actual in the duration

²⁴ Rastko Mo~nik, *Word... to word (Beseda... besedo)*, [KUC, Ljubljana, 1985, p. 117

²⁵ Here we have in mind the following references: Giorgio Agamben, *Potentialities, Collected Essays in Philosophy*, Stanford University Press, Stanford Cal, 1999; *Becomings, Explorations in Time, Memory, and Futures*, Elisabeth Grosz (ed), Cornell University Press, Ithaca-London, 1999; Manuel

DeLanda, *Intensive Science & Virtual Philosophy*, Continuum, London-New York, 2002; Brian Massumi, *Movement, Affect, Sensation: Parables of the Virtual*, Duke University Press, Durham-London, 2002; Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude*, Semiotext(e), Los Angeles-New York, 2004

²⁶ Brian Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia. Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari*, MIT Press, Boston-Massachusetts, 1992, p. 10

of the process where the movement between the thresholds and intensities of differentiation is more crucial than the meaning, which is similar to cutting, the cut – a result of the instantaneous occupation of forces, if we use Deleuzeian terms for the factors of desire, interest and chance.²⁷

Yet here we shall not delve into the consideration of differences between epistemological concepts of late Post-structuralism and bio-political theory. Our goal is, quite the contrary, a pragmatic one: to make a schematic overview of how recent philosophical and theoretical concepts have influenced the notion of openness abandoning the category of identity for the sake of transformational potentiality, thus becoming attractive references of new artistic poetics in performing arts, as well as political practices (e.g. net activism). Let us sketch the points of new theoretical references of openness:

According to Alain Badiou, statement and act that were carrying the performative, therefore, iterative function of discourse, are now perceived as event: an extraordinary break with the *status quo* that transforms and innovates a situation pointing out to its vacuity or the impossibility of it being differentiated and recognised.²⁸ Instead of emphasising the *always-already*, the event now emphasises the preposition *amidst, in the middle*, i.e. the emergence in forming the concept, the virtual as the set of conditions of the past and the future, immanent to the emergence of the new combination. In this light, one may re-read and re-establish one of the fundamental premises of the open work throughout history up until now – and that is the 'here-and-now' of artistic act. For what was invested in the Neo-avant-garde as the guarantor of directness, uniqueness, spontaneity and chance, in the 70s and the 80s was fundamentally challenged and re-articulated as the ever-postponed, mediated, non-present, evading, *always-already*, to be kept from the 90s onward within the frame of event but now on the level of virtual rather than the 'unutterabl(e)y real', one that goes 'beyond the discourse'. Badiou himself determines the event as 'one more signifier' in the hierarchy of situation rather than the one that falls out of its signifying hierarchy. According to

his conception of event,²⁹ the 'here-and-now' is once again acquiring the possibility of opening as the interruption of situation or the state of things. The 'here-and-now' event could be determined as the intervention within the real (rather than outside of it); it is the 'additional signifier' or 'excessive', hence it cuts the *status quo* situations. 'Here-and-now' therefore takes place in the real (*amidst*) but emerges from the potentiality of the virtual in the given situation.

The process leading to emergence implies the force of differentiation under the principle "everything is divisible!" In political sense, bifurcation requires detouring, escape and separation as the more efficient, more creative strategy than the critical conflict and confrontation. Instead of measuring power in confrontation that results with the hierarchy of the centre and the margin within the structure of contained differences, it is more productive to differentiate the voice taking the third path. The rhizomatic network thus created is open inasmuch it represents a model of self-organisation as, for instance, in the processes of collective work or open source technology. Openness is here a correlation of that type of difference that does not differentiate something from something else (difference as the divergence or breach and the failure of identity) but instead differs even from its own differentiation: briefly, how to diverge at once in two directions? How to think the direction or an orbit without the possibility of anticipating the destination? Differentiation here implies a motion that shifts from transformation of intensity towards species, where the diversity prevents similarity as the regulative factor of difference. The process led by difference, by direction rather than intention, is open to the extent to which it generates new structures without homogenising their components and their submission to hierarchical control. Becoming cannot be reduced to procedure or technique but it could serve as one of the operational concepts in performing arts with the aim to denote the non-imitative and non-representative production of figures, statements and situations; as a heterogenesis in which the difference between the types of units proliferates in the vertiginous dynamics of cognitive and sensorial activities.

²⁷ Deleuze's standpoint on signification is best illustrated with a statement ascribed to him: "A thing has as many meanings as there are forces capable of seizing it."

²⁸ Alain Badiou, *L'être et l'événement*, Seuil, Paris, 1988

²⁹ See Peter Hallward, *Badiou: A Subject to Truth*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis-London, 2003; and Alain Badiou, *Manifest za filozofiju*, Jesenski i Turk, Zagreb, 2001

The past decade notes the singling out of a discourse in performing arts, equally orchestrated by the authors' poetics and the interpretation of their practices, swarming with concepts derived out of Deleuzian philosophy. Such discourse is not coherent and is often even elusive in the gap between the abstract desirable postulates, uncritical remnants of avant-garde and Neo-avant-garde treatments (literal, spontaneous, 'present') of performing process, the body and its perceptions and receptions and the literal embodiments in the form of images of 'body without organs' or 'monstrosity'. What we may only ascertain with confidence is not the theoretical correctness or the stability of the new paradigm but the responsibility for the new commitment towards the processes of open production. What we talk about here is the commitment towards the exploration of body not as a site, inscription, lack and prohibition; that is, in accordance with Spinoza's so often quoted stance from Deleuze up until now, not towards what the body is or cannot be, but what it can; the capacity to receive and act affectively, to generate new, singular and irreproducible connections indicating to or surpassing the borders between man, animal, machine and inorganic matter. The spectator is ever less castrated by the reminder of his/her function in the theatre of representation and the sublime spectacle, and is increasingly empowered by the virtualisation of experience and comprehension that have to be safeguarded against the erroneous identification with the romantic "unutterable", which is independent, outside of the discourse and/or surpassing it and preceding it. The virtual is not unutterable; it is the condition of hyper-differentiation and ramification of knowledge beyond the borders of the performance as autonomous work of art – the work of perception required from the spectator. It compels us not to abandon the discursive work but to constantly reformulate the possibilities of description, expression and interpretation in the sense of experimenting with knowledge and the political power of that knowledge.

To conclude: openness is not an immanent presupposition of the work of art at present; open-

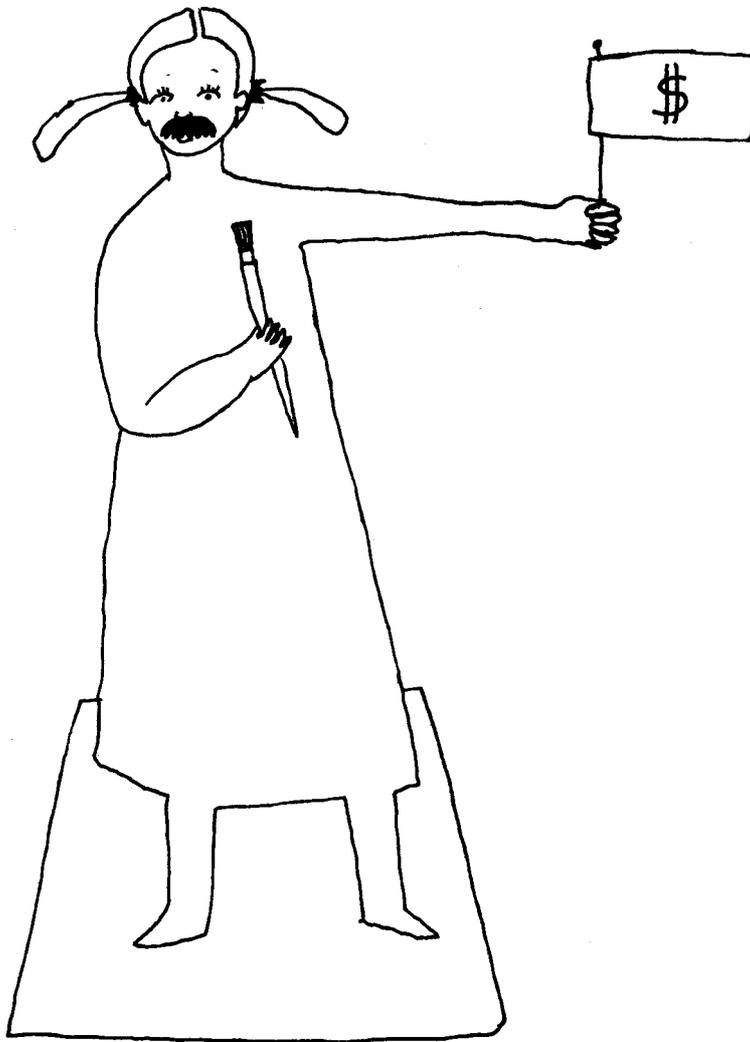
ness is the imperative of multiplication of consistent artistic and political practices which, if genuinely open, have to withstand the effects of friction of their differences. Therefore in considering the multitude of particular propositions in contemporary choreography that we took as example, one should take into account when the borders of openness of this field are regulated by the laws of the free institutional market; when is it particularity, self-contained with the request for new and different commodification of liberal individuality; and when, in turn, there is at work the transpersonal machine of author's practice capable of effects of complex transversal transformation of the field of art and society.

The third position is potentially the most creative as it intervenes into the field of art by constantly transforming it through questioning, exploring and problematising the apparatus of its institutions, rather than threatening to destroy it. It inscribes into it as the virtual into the real; although it is not 'made of the same substance' as that field, it does not exist on the same level with it, the level of smooth reproduction or on the other hand the 'equally valuable' confrontation.³⁰ That position is the only one that nowadays in its eventfulness has the potentiality of openness on the level of artistic practice and which perhaps also on the level of institution maintains the possibility of 'art as the open notion'. For this position is performative and in an 'excessive' manner, as a new 'trigger' for the institution, so that by itself, by its here-and-now eventfulness, it extorts from the institution the mandate to act, even to change the protocols by which it introduces new procedures requiring new naming procedures for itself. And the new subject of that art – as according to Massumi's conception of expression as 'the constitutive expression' not preceded by the body – thus does not precede its act nor is it entirely subdued to it as the effect in the linear causal chain, but it breaks out of it, bursts here-and-now out its own performing.

Translation by: Katarina Pejovi}

³⁰ At the Round Table discussion on the subject of "Unbearable Lightness of (Artistic) Being" within the frame of the 2005 Ljubljana Exodos Festival, Emil Hrvatini proposed three tactics of contemporary artistic practice that are schematic but delineate those positions with precision: acting (reproduction with-

in the institution), non-acting (position outside of institution) and anti-acting (inter-institutional transforming of institution). According to this schematisation, the third position, the position we consider as potentially the most creative, carries out the tactics of anti-acting.



APPENDIX

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Bojana Cveji}: *I Remember*

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Jasna Veli-kovi}: *There is No Riddle*

Jelena Novak: *Dancing with the Text*

Ana Vujanovi}: *New Theatre and (Word) Game – Basic Rules of Walking*

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Jelena Novak: *Death of Composer – From Reality to Fiction*

Jasna Veli-kovi}: *Act Tractatus*

Sini{a Ili}, Bojan Djordjev: *Marilyn*

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Jelena Novak: *(De)/(Re) Construction of the Opera – Einstein on the Beach*

Ana Vujanovi}: *More – Walking Beyond Einstein on the Beach... Belgrade, 2001*

Bojana Cveji}: *Einstein on the Beach Next to the Opera, After Opera, as Opera, as Machine, as a Desiring Machine*

Bojan Djordjev: *The Life and Times of Robert Wilson*

Jelena Novak: *Einstein on the Beach – Architecture. Exotic! Erotic?*

Mi{ko [uvakovi]}: *To Destroy or to Read Theatre*

Sini{a Ili}: *Einstein on the Farm; Post-theoretical Comic Literature Used While Walking (by the way)*

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Ana Vujanovi: *New Reading of Theatre*

Goran Sergej Prista: *Death and Breath*

Emil Hrvatin: *Dramaturgy of Looking: Terminal Spectator and Other Strategies*

Neja Kos: *Dramaturgy in Dance* / trans. Milan T. Djordjevi}

Eda ^ufer: *Some Thoughts on Contemporary Dramaturgy* / trans. Milan T. Djordjevi}

Eda ^ufer: *Dance Dramaturgy* / trans. Milan T. Djordjevi}

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Mi{ko [uvakovi}: *Impressions from the Age of Enlightenment in the Age of Agent Body; a Simulation of Impressionistic Critique of Performance Diderot's Nephew or Blood is not Water*

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Bojana Cveji}, Tanja Markovi}, Ljubi{a Mati}, Maja Mirkovi}, Mi{ko [uvakovi}, Ana Vujanovi}: *Fragmentary History of Dance During the 20th and the Beginning of the 21st Century: Discourses, Poses and Transgressions of Dance*

Mi{ko [uvakovi}: *Discourses and Dance – Introduction to Philosophy and Theory of Dance*

Ana Vujanovi}: *Performing (Conceptual) Dance: Actor as/and Author as 'Afformer' as 'Performer' (as Jérôme Bel...)*

Mårten Spångberg: *Something like a Phenomenon* / trans. Vesna Peri}

Goran Sergej Prista: *What Needs to Be Excluded* / trans. Jelena Jankovi}

Bojana Kunst: *Performing the Other Body* / trans. Jelena Jankovi}

Ivana Stamatovi}: *Opera in Movement*
 Jelena Novak: *Operation: Orfeo – Transplantation of the Opera Organs*
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 Mladen Dolar: *If Music Be Food of Love (1)* / trans. Tatjana Markovi}

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 Hélène Cixous: *Portrait of Dora* / trans. Ljubi{a Mati}; proof-reading Sanja Milutinovi} Bojani}

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Marvin Carlson: *Resisting Theatricality* / trans. Vlatko Ili}

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Ivana Stamatovi}: *Vocal-bodily In/Per/Versions of Narcissus, Echo and the Nymphs*

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Marina Gr`ini}: *Technology, Performativity: Time of Theatre* /trans. Maja Pelevi}

Jelena Novak: *Opera in the Age of its Electronic/Digital Reproduction*

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Helen Varley Jameison, Tanja Markovi}: *X (Body + Avatar) = Cyberformance; X = Collision?* (discussion)

Igor [tromajer, Ana Vujanovi}: *Love Without Mercy* (discussion)

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Mladen Dolar: *If Music Be Food of Love... (3)* /trans. Tatjana Markovi}

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VISIT TO THEORETICAL BLOCK

Rufo Caballero: *Narration and the Future of Cinema* /trans. Miljana Peri}

WORKING THEORY

Mi{ko [uvakovi}, Ana Vujanovi}: *Gazes of(for) RB*

Marta Popivoda: *Proposition for Work X 1 – 7*

Aleksander Bender: *Story and Requests for Subjectivity, and Sini{a Ili}: Other Version*

Maja Pelevi}: *Post-script for a Short Film About the Mute Woman.doc*

Maja Mirkovi}: *On Film and Falling in Love*

DISCUSSIONS

Bojana Cveji}, Ana Vujanovi}: *Open Work – Does it Deserve Theory Today?*

CRITIQUE

Bojan Djordjev: *Belgrade + Regional Dance and Theatre Scene 2004/05* (introduction)

Maja Mirkovi}: *PRO TOOLS: Contemporary Dance, Today, Europe* (see under: choreography)

Irena [entevska: *Who will Knead Fog and Clouds into Hamburger? (New repertory politics of Little Theatre “Du{ko Radovi}”)*

Anja Su{a}: *From Obsession to Need. And Back. Few Sweaty T-shirts by Du{an Muri}*

Marija Skoko: *Next Step – The Step Closer; Every similarity to real people and events is intentional...*

Marta Popivoda: *00 Tableau Critic: Actress (Work) in Progress*

Bojan Djordjev: *‘Realisms’ Against ‘Realism’; Three Directions by Anja Su{a}*

Milo{ Loli}: *Text Means Fabric (About/post/dramas of Katarina Zdjelar)*

Vlatko Ili}: *Slam Excess of the Bogavac Sisters; Theatre: TRUE or FALSE*

Ana Vujanovi} (ed): *Programme of International Contemporary Dance Workshops in 4 Steps*

VISIT TO THE CRITIQUES

Andrej Mir-ev: *Polyphonic Bodies of Voices (On erotics of the body and perversion of voice re. performance Mass for Pre-elections Silence)*

Ana Vujanovi}: *Critical Diary of Slovene Dance Biennial Gibanica 05*

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